



Staatscommissie
tegen Discriminatie
en Racisme

Dismantling discrimination

Towards a government that
combats and prevents
discrimination and racism

June 2026

Final report

All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or on any grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted.

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Foreword

Discrimination and racism are global phenomena that also occur in our country. They touch the very core of our society and the foundation of our rule of law: that every person is of equal worth, is treated equally in equal circumstances, and has equal opportunities. The insights in this report show that, although these fundamental rights are enshrined in Article 1 of the Constitution, they are violated in practice. Change is urgently needed.

The State Committee against Discrimination and Racism was tasked in 2022 by the House of Representatives with conducting research into the state of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands. In addition, the committee was given the task of reviewing the entire government for discrimination and ethnic profiling. It was also asked to reflect on profiling by government and to advise on better policy and regulation for tackling discrimination and racism. During its term, the committee published several thematic progress reports. Four years later, this final report is now before you. It is the result of extensive scientific research, conversations with people from all parts of society, and intensive reflection on the role of government.

What this final report makes particularly clear is that discrimination is not an incident, but a structural phenomenon. It is embedded in institutions, working methods, and assumptions, and often operates invisibly. This calls for a structural approach, while the current government approach is mainly limited to responding to individual incidents after the fact. Government's detachment on this issue, moreover, stands in stark contrast to the societal movements that have stepped forward in recent decades to demand change.

The committee observes that government has a dual role when it comes to discrimination and racism. It is guardian of fundamental rights, but can also itself contribute to unjustified unequal treatment. This calls for introspection, for a government that looks critically at its own position and actions. Above all, it calls for a fundamental change of course: from reactive to proactive, from aloof to directive, from decision-making about people to decision-making with people.

An effective approach to discrimination and racism is essential. Given the grounds set out in Article 1 of the Constitution, everyone is affected by discrimination, directly or indirectly. Discrimination has an enormous impact on people's lives. It also costs society billions to carry out redress operations.

In this report, the committee presents an action agenda with concrete solutions to structurally dismantle discrimination and racism. These actions call for political courage, leadership, administrative and civil-service commitment, and societal engagement.

But more importantly: they call for the awareness that equality and equity are not self-evident, but require ongoing attention and action. Dismantling discrimination is not a one-off task. It is a lasting responsibility for all of us. This report is intended as a call to action – and an invitation – to take up that responsibility together. With this report, the committee also explicitly aims to support civil society organisations in their role as drivers of change, advocates for equal rights, and critical partners of government.

Many people and organisations have actively contributed, in various ways, to the committee's work. The committee thanks external authors, reviewers, advisors, and interlocutors for their constructive input and valuable contributions.

On behalf of the State Committee against Discrimination and Racism,
Dr Joyce Sylvester, Chair

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Summary

Discrimination and racism affect society as a whole. Directly or indirectly, everyone is affected by discrimination, and its impact is significant. The State Committee against Discrimination and Racism (hereinafter: committee) was established in 2022 at the request of the House of Representatives, with the mandate to conduct scientific research into discrimination and racism in the Netherlands. The focus here is specifically on discrimination by the government. In doing so, the committee made a conscious decision to conduct research in both the European and Caribbean Netherlands. In recent years, the committee has already published some of its findings in various progress reports and other publications. This final report brings these insights together, synthesizes them into overarching observations, and describes the lessons that have emerged during the process. Based on this, this final report offers the government and society an action plan to combat and prevent discrimination and racism.

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that discrimination and racism are also structural problems within and perpetrated by the Dutch government. The committee therefore has a clear vision for the future: a government that itself does not discriminate, actively promotes equality and equity, and thereby sets a good example for society.

The fight against discrimination and racism is a long-term struggle. A hundred years ago, the Netherlands looked fundamentally different. Thanks to the efforts of civil society organizations and movements, much has changed for the better in the areas of discrimination and equality since then. But while the most visible, explicit forms of discrimination are being addressed, the more subtle, deeply ingrained forms persist. Despite the seriousness of the problem, progress in combating these deeply ingrained forms of discrimination and racism by and within the government lags behind. The committee identifies three interrelated explanations for this:

First, legislation and policy are often developed from a limited perspective.

Government organizations still do not sufficiently reflect the diversity of the population. In addition, people who are directly affected by discrimination are not sufficiently involved in a structural sense. Their experiences and expertise are not sufficiently reflected in legislation, policy, service provision, and oversight. This issue is particularly urgent for the Caribbean Netherlands, where the distance from the national government is even greater.

Second, the approach to discrimination and racism is reactive and focused on individual incidents.

The system of legal protection and oversight is primarily geared toward addressing issues after they occur, rather than preventing them in advance. Because there is a lack of monitoring, structural patterns of discrimination and their impact remain hidden. Moreover, this reactive approach makes it difficult to anticipate new forms of discrimination in a changing society.

Third, the government and politicians remain aloof. Politicians and government officials regularly adopt a cautious or dismissive stance when addressing discrimination and racism. This aloofness is not limited to words; in practice as well, the government avoids making binding decisions and implementing structural guidance. This is problematic. Those who have the power to act but choose not to do so perpetuate the status quo.

These three statements are closely related and call for a coherent approach. That is why the committee is presenting an action agenda with five areas of focus and ten specific actions. These are aimed at strengthening civic engagement, knowledge development, governance, legislation, and oversight. The government has a particular role to play here, but society also has an important part to play:

Take pluralism as a starting point

This shifts decision-making from being made about people to being made with people. To this end, the following actions are necessary:

1. **Ensure that the government truly reflects society and**
2. **Systematically involve citizen collectives and residents in legislation, policy, implementation, and oversight.**

Organize systematic monitoring and insight

A targeted approach to discrimination and racism cannot succeed without reliable expertise and (experiential) knowledge. The following actions are necessary:

3. **Encourage systematic data collection and knowledge development regarding discrimination, and**
4. **Invest in mutual knowledge of the Caribbean Netherlands.**

Take the lead and prevent discrimination

A robust approach to discrimination and racism requires clear leadership, institutional anchoring, and a proactive, learning government. Take the following actions:

5. **Strengthen central leadership, coordination, and action on the issue of discrimination, and**
6. **Implement the Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes and the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services across the entire public sector.**

Stop profiling and update anti-discrimination legislation

Taking action only after discrimination and racism have occurred is not enough. Tackle discrimination and racism proactively. To this end, the following actions are essential:

- 7. Stop current and planned uses of data-driven profiling in the performance of tasks and services, and**
- 8. Enforce legal prevention through the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and update anti-discrimination law.**

Contribute to equality and equity

Discrimination and racism affect the entire society, and everyone has a responsibility in this regard. It is essential that those with the most power make the greatest contribution. At the same time, everyone can be part of the movement toward greater equality. Take the following actions:

- 9. Make equality and equity the standard in the Caribbean Netherlands as well, and**
- 10. Society: establish equality and equity as the norm and actively live by them.**

The ten actions are interconnected: knowledge informs policy, prevention supports enforcement, and a diversity of voices serves as a common thread. Together, the actions form a multi-year roadmap toward a government and society that actively prevent and combat discrimination and racism. To ensure that this change in course is actually implemented, the committee calls on the government to establish a compliance and monitoring committee to drive and oversee the implementation of the committee's actions.

Dismantling discrimination. It requires courage, moral leadership, concrete measures, resources, a diverse range of voices, and the ongoing commitment of all of us.

1. Introduction

Discrimination is prohibited by law in the Netherlands. Despite its prohibition, which is enshrined in Article 1 of the Constitution, discrimination remains a common and persistent problem in practice. Discrimination and racism are deeply rooted in all sectors of our society. They occur in the labour market, in healthcare, in the housing market, in education, and within government itself.¹ Research shows that the number of reports of discrimination to the police and other official bodies has been rising for years. In 2025, for example, the number of reports to the Discrimination.nl reporting point rose by more than 70 percent.² In addition, it is estimated that millions of residents³ experience discrimination, but most of them do not report it.⁴ This means that millions of residents experience that they themselves, or those close to them, are treated unequally or are excluded from full participation in society. Ultimately, everyone is affected by this, directly or indirectly.

In this report, the State Committee against Discrimination and Racism (hereinafter: committee) brings together insights from four years of research. It offers government, civil society organisations, experts, citizen collectives, and residents knowledge, tools, and instruments to recognise, prevent, and combat discrimination and racism. This introduction outlines the background, establishment, and mandate of the committee. It is followed by a concise overview of the research that the committee has published over the past four years through progress reports. Finally, the specific focus of this report is explained, and the committee's vision for the future of an 'antidiscriminatory' government is presented.

1.1 Establishment and mandate of the committee

The State Committee against Discrimination and Racism was established in 2022 for a period of four years, at the request of the House of Representatives. Among the reasons for its establishment were the Black Lives Matter protests and the childcare benefits scandal. The committee's mandate is to conduct scientific research into discrimination and racism in the Netherlands.

Box 1. Article 1 of the Constitution

"All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or on any other grounds whatsoever, shall not be permitted."

It is stipulated in the decree of establishment that the committee conducts research into the state of discrimination and racism in Dutch society. The committee additionally focuses its research specifically on discrimination by and within the Dutch government. In doing so,

1. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2023). [*Aard, omvang en oorzaken van discriminatie en racisme in Nederland. Eerste inzichten en vervolg.*](#)
2. Walz, G. & Fiere, B. (2026). [*Discriminatiecijfers in 2025. Een rapport over registraties van discriminatie-incidenten door de politie, en meldingen bij antidiscriminatievoorzieningen en andere organisaties in Nederland.*](#) Art. 1.
3. The committee deliberately uses the term 'residents', referring to everyone present in the Netherlands, including citizens, asylum seekers, and tourists. This is because the prohibition of discrimination applies to 'all persons in the Netherlands'.
4. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2026). [*Veiligheidsmonitor 2025.*](#)

the committee has explicitly chosen to conduct research in both the European Netherlands and the Caribbean Netherlands. The Caribbean Netherlands refers to Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba. These islands are special municipalities of the Netherlands and therefore fall directly under the responsibility of the Dutch government. It is precisely for this reason that the committee pays particular attention to them.

The committee's mandate has two parts. First, on the basis of scientific research, the committee must map the nature, scale, and causes of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands. In doing so, it examines various sectors of Dutch society, looking in any case at the housing market, the labour market, education, and healthcare. Second, the committee must elaborate on two themes relating to government. The first theme is a broad review of (risks of) discrimination and ethnic profiling in working methods and organisational cultures across the entire government. The second theme is an exploration of whether, and under what conditions, government bodies may use ethnicity in combating fraud. This also includes a reflection on whether distinctions based on 'race'⁵ and nationality in risk profiles can still be used solely to protect or support people.

Discrimination is prohibited by law in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, discrimination remains a common and persistent problem in practice. Millions of residents experience that they themselves, or those close to them, are treated unequally or are excluded from full participation in society. Ultimately, everyone is affected by this, directly or indirectly.

5. The term 'race' originates from the colonial era, when humanity was thought to consist of different races. From a biological perspective this is incorrect: there is only one human race. To emphasise this, the committee places the term 'race' in quotation marks.

On the basis of its research, the committee advises the government on what is needed in policy, legislation, and practice to prevent and combat discrimination and racism, particularly within government. The complete decree of establishment of the committee, including its mandate, can be found in Annex 2. Annex 3 describes the context in which this mandate came about and the committee's working method.

Box 2. Definitions

Discrimination: making a distinction that is in some way offensive or that causes unjustified disadvantage, or that is such that the disadvantaged person is not regarded as an equal human being. This can involve not only explicitly protected grounds of discrimination or characteristics of identity, but also discrimination “on any ground whatsoever”. It can therefore also involve grounds that are not (yet) explicitly enshrined in the Constitution, such as education or age.⁶

Racism: a theory, idea, or belief in which people are divided into groups on the basis of supposed ‘races’. In this, one or more groups are regarded as superior and other groups as inferior. This distinction is made on the basis of characteristics historically associated with ‘race’. This often concerns physical characteristics, such as skin colour and hair type. However, it can also concern socio-cultural aspects, such as culture, religion, (national) origin, or migration background.⁷ Racism is not the same as discrimination on the grounds of ‘race’. Discrimination on the grounds of ‘race’ is a legal concept that provides protection against unjustified disadvantage, exclusion, or unequal treatment on the basis of characteristics such as skin colour, religion, or origin – summarised under the umbrella term ‘race’. The committee chooses to focus its work primarily on discrimination on the grounds of ‘race’ rather than on racism. In some places in this report, racism is given particular attention.

Institutional discrimination: the phenomenon whereby the processes, policies, or written and unwritten rules of organisations lead to structural discrimination based on a particular characteristic (of identity), for example ethnicity, gender, or sexuality. Institutional discrimination is embedded in the cultures and structures of organisations and institutions. It cannot be traced back to the prejudices or behaviour of a single individual. Institutional discrimination concerns patterns that are deeply embedded in society and that lead to unequal treatment on a large scale.⁸

Structural discrimination: the phenomenon whereby inequality between groups is caused and maintained because different societal domains interact with and thereby reinforce each other’s inequality. Examples of such domains include education, the labour market, the housing market, healthcare, and the judiciary. This concept looks at the societal system as a whole: not what goes wrong within a single organisation, but how the structure of society reproduces inequality. For example, growing up in a poor neighbourhood can lead to less access to good education, which in turn reduces opportunities in the labour market, which again limits opportunities in the housing market.

These patterns are rooted in historically grown power relations and are reflected in cultural norms, policy, and legislation. Structural discrimination can occur on any characteristic (of identity), such as

6. The committee derives this definition from: Parlementaire onderzoekscommissie effectiviteit antidiscriminatiewetgeving. (2022). [*Gelijk recht doen. Een parlementair onderzoek naar de mogelijkheden van de wetgever om discriminatie tegen te gaan.*](#)
7. This definition is largely based on the definition of institutional racism used by the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (College voor de Rechten van de Mens, CRM). See the CRM letter [*Advies definitie racisme*](#) of 25 May 2022 to the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The committee does, however, broaden the characteristic of ‘race’ to related characteristics (for example ethnicity).
8. This definition is also largely based on the CRM letter [*Advies definitie racisme*](#) of 25 May 2022. At the same time, the committee recognises that: 1) this can also occur on the basis of characteristics other than race; and 2) underlying theories, ideas, or beliefs about inferior and superior groups are not a precondition for the institutional character of this phenomenon.

ethnicity, gender, religion, or socio-economic background. Whereas institutional discrimination relates to processes and rules within organisations, structural discrimination refers to the wider societal system, in other words the interconnection between domains.⁹

Cumulative discrimination: the phenomenon whereby discrimination is not limited to a single moment or place, but accumulates in the experiences and life course of individuals and across generations. As a result, the consequences can become greater than would be expected on the basis of isolated incidents. Whereas structural discrimination looks at how the societal system produces inequality between groups, cumulative discrimination looks at what that inequality means in people's lives. Cumulative discrimination can occur in three ways. First, discrimination can accumulate within a single domain, for example in the labour market: from rejection in job applications to fewer opportunities for development and promotion, ultimately resulting in lower pension accrual. Second, discrimination in one domain can carry over into another domain: discrimination in education, for instance through lower school recommendations or fewer internship opportunities, can limit access to work and income, which in turn affects financial security and future prospects. Third, the effects can carry over from generation to generation: disadvantages in education, health, or wealth accumulation also limit the opportunities of children and grandchildren.¹⁰

Intersectionality: an approach that reveals that people cannot be reduced to a single specific identity or population group. A person, for example, does not only have a particular gender, but also belongs to a particular ethnic group, has a practical or theoretical education, and is poor or wealthy. These characteristics can moreover reinforce each other in how someone is treated. Intersectionality helps to understand that discrimination often operates on multiple grounds at once, and can therefore play out differently for people within the same group. Within a single ethnic or religious minority, for example, men and women may have different experiences of discrimination. The same applies to men with a practical education compared to men with a theoretical education.¹¹ Moreover, intersectionality can provide insight into how different forms of structural discrimination (for example based on ethnicity and gender) operate simultaneously and reinforce each other.¹²

9. Bonilla-Silva, E. (1997). [Rethinking racism. Toward a structural interpretation.](#) *American Sociological Review*, 62(3), 465-480.
- Bailey, Z. D. et al. (2017). [Structural racism and health inequities in the USA. Evidence and interventions.](#) *The Lancet*, 389(10077), 1453-1463.
10. Blank, R. M. (2005). [Tracing the economic impact of cumulative discrimination.](#) *The American Economic Review*, 95(2), 99-103.
11. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). [Keer op keer. Inzichten in gestapelde discriminatie-ervaringen in Nederland en Europa.](#)
12. Cho, S. et al. (2013). [Toward a field of intersectionality studies.](#) Theory, applications and praxis. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 38(4), 785-810.
13. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2023). [Aard, omvang en oorzaken van discriminatie en racisme in Nederland. Eerste inzichten en vervolg.](#)

14. The following reports were commissioned by the committee:
 Hoogenbosch, A. et al. (2023). [*Verkenning discriminatie en racisme op de woningmarkt*](#). Verwey-Jonker Instituut.
 Badou, M. et al. (2023). [*Verkenning discriminatie en racisme in de zorg*](#). Movisie.
 De Wit, N. et al. (2023). [*Verkenning discriminatie en racisme in sport en cultuur*](#). Verwey-Jonker Instituut.
15. Parlementaire onderzoekscommissie effectiviteit antidiscriminatiewetgeving. (2022). [*Gelijk recht doen. Een parlementair onderzoek naar de mogelijkheden van de wetgever om discriminatie tegen te gaan*](#).
16. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2023). [*Doorwerkingen van slavernijverleden. Meervoudige perspectieven op de relatie tussen verleden en heden*](#).
17. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). [*Keer op keer. Inzichten in gestapelde discriminatie-ervaringen in Nederland en Europa*](#).
18. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2026). [*Tussen Kamer, krant en sociale media. De wisselwerking tussen de Tweede Kamer, landelijke kranten en sociale media in de verspreiding van discriminerende uitingen*](#).
19. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). [*Gelijkheidsplicht. Publieke Sector \(GPS\). Naar wettelijke verankering van een proactieve aanpak van discriminatie door de overheid*](#).
20. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). [*Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht*](#).

1.2 Progress reports of the committee

Over the past four years, the committee has published several progress reports within thematic lines of work. These progress reports have helped to make the broad and extensive mandate that the committee received in its decree of establishment manageable. Together, these progress reports form a response to the committee's mandate.

The committee's lines of work relate to: 1) the state of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands; 2) legislation and regulation; 3) reviewing government for (risks of) discrimination; 4) profiling; and 5) the Caribbean Netherlands. The concise outcomes per line of work are described below. Annex 1 presents the outcomes of the lines of work schematically and explains them further. Annex 4 provides a summary of the recommendations from the various progress reports.

With regard to the state of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands, the committee has published several reports. The report on the nature, scale, and causes of discrimination and racism makes clear that discrimination occurs in all sectors of Dutch society.¹³ For this report, the committee commissioned research by the Verwey-Jonker Institute and Movisie into discrimination in the housing market, in healthcare, and in sport and culture.¹⁴ These studies build on the research report of the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on the Effectiveness of Anti-Discrimination Legislation, which addresses discrimination in the labour market, in education, in social security, and in policing.¹⁵ In the collection of essays on the legacy of the history of slavery, various authors show how our past influences discrimination and racism in the present.¹⁶ In addition, the report on intersectional and cumulative discrimination provides insight into how discrimination affects certain groups time and again.¹⁷ Finally, the committee shows the interplay between discriminatory expressions on social media, in the House of Representatives, and in newspapers.¹⁸

In its advice on legislation and regulation, the committee has focused on two different subjects. First, the committee conducted research into a better legal approach to (institutional) discrimination by government, in light of the childcare benefits scandal. To this end, the committee advocates the introduction of a statutory Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED): an obligation for government bodies always to take into account the importance of non-discrimination and equal treatment in carrying out their tasks.¹⁹ In addition, the committee has formulated a vision for the future of non-discrimination law. This stems from preliminary advisory reports commissioned by the committee and written by academics in collaboration with people from (legal) practice and people who themselves experience discrimination.²⁰

In fulfilling its task of reviewing (semi-)government organisations for discrimination and ethnic profiling, the committee has given substance to this through the development of the Discrimination Assessment. With this Discrimination Assessment, organisations can, in a few sessions and

under the guidance of a process facilitator, identify and address risks of discrimination in their work processes. The committee has developed several versions of the Discrimination Assessment. The Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes and the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services²¹ complement each other: while one provides insight into the risks of discrimination and racism in the development of policy, the other detects risks in implementation and service provision.

With regard to its mandate to advise on profiling, the committee finds that current data-driven profiling practices are in tension with three principles of just government action: the rule of law, democratic quality, and administrative capacity. The committee therefore advises stopping current and planned applications of profiling and instead investing in alternative methods, such as random checks.²²

The insights and recommendations from the lines of work described above apply to the whole of the Netherlands, including the Caribbean Netherlands. The committee has made the Caribbean Netherlands a particular point of attention throughout its work, because the specific historical, administrative, socio-economic, and geographical context of the islands requires targeted attention. This has translated into concrete activities. An exploratory study was conducted into how the Discrimination Assessment could be designed for the Caribbean Netherlands.²³ On this basis, a version of the Discrimination Assessment was developed that, in terms of language and examples, fits the Caribbean context. This version of the Discrimination Assessment is used in the Caribbean Netherlands. In addition, the committee made working visits to Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba to engage in dialogue with administrators and residents. Finally, the committee organised a knowledge session, in collaboration with the Dutch Research Council, on what is needed to structurally close the knowledge gap regarding the Caribbean Netherlands.

Together, these lines of work and activities form a response to the committee's mandate and the foundation on which this final report is built.

1.3 Focus of this report

Much is already known about the nature and causes of discrimination and racism. Research shows, for example, that discriminatory expressions and actions are not incidents, but recurring phenomena that affect people time and again. Moreover, discrimination and racism do not stand alone: they are embedded in convictions, in structures, and in institutions, and are therefore widespread throughout the fabric of society. In addition, discrimination and racism have historical roots, for example in the legacy of slavery. Throughout history, major steps have been taken towards equality. This progress has come about partly through the development of national, European, and international standards for equal treatment and non-discrimination, which have gradually become embedded in legislation, case law, and policy. At the same time, discrimination and racism remain deeply embedded in society, and their current forms are in many respects less visible.

21. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). *Discriminatie in dienstverlening. Ervaringen en lessen om discriminatie in publieke dienstverlening te voorkomen en bestrijden*.

22. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2026). *Principes voor profilering. Een kritisch perspectief op de toepassing van datagedreven profilering door de overheid*.

23. Pullen, E., Zwiers, M., & Dankers, V. (2024). *Caribisch Nederland in beeld. De toepassing van het doorlichtingsplan en -instrument van de Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme op Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba*. USBO Advies & Universiteit Utrecht.

24. Parlementaire onderzoekscommissie effectiviteit antidiscriminiewetgeving. (2022). [Gelijk recht doen. Een parlementair onderzoek naar de mogelijkheden van de wetgever om discriminatie tegen te gaan.](#)
25. Parlementaire onder-vragingscommissie Kinderopvangtoeslag. (2020). [Ongekend onrecht.](#)
26. Rijksoverheid. (2021, 15 January). [Kabinetsreactie op het rapport 'Ongekend onrecht.'](#)
27. Parlementaire enquêtecommissie Fraudebeleid en Dienstverlening. (2024). [Blind voor mens en recht.](#)
28. Parlementaire onder-vragingscommissie Kinderopvangtoeslag. (2020). [Ongekend onrecht.](#)
29. NOS Nieuws. (2023, 14 February). [Hof verbiedt etnisch profileren marechaussee bij controles.](#)
30. NOS Nieuws. (2024, 11 November). [Geld terug voor studenten na discrimineren: de fraudeopsporing.](#)
31. College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (2026, 5 March). [College oordeelt: vrouwelijke rechters ongelijk beloond door de Staat.](#)
32. Fermin, A. et al. (2022). [Institutioneel racisme bij de gemeente Utrecht? Een verkennende studie naar processen van uitsluiting op vier beleidsterreinen.](#) Bureau Omlo.
33. Omlo, J. et al. (2022). [Racisme bij het ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken. Een verkennend onderzoek.](#) Bureau Omlo.

Over the past ten years, moreover, there have been several parliamentary inquiries that not only outline problems but also offer solutions. For example, the research report *Gelijk recht doen* (Equal Justice) by the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on the Effectiveness of Anti-Discrimination Legislation (POC) describes clear steps that government must take to combat institutional discrimination.²⁴ In response to the report *Ongekend onrecht* (Unprecedented Injustice) by the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into the Childcare Benefits Scheme (POK),²⁵ the cabinet describes the steps that will be taken within government to prevent discrimination.²⁶ In the final report of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Fraud Policy and Service Provision, *Blind voor mens en recht* (Blind to People and the Law), the necessity is emphasised of testing the constitutionality of laws, of holding government accountable for discriminatory actions, and of government gaining more knowledge about data. The report also describes that, in implementation, much more attention and consideration is needed for the people involved, with all their diversity.²⁷

Nevertheless, the committee observes that (too) little is done with the insights from these inquiries. The committee therefore answers, in this final report, the question of **why government's approach to discrimination and racism is lagging behind and what government can do about it**. Moreover, it shares an action agenda for taking concrete steps to dismantle discrimination and racism.

1.4 Vision for the future: an antidiscriminatory government

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that discrimination and racism are a problem not only in society, but also within the Dutch government. The childcare benefits scandal,²⁸ ethnic profiling by the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee,²⁹ discriminatory algorithms used by the Education Executive Agency (DUO),³⁰ lower pay for female judges,³¹ and institutional racism at the Municipality of Utrecht³² and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs³³ are just a few recent, better-known examples of (indirect) discrimination by and within government.

With its work, the State Committee against Discrimination and Racism therefore has a clear goal in mind: a non-discriminatory government. A government that does not discriminate sounds like a very simple wish. At the same time, the committee sees time and again that government is still far removed from this.

The committee, moreover, strives not only for a non-discriminatory government, but also for an antidiscriminatory government. Government must do more than not discriminate. Government must actively work to prevent discrimination and promote equality. The committee aspires to a government that treats everyone as equals and that holds human dignity in high regard – also because, in doing so, government sets a good example for society: a society in which everyone can come into their own, develop themselves, and participate.

Government must actively work to prevent discrimination and promote equality.

This task is not new. It connects to a broader development in the international and European human rights framework, in which states are not only obliged to prohibit discrimination, but also to actively prevent it and promote equality. These positive obligations call for a government that does not wait and see, but takes responsibility for tackling structural inequality. Based on this vision for the future and this responsibility, the committee examines what improvements are needed in current legislation, current policy, and practice.

1.5 Reader's guide

To place the committee's research in historical and international context, chapter 2 of this report explains the long-standing struggle against discrimination. Discrimination and racism are, after all, historically ingrained phenomena. Throughout history, major steps have been taken towards equality, but at the same time many forms of discrimination and racism remain persistent, and much work remains to be done. Chapter 3 brings together the insights that the committee has shared over the past four years through progress reports. On the basis of these insights and other scientific research, the question is answered as to what hinders the further approach to discrimination and racism by government. Solutions follow from this. In chapter 4, the committee presents an action agenda for dismantling discrimination and racism. To provide more insight into the various forms of discrimination and racism and their impact on (groups of) people, the committee has conducted interviews with representatives of several advocacy organisations. These interviews are spread throughout the report and highlight the diversity of experiences of discrimination and the urgency of taking action to combat discrimination and racism. In a number of boxes, the committee explains more about its work.

Discrimination Assessment, Municipality of Arnhem

In 2024, the Municipality of Arnhem took part in the committee's pilot of the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services.³⁴ For the municipality, participation in the pilot was a unique opportunity to take the step, as an organisation, from awareness to action. As alderman Maurits van de Geijn explains: "In recent years, as a municipality we have already made considerable efforts – in the form of the Inclusive Arnhem city programme – to raise awareness of and combat discrimination and racism. This programme focuses on the city, but also on our own organisation. The opportunity offered by the

34. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). [*Discriminatie in dienstverlening. Ervaringen en lessen om discriminatie in publieke dienstverlening te voorkomen en bestrijden.*](#)

Discrimination Assessment to actually investigate specific service-delivery processes appealed to us, because it is a valuable addition to the range of measures we have already put in place.”

The Municipality of Arnhem used the Discrimination Assessment to scrutinise the way in which it conducts address investigations. This process has a major impact on the lives of people in the city. Address investigators come literally behind people's front doors. Moreover, address investigators have the authority to deregister people from the Personal Records Database, as a result of which those people also lose entitlement to numerous benefits and allowances.

With an enthusiastic team of researchers, managers, and address investigators, the Municipality of Arnhem got to work with the Discrimination Assessment. The entire address investigation process was critically examined: from statutory regulations and internal implementation policy through to practical execution. The team concluded that there were clear risks of discrimination, because it was not clear on the basis of which criteria reports were followed up. As a result, staff had a great deal of leeway to decide for themselves which reports were given priority and what follow-up step was appropriate. In practice, they fell back on routine and previous experience, for example with certain neighbourhoods, properties, or population groups. The Municipality of Arnhem concluded that it needed to do further work to remove the risks of discrimination identified. It did so by revising policy and work processes and by making case discussions and critical peer review part of the way of working. All of this with the aim of becoming a learning organisation, where there is room and safety to discuss complex considerations and possible unconscious bias.

For more information, see: www.discriminatietoets.nl.

2. A long-standing struggle against discrimination and racism

100 years ago, the Netherlands looked fundamentally different from today. Much has changed since then. Every generation fought for equal rights, and every generation made progress. That progress did not come about by itself, but was forced through by people who experienced discrimination themselves and organised. They often went against the resistance of the majority, of institutions, and of government. That struggle required courage, perseverance, and taking personal risks.

Progress did not come about by itself, but was forced through by people who experienced discrimination themselves. That struggle required courage, perseverance, and taking personal risks.

The societal struggle went hand in hand with a gradual development of equal treatment law. In the Netherlands, but also in a European and international context, standards emerged that explicitly protect equal treatment and oblige states to combat discrimination. This legal anchoring played an important role in enforcing and consolidating rights that had been won.

But this struggle is, above all, one of shifting forms: where some visible, explicit forms of discrimination have been or are being tackled, more subtle, more deeply ingrained forms persist. Sometimes these take on new forms that are difficult to recognise, such as a fraud algorithm that in practice disproportionately selects certain groups. It is precisely this less visible discrimination that constitutes one of the greatest challenges today. Below, the long-standing struggle against discrimination and racism and current developments are explained further.

2.1 Changes over the past 100 years

By placing the histories of different communities side by side, similar patterns become visible: discrimination has been criminalised over time, and equal treatment is protected by law, but residual forms of discrimination have proven persistent and new forms continue to emerge. Below, the committee highlights a number of examples from

different communities. These examples are intended to make the pattern visible; they do not constitute a complete overview of the changes over the past 100 years.

2.1.1 Emancipation in a broad sense

A little over 100 years ago, women in the Netherlands were not allowed to vote. Decades of activism and mobilisation led to important changes, resulting in an amendment to the Electoral Act in 1919 that gave women the right to vote. However, this did not apply to the whole of the Netherlands. In Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles, women only gained the right to vote in 1948.³⁵ In the European Netherlands too, men and women still did not have equal rights in many respects at that time. For example, married women in the Netherlands lacked legal capacity until 1956. Without their husband's permission, they could not, for instance, sign a contract or open a bank account.³⁶ Inequality in the labour market was also still legally permitted. It was not until 1980 that a law came into force prohibiting employers from making a distinction between men and women doing the same work, for example in pay.³⁷ Sexual violence was also not yet prohibited in all cases. It took until 1991, for example, before rape within marriage was made a criminal offence.³⁸

The struggle against discrimination is, above all, one of shifting forms: where some visible, explicit forms of discrimination are being tackled, more subtle and more deeply ingrained forms persist.

A little over 50 years ago, it was a criminal offence for an adult to have sexual relations with someone of the same sex who was younger than 21. A 21-year-old woman who had a sexual relationship with a 20-year-old woman was therefore committing an offence. This criminalisation had major consequences for personal lives. The vice squad kept files on people suspected of being homosexual; thousands of people were sent to prison.³⁹ Eventually, in 1971, the minimum age was equalised with that for heterosexual couples, namely 16.⁴⁰ But even after that, homosexual and heterosexual couples still did not have equal rights. Until the start of the 21st century, same-sex couples could only enter into a registered partnership, not marry. In 2001, the Netherlands became the first country in the world to open civil marriage to couples of the same sex.⁴¹ It is only more recently that growing attention has been paid to the rights of intersex and transgender people. In 2018, for the first time,

35. Atria. (2019, 1 januari). [Vrouwenkiesrecht in Nederland](#).

36. Heppener, L. (2024, 10 april). [Geen vrouwenarchief zonder mannelijke toestemming](#). Atria.

37. Overheid.nl. (2026, 1 januari). [Wet gelijke behandeling van mannen en vrouwen](#).

38. Estrada Londoño, J. (2023, 6 maart). [Nederlands feminisme en de strijd tegen geweld](#). Atria.

39. Galesloot, H. (2012). ['Bewaar mij voor de waanzin van het recht'. 100 jaar strafrecht en homoseksualiteit in Nederland](#). IHLIA.

40. Swiebel, J. (2019). [Het einde van artikel 248bis. Kantelpunt in de relatie tussen de homobeweging en de overheid](#). *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies*, 22(3), 231-248.

41. Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal. (2001). [Wet openstelling huwelijk](#). [wetsvoorstel].

42. NOS Nieuws. (2018, 19 oktober). [Geen M of V, maar X: voor het eerst paspoort veranderd in genderneutraal.](#)
43. Overheid.nl. (2023). [Wet vereenvoudiging non-binaire geslachtsvermelding](#) [consultatie].
44. Van Trigt, P.W. (2020, 2 juni). [1916 Staatscommissie. Onderzoek tot verbetering van het lot van blinden en halfblinden.](#) Canon Sociaal Werk.
45. College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (z.d). [Mensen met een beperking. VN-verdrag handicap.](#)
46. Landman, I. (2020, 3 juli). [1863 of 1873? Wanneer werd de slavernij nou \(echt\) afgeschaft?](#) NOS Nieuws.
47. Rijksoverheid. (2022, 19 december). [Excuses regering voor slavernijverleden Nederland.](#)
48. Lauret, L. B., & Fatah-Black, K. J. (2025). [Citizenship categories and their legacies in the Dutch post-colonial politics.](#) In S. de Lange et al. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Dutch Politics*. Oxford University Press.
49. Fatah-Black, K. J., & Lauret, L. (2024). (Post) koloniaal burgerschap en interdisciplinariteit. In K. J. Fatah-Black, & L. Lauret (Eds.), *Koloniaal burgerschap. Geschiedenis en erfenis* (pp. 9-24). Boom.
50. Heijls, E. J. M. (1995). [Van vreemdeling tot Nederlander. De verlening van het Nederlanderschap aan vreemdelingen \(1813-1992\).](#) Radboud Universiteit.
51. Lauret, L. B., & Fatah, K. J. (2025). [Citizenship categories and their legacies in the Dutch post-colonial politics.](#) In S. de Lange et al. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Dutch Politics*. Oxford University Press.

a person's sex in their passport was changed to gender-neutral ('X') following a court ruling on the matter.⁴² Non-binary people, however, still have no statutory means of changing their gender registration to X. A bill that would make this possible went out for consultation in 2023, but the process has been delayed.⁴³

Compulsory education was introduced in 1901. From that point on, children between the ages of six and twelve were required to attend school. However, this did not apply to children with a visual or hearing impairment. It was not until 1947 that compulsory education also applied to them.⁴⁴ Many other barriers for people with disabilities remained at that time. In 2006, the United Nations adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This convention enshrines in law that people with disabilities must be able to participate in society on an equal footing. However, it took until 2016 before the Dutch government accepted the convention, and to this day it does not apply to the Caribbean Netherlands.⁴⁵ The interview with Ieder(in), the umbrella organisation for people with disabilities or chronic illness, shows the obstacles that people with disabilities still encounter in daily life (interview 1).

2.1.2 Racial hierarchy in legislation

The abolition of slavery in the Kingdom of the Netherlands took place a little over 150 years ago.⁴⁶ It took until 2022 before the government issued an apology, on behalf of the state, for the Dutch history of slavery, to all enslaved people worldwide who suffered under the actions of the Dutch state and to all their descendants.⁴⁷ 100 years ago, however, the Kingdom of the Netherlands still had various overseas colonies. In these colonies, a racial hierarchy was incorporated in legislation, determining which residents were and were not full Dutch citizens. So-called 'natives' (inlanders) in the Dutch East Indies, for example, held second-class Dutch nationality. They were called 'Dutch subjects, non-Dutch nationals'.⁴⁸ This meant, for example, that they could not hold political office.⁴⁹ At the independence of Indonesia in 1949⁵⁰ and the independence of Suriname in 1975,⁵¹ the government restricted as far as possible who could obtain Dutch nationality.

In the European Netherlands too, a racial hierarchy was incorporated in laws and regulations during the Second World War. From early 1941, for example, an increasing number of professions, means of transport, and places were prohibited for Jews.⁵² Furthermore, the Dutch government cooperated in the identification and deportation of Jewish citizens during the German occupation (1940-1945). People resisted, and people helped Jews go into hiding, but at the same time parts of the government participated in the persecution process through public administration, the police, and transportation.⁵³ In the end, more than 100,000 Jewish people were deported from the Netherlands and murdered – roughly three-quarters of the Jewish population in the Netherlands. In 2020, then Prime Minister Rutte apologised on behalf of the government for the actions of the authorities during the occupation.⁵⁴

2.1.3 Cultural shift

The long-standing struggle against discrimination and racism has led to legal equality in many cases, for different groups in society. In addition, a cultural shift has taken place, making many forms of discrimination and racism less acceptable. The process of such a cultural shift can be aptly illustrated by the debate surrounding the figure of Zwarte Piet (Black Pete). What most Dutch people had regarded for decades as an innocent tradition became, from 2013 onwards, a subject of debate. The public debate on the figure of Zwarte Piet led to a slow but steady shift in collective opinion.⁵⁵ The figure was increasingly recognised as a cultural practice with racist roots. More and more adjustments were made at festive processions, in shops, and on television. In 2025, the campaign group Kick Out Zwarte Piet disbanded itself. The organisation says it achieved its goals: Zwarte Piet has been 'de-normalised'.⁵⁶ This is a good example of the indispensable role that citizen collectives play in emancipation processes. These forces are, and remain, sorely needed.

The fierce reactions to the protest against the figure of Zwarte Piet, including explicit racist violence against demonstrators, show on the one hand how deeply such patterns can be ingrained, even in a society that regards itself as tolerant.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the gradual shift in public opinion and practice shows that change is possible once exclusion that has been rendered invisible is made visible.

Citizen collectives play an indispensable role in the cultural shift needed for emancipation processes. These forces are, and remain, sorely needed.

52. Anne Frank Stichting. (z.d.). [Verboden voor Joden](#).

53. Kemperman, J. (2025, 21 mei). [NIOD-onderzoek naar de gemeente Amsterdam tijdens WOII](#). NIOD.

54. NOS Nieuws. (2020, 26 januari). [Excuses Rutte: overheid schoot tekort tijdens de Holocaust](#).

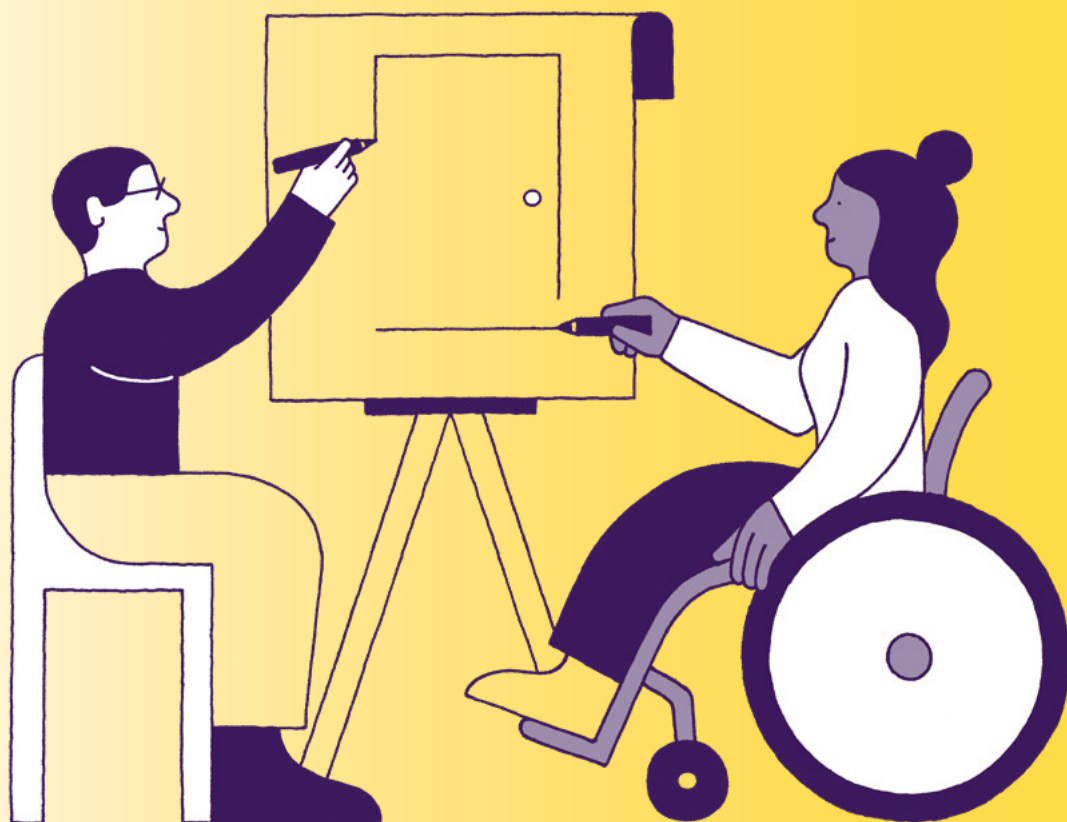
55. Kennisplatform Inclusief Samenleven. (2018, 15 november). [De langzame maar gestage metamorfose van Zwarte Piet](#).

56. Nieuwsuur. (2025, 15 november). [Actiegroep Kick Out Zwarte Piet stopt: 'Nederland moet stokje overnemen'](#).

57. Schols, H., & Maussen, M. (2025). [Changing conceptions of racism in the Netherlands. From interpersonal bias to racism as institutional](#). *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1–9.

Interview 1

'Many facilities are not accessible for people with disabilities'



Interview with Thijs Hardick and Xan Koster,
policy officers at Ieder(in), the umbrella organisation
for people with disabilities or chronic illness

“The group of Dutch people with disabilities is large and diverse. People with a visual impairment experience different problems than people in a wheelchair. But in general, our constituency experiences obstacles in all areas of life, throughout their lives. Think of the housing market, where there is a major shortage of homes for wheelchair users or people with autism. Or inaccessible public transport, which means people cannot get to work or to see friends. You may be able to drive yourself and want to park with a disability parking permit, but then the rules are different in every municipality. These are all things that people without a disability barely notice, but that make life difficult for many Dutch people.

Our target group rarely uses the word ‘discrimination’, but that is often the case regardless. Under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in force in the Netherlands since 2016), the accessibility of public facilities is a human right. And in the Netherlands, we often cannot offer that. Many websites, for example, are not accessible. Or a completely different problem: public toilets and wheelchair-accessible toilets are scarce. Our education system is also unequal. Young people with disabilities quickly end up in special education, but that offers few career prospects. That usually means you cannot participate in society on an equal footing.

Sometimes the inequality lies in seemingly small things. Until recently, the 112 emergency number could only be reached by phone, meaning that deaf and hard-of-hearing people, for example, could not use it. Fortunately, 112 can now also be reached via text message, the 112 app, and Teletolk (a sign-language relay service).

People with disabilities often do not get the help they need. Many municipalities, for example, assume that people with little energy who nevertheless work should be able to manage their own household. But sometimes it is precisely that help that makes it possible for them to work. And if you get help to get out of bed, but that help only arrives late in the morning, then you cannot be at work early. Partly because of this kind of obstacle, people with disabilities are structurally poorer. A large part of the labour market is still inaccessible, and benefits are low.

Women with disabilities in particular have a hard time. Partly due to employers’ prejudices and additional caregiving tasks at home, they have more difficulty finding work than men with disabilities. As a result, they are often dependent on others and extra vulnerable to sexual violence or abuse. And in the Caribbean Netherlands, people with disabilities have it hard. There are hardly any facilities there. There are, for example, no pavements, meaning that people in wheelchairs have to use the road. But there, they are often removed from it by the police.”

58. De Cuba, S. et al. (2025). [Nationaal onderzoek moslimdiscriminatie](#), Regioplan.

59. Feddes, A. R. et al. (2024). [Onderzoek naar ervaren discriminatie en racisme bij mensen met een \(Zuid-\) Oost-Aziatische herkomst in Nederland](#), Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid.

60. Terlouw, A. B. (2022). [Klassisme. Discriminatie op grond van sociale status. Toevoeging van de gronden sociale afkomst en/of sociaal-economische status aan de Nederlandse anti-discriminatiewetgeving?](#) *Nederlands Tijdschrift voor de Mensenrechten*, 47(4), 403–422.

61. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2025, 29 april). [Loonverschil tussen mannen en vrouwen steeds kleiner](#).

62. Atria. (2025, 24 november). [De loonkloof](#).

63. College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (2026). [Oordelen 2026-35; 2026-36; 2026-37; 2026-38](#).

64. College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (2022, 7 april). [College geeft advies over wetsvoorstel aanpassing pensioenstelsel](#). See also: Senden, L. A. J., & Visser, M. C. B. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, [Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht](#).

65. Van Kesteren, J. et al. (2026). [In verwachting van gelijke behandeling. Inzicht in vermoedelijke en herkende discriminatie wegens zwangerschap en pril moederschap](#), SEO.

66. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2024). [Prevalentie monitor huiselijk geweld en seksueel grensoverschrijdend gedrag 2024](#).

67. Panteia, Movisie & Ipsos I&O. (2024). [Lgbtq+-monitor 2024](#).

2.2 Discrimination and racism remain persistent

Much progress has thus been made over the past 100 years, but persistent and deeply ingrained forms of discrimination and racism continue to exist. There is a wealth of research showing that people today are still discriminated against on an almost inexhaustible list of grounds, such as religion,⁵⁸ origin,⁵⁹ or socio-economic status.⁶⁰

Women, for example, experience discrimination in various respects. Women still earn less on average than men for comparable work.⁶¹ The pay gap in the Netherlands is on average 10.5 percent per hour.⁶² Although the pay gap is narrowing, at the current pace it will still take decades before men and women are paid equally. The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (College voor de Rechten van de Mens; hereinafter: the College) recently ruled, in a number of complaint cases, that the State discriminated against female judges by paying them less than their male colleagues.⁶³ Women also still build up a much lower pension than men: the gender pension gap is 40 percent. According to the College, the new Pensions Act leads to indirect discrimination against women, meaning they must be compensated.⁶⁴ In addition, almost 50 percent of women who worked or were seeking work during their pregnancy experience pregnancy discrimination.⁶⁵ Moreover, women experience disproportionately high levels of sexual harassment. Compared with men, women are more than twice as likely to be victims.⁶⁶

LGBTQIA+ people also experience more violence and exclusion in all kinds of areas of society, such as at school, in healthcare, and in the workplace.⁶⁷ They are increasingly confronted with discriminatory expressions, online and offline.⁶⁸ Protection against this, however, differs by group. The legal provisions that criminalise group insult do not include sex as a ground for discrimination. Discriminatory insults concerning transgender people, intersex people, and cisgender women therefore cannot be prosecuted on the basis of these provisions. The bill⁶⁹ intended to make this possible went out for consultation in 2020, but the legislative process has been delayed.⁷⁰ In addition, the emancipation gains of one group are sometimes used to exclude another group. Gay emancipation, for example, is sometimes used as a yardstick for national identity: those who do not accept homosexuality, the argument goes, do not fit in with 'the Netherlands'. In such cases, migrants and Muslims are often cited as examples, while homophobic expressions in other contexts receive less attention.⁷¹ The protection of gay rights is then not only a goal in itself, but also a way of portraying certain groups as not fitting into Dutch society. In this way, different forms of discrimination are linked to one another in a way that can reinforce exclusion, thereby perpetuating inequality.

In addition, despite the introduction of the UN Disability Convention, public space, public transport, and the labour market are far from accessible to everyone.⁷² In public transport, for example, bus stops are often inaccessible and lifts regularly out of order.⁷³ In the Caribbean Netherlands, moreover, the UN Disability Convention still does not apply at all.⁷⁴

2.2.1 Discrimination is institutionally ingrained

The examples given make clear that discrimination is not only found in laws that perpetuate inequality. Discrimination is a structural and institutional phenomenon. Even when laws change, historical legacies remain through which unequal power relations can persist. Moreover, culture, processes, policy, and written and unwritten rules can also lead to structural inequality. Discrimination, therefore, does not only concern individuals who discriminate; it is also about institutional and structural patterns: deeply ingrained images and ways of working that lead, on a large scale, to unequal treatment. Crucially, this need not happen consciously or intentionally. This is precisely why, in the case of institutional discrimination, the outcome is decisive. When a procedure, protocol, rule, or way of working structurally results in certain groups being adversely affected, institutional discrimination is present, regardless of intent.

Discrimination is also about patterns: deeply ingrained images and ways of working that lead to unequal treatment.

Institutional racism, moreover, cannot be seen separately from the Dutch history of slavery and colonialism. Although a direct causal link is difficult to research, various studies show that there are indeed connections and patterns between this past and present-day forms of inequality and discrimination. Racially hierarchical ideas, which in the past were explicitly incorporated in legislation and societal structures, continue to have an effect on present-day perceptions, knowledge production, and institutional practices. For example, stereotyping and one-sided historical perspectives are visible in teaching materials in education, there is under-representation of Afro-Dutch people in academia, and there are inequalities in healthcare based on the white male 'standard patient'. Cultural and racial prejudices also hinder equal opportunities for people of African, Latin American, and Southwest Asian descent in the labour market and the housing market.⁷⁵ These continuing effects make clear that institutional racism is not merely a present-day phenomenon, but is rooted in historical power relations that continue to reproduce themselves in adapted forms.⁷⁶

Patterns of institutional discrimination and institutional racism manifest themselves at several levels simultaneously and reinforce one another. Three levels can be distinguished here: the individual level, the organisational level, and the societal level.

Individual level: first of all, our quick judgements and learned stereotypes determine how people are approached. Think of doctors who take the

68. Walz, G., & Fiere, B. (2026). [Discriminatiecijfers in 2025. Een rapport over registraties van discriminatie-incidenten door de politie, en meldingen bij antidiscriminatievoorzieningen en andere organisaties in Nederland](#). Art. 1.
69. Kamerstukken II, [36510, nr. 2](#). (2024, 7 maart).
70. Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal. (2024). [Wijziging van de Awgb en het WvSr](#).
71. Bracke, S. (2012). From 'saving women' to 'saving gays': Rescue narratives and their dis/continuities. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 19(2), 237-252.
Mepschen, P. et al. (2010). [Sexual politics, orientalism and multicultural citizenship in the Netherlands](#). *Sociology*, 44(5), 962-979.
72. College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (z.d.) [Mensen met een beperking. VN-verdrag handicap](#).
73. College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (2023). [Reizen in het dagelijks leven: toegang tot vervoer en mobiliteit. Jaarlijkse rapportage over de naleving van het VN-verdrag handicap in Nederland 2023](#).
74. College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (2025, 14 april). [Het VN-verdrag handicap in Caribisch Nederland](#).
75. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2023). [Doorwerkingen van slavernijverleden. Meer-voudige perspectieven op de relatie tussen heden en verleden](#).
76. See also: Van Douwen, N., Koulen, S.-J., & Sylvester, J. (2025, 27 juni). [Hoe het slavernijverleden kan doorwerken in hedendaagse ervaringen met discriminatie en racisme](#). Sociaal Bestek.

77. Zemouri, C. et al. (2024). [Exploring discrimination and racism in healthcare. A qualitative phenomenology study of Dutch persons with migration backgrounds](#). *BMJ Open*, 14(6), e082481.
78. Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs. (2025). [Verskil in schooladviezen tussen jongens en meiden. Meiden op achterstand](#).
79. Jong, P. W. et al. (2025). [Van verdenking tot vrijheidsstraf. Een statistisch onderzoek naar de invloed van migratieachtergrond op uitkomsten in de Nederlandse strafrechtketen](#). Weten-schappelijk Onderzoek- en Datacentrum.
80. Harrits, G. S. (2019). [Stereotypes in context: How and when do street-level bureaucrats use class stereotypes?](#) *Public Administration Review*, 79(1), 93-103.
- Jilke, S., & Tummers, L. (2018). [Which clients are deserving of help? A theoretical model and experimental test](#). *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 28(2), 226-238.
81. Van Atteveldt, W. et al. (2024). [Tussen ambitie en uitvoering. Een contextanalyse van de dynamiek tussen media, politiek en beleid bij de totstandkoming en uitvoering van dertig jaar sociale zekerheid](#). Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- Blijleven, W. et al. (2023). [Mensbeelden achter beleid](#). Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
82. Europees Parlement. (2025). [Measures needed to counter the sharp decline in democracy and human rights worldwide](#). Amnesty International.
- (2025). [The state of the world's human rights](#). Amnesty International Annual Report 2025.

complaints of patients with a migration background less seriously,⁷⁷ teachers who give girls a lower school recommendation than boys despite comparable test scores,⁷⁸ or judges who impose higher sentences on suspects with a migration background than on suspects without one.⁷⁹ In such situations, stereotypes help shape assessments of who 'deserves help' and who needs to be checked for fraud, for example on the basis of origin, gender, socio-economic position, or disability.⁸⁰

Organisational level: secondly, inequalities are recorded and reproduced through procedures, rules, and the prevailing organisational culture.

This goes beyond the sum of individual prejudices: it is the design of the organisation itself that can systematically disadvantage certain groups, even when individual staff members try to act objectively. One example of this is the use of profiling in fraud prevention, where data on postcode or dual nationality have in the past been used as predictors. In the labour market too, this manifests itself in structural barriers, for example when procedures routinely require 'flawless command of the Dutch language' for positions where this is not actually necessary. Through this kind of ingrained process, inequality reproduces itself at the organisational level, without any conscious human judgement being needed at all.

Societal level: thirdly, dominant norms and images legitimise which groups 'belong' and which do not. Those images feed into how organisations design their policy, oversight, and service provision, and in doing so often form the breeding ground for the ingrained procedures that reproduce inequality at the organisational level. A concrete example is the societal debate about the so-called 'Bulgarian fraud' affair in 2013, in which fraud was quickly linked to Bulgarians and other Eastern European groups. What followed was not only a sharpened political debate, but also serious repercussions for people with an Eastern European background. They were checked more often, distrusted more often at government counters, and felt that they were regarded as suspect from the outset. Such images can become normalised and subsequently feed into the organisational level, for example in the harshness of fraud enforcement and checks.⁸¹ In this way, a societal image of certain people can form the basis for organisational practices that disproportionately affect those groups.

Discrimination should therefore not be seen merely as an individual incident, but as a structural risk that is by default present in the way our society and institutions are organised. Only once discrimination is recognised as such a 'standard risk' can institutions be designed in a way that actively reduces this risk.

2.2.2 There is not only progress, there is also backlash

Although much has improved over the past 100 years in the area of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands, progress has not been one-directional. Worldwide, there is even talk of a so-called *backlash*, in which equal rights come under pressure and antidiscrimination initiatives are being dismantled.⁸² Gains, moreover, can be rolled back not only socially but also legally. Recent international developments make this clear. The

right to abortion in the United States, for example, has been restricted in recent years.⁸³ Turkey withdrew in 2021 from an international convention on combating violence against women and domestic violence.⁸⁴ In the United Kingdom, the Supreme Court ruled in 2025 that the term ‘woman’ refers only to people born with female reproductive organs. This ruling excludes transgender women from the legal definition of ‘woman’.⁸⁵

Worldwide, there is a backlash: equal rights are coming under pressure and anti-discrimination initiatives are being dismantled.

In the Netherlands too, discrimination and inequality are increasing in some respects. Hate speech in the Netherlands, for example, is becoming more frequent. Think, for example, of antisemitic rhetoric and calls for violence against transgender people.⁸⁶ In 2025, transgender people reported discrimination 51 percent more often than the year before.⁸⁷ The coronavirus pandemic, moreover, led to an increase in discrimination against people of (South)East Asian descent.⁸⁸ Since the pandemic, they have more often experienced racist behaviour and a reinforcement of existing stereotypes. Research also shows that discrimination against Muslims has become increasingly normalised.⁸⁹ The interview with the Contact Body for Muslims and Government, a participant in the Consultative Body of Jews, Christians and Muslims, illustrates this (interview 2).

In addition, societal and technological developments, such as the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), create new forms of discrimination and racism. Think, for example, of algorithmic profiling that reproduces existing prejudices about certain groups, digital services that exclude certain groups,⁹⁰ and online platforms where selection takes place on the basis of name, appearance, or postcode. It is therefore essential not to view the long-standing struggle against discrimination and racism as a story of progress alone.

83. NOS Nieuws. (2022, 24 juni). [Amerikaans Hooggerechts-hof schrapt landelijk recht op abortus.](#)

84. NOS Nieuws. (2021, 20 maart). [Turkije stapt uit Istanbul-verdrag, dat geweld tegen vrouwen bestrijdt.](#)

85. NOS Nieuws. (2025, 19 april). [Protest in Londen tegen uitspraak hof over trans vrouwen in VK.](#)

86. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. (2026). [ECRI – Country monitoring in the Netherlands.](#)

87. Transgender Netwerk. (2026). [Discriminatie tegen transgender mensen opnieuw enorm gestegen.](#)

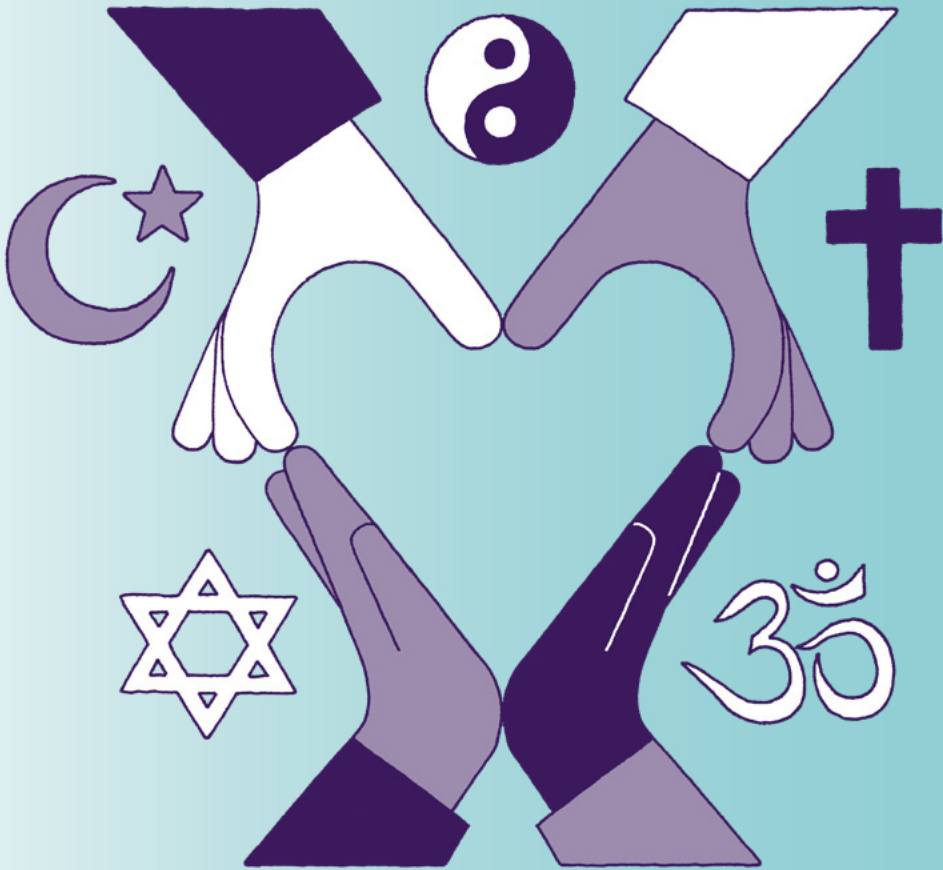
88. Feddes, A. R. et al. (2024). [Onderzoek naar ervaren discriminatie en racisme bij mensen met een \(Zuid-\) Oost-Aziatische herkomst in Nederland.](#) Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid.

89. De Cuba, S. et al. (2025). [Nationaal onderzoek moslimdiscriminatie.](#) Regioplan.

90. Kuipers, G. et al. (2026). [Toegankelijk. Toch? Over het wat en hoe van essentiële \(gedigitaliseerde\) dienstverlening.](#) Nederlandse School voor Openbaar Bestuur.

Interview 2

‘Muslims regularly find themselves under a magnifying glass at government bodies’



Interview with Muhsin Köktaş,
chair of the daily board of the Contact Body for Muslims
and Government (CMO) and participant in the Consultative
Body of Jews, Christians and Muslims (OJCM)

“The Netherlands is no longer as tolerant as it used to be. I speak to many Muslims who feel they no longer fully belong here. That is partly due to online hate messages or remarks on the street, but also because they are regularly placed under a magnifying glass by government bodies. The government often sees Muslims as a potential danger and keeps a close watch on Islamic organisations. Mosques, for example, constantly have to account for their donations, because there is fear of links to Gaza or terrorist organisations. But how can you know exactly where that money comes from? Donations are often anonymous. Islamic organisations also run into barriers at banks: when opening a bank account, they are asked many questions about money laundering. Christians from Muslim countries, such as Syria, also suffer from this. They have Islamic-sounding names and therefore have to provide extra accountability.

Within the Consultative Body of Jews, Christians and Muslims, we discuss how our respective constituencies experience discrimination and how we can solve that together. Think, for example, of the lack of prayer spaces at educational institutions. Jews and Muslims in particular increasingly experience discrimination in the Netherlands. The war in Gaza has increased mistrust towards both groups. Inflammatory statements by members of the House of Representatives do not help. They have an enormous influence on our constituency, especially on young people who were born and raised here. They see themselves as part of the Netherlands, but are regularly pushed into a corner by politics. I hear from my Jewish colleagues that many pupils and students at their schools do not dare to say that they are Jewish. They are afraid of being associated with Israel and as a result do not feel safe.

Discrimination by government bodies unfortunately still occurs regularly. The wrongdoings at DUO (the Education Executive Agency) and the Tax Administration disproportionately affected Muslims. There is also still a lot of discrimination in the labour market, for example on the basis of names or photos. I also regularly hear stories of Muslims being harassed on the street. Muslim women in particular suffer from this. Some no longer dare to go out alone. I hope it will get better in the coming years, but at the moment things are not going in the right direction. We need to talk to each other more and get to know each other better. Because despite our differences, together we form one society.”

2.3 The structural disadvantage of the Caribbean Netherlands

The institutional character of discrimination comes sharply into focus in the relationship between the European Netherlands and the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. The inequalities that exist in the Caribbean Netherlands are not incidents, but the result of legislation, administrative relationships, and policy. They have grown historically and prove difficult to address in practice; despite years of being flagged and criticised, progress in reducing them remains limited.

In 1986, Aruba became a separate country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands; in 2010, Curaçao and Sint Maarten followed. Although the residents of these countries are Dutch nationals, most of them are not allowed to vote for the House of Representatives and also have no influence on the composition of the Senate. As a result, they have only limited influence over decisions made by the Dutch parliament that do affect the Kingdom as a whole.⁹¹ This points to an unequal power relationship between the different countries within the Kingdom.

The inequalities that exist in the Caribbean Netherlands are not incidents. They have grown historically and prove difficult to address.

91. Raad van State. (2024). [*70 jaar Statuut voor het Koninkrijk. Samenwerking op basis van wederzijds begrip.*](#)

92. Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, also referred to as the Istanbul Convention.

93. Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport. (2026, 3 februari). [*Voortgang ratificatie VN-Verdrag Handicap en Verdrag van Istanbul Caribisch Nederland*](#) [Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives].

94. College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (2025). [*Vijftien jaar na 10-10-10. De belofte van gelijkheid en de grenzen van het 'comply or explain'-principe.*](#) Nationaal Coördinator tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2026). [*Gelijkwaardigheid als grondwettelijke opdracht. Ongelijkheid tussen Europees en Caribisch Nederland doorbroken.*](#)

When the Netherlands Antilles was dissolved in 2010, Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba became special municipalities of the Netherlands. Since then, they have formed a full part of the country. But full equality has not thereby been achieved. The context of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba calls for a tailored approach, and central government is taking important steps in this regard. Yet residents of the Caribbean Netherlands have been waiting ten years or longer for protection against domestic violence that has long been a matter of course for other Dutch people. Human rights treaties that apply in the European Netherlands, such as the Istanbul Convention⁹² and the UN Disability Convention, do not yet apply to the Caribbean Netherlands. Ratification of the UN Disability Convention is expected at the earliest in 2031. For the Istanbul Convention, no date is yet in sight.⁹³ Social security provisions that have long existed in the European Netherlands are also lacking on the islands, such as adequate rent allowance, unemployment benefit, the child budget, debt assistance, and various provisions for people with a chronic illness.⁹⁴ This, combined with the high cost of living on the islands, means that relatively more residents of the Caribbean Netherlands live in poverty than in the European Netherlands. The Social Minimum Committee for the Caribbean Netherlands describes the stark poverty and lack of financial security on the islands in its 2023 advisory report. Whereas in the European

Netherlands it is estimated that 1 in 17 people live in poverty, the estimate for the Caribbean Netherlands is that this affects 1 in 3 people.⁹⁵

The Council for the Environment and Infrastructure concluded in 2025 that there are potentially undesirable differences in policy effort between the European and Caribbean Netherlands, including in the areas of infrastructure, climate change, and health.⁹⁶ In January 2026, the District Court of The Hague ruled that the Dutch government must do more to protect residents of Bonaire against climate change. The absence of concrete measures violates their human rights and treats them unequally compared with residents of the European Netherlands.⁹⁷ The Education Council, moreover, concluded that the Dutch education system is insufficiently attuned to the situation of Bonaire, Saba, and Sint Eustatius, meaning that the right to good education is insufficiently guaranteed.⁹⁸ Owing to the small scale and great distance from the European Netherlands, the supporting infrastructure that is taken for granted in the European Netherlands is lacking, meaning that schools cannot always provide pupils with the support they need.

Part of the problem is that legislation, instruments, and policy measures are developed in The Hague from a European-Dutch perspective and subsequently applied to the Caribbean islands unchanged, or not applied at all. This is despite the fact that the islands' specific historical, cultural, and administrative context and geographical location call for a tailored approach and dedicated effort to bring living conditions up to a level equal to that in the European Netherlands. As described above, there are various reports and studies that flag the unequal treatment of the Caribbean Netherlands. Yet structural change has so far failed to materialise. These inequalities are illustrated in the interview with Bonaire's Innovation and Technology Lab about the experiences of young people on Bonaire (interview 3).

Even where inequalities are visible, documented, and widely recognised, structural change fails to materialise when political will, administrative coordination, and institutional capacity are lacking.

The situation in the Caribbean Netherlands shows, par excellence, what generally holds true for tackling discrimination and racism in the Netherlands. Even where inequalities are visible, documented, and widely recognised, structural change fails to materialise when political will, administrative coordination, and institutional capacity are lacking.

95. Commissie sociaal minimum Caribisch Nederland. (2023). *Een waardig bestaan. Een sociaal minimum dat voorziet in toenemend perspectief op zelfredzaamheid.*

96. Raad voor de Leefomgeving en Infrastructuur. (2025). *Samen naar beter: aanbevelingen voor het rijksbeleid voor het fysieke domein in Caribisch Nederland.*

97. Rechtbank Den Haag (2026, 28 januari). [ECLI:NL:RBDHA:2026:1344](https://eclis.nl:8443/uitspraken/2026/1344).

98. Onderwijsraad. (2026). *Onderwijs in Caribisch Nederland.*

Interview 3

'Young people on Bonaire feel they don't count'



Interview with Tirzah Richards,
board member of Bonaire's Innovation
& Technology Lab (BIT-Lab)

“Bonaire has been a Dutch municipality since 2010. We have Dutch street signs, supermarkets, and rules. But the environment here is naturally completely different. And that creates friction sometimes. A good example are the strict Dutch rules we have for healthcare professionals. Care providers have to meet Dutch requirements, such as the BIG register (the Dutch register for healthcare professionals). Healthcare training programmes in the region do not provide those qualifications, even though there are excellent courses available in Latin America. The result is that many local young people have to go to the European Netherlands to study. And we bring in many care providers from the European Netherlands to fill vacancies, while they don't speak Papiamentu, the mother tongue of many patients.

Language is an issue in any case. Dutch is taught at school, but everyone otherwise speaks Papiamentu. Yet all government positions are conducted in Dutch. Local residents are more or less forced to speak Dutch and are judged on that at work.

There is still a tendency to bring in European Dutch people for many administrative positions. In 2010, everything had to be overhauled: the tax system, laws, and infrastructure. Many people came in temporarily from the European Netherlands for this. That tendency to bring in experts from outside Bonaire has persisted. There is still often a sense that everything from abroad is better. I see that in training sessions and workshops too. There are plenty of people from the Caribbean Netherlands who could do that work, but they struggle to find employment. Local young people in particular feel that they don't count.

There is also often a lack of cultural sensitivity. A few years ago, for example, there was a subsidy application for foster families in youth care, which stated that they had to provide a room with heating. We don't have that here on Bonaire at all. It also said a child should have their own room, while most children here share a room with brothers or sisters. A subsidy like that misses the mark for island residents, because in The Hague there seems to be little attention for Bonaire. It sometimes feels as though we are not entirely equal to other Dutch municipalities. You see that reflected, for example, in the effects of climate change. Bonaire suffers a great deal from this, but the Dutch government has barely invested in it. Our municipal budgets are also often lower, and little local research is done.

With BIT-Lab, we try to bring the challenges facing young people on Bonaire to the attention of local and national politics. Many young people go to study in the European Netherlands or Latin America and then stay away. We try to retain and pool their knowledge, in order to improve life on the island. Fortunately, that has been going steadily better in recent years.”

2.4 Democratic urgency

The struggle against discrimination and racism touches on the very core of the democratic promise that every person counts and that everyone is of equal worth. When residents experience that they are not treated equally, they are harmed: economically, socially, culturally, physically, or mentally. Moreover, their trust in institutions and in society erodes.⁹⁹ Preventing and combating discrimination is therefore not a side issue, but a necessary condition for the legitimacy of our democracy and rule of law.

When residents experience that they are not treated equally, they are harmed economically, socially, culturally, physically, or mentally.

That the Netherlands still has a long way to go in this respect is clear not only from the situation in its own country. International comparisons also make this visible. In a European study among ethnic minority groups, respondents in the Netherlands reported experiences of discrimination more often than the EU average. For example, 35 percent experience discrimination in contact with public or private services, compared with an average of 16 percent in the EU.¹⁰⁰ Research by the committee, moreover, shows that people in the Netherlands relatively often experience cumulative discrimination compared with other European countries.¹⁰¹ In terms of gender, the Netherlands has fallen in the *Global Gender Gap Index*, an annual comparison of the progress countries make in promoting equality between men and women, from 28th place in 2024 to 43rd place in 2025.¹⁰² These international signals underline the urgency of a robust and structural approach to discrimination and racism, also in 2026.¹⁰³

Government has a particular responsibility in this regard. It is legislator, employer, service provider, and protector of fundamental rights, and can therefore be both guardian of equality and cause of inequality. Recent scandals have shown how deeply discrimination and racism can become embedded in policy, algorithms, and implementation practices. They have damaged trust in government, but have also exposed something: the need for government to reflect on its own role and to subject itself to the standard of equal treatment.

2.5 In conclusion: the importance of rule-of-law institutions, durable protection, and a strong civil society

The history of the struggle against discrimination and racism shows a clear but stubborn pattern. Progress is made, often step by step, by people and movements that make inequality visible and open it up to debate. This development also reflects the growth of the human rights

99. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). *Keer op keer. Inzichten in gestapelde discriminatie-ervaringen in Nederland en Europa*.

100. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2017). *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey - Main results*. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2019). *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Summary of main results - NL*.

101. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). *Keer op keer. Inzichten in gestapelde discriminatie-ervaringen in Nederland en Europa*.

102. World Economic Forum. (2025). *Global Gender Gap Report 2025*.

103. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. (2026). *Sixth report on the Netherlands, adopted on 3 December 2025*.

framework, in which equal treatment and non-discrimination have grown into core norms of the democratic rule of law. At the same time, that progress is never definitive. Gains come under pressure, provoke backlash, or are undermined in adapted form by new, less visible mechanisms of exclusion.

This dynamic makes clear that equal rights must not only be fought for, but must also be durably protected and anchored. Formal equality in legislation is a necessary step, but insufficient as long as institutional and societal patterns continue to reproduce inequality. The human rights framework increasingly requires states to actively safeguard the norm of non-discrimination and equality.

The long-standing struggle against discrimination and racism thus teaches three important lessons. First, that a resilient rule of law needs robust institutions that actively oversee equal treatment and that are able to recognise and counter new forms of discrimination in good time. Second, that rights gained and progress made must be explicitly and durably anchored in legislation and regulation, policy, and implementation, so that they do not remain dependent on shifting societal or political views. Third, that a strong and critical civil society is indispensable: it is precisely civil society organisations, activists, and citizen collectives that put inequality on the agenda, make it visible, and force change.¹⁰⁴

Against this background, the committee analyses in the next chapter why the current approach to discrimination and racism falls short and what structural obstacles stand in the way of effective enforcement.

104. Esajas M. & Spijkerboer, T.P. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, [*Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht.*](#)

3. What hinders the approach to discrimination and racism?

There is a great deal of knowledge available in the Netherlands about discrimination and racism, about the domains in which it occurs, about the mechanisms that sustain it, and about interventions that can help. Yet the committee observes that progress in prevention and action by government is lagging behind, and that larger, structural steps are not being taken. This also requires introspection. In this chapter, the committee describes where things are going wrong, thereby holding up a mirror to government: a government that wants to prevent discrimination and racism must be willing to look critically at itself.

A government that wants to prevent discrimination and racism must be willing to look critically at itself.

On the basis of four years of research and conversations with administrators, politicians, civil servants, and civil society, the committee identifies three interrelated explanations for the lack of progress in government's approach to discrimination and racism: 1) an approach that does not sufficiently start from the experiences and knowledge of the people and communities affected by discrimination and racism, 2) an approach to discrimination that remains too incident-focused and reactive, and 3) an aloof and often dismissive attitude towards discrimination and racism on the part of government and politics. These findings are explained below.

3.1 A lack of representation increases the risk of discrimination

The committee observes that legislation and policy are often formulated, developed, and implemented from a limited set of voices and perspectives. This lack of representation can undermine the legitimacy and quality of policy and legislation. This is not only about who is employed by government, but also about which perspectives and experiences actually count in decision-making.¹⁰⁵ Research shows that, in the absence of representation, the experiences, knowledge, and expertise of missing groups are not taken into account, or are taken into account poorly, in decision-making processes.¹⁰⁶ As a result, signals from people who experience discrimination are not heard, not recognised in time, or not taken seriously enough. The problem, therefore, is not only that certain

105. Krislov, S. (1974). *Representative bureaucracy*. Englewood Cliffs. Çelik, S. (2020). *Meer vrouwen in het openbaar bestuur. Lessen uit de publieke sector*. *Beleid en Maatschappij*, 47(1), 64–75.

106. Jhagroe, S., & Salazar-Morales, D. (2025). *A theory of policy coloniality. The role of race and colonial knowledge in policy formulation*. *Critical Policy Studies*, 1–21.

voices are insufficiently represented, but that the system is, moreover, insufficiently designed to listen to those voices.

When the connection with society falls short, policy and legislation are more readily designed from a narrowed worldview. Stereotypes can then creep into law and policy.¹⁰⁷ Discrimination in rules, processes, and implementation can also be overlooked.¹⁰⁸ Assumptions about ‘the average citizen’ are more easily normalised because they are not systematically questioned, and interventions are less well aligned with the reality of implementation.¹⁰⁹ The interview with Colored Collective shows how important it is for government policy to pay attention to intersectionality and the diversity of groups in society (interview 4).

3.1.1 Lack of representation within government

The lack of representation within government stems mainly from the fact that government organisations, especially in senior positions, still do not sufficiently reflect the population. The 2025 Gender Diversity Monitor shows that women hold an average of 40.5 percent of senior positions within central government, a slight decrease compared with 2024 (41.2 percent).¹¹⁰ The share of staff with a background outside Europe in pay scales 13–14 stood at 14 percent at the end of 2025, against a target of 16 percent for 2026.¹¹¹ In pay scale 15 and above, the share stood at 10 percent, also below the target of 12 percent for 2026. It is unlikely that these targets will be met in time. The growth in the share of staff with a background outside Europe also appears to be levelling off. In addition, research shows that discrimination and racism also occur within government in the workplace. In a recent study into racism within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, staff with a migration background reported that their ideas and input were regularly ignored.¹¹²

The system is insufficiently designed to listen to the voices of people affected by discrimination.

The government recognises the importance of representation, as reflected, for example, in the diversity and inclusion targets set out in the Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Report.¹¹³ The report of the visitation committee of the Senior Civil Service (ABD) also describes a diverse and inclusive senior civil service as “crucial to the functioning of central government, because it enables government to respond to what is happening and what matters in society”.¹¹⁴ Despite this, government organisations still do not sufficiently reflect society.

107. Steijns, J. M., i.s.m. Azoual, R. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, [*Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht.*](#)
108. Hassan, M. (2023). [*The psychological impact of discrimination on minority groups. Implications for policy and practice.*](#) *Journal Of Psychology, Health And Social Challenges*, 1(2), 132–148.
109. Roeters, A. (2026). [*Van een systeemblik naar oog voor mensen. Over afstand, aannames en echte aansluiting.*](#) Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
110. Vlaanderen, M. et al. (2026). [*Moedig voorwaarts. Genderdiversiteit in de top van de \(semi\)publieke sector.*](#) [Monitor Genderdiversiteit 2025]. SEO.
111. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2026). [*Barometer Culturele Diversiteit Het Rijk.*](#)
112. Omlo, J. et al. (2022). [*Racisme bij het ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken. Een verkennend onderzoek.*](#) Bureau Omlo.
113. Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties. (2022). [*Monitoringsrapportage Diversiteit en Inclusie 2022.*](#)
114. Kamerstukken II, [*31490, nr. 335.*](#) (2024, 19 januari).

Interview 4

**'Our constituency is
doubly marginalised,
and there is little attention
for that in policy'**



Interview with Srishagon Abraham,
co-chair of Colored Collective

“With Colored Collective, we work for racialised¹¹⁵ LGBTQIA+ people.¹¹⁶ A large part of our constituency has fled their country of origin, and some are still in the asylum procedure. Those procedures are tough. You then have to prove that you are queer, but how do you do that? Most of them had to keep that a secret in their country of birth. It is often the reason they fled. Due to severe cuts to asylum services and backlogs at the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), they remain in uncertainty for months, sometimes years. In the meantime, they are not allowed to work and cannot start a life of their own. They have to keep waiting in asylum seekers’ centres, where LGBTQIA+ people regularly face discrimination.

In addition, there is an increasing dehumanisation of asylum seekers. Think, for example, of the planned visit to the Efteling theme park with young asylum seekers, which drew a great deal of criticism and was ultimately cancelled. Social activities with asylum seekers provoke resistance. That is why we organise safe(r) space gatherings, where queer asylum seekers can come together safely.

Our constituency is doubly marginalised. They suffer not only from exclusion because of their skin colour or ethnic background, but also because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. That regularly results in loneliness and isolation. Trans women of colour in particular have a hard time. In government policy, I see little attention for intersectionality. Many measures are aimed at a single target group. And where there is attention, it does not always translate into practice. Trans healthcare is a good example. Policy documents list ‘access to trans healthcare’ as a priority. But at the same time, funding for trans clinics is being cut. At our trans clinic in Utrecht, the waiting time now stands at two years.

Healthcare in the Netherlands is also not yet very inclusive. Much healthcare still uses ‘the white man’ as the standard reference, meaning that people with darker skin are more often affected by misdiagnoses. Think, for example, of devices that measure oxygen levels through the skin, which turn out to be unreliable for darker skin tones. Our target group also encounters a lot of racial and cultural prejudice, causing their complaints to be underestimated. Pain in people of colour, for instance, is more often underestimated. And what I find truly troubling: conversion therapy, in which people are ‘converted’ to heterosexuality, is still legal in the Netherlands.

Things have improved in recent years, but have also got worse. There is more attention for the position of marginalised communities, but at the same time also more polarisation. Online especially, we see more hate messages and racist remarks. That also affects how people speak to us on the street. Our target group is increasingly subjected to verbal abuse and hostile treatment. They also face discrimination in the labour market, based on their name, skin colour, ethnic background, gender expression, or sexual orientation. We see this reflected in discrimination statistics.”

115. Racialisation refers to the process whereby people are categorised into groups based on how they look, their name, (assumed) background, or religion. This categorisation is often accompanied by certain ideas and expectations, for example about behaviour, norms, or loyalty. As a result, people may be seen as ‘Muslim’, ‘Jewish’, or ‘migrant’, regardless of whether they see themselves that way too.

116. The Colored Collective foundation was established in 2018 by and for racialised (racialised: othering through race), ethnicised (ethnicised: othering through ethnicity), and migrantised (migrantised: othering through the process by which a state’s exclusionary system turns someone into an (illegalised) migrant, asylum seeker, or refugee) LGBTQIA+ people.

3.1.2 Lack of civic engagement

The lack of representation within government can be partly compensated for by gathering the perspectives, insights, and experiences of (groups of) residents in a structural and meaningful way. The research report *Gelijk recht doen* by the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on the Effectiveness of Anti-Discrimination Legislation already emphasised how important it is to involve the people concerned in the legislative process.¹¹⁷ On paper, government also appears to be aware of this. Gathering the perspectives of stakeholders, for example, is part of the policy process.¹¹⁸ An assessment that measures the effects of policy and legislation on equality between men and women (the so-called ‘gender assessment’) is also formally part of the work process.¹¹⁹ Research shows, however, that instruments such as the Policy Compass¹²⁰ and the gender assessment¹²¹ are used only to a very limited extent. Moreover, the Policy Compass contains no comparable assessment for grounds of discrimination other than gender.

That existing instruments are used insufficiently points to a deeper problem. Power differences determine who has access to consultation, which voices are seen as ‘reasonable’ or ‘expert’, and which input ultimately carries weight. Meaningful participation therefore requires not only a good process, but also a democratic culture, attitude, and decision-making approach: a willingness to take differences seriously, to make room for dissent, and to accept that others may be different.¹²² When participation is organised within the existing frameworks and assumptions of policymakers, without room for dissent, it amounts to no more than a symbolic moment of consultation. Participants then experience that their input is heard but does not really influence decision-making. Meaningful participation requires a willingness to have one’s own assumptions questioned, even when that is uncomfortable.

In addition, when government organises civic participation, this often takes the form of individual personal accounts. Such accounts are valuable because they make the impact of policy and implementation tangible and can lead policymakers to see things differently. But individual accounts alone are not enough. Citizen collectives and grassroots movements have the ability to connect personal experiences to a broader analysis and translate them into strategic action aimed at structural change. Where government largely operates reactively, these groups have long been building the knowledge, networks, and working methods needed to dismantle discrimination and racism.

The committee’s own observations confirm this picture. Conversations with civil servants during Discrimination Assessment sessions show that civil servants are still not sufficiently used to gathering the perspectives of residents and citizen collectives in a structural and meaningful way. Civic engagement is still too often incidental, late in the process, limited to consultation during policy development rather than during implementation, or organised through channels that are not accessible to everyone. As a result, experiential knowledge and expertise

117. Parlementaire onderzoekscommissie effectiviteit antidiscriminatiewetgeving. (2022). *Gelijk recht doen. Een parlementair onderzoek naar de mogelijkheden van de wetgever om discriminatie tegen te gaan*.

118. Kenniscentrum voor beleid en regelgeving. (2025, 16 december). *Beleidskompas. Wie zijn belanghebbenden en waarom*.

119. Kenniscentrum voor beleid en regelgeving. (2025, 13 november). *Beleidskompas. Gevolgen voor burgers: Effecten op gelijkheid*.

120. Koppenjan, J. F. M. et al. (2024). *Het gebruik van het Beleidskompas binnen de Rijksoverheid. Ontwikkeling evaluatiekader en eerste evaluatie Beleidskompas*. Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam & GovernEUR.

121. Ardon, D. & Van Wijn-gaarden, R. (2024). *Gendemainstreaming bij de rijksoverheid. Een gedragswetenschappelijk onderzoek*. Movisie.

122. Young I. M. (2002). *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford University Press. Ghorashi, H. (2025). *Ontregelende meerstemmigheid. Pleidooi en bouwstenen voor anders participeren*. Van Gennep & Movisie.

are not consistently incorporated as steering information for design, implementation, monitoring, and adjustment. In addition, too little time, money, and space are made available for civil servants to gather the perspectives of residents and civil society and to actually incorporate them into legislation, policy, and implementation. This is related, firstly, to the political desire for a decisive government, which in practice can translate into speed and short decision-making lines. The call for quick solutions can, moreover, lead to internal coordination pressure, forcing participation to be hastily squeezed into tight deadlines. As a result, participation can become a formal step that mainly serves to be able to tick the box that residents have been involved, without their input being able to meaningfully influence choices. The Participation Knowledge Hub aptly describes this as ‘tick-box participation’.¹²³

Power differences determine who has access to consultation, which voices are seen as reasonable or expert, and which input carries weight.

Secondly, an outdated image of civil-service, and more broadly public, professionalism plays a role. Scientific research into (public) professionalism shows that the professionalism of public service providers and civil servants does not only lie in the extent to which they are themselves autonomous subject-matter experts. Their professionalism also lies in the way they connect with residents and civil society, other fields of expertise, and different levels (policy, implementation, practice).¹²⁴ In other words, the ‘quality’ of public professionals’ actions is determined by the way in which they form relationships with other forms and fields of knowledge. This does not mean that subject-matter knowledge is less important, but that it only acquires meaning in relation to other forms of knowledge (such as experiential and community knowledge).¹²⁵

In its work, the committee has gained experience with co-creation: working together as equals on content and outcomes, in order to arrive at better-supported, joint solutions. In writing various reports and in carrying out discrimination assessments, the committee has made use of insights from a wide range of people, institutions, and civil society groups.¹²⁶ The committee’s experience with this is that when sounding-board groups, learning sessions, and local conversations are taken seriously, this helps to make assumptions and routines visible and to recognise and more specifically limit risks of discrimination at an earlier stage. Meaningful participation also increases support for change processes. At the same time, the committee observes that the

123. Boogaard, G. et al. (2024). [Essaybundel burgerparticipatie op nationaal niveau](#). Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties.
124. Noordegraaf, M. (2020). [Protective or connective professionalism? How connected professionals can \(still\) act as autonomous and authoritative experts](#), *Journal of Professions and Organizations*, 7(2), 205–223.
125. Roeters, A. (2026). [Van een systeemblik naar oog voor mensen. Over afstand, aannames en echte aansluiting](#). Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
126. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). [Gelijkheidsplicht. Publieke Sector \(GPS\). Naar wettelijke verankering van een proactieve aanpak van discriminatie door de overheid](#). Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). [Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht](#).

representation of residents, without structural embedding, remains dependent on individual champions and temporary projects.

3.1.3 Lack of representation from the Caribbean Netherlands

For the Caribbean Netherlands, the issue of representation is particularly urgent. The distance between legislation and policy on the one hand, and lived reality on the other, is often directly felt there. The evaluation committee chaired by Liesbeth Spies already concluded in 2015 that powers had shifted to The Hague, that consultation procedures for legislation have limited effect, and that residents experience arbitrariness due to inconsistent application of the equality principle.¹²⁷ In the House of Representatives and in election campaigns, there is relatively little attention for the Caribbean Netherlands. The low turnout in the 2025 national elections reflects this: 9.7 percent on Sint Eustatius, 21.5 percent on Bonaire, and 28 percent on Saba,¹²⁸ while turnout in local elections is considerably higher (80.7 percent on Sint Eustatius, 64.5 percent on Bonaire, 83.6 percent on Saba).¹²⁹ Residents apparently do feel engaged with their own community, but not with the national decision-making that determines their lives to a large degree.

That distance has concrete consequences for the quality of policy. Working visits by the committee to Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba confirm this. Interlocutors point to various forms of discriminatory government action that are directly linked to the absence of local knowledge and perspectives in policymaking. A concrete example is the poor alignment of education on the islands with further education and labour-market opportunities: while the language of instruction on Saba and Sint Eustatius is English, fluent command of Dutch remains a requirement for government positions. Such structural mismatches arise when policy is designed without the experiences and needs of the communities concerned being decisive from the outset.

The same has emerged from the pilots of the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services in the Caribbean Netherlands (see box 4). For these pilots, process facilitators were deployed who speak Papiamentu and know the local context well. The pilots show that risks of discrimination in the Caribbean Netherlands sometimes arise differently than in the European Netherlands. This is partly due to the small scale of the islands and the close interweaving of oversight and communities. Practices that at first sight appear neutral can therefore play out differently. The pilots also make clear that instruments developed in the European Netherlands cannot be deployed unchanged in the Caribbean Netherlands. The Discrimination Assessment has been adapted with examples and background information that fit the Caribbean reality. This underlines that a generic approach developed in The Hague is missing perspectives when the communities concerned have not been involved from the outset.

127. Spies, J. W. E. et al. (2015). [*Vijf jaar verbonden. Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, Saba en Europees Nederland*](#). Commissie evaluatie uitwerking van de nieuwe staatkundige structuur Caribisch Nederland.

128. Van Raalte, J. (2025, 31 oktober). [*Op de Caribische eilanden was de opkomst dramatisch laag, maar waren de uitslagen verrassend*](#). Trouw.

129. Kiesraad. (2023). [*Eilandsraad 15 maart 2023*](#).

Box 4. Discrimination Assessment, Public Entity of Bonaire

In 2025, the Public Entity of Bonaire began working with the Discrimination Assessment, under the guidance of a process facilitator from the University of Aruba. A team of staff from the Supervision and Enforcement department investigated the way in which oversight of the Alcohol and Catering Ordinance is carried out on Bonaire. The team critically examined the provisions of the ordinance, the way they implement it, and whether the distinction they make between citizens and businesses in doing so is potentially discriminatory.

Applying the Discrimination Assessment initially gave the team awareness of how risks of discrimination and racism can be present in their own work. For example, using a documentary about discrimination and racism in the Caribbean Netherlands, the team held a conversation about their own environment and work. This led to a new way of looking at their own working practices and habits. The team discovered, for example, that in their oversight and enforcement choices they make a distinction based on the scale and size of catering businesses. Using the content of the Discrimination Assessment, the team asked critical questions about the extent to which this distinction is always justified and what could be done to prevent unjustified distinctions. One of the measures the team took was to place less emphasis on punishment and fines for the group of small, start-up businesses with limited knowledge of laws and regulations. Instead, team members want their oversight to help contribute to entrepreneurs becoming more aware of laws and regulations and able to comply with them. In other words, a more proactive and people-centred approach to service provision that does justice to differences on the island.

3.2 The approach to discrimination and racism is incident-focused and reactive

As a second explanation for the lack of progress in government's approach to discrimination and racism, the committee observes that the administrative and legal approach to discrimination is mainly organised around individual incidents.¹³⁰ This incident-focused approach is related to the way the system of legal protection, oversight, and policy responses is structured: aimed mainly at remedy after the fact, not at prevention beforehand. As a result, discrimination mainly comes into view through reports, complaints procedures, police records, and objection and appeal proceedings.¹³¹ The consequence is that policy and implementation only change after scandals come to light, or after court rulings force change. This keeps government dependent on after-the-fact signals, rather than actively recognising and preventing risks itself.

An incident-focused approach fails to recognise three fundamental insights from the committee's research. First, that discrimination often repeats itself structurally and has a cumulative effect.¹³² Second, that it is

130. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). *Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht*.

131. Although these are important provisions, they are only useful once discrimination has already taken place, and they often place the burden of proof on those affected by discrimination.

132. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2023). *Aard, omvang en oorzaken van discriminatie en racisme in Nederland. Eerste inzichten en vervolg*.

increasingly intertwined with digitalisation, data processing, algorithms, and profiling, meaning that discriminatory effects can occur on a large scale and sometimes invisibly.¹³³ And third, that generic and seemingly 'neutral' policy choices can, in practice, turn out to be discriminatory for different groups.¹³⁴

3.2.1 Lack of data on patterns

An incident-focused approach narrows the view of underlying patterns and institutional mechanisms. Structural inequalities in processes, risk models, images of humanity, algorithms, and implementation practices thus remain out of sight for longer. Yet these are precisely the forms of discrimination that are becoming increasingly common today, particularly when it comes to discrimination by government.¹³⁵ This follows from various reports by the committee, which show this lack of insight into patterns. In its research into the nature, scale, and causes of discrimination and racism, the committee finds that structural data on experiences and outcomes for different groups are often lacking. Without this data, it is difficult to observe how discrimination is connected across different domains, to identify the impact of (cumulative) discrimination on different groups in good time, and to develop well-substantiated policy. Reports on the Netherlands by international monitoring bodies also point to a lack of equality data, referring to data on (patterns of) discrimination experiences and diversity.¹³⁶

Without data on patterns of discrimination, it is difficult to monitor its impact.

The committee has also clearly experienced this data shortage in its own research. For example, it turned out that no adequate dataset was available in the Netherlands to analyse cumulative and intersectional discrimination. To bridge this gap, the committee had to turn to international data sources, such as those of the *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights* (FRA). These data sources, however, proved limited in scope, for example because they focus only on specific groups or certain grounds of discrimination.¹³⁷ In addition, the categories used in existing datasets do not always match how people identify themselves or experience discrimination. All this underlines that not only more data are needed, but above all different forms of data collection: with room for self-identification, attention to the context in which discrimination takes place, and a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to better interpret patterns and mechanisms. This data problem is, moreover, reinforced by demographic developments in society. Statistics Netherlands (CBS) classifies people as having a 'Dutch background' when they themselves were born in the Netherlands and both their parents

133. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2026). *Principes voor profilering. Een kritisch perspectief op de toepassing van datagedreven profilering door de overheid*.

134. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). *Discriminatie in dienstverlening. Ervaringen en lessen om discriminatie in publieke dienstverlening te voorkomen en bestrijden*.

135. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2026). *Principes voor profilering. Een kritisch perspectief op de toepassing van datagedreven profilering door de overheid*.

136. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2026, 27 februari). *Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of the Kingdom of the Netherlands* (pp. 4–5). Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. (2021, 16 november). *Concluding observations on the combined twenty-second to twenty-fourth periodic reports of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (2024, 27 september). *Concluding observations on the initial report of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. (2026, 3 maart). *Sixth report on the Netherlands, adopted on 3 December 2025*.

137. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). *Keer op keer. Inzichten in gestapelde discriminatie-ervaringen in Nederland en Europa*.

were also born in the Netherlands. Anyone born in the Netherlands with at least one parent born abroad falls, in the statistics, into the category 'child of a migrant'. At the same time, the group of children whose parents were born in the Netherlands, but who have at least one grandparent with a background outside Europe, is growing. CBS figures show that this is now a considerable group: of all children up to the age of four with a Dutch background, more than 17 percent have parents who were born in the Netherlands, while at least one grandparent has a background outside Europe.¹³⁸ Under the current CBS definition, these children fall into the category 'Dutch background' and are therefore no longer visible in statistics on country of origin. Discrimination on the basis of appearance or assumed origin, however, does not stop when someone falls under the statistical category 'Dutch background'. As younger generations grow up, current measurement methods lose their ability to map the diversity and inequalities in society.

In addition, the data problem occurs to an even greater degree in the Caribbean Netherlands. Data is lacking there both to demonstrate how the situation on the islands differs from the European Netherlands, and to research inequality on the islands themselves. This problem is confirmed by reports from international monitoring bodies.¹³⁹ The Social Minimum Committee likewise concludes that reliable data are essential for the design and implementation of policy, and points to the shortage of data concerning the Caribbean Netherlands.¹⁴⁰

In light of this, the committee organised a scientific knowledge session, in collaboration with the Dutch Research Council (NWO). This produced two additional insights into how research and knowledge can contribute to greater equality between the European and Caribbean Netherlands. First, there is the risk that arises when research on the islands is designed exclusively from a European perspective. This can create new forms of dependency that reinforce existing power relations. Second, researchers and island residents point to a pattern of research fatigue: residents are regularly approached for research, while local knowledge institutions and research positions remain structurally underfunded, and conclusions from previous research rarely lead to concrete policy changes. Without structural investment in an equal knowledge infrastructure, inequalities in the Caribbean Netherlands remain invisible in national monitoring, and therefore also in political decision-making.

3.2.2 The current approach is too reactive

The report on the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) shows that the current legal framework contains too few concrete obligations for government organisations to prevent discrimination.¹⁴¹ Non-discrimination law is, to a significant extent, organised individually and reactively: it protects victims only after they have been discriminated against, if they themselves already recognise or know this. It places insufficient structural responsibility on organisations to systematically analyse and correct unequal effects.¹⁴² In a rapidly changing and digitalised society, however, new risks often arise faster than legislation can be adapted.

138. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2024). [*Integratie en samenleven 2024*](#).

139. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (2025, 29 oktober). [*Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*](#).

140. Commissie sociaal minimum Caribisch Nederland. (2023). [*Een waardig bestaan. Een sociaal minimum dat voorziet in toenemend perspectief op zelfredzaamheid*](#).

141. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). [*Gelijkheidsplicht Publieke Sector \(GPS\). Naar wettelijke verankering van een proactieve aanpak van discriminatie door de overheid*](#).

142. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). [*Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht*](#).

Without additional, proactive obligations, government therefore continues to lag behind events. This is why the committee has advised on the introduction of an equality duty for the public sector (see box 5).

Non-discrimination law is, to a significant extent, organised individually and reactively: it protects victims only after they have been discriminated against, if they recognise this themselves. Without proactive obligations, government continues to lag behind events.

On top of this, there are constant new technological developments that are changing the landscape of discrimination risks. The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic decision-making creates forms of discrimination that are fundamentally different from those government has dealt with so far. In this context, discrimination can occur on a large scale, in an automated way, and often invisibly. For example, because it is embedded in opaque and untraceable training data, models, and decision rules for public services, risk assessments, or enforcement. Discriminatory patterns can thus spread faster than in the case of human decision-making, and moreover in a way that is harder to detect. This underlines the limitations of a reactive approach. Government must therefore be able to recognise and address the discrimination risks of new technologies at an early stage, before they are rolled out on a large scale.

Box 5. Public Sector Equality Duty

In a progress report, the committee advised on the introduction of a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) for the Netherlands. The PSED requires all government bodies to prevent discrimination and promote equality. The duty is not new, but enshrines existing international and constitutional obligations in law and makes them concrete.

The core of the PSED is that government bodies make the importance of non-discrimination and equality an integral part of, and factor into, their decision-making and actions. This includes, among other things, that government bodies always carry out an equality impact assessment in their decision-making and involve citizen collectives in this.

Variants

The PSED also includes an accountability and oversight mechanism. Government bodies must be able to demonstrate that they comply with their duty. An independent body oversees compliance. The committee has developed three variants that increase in ambition, and has advised introducing them step by step.

PSED	Regulate	Account for	Oversee
Basic variant	Statutory duty	Best-efforts obligation, anti-discrimination policy	Light scrutiny (e.g. The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights)
Middle variant		Obligation of result, anti-discrimination policy	PSED inspection service with intervention powers (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations)
Extended variant		Information and reporting duties	Independent authority with sanctioning powers

Lessons from the United Kingdom and Ireland

The PSED is inspired by the *Public Sector Equality Duty* (PSED) in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Under the PSED, British and Irish government bodies must collect *equality data*, develop anti-discrimination policy, monitor themselves, and report periodically on progress. International experience yields three important lessons:

- Added value: the duty anchors a proactive approach and promotes a cultural shift within organisations, transparency, and accountability.
- Risks: it must not become a ‘tick-box exercise’ or lead to high implementation burdens.
- Preconditions: leadership, guidelines, training, responsible and participatory equality data, sufficient budget, and an implementation and governance plan are essential.

3.2.3 The importance of anticipation

An effective approach requires a shift from a reactive to an anticipatory government. Because when government only acts after incidents, it continues to lag behind events. This means that government must systematically investigate where risks of discrimination (can) arise, including with new digital applications and policy innovations. It means that equal treatment is integrated from the outset into legislation, policy, and implementation, with structural monitoring of (equality) effects. It also means that preventing discrimination and promoting equality become guiding principles of government action, rather than after-the-fact correction mechanisms. The Public Sector Equality Duty proposed by the committee offers an overarching legal framework in which this is anchored.

Such a future-proof approach requires more than legal adjustments alone. It requires a government that stands closer to society, that picks up developments and signals at an early stage, and that is willing to structurally adjust policy on the basis of residents' experiences. As discussed in section 3.1, participation by, and co-creation with, residents and citizen collectives are not optional or supplementary elements, but preconditions for a government that genuinely wants to prevent discrimination rather than correct it after the fact.

An effective approach requires a shift from a reactive to an anticipatory government. That means equal treatment is integrated from the outset into legislation, policy, and implementation, with structural monitoring of (equality) effects.

In short, as long as the approach to discrimination is primarily organised around incidents and individual complaints, the structural nature of the problem remains out of view, and government continues to operate reactively. The insights from the committee's research make clear that a fundamental change of course is needed: from combating incidents to structural prevention, and from a government that waits to a government that anticipates.

3.3 Government and politics remain too aloof

In recent years, government and politicians have responded strongly to explicit forms of discrimination and racism in Dutch society. These responses concerned socially significant and highly visible forms of discrimination and racism, such as racist chanting in football stadiums¹⁴³ and femicide.¹⁴⁴ But they also concerned forms of discrimination and racism within government itself, such as discrimination and racism at the Tax Administration,¹⁴⁵ DUO (the Education Executive Agency),¹⁴⁶ and the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee.¹⁴⁷ In all these cases, there was strong, widely shared political outrage and condemnation. Apologies from members of the cabinet usually followed when it concerned clearly established forms of discrimination and racism within government itself.¹⁴⁸ Despite this, the committee observes that government organisations and politicians struggle with their own responsibility regarding discrimination and racism, both in word and in deed.

3.3.1 Aloof in words

Role of politicians

The committee observes that government organisations and politicians find it difficult to take responsibility for statements and actions that (directly or indirectly) contribute to structural patterns of discrimination and racism in Dutch society. Although this aloof attitude can sometimes be a deliberate choice, for example out of fear of causing polarisation, it does have societal consequences in normalising discrimination and racism. Research, moreover, shows that this effect is strongest when it comes from 'mainstream politicians'.¹⁴⁹ This pattern of restraint – precisely on the part of *mainstream* politicians – is visible in several examples that follow below. A deliberate choice has been made here to use a number of recent examples (2025–2026) from national politics, because these show the strongest influence on the normalisation of discrimination and racism in Dutch society. The committee describes these examples not to single out individual politicians, but to illustrate a broader pattern of political restraint.

Government organisations and politicians struggle with their own responsibility regarding discrimination and racism, both in word and in deed.

A well-known example of this aloof political attitude is that, during the General Political Debates in September 2025, a discussion arose about whether or not members of the House of Representatives should be challenged on discriminatory statements. The then prime minister

143. RTL Nieuws. (2019, 19 november). [Kamer roept Rutte naar parlement om vragen over spreekkoren Den Bosch](#).

144. Fuks, I. (2025, 23 september). [Emotie én strijd om regie in Kamerdebat over femicide, onder toezicht oog van nabestaanden](#). NRC.

145. Parlementaire onder-vragingscommissie Kinderopvangtoeslag. (2020). [Ongekend onrecht](#).

146. NOS Nieuws. (2024, 11 november). [Geld terug voor studenten na discriminerende fraudeopsporing](#).

147. NOS Nieuws. (2023, 14 februari). [Hof verbiedt etnisch profileren marechaussee bij controles](#).

148. Parlementaire onder-vragingscommissie Kinderopvangtoeslag. (2020). [Ongekend onrecht](#).

149. 'Mainstream politicians' here refers to politicians who do not hold a radical ideological position on the political spectrum. This therefore concerns politicians situated more towards the political-ideological 'centre'. Valentim, V. et al. (2025). [How mainstream politicians erode norms](#). *British Journal of Political Science*, 55, e105.

responded by saying he did not want to “pass judgement” on members of parliament.¹⁵⁰ Although taking a normative stance might have caused tensions within the coalition, doing so could, from a societal point of view, have sent a meaningful signal of taking a stand against discrimination and racism.

In the same month, the House of Representatives adopted a motion to designate Antifa as a terrorist organisation.¹⁵¹ The motion drew a great deal of criticism. It criminalises certain beliefs, which can be regarded as discrimination on the grounds of political conviction or belief. Although the leader of one of the parties that voted for the motion said a month later that her party would not support it again, she maintained the position that Antifa should be designated as terrorist. She said of this: “I simply don’t want that ideology.”¹⁵²

An aloof attitude on the part of politicians can be a deliberate choice, for example out of fear of causing polarisation. Nevertheless, it has societal consequences in normalising discrimination and racism.

150. Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal. (2025). [Tweede Kamer, 3^e vergadering, Donderdag 18 september 2025](#) [Plenaire verslag].

151. Kamerstukken II, [36800, nr. 103](#), (2025, 18 september).

152. Nieuwsuur. (2025, 23 oktober). [Yesilgöz zou antifa-motie niet weer steunen, maar wil dat gedachttegoed gewoon niet](#).

153. Vos, E. (2025, 27 oktober). Rob Jetten maakt [grap over kroonprinses in dienstplicht, presentator spreekt van ‘seksistische opmerking’](#). NRC.

154. RTL Nieuws. (2025, 28 oktober). [Jetten betreurt opmerking over prinses Amalia tijdens debat: ‘Dat was niet zo handig’](#) [Video].

155. Nieuwsuur. (2025, 20 oktober). [CDA-leider Bontenbal: religieus onderwijs mag botsen met grondrecht van gelijkheid](#).

In a debate ahead of the House of Representatives elections in October 2025, one of the party leaders stated that it was good promotion for the Ministry of Defence that Crown Princess Amalia had become a reservist. He said of this that “a number of guys here in the room [...] would quite like” to end up in a military training exercise with her.¹⁵³ This remark was immediately labelled sexist by the debate moderator. Rather than acknowledging this, the party leader downplayed the incident. He later called it merely “not very clever”.¹⁵⁴ Acknowledging the discriminatory nature of this statement could precisely have been an example of upholding inclusive norms and values.

In the same month, the leader of another political party argued that schools should have room to express religious values, even when these clash with the prohibition of discrimination. He said, for example, that he did not want to condemn the rejection of same-sex relationships by Reformed schools.¹⁵⁵ Although these statements may fit with his party’s positions, that makes no difference to their consequences. This aloof stance normalises this discriminatory practice in education.

In December 2025, a member of the cabinet held talks with representatives of Muslim youth organisations about the image of

Muslims.¹⁵⁶ The discussion addressed the question of why incidents involving people with an Arab background are often immediately linked to being Muslim, while this does not happen with other religious convictions. In the summary of this conversation, the cabinet member wrote that the Muslim youth organisations had been asked for “a reflection from the community on why they themselves think this happens”. This discriminatory image was not further identified as discrimination, nor did the cabinet member speak out against it. This example illustrates how cabinet members, too, can adopt an aloof stance. In this case, the responsibility for explaining discrimination was placed with the affected community itself.

In addition to being reluctant, politics also fairly regularly takes a denying stance with regard to specific forms of discrimination and racism. Here too, politicians seem not to realise their particular responsibility and the effects of their actions. In March 2025, the National Survey on Muslim Discrimination was published. It shows that discrimination against Muslims is a widespread phenomenon and stands in the way of Muslims’ connection with Dutch society. A majority of the House of Representatives, however, did not want to hold a debate on this research, on the grounds that it had not been carried out properly.¹⁵⁷ This criticism, however, is barely substantiated and is not supported by academics either.¹⁵⁸

Politicians seem not to realise their particular responsibility and the effects of their actions.

Politicians not only remain aloof, they sometimes also make discriminatory statements themselves. In May 2024, for example, a cabinet member from a former government said: “What you see is that many asylum migrants come from countries with an Islamic faith. We know that hatred of Jews is almost part of the culture there.” The Public Prosecution Service concluded that the statements in question are, in principle, a criminal offence, but that criminal prosecution of the politician in this case would conflict with freedom of expression.¹⁵⁹ The cabinet, however, denied that such statements are discriminatory.¹⁶⁰ Some political parties also cast doubt on the existence of racism. For example, the leader of a political party stated on a television talk show in September 2025 that her party does not believe there is institutional racism within Dutch government,¹⁶¹ while research has shown the opposite.¹⁶²

Role of the media

News media, too, often adopt a reserved stance when it comes to speaking out against discrimination and racism. In the example mentioned above concerning institutional racism within government,

156. Kamerstukken II, 30950, nr. 510. (2026, 10 februari).
157. NOS Nieuws. (2025, 25 maart). [Kamer wil geen debat over onderzoek moslimdiscriminatie: 'rammelt aan alle kanten'](#).
158. Vriesema, M. (2025, 31 maart). [Kamer keurt onderzoek moslimdiscriminatie af. Klopt de kritiek? 'Bullshit, de boodschapper wordt aangevallen'](#). Trouw.
159. Openbaar Ministerie. (2024, 12 juli). [OM seponneert aangiften van groepsbelediging tegen Mona Keijzer](#).
160. Pelgrim, C. (2025, 20 januari). [Staatscommissie noemt discriminatie door overheid 'structureel' en hekelt uitspraken kabinet](#). NRC.
161. BNNVARA. (2025, 1 september). [Pauw & De Wit. Ingrid Coenradie en Joost Eerdmans over hun plannen](#) [Video].
162. Omlo, J. et al. (2022). [Racisme bij het ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken. Een verkennend onderzoek](#). Bureau Omlo. Kamerstukken II, 30950, nr. 359. (2024, 9 februari). Witkamp, A. et al. (2024). [Racisme binnen de Rijksoverheid. Kwalitatief onderzoek naar ervaringen, gevolgen en de aanpak van racisme op de werkvloer binnen de Rijksoverheid](#). Verwonderzoek & Labyrinth Onderzoek & Advies.

163. Can, M. (2022, 27 april). [Ge-lach om misbruikverhaal Johan Derksen, 'omstanders hadden moeten ingrijpen'](#). NOS Nieuws.
164. Van der Aa, E. (2026, 18 maart). [Makers documentaire eisen excuses dj's na 'racistisch' interview, PowNed weigert, Algemeen Dagblad](#).
165. Ng, J. et al. (2026, 17 maart). [Open brief: de normalisering van racisme. Meer dan Babi Pangang](#).
166. NOS Nieuws. (2026, 23 maart). [Ruud de Wild loopt weg uit eigen radioshow om doodsb bedreigingen na interview](#).
167. De Jonge, L., & Gaufman, E. (2022). [The normalisation of the far right in the Dutch media in the run-up to the 2021 general elections](#). *Discourse & Society*, 33(6), 773–787.
168. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). [Discriminatie in dienstverlening. Ervaringen en lessen om discriminatie in publieke dienstverlening te voorkomen en bestrijden](#).
169. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2026). [Tussen Kamer, krant en sociale media. De wisselwerking tussen de Tweede Kamer, landelijke kranten en sociale media in de verspreiding van discriminerende uitingen](#).
170. Redactie Trouw. (2026, 17 februari). [De Tweede Kamervoorzitter moet nieuw onderzoek serieus nemen en discriminerende taal weren](#). Trouw.
171. Pelgrim, C. (2025, 20 januari). [Staatscommissie noemt discriminatie door overheid 'structureel' en hekelt uitspraken kabinet. NRC](#).

the political leader received hardly any pushback during the talk show. Other television programmes regularly attract attention through sexist remarks. Here, too, there is hardly any pushback.¹⁶³ In February 2026, a radio interview took place with one of the makers of a documentary about the search by Dutch people of Chinese-Indonesian descent for their own background. Instead of a substantive conversation about the documentary, the interview descended into jokes about Chinese food and stereotypes.¹⁶⁴ The documentary makers spoke, in an open letter, of “the normalisation of racism” and asked for an apology.¹⁶⁵ The radio station considered this unnecessary and called it “a joke”.¹⁶⁶

Scientific research, moreover, shows that the way Dutch media deal with far-right parties contributes to the normalisation of their positions.¹⁶⁷ Far-right figureheads, for example, are given extensive opportunity on talk shows to explain their views, as if these discriminatory positions were just as normal as other (non-discriminatory) positions.

Consequences of restraint

This restraint in naming and speaking out against discrimination and racism is problematic. In earlier reports, the committee has pointed out to politicians that words matter.¹⁶⁸ Research by the committee shows that an increase in discriminatory statements by politicians is associated with a comparable increase in discriminatory expressions in national newspapers and, in particular, on social media. The same research shows that news media, including national newspapers, play an important role in how statements about population groups affect society.¹⁶⁹ Precisely for this reason, news media have a responsibility to provide critical interpretation and context.¹⁷⁰

When discrimination is denied, ignored, or repeated without critical reflection, both politicians and news media send the signal that such statements are acceptable.

When discrimination is denied, ignored, or repeated without critical reflection, both politicians and news media send the signal that such statements are acceptable or ‘normal’. The normalisation of discriminatory expressions makes it more complicated for government and for society to take discrimination and racism seriously and to combat and prevent it. The committee has also heard this repeatedly in conversations with administrators and civil servants. It also has an effect on people who experience discrimination. It can give people the feeling that there is no point in reporting their experiences of discrimination.¹⁷¹

172. Driessen, C. (2025, 6 november). [Rechters over hun vooroordelen: 'Had ik dit met een witte, hoogopgeleide jongen hetzelfde aangepakt?' NRC](#).
173. CommunicatieRijk. (2026). [Startadvies kabinetsbrede communicatie](#). Voorlichtingsraad, Ministerie van Algemene Zaken.
174. Baldewsingh, R. (2026). [De illusie van gelijkheid. Pleidooi voor een fundamentele herijking van de aanpak van discriminatie en racisme in Nederland](#). Nationaal Coördinator tegen Discriminatie en Racisme.
175. Commissie Gelijke Behandeling. (2000). *Evaluatie van vijf jaar Algemene wet gelijke behandeling. Gelijke behandeling in beweging* (p. 29). Commissie Gelijke Behandeling. (2005). [Evaluatie AWGB en werkzaamheden CGB 1999-2004. Het verschil gemaakt](#) (p. 53). Zoontjes, P. J. J. (2006). De uitzondering inzake "eenzijdig overheidshandelen". In M. L. M. Hertogh, & P. J. J. Zoontjes (Eds.), *Gelijke behandeling: principes en praktijken. Evaluatieonderzoek Algemene wet gelijke behandeling*. Wolf Legal Publishers (pp. 115-144). See also: European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. (2019). [ECRI report on The Netherlands \(fifth monitoring cycle\)](#).
176. Groenendijk, C. A. & Kruijt, A. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, [Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht](#).
177. Nationaal Coördinator Discriminatie en Racismebestrijding, College voor de Rechten van de Mens, & Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2023, 20 maart). [Eenzijdig overheidshandelen onder de AWGB](#) [Brief aan de Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties].
178. Kamerstukken II, [30950, nr. 455](#), (2025, 25 april).

A denying and aloof attitude on the part of politicians and cabinet members towards discrimination and racism undermines trust in government and in the democratic rule of law. This denying attitude is also reflected in the interview with Asian Raisins about racism against people of Asian descent (interview 5).

At the same time, the committee observes that this pattern can also be broken. Acknowledging and openly discussing discrimination and racism makes it possible to address them. The committee sees this happening, for example, in organisations that use the Discrimination Assessment. The recent openness about bias and discrimination within the judiciary also makes it possible for judges to reflect on this and address it.¹⁷² The Communication Council, moreover, emphasises that politicians and cabinet members, through deliberate and careful communication, can make a positive contribution to social cohesion.¹⁷³

Aloof in deeds

Aloofness is not limited to language. The committee observes that measures against discrimination and racism often remain stuck at the level of intentions, pilots, and temporary programmes, without structural anchoring. This aligns with what the National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism (NCDR) recently described as 'institutional reticence': avoiding binding choices and structural steering on discrimination and racism.¹⁷⁴

No follow-up to recommendations

This reticence is, first of all, visible in the absence of concrete follow-up to earlier recommendations. For more than thirty years, various authoritative bodies have argued for the inclusion, in the General Equal Treatment Act (Awgb), of a prohibition on discrimination through so-called unilateral government action.¹⁷⁵ Such a provision would make it possible for victims of discrimination by government to file a complaint with the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights. This provision would thereby strengthen the legal protection of residents.¹⁷⁶ In 2023, the committee, together with the National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism and the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, again advised including such a provision in the Awgb.¹⁷⁷ Although this advice was adopted by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, and the introduction of a bill was announced,¹⁷⁸ no concrete legislative process has so far been initiated.

Interview 5

**‘Racism against people of Asian descent is often trivialised,
but it hurts a lot of people’**



Interview with Rui Jun Luong,
founder of Asian Raisins

“There is little attention for it, but people of Asian descent are also widely discriminated against in the Netherlands. They are, for example, shouted at on the street and sometimes even attacked. It also happens at schools, internships, or workplaces: ‘Ching, chang, chong.’ ‘Can I order spring rolls from you?’ Or primary schools where children sing ‘Hanky Panky Shanghai’ in class.¹⁷⁹ It is often trivialised, but it hurts a lot of people. We also see it pass by in talk shows or reality shows on television, for example the suggestion that Chinese people would eat their own dog or cat. And the coronavirus pandemic was, for many people, a reason to insult Asians even more, because ‘they are the ones who ate bats’. I also heard from someone that the bus driver did not let her on the bus because she looked Chinese. He was afraid of getting sick.

Women of Asian descent in particular also still deal with sexism. Many people have the image that they are submissive and servile, by linking it to massage parlours and websites where European men can pick out a Thai bride. As a result, many of them are treated disrespectfully.

Discrimination by government bodies is usually not clearly visible. It lies in small things. At service counters, for example, I am often addressed in English. Sometimes even after I have already spoken Dutch. With Asian Raisins, I show examples of online racism on social media. Those posts then receive a lot of hateful reactions in response. I have tried to report this to the police, but the police and the Public Prosecution Service seem to have little interest in pursuing it. I hear this from more people with similar experiences. They are told: ‘This is not racism.’ Or: ‘There is insufficient evidence.’ If such cases are not pursued, they also do not appear in the statistics, which makes government think it does not exist. And in my view, government is precisely what should spur action to tackle racism. It starts with acknowledging that it is a problem.

With Asian Raisins, we try to make racism against Dutch people of Asian descent something that can be discussed. Many people think racism disappears by itself, but that is not the case. We see it everywhere, especially on social media. Young people with Asian roots in particular suffer a great deal from this. Anti-Chinese memes regularly circulate, much like irritating remarks from someone like Donald Trump about Chinese people. Unfortunately, many people pick that up too.”

179. “‘Hanky Panky Shanghai’ is a make believe birthday song sung at primary schools and children’s birthday parties. This so-called birthday song is supposed to be the Chinese version of Happy Birthday. The song consists of three nonsensical words meant to sound Chinese, but can hardly be given the honour of any type of comparison to a real Chinese language like Mandarin or Cantonese. Whilst singing this song people often portray racist caricatures, making a slanted eyes gesture or putting their hands together and making bowing movements.”
From: [Asian Raisins FAQ](#)

180. Kamerstukken II, [36284, nr. 56](#), (2025, 3 juli).
181. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (2025, 29 oktober). [Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of the Kingdom of the Netherlands](#). European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. (2019). [ECRI report on The Netherlands \(fifth monitoring cycle\)](#).
182. Kamerstukken II, [30950, nr. 510](#), (2026, 10 februari).
183. NOS Nieuws. (2025, 23 januari). [Stevige ingreep nodig bij herstel toeslagenaffaire, zegt spoedcommissie](#).
184. Pruis, A., & Wiessing, E. (2026, 9 februari). [Toeslagenouders opnieuw in de schulden door goedbedoelde betaalpauze](#). NOS Nieuws.
185. Parlementaire enquête-commissie Fraudebeleid en Dienstverlening. (2024). [Blind voor mens en recht](#).
186. Kamerstukken II, [30950, nr. 335](#), (2023, 12 december).
187. See commitments by the Minister of the Interior during a committee debate in April 2024: Kamerstukken II, [30950/34338, nr. 411](#), (2024, 11 juli). See also commitments by the Minister of the Interior during a committee debate in January 2025: Kamerstukken II, [30950, nr. 435](#), (2025, 21 februari).
188. Rijksoverheid. (2025). [Besluit nieuw Nationaal Programma tegen Discriminatie en Racisme aan volgend kabinet](#).
189. Kamerstukken II, [30950, nr. 454](#), (2025, 25 april).
190. Bureau Woordvoering Kabinetsformatie. (2026). [Aan de slag. Bouwen aan een beter Nederland. Coalitieakkoord 2026-2030 D66, VVD en CDA](#).

In 2022, the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on the Effectiveness of Anti-Discrimination Legislation (POC) presented the report *Gelijk recht doen*. This report describes a number of clear steps for government to amend legislation in order to counter institutional discrimination. In concrete terms, little has been done with this so far. For example, the POC states that proactive attention must be paid to the possible discriminatory effects of legislation. Accountability obligations should also be imposed on implementing bodies and employers. They should, for example, report on what they have done to prevent or combat discrimination. Government, however, has not yet acted on this. In its progress report on the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the committee further elaborated on what these proactive duties could look like. Both the House of Representatives¹⁸⁰ and international bodies¹⁸¹ have urged that this be acted upon.

The POC also emphasises that it is not effective to place the responsibility for tackling discrimination solely on the people who experience it. Yet the committee sees that this still happens, for example in the conversation between a minister and Muslim youth organisations.¹⁸² The same pattern is visible in the financial consequences and handling of the childcare benefits scandal. In January 2025, an emergency committee concluded that firm intervention is needed in addressing the childcare benefits scandal. Otherwise, it will take years before victims receive compensation.¹⁸³ In February 2026, it also emerged that some victims had fallen back into debt as a result of a government initiative.¹⁸⁴ Little has also been done with the recommendations of the 2024 Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Fraud Policy and Service Provision. For example, with the recommendation that government must be able to be held accountable for discriminatory actions, and that implementation requires much more attention and consideration for the people concerned.¹⁸⁵

Erosion of institutions

The lack of follow-up to earlier recommendations is linked to a broader erosion of institutions. Since the establishment of the National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism (NCDR) in 2021, a National Programme against Discrimination and Racism is supposed to be adopted annually on the NCDR's initiative, containing measures to combat discrimination and racism. The most recent National Programme, however, was published at the end of 2023.¹⁸⁶ The Schoof cabinet repeatedly postponed the adoption of a new National Programme¹⁸⁷ and ultimately passed it on to the next cabinet.¹⁸⁸ As a result, a concrete, up-to-date approach to discrimination and racism by government has been lacking for some time.

In addition, the role of the NCDR has been scaled back: whereas the NCDR was originally responsible for drawing up the National Programme, since the spring of 2025 it has had only an advisory role.¹⁸⁹ At the same time, the Jetten cabinet states in its coalition agreement that it wants to take steps, including by anchoring the work of the NCDR and the National Coordinator for Combating Antisemitism in law.¹⁹⁰ In the budgetary annex

to the agreement, however, no additional resources have been earmarked for tackling discrimination and racism.¹⁹¹ This hampers the actual assumption of government responsibility.

It is concerning that the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations itself states that it has insufficient financial resources and capacity to fulfil its coordinating role on the issue of discrimination and racism.

191. Bureau Woordvoering Kabinetsformatie. (2026). [Budgettaire tabel en bijlage bij coalitieakkoord Aan de slag](#).

192. [Bijlage deel 13 van 38 bij Kamerstukken II, 36848, nr. 30](#). (2026, 30 januari).

193. See contributions by Members of Parliament during a committee debate in September 2025: [Kamerstukken II, 30950, nr. 502](#). (2025, 6 oktober).

194. Kros, K. et al. (2022). [Monitor lokaal antidiscriminatiebeleid 2022](#). Kennisplatform Inclusief Leven, i.s.m. Movisie.

195. College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (2025, 10 oktober). [Vijftien jaar na 10-10-10: De belofte van gelijkheid en de grenzen van het 'comply or explain' principe](#).

196. Spies, J. W. E. et al. (2015). [Vijf jaar verbonden. Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, Saba en Europees Nederland](#). Commissie evaluatie uitwerking van de nieuwe staatkundige structuur Caribisch Nederland.

197. [Kamerstukken II, 36200 IV, nr. 13](#). (2022, 20 oktober).

198. [Kamerstukken II, 36200 IV, nr. 85](#). (2023, 23 juni).

Against this background, it is all the more concerning that the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations itself states that it has insufficient financial resources and capacity to fulfil its coordinating role on the issue of discrimination and racism, nor to implement the advice and reports issued by the committee.¹⁹² Concern that too little is happening is also voiced from within the House of Representatives.¹⁹³ This reticence, moreover, extends more broadly than central government. A large proportion of municipalities, for example, have no anti-discrimination policy at all.¹⁹⁴

Caribbean Netherlands

This aloofness also manifests itself in the relationship between the European Netherlands and the Caribbean Netherlands. Since 2019, the comply-or-explain principle has applied: new policy and new legislation apply, in principle, to the Caribbean Netherlands as well, unless there are substantiated reasons to deviate from this.¹⁹⁵ In theory, the principle can allow room for a tailored approach suited to the islands, but this requires a careful and verifiable assessment.¹⁹⁶

In practice, however, the principle has not had the desired effect. The question of whether and how new policy also applies to the islands is, according to conversations held by the committee, often raised late by sectoral ministries, or not at all. This is sometimes due to unfamiliarity with the Caribbean context, and sometimes because its complexity is cited as a reason to avoid the topic. In 2022, the House of Representatives asked the government to include a standard passage on the Caribbean Netherlands in every parliamentary letter announcing new policy.¹⁹⁷ The cabinet argued that this request had been met by including a passage on the Caribbean Netherlands in policy-development handbooks.¹⁹⁸ The explanation of comply-or-explain in these handbooks, however, is limited and in some cases even incorrect, for example regarding the mandatory justification of legislative choices

for the Caribbean Netherlands.¹⁹⁹ The consequence is that the Caribbean Netherlands is not excluded on the basis of a conscious assessment, but is simply forgotten or deliberately avoided. Public documents rarely account for how the principle has been applied, meaning that such assessments cannot be verified.

Both the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights and the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure concluded in 2025 that the principle can actually contribute to increasing inequality.²⁰⁰ Failing to comply with, or postponing, legislation for the Caribbean Netherlands has led to backlogs that are difficult to make up.²⁰¹ A recent legal analysis, moreover, concludes that applying comply-or-explain in its current form is practically impossible, owing to a lack of clarity about the frameworks to be used. This leaves Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba vulnerable to administrative and political arbitrariness.²⁰²

The committee concludes that the way the Dutch government deals with the Caribbean Netherlands is in tension with the principle of equality. Equality must be the starting point in legislation, decisions, and policy for the whole of the Netherlands, with specific attention for the regional context. This does not mean that exactly the same policy must apply everywhere, but that specific attention is paid to the needs that exist and to how policy plays out for residents.

The reticence in government and political action is a political choice. Those who have the power to act, and choose not to, deliberately maintain the status quo. A government that so often adopts an aloof and wait-and-see attitude – certainly in light of the childcare benefits scandal and the absence of an up-to-date National Programme against Discrimination and Racism – normalises the presence of institutional discrimination and institutional racism.

3.4 In conclusion: how the explanations interrelate

The explanations described above for the lack of progress on discrimination and racism are not isolated from one another. They reinforce each other. When discrimination is seen as an incidental exception, a reactive, incident-based approach follows naturally, and politics can remain aloof. But when discrimination is recognised as a structural phenomenon that occurs within many institutional contexts, aloofness is no longer appropriate. Proactive obligations, the collection of better data, and structural accountability then become necessary. It also becomes clear that setting norms by politicians and those in authority is not optional, but essential. At the same time, it turns out that policy and implementation cannot be improved without diverse sources of knowledge, including those of citizen collectives and the perspectives of people who experience discrimination. It is precisely their experiences that reveal where rules, processes, and images of humanity play out unequally in practice. And conversely: when those experiences are consistently taken seriously, it becomes increasingly difficult to deny discrimination or reduce it to incidents. In this way, the three explanations interlock.

199. De Jong, B. L. (2025). [De juridische basis op orde voor een gelijkwaardig Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba](#), *Tijdschrift voor Constitutioneel Recht*, 16(4), 338–358.

200. Raad voor de leefomgeving en infrastructuur. (2025). [Samen naar beter: aanbevelingen voor het rijksbeleid voor het fysieke domein in Caribisch Nederland](#). College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (2025, 10 oktober). [Vijftien jaar na 10-10-10: De belofte van gelijkheid en de grenzen van het 'comply or explain' principe](#).

201. Idem.

202. De Jong, B. L. (2025). [De juridische basis op orde voor een gelijkwaardig Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba](#), *Tijdschrift voor Constitutioneel Recht*, 16(4), 338–358.

The need for a structural and proactive approach is further heightened by the fact that society itself is constantly changing. Demographic shifts mean that existing research categories increasingly fail to match the actual diversity of perspectives and experiences in society. As a result, the instruments currently used to measure and monitor discrimination lose validity and usefulness. The fact that the categories used do not align well with all groups can have far-reaching consequences. The interview with Stichting NNID, the Expertise Centre for Sex Diversity, illustrates this and offers further insight into the (discrimination) experiences of intersex people (interview 6).

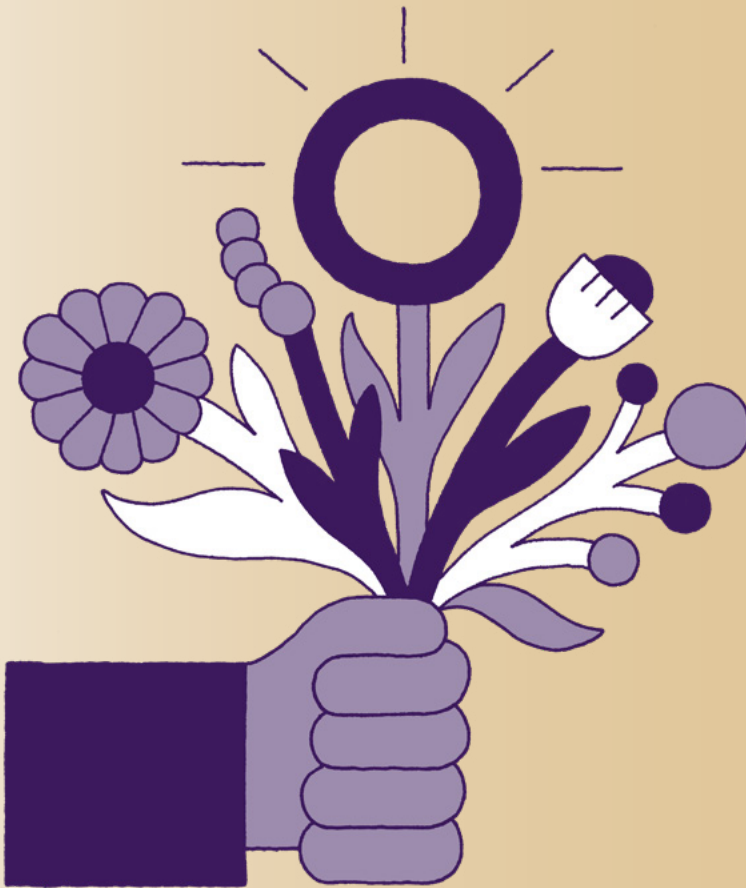
Those who have the power to act, and choose not to, deliberately maintain the status quo.

At the same time, technological developments, from algorithmic decision-making and profiling to the widespread application of artificial intelligence, bring new discrimination risks that develop faster than existing frameworks can keep up with. A future-oriented approach to discrimination therefore requires government not only to respond to what is currently visible, but to invest structurally in the capacity to recognise and prevent new forms of discrimination in good time. This requires continuous adaptation of monitoring, legal frameworks, and institutional working methods, and an awareness that the struggle against discrimination is not a finite project, but a lasting responsibility.

Dismantling discrimination and racism requires an action agenda that works at several levels simultaneously. The committee presents this action agenda in the next chapter.

Interview 6

‘Many intersex children are still operated on unnecessarily’



Interview with Renate Adriaansens,
policy officer at Stichting NNID,
the Expertise Centre for Sex Diversity

“It is estimated that there are around 198,000 intersex people in the Netherlands. They are born with a body that does not match the idea most people have of ‘man’ and ‘woman’.²⁰³ Research shows that two-thirds of Dutch people do not know what intersex is. That makes it difficult for intersex people to be open about it. Many intersex people have, from a young age, heard from doctors that they had better keep quiet, because society would not understand it. This creates stigma and taboo. We see that intersex people often become isolated as a result. We need to get rid of that stigma.

There are still doctors who advise intersex people to keep it a secret. And there are also still doctors who carry out unnecessary medical treatments on intersex children without their consent. These treatments can be put off until the child can decide for themselves. We know heart-breaking examples of intersex people who received treatments at a young age with lifelong consequences, including chronic pain and severe psychological effects. In the Netherlands, more than 1,000 genital operations are still carried out each year on children younger than twelve. They are treated differently in this regard than other children, who are protected against unnecessary treatments.

The effects of unnecessary medicalisation and secrecy continue into later life. Intersex people are much more likely to experience violence and sexual violence, are bullied more often, and face discrimination at work or when looking for a home. They more often experience disrespectful treatment from institutions. There are, for example, far too many unnecessary sex registrations at Dutch institutions. For intersex people, these are hurdles that are difficult to overcome. That must be possible via the courts or the current Transgender Act, but that is not straightforward.

A group that runs into even more hurdles are intersex asylum seekers. They have to prove to the IND that they are intersex, but are not believed. Sometimes we hear heart-breaking cases, such as that of an asylum-seeking family with an intersex child. The family was deported, but not before the child was operated on. The idea was that otherwise it couldn't be returned to its country of origin. The doctors will probably have thought they were doing something humane. But instead of assisting with an asylum application on the base of being intersex, they signed someone up for life.”

203. “The term intersex refers to the experiences of people who are born with a body that does not match the image of male or female that society holds. [...] Intersex is not something you ‘are’, but something you ‘have’. [...] So you have an intersex body, just as you have a large or small nose. [...] Intersex is a variation on the norms that have (wrongly) applied to the ‘diagnosis’ of male or female sex. The norm for ‘male’ is XY chromosomes, a penis, testes, testosterone, and a particular body type, while the norm for ‘female’ assumes XX chromosomes, a vagina, ovaries and oestrogen, and a different body type. Yet girls are born with XY chromosomes and boys with XX chromosomes. Or boys with a vagina, and girls with a clitoris so large that it could equally be described as a small penis. In these latter situations, doctors and parents often still think that surgical intervention is necessary. In most cases, however, there is no medical emergency, and surgery is performed for cosmetic reasons alone.” (Source: [Seksediversiteit.nl](https://seksediversiteit.nl/), (z.d.). [Wat is intersekse?](https://seksediversiteit.nl/))

4. Action agenda for dismantling discrimination and racism

Discrimination and racism affect the whole of society. Everyone is involved, directly or indirectly, whether consciously or not: as someone who is affected, as a witness, or as part of institutions that perpetuate discrimination or, conversely, dismantle it. Preventing and combating discrimination is a shared responsibility of government, institutions, civil society organisations, and residents. But that responsibility is not equally distributed. Individual residents – even when they organise in citizen collectives or grassroots movements – have less power to force structural change than large organisations or government. At the same time, it is precisely these movements that have shown for decades that change is indeed possible. Time and again, they have made visible what was long denied, thereby clearing the way for new norms, policy, and legislation.

Government has a particular task, but also a particular responsibility, to actively carry, strengthen, and durably anchor this change. After all, it is legislator, employer, service provider, and protector of fundamental rights. The analysis in the previous chapter shows why the approach to discrimination and racism is not making sufficient progress. At the same time, that analysis also makes clear where the levers for improvement lie. The question is not only whether government is willing to look critically at itself, but also whether it is willing to change. That requires not only insight, but also administrative and political courage.

A great deal of knowledge is available, and concrete instruments have been developed for tackling discrimination and racism, both by the committee and by other organisations. Moreover, the committee senses that there is broad willingness in society to take further steps. This provides grounds for action.

There is broad willingness in society to take further steps. This provides grounds for action.

In this chapter, the committee presents a coherent action agenda for dismantling discrimination and racism. This action agenda has been developed on the basis of research, conversations, and active collaboration with government bodies and civil society organisations, and builds on insights from the preceding chapters. The recommendations

the committee made earlier in its progress reports²⁰⁴ and the outcomes of sessions organised by the committee have also been incorporated.

The committee arrives at five areas of focus, with ten specific actions. Together, these solutions and actions are aimed at a structural change of course, particularly on the part of government. Some of these actions will sound familiar. That is no coincidence. Earlier reports and committees reached similar conclusions.²⁰⁵ That so much of this has not been sufficiently followed up says something important: what is lacking is not knowledge of what needs to happen, but the political will and administrative capacity to actually do it. This action agenda therefore focuses not only on what needs to happen, but also on how change can be implemented concretely, in the short term, and on a lasting basis.

This action agenda brings together a variety of insights and (scientific) disciplines. In doing so, the committee offers a more integrated approach to discrimination and racism by government. The actions are aimed at structural change both in society and within government, through strengthening societal engagement, knowledge, legislation, governance, and oversight. These forms of strengthening are closely interlinked. Knowledge and monitoring make targeted policy possible. Stronger governance ensures coherence and cooperation. Good legislation makes prevention enforceable. Broad engagement of citizen collectives and civil society organisations is not a side issue in this, but a precondition. Figure 1 provides an overview of the areas of focus and actions.

Dismantling discrimination is not a one-off task. It is an ongoing responsibility for all of us. Government has a particular role to play in this: as norm-setter, as guardian of equal treatment, and as the first to show that equal treatment is more than a promise.

204. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has, in part, already started implementation of this, partly in response to motions from the House of Representatives. For example, the ministry is taking central leadership for the further roll-out of the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services and the Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes. The ministry also organised a symposium on the preliminary advisory reports and the PSED report.

205. See, for example: Parlementaire onderzoekscommissie effectiviteit antidiscriminatiewetgeving. (2022). [*Gelijk recht doen. Een parlementair onderzoek naar de mogelijkheden van de wetgever om discriminatie tegen te gaan.*](#) Parlementaire enquêtecommissie Fraudebeleid en Dienstverlening. (2024). [*Blind voor mens en recht. Raad voor de leefomgeving en infrastructuur.*](#) (2025). [*Samen naar beter: aanbevelingen voor het rijksbeleid voor het fysieke domein in Caribisch Nederland.*](#) Rechtbank Den Haag. (2026, 28 januari). [ECLI:NL:RBDHA:2026:1344.](#)

Action agenda

Broaden the perspective: take pluralism as a starting point

1. Ensure that the government truly reflects society
2. Systematically involve citizen collectives and residents in legislation, policy, implementation, and oversight

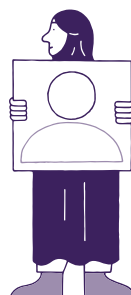


Make societal inequalities visible: organise structural monitoring and insight

3. Encourage systematic data collection and knowledge development regarding discrimination and racism
4. Invest in mutual knowledge of the Caribbean Netherlands

Ensure a durable approach to discrimination: take the lead and prevent discrimination

5. Strengthen central leadership, coordination, and action on the issue of discrimination
6. Implement the Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes and the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services across the entire public sector



Work towards an anti-discriminatory government: stop profiling and update anti-discrimination legislation

7. Stop current and planned uses of data-driven profiling and invest in alternative methods
8. Enforce legal prevention through the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and update non-discrimination law

Take responsibility: contribute to equality and equity

9. Make equality and equity the standard in the Caribbean Netherlands as well
10. Society: establish equality and equity as the norm and actively live by them

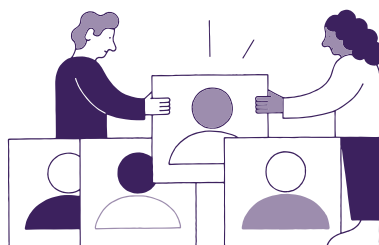


Figure 1. Action agenda for dismantling discrimination and racism

4.1 Broaden the perspective: take pluralism as a starting point

To counter the lack of representation (see section 3.1), pluralism is a requirement. Discrimination and racism persist wherever certain perspectives are missing or systematically excluded. As long as government only listens to the voices already at the table, nothing changes. Pluralism requires a shift: from decision-making about people to decision-making with people. The committee is thereby advocating an approach that moves towards ‘deep democracy’: a form of democracy in which not only those who are already heard are listened to, but in which active room is made for perspectives that are normally excluded, including uncomfortable ones.²⁰⁶

The committee is not alone in this. Earlier research and earlier committees have already described the importance of representation and participation.²⁰⁷ Yet insufficient steps have been taken in this area. The committee therefore reiterates the importance of pluralism and translates it into concrete actions. Representation and participation are not stand-alone goals: they are an essential precondition for further progress. The following actions are necessary:

1. Ensure that the government truly reflects society

Pluralism in society begins within government. Without diversity in the workplace and room for dissenting perspectives, decision-making remains one-sided and closed. Break through this closedness. Build a government that represents everyone and excludes no one. This requires concrete action. The following steps are necessary:

Government bodies, ensure that your workforce, at all levels including the very top, truly reflects society.²⁰⁸

Take visible action on the recruitment, progression, and retention of, among others, people with a practical educational background, people from different ethnic groups, people with disabilities, women, and other groups currently under-represented in higher pay scales or positions.²⁰⁹ Address inequality with proven effective measures, such as objectifying selection criteria, recording and accounting for the choices made by recruitment panels, and actively monitoring recruitment and progression figures per job level.²¹⁰ Involve both the European and Caribbean Netherlands fully and purposefully in staff recruitment.

Government bodies, create a safe and inclusive working environment.

Representation and diversity only have meaning once diverse perspectives can actually be contributed and are taken seriously. Work on inclusion using proven effective initiatives, such as training and deploying managers as role models and actively reducing discrimination in the workplace.²¹¹

- 206. Ghorashi, H. (2025). *Ontregelende meerstemmigheid. Pleidooi en bouwstenen voor anders participeren*. Uitgeverij van Gennep & Movisie.
- 207. Boogaard, G. et al. (2024). *Essaybundel burgerparticipatie op nationaal niveau*. Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties. Parlementaire onderzoekscommissie effectiviteit antidiscriminatiewetgeving. (2022). *Gelijk recht doen. Een parlementair onderzoek naar de mogelijkheden van de wetgever om discriminatie tegen te gaan*. Van Kampen, L. et al. (2026). *Beschouwing. Perspectieven op 'zinvolle' participatie*. Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
- 208. By ‘government bodies’, the committee refers to ministries, public service providers, provinces, municipalities, water authorities, and all other (central) government institutions.
- 209. A good example is the [secondary vocational education \(mbo\) traineeship programme, launched in 2026](#) by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations / Housing and Spatial Planning.
- 210. Hulsege, G. et al. (2020). *Delphi-studie stand der wetenschap arbeidsmarkt-discriminatie. Interventies om arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie te verminderen en de diversiteit te vergroten*. TNO.
- 211. Coello Eertink, L. & Kreinsen, S. (2019). *Inclusief beleid op de werkvloer. Factoren die bijdragen aan (het creëren van) een inclusieve werkvloer*. Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving. Van den Brink, M. C. L., & Celik, S. (2023). *We zijn er nog niet. De lange weg naar een inclusieve organisatie*. *Beleid & Maatschappij*, 14(2), 108–116.

Government bodies, ensure that every civil servant has the knowledge and skills to act inclusively.

This is not a side issue, but a core task. Make training on fundamental rights, diversity, and inclusion a core part of onboarding, introduction programmes, and career development. Pay explicit attention, in doing so, to discrimination – including by government itself – and to the different parts of the Kingdom, including the Caribbean Netherlands. Knowledge of this is still too often lacking among civil servants who develop policy that directly affects the BES islands. This is a driving responsibility for the Directorate-General for Digitalisation and Government Organisation, as the body responsible for high-quality civil-service professionalism via the Civil Service and Organisation Directorate. The Senior Civil Service (ABD) has a specific responsibility for strengthening the inclusive leadership of ABD managers.

Government bodies, take action where internal representation still falls short, and organise additional safeguards.

Deploy people with lived experience for this: people who, on the basis of their own experience of discrimination or exclusion, know where policy falls short and what could be improved. Lived experience is a fully-fledged form of expertise, not volunteer work. Pay people with lived experience fairly and structurally for their contribution. Also ensure that perspectives from all parts of the Netherlands are taken into account. Give specific attention, therefore, to knowledge and representation from the Caribbean Netherlands.

2. Systematically involve citizen collectives and residents in legislation, policy, implementation, and oversight

Pluralism also requires structural engagement with civil society. If government wants to change, it is essential to learn from, and work together with, citizen collectives. This is all the more important because existing policy instruments and work processes still pay too little explicit attention to diversity, particularly to the voice of marginalised groups. As a result, their perspectives easily remain out of view, are gathered too late, or are gathered but not actually taken into account at decision-making moments.²¹² Involve civil society, and specifically relevant citizen collectives and marginalised groups, in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policy and legislation. Do not make participation optional, but a fixed part of co-creative work processes. Invest substantially in civil society and make co-creation the norm. The following actions are necessary for this:

Cabinet, municipalities, and other government bodies, facilitate a strong and independent civil society.

Provide structural funding. Support citizen collectives and civil society organisations in the Caribbean Netherlands. Take civil society organisations seriously as knowledge partners and learn from their knowledge, insights, and ways of working. Protect civil society as a countervailing force. Stop restricting the right to demonstrate.

212. Van Kampen, L. et al. (2026). *Beschouwing. Perspectieven op 'zinvolle' participatie*. Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

Cabinet, municipalities, and other government bodies, ensure sufficient time, budget, support, and accessible infrastructure for civic and societal engagement.

Invest in durable relationships with residents and citizen collectives. Explicitly make room for residents from the Caribbean Netherlands and actively remove barriers to their participation. Also ensure that grassroots movements and informal citizen collectives in particular have a structural seat at the table: they reach people that large, professionally organised organisations often do not reach, and they know what is really going on. Organise civic engagement in such a way that all groups in society can participate on an equal footing. Provide multi-year funding and fair compensation for lived experience and community expertise. Without these preconditions, participation remains a promise on paper.

Government bodies, make civic participation a fixed part of work processes.

Civic participation is not optional. Ensure that civil servants are continually reminded that involving civil society organisations and citizen collectives is part of the job. Make civic engagement a mandatory, rather than optional, part of the Policy Compass. Develop creative and co-creative working methods that go beyond consultation evenings and surveys. Consider a civic service term for civil servants: an annual obligation to work together with a community initiative related to their own policy area. This way, civil servants get to know the practical reality of the people for whom they develop policy.

Government bodies, establish a National Participation Academy.

Valuable civic participation does not arise by itself, but requires the right skills. Invest, therefore, in developing and delivering training for civil servants. One concrete way to anchor this structurally is to establish a National Participation Academy, as previously proposed by the Participation Knowledge Hub.²¹³ Skills alone, however, are not enough. Making valuable use of civic participation requires a fundamentally different attitude. Put humility at the centre: be aware of what you do not know, learn from different perspectives, and take residents seriously as equal conversation partners.

213. Boogaard, G. et al. (2024). [*Essaybundel burgerparticipatie op nationaal niveau*](#). Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties.

4.2 Make societal inequalities visible: organise structural monitoring and insight

Targeted policy against discrimination and racism is impossible without reliable data and knowledge. The absence of data and monitoring at national level leads to knowledge gaps (see section 3.2.1). This is reinforced by the absence of a diversity of perspectives. Systematically map changes in the nature, scale, and patterns of discrimination and racism, so that policy interventions no longer lag behind events but can be designed proactively and coherently. Undertake, therefore, the following actions:

3. Encourage systematic data collection and knowledge development regarding discrimination and racism

If you do not measure or research something, you do not know whether your approach is effective. To be able to combat discrimination and racism effectively, reliable data are needed that make it possible to make visible differences in treatment, access, and outcomes between groups of people.²¹⁴ Without insight into patterns, the approach to discrimination remains ad hoc, reactive, and inadequate.

At the same time, existing measurement methods and research categories are losing their usefulness due to demographic shifts (see section 3.2.1). Without timely renewal, the ability to see discrimination risks diminishing at precisely the moment when the need for structural insight is growing. This must change. The following actions are necessary for this:

Cabinet, establish a long-term, interdisciplinary knowledge centre that provides direction for policy on discrimination and racism on the basis of in-depth research.

A government that wants to structurally prevent discrimination and racism needs lasting insight into what is changing in society, legislation, implementation, and technology. The committee's experience shows that an interdisciplinary perspective in particular yields new insights: legal norms, implementation practices, data and technology, societal power relations, and lived experience all interact with one another. If you look at these components in isolation, you miss connections and policy remains reactive. With the conclusion of the committee's work, this integrated view risks being lost, even though the task is not temporary. Anchor, therefore, a discrimination knowledge centre that pools and deepens knowledge, identifies developments at an early stage, and provides the cabinet with direction for choices on policy, legislation and regulation, and implementation. In this knowledge centre, research, monitoring, experiential knowledge, and implementation insights come together structurally. This allows for systematic learning about what works, for whom, and under what

²¹⁴ European Commission. (2026, 20 januari). *A Union of Equality. EU Anti-racism Strategy 202*.

circumstances. There are already strong research institutes and a broad group of academic researchers from various disciplines active in this field. What is currently still lacking is a fixed structure in which this knowledge is continuously brought together and translated into strategic direction for the cabinet, with attention to the connections between grounds, domains, and societal developments. Explore in the short term which institutional form is most suitable for this, for example an independent body, an advisory council, or a consortium of parties, provided that independence, continuity, and influence on policy and implementation are guaranteed.

Cabinet, develop a national strategy for collecting and using equality data, or have this done by the knowledge centre to be established.

The Netherlands does not have a coherent framework that determines how equality data can be collected, for what purposes, with what quality standards, and by whom. This gap must be closed. Develop a strategy that covers the full breadth of relevant forms of knowledge: qualitative and quantitative, small-scale and large-scale, scientific and experience-based, institutional and community-based. Give a central place to the knowledge of people who themselves experience discrimination and the knowledge of civil society groups working on this. Include in the strategy data on personal characteristics (including statutory grounds of discrimination such as ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and disability, and non-statutory grounds such as socio-economic status, education, or physical characteristics), data on documented experiences (such as discrimination reports and surveys), and data on outcomes (such as the results of selection, allocation, checks, and progression). Make explicit in the strategy how this knowledge is shared responsibly and used for monitoring, evaluation, and improving policy and implementation.²¹⁵ Essential here is that knowledge is collected not only about people, but with them. Ensure, therefore, clear principles for the fair and privacy-conscious handling of data. The starting point here should not be government's information needs, but the autonomy and agency of the groups concerned.²¹⁶

Cabinet, commission a knowledge institution to carry out long-term, large-scale monitoring of discrimination in the Netherlands, covering both the European and the Caribbean Netherlands.

Choose an institution such as the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) and/or Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Have them carry out the monitor in close cooperation with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Ensure that this monitor investigates, in any case, cumulative and intersectional forms of discrimination. Make this monitor part of the knowledge base with which the knowledge centre to be established provides the cabinet with strategic direction. Report to the House of Representatives at least once every two years on the findings and trends from the monitor, so that parliament can fulfil its oversight role in this area.

215. European Commission. (z.d.) [Equality data collection](#).

216. De Vries, K. M., i.s.m. Schalkwijk, J. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, [Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht](#).

4. Invest in mutual knowledge of the Caribbean Netherlands

There is an appalling lack of knowledge about the Caribbean Netherlands in the European Netherlands (see section 3.2.1). Inequalities that are not measured are not seen or recognised. Policy that is not based on Caribbean reality perpetuates those inequalities. Break this pattern. The recommendations on knowledge development and monitoring described above also apply explicitly to the Caribbean Netherlands. But more knowledge production alone is not enough. Knowledge about the Caribbean Netherlands cannot be produced exclusively from European-Dutch frameworks and institutions. Create, therefore, a knowledge infrastructure that does justice to the Caribbean context. Give island communities a say in this over the questions that are asked, the methods used, and the way results are shared and applied. Also ensure that sufficient resources are available in the Caribbean Netherlands to research what is relevant to the islands themselves. In this way, knowledge of the Caribbean Netherlands becomes reciprocal. Undertake the following actions for this:

Knowledge institutions and the Dutch Research Council (NWO), invest in research capacity on the islands themselves and apply co-creative forms of knowledge development.

Provide structural funding so that researchers, local professionals, and communities can jointly formulate questions and validate findings in the Caribbean context. Create more (academic) doctoral positions on and for the BES islands. Facilitate opportunities for professionals from the Caribbean region to return. Also invest in sufficient resources to initiate research from a Caribbean perspective.

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, make existing local knowledge and research accessible.

Address the invisibility and inaccessibility of the considerable amount of locally produced knowledge. Ensure that this knowledge is made structurally accessible to researchers, policymakers, and residents of the Caribbean Netherlands. Invest in coordinating the knowledge infrastructure on the BES islands and in digitising existing sources.

CBS, SCP, and other national knowledge institutions, structurally involve the Caribbean Netherlands in regular research programmes and data collection.

Make the inclusion of the Caribbean Netherlands the norm in national research. Ensure that all research programmes structurally include the Caribbean Netherlands, making comparison with the European Netherlands possible and bringing inequalities into view.

4.3 Ensure a durable approach to discrimination: take the lead and prevent discrimination

A robust approach to discrimination and racism requires clear direction, institutional anchoring, and an anticipatory, learning government. At present, the approach to discrimination and racism is fragmented, insufficiently structurally embedded, and reactive (see sections 3.2 and 3.3). Central leadership is therefore necessary. A durable approach to discrimination and racism, moreover, requires a government that is aware of the discrimination risks in its own services and policy, and that addresses them. Investment in proactive learning and change instruments is therefore essential. The following actions are necessary:

5. Strengthen central leadership, coordination, and action on the issue of discrimination

In recent years, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has not sufficiently taken up its role on the discrimination dossier. Civil-service staffing is too limited, and necessary initiatives to combat discrimination remain stalled for far too long. Although the current government states in its coalition agreement that it wants to take steps on discrimination and racism, no budget has been allocated for this. Moreover, the approach to discrimination and racism, and related themes such as diversity, inclusion, and emancipation, is fragmented across a variety of ministries and departments. It is necessary for the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to take the lead, coordinate cooperation between different ministries and departments, and get to work on concrete actions. Take the following steps for this:

Cabinet, enable the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to take the lead.

The current coalition agreement states that racism and discrimination have no place in our society. Show that government genuinely takes the approach to discrimination and racism seriously. Give the Ministry of the Interior the resources and staffing needed to take up its coordinating role and to implement the available advice and reports.

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, create a Directorate against Discrimination.

Strengthen the visibility and priority of the approach to discrimination and racism. Organise a clear and powerful point of contact at national level. Give this directorate the resources (staff and budget) to actually deliver on the coordination and approach to discrimination and racism.

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, build connections between ministries, departments, and units working on discrimination and racism, diversity and inclusion, and emancipation.

These are themes that are strongly connected in substance, but that are fragmented across different ministries, departments, and units. Moreover, responsibility for tackling discrimination is allocated to different ministries depending on the ground of discrimination.²¹⁷ Structural change, however, requires an integrated approach. Strategies developed for different grounds of discrimination, moreover, can learn a great deal from each other. Coordination between the different themes is therefore essential. Ensure that the Directorate against Discrimination to be established takes on this coordinating role. Build connections between different departments and units. Ensure connection rather than competition between the themes of discrimination and racism, diversity and inclusion, and emancipation. Make tackling discrimination, across all areas, departments, and ministries, part of good governance.

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, draw up the National Programme against Discrimination and Racism.

Draw up a National Programme periodically, for example from the Directorate against Discrimination to be established, and ensure that it is actually implemented. Do this in consultation with the National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism. Formulate, in the National Programme, a long-term vision for a durable and coherent approach to discrimination and racism in society and within government. Translate this vision into concrete goals, linked to an action agenda per ministry, department, and the bodies involved. Structurally involve other ministries, institutions, and civil society organisations, so that the programme is broadly supported and effective.

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, take the lead on strengthened cooperation in enforcement and oversight.

Cooperation between institutional parties involved in tackling discrimination and racism is still insufficiently developed. Organise, therefore, a fixed partnership between supervisory and enforcement bodies, for example from the Directorate against Discrimination to be established. Align priorities, division of tasks, information-sharing, and joint actions within this partnership. Counter fragmentation and create a coherent and effective system of oversight and enforcement.

²¹⁷ For example, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for emancipation policy focused on LGBTQIA+ and gender equality, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is responsible for tackling discrimination on the grounds of origin, religion, and skin colour, and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for tackling discrimination on the grounds of disability.

6. Implement the Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes and the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services across the entire public sector

The Discrimination Assessment for Public Services and the Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes have proven themselves as active methods for identifying and preventing risks of discrimination and racism in policy and implementation. By involving residents and citizen collectives, the use of the Discrimination Assessment contributes to strengthening pluralism within government. Moreover, the Discrimination Assessment contributes to knowledge of, and insight into, discrimination risks within government organisations. The Discrimination Assessment thus forms an important building block for structurally anchoring non-discrimination and equal treatment in government action. In this context, the House of Representatives has adopted a motion requesting the government to safeguard the use of the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services and to give the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations central leadership.²¹⁸ Take the following steps:

Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, take active leadership of, and ownership for, the roll-out of the Discrimination Assessment.

Set concrete and measurable goals for the use of the Discrimination Assessment, in consultation with municipalities, public service providers, and ministries. Ensure sufficient resources and staffing for guidance, implementation, and further development.

Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, ensure transparency towards parliament.

Inform the House of Representatives annually about the outcomes and lessons from the application of the Discrimination Assessment, in a clear progress report, Staat van Discriminatie [State of Discrimination] (comparable to Staat van de Uitvoering [State of Implementation]).²¹⁹ This progress report provides insight into broader patterns of discrimination risks within government organisations and offers knowledge on how these risks can be addressed.

Ministries, public service providers, provinces, water authorities, and municipalities, set a good example by having all (semi-) government organisations periodically undergo the Discrimination Assessment.

This can subsequently help encourage application in other sectors, beyond government. A broader roll-out of the Discrimination Assessment contributes to structurally anchoring non-discrimination and equal treatment throughout the Netherlands.

218. Kamerstukken II, 30950, nr. 439, (2025, 19 maart).

219. See: [Staat van de Uitvoering](#).

4.4 Work towards an antidiscriminatory government: stop profiling and update anti-discrimination legislation

It is essential to structurally prevent discrimination and racism (see section 3.2). This requires a shift from reactive to proactive action, in which risks of discrimination are already addressed in policy, implementation, and legislation. This requires both ending practices that structurally lead to unequal treatment, such as profiling, and a fundamental strengthening of the legal framework. Undertake the following actions:

7. Stop current and planned uses of data-driven profiling and invest in alternative methods

Stop the use of current and planned forms of data-driven profiling for fraud policy. This approach conflicts with central principles of just government action and structurally leads to risks of direct and indirect discrimination. Invest, therefore, in alternative methods such as random checks. The following steps are necessary to realise this change of course:

Government bodies, stop current and planned uses of data-driven profiling for fraud policy.

Only if government can guarantee that profiling is more effective than other methods and will have no direct or indirect discriminatory effects is it conceivable that government might still make use of these methods in future. Moreover, ensure additional structural safeguards, such as meaningful participation and input from citizens, and proactive and independent oversight with attention to (additional) risks of cumulative discrimination through profiling.

Government bodies, invest in alternative methods such as random checks.

When government cannot demonstrate that the use of profiling is necessary, proportionate, and non-discriminatory, it is necessary to invest in alternative methods for carrying out tasks and services. Consider the use of random checks and 100% checks, given that the risks of discrimination with these methods are very low.

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, develop government-wide frameworks for oversight and enforcement without profiling.

Establish that random sampling is the norm, and formulate clear conditions for exceptions, such as supportive profiling, with safeguards for participation, transparency, verifiability, and legal protection. Actively assess whether government bodies are genuinely moving away from profiling and whether alternative methods comply with the aforementioned principles of just government action.

8. Enforce legal prevention through the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and update non-discrimination law

Reform the legal framework so that it actively prevents discrimination and racism. The current non-discrimination law is complex, fragmented, and strongly focused on individual, reactive enforcement. The legislation is insufficiently equipped to tackle structural discrimination. Strengthen coherence, and anchor prevention and a structural approach to discrimination in law. Take the following steps for this:

Cabinet, in particular the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, introduce a statutory Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).²²⁰

Require government bodies, through the PSED, to structurally and demonstrably factor in the importance of non-discrimination and equal treatment across their entire performance of duties and decision-making, including data-driven profiling practices. Include this duty in law, on the basis of the concrete statutory wording developed by the committee.²²¹ Use clear statutory provisions on scope, content, concepts, and exceptions, inspired by British and Irish experience. Also require government bodies, under the PSED, to carry out an equality impact assessment (covering all grounds of discrimination, with attention to intersectionality) and to consult stakeholders in all phases of the policy cycle (ex ante, ex durante, and ex post evaluations of policy and regulation). Include this in the Policy Compass.²²²

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, develop, in consultation, an accountability and oversight mechanism for the PSED.

Ensure transparency within government through the PSED. Encourage, and in due course require, government bodies to develop anti-discrimination policy for all their tasks, monitor progress, and publicly account for this through reports overseen by an independent authority. The committee has worked out a growth path based on three PSED variants that increase in ambition.²²³ Develop a plan for phased introduction of this. Ensure sufficient funding and the right preconditions. Pay attention here to feasibility, impact, administrative embedding and governance, meaningful participation, and responsible *equality data collection*.²²⁴ Involve, in this context, the knowledge centre to be established as a possible stepping stone towards an independent monitoring and oversight body. In this way, make the PSED an overarching legal framework for the committee's proposed actions on these themes.

Cabinet, in particular the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, set in motion a broader, fundamental renewal of non-discrimination law.

Tackle institutional and structural forms of discrimination more effectively by fundamentally renewing Dutch non-discrimination law.²²⁵ Base this on developments in the European and international human rights framework. Use, in doing so, the vision for the future developed by the committee, with three pillars along which renewal

220. A motion has been adopted by the House of Representatives requesting the government to set this process in motion. See: Kamerstukken II, 36284, nr. 56. (2025, 3 juli).

221. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). *Gelijkheidsplicht Publieke Sector (GPS). Naar wettelijke verankering van een proactieve aanpak van discriminatie door de overheid*. (pp. 128).

222. Senden, L. A. J. & Visser, M. C. B. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, *Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht*.

223. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). *Gelijkheidsplicht Publieke Sector (GPS). Naar wettelijke verankering van een proactieve aanpak van discriminatie door de overheid*. (pp. 127-137).

224. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). *Gelijkheidsplicht Publieke Sector (GPS). Naar wettelijke verankering van een proactieve aanpak van discriminatie door de overheid*. (pp. 139-140).

225. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2025). *Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht*.

can take place: norm, compliance, and cooperation. Ensure that non-discrimination law acquires clearer concepts²²⁶ and a more explicitly proactive character. Add, in this context, obligations for organisations and employers to prevent discrimination.²²⁷ Strengthen, moreover, legal protection, among other things by including a prohibition on discrimination through unilateral government action in the General Equal Treatment Act.²²⁸

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, counter fragmentation and integrate existing laws into an accessible and coherent act.

Systematic renewal requires more than isolated legislative amendments. It is also about creating coherence. At the same time, a step-by-step renewal can be more effective. Develop, therefore, a programmatic approach, in which legislation is designed in phases and connected to policy, implementation, knowledge development, and societal dialogue. Follow these steps for this:

1. Take stock of existing equal-treatment laws. Arrive at a coherent, accessible legal framework, for example in the form of an Integration Act on Equal Treatment.
2. Develop a substantive framework based on the aforementioned pillars for renewal.
3. Work together, in this process, with the bodies involved, civil society organisations, and citizen collectives.
4. Translate these principles into concrete legislation and a phased implementation strategy.

226. Holtmaat, H.M.T & Achouak el Idrissi, L.Z. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, *Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatie-recht*.
Dube, N. & Alspeer, J. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, *Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatie-recht*.

227. Hoogenboom, A. & Waddington, L. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, *Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatie-recht*.
Senden, L. A. J., & Visser, M. C. B. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, *Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatie-recht*.

228. Groenendijk, C. A. & Kruyt, A. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, *Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatie-recht*.
Loof, J.-P., Jans, H. & Terpstra, G. (2025). In Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, *Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatie-recht*.

4.5 Take responsibility: contribute to equality and equity

Government and politics' current detachment undermines the approach to discrimination and racism (see section 3.3). It is essential that institutions and organisations stand firmly behind the constitutional prohibition of discrimination, and that government and politics live up to their leading role in preventing and combating it. At the same time, everyone in the Netherlands can contribute to equality and equity, with particular emphasis on people in positions of authority.

Article 1 of the Constitution recognises no hierarchy between regions. The right to equal treatment applies to every resident of the Netherlands, whether they live in Zeeland, on Vlieland, in Groningen, or on Saba. Equity must therefore be the starting point in legislation, decisions, policy, and conduct throughout the Netherlands. The following actions are needed.

9. Make equality and equity the standard in the Caribbean Netherlands as well

Nowhere is the distance between the norm of equity and reality as great as in the Caribbean part of our country (see sections 2.3 and 3.3.2). Although Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba have been part of the Netherlands since 2010, structural inequalities exist in legislation, knowledge, and socio-economic position. This is in tension with the equality principle and touches on the fundamental promise the Netherlands made to the residents of the BES islands in 2010. This must change. The following steps are necessary:

Cabinet, develop a vision for the future with the Caribbean Netherlands, in equal consultation with the residents and administrators of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba.

The Dutch government takes measures in the Caribbean Netherlands in areas such as education, social security, and infrastructure, but a coherent vision for the future is lacking. That is untenable. Develop a government-wide vision for the future that puts the islands' quality of life at its centre. Ensure, in doing so, equal consultation with the residents and administrators of the BES islands. Make explicit, in this vision for the future, which values are guiding. Translate the vision for the future into a strategic agenda with concrete goals, timelines, budgetary choices, and public accountability. In substance, this requires vigorously addressing structural backlogs, including in financial security, education, employment, local infrastructure, and climate policy.

Cabinet, strengthen the comply-or-explain principle.

Make it the starting point that all treaties ratified by the Netherlands, and all laws that apply in the European Netherlands, also apply to the Caribbean Netherlands. Leave it to Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba to indicate when full application is not feasible in the short term

because of the islands' specific circumstances, rather than having this decided in The Hague. This shifts the lead to the islands and makes differentiation a deliberate choice that serves their specific needs. Ensure that the cabinet concretely justifies, in public documents, which choices have been made, why, and with what consequences for residents of the Caribbean Netherlands.

Ministry of Justice and Security, in particular the Knowledge Centre for Policy and Regulation, make the Caribbean Netherlands an integral part of the Policy Compass.

Include targeted and explicit questions about the Caribbean Netherlands in every step of the Policy Compass, so that differences in problems, goals, solutions, and consequences between the European and Caribbean Netherlands become visible. Ensure that every civil servant uses the Policy Compass to consistently assess what policy developed in the European Netherlands means for the Caribbean Netherlands.

10. Society: establish equality and equity as the norm and actively live by them

Discrimination and racism affect the whole of society and require a shared responsibility, and therefore everyone's effort. At the same time, not everyone has the same power to bring about change. A large part of the responsibility for combating and preventing discrimination and racism therefore lies, in particular, with politicians, political administrators, (senior) civil servants, and other bearers of the democratic rule of law, such as the media, journalists, and social media platforms. Discrimination and racism do not disappear by themselves. They must be actively named, combated, and prevented. This requires clear norm-setting and visible leadership. Civil society plays a crucial role in identifying, raising, and combating discrimination and racism. Anti-discrimination organisations, advocacy organisations, citizen collectives, and grassroots movements bring forward experiences from society and contribute to public awareness, policy improvement, and legal protection. The following steps are necessary:

Politicians, consistently uphold the norm of equality and equity.

Stop discriminatory and racist statements. Take responsibility in, and for, public debate. Do not make statements that contribute to normalising discrimination or exclusion. Political language is never neutral and has major societal effects.

Cabinet members and administrators, actively and consistently speak out against discrimination and racism.

Name and explicitly acknowledge discrimination and racism. Visibly uphold the norm of equity in word and deed. Correct where necessary, including each other.

Cabinet members and administrators, actively steer towards preventing and combating institutional discrimination within (semi-) government bodies.

Formulate anti-discrimination policy. Identify risks, take measures, and hold organisations that fall short to account. Make use of instruments such as the Discrimination Assessment to identify discrimination risks in good time. Make use of positive action, such as preferential policies and quotas, to combat inequalities.²²⁹

Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, actively enforce compliance.

Hold government organisations and cabinet members accountable for discrimination and racism in statements, policy, legislation, and service provision. Intervene where anti-discrimination policy falls short or where follow-up on discrimination risks is inadequate.

Media and journalists, be aware of your influence on public debate.

Steer clear of spreading discriminatory and racist expressions. Remain critical, provide pushback, and name discriminatory and racist statements and actions. Prevent the normalisation of discrimination and racism.

Social media platforms, combat the normalisation of discrimination and racism via social media.

Take reports seriously. Comply with the Digital Services Act. Give recognised researchers access to relevant data, so that they can research online discrimination and racism.

Businesses and civil society institutions, uphold and strengthen inclusive norms.

Tackle discrimination and racism wherever it occurs, for example in schools, on sports fields, on public transport, and in hospitals. Encourage and record reports. Raise awareness. Apply proven effective interventions to reduce discrimination and strengthen inclusive norms.²³⁰

Employers, actively pursue policy against discrimination and racism within organisations.

Apply proven effective interventions to reduce and prevent discrimination²³¹ and increase diversity.²³²

Institutional parties involved in tackling discrimination and racism, work together on enforcement and oversight.

Discrimination.nl, Meld.Onlinediscriminatie, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, the National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism, and the National Coordinator for Combating Antisemitism: align priorities, tasks, information-sharing, and joint actions.

Sectoral (market) regulators, make tackling discrimination a priority.

Oversight of compliance with the prohibition of discrimination and the right to equal treatment is also a responsibility for sectoral (market) regulators, such as the Netherlands Authority for Consumers

229. See Raad van State. (2016, 31 oktober). nr. W04.16.0229/1 (advies).

230. Felten, H., & Broekroelofs, R. (2022). *Wat werkt bij het verminderen van discriminatie*. Movisie.

231. Idem.

232. Hulsege, G. et al. (2020). *Delphi-studie stand der wetenschap arbeidsmarkt-discriminatie. Interventies om arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie te verminderen en de diversiteit te vergroten*. TNO.

and Markets, the Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets, the Dutch Data Protection Authority, the National Ombudsman, and inspectorates. Market regulators are mainly strict when it comes to economic and financial interests. The effects of policy on people are often not assessed. Make equality a priority.

Civil society organisations and citizen collectives, keep actively raising signals of discrimination.

Consistently bring experiences and expertise from society to the attention of politics and government organisations. Use your unique position to bring a diversity of voices and perspectives into public debate.

Civil society organisations and movements, seek cooperation to build a strong countervailing voice.

Strengthen the collective countervailing voice and increase its impact. Many societal and administrative changes have started with community initiatives and activism. Together, civil society organisations are stronger. Solidarity between civil society organisations is essential to combat structural and intersectional forms of discrimination.

Residents, speak out and report discrimination.

Stop looking away. Discrimination and racism exist, and everyone can contribute to combating them. Report discrimination, including when you see others being discriminated against.

4.6 In conclusion: dismantling discrimination is a lasting task

Discrimination is not a marginal phenomenon. It is a structural problem that affects people and groups in their daily lives and undermines the very core of the democratic rule of law. Discrimination erodes trust, hinders equal opportunity, and undermines the legitimacy of government action. Dismantling discrimination requires more than incidental measures, temporary attention, or awareness-raising.²³³ It requires political choices, institutional renewal, and durable investment in knowledge, prevention, oversight, and societal engagement. It also requires a government that sets a good example itself and consistently makes Article 1 of the Constitution its guiding principle.

With this action agenda, the committee provides concrete tools for a structural change of course. The recommendations show how government, institutions, and society can together build an equitable society. At the same time, humility is appropriate here. This agenda does not offer a ready-made final solution – a *quick fix* – for a problem that is deep-rooted and multifaceted. It marks a first, necessary step in dismantling persistent patterns of discrimination. Structural change requires a willingness to keep learning and adjusting, and calls for continuous attention and vigilance.

233. Baldewsingh, R. (2026). [*De illusie van gelijkheid. Pleidooi voor een fundamentele herijking van de aanpak van discriminatie en racisme in Nederland.*](#) Nationaal Coördinator tegen Discriminatie en Racisme.

A warning is in order here. The rights and protections built up over decades of struggle are not self-evident. They continue to exist only as long as they are actively maintained and strengthened. The moment effort slackens – for example because political priorities shift or societal vigilance declines – the course can change. International developments show how quickly that can happen. In the United States, diversity and inclusion policy at both public and private organisations is under pressure, with direct consequences for representation and equal treatment.²³⁴ In Hungary, the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community have been restricted. The European Court of Justice recently ruled that Hungary violated fundamental principles of the European Union with a law that stigmatises, marginalises, and treats LGBTQIA+ people as a threat to society.²³⁵ Since 2020, abortion has been made virtually impossible in Poland.²³⁶ A recent United Nations report shows that, worldwide, a quarter of countries are experiencing *backlash* with regard to women's rights.²³⁷ These examples show that what has been built up over years can be dismantled in a short space of time. Maintaining and advancing the approach to discrimination and racism is therefore a task that requires ongoing commitment from government, institutions, civil society organisations, and residents.

This commitment is not only a matter of justice, but also of strategic importance for the Netherlands. It is inevitable that our society will face economic, geopolitical, or ecological crises in the future as well. The extent to which a society can withstand such crises depends on its sense of togetherness and mutual solidarity. A society in which discrimination and racism are widespread is one that, in times of crisis, is driven apart rather than brought together. Actively combating discrimination and racism strengthens resilience. It contributes to a society in which everyone feels recognised and represented, and which is therefore able to face the challenges of the future together.

Dismantling discrimination means building a society and a government that actively prevent discrimination and racism and promote equality. That requires courage, moral leadership, measures, resources, and pluralism, and the lasting commitment of all of us.

234. Bouma, R. (2025, 6 februari). [Trump haalt streep door diversiteits-beleid, ambtenaren vrezen ontslag](#). NOS Nieuws.

235. HvJ EU 21 april 2026, C-769/22, ECLI:EU:C:2026:326 (Commissie t. Hongarije). The law links homosexuality to pedophilic crime and stipulates that young people may not view media content that depicts or promotes deviations from gender identity, gender reassignment, and homosexuality. According to the Court, Hungary has violated several fundamental European rights, including the right to non-discrimination, the right to human dignity, respect for private and family life, the GDPR, the right to data protection, and freedom of expression and information.

236. Balduk, C. (2020, 2 december). [Meer Poolse vrouwen voor abortus naar Nederland](#). NOS Nieuws.

237. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2025). [Women's rights in review 30 years after Beijing](#).

Box 6. Compliance and Monitoring Committee

As noted earlier in this report, not all the recommendations the committee makes in this report are entirely new. The committee's report builds on earlier reports, including those of the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on the Effectiveness of Anti-Discrimination Legislation (2020–2022), the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into the Childcare Benefits Scheme (2020–2021), and the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Fraud Policy and Service Provision (2022–2024). Although earlier reports and committees arrived at partly comparable recommendations, much of this has not been sufficiently followed up. This is consistent with the committee's analysis that government adopts a reluctant stance in tackling discrimination and racism. What is lacking, therefore, is not so much insight, but decisiveness and administrative capacity to change.

The committee therefore calls on the cabinet to establish a compact and effective compliance and monitoring committee. This committee – staffed by authoritative experts with interdisciplinary knowledge of discrimination and racism – operates under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and is tasked with actively following, encouraging, and, where necessary, accelerating implementation of the action agenda, with particular attention to the broader roll-out of the Discrimination Assessment. The committee reports annually on progress, flags lagging results, and makes further recommendations where necessary to strengthen the effectiveness of the approach.

Annexes

Annex 1 | Implementation of the mandate

In its decree of establishment, the State Committee against Discrimination and Racism (hereafter: the committee) received a broad and extensive mandate. To make this mandate manageable, the committee has, over the past four years, published several progress reports along different thematic lines of work. These lines of work relate to: 1) the state of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands; 2) legislation and regulation; 3) reviewing government bodies for (risks of) discrimination and ethnic profiling; 4) profiling; and 5) the Caribbean Netherlands. The concise outcomes per line of work are described below. Table 1 provides a schematic overview of the different lines of work and their corresponding outputs.

Table 1. Overview of lines of work and outputs

Line of work	Outputs
Nature, scope and causes	1. Doorwerkingen van slavernijverleden. Meervoudige perspectieven op de relatie tussen heden en verleden [Legacies of the History of Slavery. Multiple Perspectives on the Relationship between Past and Present] (July 2023) 2. Aard, omvang en oorzaken van discriminatie en racisme in Nederland: eerste inzichten en vervolg [Nature, Scope and Causes of Discrimination and Racism in the Netherlands: Initial Insights and Follow-up] (December 2023) 3. Keer op keer. Inzichten in gestapelde discriminatie-ervaringen in Nederland en Europa [Time and Again. Insights in Discriminatory Experiences in the Netherlands and Europe] (March 2025) 4. Tussen Kamer, krant en sociale media [Between the House of Representatives, Newspapers, and Social Media. The Interaction between the House of Representatives, National Newspapers, and Social Media in the Spread of Discriminatory Expressions] (February 2026)

Line of work	Outputs
Legislation and regulation	1. Gelijkheidsplicht Publieke Sector. Naar wettelijke verankering van een proactieve aanpak van discriminatie door de overheid [Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Towards Legal Anchoring of a Proactive Approach to Discrimination by Government] (September 2025) 2. Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht [Together for Equality. A Vision for the Future of Dutch Non-Discrimination Law] (December 2025) 3. Round table: PSED and equality data (January 2026) 4. Round table: PSED and enforcement & oversight (February 2026) 5. Ministry of the Interior symposium ‘Gelijk vooruit [Equal Progress]. Towards future-proof equal treatment legislation’: PSED workshop (March 2026)
Reviewing government bodies	1. Discriminatie in dienstverlening. Ervaringen en lessen om discriminatie in publieke dienstverlening te voorkomen en te bestrijden [Discrimination in Services. Experiences and Lessons to Prevent and Combat Discrimination in Public Services] (February 2025) 2. Discrimination Assessment for Public Services 3. Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes
Profiling	1. Principes voor profilering, een kritisch perspectief op de toepassing van datagedreven profilering door de overheid [Principles for Profiling. A Critical Perspective on the Application of Data-Driven Profiling by Government] (May 2026)
Caribbean Netherlands	1. Caribisch Nederland in beeld [Caribbean Netherlands in Focus] (May 2024) 2. Scientific knowledge session on knowledge intensification in the Caribbean Netherlands, in collaboration with NWO (March 2026) 3. Discrimination Assessment for the Caribbean Netherlands



1. Nature, scope and causes of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands

The committee has provided insight into the nature, scope, and causes of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands through several reports. The report *Aard, omvang en oorzaken van discriminatie en racisme in Nederland: eerste inzichten en vervolg* (December 2023) shows that discrimination is a complex and extensive problem. Discrimination and racism occur in a wide range of domains, such as the labour market, the

housing market, sport, healthcare, and public space. Discrimination and racism also occur within government's own actions.

On the basis of this report, the committee flags a number of topics that deserve more attention. First, the committee concludes that future research should focus more on effective solutions to discrimination and racism. In addition, the institutional dimension of discrimination and racism – particularly discrimination by government – remains under-examined in existing research. There is also still insufficient insight into the cumulative and intersectional nature of discrimination in the Netherlands.



Intersectional and cumulative discrimination were examined in the progress report *Keer op keer. Inzichten in gestapelde discriminatie-ervaringen in Nederland en Europa* (March 2025). This research shows that more than a third of Dutch people of Turkish or North African descent experience discrimination across different domains, for example in both the housing market and education. This is referred to as cumulative discrimination. This cumulative discrimination has negative consequences. People feel more economically vulnerable, for example, and have less trust in institutions such as government and the police. The intersectional analyses in this research help to identify more precisely which groups are hit hardest by discrimination. The accompanying background article by researchers from Radboud University contains additional analyses showing that the proportion of respondents experiencing discrimination differs by domain.



The committee further concludes that discrimination in different domains can reinforce one another. The report *Tussen Kamer, krant en sociale media* (February 2026) shows that discriminatory expressions by politicians, newspaper coverage, and expressions on social media influence one another. Statements by politicians, for example, can fuel online discussions about population groups and discriminatory expressions.



Finally, the historical roots of discrimination and racism are explored in the essay collection *Doorwerkingen van slavernijverleden. Meervoudige perspectieven op de relatie tussen verleden en heden* (July 2023). For this collection, the committee asked various experts to provide insight into the possible legacies of the history of slavery in present-day experiences of discrimination and racism. Although it is often scientifically difficult to establish causal links, various connections and patterns are visible. Explicitly connecting past and present is important for understanding where present-day stereotypes come from, and for recognising that, because of their deep historical roots, they must be tackled structurally.

2. Legislation and regulation

Against the background of the nature, scope, and causes of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands discussed in the previous section, the committee examined how Dutch non-discrimination law could be improved. The committee has published two reports on this.

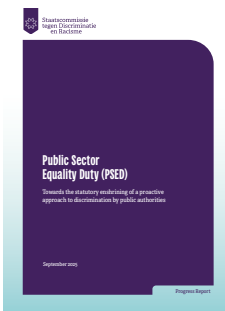


In the pre-advisory papers *Samen voor gelijkheid. Een toekomstvisie op het non-discriminatierecht* (December 2025), the committee finds that non-discrimination law consists of a multitude of international, European, and national rules. The system is complex, fragmented, and uneven in its protection. The committee also finds that the law is organised in a way that is too individual and reactive: individual victims must themselves file complaints or initiate legal proceedings once they have been discriminated against. There are still insufficient rules requiring organisations and bodies to prevent discrimination and promote equal treatment.

The vision for the future of non-discrimination law rests on three pillars for renewal. First, the law must start from a broader understanding of discrimination. The law should define that discrimination is not only about incidents, but also about more complex, structural, institutional, and intersectional forms. Second, this broader norm must be better enforced: on the one hand by strengthening individual legal protection, and on the other by introducing statutory obligations for organisations to act proactively to prevent discrimination and promote equal treatment. Third, the groups of people the law aims to protect must be more closely involved in its renewal and enforcement.

These three pillars are based on nine pre-advisory papers on urgent themes within non-discrimination law. The pre-advisory papers were written by academics in collaboration with people from (legal) practice and people who themselves experience discrimination. This co-creative collaboration makes the vision for the future not only academically grounded, but also broadly supported in society.

In the progress report *Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Towards Legal Anchoring of a Proactive Approach to Discrimination by Government* (September 2025), the committee examined, more specifically, a better legal approach to (institutional) discrimination by government, against the background of the childcare benefits scandal. The committee finds that – besides Article 1 of the Constitution – the law sets out hardly any obligations regarding discrimination for government bodies. As a result, the approach to institutional discrimination remains too fragmented and voluntary.



The committee therefore advocates the introduction of a statutory PSED: a duty for government bodies always to take into account the importance of non-discrimination and equal treatment in the performance of their tasks. This is done by assessing, from the outset, whether legislation, policy, and implementation produce fair outcomes – and adjusting course where necessary. The equality principle should be a fixed part of decision-making. Government bodies, for example, should use equality impact assessments to assess in advance whether decision-making disadvantages certain groups, and should actively involve people in matters that affect them. They should collect so-called equality data and, on that basis, develop anti-discrimination policy and report on their approach. In the report, the committee formulates concrete statutory wording for the legal duty. It also works out three variants for an enforcement and oversight mechanism.



3. Reviewing government bodies

In its decree of establishment, the committee was tasked with reviewing government, including semi-government organisations, for discrimination and racism. The committee initially gave substance to this through the development of the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services. With this Discrimination Assessment, those who carry out public tasks and services can identify and address risks of discrimination. The most stubborn form of discrimination and racism is embedded in structures and normalised in the implementation of public tasks and services. Patterns of discrimination and racism are widespread throughout society, and government is unfortunately no exception to this. The development of the Discrimination Assessment is consistent with this view of discrimination as a structural problem. In the progress report *Discriminatie in dienstverlening. Ervaringen en lessen om discriminatie in publieke dienstverlening te voorkomen en te bestrijden* (February 2025), the committee provides insight into the development of the Discrimination Assessment and the course of, and lessons learned from, the pilots with the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services.

Following the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services, the committee developed the Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes in the spring of 2025. This Discrimination Assessment is intended for policymakers and provides insight into how their own working practices and processes can lead to policy that discriminates against groups of people in society. The two discrimination assessments complement each other: while one provides insight into risks of discrimination and racism in the development of policy, the other detects risks in implementation.

The pilots with the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services in 2024 and the Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes in 2025 show that the Discrimination Assessment is effective in making risks of discrimination visible and open to discussion. These pilots also yield insights into the way images of humanity – (undiscussed) ideas and assumptions about what certain groups of residents look like, how they behave, or what needs they have – play a role in the development of policy and in the performance of tasks and services.

The pilots also show that involving residents and citizen collectives is crucial. Civic participation makes it possible to expose the assumptions and images of humanity held by civil servants. In addition, residents' experiences help to map the societal effects of policy and implementation. Finally, the pilots show that approaching discrimination as an institutional problem can reduce resistance, by connecting discussions of discrimination and racism to a broader improvement of work processes and the strengthening of professionalism.

4. Profiling

In its decree of establishment, the committee was asked to reflect on ethnic profiling and the use of profiling by government. Profiling is the practice of systematically collecting, analysing, and categorising characteristics of groups or individuals in order to identify patterns in behaviour, traits, or risks. In the progress report *Principes voor profilering, een kritisch perspectief op de toepassing van datagedreven profilering door de overheid* (May 2026), the committee asks itself the question: to what extent is profiling compatible with a government that actively works against discrimination and racism? The committee examined this question from a critical, principled perspective.



The committee concludes that government's use of profiling carries significant risks and therefore requires considerable restraint. As a result of technological developments, profiling has grown into a complex practice that is difficult to limit. Owing to the rapid growth and linking of datasets and the broadening of applications – from combating fraud to, among other things, enforcement and social security – profiling has expanded both technically and institutionally. Moreover, it is increasingly deployed within public-private partnerships and presented as a seemingly simple solution to societal problems, while its actual effects often remain unclear.

The committee also finds that, in practice, government does not sufficiently adhere to the principles of just government action. Although concepts such as effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency are regularly invoked, empirical substantiation and actual application are often lacking. Transparency towards citizens is limited, and verifiability is hampered in practice. This creates a gap between formal frameworks and actual conduct. This increases the risk that profiling leads to violations of public values such as the rule of law, democratic legitimacy, and administrative capacity. The committee points, in particular, to the risk of (cumulative) discrimination, whereby certain groups are repeatedly and disproportionately affected.

At the same time, the committee emphasises that collecting and analysing data can also contribute to making inequality visible and countering it. Data can help to better map discrimination and exclusion and to improve policy in a more targeted way. In this supportive use of data, it is important that the people whose data are used give explicit consent for this. Moreover, they must be fully involved in the development of policy and measures that result from these analyses. In this way, so-called *equality data* can be deployed for people, rather than against them.

On the basis of these findings, the committee makes far-reaching recommendations. First, it advocates stopping current and planned applications of profiling and limiting its further spread. Alternative methods, such as random checks, flagging systems, and complaints procedures, are preferable because they carry less risk of discrimination

and can contribute to fairer treatment of citizens. If profiling is nevertheless applied, government must demonstrate that it is necessary and proportionate and has no discriminatory effects. This requires strict requirements for decision-making, design, and use, with an emphasis on transparency, accountability, and citizen involvement. The committee additionally recommends independent assessment by a central regulator, in order to prevent both direct and cumulative discrimination.

Finally, the committee advocates a fundamental shift towards a proactive approach, in which preventing discrimination is central. This can be achieved by introducing an equality duty for the public sector, with which policy and implementation are systematically assessed for fair and equal outcomes.

5. Caribbean Netherlands

Throughout its term, the committee has paid specific attention to experiences of unequal treatment by government in the Caribbean Netherlands. The committee examined how institutional discrimination manifests itself in the relationships between the Caribbean Netherlands and the European Netherlands, between the islands themselves, and between residents and government on the islands themselves.

In 2023 and 2025, the committee spoke with administrators from Saba, Sint Eustatius, and Bonaire who were in the European Netherlands to attend the congress of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG). Following these conversations, delegations from the committee made working visits to the three islands in the autumn of 2024 and the summer of 2025. The committee also took part in the congress of the National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism in November 2025.

During these working visits, the committee encountered various examples of discriminatory action by the Dutch government. This is partly reflected in manners and a perceived ‘Hague attitude’, or the feeling of being treated as second-class citizens in legislative processes that pay insufficient attention to the specific context of the islands. Interlocutors point, among other things, to the poor alignment of education with further education: while the language of instruction on Saba and Sint Eustatius is English, fluent command of Dutch is essential for anyone seeking to work for the government. It was also discussed that certain human rights treaties that apply in the European Netherlands do not yet apply to the Caribbean Netherlands, such as the Istanbul Convention and the UN Disability Convention.

In 2025 and 2026, the committee carried out two pilots of the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services in the Caribbean Netherlands. For these pilots, process facilitators were deployed who speak Papiamentu and know the local context and relationships well. The Discrimination Assessment was also adapted with examples and background information that better fit the Caribbean reality. The pilots show that, in the Caribbean Netherlands, different perceptions of residents matter than in the European Netherlands. Combined with

the small scale of society, these create different risks of (institutional) discrimination. With input from process facilitators, experts, and local civil servants, the Discrimination Assessment for the Caribbean Netherlands is being further developed. These experiences underline that measures and instruments developed in the European Netherlands cannot be deployed unchanged in the Caribbean Netherlands.

In March 2026, the committee organised a knowledge session, in collaboration with the Dutch Research Council, on knowledge intensification in the Caribbean Netherlands. This session brought together researchers, activists, administrators, and policymakers with and without roots in the Caribbean Netherlands. The central question was what is needed to close the structural knowledge gap regarding the Caribbean Netherlands. The session found that there is 'data poverty' on the islands: data is lacking to properly map inequalities and to monitor the effects of policy. At the same time, a considerable amount of locally produced knowledge already exists on the islands, but it is insufficiently visible and accessible. Participants emphasised that knowledge about the Caribbean Netherlands must not be produced exclusively from European-Dutch frameworks and institutions. Moreover, island communities must be given more say over the questions that are asked and the methods that are used.

The committee finds that there are structural inequalities in government policy in various areas, and concludes that the way the Dutch government deals with the Caribbean Netherlands is in tension with the equality principle. Equity must be the starting point in legislation, decisions, and policy for the whole of the Netherlands, with specific attention for the regional context. This does not mean that exactly the same policy must apply everywhere, but that specific attention is paid to the needs that exist and to how policy plays out for residents.



Annex 2 | Instellingsbesluit

STAATSCOURANT

Nr. 11349

12 mei

2022

Officiële uitgave van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden sinds 1814.

Besluit van 3 mei 2022, houdende instelling van een staatscommissie tegen discriminatie en racisme (Instellingsbesluit staatscommissie tegen discriminatie en racisme)

Wij Willem-Alexander, bij de gratie Gods, Koning der Nederlanden, Prins van Oranje-Nassau, enz. enz. enz.

Op de voordracht van Onze Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties van 26 april 2022, nr. 2022-0000225441;

Handelende in overeenstemming met het gevoelen van de ministerraad;

Gelet op artikel 6, eerste lid, van de Kaderwet adviescolleges en artikel 2 van de Wet vergoedingen adviescolleges en commissies;

Hebben goedgevonden en verstaan:

Artikel 1

Er is een staatscommissie tegen discriminatie en racisme, hierna te noemen: de staatscommissie.

Artikel 2

1. De staatscommissie heeft tot taak de regering:
 - a. te informeren over de stand van discriminatie en racisme in Nederland door inzicht te verschaffen in de aard, omvang en oorzaken van discriminatie en racisme in Nederland op basis van wetenschappelijk onderzoek;
 - b. door effecten van beleid en regelgeving op dit gebied te monitoren; en
 - c. een advies uit te brengen over betere waarborgen en verbetering van beleid en regelgeving om discriminatie en racisme te voorkomen en tegen te gaan.
2. De staatscommissie besteedt bij haar werkzaamheden aandacht aan de volgende onderwerpen:
 - a. discriminatie en racisme in sectoren van de samenleving, zoals in ieder geval de woningmarkt, de arbeidsmarkt, het onderwijs, de zorg; en
 - b. discriminatie en racisme door de overheid, waarbij de staatscommissie in ieder geval een brede doorlichting op discriminatie en etnisch profileren uitvoert van de werkwijze en organisatiecultuur van alle (semi)overheidsinstanties en uitvoeringsinstanties, en in ieder geval reflecteert op de mogelijkheid en wenselijkheid van een verbod voor overheidsinstanties om etniciteit te gebruiken om fraude te bestrijden en verkent wat de mogelijkheden zijn om onderscheid op grond van ras en nationaliteit in risicoprofielen alleen toe te passen ter bescherming dan wel ter ondersteuning van mensen.

Artikel 3

1. De staatscommissie bestaat uit maximaal tien leden, inclusief de voorzitter.
2. Als voorzitter van de commissie wordt benoemd: mw. dr. Joyce Sylvester.
3. De overige leden worden bij ministerieel besluit benoemd.

Artikel 4

1. De voorzitter en de leden van de commissie, voor zover niet vallend onder de uitzondering van artikel 2, derde lid, van de Wet vergoedingen adviescolleges en commissies, ontvangen een vaste vergoeding per maand.
2. De voorzitter ontvangt voor de duur van het onderzoek een vaste vergoeding, gebaseerd op een arbeidsduurfactor van maximaal 50% en salarisschaal 18 trede 10, zoals overeengekomen in de laatstelijk afgesloten collectieve arbeidsovereenkomst voor ambtenaren die krachtens een arbeidsovereenkomst bij de Staat werkzaam zijn.



3. De overige leden ontvangen voor de duur van het onderzoek een vaste vergoeding, gebaseerd op een arbeidsduurfactor van 10% en salarisschaal 18, trede 10, zoals overeengekomen in de laatstelijk afgesloten collectieve arbeidsovereenkomst voor ambtenaren die krachtens een arbeidsovereenkomst met de Staat werkzaam zijn.

Artikel 5

1. De staatscommissie geeft op onafhankelijke wijze invulling aan haar taken en stelt een eigen wetenschappelijk werkprogramma op. Hierbij overlegt de staatscommissie met relevante overheidsorganisaties, instanties, en (advies)organen.
2. De staatscommissie brengt haar eindadvies uit voor 1 mei 2026 aan Onze Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties.
3. Na het uitbrengen van het eindadvies is de staatscommissie opgeheven.

Artikel 6

De archiefbescheiden worden na de opheffing van de staatscommissie, of indien de omstandigheden daartoe eerder aanleiding geven, zoveel eerder, overgedragen aan het archief van het Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties.

Artikel 7

Dit besluit treedt in werking met ingang 1 mei 2022. Indien de Staatscourant waarin dit besluit wordt geplaatst, wordt uitgegeven na 30 april 2022, treedt het in werking met ingang van de dag na de datum van uitgifte waarin het wordt geplaatst en werkt het terug tot en met 1 mei 2022.

Artikel 8

Dit besluit wordt aangehaald als: Instellingsbesluit staatscommissie tegen discriminatie en racisme. Onze Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties is belast met de uitvoering van dit besluit dat met de nota van toelichting in de Staatscourant zal worden geplaatst.

*De Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties,
H.G.J. Bruins Slot*



NOTA VAN TOELICHTING

Algemeen

Tijdens de kabinetsperiode 2017–2021 is in de Staten-Generaal meerdere malen gedebatteerd over racisme en discriminatie wereldwijd en in Nederland in het bijzonder. In 2020 verwoordde de *Black Lives Matter*-beweging hoe uitsluiting en discriminatie een harde realiteit en groot onrecht is in het leven van veel mensen. Het rapport 'Ongekend onrecht' van de Parlementaire ondervragingscommissie Kinderopvangtoeslag maakte in ditzelfde jaar pijnlijk duidelijk hoe ook het handelen van de overheid kan leiden tot uitsluiting en discriminatie (Kamerstukken II, 2020/21, 35 510 nr. 2). Deze gebeurtenissen hebben geresulteerd in het aannemen door de Tweede Kamer van een motie-Asscher c.s. waarin de regering wordt gevraagd om 'een divers samengestelde Staatscommissie Discriminatie en Racisme in te stellen die op langjarige basis onderzoek kan doen naar de stand van racisme in Nederland, voorstellen doet en de effecten van beleid kan monitoren.' (Kamerstukken II, 2019/20, 30 950, nr. 186). Later heeft de Tweede Kamer een motie-Azarkan c.s. aangenomen, die de regering verzoekt om 'een brede doorlichting op discriminatie en etnisch profileren te organiseren van de werkwijze en organisatiecultuur van alle (semi)overheidsinstanties en uitvoeringsinstanties' (Kamerstukken II, 2019/20, 35 510 nr. 33). De uitvoering van deze motie is in de opdracht van de staatscommissie meegenomen. Ook heeft de Tweede Kamer een motie-Belhaj c.s. aangenomen, die de regering verzoekt om 'overheidsinstanties etniciteit niet te laten gebruiken om fraude te bestrijden' (Kamerstukken II, 2020/21, 30 950 nr. 237) en heeft het kabinet de motie-Mutluer c.s. overgenomen waarin verzocht wordt om de staatscommissie discriminatie en racisme te laten verkennen of het mogelijk is dat onderscheid op grond van ras of nationaliteit in risicoprofielen alleen toegepast mag worden ter bescherming dan wel ter ondersteuning van mensen (Kamerstukken II, 2021/22, 30 950, nr. 293). Uitvoering van deze moties zijn meegenomen in de opdracht van de staatscommissie. Het onderhavige besluit strekt tot de instelling van de bedoelde commissie. De staatscommissie is onafhankelijk en heeft een wetenschappelijk profiel.

Artikelsgewijs

Artikel 1

Dit artikel roept de staatscommissie in het leven.

Artikel 2

Dit artikel regelt welke opdracht de staatscommissie heeft. De eerder genoemde motie-Asscher c.s., motie-Azarkan c.s., motie-Belhaj c.s. en motie Mutluer c.s. bevatten de opdracht aan de staatscommissie en maken dus integraal onderdeel uit van dit besluit. Voor de taakopdracht is nauw aangesloten bij de tekst van deze moties. Dat neemt niet weg dat de staatscommissie breder kan adviseren over het gebruik van etniciteit door overheidsinstanties dan geformuleerd in de motie Belhaj c.s. en de motie Mutluer c.s. De staatscommissie houdt bij haar werkzaamheden rekening met de rapportages van de departementen over hun interne doorlichting ter uitvoering van de motie-Klaver c.s., die de regering onder andere verzoekt 'het gebruik van nationaliteit, etniciteit en geboorteplaats als datavariabele in alle risicomodellen, -profielen, -systemen, -selectie en zwarte lijsten die binnen het overheidswezen gebruikt worden volledig uit te sluiten' (Kamerstukken II 2021/22, 35 510, nr. 16) en de motie-Marijnissen c.s., die de regering onder andere verzoekt 'een voorstel te doen hoe overal binnen overheidsinstellingen vervuilde data, risicomodellen en het gebruik van nationaliteit worden opgeruimd.' (Kamerstukken II 2021/22, 35 510, nr. 21). De staatscommissie gaat over alle discriminatiegronden.

Artikel 3

Dit artikel regelt de omvang en het karakter van de staatscommissie. De staatscommissie bestaat uit maximaal tien leden, waarbij wordt gelet op een evenwichtige samenstelling. De staatscommissie heeft een sterk wetenschappelijk profiel. In het artikel wordt ook de benoeming van de voorzitter geregeld. De benoeming van de leden van de staatscommissie en de ondersteuning is geregeld in een ministerieel besluit op basis van artikel 6, derde lid, van de Kaderwet adviescolleges.

Artikel 4

Dit artikel regelt de vergoeding van de voorzitter en de leden.



Artikel 5

De staatscommissie heeft, in lijn met de traditie, de vorm van een éénmalig adviescollege in de zin van artikel 6, eerste lid, van de Kaderwet adviescolleges.

De staatscommissie stelt een eigen werkprogramma op voor omvangrijk lange termijn onderzoek dat nieuwe wetenschappelijke inzichten verschaft. In het doen van langdurig wetenschappelijk onderzoek ligt de meerwaarde van de staatscommissie ten opzichte van de taken van Nationaal Coördinator tegen Discriminatie en Racisme (NCDR), zoals vastgelegd in het instellingsbesluit van de NCDR (Staatscourant 2021 nr. 44309, 18 oktober 2021), en de taken van het College voor de Rechten van de Mens (het College), zoals vastgelegd in de Wet op het College voor de Rechten van de Mens. De staatscommissie werkt op onafhankelijke wijze, maar bij het opstellen van haar werkprogramma treedt zij wel in overleg met relevante overheidsorganisaties, instanties en adviesorganen, zoals (maar niet uitsluitend) de NCDR, het College, de Nationale ombudsman, de sociaaleconomische Raad, het Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau, universiteiten, hoge scholen, lokale ADV's, gemeenten, provincies, ministeries. De staatscommissie dient binnen vier jaar een eindadvies uit te brengen en heeft de mogelijkheid om tussenrapportages uit te brengen.

Artikel 6

Dit artikel regelt wat er gebeurt met de archiefbescheiden van de staatscommissie.

Artikel 7

Dit artikel regelt de inwerkingtreding van dit besluit.

Artikel 8

Dit artikel bevat de citeertitel van dit besluit.

*De Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties,
H.G.J. Bruins Slot*

Annex 3 | Context and Working Method

The installation of the committee follows directly on from the publication of the report *Gelijk recht doen* (Equal Justice. A Parliamentary Inquiry into the Possibilities for the Legislature to Counter Discrimination) by the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee (POC) of the Senate (14 June 2022).²³⁸ This report proposes an assessment framework that the legislature can use in the legislative process to prevent and better counter discrimination. During the committee's term, further relevant research has been published. Important in this regard is the report *Blind voor mensen en recht* (Blind to People and the Law) by the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Fraud Policy and Service Provision (PEFD).²³⁹ This report follows on from the POK report *Ongekend onrecht* (Unprecedented Injustice) and concludes that structural problems in government policy and implementation have, over the past 30 years, led to discriminatory outcomes. Without fundamental reforms, such wrongdoings remain possible (26 February 2024).

In addition, two related state committees have published their final reports. The State Committee on the Rule of Law (February 2023 – June 2024) finds that government has become too complicated and that legal protection for vulnerable people is inadequate.²⁴⁰ Ten proposals from a citizen's perspective are intended to counter the neglect of the rule of law (*De gebroken belofte van de rechtsstaat* [The Broken Promise of the Rule of Law], 2024). The State Committee on Demographic Developments 2050 (September 2022 – January 2024) finds that, with population ageing and growth, pressure on public services and inequalities between different groups will also increase.²⁴¹ This has an impact on our welfare state and social cohesion, and calls for important political choices (*Gematigde groei* [Moderate Growth], 2024). This latter state committee also published a separate report on the Caribbean Netherlands (*Gerichte groei* [Targeted Growth], 2024).²⁴²

It is against this background that the committee has interpreted and carried out its broad, extensive mandate. At the outset, the committee decided to build on existing and ongoing research and not to duplicate work already done – it set out to identify knowledge gaps.²⁴³ It also commissioned a large-scale societal needs assessment on desired priorities, carried out by the agency EMMA.²⁴⁴ The 35 government bodies, civil society institutions, and advocacy organisations involved identified, among other things, the following priorities: institutional racism, action-oriented practice-based research within organisations, and online discrimination.

Along various thematic lines of work, the committee subsequently published progress reports. These lines of work relate to: 1) the state

238. Parlementaire onderzoekscommissie effectiviteit antidiscriminatiewetgeving. (2022). [*Gelijk recht doen. Een parlementair onderzoek naar de mogelijkheden van de wetgever om discriminatie tegen te gaan.*](#)

239. Parlementaire enquêtecommissie Fraudebeleid en Dienstverlening. (2024). [*Blind voor mensen en recht.*](#)

240. Staatscommissie rechtsstaat. (2024). [*De gebroken belofte van de rechtsstaat. Tien verbetervoorstellen met oog voor de burger.*](#)

241. Staatscommissie Demografische Ontwikkelingen 2050. (2024). [*Gematigde groei.*](#)

242. Staatscommissie Demografische Ontwikkelingen 2050. (2024). [*Gerichte groei.*](#)

243. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2023). [*Werkprogramma op hoofdlijnen.*](#)

244. Aliev, M. et al. (2023). *Maatschappelijke vraaginventarisatie Discriminatie & Racisme. Vraaginventarisatie voor de onderzoeksagenda van de Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme* [Unpublished]. EMMA.

of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands; 2) legislation and regulation; 3) reviewing government for (risks of) discrimination and ethnic profiling; 4) profiling; and 5) the Caribbean Netherlands. The concise outcomes per line of work can be found in Annex 1.

For its research into the nature, scope, and causes of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands, the committee first carried out a meta-analysis of existing qualitative and quantitative research. It also commissioned three rapid studies from the Verwey-Jonker Institute and Movisie, into discrimination in the housing market,²⁴⁵ in healthcare,²⁴⁶ and in sport and culture.²⁴⁷ These studies build on the POC report, which addresses discrimination in the labour market, in education, in social security, and in policing. In this way, the committee created a broad knowledge base on societal domains, as a starting point for further choices and deeper analysis.

The meta-analysis maps out what we know about discrimination and racism, but also what we do not yet know. The committee finds that existing data mainly concern incidents and individual grounds of discrimination, but do not capture structural, institutional, and cumulative patterns, such as the legacies of the history of slavery. Data are lacking on, among other things, discrimination by government, intersectional forms of discrimination, and discrimination in the Caribbean Netherlands.

The committee selects two themes to examine in greater depth, using suitable methods. The first theme is the history of slavery. In the commemorative year marking 150 years since the abolition of slavery, the committee published an essay collection in which ten authors share their insights into how the history of slavery continues to affect present-day experiences of discrimination and racism.²⁴⁸ The second theme is cumulative and intersectional discrimination. The committee commissioned research by Radboud University into how cumulation and intersectionality can be analysed in the future.²⁴⁹ This was done on the basis of an existing dataset on experienced discrimination in Europe held by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA). The research yields new methodological insights and findings. The committee supplements this with interviews on how people experience discrimination ‘time and again’.

In addition, the committee chose to conduct research into online discrimination. The committee commissioned research by the University of Amsterdam into the interplay between online and offline discrimination. The research provides insight into how discriminatory expressions in the House of Representatives, in newspapers, and on social media can reinforce one another and contribute to a discriminatory climate in the Netherlands.²⁵⁰

The themes of structural and institutional discrimination, discrimination by government, and discrimination in the Caribbean Netherlands are central to the committee’s line of work on reviewing government. Here, the committee opts for action-oriented research and, in

245. Hoogenbosch, A. et al. (2023). [Verkenning discriminatie en racisme op de woningmarkt](#). Verwey-Jonker Instituut [commissioned by State Committee against Discrimination and Racism].
246. Badou, M. et al. (2023). [Verkenning discriminatie en racisme in de zorg](#). Movisie [commissioned by State Committee against Discrimination and Racism].
247. De Wit, N. et al. (2023). [Verkenning discriminatie en racisme in sport en cultuur](#). Verwey-Jonker Instituut [commissioned by State Committee against Discrimination and Racism]].
248. Staatscommissie tegen Discriminatie en Racisme. (2023). [Doorwerkingen van slavernijverleden. Meervoudige perspectieven op de relatie tussen verleden en heden](#).
249. Hijssen, L. D. J., & Spierings, N. (2025). [Cumulative, intersectionele discriminatie onder Turkse en Noord-Afrikaanse Nederlanders, in vergelijking Europees perspectief](#). Radboud Universiteit [commissioned by State Committee against Discrimination and Racism].
250. Fonseca, J. (2026). [The interplay between media, politics, and online behaviour. Measuring the dynamics of discriminatory climates. Research for the State Commission against Discrimination and Racism](#). Universiteit van Amsterdam [commissioned by State Committee against Discrimination and Racism].

collaboration with government bodies, develops concrete instruments: the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services, the Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes, and the Discrimination Assessment for the Caribbean Netherlands. With these, professionals within government can themselves assess their public services and policy processes for risks of discrimination and subsequently draw up an action plan. These themes are also central to the committee's research into better policy and regulation.

Where the POC report focuses on the legislature, the committee focuses on the legislation itself. Together with academics and people from practice, the committee develops a vision for the future of Dutch non-discrimination law. This vision for the future is based on nine pre-advisory papers on specific themes within non-discrimination law. For a durable, future-proof body of law, the committee advocates a fundamental renewal of equal-treatment legislation. The committee chooses to examine one theme in greater depth itself, namely the possibility of a statutory Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). In doing so, it responds to the call from the POC, the NCDR, and Amnesty International Netherlands to conduct research on this.

For its research into data-driven profiling in fraud prevention and enforcement, the committee chose an explicitly interdisciplinary perspective. Profiling is a complex issue with not only legal, but also administrative and societal dimensions. The committee therefore did not only ask what is legally permitted, but above all what just government action requires in this context. The committee applies three principles that profiling must satisfy: the rule of law, democratic legitimacy, and administrative capacity. If government cannot demonstrate that the current use of profiling is necessary, proportionate, and non-discriminatory, the committee advises switching to alternative methods, such as random checks. This principled position was arrived at partly through an extensive expert review, in which government bodies, regulators, and civil society organisations took part.

Collaboration with stakeholders is an important part of the committee's working method across all its research. This collaboration takes different forms and degrees of intensity: from providing a platform, consultation, and participation, to co-creation. For example, the essay collection on the legacies of the history of slavery provides a platform for various authors on this under-examined theme. For the development of the discrimination assessments, the committee works closely with government bodies. In its research, the committee involves universities and research institutions. For its research into the PSED, the committee speaks with human rights institutions, advocacy organisations, government, and academics in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It also organises two round tables on the PSED in the Netherlands, focused on the topics of equality data and enforcement & oversight. The vision for the future of non-discrimination law is developed through co-creative collaboration between academics and people from practice.

The scientific knowledge session on the Caribbean Netherlands brings together different kinds of knowledge and experience on urgent themes.

For the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services and the research into the PSED and risk profiling, the committee organises expert reviews. Throughout its term, the committee also speaks with numerous bodies, civil society organisations, academics, and people with lived experience. An overview of external authors and interlocutors is included in Annex 7.

Through these collaborations, the committee aims not only to fulfil its mandate, but also to contribute to renewing how research, policy, and regulation come about.

Annex 4 | Recommendations from progress reports

In its progress reports, as described in Annex 1, the committee has made various recommendations. These recommendations are set out below in the order of the lines of work, per report.

Recommendations – Aard, omvang en oorzaken van discriminatie en racisme

The report's main conclusion is that discrimination is a complex, structural problem that cannot be captured in isolated sectors or incidents. It works its way across domains and stages of life and is deeply embedded in societal structures and historical patterns. At the same time, the committee emphasises that a great deal is already known about the problem itself, but that there is a particular need for concrete avenues for action and solutions, especially regarding institutional discrimination (above all within government).

To build on this, the committee set out three clear directions for follow-up and action at the time (2023):

- **Policymakers, researchers, and government: take a broader view of discrimination.**

Discrimination should no longer be approached sectorally and in fragmented fashion, but as a coherent, cumulative problem that develops across domains and stages of life. This requires a different way of thinking and analysing.

- **Government, policy, and politics: focus on solutions and avenues for action.**

Rather than investing primarily in measuring the scale of the problem more precisely, the focus should shift to developing policy, regulation, and interventions that address the structural causes of discrimination.

- **Government and the committee itself: tackle institutional discrimination in a targeted way.**

In its follow-up work, the committee will focus mainly on discrimination within government. Concretely, this means: developing an instrument to review government organisations; and carrying out pilots to test and improve this approach.

The underlying idea is that discrimination cannot be effectively combated with isolated, temporary measures. Because it is deeply embedded in structures, policy, and organisational cultures, it requires a systematic and sustained approach, with specific attention to how it arises and persists within organisations themselves.

Recommendations – Keer op keer

The central conclusion of this report is that discrimination in the Netherlands is often not an isolated occurrence, but accumulates across different areas of life. Many people experience discrimination in multiple places at once, such as in education, work, and public space. The combination of characteristics, such as origin and sex, plays an important role here and shows that discrimination is unevenly distributed and affects different groups in different ways.

To better understand and address this problem, the committee highlights three important directions:

- **For (policy) research:**

More and better (up-to-date) research is needed into how discrimination accumulates over time and across different domains, and who is most affected by this. More insight into cumulative discrimination is therefore needed.

- For comparison and policy evaluation: Also look at differences between countries, to better understand why discrimination occurs relatively more often in the Netherlands.

- **For policy (government):**

Policy must take into account the combination of factors (such as origin and sex), because it is precisely that combination that determines how, and to what extent, people experience discrimination. Policy must therefore make more use of an intersectional approach.

- **For policymakers and institutions:**

Explicit account must be taken of the effects of cumulative discrimination, such as greater economic vulnerability, less social engagement, and declining trust in institutions. More attention must therefore be paid to the societal consequences of discrimination.

The underlying idea is that discrimination is not only a legal problem, but a social and structural issue with wide-ranging consequences for society. Understanding and addressing it therefore requires a broader view, in which not only incidents are central, but also patterns, connections, and long-term effects.

Recommendations – Tussen Kamer, krant en sociale media

The main conclusion of this report is that discriminatory expressions are not confined to a single domain, but move between, and reinforce one another across, politics, the media, and social media. Precisely because these domains influence one another, all parties involved contribute – whether to the emergence of, or to countering, a climate in which discrimination can become normalised. This places a shared responsibility on all these actors to actively contribute to a respectful public debate.

To make this a reality, the committee formulates three clear recommendations:

- **Politicians, newspapers, and social media platforms: actively break the spread of discrimination.**
All parties involved must recognise their own role in reinforcing discrimination and racism and take structural responsibility for this. This requires conscious choices about what is said, shared, and amplified, and an active commitment to preventing escalation.
- **Platforms and regulators: ensure transparency and accountability of social media platforms.**
Social media platforms should no longer act only reactively, but should actively provide insight into how their systems work (such as algorithms and moderation). This also means making data available for research and taking responsibility for the spread of harmful content. At the same time, regulators have a duty to strictly enforce compliance in this area and to hold platforms accountable.
- **All actors (with particular emphasis on politicians and the media): set and uphold clear norms in public debate.**
It is important that active limits are placed on what is acceptable. This is achieved not only through rules, but also through how people respond to expressions: by offering pushback, providing context, and not normalising stigmatisation.

The underlying idea is that countering discrimination does not happen by itself, but depends on active action by all parties involved. Because expressions spread quickly and reinforce one another, deliberate norm-setting, transparency, and accountability are crucial to prevent discrimination from becoming normalised in public debate.

Recommendations – Public Sector Equality Duty

In this report, the committee makes three main recommendations for better tackling discrimination within government. The core message is that government must not only respond to discrimination, but must actively prevent it. This requires changes in legislation, policy, and everyday practice.

To address these challenges, the following recommendations emerge, aimed at different actors:

- **To central government and the legislature:**
Enshrine a Public Sector Equality Duty in law, so that government bodies are required to actively take equal treatment and equal opportunities into account in policy and implementation.
- **To central government (together with other parties):**
Ensure a sound system of oversight and accountability, with clear rules, monitoring, and room for phased introduction (for example through pilots and evaluations).
- **To government organisations (civil servants, managers, administrators):**
Do not wait for new legislation, but start now applying tools and working methods to prevent discrimination, actively involve residents, and make equality part of everyday policy.

Recommendations – Samen voor gelijkheid (preadviezen)

The core message is that discrimination in the Netherlands is not an exception, but a structural problem deeply embedded in institutions, policy, and everyday practices. Current law is insufficiently equipped for this: it mainly intervenes after something has already gone wrong and focuses on individual cases, while the causes are often broader and more systemic.

To shape this change, the committee proposes three pillars:

- A broader norm: the law must better recognise that discrimination can also be structural and intersectional, not only individual.
- Stronger compliance: alongside complaints procedures, more emphasis must be placed on prevention, monitoring, and obligations for organisations to actively promote equality.
- More cooperation: people who experience discrimination must be given a greater role in policy and decision-making, so that the law better aligns with practice.

The underlying idea is that equality is not only something enforced through law, but also something that is actively shaped by how government and society function. The law should therefore not only be a safety net, but also an engine for change towards a fairer society.

Recommendations – Discriminatie in dienstverlening

On the basis of the knowledge gained from the pilots, it has become clear that discrimination in public services does not arise solely from individual mistakes, but stems from deeply rooted patterns in policy, implementation, and organisational culture. Factors such as images of humanity, limited civic engagement, and organisational preconditions play a major role in how discrimination arises and persists. At the same time, the report shows that countering discrimination requires a structural and deliberate approach within organisations, in which learning, reflection, and collaboration are central.

To bring about these structural changes, the report's conclusions yield the following recommendations, aimed at different actors:

- **Public service providers (implementing organisations): actively work on awareness and reflection.**

Organisations must actively support staff in recognising and discussing prejudices and images of humanity, for example through training, peer supervision, and structural moments of reflection at work.

- **Public service providers: structurally organise civic engagement.**

Involve residents – especially groups who experience discrimination – in a sustainable and accessible way, and invest in trust, relationships, and inclusive forms of participation.

- **Public service providers and policymakers alike: view discrimination as an institutional problem.**

Do not focus only on individual conduct, but look specifically at how processes, rules, and organisational culture can cause or reinforce discrimination.

- **Central government and politics: create the right preconditions.**

Ensure sufficient capacity, support, clear frameworks, and cooperation, so that organisations can genuinely and structurally get to work preventing discrimination.

- **Public service providers: keep learning and repeating.**

Instruments such as the Discrimination Assessment should not be used just once, but should become part of a continuous process of learning and improvement within organisations.

The underlying idea is that preventing discrimination is not a one-off intervention, but an ongoing process of change. It requires organisations that look critically at themselves, actively learn from experience, and structurally make room for other perspectives – both internally and from society.

Recommendations – Principes voor profiling

The report's main message is that data-driven profiling by government is not a neutral or purely technical instrument, but a structural and expanding phenomenon that creates risks for equality, the rule of law, and trust in government. In practice, profiling often turns out to be insufficiently substantiated, difficult to scrutinise, and capable of leading to (cumulative) discrimination and societal harm. Although the committee understands the appeal of digital systems, the current system of rules and oversight falls short: safeguards are not properly applied in practice, or are even circumvented, and legislation still focuses too much on correcting after the fact rather than preventing discrimination. At the same time, government often lacks transparency, grip on effects, and citizen involvement.

For an effective approach to this problem, the committee makes the following recommendations:

- **Halting data-driven profiling:**
the committee advocates halting current applications of profiling for as long as there are no measures and safeguards in place to prevent discrimination, including demonstrating its effectiveness. At the same time, the committee points to alternative methods, such as random and full checks. These alternatives are preferable because they are fairer, more transparent, and less risky.
- **Stricter conditions and oversight:**
if profiling is nevertheless used in future, government must demonstrate that this is necessary and proportionate. This must be done transparently, with active assessment for discrimination and meaningful input from citizens. In addition, central, independent oversight is needed, to assess not only individual applications but also broader, cumulative effects at societal level.
- **A proactive and structural approach to discrimination:**
the focus must shift from reactive to preventive policy. This means that government must actively prevent discrimination by systematically assessing policy, legislation, and implementation for equal outcomes, involving citizens in decision-making, and collecting and monitoring data structurally and responsibly in order to make inequality visible and address it.

The underlying idea is that data and the use of technology do not automatically lead to better or fairer decision-making. Without clear normative frameworks, oversight, and citizen involvement, profiling can actually reinforce existing inequalities. Government must therefore steer not only towards efficiency, but above all towards fairness, transparency, and the protection of fundamental rights.

Annex 5 | Motions

Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

2

Vergaderjaar 2019–2020

30 950

Rassendiscriminatie

Nr. 186

MOTIE VAN DE LEDEN ASSCHER EN PIETER HEERMA

Voorgesteld 1 juli 2020

De Kamer,

gehoord de beraadslaging,

overwegende dat voorbeelden van discriminatie door werkgevers, makelaars, onderselectie in het onderwijs, behandeling in de jeugdzorg en etnisch profileren laten zien dat er ook in Nederland helaas sprake is van discriminatie en racisme;

overwegende dat overheidsinstanties tientallen algoritmes gebruiken die een risico op discriminatie met zich meebrengen;

overwegende dat mechanismes die bewust of onbewust aan discriminatie ten grondslag liggen, blootgelegd en aangepakt moeten worden;

verzoekt de regering een divers samengestelde Staatscommissie Discriminatie en Racisme in te stellen die op langjarige basis onderzoek kan doen naar de stand van racisme in Nederland, voorstellen doet en de effecten van beleid kan monitoren,

en gaat over tot de orde van de dag.

Asscher
Pieter Heerma

Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

2

Vergaderjaar 2020–2021

35 510

Parlementaire ondervraging kinderopvangtoeslag

Nr. 33

MOTIE VAN HET LID AZARKAN C.S.

Voorgesteld 19 januari 2021

De Kamer,

gehoord de beraadslaging,

constaterende dat de Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens constateerde dat de werkwijze van de Belastingdienst in strijd was met de wet en discriminerend was;

constaterende dat er niet alleen binnen de Belastingdienst, maar ook binnen andere overheidsorganisaties sprake is en sprake kan zijn van discriminatie;

verzoekt de regering, om een brede doorlichting op discriminatie en etnisch profileren te organiseren van de werkwijze en organisatiecultuur van alle (semi)overheidsinstanties en uitvoeringsinstanties,

en gaat over tot de orde van de dag.

Azarkan
Jetten
Van Kooten-Arissen

Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

2

Vergaderjaar 2020–2021

30 950

Rassendiscriminatie

Nr. 237

**GEWIJZIGDE MOTIE VAN HET LID BELHAJ C.S. TER VERVANGING
VAN DIE GEDRUKT ONDER NR. 228**

Voorgesteld 20 april 2021

De Kamer,

gehoord de beraadslaging,

constaterende dat etniciteit onderdeel kan zijn bij fraudebestrijding door de overheid;

verzoekt de regering, conform het stembusakkoord geïnitieerd door Controle Alt Delete, overheidsinstanties etniciteit niet te laten gebruiken om fraude te bestrijden,

en gaat over tot de orde van de dag.

Belhaj
Simons
Bromet
Ceder
Den Haan
Vestering
Leijten
Kathmann

Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

2

Vergaderjaar 2021–2022

30 950

Rassendiscriminatie

Nr. 293

MOTIE VAN HET LID MUTLUER C.S.

Voorgesteld 13 april 2022

De Kamer,

gehoord de beraadslaging,

overwegende dat het College voor de Rechten van de Mens voor het gebruik van risicoprofielen een mensenrechtelijk toetsingskader heeft gemaakt;

van mening dat een risicoprofiel niet tot discriminatie op grond van ras of nationaliteit mag leiden;

van mening dat slechts onder strikte voorwaarden sprake kan zijn van een objectieve en redelijke rechtvaardiging voor dat onderscheid;

verzoekt de regering om de staatscommissie discriminatie en racisme te laten verkennen of het mogelijk is dat onderscheid op grond van ras of nationaliteit in risicoprofielen alleen toegepast mag worden ter bescherming dan wel ter ondersteuning van mensen,

en gaat over tot de orde van de dag.

Mutluer
Ceder
Van Baarle

Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

2

Vergaderjaar 2024–2025

30 950

Racisme en Discriminatie

Nr. 439

MOTIE VAN HET LID VAN NISPEN C.S.

Voorgesteld 19 maart 2025

De Kamer,

gehoord de beraadslaging,

overwegende dat overheidshandelen zowel expliciet als impliciet tot ongerechtvaardigd onderscheid tussen (groepen) mensen kan leiden, met grote gevolgen voor individuen en de samenleving;

overwegende dat de staatscommissie een Discriminatietoets Publieke Dienstverlening heeft ontwikkeld, waarmee overheidsorganisaties zelf kunnen achterhalen waar en hoe er risico's op (institutionele) discriminatie ontstaan in hun dienstverlening;

verzoekt de regering ervoor te zorgen dat de Discriminatietoets Publieke Dienstverlening door publieke dienstverleners zal worden gebruikt en het Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken hierbij de centrale regie te geven,

en gaat over tot de orde van de dag.

Van Nispen
Tseggai
Bamenga

Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

2

Vergaderjaar 2024–2025

30 950

Racisme en Discriminatie

Nr. 437

MOTIE VAN HET LID CEDER C.S.

Voorgesteld 19 maart 2025

De Kamer,

gehoord de beraadslaging,

constaterende dat de staatscommissie tegen discriminatie en racisme heeft aanbevolen dat publieke dienstverleners bij uitvoeringstoetsen aandacht besteden aan risico's op discriminatie;

overwegende dat de discriminatietoets ontwikkeld is als instrument voor overheidsorganisaties om risico's op discriminatie bloot te leggen;

verzoekt de regering om publieke dienstverleners bij het opstellen van een uitvoeringstoets ook het risico op discriminatie expliciet te laten beoordelen,

en gaat over tot de orde van de dag.

Ceder
Bamenga
Tseggai

Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

2

Vergaderjaar 2024–2025

36 284

Slavernijverleden

Nr. 56

MOTIE VAN DE LEDEN CEDER EN WHITE

Voorgesteld 3 juli 2025

De Kamer,

gehoord de beraadslaging,

de huidige aanpak van het kabinet te reactief is en tekortschiet in het tegengaan van discriminatie;

overwegende dat een gelijkheidsplicht al in meerdere Angelsaksische landen reeds van kracht is;

verzoekt de regering conform het advies van de staatscommissie tegen discriminatie en racisme de mogelijkheden voor het invoeren van een wettelijke gelijkheidsplicht voor de publieke sector in beeld te brengen en plannen te maken voor invoering hiervan, en de Kamer hierover voor de begrotingsbehandeling te informeren,

en gaat over tot de orde van de dag.

Ceder

White

Annex 6 | Composition of the Committee

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The State Committee against Discrimination and Racism is a one-off advisory body that was established for a period of four years, at the request of the House of Representatives, on 1 May 2022. The committee conducts scientific research into the nature, scope, causes, and approach to discrimination and racism in Dutch society.

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