



# NEWSLETTER



*to enable talented young people to achieve their aspirations, using links across Europe between commercial and academic organisations*

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**Netherland**

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## European Council

Nicolas Sarkozy, the President of the French Republic, is presiding over the European Council being held in Brussels on 11 and 12 December. This is the third European Council organised under the French Presidency, an extraordinary council having been convoked on 1 September following the conflict in Georgia. This Council is about the Lisbon Treaty, economic and financial issues, energy and climate change, the common agricultural policy and the EU's security and external relations. The European Council brings together the Heads of State and Government of the 27 Member States and the President of the European Commission. They are assisted by the foreign affairs ministers of the EU Member States and a member of the Commission. European Council meetings are also attended by the High-Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, who assists the President of the European Council, and by the Secretary-General of the European Commission. Though it does not adopt formal legislative acts, the European Council is the most important decision-making body of the European Union. It is the institution that gives the EU the necessary impetus for its development and defines its general political guidelines, in particular in the domain of the Common Foreign and



Security Policy. The Presidency intends to restrict the agenda for the European Council to items which will actually be discussed by the Heads of State or Government. The conclusions of the meeting will be brief, focusing mainly on the decisions and general policy lines approved by the European Council, and, if necessary, the follow-up to previous European Councils. The meeting will be preceded by a presentation by the President of the European Parliament, Mr Hans-Gert Pöttering, followed by an exchange of views.



### Provisional agenda

- 1. Lisbon Treaty**  
Further to the conclusions of its meeting in October 2008, the European Council will return to this issue in order to adumbrate a solution and establish a common way forward.
- II. Economic and financial affairs**  
The European Council will return to the financial crisis and its impact on the economy. In particular, it will review work undertaken following the meeting in October 2008 and will issue the necessary decisions or guidance as regards:
  - strengthening financial stability and financial supervision;
  - initiatives for reforming the international financial system;
  - support for growth and employment, for maintaining European industry's international competitiveness and for Europe's scientific and technological



development.

### III. Energy and climate change

In accordance with its October 2008 conclusions, the European Council will decide on appropriate responses to the challenges of implementing the energy-climate package, with a view to reaching overall agreement on it by the end of the year, working closely with the European Parliament.

### IV. Common agricultural policy

The European Council will review the work of the Agriculture Ministers on the CAP health check and, if appropriate, the way ahead.

### V. External relations and security

The European Council will be asked to approve a declaration on European defence and security, concerning, in particular, the European security strategy, international security, and strengthening European security and defence policy capabilities. It will briefly consider the Commission proposals for an eastern partnership and ask the Council and the Commission to continue work on this in 2009. The Presidency does not, at this stage, plan to raise any other foreign policy matters at this European Council meeting.



## News from Europe

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**Credit crunch – the EU at work. A quick guide to the EU's response to the financial crisis .**



The crisis that started in the US over a year ago has sent shock waves around the globe. Former giants of the financial world have found themselves suddenly facing bankruptcy. Inevitably, the crisis is also having an effect on households and businesses - economic growth has slowed sharply and in some EU countries unemployment has begun to increase for the first time in several years. In the EU, the turmoil has prompted action on many levels – by national governments, the European Central Bank and the Commission. All have been working closely together to protect savings, maintain a flow of affordable credit for businesses and households and put in place a better governance system for the future. **Looking ahead** Amid fears of a global recession, the Commission is pressing for rapid adoption of measures proposed in June to help small businesses, which create most new jobs in the EU. It is also asking the European Parliament and the 27 EU member countries to quickly adopt the proposed directive on capital requirements for financial institutions, aimed at reining in excessive risk-taking by banks and improving supervision of banks that operate in different EU countries. The Commission is drawing up proposals for stricter regulation of credit rating agencies. These agencies advise investors on how safe investments are, but they failed to spot some of the risks that led to the current crisis. The Commission is also looking at the issue of executive pay, amid concern that highly-paid bankers are not held accountable for making poor investment decisions. A comprehensive plan to help the EU economy recover from the crisis is also being prepared. It is due out on 26 November and will include short-term measures. At the same time, the Commission has also made a commitment to drive European coordination, to work tirelessly to improve global cooperation and to apply EU law with the maximum flexibility. [Chronological overview](#)





## Demography Report

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**Towards better societies for families and older people.** The second European Demography Report has been published on 21 November 2008. The Report is published every two years by the European Commission and provides the latest facts and figures that are needed to assess where Member States stand in responding to the challenges of demographic change. The 2008 report focuses on the ageing society and changing family and household patterns in the EU. It will be presented at the second [European Demography Forum](#) on 24-25 November 2008 in Brussels. The Forum will be devoted to how EU countries can learn from one another to create better societies for families and older people. It will bring together policy makers and actors in the field, notably in workshops that will be reviewing examples of good practice in these two areas.

## Competition

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Surf the Net – Think Privacy!



Young people from 15 to 19 years old are invited to express their views and concerns about online privacy by creating a 30-90 seconds video of 10 MB maximum to illustrate the theme "Surf the net – think privacy!". Participants will have to work in groups of maximum six persons, supervised by a teacher or another youth leader. Schools from different European countries are also invited to work together. A special prize for the purchase of equipment will reward the best "tandem video". Winners will be invited to Brussels to meet eminent jury members and take part in the Data



Protection Day events where they will be

awarded prizes. Deadline for submitting the videos is 15 January 2009. Detailed information regarding the competition can be found at: <http://eskills.eun.org/web/dprotection/home>

## Vinyl 2010 Competition

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Young people from 18 to 30 years old, throughout Europe and from the rest of the world are invited to express their view by writing a 1,000 word essay (in English) on the theme: "Faced with a food and energy crisis, how can society improve its well-being?". Participants could win cash prizes, have their essay published and get the chance to speak at an international high-level event on sustainable development. Deadline for registering is 1st December 2008. Deadline for submitting the essay is 31 January 2009. Find out more on: <http://www.vinyl2010.org/essaycompetition>



## ThinkQuest Website Competition

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**2009** Teams of students from 9 to 19 years of age from around the world are invited to take part in this annual competition promoting the creation of web-based educational materials. Students, coached by teachers, will have to develop innovative educational websites. There are three age divisions for the teams and websites can be created for one of the twelve categories (e.g. arts and entertainment; health and safety; geography and travel). Deadline for sending the application is 2 April 2009. All necessary information is available on: <http://www.thinkquest.org/competition/>



## Mondialogo 2008 - 2009

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Engineering Award:  
Students in the engineering sciences from both developed

and developing countries are invited to form international teams that will work together on the design and development of project proposals that address the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Their projects will help to reduce poverty and address basic needs, enhance sustainable development in such areas as water supply and sanitation, mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and adapt to changing climatic conditions. International Project Teams must be registered by 31 December 2008. The final project proposal to the Mondialogo team should be submitted by 30 April 2009.

Read all the details (application guidelines, prizes, proposed projects) of this award on the Mondialogo Engineering Award website:

<http://www.mondialogo.org/5.html?&L=en>

Final conclusions from the European Youth Week event in Brussels. During this Brussels event, more than 100 young European citizens came together to express their ideas and positions on future challenges for young people. They worked together in several working groups on various topics, such as: participation and information; voluntary activities of young people; employment, entrepreneurship, social inclusion and well being; education; rights of young people, equality and anti-discrimination; and Youth in Action workshops on the intercultural dialogue.

### **This month is about Netherlands**

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Every month the United Euro Bridge will issue a newsletter customised to a different European Country. If you like to contribute with the editing, email us: [info@unitedeurobridge.org](mailto:info@unitedeurobridge.org).

## History

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The historical period sets in with the [Roman Empire](#), as the parts south of the [Rhine](#) were included in the [province](#) of [Gallia Belgica](#), and later of [Germania Inferior](#). The country was inhabited at the time by various [Germanic tribes](#), and the south was inhabited by [Gauls](#), who merged with newcomers from other Germanic tribes during the [migration period](#). The [Salian Franks](#) migrated to Gaul from this region, establishing by the 5th century the powerful [Merovingian dynasty](#). In the medieval period, the [Low Countries](#) (roughly present-day [Belgium](#) and [the Netherlands](#), including parts of Germany (Ost-Fryslan) and France (Nord-Pas de Calais)) consisted of various [counties](#), [duchies](#) and [dioceses](#) belonging to the Duchy of Burgundy and to the [Holy Roman Empire](#). These were united into one state under [Habsburg](#) rule in the 16th century. The [Counter-Reformation](#) following the success of [Calvinism](#) in the Netherlands, and the attempts to centralise government and suppress religious diversity led to a revolt against [Philip II of Spain](#). On [26 July 1581](#), independence was declared, and finally recognised after the [Eighty Years' War](#) (1568-1648). The years of the war also marked the beginning of the [Dutch Golden Age](#), a period of great commercial and cultural prosperity roughly spanning the 17th century. Around 1600, the Netherlands were considered a country, but it was not until 1648, with the [Treaty of Münster](#), that the Dutch and Spain formally made peace. After the French occupation at the beginning of the 19th century, the Netherlands started out as a monarchy, governed by the [House of Orange](#). However, after a conservative period, strong [liberal](#) sentiments could no longer be ignored, and the country became a [parliamentary democracy](#) with a [constitutional monarch](#) in 1848. It has



remained so to this day, with a brief interruption during the [occupation by Nazi Germany](#). The Netherlands is now a modern, [industrialised](#) nation and a large exporter of [agricultural](#) products. International trade (literally 'overseas') has always been a central aspect of the Dutch economy (also influencing the culture) and was also an important reason for the struggle for independence and cause of the ensuing wealth.

## The beauties of the Netherlands

This country of tulips, windmills and bicycles stretches out over a predominantly flat landscape of reclaimed land. Sophisticated urban centres and sleepy rural towns are contained within the expansive vistas broken here and there by canals, castle walls and dikes. Europe's most densely populated region is located within an area of the Netherlands called the Randstad. This urban hub is spread in a circle from Amsterdam, and includes The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht and the smaller towns of Haarlem, Leiden and Delft. The metropolitan centres buzz with the activity of seasonal festivals, cultural activities, vibrant art scenes and excellent pubs and restaurants. The cultural heritage that flavours much of Dutch life can be traced back through time. During the 1600s the Netherlands dominated the world both economically and culturally. The Dutch East India Company established trading links with the East and West Indies bringing back an abundance of merchandise and cultural influences. The Golden Age reached its zenith in the artworks of the Dutch Masters - Rembrandt, Frans Hals and Jan Vermeer. Today their paintings hang from the walls of the cities' numerous museums and galleries. Most people travelling to the Netherlands head for the unique experience of its capital city, Amsterdam. The other parts are largely unaffected by tourism, particularly the areas outside the Randstad. The southern parts of the country are transformed by undulating landscapes of shifting sands and heath moors, best experienced within the Hoge Veluwe

National Park. Still south, tucked between the German and Belgian borders, lies the historical city of Maastricht. Since the collapse of Napoleon's empire in 1814, the Netherlands has taken a neutral stance throughout most of the world's conflicts, including the First World War in which it took no part. In spite of this independent stance it still suffered severely in World War II during the Nazi invasion of 1940. Its neutral political position, combined with its tradition of liberalism and tolerance has made the Netherlands the logical choice for the establishment of the International Court of Justice, which is situated in The Hague.

## Netherlands Attractions

The Netherlands' sights and attractions are distinguished by historical names such as Anne Frank or Rembrandt, who are both immortalized in Amsterdam museums. Other highlights include the Van Gogh Museum and the notorious Red Light District (De Wallen), as well as the ancient city of Groningen. This picturesque country is home to an entity of art, history and culture unparalleled in most tourist destinations. Visitors can enjoy a Heineken at a café and mingle with the friendly townsfolk, or cycling leisurely along the beautiful canals. Amsterdam is also well known for the use of cannabis being tolerated in designated 'coffee shops'. While packing, visitors to the Netherlands should bear in mind the mild climate and year-round rainfall; the best time to visit is in summer, or in spring when the flowers, including the famous tulips, are in bloom. An authentic European destination, travelling in the Netherlands offers great historical sightseeing and artistic attractions, combined with a truly cultural experience, and is a splendid opportunity for pleasure-seekers from all walks of life.

### [Anne Frank House](#)

This museum is dedicated to the memory of Anne Frank whose famous diary, recorded over a two-year period, describes the experiences of a Jewish teenager





during World War II. Part of the house was used as a hiding place by the Franks and... [see full details](#)



## [Van Gogh Museum](#)

The Van Gogh Museum is a definitive attraction in Amsterdam. Situated in a modern building, the simple architecture subtly underscores the artists' colourful and extraordinary work. The museum houses a permanent display of several hundred of Van Gogh's paintings and drawings, many of which... [see full details](#)



## [Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art](#)

The museum closely traces the development in art of the second half of the 20th century, showcasing the most impressive collections of modern art in Amsterdam. The permanent exhibition focuses on De Stijl, Cobra, Nouveau Realisme, Pop Art, Colorfield Painting, Zero and Minimalist Art... [see full details](#)



## [Rembrandt House](#)

This museum provides an insight into the life and times of the famous painter. Rembrandt lived here between 1639 and 1658 at the height of his career. The museum presents a permanent collection of Rembrandt's work, a reconstructed 17th century studio together with temporary... [see full details](#)



## [Red Light District \(De Wallen\)](#)

A visit to Amsterdam would not be complete without a stroll around the

notorious Red Light District. The atmosphere can be chaotic with throngs of tourists jostling for space alongside city slickers, pimps and drug dealers. The prostitutes of De Wallen are part of... [see full details](#)



## [The Dutch Resistance Museum \(Verzetsmuseum\)](#)

A trip to this museum provides a fascinating insight into the activities of the Dutch Resistance Movement during World War II. Displays of false documents, weaponry and other equipment provide testimony to the bravery and innovation of its members. ... [see full details](#)



## [National Maritime Museum](#)

Covering four centuries of Dutch naval history, the National Maritime Museum allows visitors to glimpse into the adventurous seafaring past of Dutch explorers and merchants through exhibits of antiquarian maps, navigation instruments, paintings and ship models, creating one of the most extensive collections of... [see full details](#)



## [Heineken Experience](#)

One of the most popular tourist attractions in Amsterdam, the Heineken Experience is not to be missed. After opening its doors in 2001, with Heineken Experience has been attracting international beer lovers for almost a decade. Housed in the original brewery, visitors will learn... [see full details](#)



## [Amsterdam Coffee Shops](#)



Amsterdam's coffee shops are an iconic part of the city and for many tourists they constitute a unique and essential part of any visit to the Netherlands. In Amsterdam, 'coffee shop' means a place where cannabis is openly sold and smoked, while 'café' refers... [see full details](#)

## Food from Holland

### Alkmaar cheese soup

- 4 CUPS MILK
- 50 GRAM FLOUR
- 100 GRAM CHEESE, grated
- 1 ONION, chopped
- 1 TURNIP, cubed
- 1 POTATO, peeled and cooked



Stir fry the onion; add flour and stir fry 3 minutes more. Add the milk and bring to the boil, simmer for 5 minutes, stir well.

Cook the turnip 10 minutes, drain and add to the soup. Puree the potato and add to the soup, as well as 75 gram cheese. Stir until the cheese has melted. Pour the soup in plates and sprinkle the rest of the cheese on top.

### Fish soup

- 250 GRAM COD FILLET, cubed
- 200 GRAM CARROTS, in strips
- 200 GRAM TURNIP, in strips
- BUNCH OF CHIVES, chopped
- 1/2 TSP CURRY POWDER
- 4 CUPS
- 1 EGG
- 1 TBSP CORN STARCH
- 4 TBSP FISH STOCK



Stir fry the turnip and carrots 5 minutes, add the fish stock, the curry and the cod. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Finally add

the chives. Stir the egg, the cream and the corn starch together and add this to the soup. Heat the soup a little more but be careful not to let it boil.

### Vinegar chicken

- 8 CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS

- 1 LEEK, in slices
- 3 TBSP BALSAMIC VINEGAR
- 1 TOMATO, chopped
- 1 CUP WHITE WINE
- 1 TBSP MUSTARD
- 4 TBSP CREAM

Stir fry the leeks for a few minutes. Add the



chicken, white wine, vinegar and salt and pepper to taste and simmer for half an hour. Take the chicken out and reduce the sauce

on high heat. Stir in the cream and mustard, pour the sauce over the chicken and arrange the tomato on the sides.

### Weesper moppen

- 250 GRAM ALMOND PASTE
- 1 EGG
- 1 TSP BAKING SODA
- 4 TBSP SUGAR



Knead almond paste, egg and baking powder well together and roll the mixture out to a long thin roll. Cut the roll in 20

slices and sprinkle with sugar. Bake 11 minutes on a greased oven tray at 190 degrees Celsius.

### Macaroons

- 100 GRAM COCONUT, grated
- 3 EGG WHITES
- 75 GRAM SUGAR
- 50 GRAM CHERRIES, chopped



Mix the coconut with the sugar, the egg whites and two tablespoons water and heat in the microwave for 2 minutes; stir every

30 seconds. Add the cherries and mix well. Make 16 small balls, put them on a greased baking tray and flatten them. Bake the cookies 15 minutes at 175 degrees Celsius.

### Tropical chocolate pie

- 160 GRAM FLOUR
- 75 GRAM CORN STARCH
- 100 GRAM BUTTER
- 225 GRAM SUGAR
- 7 EGGS
- 200 GRAM CHOCOLATE





- 2 BANANAS
- 2 CUPS CREAM
- 100 GRAM STRAWBERRY JAM
- 4 GELATIN LEAVES

Make a dough out of 60 gram flour, 20 gram cold butter, 25 gram sugar and 1 egg. Put in the fridge for 30 minutes, roll it out to a circle, put on the bottom of a round oven dish and bake 15 minutes at 175 degrees. Allow to cool and spread the strawberry jam over the bottom. Put 80 gram butter, 100 gram flour, 75 gram corn starch, 200 gram sugar, 4 eggs and 100 gram melted chocolate together and mix during 2 minutes. Put baking paper in a rectangular oven tray and spread the batter thin. Bake 10 minutes at 200 degrees. Cool down and cut in 5 long strips with the same width. Chop the banana's (leave a piece behind for decoration), soak the gelatin leaves in a little water and dissolve them in 1 dl hot cream. Beat 2 dl cream and mix with gelatin mixture and banana's. Cool down and spread over the cake strips. Roll up one of the strips and put it straight up on the middle of your cake bottom with jam. Roll the other strips in a circle around it, dry side out. Cut the bottom to match the circles and form a round chocolate pie. Melt the other 100 gram chocolate, mix with 2 egg yolks, beat the two egg whites until fluffy, beat the rest 2 dl of cream. Mix the chocolate with cream and then with egg whites. Spread over top and sides of the cake and decorate with banana slices.

### Spice cake

- 200 GRAM SELF RAISING FLOUR
- 100 GRAM BROWN FLOUR
- 100 GRAM BUTTER
- 2 EGGS
- 1 CUP MILK
- 2 APPLES
- 2 TBSP BISCUIT SPICES
- 2 TSP GRATED GINGERROOT



Put self raising flour, brown flour, sugar, eggs, soft butter, biscuit spices and milk together and mix during 5 minutes. Add the ginger. Put the mixture in a cake form. Peel the apples and cut them in slices. Put the slices on top of the cake, push them down a little bit. Bake 45 minutes at 150 degrees.

### Apricot mousse with strawberries

- 250 GRAM SOAKED DRIED APRICOTS or BOERENMEISJES
- 300 GRAM STRAWBERRIES, cleaned and quartered
- 1/2 CUP LIQUOR
- 1 CUP CREAM, whipped with
- 4 TBSP SUGAR
- 3 LEAVES OF GELATIN, soaked



Puree the apricots. heat a few tablespoons and dissolve the gelatin. Now put all ingredients together and stir well. Distribute the mixture over 4 glasses and put them in the fridge for about three hours. Turn them around on a plate (hold the glasses for 10 seconds in hot water to make it easier) or serve in the glasses.

### Nonnevotten

- 400 GRAM FLOUR
- 1 TSP YEAST
- 2 TSP SUGAR
- 8 TBSP BUTTER, melted
- 1 CUP MILK
- 1 TSP CINNAMON



Mix flour, milk, yeast, 2 tablespoons sugar and butter together and knead for 5 minutes. Allow the dough to rise for an hour and roll it out to a rectangular form with a length of 30 centimeters. Cut this into 10 strips and fold these into bows. Allow them to rise another hour and deep fry them at 180 degrees Celsius, until both sides are golden brown (turn them around half way). Mix the remaining sugar with the cinnamon and sprinkle this over the nonnevotten. Nonnevot refers to a bow, which nuns (nonnen) from Limburg in the South of the Netherlands used to wear on their behind (vot).

### Anything to share?

Are you looking for something or someone? You could advertise anything you like in YOUR newsletter, please send your contributions to: [info@unitedeurobridge.org](mailto:info@unitedeurobridge.org)



The information in this newsletter is, to our knowledge, correct at the time of issue.