

Socialist Party (Netherlands)

The **Socialist Party** (Dutch: *Socialistische Partij*, Dutch pronunciation: [soːɹ̥iːˈlistisə parˈtɛi]; abbreviated **SP**, Dutch pronunciation: [ɛs pɛː]) is a left-wing, democratic socialist political party in the Netherlands.

After the 2006 general election, the Socialist Party became one of the major parties of the Netherlands with 25 seats of 150, an increase of 16 seats. In the 2010 general election the party obtained 15 seats. In the 2012 general election they maintained those 15 seats. The party has been in opposition since it was formed.

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History

Foundation until 1994

Socialist Party Socialistische Partij	
 	
Abbreviation	SP
Leader	Lilian Marijnissen
Chairman	Ron Meyer
Secretary	Hans van Heijningen
Leader in the Senate	Tiny Kox
Leader in the House of Representatives	Lilian Marijnissen
Leader in the European Parliament	Dennis de Jong
Founded	22 October 1971
Split from	KEN(ml)
Headquarters	'De Moed' Partijbureau SP Snouckaertlaan 70 Amersfoort
Think tank	Scientific Office of the SP
Youth wing	ROOD
Membership (2017)	39,550 ^[1]
Ideology	Democratic socialism ^{[2][3][4]} Social democracy^{[5][6][7]} Left-wing populism^[8] Soft Euroscepticism^[9]
Political position	Left-wing ^[4]
European affiliation	<i>None</i>
International affiliation	<i>None</i>
European	European United

The Socialist Party was founded in October 1971 as a Maoist party named the **Communist Party of the Netherlands/Marxist–Leninist** (KPN/ML). This KPN/ML was formed following a split from the Communist Unity Movement of the Netherlands (Marxist-Leninist). The issue that provoked the split from KEN(ml) was an intense debate on the role of intellectuals in the class struggle. The founders of KPN/ML, with Daan Monjé in a prominent role, belonged to the 'Proletarian' wing of the KEN(ml), who did not want an organisation dominated by students and intellectuals. In 1972 KPN/ML changed its name to *Socialistische Partij* (Socialist Party). Even in its early years, while adhering to Maoist principles such as organising the masses, the SP was very critical of the Communist Party of China condemning, for example, the support of the Chinese party for Unita in Angola (The brochure: "Antwoord aan de dikhuiden van de KEN").



Jan Marijnissen, Leader from 1988 until 2008.

The SP started to build a network of local parties, with strong local roots. The SP had its own General Practitioners' offices, provided advice to citizens and set up local action groups. This developed within front organisations, for instance separate trade unions, environmental organisations and tenant associations. This work resulted in a strong representation in several municipal legislatures, notably in Oss. Also in some States-Provincial the SP gained a foothold, especially in the province of North Brabant.

Since 1977 SP attempted to enter the House of Representatives. The party failed in 1977, 1981, 1982, 1986 and 1989. In 1991, the party officially scrapped the term Marxism–Leninism, because the party had evolved to the point that the term was no longer considered appropriate.

After 1994

In 1994 general election the party's first members of parliament, Remi Poppe and Jan Marijnissen were elected. Its slogan was 'Vote Against' (Dutch: *Stem tegen*). In the 1990s, the major party of the Dutch left, the Labour Party (PvdA), moved to the centre, thus making the SP and GreenLeft viable alternatives for some left-wing voters. In the 1998 general election, the party was rewarded for its opposition to the Purple government of the first Kok cabinet, and more than doubled its seats to five. In the 1999 European elections, Erik Meijer was elected into the European Parliament for the SP.

In the 2002 general election the SP ran with the slogan was 'Vote in Favor' (Dutch: *Stem Voor*). The party nearly doubled to nine seats. This result was kept in the 2003 general election. Leading up to the 2003 elections, the SP was predicted to win as many as 24 (16%) seats in the polls. These gains failed to materialise however, as many potential SP voters chose to cast strategic votes for the Labour Party, who stood a good chance of winning the elections. In the 2004 European elections its one seat was doubled to two.

In the 2005 referendum on the European Constitution, the SP was the only left-wing party in parliament to oppose it. Support for the party grew in opinion polls but fell slightly after the referendum.

The municipal elections of 2006 were a success for the SP, more than doubling its total number of seats. This can in part be explained by the party standing in many more municipalities, but it can also be seen as a reaction to the so-called 'right-wing winter' in national politics, as the welfare reforms of the right-wing second Balkenende cabinet were

Parliament group	Left–Nordic Green Left
Colors	Red
Senate	9 / 75
House of Representatives	14 / 150
States-Provincial	70 / 570
European Parliament	2 / 26
Website	
international.sp.nl (http://international.sp.nl/)	
Politics of Netherlands	
Political parties	
Elections	

called by its centre-left and left-wing opponents. In a reaction to these results, Marijnissen declared on election night that the "SP has grown up".

After the untimely end of the second Balkenende cabinet and the minority government of the third Balkenende cabinet, the SP gained 16 seats in the parliament after the 2006 general election, nearly tripling its parliamentary representation. With 25 seats, the SP became the third largest party of the Dutch parliament. In the 2006-2007 cabinet formation the SP was unable to work out its policy differences with the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), the largest party and SP remained in opposition against the fourth Balkenende cabinet, which comprised the CDA, PvdA and ChristianUnion parties.

In the provincial elections of 2007 the SP gained 54 provincial legislators more than in the provincial elections of 2003 and made it to a total of 83 provincial legislators. As a result of the provincial elections the SP has increased its representatives in the Senate of the Netherlands (upper house) to 11 from the 4 it had previously.

In the 2010 general election, SP fared worse than in the previous election, gaining only 15 seats, a loss of 10, and only 9.9% of the overall vote.

According to an opinion poll of January 2012, the SP would have won 32 seats and become, for the first time in its history, the biggest party of the country if elections were held.^[10] However, in the final weeks of the election, the SP's main rival, the PvdA, surged ahead in the polls as the biggest party on the left. The PvdA then won 38 seats in parliament in the 2012 Dutch election, and the SP took only 15 seats, remaining at its 2010 level.

Name

The party was founded as the Communist Party of the Netherlands/Marxist–Leninist (KPN/ML) in 1971. In 1972 it adopted the name **Socialistiese Partij**, with an unofficial spelling using *-iese* instead of *-ische*. In 1993 the party changed its name to the accurately spelled *Socialistische Partij*.

Ideology and issues

The party labels itself as socialist,^[11] but has also been described as social democratic.^[12] In its manifesto of principles it calls for a society where human dignity, equality and solidarity are most important. Its core issues are employment, social welfare and investing in public education, public safety and health care. The party opposes privatisation of public services and is critical of globalisation.



Emile Roemer, Leader from 2010 until 2017.

Election results

Parliament (States-General, *Staten-Generaal*)

House of Representatives (<i>Tweede Kamer</i>)					
Election year	# of overall votes	% of overall vote	# of overall seats won	+/-	Government
<u>1977</u>	24,420	0.2	0 / 150 		in opposition
<u>1981</u>	30,357	0.3	0 / 150 		in opposition
<u>1982</u>	44,690	0.5	0 / 150 		in opposition
<u>1986</u>	31,983	0.4	0 / 150 		in opposition
<u>1989</u>	38,789	0.4	0 / 150 		in opposition
<u>1994</u>	118,768	1.3 (#11)	2 / 150 	▲ 2	in opposition
<u>1998</u>	303,703	3.5 (#6)	5 / 150 	▲ 3	in opposition
<u>2002</u>	560,447	5.9 (#6)	9 / 150 	▲ 4	in opposition
<u>2003</u>	609,723	6.3 (#4)	9 / 150 	— 0	in opposition
<u>2006</u>	1,630,803	16.6 (#3)	25 / 150 	▲ 16	in opposition
<u>2010</u>	924,696	9.8 (#5)	15 / 150 	▼ 10	in opposition
<u>2012</u>	909,853	9.7 (#4)	15 / 150 	— 0	in opposition
<u>2017</u>	955,633	9.1 (#6)	14 / 150 	▼ 1	in opposition

European Parliament

Election year	# of overall votes	% of overall vote	# of overall seats won	+/-
<u>1989</u>	34,332	0.65 (#8)	0 / 26 	new
<u>1994</u>	55,311	1.34 (#8)	0 / 26 	0 —
<u>1999</u>	178,642	5.04 (#7)	1 / 26 	1 ▲
<u>2004</u>	332,326	6.97 (#6)	2 / 26 	1 ▲
<u>2009</u>	323,269	7.10 (#7)	2 / 25 	0 —
<u>2014</u>	458,079	9.64 (#5)	2 / 26 	0 —

Organisation

Leadership

■ Leaders

- Hans van Hooft (22 October 1971 – 20 May 1988)
- Jan Marijnissen (20 May 1988 – 20 June 2008)
- Dr. Agnes Kant (20 June 2008 – 5 March 2010)
- Emile Roemer (5 March 2010 – 13 December 2017)
- Lilian Marijnissen (13 December 2017 –)

■ Chairmen

- Hans van Hooft (22 October 1971 – 20 May 1988)
- Jan Marijnissen (20 May 1988 – 28 November 2015)
- Ron Meyer (28 November 2015 –)

■ Secretaries

- Tiny Kox (20 January 1994 – 24 May 2003)
- Paulus Jansen (24 May 2003 – 20 June 2005)
- Dr. Hans van Heijningen (20 June 2005 –)

■ Parliamentary leaders in the Senate

- Jan de Wit (13 June 1995 – 19 May 1998)
- Dr. Bob Ruers (19 May 1998 – 10 June 2003)
- Tiny Kox (10 June 2003 –)

■ Parliamentary leaders in the House of Representatives

- Jan Marijnissen (17 May 1994 – 20 June 2008)
- Dr. Agnes Kant (20 June 2008 – 5 March 2010)
- Emile Roemer (5 March 2010 – 13 December 2017)
- Lilian Marijnissen (13 December 2017 –)

■ Lijsttrekker – General election

- Remi Poppe – 1977
- Hans van Hooft – 1981, 1982, 1986
- Jan Marijnissen – 1989, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
- Emile Roemer – 2010, 2012

Representation

Members of the House of Representatives

Current members

Current members of the House of Representatives since the general election of 2017:

- Lilian Marijnissen, Parliamentary leader
- Renske Leijten, Deputy Parliamentary leader
- Dr. Ronald van Raak, Parliamentary secretary
- Dr. Sandra Beckerman
- Jasper van Dijk
- Frank Futselaar
- Maarten Hijink
- Sadet Karabulut
- Bart van Kent
- Nine Kooiman
- Peter Kwint

- [Cem Laçin](#)
- [Michiel van Nispen](#)
- [Emile Roemer](#)

Members of the Senate

Current members

Current members of the [Senate](#) since the [election of 2015](#):

- **[Tiny Kox](#)**, [Parliamentary leader](#)
- [Arda Gerkens](#), [Deputy Parliamentary leader](#) and [Parliamentary secretary](#)
- [Dr. Bastiaan van Apeldoorn](#)
- [Hans-Martin Don](#)
- [Tuur Elzinga](#)
- [Frank Köhler](#)
- [Meta Meijer](#)
- [Dr. Bob Ruers](#)
- [Anneke Wezel](#)

Members of the European Parliament

Current members of the [European Parliament](#) since the [European Parliamentary election of 2014](#):

1. [Dr. Dennis de Jong](#), [Leader](#)
2. [Anne-Marie Mineur](#)

SP is a member of the [European United Left–Nordic Green Left](#) (GUE/NGL) group in the European Parliament. The party is not affiliated with the [Party of the European Left](#).

Local and provincial government

The SP provides no [King's Commissioners](#) or [mayors](#). Dutch mayors and King's Commissioners are appointed by the [Minister of the Interior](#); the SP opposes this procedure, and wants mayors to be elected by the [municipal council](#). The SP is part of the provincial executive ([Gedeputeerde staten](#)) in six out of twelve provinces. The SP is also part of several municipal executives ([College van burgemeester en wethouders](#)), notably in [Amsterdam](#) and [Utrecht](#).

Organisation

The SP has 41,710 members as of 2016 and has grown considerably since it entered parliament in 1994 making it the third largest party in terms of its number of members but, like other parties in the Netherlands, has seen a decline in membership in recent years.^[13]

Organisational structure

The highest body within the SP is the party council, formed by the chairs of all local branches and the party board. It convenes at least four times a year. The party board is elected by the party congress, which is formed by delegates from the municipal branches. The congress decides on the order of the candidates for national and European elections and it has a final say over the party program.

At the party congress which was held on the 28th of November in 2015, [Ron Meyer](#) was elected as the secretary of the party board. Previously he was working for the Netherlands Trade Union Confederation (FNV).^[14] Ron Meyer was elected along with 10 other party board members.

Lilian Marijnissen became the leader of the party on 13 December 2017.^[15]

The SP is a constant active force in extra-parliamentary protest. Many of its members are active in local campaigning groups, often independent groups dominated by the SP, or in the SP neighbourhood centres, where the party provides help for the working class.^[16]

An example more of nationwide nature is the movement for a National Healthcare Fund (Nationaal ZorgFonds).^[17] This campaign demonstrates the necessity of a single payer system, and wants to remove market and commercialisation aspects of the current healthcare system. The expensive advertising annually organised by healthcare insurance companies, in order to attract new customers, is a big example. The NHS inspired movement thinks that money should solely be spent on healthcare itself. Switching from one insurance company to another can only be done once every year, as restricted by Dutch law.^[18]

Linked organisations

The youthwing is called ROOD, *jong in de SP* (English: RED, Youth within the SP; the word *rood* is officially written in capitals, but is not an acronym). The SP publishes the magazine the *Tribune* monthly^[19] (which was also the name of a historical Communist Party of the Netherlands newspaper).

Splinter groups

At one point, two Trotskyist entryist groups operated within the SP, Offensive, now called Socialist Alternative, and the International Socialists. The IS however was expelled on the grounds of double membership. The similar, but very small group Offensief was not considered a factor of power but its members were banned from the SP in February 2009, on the grounds of being "a party within a party". Members of the party Socialist Alternative Politics still operate within the SP.

Relationships to other parties

The Socialist Party has always been in opposition on a national level, although there are now numerous examples of government participation on a local and provincial level. On many issues, the SP is the most left-wing party in parliament. Between 1994 and 2002 the Labour Party (PvdA) had a conscious strategy to isolate the party, always voting against the latter's proposals. The party however did co-operate well with GreenLeft. After the PvdA's disastrous election result in 2002, the Labour Party, now back in opposition, did co-operate with the SP, against some of the policies of the centre-right Balkenende government, and their relationship improved significantly. New tensions arose however after the elections of 2006, when the SP approached the PvdA in electoral support, and the PvdA joined the government, whereas the SP did not.

As of 2016 the ruling VVD-PvdA coalition has meant that the PvdA lost a huge part of its base. In the polls, the party currently stands at around 12 seats, losing 26, which has been a stable position for the last three years.^[20] Despite that, the SP has gained little to nothing, remaining stable at around 16 seats in the same polls.

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Further reading

SP publications in English

- Jan Marijnissen & Karel Glastra van Loon, "The Last War of the 20th Century: Discussions on the new world order" (<http://international.sp.nl/the-last-war-of-the-20th-century>) (On the threshold of the new millennium, Jan Marijnissen en Karel Glastra van Loon spoke with prominent experts in the area of peace and security, both within the Netherlands and abroad.)
- Jan Marijnissen, "Enough!: a socialist bites back" (<http://international.sp.nl/enough>) (SP-chairman Jan Marijnissen summarises and internationalises his opposition against the ideological mainstream in today's politics throughout the world. Neoliberalism, argues Marijnissen, causes the return of 19th century social and democratic circumstances. Who does not agree, has the duty to stand up and say: enough!)
- Harry van Bommel & Niels de Heij, "A Better Europe Starts Now" (<http://international.sp.nl/publications>) (European cooperation has already brought us many benefits, for example in the areas of human rights and of our prosperity. That does not mean that it is always good or that cooperation in all areas offers added value. The outcome of the referendum on the European Constitution demonstrated that a clear majority holds the European Union as it is now in little esteem, and that there was a need for a broad social discussion over Europe and the role of the Netherlands within it. This paper is intended to contribute to such a debate by making proposals for a more democratic, slimmed down, balanced and affordable EU, as well as a fruitful European agricultural policy.)
- Anja Meulenbelt & Harry van Bommel, "The promised land, the stolen land". (<http://international.sp.nl/the-promise-d-land-the-stolen-land>) (March 2007) (A summary of the study by Anja Meulenbelt and Harry van Bommel).

External links

- [Official website \(http://international.sp.nl/\)](http://international.sp.nl/) (in English)
 - [Speech by former SP leader Jan Marijnissen at the congress of the Socialist Left Party of Norway \(http://international.sp.nl/news/2007/03/sp-leader-addresses-norwegian-socialist-left\)](http://international.sp.nl/news/2007/03/sp-leader-addresses-norwegian-socialist-left), which gives an overview of the SP's history and policies (March 24, 2007).
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