

# **Preliminary and background studies**

## **Report and Evaluation of the Fifth Term of Office**

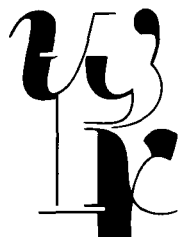
**1993-1997**

**V103**

---

**1998**

**Netherlands Scientific Council  
for Government Policy**



# Table of contents

<b>Background</b>	5
<b>1. Responsibilities and organisation</b>	7
1.1 Responsibilities	7
1.2 Organisation	7
1.2.1 Composition of the Council	7
1.2.2 Advisory members	8
1.2.3 The Bureau	8
1.2.4 Budget	9
<b>2 Working methods</b>	11
2.1 Compilation of programme of work	11
2.2 Preparation of reports	13
2.3 External liaison	13
2.3.1 General	13
2.3.2 Government and Parliament	13
2.3.3 The academic community	14
2.3.4 Advisory bodies	14
2.3.5 Other liaison	15
2.3.6 Foreign liaison	15
<b>3 Publications</b>	17
3.1 Introduction	17
3.2 Reports to the Government	17
3.2.1 Sustained risks: a lasting phenomenon	17
3.2.2 Interest and policy: towards a responsible implementation of employee insurance	19
3.2.3 Decision-making on complex projects	21
3.2.4 Higher education in stages	23
3.2.5 Stability and security in Europe. The changing foreign policy arena	24
3.2.6 On the organisation of public administration	27
3.2.7 Social dichotomy in perspective	29
3.2.8 From sharing to earning. Considerations for social security in the 21st century	31
3.2.9 Public health care	32
3.2.10 Spatial development policy	34
3.2.11 State without a territory. An exploration of administrative consequences of information and communication technology	36
3.3 Personal advice by WRR Chairman, having heard the Council	37
3.4 Other WRR projects/publications	38
3.4.1 Core government tasks	38
3.4.2 An enterprising society	39
3.4.3 Anniversary volume 'Wise before the event'	40
3.5 Independent publications in the 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series	41
3.5.1 Vocational education; developments and dilemmas in matching education with employment	41
3.5.2 On law and state; a sociological exploration of social, political and legal relations	41
3.5.3 Distribution of income under a sustainable old age pension system	42
3.6 Conferences and symposiums	42
3.6.1 Socio-economic policy between risk and security	42
3.6.2 Stability and security in Europe	43
3.6.3 Fundamental questions about the future of health care	43
3.6.4 Volatilisation in the economy	44
3.7 Follow-up activities	44

<b>4</b>	<b>Evaluation of the fifth term of office</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Working method</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Functioning of the Council</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>The advisory members</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>WRR Bureau</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b> Integral text of the Scientific Council for Government Policy Establishment Act		<b>51</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b> Publications fifth Council term		<b>55</b>
<b>Appendix 3</b> Personalia		<b>59</b>

# Background

The activities of the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) fall into five-yearly terms of office. The fifth term of office expired on 31 December 1997. As at the end of its previous terms of office, the Council should like to provide an account of the way in which it has discharged its statutory responsibilities. Chapter 1 of this report outlines the responsibilities and organisation of the Council. Chapter 2 deals with the Council's working methods while the Council's reports and their effects within the political system and society in general are discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides an evaluation of the way in which the Council has operated.



# Responsibilities and organisation

## 1.1 Responsibilities

The Council's responsibilities are described in the Act of Establishment of 30 June 1976 as follows:

- a. to supply in behalf of government policy scientifically sound information on developments which may affect society in the long term and to draw timely attention to likely anomalies and obstacles, define major policy problems and indicate policy alternatives;
- b. to provide a scientific structure to assist the Government in establishing priorities and conducting coherent policies;
- c. with respect to prospective research and long-term planning, in both the public and private sectors, to make recommendations on the elimination of structural inadequacies, the furtherance of specific studies and the improvement of communication and co-ordination.

The Council's activities consist of the exploration of new problems, the analysis of existing problems in a broad context and the identification of new solutions. The reports discussed in this publication are policy-oriented but not necessarily in line with government policy. The more a report contains concrete policy proposals, the more direct are its potential social and political effects and the more immediately are those effects discernible. This is not to say that reports looking to the longer term have no effect, but the results generally depend on the willingness of the various bodies concerned – the Government, Parliament as well as organisations within the community – to take cognisance of insights that in many cases depart from the conventional wisdom.

The Council consistently seeks to provide scientifically based information and to identify problems and policy alternatives as objectively as possible. The conversion of scientific knowledge to well-founded policy advice does however have some normative aspects. In so far as policy choices are made, these are explicitly justified by the Council.

With a view to the wider effects of its reports, the Council attaches particular importance to the public nature of its activities. The more the Council's reports and other publications attract attention and generate public debate, the greater the Council has found the effects of its work to be.

## 1.2 Organisation

### 1.2.1 Composition of the Council

The WRR Act of Establishment lays down a minimum of five members and a maximum of eleven. The office of Chairman is a full-time appointment; the remaining members of the Council are appointed for at least two working days a week. At the end of the fifth term of office the Council consisted of six members. The following served on the Council throughout the entire term: Mr. J.P.H. Donner (chairman), Dr. H.P.M. Adriaansens, Dr. R. Rabbinge and Dr. D.J. Wolfson. Dr. W. Derksen was appointed member of the Council as of April 1, 1993, and Dr. L.G. Gunning-Schepers as of January 1, 1995. Mr. H. Hooijkaas resigned from the Council on 1 January 1995.

Dr. A.P.N. Nauta acted as Executive Secretary to the Council and was also Director of the Bureau until June 1995. He was succeeded on 1 July 1995 by

Mr. J.C.F. Bletz, who was succeeded as Assistant-Secretary and also Deputy-Director by Mr. H.C. van Latesteijn, who till then had been a member of the Council's academic staff.

### 1.2.2 Advisory members

Since its establishment The Council has had advisory members drawn from the major government institutions whose work is closely connected with that of the Council. During the fifth term of office the advisory members were: Dr. F.J.H. Don, director of the Central Planning Office (CPB), Mr. R.B.J.C. van Noort, Director-General of the National Institute of Public Health and Environment (RIVM), Mrs. J.A.M. Kroese-Duijsters, Director-General for Physical Planning (RPD), until her departure on 15 October 1997 and Prof. A.J. van der Staay, Director of the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP). The advisory members take cognisance of the papers for the Council meetings. The Council meets several times a year with the advisory members.

### 1.2.3 The Bureau

The Council has a Bureau headed by a Director, who is also Secretary to the Council, assisted by the Deputy Director, who is also the Assistant Secretary to the Council. The Bureau supports the Council in its activities and comes under the Ministry of General Affairs. The composition of the staff as at 31 December 1997 is shown at Appendix 3.

	Bureau composition (FTE)	
	End 1997	End 1992
Management	2	2
Research staff	14	27
External communication	1	1
Automation	1	1
Library staff	2	2
Administrative and domestic staff	9.5	10.5
Total	29.5	43.5

As at 31 December 1997 the 14 academic staff positions were occupied by 15 staff members from the following disciplines: economics/econometrics (5), social and political sciences (6), law (2), spatial planning (1) and technology (1). Staff members can however be deployed in any area of interest to the Council.

The reduction in staff levels between 1992 and 1997 reflects a reorganisation and modernisation of the Council's and bureau's working methods arising from a decision taken by the Minister of General Affairs in October 1992 as part of the Great Efficiency Operation (GEO). This decision was taken after discussion in the Council of Ministers and was based in part on the report issued by a visitation committee concerning the tasks and working methods of the WRR in the 1990s. In broad terms this decision was concerned with promoting the flexibility of the organisation by limiting the number of Council and staff members (with a core establishment of 14 FTEs for the permanent scientific staff), while at the same time the research budget was expanded. This therefore created greater possibilities for temporary appointments at Council and staff level. This has been taken further during the past Council term, by appointing both seconded advisory Council members and young academics on a contract basis to work on a specific project (generally lasting around two years) at the WRR before pursuing their career elsewhere.

As part of the aforementioned reorganisation, the WRR's Committee for social and cultural policy was abolished. This committee had been set up in 1989 in order to take over the advisory functions of the Welfare Policy Harmonisation Council that was abolished at that time.

#### 1.2.4 Budget

The Council's budget comes under Chapter III of the Government Budget (General Affairs). Apart from staff costs and other expenditure, the budget also contains an item for commissioning academic studies from other bodies.

The annual size of budget is shown in the following table (in thousands of Dutch guilders).

Financial year (x 1,000 gld.)	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Expenditure on personnel	4,764	4,538	4,257	3,760	3,713
Scientific studies	1,690	1,690	1,690	1,690	1,644
Material expenditure	617	679	786	718	728
Total	7,071	6,907	6,733	6,168	6,085





## 2.1 Compilation of programme of work

The Council itself decides on the subjects for study and reporting within its statutory terms of reference. In addition subjects can be included in the programme of work at the request of the Government, Parliament or other organisations within the community. In all cases they will have to be major social and political issues calling for solutions over a period of years. The subjects must lend themselves to government intervention and scientific research. Furthermore, they should cover a number of policy fields. The Council must of course also have the necessary expertise at its disposal. The programme of work is a flexible programme; topics may be added during the course of the Council term. Projects the initiative for which was taken in the preceding term may also be completed.

The following topics formed part of the programme of work during the fifth Council term. (The resultant reports to the government as well as other publications are briefly outlined in chapter 3.)

One project from the fourth Council term was completed at the start of the fifth term:

- 1 Demographic developments and policy (report no. 43: *Demographic Developments and Policy*, March 1993).

The Council had already embarked on two other projects in the fourth term:

- 2 Environmental policy.  
During the previous Council term, the Council had issued a report at the request of the government concerning strategy and the instruments and enforceability of environmental policy (report no. 41, April 1992). This request for advice provided for a follow-up study into the objectives of that policy: report no. 44: *Sustained Risks: a Lasting Phenomenon* (June 1994).

- 3 Complex projects.  
The Council received a request for advice on this subject from the government on 26 June 1991. That request was responded to with report no. 46: *Decision-making on Complex Projects* (September 1994).

Upon the commencement of the fifth term of office the Council decided to take up the following new projects.

- 4 Higher education.  
An exploratory symposium was held at the end of the previous Council term concerning the problem of higher education, on the basis of which the Council determined that there were grounds for issuing an advisory report on this subject. This resulted in report no. 47: *Higher Education in Stages* (February 1995).
- 5 Futures research.  
Partly with a view to the futures research being conducted by other organisations the Council decided to carry out a futures study into a number of related topics of relevance for social cohesion and social segmentation. This resulted in report no. 50: *Social Dichotomy in Perspective* (December 1996).
- 6 Core government tasks.  
This study, which was originally undertaken with the aim of determining the core tasks of government, gradually led to the finding that 'objective' core tasks do not exist: what needs to be done arises from subjective attitudes and changing circumstances. The WRR therefore decided not to proceed with a report to the government on core tasks. The Chairman of the Council,

Mr. J.P.H. Donner, concluded the project by means of a publication under his own name in the WRR's 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series: *Staat in Beweging* (State in Motion) (V100, April 1998).

7 Implementation of social security.

A project on the more general problems of the organisation and implementation of government policy, the dynamics of executive agencies and the assignment of rights concentrated on the current problems facing the system of social security, especially employee insurance. This resulted in the report no. 45: *Interest and Policy: Towards a Responsible Implementation of Employee Insurances* (June 1994).

The following topics were added to the programme of work in the course of the Council term.

8 Public administration.

Since social dynamics and administrative organisation are increasingly the subject of friction, the Council added this topic to its programme of work. This resulted in report no. 49: *On the Organisation of Public Administration* (December 1995).

9 The Netherlands in the world.

The turbulent developments in the world order are obliging Europe and also the Netherlands to redefine its position at the present time. To make sure that the WRR had sufficient expertise at its disposal on this topic, Dr. M.C. Brands (University of Amsterdam) was added to the Council for a two-year period as an advisory member. Report no. 48: *Stability and Security in Europe: the Changing Foreign Policy Arena* (November 1995) was drawn up under his leadership.

10 Future of social security.

The Council placed this subject on its programme of work partly with a view to taking the mid-term debate about the future of the social security system, as provided for in the 1994 coalition agreement, further in substantive terms. This resulted in report no. 51: *From Sharing to Earning. Considerations for Social Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (May 1997).

11 Public health.

A number of technological developments are threatening the ability to insure health risks and hence the basis for the present system of public health care. This provided the reason for the Council to add this subject to its programme. The result was report no. 52: *Public Health Care* (June 1997).

12 Reorientation towards spatial planning.

As a result of a number of social changes the once clear distinction between urban and rural areas has become more diffuse. The result has been that the system of spatial planning, which is based on this distinction, is increasingly losing touch with present-day realities. The WRR has indicated the main elements of a more differentiated planning system, in which, on the one hand, the national government would play a bigger role in matters of national interest but, on the other, it would no longer be attempted centrally to regulate the way in which every square metre is to be used. Report no. 53: *Spatial Development Policy* (March 1998).

13 Mobility, communication and information.

Developments in the field of information and communication technology (ICT) could have substantial consequences for the government's policy options. It is important to respond to new problems as well as new opportunities in terms of a modified concept of the state's capacity to act. This notion has been elaborated and analysed in report no. 54: *State Without a Territory. An Exploration of Administrative Consequences of Information and Communication Technology* (March 1998).

14 An enterprising society.

This project was based around the idea that a number of welfare aspects generally placed side by side with or contrasted to paid employment, such as a wide variety of caring tasks and efforts to clean up the environment, are

becoming or could form part of employment. It did not prove possible to complete the project during the fifth Council term with a report to the government, although a publication on the subject is under preparation.

## **2.2 Preparation of reports**

An internal project group is set up for each subject selected for study. These project groups are chaired by a member of the Council, with a member of the research staff as secretary. Council and staff members often participate in more than one project group. Since the Council is a 'working' one, Council members and staff both contribute independently to the draft reports submitted to the Council for discussion and adoption. The fact that the composition of the staff is not tied to Council terms of office and that members of staff may therefore be attached to the WRR for more than five years helps ensure the continuity of the expertise built up within the organisation – a continuity for which there is a particular requirement given the constantly changing composition of the Council.

The Council meets on average once a fortnight. These meetings discuss draft reports and documents and decide upon the final versions of the texts prepared by the project groups. Commissioned projects of any scale are also submitted to the Council for approval, while the Council also decides whether the studies carried out by staff members or outsiders should be included in the Council's 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series.

The Council as a whole is responsible for the results of the work. As far as possible decisions are taken on the basis of consensus, based in turn on open discussion and the exchange of argument.

Each report is submitted to the advisory members for comment. This procedure is an important means of ensuring effective working contacts between the Council's staff and the staff bureaus of the advisory members.

## **2.3 External liaison**

### **2.3.1 General**

With a view to the wider impact of its reports, the Council attaches importance to liaison with government departments, organisations in the community and experts in specialist fields both during the preparation and after the publication of its reports. The Council once again maintained numerous domestic and foreign contacts during this term of office. One member of staff has special responsibility for external communication. Background information on reports and other publications by the Council are provided both on request and at the Council's own initiative. The Council organises press conferences upon the publication of reports. On various occasions, the Council has also held a seminar or conference in some cases to follow up a previously issued report.

### **2.3.2 Government and Parliament**

Under Section 12 of the WRR Act of Establishment, the Prime Minister is required to inform the Council of the findings of the Council of Ministers with respect to the Council's reports. In the debate on the Act of Establishment an undertaking was given to the Lower House that the Government would report its findings to the Council within three months. In practice, however, Government reactions can sometimes take longer.

Under law the Council has the right to seek a Council of Ministers hearing in

respect of the Government's reaction, but during this term of office no use was made of this provision. Close liaison was, however, maintained with government departments. Upon request from the Lower House, discussions were held on a number of occasions with Council and staff members concerning the Council's reports.

When revising the advisory system (cf. section 2.3.4) the government amended the WRR Act of Establishment with respect to the determination of the programme of work. The practice whereby the WRR draws up its own programme of work, after consultations between the Prime Minister and the chairman of the Council, has been enshrined in the Act. The government considered that this would, on the one hand, do justice to the independence of the WRR while, on the other, providing for balanced political involvement in the WRR, for example because the Prime Minister also takes cognisance of the Council of Minister's views concerning the Council's proposed programme of work. The amendment proposed was accepted in Parliament on September 10, 1997 (TK 1996–1997, 25 248 nos. 1–3). In accordance with overall government policy, this amendment furthermore provided for the abolition of the age-limit for Council members, while the dated transitional and concluding provisions of the Establishment Act were also deleted.

### **2.3.3 The academic community**

Contacts with the scientific and academic community form an integral part of the Council's work. Not only did the majority of the Council's members in this term of office have a university chair but four members of the staff also had part-time chairs. In addition Council and staff members regularly gave guest-lectures at universities and published papers on Council reports or preliminary studies.

The Council has a budget for commissioning outside studies and research. Many of the Council's contacts with the academic community took place as a result of commissioned work, which is closely prepared and monitored by the WRR. The Council's reports also rely on the results of these external studies and commissioned research, some of which have been published in the 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series, and others in the 'Working Documents' series.

### **2.3.4 Advisory bodies**

During the period under review a radical reorganisation took place of the advisory system in the Netherlands. Under the Advisory System Reform Act, all existing advisory bodies with the exception of the Social and Economic Council (SER) and the WRR were abolished as from 1 January 1997. As from that same date, new 'strategic' advisory bodies – one for each main area of government policy – were set up under the *Advisory Bodies Framework Act*. This operation was designed both to trim down the advisory system and to promote the primacy of the political system.

The non-abolition of the WRR was justified by the government on the grounds of the Council's special position and that the continued existence of the Council had not been and was not a matter for debate. As far as that position is concerned, it has consistently been argued that while the WRR is an advisory body in the sense of Article 79 of the Constitution and also forms part of the new advisory system, the Council does not come under the Framework Act. On the basis of its research tasks the Council differs from those advisory bodies that issue advice at the instruction of the government on specific policy intentions in a particular field. The WRR is concerned with research, of a multidisciplinary nature, into social developments in the longer term and in

various policy fields. Part of its remit is also to examine whether certain developments provide grounds for modifying the assumptions on which government policy is based.

From the inception the WRR has attached value to effective interaction between the various advisory bodies in the reform system so as to promote a good exchange of information and to prevent overlap within the advisory system wherever possible, while retaining the independent responsibility of each body. At the initiative of the Council one-day meetings were held in 1996 and 1997 of the chairmen and secretaries of the councils in the new advisory system and the directors and directors-general of the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB), the National Institute of Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), the National Spatial Planning Agency (RPD) and the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP). The Minister of the Interior was officially represented at these meetings. The aim of the consultations was, on the one hand, to bring together the expectations of the future of the planning agencies with respect to policy fields of relevance for all advisory bodies and, on the other, to exchange views on practical issues facing advisory bodies.

The bodies in question agreed that they would henceforth hold similar meetings once a year. The WRR will act as the central point for knowledge and preparation of these meetings, while the organisation and chairmanship of the actual meetings can rotate among the participants.

Once again the Council held consultations during this term of office with the Organisation for Strategic Labour Market Research (OSA) in the preparation of its programme of work (Section 6 of the OSA Establishment Decree). The OSA's terms of reference are to encourage strategic research into the labour market and to translate the results of that research into policy.

### **2.3.5 Other liaison**

In order to operate effectively the Council considers it essential to maintain effective liaison with and obtain information from relevant organisations in the community both during the preparatory phase of a report and after it has been published. In part these are general contacts, for example those with scientific bureaus of the political parties or national trade unions and employer's associations, while others concern a particular subject of study. These contacts provide the Council with valuable information and suggestions. In addition, they help the Council to gauge the reaction to its reports in the outside world.

### **2.3.6 Foreign liaison**

It is vitally important for a body such as the Council to stay in touch with counterpart institutions in other countries or with foreign institutions and individuals, which are able to provide the Council with useful information. Developments with the capacity to influence society, not just in the short but also in the longer term, often extend well beyond national borders.

The foreign contacts maintained for the purposes of the individual reports are noted in Chapter 3. Special reference may be made here to the numerous contacts during the process of compiling a, not previously available, international register of think tanks (cf. section 3.4). In addition virtually all the Council reports have been translated into English either in their entirety or in summary form. Where appropriate, a number of publications in the 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series appeared directly in English.

Members of the Council and the staff participated in a number of international scientific/academic conferences, presenting papers on subjects under current or previous study by the WRR.

## 3.1 Introduction

During the period under review the Council submitted eleven reports to the Government. A summary of the Council's reports, as well as their impact and the Government reactions to them, is provided in section 3.2.

Apart from reports to the Government, which are issued by the Council as a whole, the Council also publishes a 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series and a 'Working Documents' series in the name of the author(s). These series are intended to make available all the information and research results gathered together on behalf of or by way of follow-up to the Council's reports. During the fifth term of office, 22 studies were published in the 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series; in addition 26 working documents were published. Furthermore, on the occasion of its 25th anniversary the Council published a special volume on think tanks. A full list of the Council's publications in the fifth term of office is provided at Appendix 2. Finally the Council issues a newsletter with details of its activities. This newsletter, which is only available in Dutch, appears two or three times a year.

As will become evident from section 3.2, the majority of the projects started by the Council in the fifth term of office resulted in reports to the Government. Section 3.2 also examines publications in the 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series that go with the reports. Section 3.3 mentions a number of advisory reports presented by the Council's chairman, after consultations with the Council. In section 3.4 the Council's anniversary volume *Mosterd bij de maaltijd* (a shortened edition of which appeared in English as *Wise before the event*) is discussed. Section 3.5 then discusses the conferences and seminars held by the Council. Section 3.6 examines a number of independently published studies in the 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series. Finally section 3.7 deals with the follow-up of a number of projects, resulting from the former (fourth) term of office.

## 3.2 Reports to the Government

### 3.2.1 Sustained Risks: a Lasting Phenomenon

#### a. *Background and content*

Report no. 44, *Sustained Risks: a Lasting Phenomenon*, which was published in June 1994, was the response to the government's two-part request for advice of 5 September 1990. The first question concerned the instruments required in order to achieve the objectives of sustainability. The Council's views on this matter were set out in report no. 41: *Environmental Policy: Strategy, Instruments and Enforcement* (see *Report and Evaluation of the Fourth Term of Office*, 1993) which was published in 1992. The government's second question concerned the objectives of environmental policy themselves. In particular, the government wanted an in-depth study of the concept of sustainability: what interpretations can be given to this concept in the light of objective, measurable ecological data and the normative choices at issue?

In *Sustained Risks: a Lasting Phenomenon* the Council indicates first of all that it is not possible to speak of an uncontroversial 'environmental utilisation space' for human activities based on the ecological sciences. This is not just because the scientific knowledge about the ecological system is fragmentary



and ambiguous, but also because there is no consensus concerning the significance to be attached to individual aspects of the environment and nature. In addition the judgement about the seriousness of the consequences of human activities for the environment and nature is one that is not taken in isolation but is always influenced by the importance attached to the social risks at issue. 'Sustainability' is not therefore an objective feature of a process but an adjective assigned to it after the social and ecological consequences and the risks of activities, now and in the future, have been weighed.

On the basis of this insight the Council developed four interpretations of sustainability, differing in terms of the perception of ecological and social risks and the respective weights to be assigned to them. These action perspectives were elaborated for the longer term on the basis of scenarios. This was done for a number of important problem areas, namely the world food supply, energy supply, the management of resources, nature conservation and water management. This made it clear that behaviour based on one and the same value could nevertheless have widely differing consequences in the longer term. But even if sustainability can be interpreted in very different ways, it also became clear that taking the concept seriously involves making radical choices. This emerged from the reference scenarios developed by the Council in the various problem areas. Continuation of current trends turned out to give rise to major problems in most of the areas.

Recognising the diversity of possible attitudes towards sustainability accentuates the political nature of those views. The report has therefore examined the necessary political and administrative conditions for strategic policy formulation aimed at sustainability.

b. *Preliminary studies*

A specialist study was conducted in each of the problem areas in question. Of these the following appeared in the Preliminary and Background Studies series: T. van der Meij et al., *Ontwikkelingen in de natuur* (Developments in nature. Visions on the living nature in the world and scenarios for its maintenance; V87, 1995).

This study reveals that the continuing impoverishment of nature is to be anticipated given the continuation of current global trends. Scenarios aimed at nature conservation accordingly require far-reaching changes. The scenarios developed to this end relate to the preservation of productive nature, recreational nature and unutilised nature and the space to be set aside for those purposes. It becomes clear that nature conservation is a very severe challenge, especially in Africa and South Asia, even if sustainability is understood as minimal claims on nature to create reservations, as the rate of population growth will bring nature conservation objectives into major collision with food production and water supply requirements. The degrees of freedom are however substantially greater in other continents.

In addition the following studies appeared as Working Documents:

- D. Scheele, *Duurzaamheid materiaalgebruik en de exploitatie van mineralen* (Sustainable use of materials and the exploitation of minerals; W78, 1994).
- W.M. de Jong, *Chloor in duurzaam perspectief* (Sustainable perspective on chlorine; W79, 1994).
- J. Dogterom and P.H.L. Buijs, *Duurzaam watergebruik in Nederland* (Sustainable use of water in the Netherlands; W80, 1994).

Two specialist studies were published separately by the research institutes in question:

- B. van den Haspel et al., *Energie tot oneindig. Concepties van duurzaamheid in vijf wereld-energiescenario's* (Infinite energy. Conceptions for sustainability

- in five world-energy scenarios); Centre for Energy Conservation and Clean Technology, Delft, 1994.
- J.C. Luyten, *Sustainable world food production and environment*; AB-DLO, Wageningen, 1995.
- c. *Government's reaction*  
 In its reaction of 28 October 1994 the government endorsed the view that sustainability concerned a trade-off between ecological, social and economic risks and uncertainties. It also shared the Council's view that the 'environmental utilisation space' was more concerned with the policy outcome of that trade-off than with the scientifically defined delimitation of those political trade-off processes. The government did not consider the WRR analysis and recommendations to be applicable to current policy but to be particularly relevant for the development of a policy aimed at the longer term. The various action perspectives distinguished in the report and the scenarios could then serve as input for a public debate in this area.
- d. *Impact of the report*  
 The report directed the debate about sustainability down a different path. The argument that policy cannot ultimately be based on a scientifically founded necessity but instead requires political legitimisation initially encountered stiff resistance. This however gradually faded away to be replaced by approaches based around the trade-off between ecological and social considerations as called for by the Council. The various scenarios in the specialist areas, however, made less impact, except in the case of the world food supply. The sustainability scenarios devised for this aspect aroused considerable international interest, for example among the World Bank and the FAO and affiliated organisations.

### 3.2.2 Interest and Policy: Towards a Responsible Implementation of Employee Insurances

- a. *Background and content*  
 The responsibilities for the implementation of government policy are not always clearly defined. With respect to social security this emerged for example in 1993 in the report by the Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry (Buurmeijer Committee), which concluded that the implementation structure for employee insurance was in need of radical overhaul. The findings of this survey provided one of the reasons for the Council to focus its thinking about the problems of implementing government policy on social security in particular. This resulted in report no. 45, *Belang en beleid; naar een verantwoorde uitvoering van de werknemersverzekeringen* (Interest and policy: towards a responsible implementation of employee insurances), published in June 1994. The report is based around the argument that responsibility for labour market and benefit policy can no longer be passed onto others but that it needs to be clearly determined who are the principals and the agents, and what their respective tasks and responsibilities are.

The Council goes on to conclude that the promotion of labour force participation should be a much more prominent element in the administration of social security. This has consequences for the employee insurance executive agencies, which will need to concentrate primarily on prevention, reintegration, placement and training. The emphasis in implementation will therefore need to shift from the provision of benefits to the promotion of labour force participation. The primary task for the executive agencies must be to draw up a customised plan with clients and their former or potential employers in order to find or keep them in work. The results recorded in the process must be the measure for evaluating whether they are operating effectively.

Lambers, Lubach and Scheltema explored the legal possibilities for accelerating decision-making processes. The second of these was the working document *Grote projecten in Nederland* (Complex projects in the Netherlands; W77, 1994) in which Bruning produced the empirical material for the Council's report. Thirdly, Kolpron Consultants drew up an international comparison of decision-making processes (*Besluitvorming over grote infrastructuurprojecten in andere Europese landen* (Decision-making on large infrastructural projects in other European countries); Kolpron, 1994).

c. *Government's reaction*

The Cabinet published its response to the report in April 1996, having presented a provisional standpoint a year earlier. The latter subsequently formed the subject of advice by the Spatial Planning Council (RARO), the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), the Interprovincial Co-operation Forum (IPO), the Netherlands Society for Nature and Environment Foundation and the Federation of Dutch Contractors Organisations (AVBB).

In its reaction to the WRR report the Cabinet generally endorsed the Council's findings. This applies to both the analysis of decision-making processes and the conclusion that the procedures need to be modified. The Cabinet did not however adopt the recommendation that separate legislation for complex projects be introduced but expressed the preference to expand the existing legislation – Crucial Planning Decisions and the Infrastructure (Planning Procedures) Act – by placing the preparation of decision-making on a more structured basis. The Cabinet also devoted considerable attention to the concrete elaboration of the preparatory stage. In this regard the Cabinet adopted the Council's suggestions to appoint a monitoring committee and to create possibilities for appeal against decisions in principle. The Cabinet recognised the fact that these improved preparation procedures involve a risk of duplication with existing procedures which commonly come into play only at a later stage in the decision-making process, namely urban and regional planning, the Environmental Impact Assessment procedures and the granting of licences. The Cabinet wishes to discuss these problems in the evaluation of the Infrastructure (Planning Procedures) Act.

d. *Impact of the report*

As will be evident from the above much of the Council's advice has been adopted. In practice the WRR report has provided the foundation for the setting up of what are known as 'utility and necessity' debates – e.g. those concerning the development of the Second Maasvlakte and the expansion of Schiphol or construction of a new airport – and for the appointment of a committee of experts to monitor the process. (It should however be noted that the term 'utility and necessity' did not derive from the WRR.)

This observation perhaps most effectively illustrates the function of this WRR report, which combined a number of more or less separate and in many cases also apparently conflicting requirements for change in a single proposal. The report indicates that public involvement, democratic accountability, a proper return on capital and dynamic decision-making can be combined if the structure of the process is modified. The experiments now being carried out in practice will generate the necessary practical data to enable further adjustments to be made to the existing practices.

### 3.2.4 Higher Education in Stages

#### a. *Background and content*

Report no. 47 *Higher Education in Stages* was published in February 1995. In this report the Council analyses the changing national and international social environment of higher education. Partly on this basis, proposals were made for improvements to the career-relevance of higher education.

Participation in higher education has risen sharply in recent decades, and it is now required to meet more exacting and different requirements. In addition scientific research has become more specialised. The Council notes that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the various traditional objectives of higher education to be realised simultaneously within the existing structure. Particularly in the case of university education, the objective of academic training is at risk of being by-passed. The main focus now is on the two other objectives of university education, namely the training of scientific researchers or specialised professional practitioners. In practice, however, professions are becoming less and less training-specific, apart from which their content is changing rapidly. People with higher education must be flexible and capable of holding down various positions in the course of their career. Furthermore the free movement of people within the European Union demands that the Dutch system of higher education harmonises effectively with other education systems.

By breaking higher education down into a number of stages and drawing a clearer distinction between the objectives of universities and the technical colleges or *hogescholen* the education will retain its currency for longer and higher education will in the opinion of the WRR meet the varying aptitudes and interests of students more effectively. According to the proposals in the report students with a pre-university (VWO) certificate will attend a three-year course at an *academie*. The *hogeschool* will continue to provide vocational training courses lasting four years for students who have completed senior secondary schooling (HAVO). During the first stage (after the preliminary examinations), students would be able to opt for a major subject and one or more minor subjects. On completion of the first stage a substantial proportion of students would leave higher education, taking up a profession to gain further experience. A selected group of students would then prepare for a career by proceeding to a second stage lasting between one and three years. They would undergo training as a scientific researcher at a *research school* or attend a *professional school* with a view to qualifying as an engineer, doctor or solicitor.

The report also makes a number of proposals for the different structuring of education, so that it would be smaller-scale and more intensive and selection and referral could be improved. Among other things it is recommended that the course content be primarily determined by a curriculum board rather than individual university departments.

#### b. *Preliminary study*

On behalf of the WRR, the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CSHOB) of the University of Twente conducted an international comparison and analysis of higher education in the Netherlands and neighbouring countries – namely Denmark, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Flanders – for the purposes of the report. The study, *Aspecten van hogere onderwijs; een internationale inventarisatie* (Aspects of higher education; an international survey; V86, 1995), indicated that Dutch higher education scored well by international standards in terms of participation and funding. The study also revealed, however, that the Dutch system afforded few opportunities for completing higher education with a diploma at various levels.

The Dutch system also lacks dynamism and has only a limited number of types of higher education in comparison with neighbouring countries.

c. *Government's reaction*

In an initial reaction the government expressed appreciation for the way the report had concentrated in its analysis on the objectives of higher education. At a later stage the government reacted to the recommendations in the report, when 16 seminars had been organised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in 1995 on the reform of the system, bringing together all parties concerned. The WRR report provided one of the basic documents for these meetings.

On 6 June 1996 the Minister and State Secretary sent a memorandum to the Lower House in connection with the Higher Education and Research Plan (HOOP) 1996, announcing greater variation in the length and nature of courses of study. The possibility of a three-year course was cited and worked out in more detail. In a bill submitted to the Lower House in May 1997 it was ultimately proposed that the universities be allowed to get away from the strict rule of (mostly) a standard four-year course. Under the bill it is now possible to conduct experiments with three-year courses, concluding with a *kandidaat's* (bachelor's) examination. Five-year courses are also permitted.

d. *Impact of the report*

In the debate about the report in the media it was noted on the one hand that the report offered opportunities for greater differentiation and adjustment in line with the requirements of students in the labour market, but on the other hand there was concern about the ability of students who left university after three years to find a place in the labour market. The latter point, in particular, was repeatedly examined by the WRR in lectures and articles following publication of the report. In the meantime a number of universities have announced plans to introduce differentiated and multi-stage courses.

### 3.2.5 Stability and Security in Europe. The Changing Foreign Policy Arena

a. *Background and content*

In report no. 48, *Stability and Security in Europe. The Changing Foreign Policy Arena*, published in June 1995, the Council analyses the international situation following the upheavals in Central and Eastern Europe. The report notes that the former bipolar system has been replaced by an uncertain complex of inter-state relations in which initially crises are generally local in nature. Although the security situation in Europe has improved as the threat of a major conflict has been eliminated, we now face a multiplicity of varied and not easily controlled risks, due in particular to ethnic and cultural conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe. These crises are placing cooperation among the NATO allies on the spot since the direct involvement of the western countries concerned varies considerably. The result is that the security of the West can no longer be regarded as 'indivisible'. Fissiparous forces can be further accentuated by economic regionalisation and polarisation within the world trade system.

According to the Council special attention needs to be devoted to improving the coordination of relations between the western allies. Within NATO the United States' main concern in Europe is with strategic problems (especially nuclear issues), which need to be tackled in conjunction with Russia. This has increased the inclination on the part of the US to act unilaterally, and greater attention is being paid to domestic problems in the US. Germany is neither able nor willing to take on the leading role in Europe and is also disproportionately burdened by the Central and East European problems.

The European Union will only be able to play a role in this area if the member states are able to mount sufficient capacity between them for effective intervention. This point has not remotely been reached. If the EU is to contribute actively towards a future system of security in Europe this will probably involve going further down the path of differentiated integration. The Netherlands should cooperate in this process, with policy concentrating as far as possible on the promotion of integrative elements in European cooperation. In this regard it needs to be recognised that the leadership of further integration will reside with Germany and France. This also necessarily means that it will no longer be possible to cling to national political preferences and that irritation among partner countries, for example with Dutch asylum or drugs policy, cannot simply be wished away.

While the Council considers that in principle it would also be possible to pursue a Dutch policy confined to the general aim of preventing the integration already achieved in Europe from crumbling while otherwise leaving options open wherever possible, this policy would in its view not be a sufficiently integrative one in nature.

b. *Preliminary studies*

The report *Stability and Security in Europe* drew on a number of studies, most of which were written by external, including a number of foreign, experts. The following studies appeared in the 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series:

L. Hagendoorn, K. Phalet, R. Henke, R. Drogendijk, *Etnische verhoudingen in Midden- en Oost-Europa* (Ethnic relations in Central and Eastern Europe; V88, 1995).

In the study the researchers provide a survey of the relations between ethnic and national groupings in over twenty Central and East European countries. The study covers the relative size of and social differences between population groups, the historical backgrounds of existing ethnic and nationalist differences, and relations between minorities and parent countries. A survey of conflict-inhibiting factors and an evaluation of the current situation in Russia reveals that Western Europe can play a role in limiting the risks of ethnic conflicts, but this role is a limited one and can at best be indirect.

H.C. Posthumus Meyjes, A. Szász, Christoph Bertram, W.F. van Eekelen, *Een gedifferentieerd Europa* (A differentiated Europe; V89, 1995).

In this volume Posthumus Meyjes and Szász present conflicting visions of the policy that the Netherlands should conduct in the coming years with respect to European integration. Given the numerous uncertainties in the international situation, Posthumus Meyjes favours a policy in which options are kept open. In his view the aim should no longer be for the federal development of the European Union, nor should the EU take on a defence role. Proposals for differentiated integration as advanced for example on the German side would better not be pursued. By contrast Szász argues that an Economic and Monetary Union, which the Netherlands has already decided in favour of, requires a lasting economic and political foundation. The establishment of such a foundation cannot be left to Germany and France alone. The Netherlands should therefore in principle be prepared to work towards differentiated integration.

In relation to the security problem Bertram outlines the 'return of geography' in the Atlantic Alliance now that, since the ending of the Cold War, conflicts have become largely local in nature. Europe will need to do more towards its own security. The heart of a European security drive will be formed by Franco-German cooperation. A number of smaller countries, such as the Netherlands, can however also play a significant role in this process.

Van Eekelen examines security cooperation in recent years in Europe,

especially in the context of the Western European Union, looking back among other things to the war in the former Yugoslavia. In general, the author argues, security needs to be interpreted in broad terms and can be more effectively promoted by means of participation and integration than by military guarantees alone.

J. Rupnik, P. Hassner, M. Tatu, M.C. Brands, R. Havenaar, *Challenges in the East* (V90, 1995)

This preliminary study brings together four contributions concerning the changed situation in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989–1990 and the implications this has had for the European Union. The policy that the EU is required to pursue in relation to the Central and East European countries, the developments in the Russian federation and the consequences for Germany of changes in Europe are examined in turn. As far as the latter is concerned Brands and Havenaar note the stringent demands being made of Germany in order to fulfil certain tasks, including both the deepening of European integration and preservation of internal cohesion within the Union and the challenge of integrating Central European countries into the EU and keeping Russia on a moderate course in domestic and foreign policy.

J.H.P. Donner (rapporteur), *Europa, wat nu?* (Europe, what now?; V91, 1995).

This study, conducted by a working group of the European Movement Netherlands (EBN) with the chairman of the WRR as rapporteur, centres around the notion that the process of integration is not unambiguous and irreversible. The working group notes that centrifugal forces will become stronger within the European Union. Cohesion will no longer be primarily assured by the benefits of the market but will increasingly rest on the capacity of the Union to provide an effective response to social issues by way of back-up to domestic policies.

The following publications appeared in the 'Working Documents' series:

- O.H. Holman, *Transformatieprocessen in Midden- en Oost-Europa: de internationale dimensie* (Transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe: the international dimension; W84, 1995).
- J.A. Brouwers, *Amerika's buitenlandse beleid en de ontwikkeling van de transatlantische relaties na 1990* (America's foreign policy and the development of transatlantic relations after 1990; W85, 1995).
- P. Scheffer, *Machtsverschil en rechtsgelijkheid in de Europese Unie* (Imbalances in power and legal equality in the European Union; W86, 1995).
- H. Wallace and W. Wallace, *Flying Together in a Larger and More Diverse European Union* (W87, 1995).
- J. Kol, *Bloc Formation, Fragmentation and Stability in the World Economy* (W88, 1995).

c. *Government's reaction*

In its reaction in November 1995 the government expressed appreciation for the report and endorsed the view that Dutch policy should be geared towards countering fragmentation and promoting integrative elements. In this respect the government also regarded the strengthening of the European capacity to act as a key issue. A security policy based on the European Union is necessary, but must for the time being remain supplementary in nature. The government also noted that apart from the European issues with which the Council was primarily concerned in its report, the Netherlands also needed to make a contribution towards the solution of issues in a wider global context. The growth in interdependence means that crises far removed from Europe can also affect the Netherlands (e.g. where they give rise to movements of refugees), thereby qualifying the importance of geographical criteria for foreign policy. The government said that it would welcome attention to these global aspects of Dutch foreign policy in a subsequent Council report.

d. *Impact of the report*

The report *Stability and Security in Europe* was brought forward at the request of the government in the interests of its review of foreign policy. The report played a role in the drafting of the Foreign Policy Review Document. The report received extensive and generally positive attention in the media.

### 3.2.6 On the Organisation of Public Administration

a. *Background and content*

Report no. 49 *Orde in het binnenlands bestuur* (On the organisation of public administration), published at the end of 1995, sought to provide an alternative to the few successful efforts to eliminate various fundamental obstacles in public administration by means of structural changes. The Council concentrated in particular on the problems of efficiency and the responsiveness of government administration. Efficiency has come under particular pressure from the increases in scale of social problems; the necessary coordination is lacking at municipal and regional level. New demands are being made on the responsiveness of administration because of the blurring of administrative boundaries, the advent of functional administration and the increased awareness of the public have radically altered public involvement in local government. The changes in both fields impose different demands on the organisation of public administration and also exhibit continuing dynamism. Precisely because of this, the Council argues, it is appropriate to create a stable framework in which vigorous relations between the various administrative bodies make it possible to respond flexibly to changes in the social environment. A stable system is moreover important in which public administration is required to reflect the constitutional, legally-based and democratic nature of the public sector. The rules of the game between the various layers of government only assume significance once they have become firmly entrenched and it is clear to the citizen which layer of government is responsible for what, and so on.

The report went on to examine which conditions the structure of public administration needs to satisfy in order to strengthen the vitality of the relations: the administrative bodies must have substantial independent responsibility and the ability to convert that responsibility into practice in terms of scale and public support, and they need to bear financial responsibility for their deeds. More effective coordination mechanisms are also required. The clarification of responsibilities does not just apply to the system of general administration but is equally important for the balance between the general and the greatly increased functional administration and the delimitation between the public sector and the also growing private domain.

The report does not provide a blueprint for an administrative structure fulfilling these conditions. Instead the Council formulates three *development principles*, laying down a clear division of responsibilities in the central/decentralised, general/functional and public/private relations as a guiding objective. These principles are elaborated in particular for territorial/general-functional administration; requirements are laid down in order to achieve a separation between these two forms of administration. This resulted in stances on the nature of the various levels of administration looking more generally towards the future but also in statements concerning elements of current reorganisation plans (e.g. urban provinces and the uniform division of tasks).

b. *Preliminary studies*

Two preliminary studies and three working documents were published for the purposes of this report.



W. Derksen and W.G.M. Salet, *Bouwen aan het binnenlands bestuur* (Towards the organisation of public administration; V93, 1996)

This study brings together 14 articles concerning 'the theory' of public administration and the principles underlying its organisation. Some of the contributions were written by experts not forming part of the Council, and others by Council members and staff. Three clusters of articles examine the theory itself, test the theory empirically with the emphasis on the scale of administration and examine various cases of administrative reorganisation in the light of changes in the theory.

J.C.I. de Pree, *Grenzen aan verandering* (Limits to change; V97, 1997)

In this study the author, a staff member of the Council, elaborates one of the aforementioned contributions. This was also the dissertation with which the author obtained his PhD at the University of Leiden on 3 June 1997. The two major drives to reorganise public administration in recent decades are compared in the light of ten 'structural principles' of such administration. It turns out that these principles are in fact adhered to to a considerable extent. The tendency for large-scale reforms to founder may be interpreted as support for one of the main theses in *Orde in het binnenlands bestuur*: do not seek the solutions primarily in structural changes.

The following working documents were published:

- W. Derksen et al., *De blik naar buiten; Geïntegreerde dienstverlening als structuurprincipe* (From the inside looking out: integrated services as a structured principle; W81, 1995), in which the central question concerns the way in which the municipal and regional services can be organised in response to public patterns of demand.
- E. ter Borg and K. Dignum, *Grenzen in de ijle ruimte* (Limits in the empty space; W82, 1995), which takes stock of the research results concerning the way in which Dutch society actually makes use of space.
- L.J.M. Verdult, *Een andere financiële organisatie* (A different financial structure; W89, 1996), which sets out the results of a survey into the findings of the project on appropriate financial relationships.

c. *Government's reaction*

The Cabinet, which submitted its standpoint to Parliament on 24 May 1996, turned out largely to endorse the Council's analysis of the problem. It did however deliberately decide in favour of continuing with the existing policies for the reform of public administration so as to avert the risk of delay running into years. The Cabinet also considered that the analysis in the report could be used to support conclusions other than those drawn by the WRR. This applied in particular to the limitation of the role of the provinces to the coordination of policy and the introduction of a closed provincial budget, the Council's view that efforts to adapt the scale of administration to changing social circumstances will always lag behind the facts and the proposed transfer to an independent administrative body of the distribution of general resources to the provinces and municipalities.

d. *Impact of the report*

A report primarily concerned with changes in the longer term in the structure of public administration can hardly be expected to have a tangible effect within two years. The importance of a clearer division of responsibilities is, however, now broadly endorsed. More pragmatic forms of cooperation at regional level also appear to be gaining ground.

### 3.2.7 Social Dichotomy in Perspective

#### a. *Background and content*

On its own initiative the Council decided once again to conduct a future studies project. In accordance with its statutory terms of reference the WRR has conducted numerous specialised surveys of future developments. During the first Council term, in 1997, report no. 15 *The next Twenty Five Years: a Survey of Future Developments in the Netherlands* was published, examining how Dutch society would develop on the basis of more or less economic growth. The second Council term saw the publication of Part I of *A Policy-oriented Survey of the Future*, entitled *An Attempt to Challenge* (no. 19, 1980). In this report it was attempted to chart the future on the basis of normative-ideological views. Did Part I especially elaborate on these views, Part II (*Towards a Broader Perspective*; no. 25, 1983), which was published in the third Council term, outlined a number of alternative perspectives on the future resulting from these views. During the same term of office the Council also published a study into the significance of futures research within the government bureaucracy. This report, *Government and Future Research: a Survey* (no. 34, 1988), indicated where and how the future was being analysed within the government, the differences and similarities in the underlying principles and the extent to which certain topics were being neglected. In the fourth Council term it was deliberately decided not to conduct a futures study.

The decision by the Council to put futures research back on the agenda resulted in the report *Social Dichotomy in Perspective*, which was submitted to the government in December 1996. This concerns a socio-cultural exploration of the future examining likely developments until the year 2015 in the fields of employment, education and income. The point of departure for the report was that social links are under less pressure and that the risk of dichotomy declines the more favourable the developments in these areas of distribution. According to the report the social cohesion in the Netherlands in the 1970s and 1980s was tried in particular by the fact that the socio-economic framework provided insufficient room for adjustment to socio-cultural change; in the 1990s the prospects for a more harmonious socio-cultural evolution in the medium term have – contrary to popular belief – increased rather than declined, thanks in particular to the improvement in socio-economic conditions, especially the labour market. The report argues that ‘dichotomy’ in society can to a significant extent be averted by an appropriate labour market and education policies.

A more detailed analysis of three traditionally vulnerable groups, namely women, immigrants and the elderly, makes it clear that the differences within these groups have now grown to the point that the groups can no longer be regarded as relevant policy categories. In those cases where there was evidence of deprivation, the common factor was not so much sex, ethnicity or age but a combination of poor education and exclusion from the labour market.

Two interrelated policy perspectives occupy centre stage for the Council in this scenario of the future, namely the emancipation of labour and the emancipation of talent. The *emancipation of labour* involves the fact that labour is gradually changing in nature. Where formerly ‘labour’ had all kinds of negative connotations, it has nowadays become much more of a commodity worth pursuing. Seen in the latter light increasing numbers of people will go in search of a job. Encouraging labour force participation fits in well with this. One way of doing so is to eliminate all manner of obstacles in the form of regulations and institutions, which not infrequently result in exclusion. As argued in the Council’s specific reports on the subject, concentration on the need for labour force participation within the social security system is vitally important in this regard. The *emancipation of talent* is a policy-orientation

that builds on the growing importance of knowledge and education as instruments for social distribution and that takes issue with the one-sided identification of human worth with intellectual and cognitive competence. The practical recognition of *all* talents – i.e. also suitable appreciation of comparatively unskilled labour for which there is in fact demand in society – is necessary in order to prevent the exclusion from the most important distribution mechanisms of those lacking education. From this there follows a plea for the restoration of simple employment and a different orientation towards education, with greater emphasis on individualised education and smaller-scale educational contexts and for the proposition that there are limits to which the supply of labour can and must be retrained or be given additional or refresher training.

b. *Preliminary study*

As part of this project a study was carried out by a group of researchers attached to the universities of Utrecht and Nijmegen. The results of this research were published in *De sociale segmentatie van Nederland in 2015* (Social segmentation in the Netherlands in 2015; V96, 1996), edited by H.B.G. Ganzeboom and W.C. Ultee. The study reveals the dominant role of educational inequality in relation to a series of social aspects. Not only does education level determine socio-economic variables such as income, unemployment and occupational level; the educational opportunities of children, political participation, attitudes towards ethnic minorities and social inequality are also determined to a significant extent by this factor. All too frequently the debate about social inequality concerns the distribution of income and material goods, while the importance of education is often underestimated.

c. *Government's reaction*

In its reaction to the report published on 20 May 1997 the Cabinet endorses the main elements. This applies with respect to the analysis of employment and the problems at the bottom end of the labour market. Apart from the continuation of current policies the Cabinet endorses the Council's view that supplementary policies are essential in order to eliminate hard-core unemployment. Only then will it be possible to achieve a permanent increase in the very low participation rate of the poorly educated. The analysis concerning the distribution of income and the emancipation of specific groups is also endorsed. The government does however sometimes take a different stance on specific aspects.

d. *Impact of the report*

This report aroused widespread response in the media, in conferences and in all sorts of forums for socio-political consultation and decision-making. These reactions may be divided into three main streams. In a not unimportant part of the reactions the analysis in the report and the associated recommendations found support. Other reactions were characterised by disbelief. In this group people considered that the WRR painted an unduly rosy picture of the future, did not take account of the already problematical situation faced by many people and attached undue hopes to a further growth in employment as a *deus ex machina*. The third group, finally, considered that in calling for a higher level of employment in the area of simple services – especially in the public sector – the WRR was reverting to recipes that had been tried in the past but had rightly disappeared in response to the need for cuts in government spending. The report is likely to remain on the public and political agenda for the time being. Numerous political parties have already announced that this is an area they will be covering in their party manifestos for the May 1998 elections.

### 3.2.8 From Sharing to Earning. Considerations for Social Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

#### a. *Background and content*

This report on the future of social security was submitted to the government in May 1997. It was compiled at the initiative of the Council itself, although it should be viewed against the background of the debate about the social security system foreshadowed by the Cabinet in the coalition agreement of 1994.

The report links up with a series of earlier reports published by the WRR on labour market and social security issues. The Council calls for the social security system to be geared more specifically towards the promotion of labour force participation. The present system is not tenable in the longer term, particularly given the ageing of the population. The current period, in which the Netherlands has a lead in terms of the problems also applying in other countries, must be used in order to transform the system in such a way that it will continue to meet social needs in the longer term. In terms of this notion the Council has in this report explored the alternatives and the scope these provide for exploiting the current window of opportunity.

The alternatives centre on three conceptual approaches or paradigms for finding a solution: the entitlements model, the active integration model and the supplementation policy. The first of these – the entitlements model – is concerned with tightening up the conditions for social security benefits with a view to increasing labour force participation. In the case of the active integration model, labour force participation is promoted by means of an individual approach towards the unemployed aimed at bringing qualifications into line with the demand for labour. In the case of the supplementation model, finally, the emphasis is on co-ordinating the demand for and supply of labour as far as possible on the basis of market forces. Where wages lag behind the politically and socially accepted minimum level of income, this should be supplemented by a wage-costs subsidy or income supplement.

In the report the Council examines the three paradigms in terms of five criteria, namely equity, legitimacy, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. On the basis of that analysis the Council arrives at the conclusion that given the nature of the problem the solution cannot be found in any one of those models but in a combination of them. Given the margin which the Netherlands has built up thanks to a lengthy period of wage restraint and the reform of government finances, the Council considers that a general reduction in benefits (under the entitlements model) is not now an urgent necessity. In particular, a long-term strategy to increase the labour productivity of the working population calls for investment in people. According to the Council an active integration model supplemented by elements of a supplementation model would create favourable opportunities to this end. Given such a combination the WRR sees new opportunities to promote the employment-creation potential of the economy.

#### b. *Preliminary studies*

No preliminary studies were carried out for this report.

#### c. *Government's reaction*

In its reaction to the report of July 1997 the government observes that the orientation towards the longer term makes the report particularly relevant for the next government term of office. This means that the report can be drawn on in the preparation of the manifestos of the political parties and the coalition formation in 1998. In that light the government refrained from any substantive response to the recommendations in the report. Considerable

attention was however devoted to the report in the *Social Policy Document 1998*, which appeared on the third Tuesday of September 1997.

d. *Impact of the report*

Generally speaking the ideas put forward in the report – which, like the Council's earlier reports *Work in Perspective* (no. 38, 1991) and *Interest and Policy* (no. 45, 1994), place a marked emphasis on labour force participation and the benefits of doing so for social security – struck a resonant cord. This also applies to the strategy of active integration and the emphasis on individual case management called for in the report. Less attention, however, was devoted to issues of legitimacy and legal guarantees raised by the Council. The report made an immediate impact in the form of the National Action Programme *Life-long learning*, set up by the government on 27 January 1998.

### 3.2.9 Public Health Care

a. *Background and content*

Report no. 52 *Public Health Care. Priorities and a Sound Financial Basis for Health Care in the 21st Century* was published in June 1997. The report examined how universal access to equal-quality health care can be guaranteed in the longer term. The necessary risk-solidarity in health care is increasingly under pressure as a result of the ageing of the population and technological developments. The Council's analysis reveals the need to demarcate a basic package of care for which society should accept responsibility. In addition supplementary care can be arranged in the free market.

The report describes how the demand for medical care in the Netherlands will increase in the years ahead due to social and technical developments. The development of new technologies is increasing the range of care available and hence also the cost. In addition diseases are primarily concentrated among the older age groups, which are set to grow proportionately in the decades ahead. The distribution of the growing premium burden is therefore a topical issue. If one wishes to retain the traditional and widely supported objectives of universal access and equality of provision, risk-solidarity is an essential precondition. This means that individuals with a high risk of falling ill are protected. Because the required risk-solidarity can barely be realised without government intervention, this is emphatically an area for government involvement.

The report reaches the conclusion that health care needs to be broken down into the following two objectives: the promotion of public health and the care and nursing of the sick. Both these tasks qualify as a collective responsibility. This means that non-medical tasks should no longer be regarded as forming part of health policy. The report puts forward instruments for delimiting the basic package of state-provided health care. A cost-effectiveness analysis is proposed for curative facilities. The cost/quality ratio may be decisive for health facilities.

In addition a number of preconditions need to be satisfied with respect to the organisation of health care in order to safeguard risk-solidarity. The basic package would form part of universal social insurance. Social insurers would have a duty to accept any insured party and no or only very limited differentiation of the nominal premium for individual insured parties would be permitted. The report also examines the allocation of responsibilities and the rendering of account by municipalities, insurers, the medical profession and patient organisations.

b. *Preliminary study*

By way of preparation for the report the WRR held a working conference on 18 and 19 April 1996 with experts from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. The experts were asked to assess realistic goals for health policy in the future in the light of likely social developments and the government's ability to act. The report on the conference was published together with the written contributions provided for the conference in a preliminary study entitled *Fundamental Questions about the Future of Health Care* (V95, 1996). The report reveals that an important reason for reconsidering the objectives of health care resides in the ageing of the population and developments in medical technology. A distinction needs to be drawn between: (a) universally accessible care (this may mean that it needs to be funded by taxes and premiums), and (b) care that can be left to individual preferences and financial resources. During the conference the expectation was voiced that if these choices are not made, the ultimately limited resources available will generate inequality in the access to the health care deemed necessary for all.

At the same time a number of publications appeared in the 'Working Documents' series:

- P.J. Branger, E.M.R.M. Paalvast, J.C. Voorhoeve, K.M. van Hee, *Informatisering in de gezondheidszorg: een toekomstverkenning* (Information technology in health care: a futures study; W93, 1997).
- J.H.M. Zwetsloot-Schonk, P.F. de Vries Robbé, *Ontwikkelingsprincipes voor de inrichting van de informatievoorziening over de curatieve zorg* (Developmental principles for the organisation of information management in curative care; W94, 1997).
- P.J. van Mheen, J.J. Barendregt, *Toekomstige zorgbehoefte in Nederland; een kwantitatieve verkenning* (The future demand for health care in the Netherlands: a quantitative survey; W95, 1997).

c. *Government's reaction*

In its reaction to the report of 29 September 1997 the government expressed its appreciation for the Council's analysis and observations. It took the view that the report could be drawn upon in the preparation of the election manifestos of the political parties and in the coalition formation in 1998. In that light the government refrained from providing any substantive reaction to the recommendations in the report.

Following this reaction the Lower House urged a more substantive reaction. In response to the Oudkerk parliamentary motion, the Minister of Health ultimately promised a reaction would be provided. On the basis of the most recent planning, the Minister's comments on the WRR's proposals will be sent to the Lower House in the second half of June 1998.

d. *Impact of the report*

Considerable attention was devoted to health care in the election manifestos for the May 1998 elections. A number of parties also incorporated proposals in their manifestos along the lines of the WRR recommendations. In March 1998 the Minister of Health herself expressed the view that statutory universal basic insurance for essential care was desirable in due course. She wanted to use the next government term of office to elaborate and think through all the consequences.

In the health sector there is widespread familiarity with the contents of the report. In medical and pharmaceutical circles the attention focuses primarily on the analysis in the report concerning the possibility and desirability of making choices in health care. The analysis resulting in the proposal to introduce a system of basic insurance is generally endorsed, although opinions

differ concerning the extent to which such basic insurance can be provided on a commercial basis.

### 3.2.10 Spatial Development Policy

#### a. *Background and content*

In order to conduct an effective spatial development policy and to meet the needs of strategic large-scale projects more effectively, the state government should be given greater planning powers. This can be achieved by the introduction of a broad-mesh 'national planning grid', within which it is determined which areas and links are important for national policy.

Along these lines the Council elaborated the basic principles in report no. 53 *Spatial Development Policy* (1998) for a system of spatial planning that corresponded more closely with the dynamics of society. The latter changes are making spatial planning increasingly problematical since the starting point of a clear distinction between urban and rural areas is increasingly losing significance. Partly as a result, land-use claims are increasingly being realised at local level at variance with the national plans. This is accentuated by the fact that agriculture and public housing are disappearing as ancillary, support factors in spatial planning policy.

In order to retain the scope of physical planning, the WRR considers a greater role for the national government to be inescapable. Under the title *spatial development policy* the Council outlines the contours of an approach in which planning is more specifically linked to physical investments and, conversely, (sectoral) investments taking up space are linked to more general planning considerations. Three types of areas are distinguished in the 'National Planning Grid' to be drawn up by the central government:

- national projects whose strategic importance for the future of the Netherlands requires that the state government continues to play a major role;
- development areas in which supra-local interests render it desirable for the state to determine the overall framework for development within which the province can then administer the relevant policies;
- basic areas: the largest part of the country, where the state can confine itself to defining the basic qualities to be respected. Here no supra-local developments are at issue and no state government involvement is therefore required.

The proposed spatial development policy constitutes a break from the existing system of indicative planning. In the approach proposed by the Council the state concentrates on ensuring the quality of planning without laying down generic concepts in advance.

#### b. *Preliminary study*

The process of European integration has made a reorientation of Dutch national planning inevitable. The business location patterns of private industry are increasingly at variance with the objectives of national spatial planning, which in turn is under pressure from European sectoral policy. This is the conclusion reached by researchers W. Zonneveld and A. Faludi in their study *Europese integratie en de Nederlandse ruimtelijke ordening* (European integration and Dutch spatial planning; V102, 1998), which was written for the report *Spatial Development Policy*.

Research into business establishment patterns indicate that concepts such as urban interchanges or the compact city – important elements in current policy – have very little effect in practice. Proximity is becoming steadily less essential and accessibility, by contrast, increasingly important. In the emerging network economy, businesses are accordingly increasingly concerned with the infrastructure and less with location in or near to urban concentrations.

5

This has given rise to the emergence of corridors. A notable effect of this establishment pattern is the emergence of regional specialisation. Within Europe, the Netherlands for example has the edge as a location for new businesses in the transport, distribution and logistics fields. It is therefore important to bring about a multi-modal transport network, in which water and rail are more important transport modalities.

The vigorous nature of European sectoral policy is the second reason why the position of national spatial planning has been undermined. Within the European union efforts are currently being made to build up a new policy domain concerned with spatial development. That domain must be consistent with the various basic spatial planning systems in the member states of the European Union. National spatial planning can to some extent influence that policy domain via sectors at national level that are situated within the same policy compartments as the sectors of the European union. The existing tensions between sectors and physical planning considerations consequently obtain a European dimension and can be accentuated. In addition the position of national physical planning can be weakened, according to the authors, when it comes to the discussion and decisions concerning the national physical economic structure.

The following two working documents appeared in connection with the report *Spatial Development Policy*:

- Reijndorp et al., *De kern van het ruimtelijk beleid – een onderzoek naar het begrip ruimtelijke kwaliteit* (The essence of spatial development policy – a study of the concept of land-use quality; W99, 1998).
- P.W.M. Smit, P.J. Stallen, G.F.W. Hengreen, *Ruimte als forum* (Space as a forum; W100, 1998).

c. *Government's reaction*

The government's reaction to the report was still being prepared when this report and evaluation was being drawn up.

d. *Impact of the report*

After a somewhat lukewarm reception in the media the report went on to make a discernible impact. Particularly among policy-makers at municipal, provincial and state level the report has aroused considerable discussion, as reflected in the large number of copies of the report that have been ordered.

On request dozens of background briefings were provided on the report at ministries, in sectoral councils and at the Social and Economic Council (SER), for interdepartmental consultative committees and provincial agencies, at professional symposiums and in the academic world. There has also been clear international interest in the report, as reflected by the invitations received to date to provide presentations in England, Scotland and Finland.

The impact of the report took more specific form in the advisory report *De sturing van een duurzame samenleving* (The direction of a sustainable society) by the Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment (VROM) Council. This report supports the call by the WRR for a white paper enabling the function and significance of large projects to be specifically assessed in a supra-sectoral manner. The VROM Council also adopted the WRR's recommendation to examine how the National Spatial Planning Commission (RPC) and the Interdepartmental Committee for Improvement of the Economic Structure (ICES) could be amalgamated.

The Minister of VROM referred on a number of occasions to the WRR report in her speech at the closing ceremony of Netherlands 2030 (8 April 1998). In professional circles, the WRR report has received extensive consideration



in journals (*Stedebouw en Ruimtelijke Ordening, Bestuurswetenschappen, Rooilijn*) and will be examined this autumn at a number of conferences. In addition the Netherlands Institute for Spatial Planning and Housing (NIROV) will be organising a one-day conference on the report in conjunction with the WRR.

### 3.2.11 **State Without a Territory. An Exploration of Administrative Consequences of Information and Communication Technology**

#### a. *Background and content*

The developments in information and communication technology have inevitable consequences for the capacity of the national state to act, it is argued in report no. 54, *State Without a Territory. An Exploration of Administrative Consequences of Information and Communication Technology* (1998). If ICT means that economic and other activities are less tied to national borders, it will become more difficult for national governments to act effectively. In particular this will create a new problem for criminal law, based as it is on the notion that the deed, the perpetrator and the consequence (i.e. the victim) are all in close proximity to one another. ICT however also has consequences for the national governments in other areas. In due course it will for example become easier to evade the progressive tax system in the Netherlands. In the field of social security and health insurance it will become more difficult to make the people with the lowest risks contribute towards the risks of those with the worst prospects. Finally the government is confronted by new issues with respect to social and cultural integration as people are increasingly able to tune into TV channels in their own culture.

Whether this will ultimately be a matter of gains or losses is not clear at this stage. What is clear is that the ultimate balance will in part be determined by the way in which the national government responds to the changes. An essential factor in this regard is that looming changes are assessed in terms not just of the existing capacity to act and the established concepts. Such an approach would be overly directed towards the restoration of existing possibilities, such as the repair of existing legislation and stepped-up law enforcement. For these reasons the WRR argues for an 'open approach' when it comes to the consequences of ICT within society. An essential factor in this regard is that an effective distinction is drawn between what the national state is able to and must do in the new context. Only then will it be possible to respond effectively to the fundamental changes awaiting the national government.

#### b. *Preliminary study*

By way of preparation for the report the WRR organised a workshop with external experts on 16 October 1996 on the topic of 'The volatilisation of the economy'. The five keynote papers discussed during this workshop as well as their reviews and an introduction by Council member Dr. W. Derksen were published as a preliminary study under the title *Volatilisering in de economie* (Volatilisation in the economy; V98, 1997), edited by M.E. Gelok and W.M. de Jong, staff members of the Council.

A number of working documents were also published in connection with the report:

- T. Oterdoom, *Analyse versus ontwerp; ruimtelijk-economische studies nader beschouwd* (Analysis versus design: an examination of spatial/economic studies; W92,1996).
- Y.C.Mets, *Cultuur en nieuwe media; tweerichtingsverkeer. Een verkennende literatuurstudie* (Culture and the new media: two-way traffic. An exploratory study of the literature; W97,1997).
- D.A. Albregtse, *Belastingheffing en ICT* (Taxation and ICT; W98,1997).

- c. *Government's reaction*  
Given the exploratory and identifying function of the report, the Council itself indicated that it did not anticipate a substantive response on the part of the government. In a reaction to the report the Prime Minister stated that it provided an interesting picture of the possible consequences of further ICT developments for the government. The content of the report may be drawn on in decisions concerning the use of policy instruments in the long term, this reaction suggests.
- d. *Impact of the report*  
In the report the WRR argues in favour of an open approach in which new methods of direction and regulation are actively promoted. This is a matter of action not just by the government but also by branches of industry and other groups within society. In this sense the report will have its wider impact. The message of the report – ‘state without territory’ – is being taken up in various publications and meetings and consideration is being given to the way in which an enforced response to the rapid developments in information and communication technology can be avoided. The recent publication date of the report means that it is still too early to provide a precise evaluation of its wider impact.

### 3.3 Personal advice by WRR Chairman, having heard the Council

During the course of its fifth term of office the Council received various requests from government departments for advice or a standpoint on elements or aspects of government policy. The Council is reluctant to enter into such requests as the Act of Establishment lays down that the Council receives requests for advice from the Cabinet as a whole and reports to the government (as a whole). This does not of course detract from the ability of members of the Council or also WRR staff members to participate in a personal capacity in the public debate on government policy and social developments or to act in an advisory capacity. These are, however, personal statements of view that do not bind the Council and are not necessarily representative of the Council's thinking.

During the previous Council term use was made on two occasions of an intermediary form in which the Chairman of the WRR, after having consulted the Council, responded to a request for advice that had been directed to the Council. These concerned the draft Framework Act on advisory bodies and the Cabinet's draft reaction to the research report on law on the disabled. In both cases these concerned subject-matter where the involvement of the WRR rendered an advisory report desirable, although not to the extent of compiling a full-blown report to the government. The standpoint sought in respect of the Framework Act on advisory bodies concerned comments on the proposed rules on the basis of the WRR's working methods and experience. The standpoint concerning proposals in the field of law on the handicapped concerned a reasoned application of the findings of three WRR reports concerning the statutory measures considered by the Cabinet, namely the reports: *Social Dichotomy in Perspective, From Sharing to Earning* and *Public Health Care*.

The overall thrust of the standpoint with respect to the Framework Act on advisory bodies was a warning against unduly detailed regulation of a device used by the government in many different ways. The notes to the legislative proposal as ultimately sent to the States-General referred to that standpoint and the way in which use had been made of it.

The general purport of the standpoint concerning the research report on law on the handicapped was that a general prohibition on discrimination as proposed by the Cabinet was not particularly opportune in the present

circumstances. Despite the good intentions, such regulations would once again place the disabled in an exceptional position, while the aforementioned WRR reports were based around the consideration that policy towards the disabled could better be integrated into a broader policy to promote social participation with special emphasis on facilitating the labour force participation of the handicapped and chronically ill.

### 3.4 Other WRR projects/publications

#### 3.4.1 Core government tasks

With its project entitled 'Core government tasks' the Council initially set out to draw up a scientific framework for the debate in the early 1990s concerning the position of the government – a debate prompted in part by the programme of cuts in government spending. On further consideration this turned out to be an episode in a succession of debates, in which many elements of the government were examined from various angles. When it comes to the process of change in government it is difficult to talk of 'core tasks'. Instead it will be a matter of each time anew articulating what the government stands for. This finding prompted the Council not to proceed with a report to the government on core tasks. Instead the study *Staat in beweging* (State in Motion; V100, 1998), by J.P.H. Donner, Chairman of the WRR until 1 January 1998, appeared in the 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series.

In seeking to identify core tasks as a reference point for understanding changes in the organisation and scale of government, Donner sees a risk that changes will be primarily assessed and evaluated in terms of the past rather than the future. The response to change is then sought in solutions that were effected in the past and which then turned government policy into a success, such as an increasing diversity of legislation and regulations. This has the unintended effect of a loss of structure and order. Furthermore, this will have a contrary effect in a situation in which the setting for government action has changed rapidly.

Current social developments, such as globalisation, individualisation and new technologies, affect the entire government apparatus and force it to adjust. Where the government formerly was part of a comparatively stable world based on custom, the current age appears to demand that what the government and state are and how they can function be articulated. Now that the social setting in which the state and government function is consistently changing such redefinition is continually required. It is, in short, better to understand the government in terms of its dynamic context: the interaction between conceptions concerning the government, changing social needs and changing possibilities.

Seen from this viewpoint, the author in this study examines the factors and developments that have influenced the current perception of the state and government and the implications of current social changes for policy, legislation and the institutional structure of government. This is illustrated in terms of three themes: certainty and dynamism, capacity to act and administrative diversity, and equality and decentralisation. The dynamism of the market, for example, is juxtaposed against the certainty and regulation of the government, but conversely the government can provide a guarantee for dynamism vis-à-vis the certainty of the market in the form of cartels and mutual agreements.

Although the study does not therefore provide a direct response to the question concerning the government's core tasks, it does set out to provide a frame of reference and instruments for obtaining a better grip on the changes in the

position of the state and government and what impedes their functioning. The direction in which the solution needs to be sought is indicated in a number of places. Withdrawal by government must, for example, not become a goal in itself. The changing nature of government will always need to be based in part around the changes in the setting in which government operates.

### 3.4.2 An enterprising society

This project sought to outline the role that employment can play in the future and the policies to go with this. The central notion was that a number of welfare aspects normally positioned alongside or in opposition to paid employment are in fact becoming an essential element of such employment. For many people employment is an important aspect of the fulfilment they obtain from life. But all kinds of caring tasks and the aim of a cleaner environment also have the potential to form part of the paid employment circuit. The project sought to explore the possibilities for exploiting the phenomenon of paid employment more effectively and to identify institutions capable of guiding this process along the right lines. Partly because the focus of the report shifted on a number of occasions, the Council did not succeed in bringing these activities to a conclusion in the fifth Council term, in the form of a report to the government. Although the project is not being continued as such, a publication on the topic is under preparation.

#### *Preliminary studies*

A number of preliminary studies appeared in the context of this project during the period under review.

SEO/Intomart, *Start-, slaag- en faalkansen van hoger opgeleide startende ondernemers* (Factors determining the chance of success of new entrepreneurs with higher education; V94,1996).

This study was a collaborative venture between Elsevier, Rabobank, SEO/Intomart, Thinktank and the WRR and generated a wide range of insights into the possibilities and limitations of policies to promote entrepreneurship. Among other things it became clear that people with experience in the labour market had a much greater chance of success of setting up their own business than people coming straight out of education or a spell of unemployment. A policy aimed at encouraging the non-employed to set up their own business is therefore aimed at the wrong group. Another finding concerned the effect of government subsidies on the prospects for success and failure; subsidies turn out to have no effect. What did have a bearing were specialist courses for people setting up businesses: those who had followed such a course turned out to earn considerably more from their business than entrepreneurs who had not.

A.H. Kleinknecht, R.H. Oostendorp, M.P. Pradhan, *Patronen en economische effecten van flexibiliteit in de Nederlandse arbeidsverhoudingen; een exploratie op basis van de OSA vraag- en aanbodpanels* (Patterns and economic effects of flexibility in Dutch labour relations; an exploration on the basis of demand and supply panel data; V99, 1997).

This study surveys the consequences of the growing flexibility of the Dutch labour market. The analysis of panel data enabled how, by whom and at what points the potential for flexible employment was being used to be clearly identified. Two aspects emerged in this regard. In the first place flexi-jobs are an important means of access to the labour market. Many people not in employment start with a flexi-job, which later leads to a permanent position. The reverse – where those on a permanent contract switch to a flexi-contract – is much less common. This indicates that more flexible employment arrangements are associated not so much with a loss of certainty as with easier access to the labour market. Secondly, the evidence shows that

businesses working a great deal (or too much) with flexible contracts are less profitable.

The following publication appeared in the 'Working Documents' series: A. Kapteyn, A. Zaidi and A. Kalwij, *Worksharing as a Policy to Increase Employment: an Evaluation* (W 96, 1997).

The point of departure for this study was the question as to whether the total volume of employment can be regarded as a cake that can be cut up as desired, for example by means of shorter working hours. And conversely, is it in fact the case that if one more person gets a job this will be at the expense of someone else's? The study presents a survey of the theories in this field, which unanimously point in a different direction: shorter working hours are unable to boost the level of employment. Testing this empirically proved much more difficult. The international comparison made in this study suggests that shorter working hours do not generally make much difference.

### 3.4.3 Anniversary volume '**Wise before the Event**'

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Provisional WRR was celebrated in 1997. Five years later, in 1976, the WRR Act of Establishment came into force and the qualification of 'provisional' was dropped. Functionally, therefore, the WRR may be said to have existed for a quarter of a century and formally for twenty years. This provided the motivation for publishing a volume of papers on the function and functioning of think tanks in general and the WRR in particular. What can be expected of such bodies, where do they make their contribution and what are they not intended for? Despite the background to its publication, the book was not compiled as a commemorative volume. Instead it is a thematic study concerning the function of institutions such as the WRR and it also seeks to fill gaps in the popular perceptions of the way such institutions as the WRR function. The title was inspired by a debate in the Lower House concerning the General Affairs budget in 1995, in which a Reformed Political Union (GPV) member of the House expressed the fear that 'reality would overtake the advice' in respect of certain items on the WRR's programme of work, in reply to which Prime Minister Kok dismissed concerns that the reports in question would, in the Dutch phrase, be like 'mustard after the meal' or wise after the event.

The volume *Mosterd bij de maaltijd* (which in English appeared as *Wise before the Event*) consists of three parts: the view from the inside looking out, the picture from the outside and some factual documentation. The first part consists of contributions by members of the Council and WRR staff concerning the relationship between science and policy, the various methods of futures research and the extent to which the Council's activities can help broaden the scientific perspective; an historical interpretation of institutions such as the WRR is also provided. In the second part a number of prominent Dutch people set out their experience with and opinions on the WRR; this part has not been included in the English translation. The comprehensive documentation provides both a list of policy-oriented think tanks in the world and a survey of the literature written about those bodies. Finally, twenty-five years of WRR publications have been systematically classified by subject and type. The volume *Mosterd bij de maaltijd* was submitted by the Chairman of the Council to the Prime Minister at a reception hosted by the latter in the Trêveszaal in honour of the Council on 13 October 1997.

### 3.5 Independent publications in the 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series

#### 3.5.1 Vocational Education; Developments and Dilemmas in Matching Education with Employment

The preliminary study *Beroepswijs onderwijs; ontwikkelingen en dilemma's in de aansluiting van onderwijs en arbeid* (Vocational education; developments and dilemmas in matching education with employment, V82) was published in November 1993. It was written by Dr. W.J. Dercksen (a WRR staff member until 1 April 1993) and H. van Lieshout (University of Utrecht) with assistance from H. Kamps and Y. Wijnands (both of the Bureau for Economic Argumentation). The Council decided to commission this study in mid-1992, partly at the request of the Ministers of Economic Affairs and Education and Science. The question was: what obstacles and dilemmas arise with respect to the implementation of the proposals made by the Temporary Advisory Commission on Education and the Labour Market (the Rauwenhoff Commission) in 1990?

The study identifies the progress and obstacles in relation to the increasing autonomy of schools, the co-operation between schools and industry (i.e. co-makership), the dualisation of vocational education, the basic qualifications and recurrent training for employed persons and job-seekers. The present education system is based around the notion that people should conclude their educational careers with a vocational training course. Advanced general secondary education (MAVO) higher general secondary (HAVO) and pre-university (VWO) education are not designed as the final stages of education, whereas vocational education is. The apprenticeship system, intermediate vocational education (MBO), higher vocational education (HBO) or a university degree should be the concluding stage of first-time education. A second notion that has gained ground over the past ten years is that the vocational education system should be the shared responsibility of the education system and industry. This has long applied to the apprenticeship system, and currently also applies to MBO. As from this academic year most MBO training courses will have national qualifications drawn up jointly by the education system and industry. No such shared responsibility has entered into higher education; the institutions themselves determine what is needed for the labour market.

#### 3.5.2 On Law and State; a Sociological Exploration of Social, Political and Legal Relations

The preliminary study *Om recht en staat; een sociologische verkenning van sociale, politieke en rechtsbetrekkingen* (On law and state; a sociological exploration of social, political and legal relations, V83) concerns fundamental scientific research conducted by former staff member Dr. W.G.M. Salet. The study was defended at the University of Utrecht on 17 June 1994 in the form of a dissertation.

Salet examines the links between the law, the state and government action on the basis of a sociological conceptual framework. As such this study discusses a number of relevant questions that will continue to play an important role in the coming period and also in the WRR's reports. A major conclusion to emerge from the study is that the modern constitutional state is overly concerned with the ongoing flow of policy problems and goals, consequently losing its normative definiteness. While the orientation towards policy issues is necessary it cannot be treated in isolation: the primary function of the constitutional state is to establish a lasting pattern of behavioural norms.

This should provide not just a reliable frame of reference for the public but also for the government in terms of its day-to-day policy orientation. Far greater input is required at this fundamental level of values and standards if the constitutional state is to recapture its authority.

### **3.5.3 Distribution of Income under a Sustainable Old Age Pension System**

The preliminary study *Gouden bergen, diepe dalen; de inkomensgevolgen van een betaalbare oudedagsvoorziening* (Distribution of income under a sustainable old age pension system, V92) was defended at Erasmus University Rotterdam as a dissertation by WRR staff member Dr. R.M.A. Jansweijer on 11 January 1996. The study sets out the background to and provides a further elaboration of the simulation model that provided the basis for Council report no. 43 (1993).

This study evaluates a number of different policy options with regard to old age provision in terms of their cost-control effectiveness. An analysis is also provided on the basis of various scenarios of the effect of such intervention on the distribution of income. The study indicates that if old age provision is kept reasonably affordable, the income inequality between young and older people will increase as both the state pension (AOW) and supplementary pensions will offer less than is promised now. Although a person solely dependent on the AOW state pension in the future will be better off than a comparable pensioner now, he or she will be less prosperous in relative terms. Inequalities will also widen among the elderly. The less that the AOW keeps pace with the rise in the standard of living, the more dependent that pensioners will be on supplementary private pensions.

Among other things the study indicates that wage costs come down if most people keep working between the ages of 55 and 65. The costs of early retirement (VUT) and invalidity schemes come down and the rising costs as a result of the ageing population can therefore be offset to some extent. It is also an effective arrangement for pensioners earning more than the minimum level of income to pay AOW contributions, thus generating extra resources in order to keep the AOW in line with the standard of living. Assuming that other circumstances remain the same, this measure will in due course result in a reduction in contributions of around 3 percent. This is nearly half the additional price of a welfare-proof AOW in excess of an AOW linked to the collectively determined (CAO) pay. Asking pensioners to pay contributions is therefore not sufficient in itself to fund a welfare-proof AOW.

On 14 May 1997 State Secretary De Grave of Social Affairs and Employment presented Dr. Jansweijer with the Councils of Labour Prize for his study, with a cheque of 25,000 guilders. The panel was unanimous that this study stood out head and shoulders above anything else published in the field of social security in recent years.

## **3.6 Conferences and symposiums**

### **3.6.1 Socio-economic Policy between Risk and Security**

On 24 and 25 May 1995, a conference entitled *Socio-Economic Policy between Risk and Security* was held in the SER building in the Hague. This conference, organised by the United States Information Service in the Hague, the University of Utrecht and the WRR, discussed the convergence and socio-economic policy between the United States and the European Union, in particular the Netherlands. The conference consisted of an open and a closed part. The latter examined the advantages and disadvantages of both systems. After the US Ambassador, K. Terry Dornbush, had opened the conference, papers

were given by Dr. H.P.M. Adriaansens (a member of the WRR), Dr. S.E. Eizenstat (US ambassador to the European Union), Dr. W.D. Broadnax (US Health Secretary) and Prof. L.A. Geelhoed (former Secretary-General of the Ministry of Economic Affairs).

The tenure of the meeting was that the way in which policy was organised in relation to the labour market and social security and the results in question were being examined with increasing interest on both sides of the Atlantic. In Europe we observe with respect the growth and employment in the US, but are fearful of 'American situations'. In the US there is a particular interest in the way in which the struggle against poverty has so far been conducted in Europe. Major issues need to be solved on both sides in the coming years. The solution might well lie somewhere in between both systems. In the closed part of the conference there was extensive discussion concerning the similarities and differences, the experience and lessons in the US and in the Netherlands concerning socio-cultural processes, labour market policy and the stimulation of entrepreneurship.

### **3.6.2 Stability and Security in Europe**

On 6 October 1995 the WRR organised a conference by way of preparation for the publication of report no. 48, *Stability and Security in Europe*. With this conference the WRR sought to make a contribution towards the discussion of the Cabinet's *Foreign Policy Review Document*. In the morning session papers were delivered by four foreign speakers: W. Wallace, F. Bary de Lonchamps, C. Schmidt and E. Brok. In particular they examined the changes in transatlantic relations. Differences of view emerged among the speakers and participants concerning the extent to which Europe and the United States had become distanced from one another and how this relationship should assume new form. In the afternoon session papers were given by F. Bolkestein, P. Dankert and P. Kooijmans concerning possible changes in Dutch foreign policy. These papers were followed by a lively discussion concerning the extent to which European integration should be taken further and how the capacity to act of the European Union in the foreign policy and security field should be given form. The papers together with a report on the discussion have been included in a WRR working document, *Perceptions of Future Developments in the European Union; Conference Report*, edited by A. Brouwers, M. Kwast-Van Duursen and H. Ruyg (W90, 1995).

### **3.6.3 Fundamental Questions about the Future of Health Care**

For the purposes of the health care project, the Council organised a closed working conference on 18 and 19 April 1996. The following questions were submitted to a forum of experts from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, United States and Canada: what are realistic goals for health care in the future? What health care should be universally accessible and should consequently be financed out of public revenues? What criteria should the organisation of health care meet? Together with the articles by the participants, the report of the conference was published in English in the 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series under the title *Fundamental Questions about the Future of Health Care* (V95, 1996).

Important conclusions to emerge from the conference were that attention to the changes in social circumstances was essential for an effective discussion about the system of health care. As a result of the ageing of the population, the growing possibilities opened up by medical technology and the rising public expectations in the health care field, the uptake of health care was set to increase in the future. Given the growing demand and the ultimately limited resources choices will need to be made with respect to the health care that was



to be funded collectively. In the absence of such choices inequality will arise with respect to access to basic health care.

### 3.6.4 Volatilisation in the Economy

The growing volatilisation of the economy prompted the Council to organise a workshop with a number of experts on 16 October 1996. This workshop concentrated on the following four questions:

1. A quickening of pace in the economic field is neither new nor special. Nevertheless a change in gear appears to be taking place, as a result of which time and space in the economic domain are assuming different dimensions. To what extent can one indeed speak of a new phenomenon?
2. As a result of the changing times/space dimensions within the economic domain (i.e. distance is becoming less important, with a commensurate increase in speed) developments could become less predictable. The second question therefore concerns the extent to which future trends in such fields as transport requirements, economic development and business establishment will be subject to growing uncertainties.
3. How should the government respond to growing uncertainty? Which policies are suitable and which less suitable in a context in which developments have become increasingly uncertain?
4. Finally, could the shrinking of distance have important consequences for the government's ability to regulate social activity? How does 'the law' apply if state boundaries are becoming less and less clearly defined, and what should be the basis for taxation be if the economy largely volatilises? Needless to say these questions are not just of importance for the economic domain; the disappearance of distance poses the government with new questions of regulation in all sorts of social fields.

The keynote papers and responses were published in the WRR's 'Preliminary and Background Studies' series under the title: *Volatiliserende in de economie* (Volatilisation in the economy; V98, 1997).

### 3.7 Follow-up activities

Apart from the preparation of reports, follow-up to those reports can also form part of the Council's activities. This applies in particular to those reports which are not just of immediate policy relevance but also provide material that sparks off a debate in a certain professional area. In recent years this has applied in particular to a number of more technical and scientific WRR reports.

The report *Ground for Choices* (no. 42, 1992, i.e. published during the fourth Council term) attracted considerable attention during the fifth Council term. The methodology developed in the report for conducting a broadly-based analysis of the European agricultural system including a number of policy variants aroused widespread interest outside the country's borders. This resulted in the first place in a number of activities on the part of the research institutes (especially various Wageningen institutes) that had been involved in the preparation of the report. Secondly the Council provided an explanation in many parts of the world concerning the background to and method of conducting the research. Interest was particularly marked in South-East Asia, where lectures were held in China, Vietnam, the Philippines, India and Malaysia. Interest was also displayed by the World Bank, the FAO and the CGIAR (the umbrella organisation responsible for coordinating international agricultural research). Apart from a briefing on the report itself, interest was displayed in Malaysia to transferring the methodology itself. To this end a number of courses lasting several days were held at MARDI (the Malaysian counterpart of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Fishery).

All these activities together resulted in the fact that the fundamental ideas in the report *Ground for Choices* led to the formation of what may be regarded as a 'school' within the body of international research concerned with agriculture and rural development.

A second report which involved more than average follow-up on the part of the Council during the fifth term was *Sustained Risks: a Lasting Phenomenon* (no. 44, 1994). The responses to the report led the Council to conclude that although the basic notion was broadly endorsed by most of the parties concerned, the report possibly provided an inadequate frame of reference in an operational sense. The key concept in the report is that sustainable development cannot simply be defined by the application of scientific criteria but that this necessarily involves the setting of political priorities, with the associated trade-off of goals. In order to convert this insight into (policy) deeds, however, a certain degree of knowledge is required concerning the way in which the political debate can be taken up and how information advanced by the scientific community should be applied. In this regard the Council asked researchers at the University of Utrecht to conduct an analysis of this problem. This resulted in the preliminary study by W.J. Vermeulen, J.F.M. van der Waals, H. Ernste and P. Glasbergen *Duurzaamheid als uitdaging* (Sustainability as challenge; V101, 1997).

Also in the case of report no. 44, the subject-matter in question turned out to be so universal that interest in other countries was again particularly marked. The English translation of the report was widely distributed and the Council was responsible for presentations in numerous international forums. As matters stand at present, the discussion concerning this subject has still to run its course and further follow-up will be required by the Council at both national and international level.



# Evaluation of the fifth term of office

# 4

## 4.1 Introduction

Apart from calling for a report, the end of a term of office also provides an opportunity for evaluating the functioning of the Council. Since its establishment the Council has done so every five years and thus has anticipated the requirement to issue a periodic evaluation report under the instructions concerning external advisory bodies issued by the Prime Minister on 11 March 1987 (no. 375699a) and the requirement for advisory bodies that come under the Advisory Councils Framework Act to (yearly) issue an evaluation report. The Council's independent status necessarily involves regular internal appraisal of its functioning. The preceding chapters explicitly discussed the more concrete activities of the Council during the period under review here. The volume *Wise before the Event* more fundamentally examined the question what might be expected of a think tank like the WRR. The present chapter is therefore confined to some general aspects relating to the activities and functioning of the Council.

## 4.2 Working method

In the report on the Council's first term of office (1972–1977) two approaches were distinguished with respect to the Council's responsibilities, namely the 'broad-brush' and the 'in-depth' approach. In the first term of office the Council opted in favour of a broad-brush approach in which a large number of different subjects of government policy in the long term were examined. In subsequent terms of office the emphasis shifted in favour of an in-depth approach in which a limited number of vital aspects of government policy were analysed in detail and examined in terms of their relevance for long-term problems. This change was related to the emergence of other advisory bodies and to government departments' own research capacity. During the period under review the Council once again opted for the in-depth approach.

This strategy involves a project-based approach towards the research topics and comparatively lengthy projects. Limiting the duration of the projects (without loss of quality), monitoring project progress and organising the greatest possible involvement of the Council as a whole are aspects that require continual attention under this working method. As noted in the report on the first term of office the in-depth approach also means that special attention has to be paid to the selection of research topics. Although the quality of the Council's work depends to a large extent on the individual creativity and involvement of the individual members and their affinity with a particular subject, this cannot be allowed to lead to the choice of topics being primarily determined by the expertise available within the Council rather than by the priorities that need to be set in the light of future developments.

In the light of the experience of the past term of office and the aforementioned debate, it is also evident that there is a continuing requirement for long-range studies, especially those of a more or less integral nature. In the fifth term of office the Council decided to add a supra-sectoral future exploration to its programme. This resulted in the report to the Government *Social Dichotomy in Perspective*, a socio-cultural future study, exploring the developments in the field of labour, education and income that are to be expected in the period up to 2015. All the projects on the Council's programme of work are of course

future-oriented and can in most cases be considered a thematic future exploration. In its selection of research topics the Council also takes account of the future scenarios drawn up by other research institutes. It should be noted here that policy-oriented future research has increased substantially since the Council's early days.

### 4.3 Function and functioning of the Council

The Council is a statutory body concerned with government policy. At the same time, however, it is independent and concerned with policy as it should or could be in the light of future developments. This inevitably creates a certain tension between the Council's work and the need for the reports to be 'of use' to the Government, in the sense of immediate applicability and usability for policy purposes. The latter requires that the Council's analyses should be consonant with and support the policies of the day and that the reports should at most outline a number of as yet unexplored solutions. The Council's function is, however, one of identifying as yet unacknowledged problems and developments, insufficiently explored policy options and the possibilities for a more integrated approach towards problems that cut across departmental or other dividing lines. This involves the identification of alternatives to present policy, risky elements in those policies and policy shortcomings – which can lead to friction with the needs and imperatives of day-to-day policy. In many instances, therefore, WRR reports initially generate a public and political debate, only gradually percolating through into policy.

It is the Council's responsibility to provide the Government and political system with topics, information and suggestions of relevance for policy. This means that allowance must, to some extent, be made for what is politically and legally feasible. But the Council would not be discharging its responsibilities if it were to refrain from tackling subjects and making recommendations in the light of its findings. In this sense the Council can only operate effectively if the Government and political system is – despite the pressure of problems and opportunities – prepared to face the future and its demands with openness.

The fifth term of office got under way on the eve of the government's programme to review the advisory system. Even before that time, at the end of the previous term of office, the Cabinet had been reconsidering the function and functioning of the WRR. On the basis of that review the Cabinet had a number of wishes concerning the size, working methods and international orientation of the WRR. Agreements were reached with the Council on these matters, which were then tested in practice. As far as the composition and size of the Council were concerned this came down to the fact that notwithstanding the provisions of the Act of Establishment (i.e. no fewer than five and no more than eleven members), efforts would be made during the fifth term of office to keep the size of the Council down. It would however be examined to what extent use could be made of advisory members for special projects.

For the larger part of the fifth term, the Council operated with six members and one advisory member in addition to the traditional advisory members. A relatively limited number of Council members is conducive to debate about and involvement in the various activities. A smaller Council, however, also affects the level of productivity, although the relationship is not a direct one. In addition there is the danger that the exchange of ideas will get stuck in a rut if the Council falls below a certain size. For these reasons the size of the Council will need as far as possible to strike a balance between the statutory extremes in the future.

To some extent the risk of one-sidedness and a restricted exchange of views within the WRR is offset by the participation of (temporary) advisory members in the activities. The experience in this respect has been favourable provided that the advisory member in fact also participates in the Council's work in other fields for the duration of his or her appointment. Otherwise these advisory members become specialists in a single project, whereas the value of the WRR resides in the need to arrive at an interdisciplinary approach towards issues for which collective responsibility is taken. This consideration accordingly imposes limitations on the available candidates for advisory membership of the Council.

Given the changes taking place in society it is inevitable that virtually every topic taken up by the WRR will also have an international dimension. This has long been reflected in the Council's activities. In addition the past term of office has been used to build up a network of international contacts with comparable institutions, other than by means of specific projects. Traditionally, the limited number of comparable institutions has constituted a problem in this regard. In recent years, however, interest has increasingly been displayed in the WRR abroad with a view to adopting a similar arrangement. The compilation of a survey of foreign think tanks in the aforementioned volume *Wise before the Event* has also established the basis for a number of connections. These are however confined to contacts; an international composition of the Council itself entails the drawback that the activities within the WRR would then presumably need to be conducted in a different language. If however language is not a problem, there would in principle be no objection towards the appointment of a foreign member of the Council.

#### 4.4 The advisory members

Since the inception the Council has had a number of ('ordinary') advisory members, generally the directors and directors-general of the leading planning agencies. This has been based on the consideration that the activities of these planning agencies have much in common with the Council's work and also that the often extensive contacts at working level between the scientific staffs of the institutions stand to benefit from an 'open channel' at policy level.

As indicated above, the in-depth approach towards the WRR's task has resulted in a project-based approach towards the topics, with the results of the project group being periodically discussed in the Council. The input of the advisory members may be made either by their attendance at regular Council meetings or at separate meetings to which these advisory members have been specially invited. Written contributions are also possible. All three methods were issued during the past term of office. The contributions by the advisory members are subject to the precondition that they take stock of the WRR's activities by being sent the Council's minutes and meeting papers.

Although experience indicates that extremely busy experts such as the directors of the planning agencies cannot assign top priority to their contact with the WRR, the present flexible working method does generate results. Useful suggestions were received from these members during the course of projects and in respect to the changes made to those projects. The short-circuiting of the contacts at working level between the agencies is of course an important by-product of the advisory membership.

The involvement of the aforementioned directors and directors-general in the annual consultations between strategic advisory bodies initiated by the WRR (see section 2.3.4 above) meets the wish expressed by the government and Parliament for the more effective utilisation of the capacity of the advisory and research apparatus surrounding the central government. The consultations

in question make it possible to take account of other institutions at an early stage in the choice of topics and in project-design. The expertise of the planning agencies and other members can be useful in this regard.

As already indicated the institution 'advisory member' was also interpreted as 'temporary Council member' during the period under review. This is an arrangement that has also been well tried in the past when the need arose. The use of this form of advisory membership built on the recommendations arising from the WRR visitation in 1992 (see section 1.2.3). By opting for advisory membership rather than for temporary Council membership a division into 'first class' and 'second class' Council members is prevented.

#### 4.5 WRR Bureau

Working with a much smaller permanent scientific staff (14 FTE instead of 27 FTE; see section 1.2.3) while given an unchanged workload required adjustments to the organisation and working methods. This may be regarded as a success in so far as the Council's output has not fallen despite the cut in staffing numbers. This is in the first place certainly due to the efforts and dedication of the remaining permanent staff. In addition greater support capacity than hitherto for the Council's work has been recruited by means of secondments, temporary contracts of employment and contract work. The enlargement of the budget to enable scientific studies to be contracted out in 1992 was intended to give a boost in this direction. The flexibility following from the greater use of temporary staff has also been used in order to correct imbalances in the age and sex structure of the permanent staff. Temporary places have been set aside for young academics, with preference being given to women where candidates are equally as suitable. Similarly efforts have been made to redress these imbalances when filling vacancies on the permanent staff in recent years. The number of women in permanent staff positions rose for example during the period under review from two to four. Steps were taken to promote the efficiency of the WRR's working methods by enabling the staff to take training courses tuned to the WRR's needs in written reporting and project management and organisation.

The scientific staff are complemented by the library staff, secretariat and the domestic staff. The support provided by the personnel in question for the Council's work was once again of great value to the Council during this term of office.

# Appendix I

## Integral text of the Scientific Council for Government Policy Establishment Act

### **ACT of 30 June 1976 Establishing a Scientific Council for Government Policy; most recently amended by Act of December 11, 1997**

We, Juliana, by the Grace of God, Queen of the Netherlands, Princess of Orange Nassau, etc., etc., etc

To all and singular to whom these presents shall come, Greeting! Whereas We have considered that for the shaping of Government policy it is desirable that information on developments which may affect society in the long term be supplied systematically, that the establishment of a permanent body giving advice and assistance to replace the Provisional Scientific Council for Government Policy may contribute to that end:

We, therefore, having heard the Council of State, and in consultation with the States General, have approved and decreed as We hereby approve and decree:

#### **Article 1**

1. There shall be a Scientific Council for Government Policy, hereinafter referred to as 'the Council'.
2. The Council will not be considered an advisory council as meant in the Advisory Councils Framework Act.

#### **Article 2**

The Council shall:

- a. supply for Government Policy scientifically sound information on developments which may affect society in the long term and draw timely attention to anomalies and bottlenecks to be anticipated; define the major problems and indicate policy alternatives;
- b. provide a scientific structure which the Government could use when establishing priorities and which would ensure that a consistent policy is pursued;
- c. with respect to studies undertaken in the sphere of research on future developments and long-term planning in both public and private sectors, make recommendations on the elimination of structural inadequacies, the furtherance of specific studies and the improvement of communication and co-ordination.

#### **Article 3**

1. The Council shall comprise at least five and at most eleven members.
2. We shall appoint the Chairman and the other members of the Council on the recommendation of Our Prime Minister/Minister for General Affairs, made in accordance with the consensus of the Council of Ministers.
3. The Chairman and other members shall be appointed for five years, except in the event of earlier discharge by Us. They shall be immediately re-eligible for appointment for one subsequent term.
4. A person appointed to fill an interim vacancy shall resign on the date on which the person he was appointed to replace would have had to resign.

#### **Article 4**

1. The post of Chairman of the Council shall be a full-time function.
2. The other members of the Council shall make available for Council work at least two working-days a week of their total working-hours.
3. In exceptional cases the Prime Minister/Minister for General Affairs may stipulate that the working-hours made available to the Council under the preceding paragraph be decreased.



### **Article 5**

The legal status of the Chairman and of the other members shall be laid down by General Administrative Order.

### **Article 6**

1. There shall be advisory members.
2. The Council may make recommendations to Our Prime Minister/Minister for General Affairs in the matter of the appointment of advisory members.
3. We shall appoint the advisory members of the Council on the recommendation of Our Prime Minister/Minister for General Affairs, made in accordance with the consensus of the Council of Ministers.

### **Article 7**

1. The Council shall have an office headed by a Secretary to assist it.
2. We shall appoint the Council's Secretary on the recommendation of Our Prime Minister/Minister for General Affairs.

### **Article 7a**

1. The Council will draw up its programme of work after having consulted Our Prime Minister/Minister for General Affairs.
2. The Council may change its programme of work after having consulted Our Prime Minister/Minister for General Affairs.
3. For the consultations referred to in the first and second paragraph Our Prime Minister/Minister for General Affairs will hear the Council of Ministers

### **Article 8**

1. The Council shall, in discharging its duties, avail itself of the results of research undertaken by other institutions.
2. General Government departments and institutions, and local authorities shall supply the Council with such information as it requires.
3. The Council may apply direct to other institutions or persons for information.
4. Our Ministers shall ensure that the Council, if the discharge of its duties so requires, be informed in time of any research on future developments and of the results of such research undertaken under their responsibility, as also of any assumptions and intentions as regards long-term policy.

### **Article 9**

1. The Council may consult directly with experts from the public and private sectors.
2. The Council may set up committees. It shall require the approval of such of Our Ministers as may be involved for any assistance given by experts from the public sector.
3. The Council may maintain direct international contacts in its own particular sphere.

### **Article 10**

The Council may, on its own initiative, request that certain studies or research projects be undertaken. This shall be done through the intermediary of such of Our Ministers as may be involved where departments or institutions working under them are concerned.

### **Article 12**

1. The Council shall report to the Government through the intermediary of Our Prime Minister/Minister for General Affairs for General Affairs.
2. Our Prime Minister/Minister for General Affairs shall inform the Council of the findings of the Council of Ministers with respect to such reports.

3. The Council of Ministers shall hear the Council, if it so requests, in connection with the findings referred to in the preceding paragraph.

**Article 13**

1. The reports submitted to the Government by the Council shall be public, in so far as secrecy shall not have to be observed.
2. The Council shall publish the reports after the Council of Ministers has studied them.

**Article 14**

The Council may issue further rules for its procedure.

**Article 16**

This Act may be cited as the Scientific Council for Government Policy (Establishment) Act.



# Appendix 2

## Publications fifth Council term

### REPORTS TO THE GOVERNMENT

- 44 Duurzame risico's: een blijvend gegeven (Sustained Risks; a Lasting Phenomenon; 1994)
- 45 Belang en beleid; naar een verantwoorde uitvoering van de werknemersverzekeringen (Interest and Policy; towards a Responsible Implementation of Employee Insurances; 1994)
- 46 Besluiten over grote projecten (Decision-making on Complex Projects; 1994)
- 47 Hoger onderwijs in fasen (Higher Education in Stages; 1995)
- 48 Stabiliteit en veiligheid. Het veranderende krachtenveld voor het buitenlands beleid (Stability and Security in Europe. The Changing Foreign Policy Arena; 1995)
- 49 Orde in het binnenlands bestuur (On the Organisation of Public Administration; 1995)
- 50 Tweedeling in perspectief (Social Dichotomy in Perspective; 1996)
- 51 Van verdelen naar verdienen (From Sharing to Earning. Considerations for Social Security in the 21st Century; 1997)
- 52 Volksgezondheidszorg (Public Health Care. Priorities and a Sound Financial Basis for Health Care in the 21st Century; (1997)
- 53 Ruimtelijke-ontwikkelingspolitiek (Spatial Development Policy; 1998)
- 54 Staat zonder land. Een verkenning van bestuurlijke gevolgen van informatie- en communicatietechnologie (State without a Territory. An Exploration of Administrative Consequences of Information and Communication Technology; 1998)

### TRANSLATED REPORTS

- 44 Sustained Risks; a Lasting Phenomenon (1995, full translation)
- 47 Higher Education in Stages (1995, summary)
- 48 Stability and Security in Europe. The Changing Foreign Policy Arena (1995, full translation)
- 50 Social Dichotomy in Perspective (1996, summary)
- 51 From Sharing to Earning. Considerations for Social Security in the 21st Century (1998, summary )
- 52 Public Health Care. Priorities and a Sound Financial Basis for Health Care in the 21st Century (1998, summary)
- 53 Spatial Development Policy (1998, summary)
- 54 State without a Territory. An Exploration of Administrative Consequences of Information and Communication Technology (1998, summary)

### PRELIMINARY AND BACKGROUND STUDIES

- V82 W.J. Dercksen, H. van Lieshout, Beroepswijs Onderwijs; Ontwikkelingen en dilemma's in de aansluiting van onderwijs en arbeid (Vocational Education; Developments and Dilemmas in Matching Education with Employment; 1993)
- V83 W.G.M. Salet, Om recht en staat; een sociologische verkenning van sociale, politieke en rechtsbetrekkingen (On Law and State; a Sociological Exploration of Social, Political and Legal Relations; 1994)

- V84 J.M. Bekkering, Private verzekering van sociale risico's (Private Insurance of Social Risks; 1994)
- V85 C. Lambers, D.A. Lubach, M. Scheltema, Versnelling juridische procedures grote projecten (Acceleration of Legal Procedures for Complex Projects; 1994)
- V86 CSHOB, Aspecten van hoger onderwijs; een internationale inventarisatie (Aspects of Higher Education; an International Survey; 1995)
- V87 T. van der Meij, J.H.W. Hendriks, C.J.M. Musters e.a., Ontwikkelingen in de natuur. Visies op de levende natuur in de wereld en scenario's voor het behoud daarvan (Developments in Nature. Visions on the Living Nature in the World and Scenarios for its Maintenance; 1995)
- V88 L. Hagendoorn, K. Phalet, R. Henke, R. Drogendijk, Etnische verhoudingen in Midden- en Oost- Europa (Ethnic Relations in Central and Eastern Europe; 1995)
- V89 H.C. Posthumus Meyjes, A. Szász, C. Bertram, W.F. van Eekelen, Een gedifferentieerd Europa (A Differentiated Europe; 1995)
- V90 J. Rupnik, P. Hassner, M. Tatu, M.C. Brands, R. Havenaar, Challenges to the East (1995)
- V91 J.P.H. Donner (rapporteur), Europa, wat nu? (Europe, What Now?; 1995)
- V92 R.M.A. Jansweijer, Gouden bergen, diepe dalen. De inkomensgevolgen van een betaalbare oudedagsvoorziening (Distribution of Income under a Sustainable Old Age Pension System; 1996)
- V93 W. Derksen, W.G.M. Salet (red.), Bouwen aan het binnenlands bestuur (Towards the Organisation of Public Administration; 1996)
- V94 SEO/Intomart, Start-, slaag- en faalkansen van hoger opgeleide startende ondernemers (Factors Determining the Chances of Success of New Entrepreneurs with Higher Education; 1996)
- V95 L.J. Gunning-Schepers, G.J. Kronjee and R.A. Spasoff (eds.), Fundamental Questions about the Future of Health Care. Conference Report (1996)
- V96 H.B.G. Ganzeboom, W.C. Ultee (red.), De sociale segmentatie van Nederland in 2015 (Social Segmentation in the Netherlands in 2015; 1996)
- V97 J.C.I. de Pree, Grenzen aan verandering. De verhouding tussen reorganisatie en structuurprincipes van het binnenlands bestuur (Limits to Change. The Relation between Reorganisation and Structural Principles of Public Administration; 1997)
- V98 M.F. Gelok, W.M. de Jong, Volatilisering in de economie (Volatilisation in the Economy; 1997)
- V99 A.H. Kleinknecht, R.H. Oostendorp, M.P. Pradhan, Patronen en economische effecten van flexibiliteit in de Nederlandse arbeidsverhoudingen. Een exploratie op basis van de OSA vraag- en aanbodpanels (Patterns and Economic Effects of Flexibility in Dutch Labour Relations. An Exploration on the Basis of Demand and Supply Panel Data; 1997)
- V100 J.P.H. Donner, Staat in beweging (State in Motion; 1998)
- V101 W.J. Vermeulen, J.F.M. van der Waals, H. Ernste, P. Glasbergen, Duurzaamheid als uitdaging. De afweging van ecologische en maatschappelijke risico's in confrontatie en dialoog (Sustainability as Challenge. Balancing Ecological and Social Risks in Confrontation and Dialogue; 1997)
- V102 W. Zonneveld, A. Faludi, Europese integratie en de Nederlandse ruimtelijke ordening (European Integration and Dutch Spatial Planning; 1998)
- V103 Verslag en evaluatie van de vijfde raadsperiode; 1993-1997 (Report and Evaluation of the Fifth Term of Office)

## WORKING DOCUMENTS

- W76 D.P. van den Bosch, W.J. Dercksen, F.J.P.M. Hoefnagel, Startkwalificatie en leerplicht (Starting Qualifications and Compulsory Education; 1994)
- W77 A.J.F. Bruning, with J. Siersma, Grote projecten in Nederland; een analyse van het tijdsbeslag van twintig besluitvormingsprocessen (Complex Project in the Netherlands; an Analysis of the Duration of Twenty Decision-making Processes; 1994)

- W78 D. Scheele, Duurzaamheid materiaalgebruik en de exploitatie van mineralen (Sustainable Use of Materials and the Exploitation of Minerals; 1994)
- W79 W.M. de Jong, Chloor in duurzaam perspectief. Over zekerheden en onzekerheden (Sustainable Perspectives on Chlorine; 1994)
- W80 J. Dogterom, P.H.L. Buijs, Duurzaam watergebruik in Nederland (Sustainable Use of Water in the Netherlands; 1994)
- W81 W. Derksen, I. van Enkevort, H. de Jong, R. Schouten De blik naar buiten. Geïntegreerde dienstverlening als structuurprincipe (From the Inside Looking out. Integrated Services as a Structural Principle; 1995)
- W82 E. ter Borg, K. Dignum, Grenzen in de ijle ruimte. Variatie in geografisch schaalgebruik verkend (Limits in the Empty Space. An Exploration of the Differing Use of Geographical Scale; 1995)
- W83 R.L. van den Bos, T. Vis, Taken en functies van het hoger onderwijs. HOAK, HOOP en WHW (Tasks and Functions of Higher Education; 1995)
- W84 O. Holman, Transformatieprocessen in Midden- en Oost-Europa: de internationale dimensie (Transformation Processes in Central and Eastern Europe; the International Dimension; 1995)
- W85 A. Brouwers, Amerika's buitenlands beleid en de ontwikkeling van de transatlantische relaties na 1990 (America's Foreign Policy and the Development of Transatlantic Relations after 1990; 1995)
- W86 P. Scheffer Machtverschil en rechtsgelijkheid in de Europese Unie (Imbalances in Power and Legal Equality in the European Union; 1995)
- W87 H. Wallace, W. Wallace, Flying Together in a Larger and More Diverse European Union (1995)
- W88 J. Kol, Bloc Formation, Fragmentation and Stability in the World Economy (1995)
- W89 L.J.M. Verdult, Een andere financiële organisatie (A Different Financial Structure; 1996)
- W90 A. Brouwers, M. Kwast-van Duursen and H. Ruyg (eds.), Perceptions of Future Developments in the European Union; Conference Report (1995)
- W91 M. de Groot, Over consumenten en digitale dienstverlening; een toekomstverkenning (On Consumers and Digital Services; a Futures Study; 1996)
- W92 T. Oterdoom, Analyse versus ontwerp; ruimtelijk-economische studies nader beschouwd (Analysis versus Design; an Examination of Spatial/Economic Studies; 1996)
- W93 P.J. Branger, E.M.R.M. Paalvast, J.C. Voorhoeve, K.M. van Hee, Informatisering in de gezondheidszorg; een toekomstverkenning (Information Technology in Health Care; a Futures Study; 1997)
- W94 J.H.M. Zwetsloot-Schonk, P.F. de Vries Robbé, Ontwikkelingsprincipes voor de inrichting van de informatievoorziening over de curatieve zorg (Developmental Principles for the Organisation of Information Management in Curative Care; 1997)
- W95 P.J. van de Mheen, J.J. Barendregt, Toekomstige zorgbehoefte in Nederland; een kwantitatieve verkenning (The Future Demand for Health Care in the Netherlands; a Quantitative Study; 1997)
- W96 Arie Kapteyn, Asghar Zaidi and Adriaan Kalwij, Worksharing as a Policy to Increase Employment: an Evaluation (1997)
- W97 Y.C. Mets, Cultuur en nieuwe media; tweerichtingsverkeer. Een verkennende literatuurstudie (Culture and the New Media; Two-way Traffic. An Examination of Literature; 1997)
- W98 D.A. Albrechtse, Belastingheffing en ICT (Taxation and ICT; 1997)
- W99 Arnold Reijndorp, Birgitt Truijens, Ivan Nio, Hagar Visser, Vindent Kompier, De kern van het ruimtelijk beleid. Een onderzoek naar het begrip ruimtelijke kwaliteit (The Essence of Spatial Development Policy. A Study of the Concept of Land-use Quality; 1998)
- W100 P. Smit, P.J. Stallen, R. Herengreen, Ruimte als forum (Space as a Forum; 1998)

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Mosterd *bij* de maaltijd; 20/25 jaar WRR (1997); published in English as 'Wise before the Event' (1998)

# Appendix 3

## Personalia

### **Members of the Council**

J.P.H. Donner (chairman)  
prof.dr. H.P.M. Adriaansens  
prof.dr. W. Derksen (since April 1, 1993)  
prof.dr. L.J. Gunning-Schepers (since January, 1 1995)  
H. Hooykaas (till Januari 1, 1995)  
prof.dr. R. Rabbinge  
prof.dr. D.J. Wolfson

### **Temporary advisory members**

prof.dr. M.C. Brands (from Januari 1, 1994 till Januari 1, 1996)  
prof. M. Scheltema (since April 1, 1997)

### **Advisory members**

prof.dr. F.J.H. Don, director Central Planning Office  
J.A.M. Kroese-Duijsters, director-general for Physical Planning (till October 15, 1997)  
R.B.J.C. van Noort, director-general National Institute of Public Health and Environment  
prof. A.J. van der Staay, director Social and Cultural Planing Office

## **COMPOSITION OF THE BUREAU AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1997**

J.C.F. Bletz, secretary to the Council and director of the Bureau  
H.C. van Latesteijn, deputy-secretary and deputy-director

### **Research staff**

dr. K.W.H. van Beek  
dr. J.M. Bekkering  
dr. M.A. Hajer  
dr. C.A. Hazeu  
N.D. Hielkema  
dr. P. den Hoed  
dr. F.J.P.M. Hoefnagel  
dr. R.M.A. Jansweijer  
dr. W.M. de Jong  
dr. G.J. Kronjee  
prof.dr. C.W.A.M. van Paridon  
dr. J.C.I. de Pree  
D. Scheele  
prof. I.J. Schoonenboom  
M. Sie Dhian Ho

### **External communication**

dr. S.J. Langeweg

### **Automation**

R.J. de Bruijn



**Library staff**

F.C. Bom

C.M.J. van Helfteren

B.L.S. van der Leij

**Administrative staff**

Y. de Graaf-de Graaf

M.Th. Nuijten-Pennings

A.A.M. van Roijen

M.J.J. van Soolingen

L.A.C. Tupan

C. de Vries

S. Wassenaar

**Domestic staff**

C.M. Verheij-Zoutenbier

D. Macleod Manuel

M.W.G. Netten-Franchimon

# Reports to the Government (published in previous Council terms)

## First term of office

- 1 Europese Unie (European Union), 1974.
- 2 Structuur van de Nederlandse economie (Structure of the Netherlands Economy), 1974.
- 3 Energiebeleid op langere termijn (Long-term Energy Policy), 1974. Reports 1 to 3 have been published in one volume.
- 4 Milieubeleid (Environment Policy), 1974.
- 5 Bevolkingsprognoses (Population Forecasts), 1974.
- 6 De organisatie van het openbaar bestuur (The Organization of Public Administration), 1975.
- 7 Buitenlandse invloeden op Nederland: Internationale migratie (Foreign Influence on the Netherlands: International Migration), 1976.
- 8 Buitenlandse invloeden op Nederland: Beschikbaarheid van wetenschappelijke en technische kennis (Foreign Influence on the Netherlands: Availability of Scientific and Technical Knowledge), 1976.
- 9 Commentaar op de Discussienota Sectorraden Wetenschapsbeleid (Comments on the discussion Paper on Sectoral Council of Science Policy), 1976.
- 10 Commentaar op de nota Contouren van een toekomstig onderwijsbestel (Comments on the White Paper on the Contours of the Future Education System), 1976.
- 11 Overzicht externe adviesorganen van de centrale overheid (Survey of External Advisory Bodies of the Central Government), 1976.
- 12 Externe adviesorganen van de centrale overheid, beschrijving, ontwikkelingen, aanbevelingen (External Advisory Bodies of the Central Government: Description, Developments, Recommendations), 1977.
- 13 'Maken wij er werk van?' Verkenningen omtrent de verhouding tussen actieven en niet-actieven ('Do we make Work our Business?' An Exploratory Study of the Relations between Economically Active and Inactive Persons), 1977.
- 14 Overzicht interne adviesorganen van de centrale overheid (Survey of Internal Advisory Bodies of the Central Government), 1977.
- 15 De komende vijfentwintig jaar, een toekomstverkenning voor Nederland (The Next Twenty-Five Years: a Survey of Future Developments in the Netherlands), 1977.
- 16 Over sociale ongelijkheid, een beleidsgerichte probleemverkenning (On Social Inequality: a Policy-oriented Study), 1977.

## Second term of office

- 17 Etnische minderheden – A. Rapport aan de Regering; B. Naar een algemeen etnisch minderhedenbeleid? (Ethnic minorities – A. Report to the Government; B. Towards an Overall Ethnic Minorities Policy?), 1979.
- 18 Plaats en toekomst van de Nederlandse industrie (Industry in the Netherlands: its Place and Future), 1980.
- 19 Beleidsgerichte toekomstverkenning: deel I. Een poging tot uitlokking (A Policy-oriented Survey of the Future: Part I. An Attempt to Challenge), 1980.
- 20 Democratie en geweld – Probleemanalyse naar aanleiding van de gebeurtenissen in Amsterdam op 30 april 1980 (Democracy and Violence – an Analysis of Problems in Connection with the Events in Amsterdam on April 30, 1980), 1980.
- 21 Vernieuwing in het arbeidsbestel (Prospects for Reforming the Labour System), 1981.
- 22 Herwaardering van welzijnsbeleid (A Reappraisal of Welfare Policy), 1982.
- 23 Onder invloed van Duitsland. Een onderzoek naar gevoeligheid en kwetsbaarheid in de betrekkingen tussen Nederland en de Bondsrepubliek (The German Factor, A Survey of Sensitivity and Vulnerability in the Relationship between the Netherlands and the Federal Republic), 1982.
- 24 Samenhangend mediabeleid (A Coherent Media Policy), 1982.

## Third term of office

- 25 Beleidsgerichte toekomstverkenning: deel 2; Een verruiming van perspectief (A Policy-oriented Survey of the Future: Part 2: Towards a Broader Perspective), 1983.
- 26 Waarborgen voor zekerheid; een nieuw stelsel van sociale zekerheid in hoofdlijnen (Safeguarding Social Security), 1985.
- 27 Basisvorming in het onderwijs (Basic Education), 1986.
- 28 De onvoltooide Europese integratie (The Unfinished European Integration), 1986.
- 29 Ruimte voor groei (Scope for Growth), 1987.
- 30 Op maat van het midden- en kleinbedrijf (Tailoring Policy to the Needs of the Small and Medium-sized Business), 1987.

- 31 Cultuur zonder grenzen (Culture and Diplomacy), 1987.
- 32 De financiering van de Europese Gemeenschap (Financing the European Community), 1987.
- 33 Activerend arbeidsmarktbeleid (An Active Labour Market Policy), 1987.
- 34 Overheid en toekomstonderzoek (Government and Future Research), 1988.

**Fourth term of office**

- 35 Rechtshandhaving (Law Enforcement), 1989.
- 36 Alloctonenbeleid (Immigrant Policy), 1989.
- 37 Van de stad en de rand (Institutions and Cities; the Dutch Experience), 1990.
- 38 Een werkend perspectief (Work in Perspective), 1990.
- 39 Technologie en overheid (Technology and Policy), 1991.
- 40 De onderwijsverzorging in de toekomst (Educational Support in the Future), 1991.
- 41 Milieubeleid; strategie, instrumenten en handhaafbaarheid, (Environment Policy: Strategy, Instruments and Enforcement), 1992.
- 42 Grond voor keuzen; vier perspectieven voor de landelijke gebieden in de Europese Gemeenschap (Ground for Choices), 1992.
- 43 Ouderen voor Ouderen; demografische ontwikkelingen en beleid (Demographic Developments and Policy), 1993.

Reports nos. 13, 15, 17, 18, 28, 31, 32, and 42 have been translated into English; English summaries are available of Reports nos. 16, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34, 37, 38, and 41; Report no. 23 has been translated into German. Of Report no. 42 a German and a Spanish Summary is available, as well as a full French translation.



