

Geert Wilders: The Dutch deserve a democratic referendum on their immigration policy



Geert Wilders, leader of the Dutch Freedom Party, March 19, 2014

The New York Times published an op ed in today's edition by Geert Wilders, leader of the Dutch Freedom Party in the Hague parliament on an issue we posted on November 7th, "[Wilders: Use Mandatory Public Referendums to Combat Ruling Elite on Issues like Mass Muslim Asylum.](#)" It was his argument for a Swiss style democratic referendum on issues like reclaiming national sovereignty over the country's borders and putting an end to the evident threats from unchecked mass Muslim immigration. *The New York Times* op ed is titled, "[The Dutch Deserve to vote on immigration policy.](#)" The significance of *The Times* op ed by Wilders is his free speech is protected here under our First Amendment. Protections that are virtually absent in The Netherlands and for many countries in the EU.

Wilders knows that full stop, as he is being brought to trial in the Hague in early 2016; not before a jury of his peers, but before a judge. It is a Kafkaesque administrative tribunal with only one purpose: to convict him for a remark that doesn't even come close to the definition of 'protected speech under the US Supreme Court [Brandenburg v Ohio decision](#). That was his "[fewer Moroccans](#)" comment on March 19, 2014 at a rally in the Hague during the European Parliament election campaign. Wilders in a defiant [December 2014 statement](#) before an interrogation by The Hague police on these trumped

up charges said:

And, at an election meeting in The Hague, I asked those present a number of questions, one of which was “Do you want more or fewer Moroccans?”

Indeed, I want fewer Moroccans in the Netherlands for the reasons and context that I have previously expressed in this statement as well as in Parliament and for which I refer you to the documents that I now deposit.

I have yet to meet the Dutchman who wants more Moroccans in the Netherlands. Asking for fewer Moroccans is something totally different than if I were to want all Moroccans to leave the Netherlands or if I were to object to every Moroccan.

Like me, 43% of all the Dutch and 95% of my supporters want fewer Moroccans in the Netherlands. I have said what millions of Dutchmen think.

All the West would agree with Wilders about “fewer Moroccans” in the wake of the Paris Massacres that killed 129, injured more than 352 innocent civilians last Friday, November 13th and the 2 terrorists killed in the battle by French police for an ISIS safe house in the largely Muslim St. Denis suburb on Wednesday, November 18th. Those killed were a female terrorist Hasna Ait Boulahcen, an unidentified suicide bomber and the bullet riddled body of her cousin, the terrorist mastermind, Abdelhamid Abaaoud. They were both of Moroccan émigré background. Ms. Boulahcen was 28 and French –born, while 28 year Abaaoud was Belgian-born. So was the Dutch Moroccan, [Mohammed Bouyeri](#), who virtually slaughtered Dutch filmmaker, Theo van Gogh on the streets of Amsterdam in November 2004.

I had the opportunity today to speak with a Dutch source. The source with background in the Dutch legal system suggested

that Wilders' trial is political; based as it is on the thin reed of the venue in which Wilders made the accusatory remark during the March 19, 2014 European Parliament campaign. The irony is according to the source was that had Wilders moved literally into an adjacent room, the Hague public prosecutors would not have brought the current action against him. As it is, the intent of the prosecutors at The Hague is to convict Wilders and hit him with a big fine. Such is what passes for Dutch prosecutorial zeal under their legal system. We commented in an October 29, 2015 [post](#) on Wilders' remarks on the upcoming trial in a *De Telegraaf* interview:

Public Prosecutors in The Hague are preparing for a trial on these trumped up charges in 2016. Wilders was exonerated from similar charges in a well publicized 2011 trial in the Amsterdam district court. Wilders' has retained one of the best known defense attorneys Geert-Jan Knoops. However, the trial judge remarks and denial of what we in US trial procedure would consider customary discovery requests would lead one to believe that The Hague court proceedings on these charges are politicized and biased this bolstering of both Knoops and his client Wilders that a fair trial would not be possible. Those are the contention of this front page interview with Wilders and his defense counsel, Knoops in this *De Telegraaf* article by Messrs. Wouter de Winther and Rudd Mikkers. Wilders said if that is the case then why show up at the trial, as the decision has already been made and the prosecution would be a proverbial media circus.

What follows is Wilders' *Times* op ed on a democratic referendum for the Dutch to have a future.

[Geert Wilders: Let the Dutch Vote on Immigration Policy](#)

"The first thing France did after last Friday's terrorist attacks in Paris was to temporarily close its borders. It was a wise move. The attacks showed just how unsafe Europe has

become as a result of the European Union's open border policies and decades of foolish decisions by governments across the Continent to open their doors to mass immigration from Islamic countries.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency among political elites to distrust the opinions of ordinary people. They are perceived to base their views on dark instincts and unjustified fears, rather than on rational choices. European voters, however, are highly educated, and it is ridiculous to suppose they can be easily fooled or manipulated.

We should respond to the current migration crisis by relying on the wisdom of the people and putting crucial national policies to a vote in binding referendums. This is an existential crisis that is leading to the dilution of national identity and the loss of security at a moment when the European Union has also robbed member nations of their sovereignty and the right to conduct their own asylum policies."

Europe's political elite has lost touch with the people. Citizens no longer feel represented by their national governments and parliaments.

That's why there has been growing support for parties like my own Party for Freedom in the Netherlands. Polls indicate that if elections were held today, we would be the largest party in the country.

We oppose a centralized Europe, because we realize the importance of national sovereignty and controlling our own borders. Without sovereignty, a nation cannot exist. Without borders, it can't be defined or protected. Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany gave people in the Middle East the impression that they were welcome in Germany. This was foolish, because millions now want to come to Western Europe. But other European countries should not be the victims of Ms.

Merkel's policies. Nor should they be forced to help Germany. The Poles, Hungarians, Slovaks and Czechs are entitled to have different priorities. And so are we. Our political and moral compass is not the Bundeskanzlei in Berlin, or the European Commission in Brussels.

There is a perfectly good alternative to the European Union – it is called the European Free Trade Association, founded in 1960. Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein are members. E.F.T.A. stands for friendship and cooperation through free trade. It does not rob anyone of sovereignty, it doesn't aim for the political unification of its member states, but members do have access to the internal European market.

Leaving the European Union would, according to [one expert study](#), be economically beneficial for the Netherlands; it would also allow our country to adopt its own asylum policies. We do not want to jeopardize our values by bringing in large numbers of people from a less liberal and less secular culture. Nor do we want to fall victim to increasing terrorism. Of course, genuine refugees are entitled to a safe haven. But we believe that they should be accommodated in their own region. It's a disgrace that there are no resettlement schemes in the immensely rich Persian Gulf States and Saudi Arabia. These countries have a moral obligation to take in their fellow Muslims.

Many Dutch voters are finally waking up to what we have been saying for years. Unfortunately, Dutch political elites suffer from the fatal arrogance of thinking they know better than the people. The democratic deficit in our society isn't caused only by the transfer of sovereignty to Brussels but also by the lack of ways in which citizens can correct their elected representatives and governments at the national level. To avoid what Thomas Jefferson called "elective despotism," we need to introduce direct democracy.

We need a system like Switzerland's, in which people have the opportunity to hold regular binding referendums whenever they feel that elected representatives are acting against the people's will. It's no coincidence that the Swiss never sold out their interests to Brussels. In a direct democracy, citizens exercise sovereignty directly and without mediation.

Dutch law actually allows consultative referendums. Next April, we will vote on the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine. But the conditions for holding referendums are very rigid. Opponents of a bill accepted in Parliament have to collect 10,000 valid signatures in 28 days after the acceptance of the bill, followed by 300,000 more within the next 42 days (that's about 2 percent of all Dutch citizens). Moreover, the referendum is valid only if 30 percent of the electorate votes, and even then it will not be binding.

In Switzerland, any law passed by Parliament can be overruled if opponents manage to collect 50,000 valid signatures within 100 days and then vote. Voters can also propose new legislation, if they succeed in collecting 100,000 valid signatures within 18 months. And the outcome is always binding, no matter how high or low the turnout.

The Netherlands would benefit from direct democracy. In a time of crisis, we need the wisdom of the people.

Geert Wilders is a member of the Dutch Parliament and leader of the Party for Freedom.