

**Kerk  
in Actie**



**Kerk in Actie**

**Eurodiaconia Advocacy  
Training**

## Our Mission

Kerk in Actie is the diaconal work of the Protestants Church in the Netherlands.

We connect and strengthen churches en partners to work together, or work in the name of them to testify of the Gospel and to practice justice, compassion and stewardship.

We support and working together in different continents with more then 800 churches partner and organizations

## Our Mission

### Our main issues

Poverty and exclusion  
Migrants and asylum seekers  
Sustainability  
Care and exclusion

## Our main tasks

To inform and support local churches and organizations to act local. We connect them in a network and strengthen their initiatives

To support financial 80 national diaconal organizations (working for the vulnerable people), lobby partners and innovation

To lobby in the name of our churches at national niveau and EU / World Wide niveau

## Our Context

### Politics:

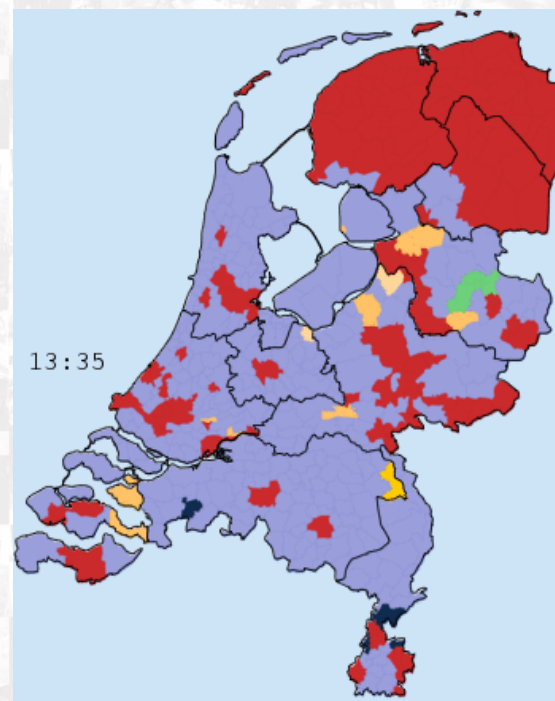
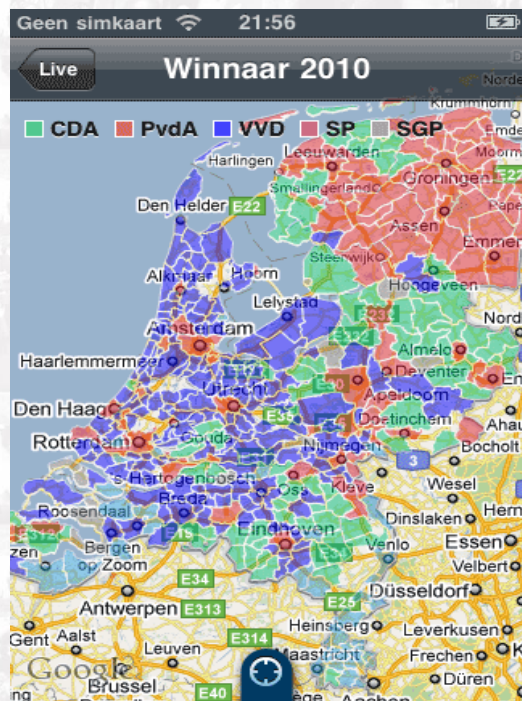
The biggest neo-liberal party and biggest social party has both a majority. Also a party which was coming up by feeding the fear of strangers and influence of Europe

Less national government, decentralization of task and local responsibilities, more civil society

### Financial:

Effect of the crisis: we need to cut our national budget to stay under the EU standard of 3%

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## Our Context

In general:

We have an increase on cost for our health system. There are taking measures to make access difficult, especially by raising the own contribution

Although our children's are living in one of the best countries of Europe, we see that a small group, specially families with one parent in bad areas living for a long time in poverty

## Our Context

In general:

The food banks get more requests for help, specially by people who lose there jobs or there own business, have not financial reserves or can't sold their homes. They have no right's to get social services.

There is a big increase of people with debts problems

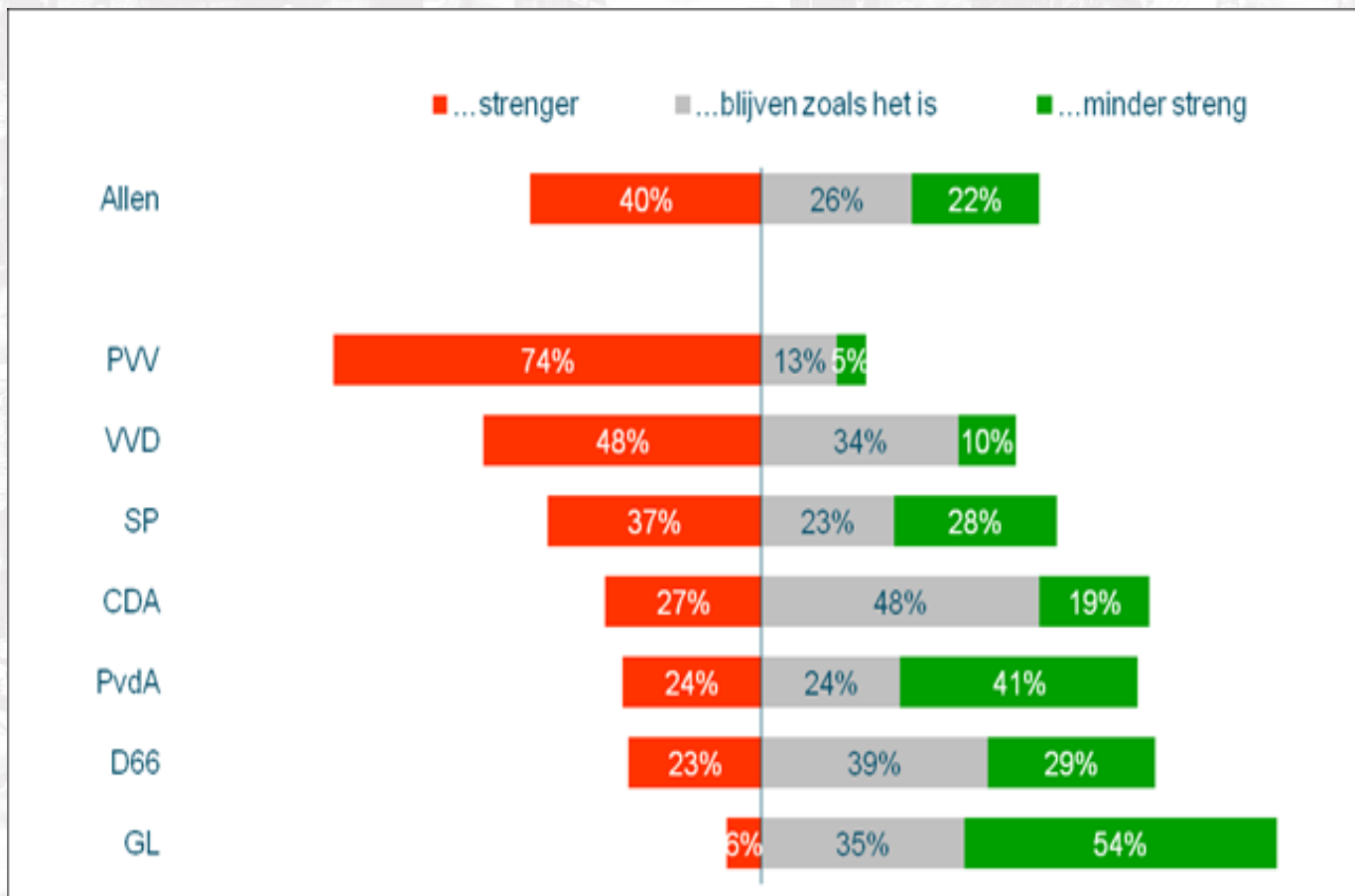
## Our Context

In general:

The policy against migrants and asylum seekers is very strict because of our coalition with a populism party.

They try to make the way of family reunion more difficult and start a very restrictive asylum policy by set people without documents in detention

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## **Our lobby networks at the moment**

A strong network of local and national churches and organizations who lobby and take care of asylum seekers

We are missing such a network about the issues of the health system and sustainability

We have different options to lobby and cooperate in local and national networks on the issue of poverty, but the impact is less at the moment than at the issue of asylum seekers

## How we decide our lobby issues ?

- We working in line of our mandate; the diaconal work of the church. Not related to a party. Choices are connected to our values
- We choose for to strengthen the position of the most vulnerable  
Example: diaconal voting index
- We working bottom up and collect the critical signals from our local churches  
Example: poverty and diaconal help research

## **Diaconal voting index**

**6 elections in the past 10 years**

Information online about the programs of the parties from the perspective of our values and diaconal priorities. Visions, purposes and plans



## Poverty and diaconal help research

Information about the temporary diaconal help  
from local churches because of poverty



- How many requests
- The amount of the aid
- Kind of diaconal groups
- Reasons for asking aid
- Solutions to avoid the problems



## How we build up our lobby?

- We collect individual and local experiences
- Decision: lobby by Kerk in Actie or in alliance
  - Useful rapports from known institutes
    - We collect solutions (strategy)
- We talk and follow politics or public servants and follow their policy in the parliament
  - We invite them to our conferences and diaconal places
- We find out the lobby moment for influence.
  - EU policy and international declarations strengthen our lobby

## How we build up our lobby?

- We use our electoral value
  - They can trust us!
- We have a good knowledge about the facts
  - You need in your team a good lobbyist
- Take not everything in your attention
  - Building up takes years

## Example on the issue of debts

- We know that having debts is one of the big causes of poverty (urgent matter)
- It's a issue that connect churches (catholic, protestants, evangelical) together
- We look which party is working on this issue
  - We invite her to a conference with 300 members of local churches and she promise to start a task group
  - We bring in proposals and connect specialists

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- We support her plans in the parliament and talk with politics of other parties
- We support the plans by collecting signatures from national / local diaconal organizations
- Her motion get support from other parties
- Therefore the Social Department has to give efforts on it
  - We start with a big prevention project.
  - We get more protection in a new law for people with debt problems

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## Example on the issue of migrants

- Lobby goal less asylum seekers in detention or more freedom in matter of detention
  - Every partner (inclusive Amnesty) has collected bad dossiers. We make a network together
- Europa policy and declarations are helpful in this lobby area
- The network start to ask the persons lead the formation from our government attention
  - Every organization send from their own perspective the same message

## Critical Success Factors

- Experiences which make the issue urgent
  - Work together with known specialists
- Bring in solutions for a strong lobby position
  - Have a mandate
- Follow the debates to see the lobby moment
- Know the politics on your issue and follow them on twitter.
  - Know their needs
- Take always the control about your own position

## Working in an alliance group

### What are the benefits?

- Big mandate so more interesting partner for the politics
- Stronger voice and power against some measures (some times stronger when you work together but react all to a issue)
- More experiences you can collect and bring in
  - More financial possibilities (but...)



## Working in an alliance group

### What are the disadvantages?

- Bread lobby alliance group without clear lobby issue
  - Far away from our churches
- The alliance group is not heard by politics because there is not an opportunity to coop together though the heavy lobby goals

## Working in an alliance group

- You need time to create a alliance group
- Don't want to be the first or get the credits
- Know the power and talents from the others
- Give and you get back for your own position

## How we decide or working by our own canals or in an alliance group?

The focus on the diaconal background and our mission means, depending the issue, it's sometimes better to have a lobby on our selves

We have some times more possibilities to get result when we lobby for a special urgent need of a diaconal group (small lobby goal)

## Example

- Our lobby on poverty issues

We are partner in the national social alliance group with the unions, social organizations and national council of churches.

Unions more focused on work issues

They want a heavy lobby policy

Last years difficult to reach a lobby goal with the alliance group, decrease of our polder model

## Example

- Our lobby on migrant issues – Child in AZC Centre
  - Forming a special network for this issue
    - Issue based on international rights for children
  - Together in contact with the department to discuss problems and solutions
- We give space to each position and collar in this network

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## Summary

Lobby is natural part of our diaconal work  
Lobby is connected to speak in name of the  
Church

Lobby is seeking balance in helpful alliance  
groups and space for own lobby policy. Not  
working in one model

Lobby is connected by our own participation to  
get a better society