



## Toespraak

van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, prof.dr. J.A. Bruijn,  
ter gelegenheid van het bezoek van de Sultan van Oman, Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

*datum 16 april 2025*

Your Majesty,

On behalf of the States General, I am very honored to welcome you in the Dutch Senate. It is a great privilege for us to receive you here today.

The relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of the Netherlands stretch across many domains.

We share the tradition of the Monarch as head of state. The relations between the House of Al Bu Said and the Dutch Royal House have been close for many years.

Secondly, both our countries have a bicameral political system, with a lower and an upper house, in the Netherlands constitutionally called 'States General'. Until the middle of the 19th century the Members of the upper house of the Netherlands, the Senate, were appointed by the Monarch. Since 1848 they are elected every four years by Members of the twelve Provincial States. The Members of the lower house, or House of Representatives, are elected directly, just like your Majlis al-Shura.

Thirdly, there is also a shared maritime tradition with the importance of the port of Suhar and our port of Rotterdam as gateway to Europe. For 400 years ships have sailed between these ports.

And if I'm correct, soon planes will fly directly from Amsterdam to Muscat. As I understand, an agreement between our international airlines and airports has been reached to make this possible.

In addition, our two countries have signed a partnership in 2022 to promote and develop cooperation in the field of green hydrogen and renewable energy. From ships to planes, and from oil to green hydrogen: our relations are always developing.

Your Majesty,

Your visit to the Netherlands comes at a time of great global unrest, in the Middle East as well as in Europe. Both our countries are in one way or another affected by the conflicts between Russia and Ukraine and between Israel and Hamas. And on another scale between Iran and the United States of America about Iran's nuclear weapons program.

In the latter conflict, you and your government are currently playing an important role in mediating between both parties.

You have also successfully intervened to establish the release in January of this year of the crew of the ship 'Galaxy'. They had been kidnapped by the Houthi from Yemen the year before.

As I understand, when you became Sultan you promised to continue Oman's foreign policy that is based on peaceful co-existence, maintaining good relations with all countries, and non-intervention.

And the examples I have just mentioned show the great value of international diplomacy, as you know from up close as a former Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



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Sports and culture are also ways of maintaining international relations in which you yourself have great experience.

You were the first president of the Oman Football Association and as Minister of Heritage and Culture you have invested in securing and protecting Oman's cultural richness and uniqueness.

Something we can relate to in the Netherlands:  
Football and flower fields that are in full bloom these weeks are part of the Dutch DNA. They form an integral and important part of our international and economic diplomacy.

Your Majesty,

We are truly honored by your presence and look forward to discussing these issues with you today.

Allow me to introduce Mrs Tineke Huizinga-Heringa, vicechair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Senate and former Minister of Transport.

First, I would like to give the floor to my colleague from the House of Representatives, Mr Martin Bosma.

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Thank you.