

Manifesto of JEF NL for the municipal elections in the Netherlands of 18 March 2026

Why Are Municipal Elections Important for European Federalism?

1. All EU citizens residing in The Netherlands can vote. This is an opportunity to make a difference where one lives, not where one was born. In addition, municipal elections help build a truly European democracy, one municipality at a time.
2. Democracy starts locally: Local political engagement builds communities that care about their local environment, help form a bond between The Hague, EU institutions, ordinary citizens, and local organisations and businesses, and enhance resilience against populists. Municipal council deliberations across the country about asylum-seeker centres or Palestine, for example, have shown that local governance has an important influence on national or even international issues.
3. Europe starts in your municipality: Our cities, towns, and villages form a vital part of a shared European heritage, including economic networks and governance structures. In return, there is much that the EU, and eventually the European federation, can do for our municipalities. Cohesion funds, natural protection programmes, support for cross-border economic activities and tourism, or Erasmus are some of the ways in which municipalities can benefit from their states' EU membership. A pro-European leadership in municipalities can utilise these benefits more efficiently while building positive relationships and networks across Europe.

What Do We Stand for?

1. We support close cooperation between municipalities, EU institutions and agencies, and the national government to maximise the gains from EU funds to municipalities. Initiatives such as Kansen voor West, Euregio, or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development have a potential to increase the welfare of our municipalities and regions.
2. We support the self-identification of municipalities with Europe. This is particularly important for municipalities that have current or historical cross-border significance, but every municipality can participate. We support that each municipality should have at least one street named after Europe.

3. We support closer European exchange between municipalities. All municipalities should foster cooperation with their partner municipalities across Europe, particularly the EU and candidate member states. This can include exchange of municipalities' citizens or cultural events focused on the partners' local culture.
4. Promote Unity in Diversity: foster local and regional identities, whether this includes language or cultural customs, and highlight their European context.
5. We support the activities of municipalities towards improving the quality of life within EU frameworks, including via Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans and the New Leipzig Charter.
6. We support the activities of municipalities towards improving clean transport links across municipalities, regions, and state borders, such as through active participation in Trans European Network projects.