

**Meeting between NL Minister Schouten and Commissioner Sinkevičius**

**When:** 29 November 2021 16:45-17:15 (videoconference webex)

**Participants:**

Commissioner Sinkevičius; Mr [REDACTED] (Member of Cabinet); Mr [REDACTED] (DHoU of ENV.A1) ; Mr [REDACTED] (Policy officer ENV.D1);

Minister Schouten; Mr [REDACTED] (Policy officer Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality), Ms [REDACTED] (Director General for Agriculture)

The meeting was requested by Minister Schouten to discuss the 7<sup>th</sup> Nitrates Action Programme. Minister Schouten indicated the new government would be able to lead a big transformation in agriculture so it becomes more nature inclusive and addresses water, soil, air and climate-related issues. Minister Schouten mentioned that the plan would be supported by a significant budget and would drive a significant reduction of livestock. She asked about the possibility to present the 7<sup>th</sup> NAP at the next EU Nitrates Committee in mid-December.

Commissioner Sinkevičius explained the concerns of the Commission with regard the current water pollution trends, to the insufficiency of the measures currently in place to address the nitrates pollution from agriculture and to reverse negative trends. He explained the difficulty for the Commission to allow a presentation in the Committee in view of a renewal of the derogation, when it has serious doubts that the Dutch Nitrates Action Programme would be in line with the provisions of the Nitrates Directive. He also highlighted the necessity to include more ambitious measures in the 7<sup>th</sup> AP given the urgency of the situation, not only under the Nitrates directive but also under the Water Framework Directive and the 2027 deadline to reach good status for all water bodies.

Commissioner and Minister agreed to meet again to continue discussing the issue, although Minister Schouten explained that a new Minister of Agriculture could be appointed soon.