



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on March 24, 2023

After Farmers' Party Victory, Dutch Government Rethinks "Green" Agenda

Members of the Dutch government urged for changes to be made to the country's "green" agenda following the unexpected victory of the pro-farmer party BoerBurgerBeweging (BBB) in recent provincial elections on March 15.

The BBB rose in popularity due to its opposition to the ruling government's environmental policies imposing nitrogen restrictions that would jeopardize thousands of farmers' livelihoods and caused widespread anger among farmers and their sympathizers. BBB will now form the largest party in the provinces as well as the Senate. Ninety-two percent of BBB voters cited the government's nitrogen policy as the reason for their votes. Polls revealed that over three-quarters of BBB voters think that provincial governments should have the ability to implement policies separate from the national government, compared to 58 percent among all voters.

Last week's electoral victory would mean that the BBB, as the largest party in the Senate, will have significant clout in lawmaking. The BBB chairman, Erik Stegink, maintained that the government's environmentalist agenda, particularly its plans to purchase and shut down farms, must be ditched, stating that "2030 must be off the table and expropriation is also not an option," alluding to the ruling coalition's pro-EU plans to halve nitrogen emissions by 2030. Notably, the BBB announced that it will not implement any anti-farmer laws in regional governments.

In turn, the Netherlands' pro-EU governing coalition has to decide between amending its "green" policy as demanded by voters and facing a bottleneck political situation.

"We can't go back to the order of the day," declared Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra on March 17. "There is a gaping hole between the Binnenhof [the Dutch Parliament] and the rest of the Netherlands." Hoekstra added, "The Hague, including us, has insufficiently understood what is going on in our country. There's a huge gap, we all have to care."

Other politicians also joined Hoekstra in calling for compromise to be made to the environmentalist agenda. The Dutch Minister for Agriculture, Piet Adema, said that "the Netherlands has expressed that farmers must have prospects."

Even Prime Minister Mark Rutte labeled the recent electoral results as "a very clear cry," although he did not elaborate on the changes he would consider making. The remarkable loss in power for Rutte —



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who is the country's longest-serving prime minister — has already led to doubts regarding his ability to continue governing the country.

Dutch media reports have questioned if Rutte would resign from his post, enabling Caroline van der Plas, party leader of the BBB, to become the next prime minister. At the moment, Rutte has the support of less than 25 percent of BBB voters, and just over a third of the confidence of the voting public as a whole.

Meanwhile, Van der Plas herself challenged Rutte's continued rule, asking, "How can you continue to govern if you have so little support?" Although she asserted that she is not setting her eyes on the premier's job, she did not exclude such an option, saying "Yes, what if?"

That being said, it seems unlikely that the ruling coalition would budge considerably on the nitrogen policy. The Minister for Nature and Nitrogen Policy, Christianne van der Wal, indicated that the contentious policy would remain on the agenda, claiming that the government has to push it through under EU law.

"For agricultural entrepreneurs, there will be a stopping scheme that will be as attractive as possible," van der Wal recently said in the Dutch parliament. The Dutch government plans to buy 3,000 "peak polluter" farms via a €24.3 billion (\$25.6 billion) fund.

Van der Wal said farmers would be given 100-percent value for their land, but if voluntary efforts do not materialize, forced buyouts would happen.

The country is trying to make farm purchases if not enough landowners accept buyouts. She continued, "There is no better offer coming."

In response, Van der Plas said that Van der Wal's remarks were "complete bullsh*t" and that "everything can change, if you want."

Additionally, Diederik Samsom, the former leader of the left-wing Dutch Labor Party, who now serves as the unelected head of cabinet for First Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans, has been found to have advised Rutte's government that it should go ahead with plans to buy out farmland despite voters' opposition to the nitrogen cuts.

Dutch broadcaster NOS reported that Samsom, in a talk with the government in November last year, said that less state intervention would not be sufficient to meet the EU's quota of nitrogen emissions.

Samsom allegedly went on to claim that if the Dutch government decided to "deliver first" and enforce the compulsory buyout of farmers, the European Commission would be more lenient in how it deals with the Netherlands on other issues linked to the nitrogen policy".

NOS pointed out that the Commission does not dictate the exact means by which local governments have to employ to meet the EU's "green" goals as long as the outcome remains the same, hinting that Samsom "meddled" in internal government affairs with his remarks.

Similarly in neighboring Belgium, the EU's forced implementation of the anti-farmer "green" agenda has provoked mayhem as well, with the Flemish [coalition government's attempts to](#) limit nitrogen fertilizers in the Dutch-speaking region of Flanders. Widespread tractor protests mirroring the Netherlands' farmers' protests last summer erupted in Belgium as well.

Since 2019, the Dutch government has been enforcing new rules for nitrogen emissions on farmers and farm buildings that have impeded the expansion of dairy, pig, and poultry operations.



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In an interview with *Fox & Friends Weekend*, one Dutch farmer lamented about the pressure from the government to shut down thousands of farms.

“I don’t know what we can expect. For my own family, I hope that one of my sons can continue farming if he wants,” the farmer, Geertjan Kloosterboer, said.

The Dutch government’s globalist “green” agenda would threaten the nation’s, as well as the world’s food supply. Recent data disclosed that the country, which is the size of Maryland, is, after the United States, the world’s next-largest exporter of agricultural products by value.

Dutch farmers’ importance in the global food supply has been undeniable, notwithstanding leftist “green” politicians’ efforts to ruin the agricultural sector on the pretext of tackling climate change.



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