



## Dankwoord

van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, prof. dr. J.A. Bruijn bij het bezoek aan de Duitse Bondsraad in Berlijn

datum 14 juni 2024

Sehr geehrte Frau Bundesratspräsidentin,  
Sehr geehrte Kollegen und Kolleginnen,  
Liebe Freunden,

It is a great honour to be here today. I would like to thank President Schwesig wholeheartedly for giving me this privilege.

As you know the visit by the *Bundesratspräsident* to the Netherlands, and to the Senate in particular, is a tradition that exists for more than twenty years. A tradition that is of great value to us and that we find very important.

The other way around, a visit from our side to the Bundesrat, is less common. Therefore it is my great honour and pleasure to pay you this return visit, after your visit to the Senate three months ago.

The relations between our countries, but also between the *Länder* and the Dutch provinces are excellent. We share the same opinions on many issues, and we work closely together on a national level and also in the border region.

Just like the Bundesrat, the Dutch Senate is connected to the regions in our country in a special way.

Here at the Bundesrat this is for instance expressed by the yearly rotation of the Presidency between the *Länder*. In the Netherlands, the 75 members of the Senate are elected by the members of the twelve Provincial States.

These indirect elections were introduced in our Constitution of 1848. Last year we celebrated the 175<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Constitution with an exhibition in the Senate building, showcasing the handwritten pages that deal with the election of the Senate by the Provinces.

A Constitution is the foundation of a country, a beacon of continuity and highly trusted by the people.

I therefore congratulate you on the 75<sup>th</sup> birthday of the German Constitution, or as you call it 'Grundgesetz'; Basic Law.

Your slogan for the celebration of the Grundgesetz, *Einheit in Vielfalt*, or Unity in Diversity encompasses the meaning of the Constitution for all citizens. In October Germany will also celebrate the *Friedliche Revolution*, that took place in 1989. We all remember the emotional images from Berlin.

Like you have said, Frau Bundesratspräsidentin, during the celebrations in honour of the Grundgesetz:

*„Demokratie ist keine Selbstverständlichkeit. Sie muss aktiv gestaltet und gegen ihre Feinde verteidigt werden.“*

That is as true today as it was in 1949 and 1989, and as it will be in the future.



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Dear friends,

Tonight is the opening of the European Football Championships in which both our countries participate.

I wish both teams all the best in the coming weeks, although you may guess where my cheers will be the loudest...

As they say: may the best team win!

*Lassen Sie uns auf die Freundschaft zwischen Deutschland und den Niederlanden, und die Freundschaft zwischen dem Bundesrat und dem Senat der Niederlande anstoßen:*

*Prost!*