



Toespraak

Opening remarks of the President of the Senate of the Netherlands, Ms. Ankie Broekers-Knol, on the occasion of the visit of the President of the Argentine Republic, H.E. Mr. Mauricio Macri, to the States General of the Netherlands, Tuesday 28th March 11.00 o'clock

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the States General of the Netherlands, and on behalf of my colleague from the House of Representatives, a warm welcome to the Senate of the Netherlands. It is an honour to receive you here today.

In 1996 I had the pleasure of visiting Argentina for the World Congress of neurology. Together with my husband I made an unforgettable round trip through your country. I remember distinctly the magnificent beauty of the Perito Moreno Glacier and the Iguazu Falls. I can only hope that your impression of the Netherlands will be as good as my impression of Argentina.

Mr. President,

The Argentine Republic and the Netherlands maintain sound bilateral relations. One of the foundations of this relationship is the Dutch emigration to Argentina, both in the 19th century and after the Second World War. In fact, the largest Dutch community in Argentina lives in the southern part of the province of Buenos Aires, the province you know so very well.

And of course... how can I not mention the even stronger tie that was created between the Netherlands and Argentina on 2nd February 2002... a tie that was desperately needed after the 1978 World Cup final, which we are still coming to terms with...



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Mr. President,

Argentina has opened its doors to foreigners in the past, and it still does so today. Last year the government of Argentina announced that it is willing to receive, amongst others, Syrian and Lebanese refugees.

The belief that challenges such as migration are global challenges, rather than local or regional challenges, is a belief we share. It is the reason why both Argentina and the Netherlands pursue an agenda of multilateralism. Through the United Nations, but also through Mercosur and the EU respectively, and countless other organisations.

Bilateral cooperation and cooperation between blocs of countries is essential in a rapidly changing international environment. A new agenda in the United States, the rise of China as a global player, Brexit and the scope of terrorism have made the world order, as we have come to know it in recent years, more unpredictable.

Therefore, I believe it is a positive development that Mercosur and the EU recently strengthened their ties. This cooperation is vital to continue to move forward in area's such as free trade, climate change, migration and security. In this respect, we look forward to the Argentinian leadership of the G20 in 2018.

Mr. President,

As you know, we recently had our general elections. The outcome is a diversified political landscape, with 13 parties elected in the House of Representatives. The formation of the new cabinet, which was started under the guidance of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, will be a challenge. At the moment we can only speculate whether we will have a centre-right cabinet or a cabinet with a strong green-left component, or some other mix of parties.



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This form of coalition and consensus building is a first nature to Dutch politicians. The Economist has dubbed this as the irony of Dutch politics: we yell at each other for months, and then we govern together for years.

We will have to wait and see whether or not the new cabinet will have a majority in the Senate. In the last few years the ruling coalition did not hold a majority in the Senate, which is similar to the Argentinian political situation.

In order to pass legislation, the two coalition parties were forced to come up with really excellent arguments to convince opposition parties to support the proposed legislation. This did not hinder the democratic process. You could even argue that this is democracy in its purest form.

Towards this background, I would be interested to hear what the minority of the reigning coalition in the Senate has meant for Argentinian politics.

Your Excellency,

Once again, thank you very much for visiting the States General. Please let me give you the floor.

Thank you.

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