



Welkomstwoord

van de voorzitter van de Nederlandse delegatie naar het Beneluxparlement, mr. H.J.J. Talsma, ter gelegenheid van de plenaire zitting van het Benelux Jongerenparlement

datum 29 september 2023

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome in the Senate of the Netherlands. We are honoured to host today's plenary session of the European Youth Parliament.

As you may have noticed, I called you 'colleagues' because that is exactly what you are! We are all members of parliament.

Albeit that the Dutch Senate celebrate it's 208th birthday this year – it was founded in 1815, and the European Youth Parliament, is a bit younger, as the name says of course.

Almost exactly to the date, on the 3rd of October 2018, your parliament met for the first time.

Of course, in the past five years there have been challenging years during the covid-19-pandemic, but it was good that you were able to meet two years ago in the Belgian Senate, and now two years later, here in the Netherlands.

As I understand, you have already had some interesting workshops including teambuilding exercises yesterday and this morning, as well as a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Certainly, that means that you are well prepared for the main event of this afternoon: the plenary sessions.

The three topics on today's agenda are of great interest to both young and old. Your final conclusions will be shared with the members of the Benelux Parliament, of whom some are present here today as well.

Your perspectives on issues such as cycling policy and e-health will serve as valuable input for the Benelux Parliament.

As you may have noticed there is a very colourful artwork in this plenary hall of the Senate.

It is by Dutch artist Navid Nuur. And there is something very special about it: your position in the room determines your perception of the work.

In other words: from every angle you get a different view. As soon as you start to move, you will see something different. Do try it later on!

It symbolizes politics: we all look at the same artwork or issue, but each of us sees something different. Our political opinions, our walks of life and of course also our age, determine the way we perceive a political issue. The artist calls upon us to put ourselves in the other one's shoes.

Put differently: imagine and incorporate the opinion of your opponent.

Colleagues,
I wish you all the best in the coming days.

And when you find that the debate is polarized and it is difficult to find common ground: think of this work of art and place yourself in the other one's shoes.

Good luck and above all: have fun!