



Interventie

van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, prof.dr. J.A.B. Bruijn, tijdens de P20-bijeenkomst in Jakarta, Indonesië, bij het thema 'Effective parliament, vibrant democracy'

datum 6 oktober 2022

Your Excellencies, dear colleagues,

It is a very great honour to be here today.

It is a great privilege for the Dutch Parliament and for me personally to participate in this meeting.

We are grateful to the Indonesian Presidency of the G20 for the invitation to our country.

More specifically, I would like to thank my colleagues from the Indonesian Parliament, Ms. Puan Maharani and Mr. La Nyalla Mattalitti, and the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Pacheco, to allow us to join you here today.

Terima kasih.

Your Excellencies, dear colleagues,

It is also an honour to speak during this session about a subject that is close to my heart. Because I truly believe that an effective parliament can only exist in a vibrant democracy.

The pandemic was characterised by the fact that the measures that had to be taken had a significant impact on the lives of citizens and were by many experienced as very restrictive.

It was therefore of the utmost importance that a balance was maintained between the capability of the government to act swiftly on the one hand, and democratic involvement on the other.

But also of great social importance in this particular situation has been the crucial role of parliaments to make the government public accountable for its actions and in doing so making the facts and data on the basis of which decisions were taken public, as much as possible.

The government initially made use of emergency decrees that were based on a pre-existing general legislation on Public Health. These gave the government a basis to act for a limited period of time, as then many of us were reluctant to believe that the pandemic would last very long.

As the pandemic progressed and the situation became less of an emergency, a temporary law was introduced to provide a better legal basis for the restrictive measures to combat the COVID-19 epidemic.

The temporary law also gave parliament a more suitable foundation for democratic oversight and gave parliament the possibility to assess if an extension of the temporary law was necessary.

This Spring the Dutch Senate deemed it unnecessary to extend the temporary law, and voted against prolonging for a fifth period of time.

The government was faced with the situation that they were forced to change the law in order to act in any future pandemic crisis with the consent of both of Houses of the States General in the Netherlands.

Colleagues,



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In emergency situations it is of vital importance that we as parliaments– with an understanding of the challenging situations – continue to use our parliamentary powers, and that the often difficult choices our governments make, that they are made in accordance with the law and therefor with parliament.

Dear colleagues,

The pandemic has shown that in any situation, but especially in emergency situations it is of vital importance that we as parliaments– with an understanding of the challenging situations – continue to use our parliamentary powers.

Only in that way parliament can be effective.

Only in that way democracies can be vibrant.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to the rest of our discussions.