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## Summary

# Exploring the boundaries of European solidarity

Citizens' perspectives on international solidarity during  
the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine



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*original title*

## **Grenzen verkennen van Europese solidariteit**

Burgerperspectieven op grensoverschrijdende solidariteit tijdens de coronapandemie en de Oekraïne-oorlog

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## Summary and implications for policy

### European solidarity as a policy instrument for tackling transnational issues

Interconnectivity and mutual dependence between the Netherlands and other countries is on the rise (WRR 2010). Transnational issues, such as the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine, highlight the mutual interdependence between European countries. These international events also help risks to spread across borders. During the coronavirus pandemic, the focus was on health and economic risks. In relation to the war in Ukraine, the focus lies on security and economic risks. These risks have both direct and indirect consequences for the quality of life of residents of the Netherlands, as well as the victims of the war in Ukraine (De Klerk et al. 2020; Den Ridder et al. 2023a). In order to limit the undesirable consequences of these international developments the Dutch government has set up various national policies. In addition, these policies are increasingly supplemented by policies at the European level (EC 2020; ER 2023). European policy is based on solidarity between European countries (see Hoefman et al. 2023). In this context, the Netherlands and the European Union (EU) are constantly balancing different interests to decide which risks they want to share with other countries, and how they want to do that. This concerns the extent to which the Netherlands and the EU want to show solidarity with other countries.

The need for a common European approach to transnational problems on the one hand and the national responsibility and autonomy of EU Member States on the other creates conflicting priorities (WRR and KNAW 2021). For example, some citizens are pushing back against the growing interdependence between the Netherlands, European policies and European politics (Dekker and Den Ridder 2019; Van den Hoogen et al. 2024; Den Ridder et al. 2023a, 2023b; SCP 2024; De Vries 2018). This poses a governance challenge: how can Dutch policymakers take into account different citizens' views on European solidarity? After all, the willingness to share risks and resources with other countries depends not only on the national government and the European Union but also on the citizens they represent (Hobolt and De Vries 2016).

The way in which Dutch and European policymakers take the views and preferences of citizens into account has consequences for how citizens view the Dutch government and the European Union (cf. Geurkink and Van Noije 2024; Van Noije et al. 2023). To date, little is known about citizens' views on European solidarity. This report outlines the different perspectives on European solidarity of the residents of the Netherlands. It is based on research using focus groups and interviews.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this research, we offer three strategies that outline how policymakers can take into account the citizens' perspectives in shaping foreign and European policy. These strategies differ in the way in which the government can deal with citizens' perspectives on what solidarity entails and the conditions that people set for supporting international solidarity. Whether policymakers choose to embrace one of these strategies remains a political choice, but all strategies require policymakers to know how citizens think about European solidarity. This study presents policymakers with this knowledge. It is also a follow-up publication to our previous research on the motives underlying the policy decisions of the European Commission during the coronavirus pandemic related to European solidarity (see Hoefman et al. 2023).

The central question of this study is how residents of the Netherlands view European solidarity. We use the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine as case studies. This study demonstrates that people desire a government that will take citizens' opinions on solidarity into consideration. Some people additionally express the need to engage with policymakers about why it is important that people from the Netherlands show solidarity with people in other countries. This concerns a debate about the diverse and complex interplay between the motives for extending European solidarity and the conditions people set for showing support for such solidarity. In this context, it is important that people indicate

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<sup>1</sup> For this study, we conducted focus groups with Dutch citizens and follow-up interviews with both Dutch citizens and migrant workers in the Netherlands from other EU countries.

how solidary they want to be, where they believe the limits for showing solidarity lie and what would be necessary to continue to be solidary with people in other countries, such as victims of the Ukraine war and refugees.

## What is European solidarity according to citizens?

The interviewees in this study had different interpretations of European solidarity. They interpreted it as coordination and cooperation between countries of the European Union, political commitments, protection of the social rights of EU citizens in other European countries or risk-sharing between EU countries (insurance mechanisms). Roughly speaking, there are two mechanisms for solidarity:

- sharing of resources ('benefits'), such as money;
- sharing of risks ('burdens').

Risk-sharing concerns a form of cooperation or coordination between countries or groups through which they spread risks. An example of this would be the risk of not having access to an effective vaccine during the coronavirus pandemic. By combining knowledge and financial resources to support the development of different types of COVID-19 vaccines, EU countries were able to increase the chances of developing a vaccine. Our study shows that citizens' image of European solidarity is overwhelmingly based on benefit-sharing or the redistribution of financial resources. This redistribution runs from the Netherlands or the European Union to other EU countries or third (non-EU) countries. People are less likely to see the sharing of burdens, or risk-sharing, between countries as a form of European solidarity. For some interviewees, risk-sharing is completely decoupled from sharing resources. In addition, when people primarily think of solidarity as benefit-sharing, they are less likely to consider the advantages of European solidarity policy for their country or for themselves. This means that, before we can draw conclusions about the extent to which people do or do not support European solidarity, it is important to realise what form of European solidarity people have in mind.

Citizens' perspectives on solidarity are of course very diverse. Moreover, for some citizens, it is also difficult to relate to international events and developments in the first place. Especially the role of Dutch and European authorities during the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine is unclear for some interviewees in our study. They are unsure whether citizens have – or even can have – a sufficient understanding of Dutch and EU foreign policy and the associated consequences for their own lives. The interviewees also point to a difference between the intentions of policymakers, the way in which they act and the outcomes of national and European policies. As an example of this, they point to the promises to share the COVID-19 vaccines with other countries and the actual redistribution of vaccines, which failed to fulfil those promises. This leads to a dissatisfaction regarding the difference between the policies being drafted, in which policymakers or politicians refer to European solidarity, and the ideas that citizens hold regarding what European solidarity actually entails. When people do not consider policy measures to be a form of solidarity, this can make them feel that policy is imposed on citizens. The limited knowledge and lack of interest displayed by some of the interviewees when it comes to European policy and politics contributes to this feeling.

## Which conditions need to be met for expressing solidarity with other (European) countries according to citizens?

This study offers insight into people's motives for extending European solidarity and the conditions they set for solidarity with other European countries, as well as third countries. People who interpret European solidarity primarily as benefit-sharing between countries are more sceptical about the way the national government and the EU balanced different interests during the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Therefore, they are also more sceptical about European solidarity. Conversely, people who believe European solidarity to be more about sharing burdens between countries or another form

of international coordination and cooperation are more positive about it. In short, people would rather share the burdens than share the benefits.

Support for solidarity between EU countries or with other countries depends on three other aspects as well:

- what interviewees consider important in terms of the way policy is created;
- how they view people in other countries and refugees in their own country;
- what resources they believe are available to the Netherlands or the EU.

If we look at what people consider important, support for European solidarity relies on a desire to promote specific values abroad, such as justice or fairness. The legitimacy of both the national government and the EU is crucial when it comes to citizens' support for European solidarity. This relates to the opportunities that citizens have to participate and have a say in policy-making, the rules and procedures through which policies are created, the justification and transparency of foreign policy, and its effectiveness and efficiency. Having access to reliable information about international events is also a necessary precondition for citizens' ability to discuss and contemplate European solidarity.

The second aspect on which solidarity depends is the way in which the participants in our research look at people in other countries and refugees in their own country. Our study shows that the respondents want to show solidarity with countries in need, and with the vulnerable residents in those countries. For example, this includes people who are suffering due to shortages of food and essential resources and people who are unable to cope on their own. The interviewees in our study were more likely to show solidarity with countries or groups of people they believed require aid through no fault of their own or without having had any control over their situation, due to events such as a pandemic or a natural disaster. There was less support when it came to economic or debt crises in other countries. People are also more likely to show solidarity if there are past or presently existing mutual relations between the Netherlands or the EU and other countries. The interviewees expected other people to be thankful for the solidarity they are being shown and were more likely to support countries and/or groups with which they identified. Identification could be based on ideological beliefs, culture and racialised background or on characteristics relating to citizenship. The latter concerns the governance in other countries and the extent to which these countries violate principles of the rule of law, human rights and democratic values.

In addition, support for international solidarity depends on what resources respondents believe are available to the Netherlands or the EU. The experiences and opinions of people with solidarity in the national context influence the way they think about European solidarity. Furthermore, experiencing scarcity in the Netherlands has an adverse effect on support for international solidarity. For example, the interviewees compare the financial resources that are available to the social security system in the Netherlands to the government spending for European funds, such as for economic development programmes and financial support to third countries such as Ukraine. When they are concerned about solidarity in the Netherlands, they experience a dilemma regarding the way in which the government arranges national and European solidarity. This, in turn, becomes an obstacle to supporting international solidarity. Serving the interests of the Netherlands and its citizens – in the way in which interviewees outline their idea of self-interest being served – then becomes a condition for voicing support for European solidarity.

## Perspectives for action – three strategies for citizens' involvement and participation

Policymakers working on transnational issues can deal with citizens' opinions on European and global solidarity in different ways. The way in which the government views its own role and that of citizens is of major importance here. The latter, for example, concerns whether the government sees residents as actors who can contribute to solving societal challenges. Or perhaps it sees its residents as vulnerable, as people who require government support in solving such challenges. In other words, this concerns the

underlying idea the government holds about the citizens. Policymakers' choices in regard to how the government sees the role of the citizens are not trivial because, among other things, they affect how citizens experience their relationship with the government.

The opinions of citizens shown in this report differ greatly from each other. This makes it difficult for policymakers to take all of them into account. Nonetheless, policymakers are faced with a choice regarding the ways to deal with citizens' perspectives. There are different ways in which policymakers can take into account the perspectives of citizens (see e.g. Goldmann 2005; Hay 2007; Van Heerde and Hudson 2010; March and Olsen 1989, 1995). For example, Van Heerde and Hudson (2010) propose three strategies:

- Strategy 1: accommodating the views of citizens in policy;
- Strategy 2: influencing citizens' preferences;
- Strategy 3: encouraging a broad societal debate.

Policymakers can use these strategies to take citizens' motives and conditions for European solidarity into account. The strategies relate to the above-mentioned aspects for citizens' support for international solidarity: the way in which policy is created, the ideas people have about those benefitting from a policy and the resources available to the Netherlands or the EU for sharing burdens or benefits. The table at the end of this chapter contains a summary of these perspectives for action. We discuss these strategies as if they are completely separate from each other, but in practice, we expect that policymakers will combine different strategies.

### **Strategy 1: accommodating the views of citizens in policy**

The first strategy involves prioritising the public opinion about European solidarity, also known as *preference accommodation*. This strategy relies on policymakers to incorporate the dominant preferences of citizens about European solidarity in foreign policy-making. Policymakers can choose to use this strategy when they want to prioritise the way citizens balance different interests (cf. Goldmann 2005; Van Heerde and Hudson 2010). This strategy therefore requires insight into what people believe is important, and why. Our study into the citizens' perspectives on European solidarity in response to the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine offers interesting tools for this, but it also shows that the views of citizens are very diverse, making it impossible to satisfy everyone. For example, some of the interviewees in our study considered it important to serve the interests of people in the Netherlands first, before helping out people in other countries. Other respondents provided a different framework for a fair distribution, for example by prioritising people in need who are not responsible for their situation.

Accommodating the dominant citizens' perspective in policy could increase the responsiveness of the Dutch government. First and foremost, this would allow the government to demonstrate that it is taking the preferences of residents seriously. However, this can prove to be a challenging task. Being responsive and taking citizens' views into account means that you need to take into account the complex interplay of motives for extending international solidarity and the conditions that people expect to be met in order for them to show support. For example, there are differences between the limits that citizens place on European solidarity. In addition, there are also differences between what citizens consider to be necessary in order for them to show solidarity with people in other countries. Our study shows that promoting certain values in policy, such as justice or fairness, is a motive for supporting European solidarity. However, serving peoples' self-interest or the national self-interest is also a condition that citizen's place for showing support for international solidarity. The challenge for this strategy lies in coming up with a balanced policy that embraces both this motive and this condition, since both are important to citizens.

The *preference accommodation* strategy is based on the *logic of expected consequences* (see Dahl 1989; Van Heerde and Hudson 2010). This logic considers the rational, calculating citizen as given and as a starting point, whereby citizens are expected to be able to rationally assess the consequences of their own actions, as well as the consequences of various government policies, for both themselves and others (Dahl 1989). This presupposed idea of how people think and behave entails that citizens can assess government policies based on the information and knowledge they have about societal, economic

and geopolitical events with widespread international consequences (cf. Dahl 1989; Goldmann 2005; Van Heerde and Hudson 2010). However, the way in which public opinion comes about, as well as the differences between individuals in terms of their executive functioning and the ability to act (Gebhardt and Feijten 2022; WRR 2017), calls this idea into question. Public opinion is not value-free; instead, it is the product of an intense interplay between politics, media coverage, public debate and personal experiences. Sentiments are likewise decisive for citizens' opinions (Bonjour and Duyvendak 2020; Van Klingereren et al. 2015). Focusing on the specific interests of citizens whose insights dominate the public opinion could therefore lead to ineffective policy, which may moreover be based on an unrealistic idea of people as well-informed citizens.

The role of government based on this strategy is to 'to maximise the public information available to citizens on which to base their decisions' (Van Heerde and Hudson 2010: 402). If policymakers wish to accommodate the public opinion on serving the self-interest of the Netherlands, the government must ensure that citizens have the freedom of access to reliable information. This concerns information about societal, economic and geopolitical events in other countries and the consequences of these events for the quality of life of the residents of the Netherlands (cf. Herzog 2023). It also includes generous and accessible provision of information about decision-making in the Netherlands and Brussels in relation to the EU (see TK 2021/2022). Furthermore, protecting the free press and civil society organisations that ensure freedom of speech is of major importance here. Stemming the tide of misinformation and disinformation must also be part and parcel of the provision of information, as citizens are concerned about the way in which misinformation and disinformation influence the public opinion in the Netherlands in relation to transnational issues. Our study, as well as previous research from the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) into contested information during the coronavirus pandemic, demonstrates these concerns (see Schaper and Hartman 2023).

We identify several risks associated with implementing this strategy. Accommodating the public opinion in policy may lead to citizens' disengagement from civic participation and politics (Hay 2007; Van Heerde and Hudson 2010). For example, this strategy may negatively affect various forms of civic and political participation, such as voting for European elections, being a member of activist groups or participating in citizens' assemblies and political parties. People might feel that the time and effort they put into civic political participation do not or no longer match up with the personal costs (Hay 2007), as policymakers are already taking the interests of citizens into account in their decision-making framework. In a participatory model, taking people's perspectives into account can reinforce civic engagement, but this will require more than just accommodating citizens' opinions in policy. We explain this further in the third strategy. Incorporating public opinion into the foreign policy of the Netherlands and the EU may similarly lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. This could happen if policymakers were to assume that citizens' views are created in a vacuum and that serving the self-interest is the only condition for supporting international solidarity.

### **Strategy 2: influencing citizens' preferences**

The opposite of the previous strategy is an active strategy based on influencing citizens' perspectives on solidarity (Goldmann 2005; Van Heerde and Hudson 2010). In this *preference shaping* strategy, policymakers draw their own conclusions, for example based on moral, geopolitical, economic or other grounds, and they try to enthruse citizens for certain forms of international solidarity that people consider desirable or undesirable. Policymakers could apply this strategy in Dutch and European foreign policy-making if they want to achieve a certain distribution of risks and benefits between countries.

The challenge associated with the implementation of this *preference shaping* strategy lies in explaining and promoting the choices made. In addition, the way in which policymakers' decisions resonate with citizens can present challenges. Our study into the citizens' perspectives on European solidarity in response to the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine shows that citizens' attitudes regarding other countries and people in those countries are very diverse. Therefore, if policymakers want to promote or discourage European solidarity, this will require an appropriate policy logic that matches the image that citizens have regarding other countries and people in those countries and also matches their ideals of solidarity. This strategy therefore requires efforts on the part of policymakers to convince people of the added value of

European solidarity, as well as a convincing story about how European solidarity fits in with the ideals and convictions of citizens. This strategy can therefore be founded on different presupposed ideas of how people think and behave.

If policymakers want to encourage European solidarity, they can for example choose to base this strategy on the idea that citizens act, as much as possible, on a moral duty to do good unto others. This is based on the *logic of appropriateness* (March and Olsen 1989, 1995) whereby the focus lies on helping people in need and taking the well-being of others from their own community into account. However, policymakers could also base this strategy on the opposite view of humanity, the ‘Homo economicus’. According to the Homo economicus view, people are economic creatures focused on satisfying their own needs in an efficient and rational way. The success of any given *preference shaping* strategy depends on the extent to which the presupposed idea of how people think and behave corresponds with how people themselves see the world. People who are (mainly) motivated by a moral duty will be less enthusiastic about a policy based on (mainly) serving the self-interest, and vice versa.

Depending on the policy objectives to either encourage or discourage European solidarity, policymakers can make an appeal to the notion of shared fate, or choose not to do so. Our study found, among other things, that people are more likely to support solidarity with countries and/or groups with which they identify. This can be based on ideological beliefs, culture and racialised background or on characteristics relating to citizenship. When implementing this strategy, it is important to realise that a shared identity is crucial when it comes to with whom people are willing to show solidarity. Thanks to this study, we know that citizens are more willing to show solidarity with countries and people in countries they consider close to them, both culturally and geographically. When people do not feel connected or find it difficult to identify with people in other countries, it can be difficult for policymakers to make citizens enthusiastic about international solidarity. It is similarly difficult to discourage solidarity in situations in which residents feel strongly connected with the population of a specific country, for example because of a shared past or something else connecting the countries.

The role of the government in a scenario in which policymakers want to promote European solidarity consists of working actively to promote community-building processes – in other words, strengthening political and military, institutional and diplomatic ties between the Netherlands and other (European) countries. After all, community-building processes are the basis for promoting solidarity, and solidarity promotes community building (Stone 1999). It is therefore relevant to this scenario who people consider to be part of the community. The way in which policymakers give shape to national and international interests contributes to the development of communal identities. For example, the way in which national authorities devote attention to national interests can therefore affect citizens’ shared experience of a sense of community. This likewise applies to the way in which the government positions itself within and in relation to international institutions such as the EU, NATO (North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and the UN (United Nations).

Through this strategy, policymakers can provide further insight into the government’s process of balancing different interests by explicitly showing which values policies are based on. Formal connections, such as being a Member State of the EU, offer opportunities for community building, but they are not a guarantee that people will foster a European or some other international identity. Our study also shows that people have different thoughts about things like promoting justice or fairness through foreign policy. Trying to encourage or discourage policy based on these values will therefore resonate with different groups of people. There is a risk that citizens will not understand or support decisions if policymakers are unable to effectively explain why they are encouraging or discouraging European solidarity. In addition, a necessary condition for implementing this *preference shaping* strategy is the existence of a high degree of social consensus and also high trust in politics and the national government. However, trust in politics and the government has been decreasing in the past few decades (Den Ridder et al. 2023b). This decreasing trend makes it more difficult for policymakers to apply this strategy. The complexity of decentralised government authorities in the Netherlands (based on network governance) presents another challenge for the national government when it comes to influencing citizens’ perspectives on solidarity.



### **Strategy 3: encouraging a broad societal debate**

The third strategy consists of facilitating opportunities for citizens to participate and have a say in policy-making about European solidarity. In this strategy, policymakers can choose to determine the departure points and boundaries for international solidarity in consultation with citizens. For example, they can do so through a public debate on the desired policies for situations that call on international solidarity. Policymakers can choose to use this strategy when they wish to design policies in co-creation with citizens.

When applying this strategy, it is important to acknowledge that not all citizens want to be involved in the development of policy to the same extent. For example, people have different expectations about the roles of national and European policymakers. In addition, the amount of knowledge about foreign policy and international events also differs greatly between people. That is why, when using this strategy, it is recommended to select forms of civic participation that take this diversity of needs and opportunities for participation into account. This is also important because, as we have learned from this study, the perceived legitimacy of national government as well as the EU is a precondition for supporting European solidarity. People expect, if they want to, to be involved in and have a say in foreign policy-making. Moreover, the rules and procedures through which policy is created, the justification and transparency of foreign policy, and the effectiveness and efficiency thereof are also important.

The role of government in this strategy is to facilitate different forms of civic and political participation. First of all, policymakers can encourage civic participation, for example in relation to the EU. After all, the EU is the political body that facilitates solidarity with and between EU Member States, including the Netherlands. Policymakers can do this by organising citizen forums, such as the Conference on the Future of Europe (see Djundeva and Den Ridder 2021), or other forms of civic participation for the benefit of agenda setting, the opinion-forming process, policy advice or co-production of the foreign policy of the Netherlands or the EU (cf. Leyenaar 2009). Encouraging political participation also fits in with this, such as voting in national elections and elections for the European parliament. Accommodating the views of citizens on European solidarity in this way can increase the responsiveness of the Dutch government, because it targets significant involvement of residents.

Encouraging a broad societal debate arises from the policy logic of encouraging a '*deliberative democracy*' (Van Heerde and Hudson 2010). This logic is based on the presupposed idea of people as engaged citizens – who have the necessary time and resources to evaluate policy in a critical and expert manner. Engaged citizens participate willingly and enthusiastically in policy-making. This view presupposes that the government does not necessarily ask citizens to contribute their thoughts, but rather that citizens take the initiative to address matters that are important to them (Bakker et al. 2011). However, this view takes little account of the differences in people's executive functioning and the ability to act. This also concerns differences between other resources, such as income, level of education and embeddedness in social networks. If policymakers take the view of the engaged citizen as given and as a starting point, they run the risk of encouraging participation among those who are already civically and politically engaged, whereas others run an even greater risk of being excluded. People who are less well informed and have access to fewer resources will also have fewer opportunities to participate. This can have direct consequences for the feasibility of policy, as policy that excludes the views of groups of citizens may be subject to blind spots and may not be effective.

Moreover, this strategy is not always easy to implement, for example due to the quick response required in the event of a war or pandemic. In situations with a considerable degree of uncertainty in which quick decision-making is key, and the level of knowledge among citizens is low, this strategy runs into the limits of what is feasible. This strategy can additionally be very expensive, considering the limited degree of scalability of some of the instruments necessary for organising civic participation. After all, setting up citizens' assemblies on a large scale takes considerable time and resources.

## Conclusion

The views of residents of the Netherlands about European solidarity regarding transnational issues are very diverse. People have different motives for extending solidarity and identify different conditions that need to be met in order for them to support European solidarity.

In addition to this, there are different ways to incorporate citizens' perspectives in foreign policy-making for the Netherlands and the EU – despite the complexity of transnational issues and the diversity in citizens' perspectives on European solidarity. Regardless of what strategy policymakers choose to use, it is necessary to know how citizens view European solidarity. Although some citizens' perspectives are more dominant than others, it is nonetheless of major importance for policymakers to realise and deal with the fact that the different ways in which citizens view European solidarity depend on a complex interplay between the motives for extending solidarity and the conditions that people expect to be met in order for them to support solidarity with other European and third countries. This requires a balance between appealing to the type of solidarity that can be expected of citizens while at the same time making it clear in which ways their interests and/or the interest of their country will also be served.

The relationship between the government and citizens is pivotal in the perspectives for action we have outlined above. That is why the strategies address different options for civic participation, requiring a different approach from policymakers for each strategy. Policymakers can apply instruments that focus, to differing degrees, on accommodating the views of citizens in policy, influencing citizens' preferences or encouraging a broad societal debate on transnational issues and solidarity. Each of the strategies entails both risks and advantages. When accommodating public opinion in policy, there is a risk, for example, that the loudest voices will also receive the most attention. When policymakers want to influence citizens' preferences, there is a risk that not everyone will feel part of the international community with which policymakers intend to share burdens and benefits. Encouraging a broad societal debate may require certain skills from citizens that not all citizens possess in equal amount. In the abovementioned perspectives for action, we nevertheless point to opportunities to shape foreign policy based on citizens' perspectives, which could increase the responsiveness and accountability of the government (Geurkink and Van Noije 2024; Van Noije 2019).

Accommodating the views of citizens in policy and encouraging a broad societal debate lends itself better to acknowledging and recognising the diversity in views on European solidarity than influencing citizens' preferences does. Compared to the other two strategies, encouraging a broad societal debate offers more opportunities for discussing under which conditions and based on which motives people support solidarity through foreign policy.

Knowledge of how citizens think about international solidarity is crucial in order to make the choice about which of these perspectives for action is appropriate and desirable for Dutch and European foreign policy. In the underlying research report, we explore in depth how citizens view (European) solidarity, under which conditions they would or would not be willing to show solidarity, what role the characteristics of the receiving party play and how citizens envision serving the (strategic) self-interest.

**Table S.1 Three strategies to include citizens' perspectives in making policy**

Strategy	Content of the strategy	When can policymakers use this strategy?	Responsibility of the government	What policy logic underlies this consideration?
Accommodating the views of citizens in policy.	Accommodating the public opinion on European solidarity in Dutch and European foreign policy.	When they want to set the public opinion about European solidarity as the focus of Dutch and European foreign policy.	Ensuring that citizens have free access to reliable information about the circumstances in other countries. Stemming the tide of misinformation and disinformation. Protecting the free press and civil society organisations that ensure freedom of speech.	The logic of expected consequences.
Influencing citizens' preferences.	Making citizens enthusiastic about the choices made by policymakers. Promoting certain values, such as justice and fairness, in Dutch and European foreign policy.	When they want to achieve a specific distribution of social burdens and benefits between countries.	Deepening or reducing political and military, economic, institutional and diplomatic ties between the Netherlands other European and third countries. Promoting specific values in foreign policy.	The logic of appropriateness.
Encouraging a broad societal debate.	Facilitating citizens' engagement in Dutch and EU foreign policy-making through various participation forms.	When they want to encourage the participation of citizens in Dutch and European foreign policy-making (in the context of increasing government legitimacy).	Facilitating civic participation in European policy, for example by organising citizen forums. Encouraging political participation, such as voting in national elections and elections for the European parliament.	Deliberative democracy.

Source: Netherlands Institute for Social Research

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