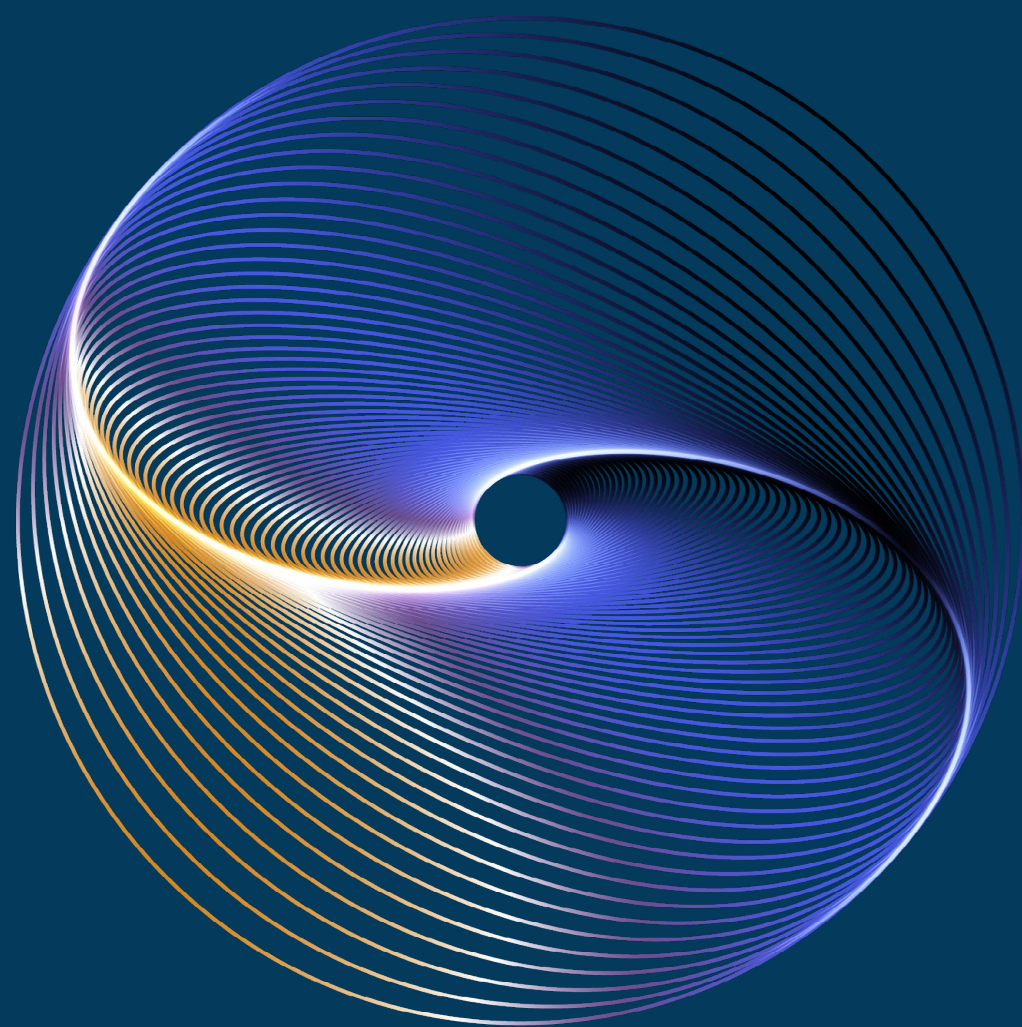


Sustainability & CSR Report 2023

Embedding ESG



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Lieke van der Velden

Sjoerd Meijer

Marike Bakker

Managing Partners

Introduction

You can't step into the same river twice, observed the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus. The world, our environment, people: everything is always in a state of movement. And change, therefore, is the only constant. More than 2,500 years later, this still rings true. In 2023, the world saw continued disruption and change, from ongoing geopolitical tension to extreme weather events, and from creating legal rights for nature to exploring the possibilities of generative AI. Navigating such a permanently evolving landscape requires leaders to look ahead. To be willing to adapt, learn and work together.

We are convinced that addressing the risks and seizing the opportunities that come with change require team work. For example, within our firm, this means we focus on building a truly inclusive work culture. Across the legal sector, we remain strongly committed to furthering access to justice for everyone. And we are proud to explore new paths and develop innovative solutions together with our clients.

Over the past few years, ESG has become widely embedded in our work, be it transactional, advisory or litigation. This is hardly surprising: from ESG due diligence to mitigating climate risks, and from sustainable financing to ethical corporate governance, ESG has become a driver of corporate strategy and a key aspect of business operations. In a time of constant change, this is a trend that we believe is here to stay.

In our fourth annual Sustainability & CSR Report, we share with you where we stand and where we intend to go. Change has proven to be a constant when it comes to reporting as well. In 2023, we started the process to become CSRD compliant. The current report does not aim to meet CSRD requirements. At the same time, we already know that the current CSRD process will bring a change in the way in which we will report on our sustainability objectives and results going forward.

Our ambition for 2024 is to enable the further embedding of ESG for our clients and within our own operations. You will find contributions and insights from our lawyers and business support professionals throughout this report. Together, we will look ahead as we continue to embed ESG in what we do – never stepping into the same river twice, but continuously adapting, learning and working together.

‘Over the past few years, ESG has become widely embedded in our work, be it transactional, advisory or litigation.’

Our responsible business policy

In 2023, we focused on further developing our ESG practice, strengthening our I&D mission and strategy, implementing our sustainable travel policy and embedding our firm-wide Impact Programme for pro bono work and community engagement. We also started preparations to better understand our future CSRD reporting obligation which will apply as from 2025.

‘We believe that by taking responsibility for our actions now, we will leave a better legacy for the future.’

Our CSR mission is to ‘Empower the Next Generation’. We believe that by taking responsibility for our actions now, we will leave a better legacy for the future. We use the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a starting point for our actions, focussing on four areas where we believe we can have the most impact: Quality Education (SDG 4), (Gender) Equality and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 5 and 10), Climate Action (SDG 13), and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16). In addition, we strengthened and expanded our Partnerships with respect to the above goals (SDG 17), since we believe that through cooperation, we can have greater impact. We have integrated the SDGs into the four pillars of our CSR policy.

Our clients: With climate change and sustainability high on the agenda for many of our clients, themes such as sustainable business and climate change increasingly form part of our everyday work. Our Sustainable Business & Climate Change team identifies ESG risks and opportunities and works with clients to develop future-proof solutions to the complex and interconnected challenges inherent in responsible business conduct.

Our people: We educate our talent to become excellent lawyers and professionals. This includes embracing inclusion and diversity in our workforce. The development of soft skills is a key pillar of our talent training programme.

Our operations: We strive to reduce our carbon footprint and integrate sustainability into our business operations firm-wide. We set ambitious carbon reduction targets: a 55% reduction by 2030 compared to 2019 and net zero by 2050. We initiated a roadmap for reducing CO₂ and off-setting our remaining emissions. We implemented a sustainable travel policy and integrated sustainability into our commuting policy.

Our society: As part of our Impact Programme, everyone within the firm receives four Impact Days per year to contribute to society through legal pro bono work or community engagement projects that contribute to our focus SDGs. We encourage and facilitate additional pro bono work and other meaningful volunteer work.

Governance

Our Steering Committee, SDG working groups and Pro Bono Committee of the Impact Programme, a dedicated CSR specialist, an I&D specialist and the Young Professionals Board all (co)develop policies, instigate new initiatives, and coordinate projects and activities. They advise the Board and the Executive Committee. The Brussels and Luxembourg offices also have a (Think) Green Committee and, in addition, the Brussels office has a Think Inclusion & Diversity Committee and a Think Healthy Committee, and the Luxembourg office has a Happy Committee. All committees are composed of both lawyers and business support professionals, and they collaborate on firm-wide CSR projects.

Since 2021, we have annually reported on our achievements in the field of sustainability. This is our fourth CSR report; it covers our work in 2023. We have described the progress we made – as well as where we fell short. The report provides an overview of our main firm-wide CSR activities and accomplishments and takes into account relevant sustainability topics. We welcome your feedback.

CSRD requirements

With this Sustainability & CSR Report we aim to provide insight in the progress we are making in the field of our ESG practice, sustainability, and CSR. The Sustainability & CSR Report is not intended to meet CSRD requirements that will be applicable to our firm as per the 2025 annual report.

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Our clients

In 2023, we experienced a rapidly changing sustainability landscape. If anything became clear amidst regulatory shifts, environmental calamities and expanding societal expectations, it was the need for speeding up and enhancing sustainability efforts. In this context, top concerns for executives were how to keep the overview, ensure the availability of personnel with the required skills and balance stakeholders' interests.

ESG issues have taken centre stage in the corporate and financial world, from the urgency of tackling climate change to the demand for more inclusive and diverse workplaces. The regulatory ESG framework, including far reaching non-financial disclosure requirements, the much debated Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, EU proposals against greenwashing, and new measures to align national and EU legislation with the 2030 climate targets, all continued to develop at a high pace. Social issues are an ever more prominent topic on the agenda of boards, such as transgressive behaviour in the workplace, and new gender pay gap reporting obligations.

Expectations from stakeholders materialised in intensified activism around climate change. This varied from campaigning against large companies and publicly scrutinising and ranking the climate plans of these companies to a variety of climate cases, including before the ECHR and a landmark ruling in ESG litigation in the Belgian climate case.

Our multidisciplinary Sustainable Business & Climate Change team helps companies and their boards to navigate the wide range of sustainability regulations and to set ambitious yet balanced transition pathways. We distinguish three trends in our ESG client work in 2023: a focus on transparency, on transitions and on taking part.

Focus on transparency

The European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) leads to a considerable increase in ESG disclosure rules and standards. Other regulations have a similar effect, such as new reporting obligations following from the update of the Dutch Corporate Governance Code and extensions of the EU disclosure requirements for the financial sector with biodiversity-related risks. As a result, companies face increasing demands for high quality data disclosure from stakeholders, regulators and investors.

Josée Weydert

Partner Banking & Finance

Managing Partner Luxembourg office



Supporting long-term value creation

“Sustainable finance is central to achieving the policy objectives of the European Green Deal and meeting the EU's commitments to climate and sustainability targets. The financial center of Luxembourg is at the forefront as an international hub for sustainable finance, facilitating a range of initiatives including responsible investment funds, blended finance solutions and green bond listings. The Luxembourg Green Exchange is the pioneering platform exclusively for green, social and sustainable securities and now hosts a range of green securities and investment funds.

In 2023, our team has advised clients on a significant number of renewable energy deals. We have also assisted clients on ESG requirements in the areas of corporate, funds, financing, intellectual property and energy law. We continue to develop our expertise in this area through research, conference attendance, client engagement and skills development. Our clients benefit from our expertise in disclosure requirements and sustainability risk analysis that goes beyond the traditional financial performance and risk assessment.”

At the same time, we see an ever-increasing focus on greenwashing, both in politics, from regulators, the public and from businesses competing in the same sector. The extensive reach of the EU Greenwashing Framework proposed by the European Commission in 2023 may have an impact on product development and climate litigation possibilities. With more reporting requirements and data collection obligations to meet, ESG objectives are definitively moving from the reputational and stakeholder management area into legal.

A selection of our client work:

- We advised clients how to set ambitious yet balanced climate risk mitigation pathways that take into account both the public pressure to elicit ambitious climate commitments and the scrutiny and questioning whether the company can deliver on them.
- We advised clients on the potentially significant implications of the CSRD for their governance, such

as internal controls to source and evaluate relevant data, and implications for their long-term business plans and strategy.

- We increasingly included ESG due diligence in M&A transactions and investments and developed ESG contract clauses to embed due diligence obligations in the supply chain.
- We advised listed companies on the effect of the CSRD on capital market transactions and how to prepare for the CSDDD.

Focus on transitions

In the transition to a more sustainable and just society, we see increasing legislation across sectors. The energy transition is but one example. Protection of biodiversity is higher on the political and corporate agenda, leading to increasing regulation, litigation risks and the incorporation of biodiversity-related risks into financial supervision. Another example is the shift that can be seen around the 'S' in ESG, for instance in the field of whistleblowers and harassment in the workplace.

Jens Mosselmans

Partner Public & Regulatory Law

Brussels office



Meeting the challenges of the hydrogen economy

“We provide comprehensive legal advice to a global green energy company, in particular in relation to enquiries about the potential development of a terminal in the port of Antwerp-Bruges. This project has attracted considerable media attention. The company aims to become a leading player in the hydrogen market. An endeavour in which they encounter various legal challenges.

We guide our client in establishing a significant presence in the Belgian energy market, despite the presence of established monopolies and the constantly evolving legislative and regulatory framework. The hydrogen market, although emerging with demand currently somewhat uncertain, holds immense promise for exponential growth and disruptive innovation. With our multidisciplinary Benelux Hydrogen team, we help our clients to meet these challenges by mapping out what is possible and under which conditions a project may be realised.”

Suzanne Kröner-Rosmalen

Counsel Corporate Governance

Amsterdam office



Advancing ESG compliance

“Where previously our work focused on informing clients about upcoming ESG legislation, in 2023 it became more specific advice on the choices that need to be made: scoping issues, implementing legislation, issues around greenwashing and liability, and ensuring responsible business conduct.”

As a Corporate Governance counsel, Suzanne Kröner-Rosmalen focuses on Corporate Governance, corporate structuring, and, in particular, ESG aspects affecting both listed and non-listed companies and financial institutions. “Within our Sustainable Business & Climate Change team, I keep our various practices abreast of the developments in sustainability-related legislation. My role is to ensure that we are all connected and know how to best assist our clients with our multidisciplinary team of ESG experts. This team also liaises with stakeholders such as interest groups, industry organisations and other initiatives that play a role in dealing with sustainability legislation. Furthermore, we regularly organise ESG-focused events and publish a monthly update on ESG-related governance, disclosure, and litigation.

Clients need to prepare for the Corporate Sustainable Reporting Directive and are increasingly asking questions about applying the reporting requirements. We have seen an increase in the number of clients who have made progress in implementing the CSRD, particularly in applying the European Sustainable Reporting Standards. Companies working on large implementation projects often struggle with the legal aspects of the CSRD and how to move forward once they have completed the first stage of the double materiality assessment and therefore need to start using the results.

The mandatory due diligence requirements to identify the negative environmental and human rights impacts of a company’s activities attract a lot of attention, as does the requirement to adopt a climate change mitigation plan. Even in its reduced scope and content, the Corporate Sustainable Due Diligence Directive will be a major game changer for companies which will be required to adopt the mandatory due diligence policy and the climate transition plan, and to act on their findings and targets. They will be held accountable and, in most cases, will have to look at their value chain in a new way. Now that the CSDDD has been formally adopted, we look forward to helping companies in scope anticipate the new rules as member states implement them.”

Our ambition for 2023 Our progress in 2023

ESG awareness and compliance

We are committed to and promote ESG awareness and compliance in our work for clients.

- We developed a monthly ESG update, organised semi-annual ESG webinars for clients, round tables on hydrogen and organised a General Counsel Event on smart engagement.
- We participated in domestic and international discussions and panels, e.g. organised by the IBA and ABA.
- We work together with ESG-related partners such as MVO Nederland, the Dutch network organisation for sustainable entrepreneurs, Jurist Doet WAT, a Dutch sustainability initiative for lawyers and with the Belgian Institute of Company Lawyers.
- We organised internal meet-ups on ESG developments and continued working with and educating students in ESG projects.

Sustainable Business & Climate Change team

Our Sustainable Business & Climate Change team plays a leading role in further developing our ESG strategy.

- The team was enlarged with several partners.
- With ESG and sustainability more embedded in our work and across our practice groups, the team proactively shared knowledge and relevant experience with more teams and practice groups.

In this transition, companies integrate commitments in their strategy and take any resulting legal consequences into account.

A selection of our client work:

- We advised on the implications of companies' climate strategy in view of potential litigation, including the implications of the duty-of-care principle in the financial sector.
- We advised the Dutch government on its envisaged investment in a large regional grid operator to enable investments in a future-proof energy grid.
- We advised in wind, solar and battery energy storage projects and on the financing of renewable energy projects.
- We advised companies in the chemical sector on how to tailor infrastructure as a service business model.
- We assisted in obtaining permits for large-scale carbon capture and storage in empty gas reservoirs in the Dutch North Sea to enable large-scale CO₂ reduction for industrial clusters in the Netherlands.
- We supported an international food and agri producer in negotiating a community agreement on the reduction of ammonia emissions.
- We advised (non) executive board members on systemic social issues such as hierarchical culture, (deeply) embedded gender norms, and the frequent use of temporary contracts.

Focus on taking part

There is growing awareness – among businesses, legislators, regulators and in society – of the importance to fight the climate crisis, protect nature and increase wellbeing. This has led, and continues to lead, to complex laws and guidelines.

Current climate-related legislation puts the financial sector in a central role to facilitate the climate transition. However, a successful climate transition requires an effective interplay between the government, the financial sector and its clients, and thereby, the further development of legislation and guidelines.

A legal landscape that is becoming more complex also means that internal and external stakeholder engagement gains importance. Companies are

Frans van der Eerden

Partner Financial Law

Amsterdam office



Staying on top of ESG matters

“The web of ESG regulatory initiatives in the EU is becoming increasingly complex. At the same time, there is a growing recognition that increased ESG disclosure and standardisation will help financial institutions, companies and investors to better assess opportunities and risks in their decision-making processes. With our monthly ESG Matters update, our Sustainable Business & Climate Change team helps our clients and other stakeholders keep abreast of the latest regulatory developments. What is happening, what is next and what does it mean for their business? And how can they best prepare for the future?

We provide insight into key developments in areas such as corporate due diligence, sustainability reporting and safe working culture. We also discuss the latest developments in ESG governance, disclosure, financial regulation and litigation. This approach generates enthusiastic feedback from a growing readership and leads to new conversations and discussion points with our clients and other stakeholders. Anyone who would like to receive a monthly copy, [can sign up](#).”

increasingly required to seek outside views on how their impact on climate and society is perceived. CEOs who fail to engage in meaningful discussions with stakeholders about what their organisations can and cannot do, are likely to face serious scrutiny by NGOs, supervisory authorities and other stakeholders. As a law firm, we can contribute by sharing knowledge, bringing together experiences from across sectors and guide clients in a shifting regulatory landscape.

A selection of our client work:

- We advised several large financial institutions on the implementation of sustainable finance-related legislation and the impact of these regulations on an operational level.
- We advise companies on their changing role with regard to their value chain.
- We advised clients on the development and implementation of meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Facts + figures

Our clients

30

Lawyers directly affiliated to the Benelux Sustainable Business & Climate Change team

19

Lawyers directly affiliated to the Benelux Hydrogen team

23

Informal conversations on ESG with US peers and clients

50+

Contributions as a speaker or panellist in (inter)national ESG-related events

150

Companies participated in CSRD training (with MVO Nederland)

600+

Participants in ESG-related seminars and events (co-)organised by NautaDutilh

Shaping tomorrow

Addressing ESG risks

Interest groups are increasingly trying to enforce measures against climate change through the courts. Stijn Franken and Stan Brijs are united in their belief that this is how it works in a healthy trias politica. When regulation falters, the courts can be accessed to push forward the energy transition.



“Climate change is a global problem which is caused by each and every one of us: the tragedy of the commons”, says Stijn Franken. He is a partner in NautaDutilh’s Dispute Resolution practice in Amsterdam and specialises in, among other things, legal aspects surrounding climate damage. “Everyone agrees that it is important to limit the consequences of climate change. But there is a huge gap between good intentions and actual behaviour. Real mitigation requires a level of self-understanding or altruism that few people or organisations have. We need to be honest about this. Ideally, a supranational organisation such as the European Union or national politics should provide guidance on the necessary social developments, and the national government should implement the agreements. If it fails to do so, the court may intervene.”

Judicial review and policy making

This happened, for example, in 2019 in the Urgenda case against the Dutch state, in which the Supreme Court of the Netherlands upheld the court of appeal’s order to the government to ensure that greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by at least 25 per cent by the end of 2020. In the Belgian Climate Case, the Brussels court of appeal held three governments liable in November 2023 for their flawed climate policies. Is this a democratic deficit? “It’s up to politics to make policy”, says Stan Brijs, a partner at NautaDutilh Brussels specialising in national and international litigation. “With this carefully reasoned ruling and a potential penalty in the future for non-compliance as a big stick, the court makes it clear to these governments that there must be a rapid change in the way they conduct this policy.”

“Since the NGO Milieudefensie initiated climate proceedings against Shell in the Netherlands in 2019, companies are also increasingly questioned about their reduction obligations in climate cases”, Stijn explains. “In this case, the court ruled that Shell must reduce its emissions by 45% by 2030. Various companies, such as financial institutions in the Netherlands are currently targeted for contributing to climate change or financing fossil fuel companies. These are all examples of systemic or strategic litigation where the court, using human rights or liability law, may take further steps in identifying climate change best practices.”

Greenwashing

“Strategic climate litigation targets an individual company, as part of a strategy to promote broader change, raise awareness and change policies and practices”, says Stan. “Another way in which stakeholders can influence an organisation’s ESG policy is through greenwashing litigation, where misleading sustainability claims are made. This can be at the level of products, services and financial instruments, as well as at the level of entities. Now that investors and the European regulations are demanding more accountability for sustainability performance and more reporting, greenwashing is coming to light earlier. Attention to the risks of greenwashing has also increased, making it an issue that no organisation making green statements or promises can ignore.”

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‘Companies are increasingly being questioned in climate cases about their reduction obligations.’





Stan Brijs Partner Litigation
Brussels office



‘By making the uncertainties, challenges and dilemmas transparent, you also enable other parties to relate to them.’

“ESG is not a tick-the-box exercise in the context of increasing reporting requirements”, Stijn notes. “It is about integrating the ESG factors into the corporate strategy, risk management and investment policy. Many companies are doing a good job, recognising that lagging behind is not an option. For companies in markets which are not highly regulated, it is equally important to manage the ongoing uncertainties around ESG. Directors must continue to identify proactively where the company stands when it comes to the climate and energy transition, what contribution they want to make, and how they account for their policies. In effect, this means constantly thinking and working ahead to future-proof the organisation. By making the ambitions, intentions and constraints concrete and by recording them, you can better defend yourself when the company is called to account for its climate policy.”

Distribution of contributions

Stijn: “The stakes are very high and everyone knows that we have to change quickly. Companies that come up with effective solutions in good time may be among the leaders in their market in ten years’ time.” According to Stan, communication is also essential. “You have to be careful about what you communicate and how you phrase it. How are we doing, what are we willing to do, what are the limitations? Compliance with the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive also requires ESG information from partners in the value chain. These data are often far from consistent, comparable or reliable. You need to be clear about this. It is also important to back up sustainability claims with facts and keep these up to date. By making the uncertainties, challenges and dilemmas transparent, you also enable other parties to relate to them. In this way, parties can find and strengthen each other. What is uncertainty to one, is a solution or an opportunity to another. Accountability is extremely important.”



‘Attention to the risks of greenwashing has also increased, making it an issue that no organisation making green statements or promises can ignore.’

Stijn says that the effects of climate damage are already felt acutely by reinsurers. These are the companies where direct insurers place the risk that they cannot or do not want to take on their own books with other insurers, as a global safety net of contractual risk sharing. “Reinsurers are forced to scale back their exposure to risks such as natural catastrophes by significantly increasing insurance premiums and tightening their terms and conditions. As a result, policyholders are forced to pay the necessary price to cover for such risks and to meet conditions to keep them manageable. Parties are forced to pay their fair share of the costs of climate change. This is also a form of distribution of contributions. Not through the legislature or the court, but through the free market.”

Foreseeability criterion

“You cannot make an omelette without breaking a few eggs”, says Stan. “A key factor is continuity: can the business continue to thrive given its market outlook and long-term strategy? Additional pressure from climate change policies can go either way: forcing companies to invest heavily in innovation or adaptation, or to divest. It can also lead to liability claims from companies that are disrupted. Companies facing stranded assets caused by climate regulation will try to recover their individual losses from the state, which in turn is a form of distributing the contribution.”

As an example, he cites a case concerning the Dutch Coal-fired Power Generation (Prohibition) Act, in which the District Court of The Hague issued a ruling in November 2022. “Three coal-fired power plants claimed financial compensation because they were no longer allowed to use coal as a fuel for electricity generation. Their claim was rejected because the ban was foreseeable at the time of their investment. However, as the transition proceeds more rapidly and is accompanied by greater shocks, the foreseeability criterion may carry less weight.”

The teams at NautaDutilh are used to looking at the overall ESG picture and considering the liability and litigation risks. According to Stan, this makes the firm an excellent sparring partner to inform and advise clients on how to address ESG uncertainties and open standards. “We work with clients in thinking about a safe way to implement ESG guidelines and to anticipate new regulations without engaging in greenwashing, and help companies to develop best practices. Other examples of what we do are ESG audits and ESG due diligence on M&A transactions or investments. I believe that our experience and multidisciplinary teams can make a big difference for our clients.” Stijn concludes: “I think that’s the way it should be, as there is a pressing need to pay even more attention to ESG opportunities and risks in the coming years, in order to make a stronger contribution to the challenge of global climate change.” ●



Stijn Franken Partner Dispute Resolution
Amsterdam office

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Our people

We prioritise inclusion and diversity to foster an adaptable, innovative and equitable workplace. In 2023, we took our I&D mission, vision and strategy a step further, developed an I&D roadmap and took steps to further embed it in the organisation.

Our people are at the heart of our firm, and a healthy and safe organisation is a top priority because an inclusive and diverse workplace makes for a successful business, and more importantly: because we believe it is the right thing to do. We are a part of society and we aim to reflect its diversity in our firm and in the legal sector. In 2023, we strengthened our Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) mission, vision and strategy, with the objective to cultivate a place of belonging and a sense of community. To this end, we have defined four pillars to focus on: inspiring and educating, raising awareness, building community, and developing (bi)cultural diversity.

We developed a three-year roadmap detailing how we aim to achieve our mission and continue to implement our strategy. We set up an infrastructure to implement the roadmap and conducted an I&D scan as a I&D zero baseline measurement. The I&D scan provides an important indicator of where we stand: the data helps us to measure inclusion in our organisation and gives an overview of our current population. By 2025, we aim to have a balanced gender representation at all senior levels (i.e., partners and counsel, and directors and managers within our business support teams) and 20% cultural diversity across the firm. At the end of 2023, our gender balance at senior level was 41% female and 59% male, compared to 40% and 60% in 2022, meaning that we have maintained a balanced senior level gender balance. We are currently working on finding a way to collect more data on cultural diversity. We have developed an I&D Scan to collect data on a selection of diversity factors and to gain more insight into the experiences of inclusion. This tool is a first step in collecting data on diversity, equity and inclusion and helps translate the data into concrete actions within our firm. Our aim is to use this tool to collect more data on cultural diversity across the firm to get a complete overview of our population, the same way we do this for gender diversity.

From goals to action

In 2023, the focus of our I&D strategy shifted to better embedding inclusion and equity in the organisation. Our three-year roadmap defines the steps that we need to

‘Inclusion & Diversity is more than policies, programmes or headcounts.’

Thierry Duquesne

Partner Employment & Pensions

Brussels office



Diversity dynamics

“Last year I joined the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the French Brussels Bar Association. Our firm and the Brussels bar share the same values with respect to Inclusion and Diversity (I&D). To attract skilled legal professionals from diverse backgrounds, we employ various strategies, such as targeted outreach to underrepresented groups and providing training to our interviewers to minimise unconscious biases.

We have affinity groups and employee networks that actively offer support and networking opportunities to our diverse workforce. Additionally, mentoring programmes pair up junior and senior professionals from different backgrounds to help them advance in their careers and stay with us.

Flexible working arrangements are available to accommodate the diverse needs of our employees, including caregivers and those with disabilities. We furthermore have strong anti-discrimination and harassment policies in place to ensure a safe and inclusive workplace for everyone.

All these efforts are part of our I&D policy. It's not just about meeting legal requirements; we also recognise that the business benefits from diversity. Diversity drives innovation, strengthens client relationships, and leads to better outcomes for our clients and communities.”

take to create a truly inclusive culture. Our focus areas are gender diversity, LGBTQIA+ people, cultural diversity and neurodiversity. In 2023, we implemented the following measures within the four policy pillars.

Inspire and educate

We launched a zero baseline measurement for I&D, an important step to gain more insight into how diverse the firm is and how inclusive our colleagues consider their work environment. Based on the outcome, we are developing an inspirational and educational programme called Daring Dialogues. This programme will focus on inclusive collaboration. Topics such as social and psychological safety, communication and behaviour are part of this programme, and it will be rolled out in 2024.

We have a firm-wide procedure in place to deal with discrimination, harassment and violence in the

workplace. We also organised training and awareness sessions, such as an internal learning event on a safe and inclusive work environment in the New York office. Our Brussels office trained all HR and business support managers on anti-discrimination legislation, appointed two confidential counsellors, and organised a workshop on unconscious bias at work. Our Luxembourg office provided diversity training, and explored different techniques to foster collaboration, resolve conflicts and leverage the strengths of individuals from different generations. In the Netherlands, our Inclusion Partner Petra Zijp discussed the importance of I&D, and our firm's approach, as a guest on radio talk shows and in an interview in the Dutch media. She is also a frequent keynote speaker at events that cover DEI topics.

Raise awareness

We launched the internal I&D inclusion hub and developed an I&D calendar highlighting specific cultural celebrations. We organised an iftar during Ramadan and a Ketu Ketu lunch session to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the former colonies of the Dutch Kingdom. We organised various activities during Queer & Pride Weeks and the Amsterdam Pride Week, including on the importance of being out and proud at work. We also launched the first I&D Week, which covered topics such as privilege, community and allyship, black art and activism and neurodiversity.

Gaïke Dalenoord

Partner Corporate M&A

Managing Partner London office



ND Wired

“In 2023, we formed ND Wired, our I&D task force focusing on neurodiversity. We are committed to creating awareness, acceptance and inclusion of all brain types. I don't believe in a standard brain: we are all wired differently. Being able to tap into all these talents and perspectives is beneficial to a company like ours, which is essentially a business built around an aggregation of bright minds, and will be essential in the years ahead. We are looking at some of the greatest legal and ethical challenges humanity has ever faced. Neurodivergent individuals often possess the remarkable problem-solving skills and creative thinking that can lead to more effective legal strategies and innovative breakthroughs.

In October, we organised our first session during the firm's Diversity Week. Discussing the challenges and opportunities of neurodiversity with over 60 colleagues was very inspiring. More awareness is where actionable results, such as an unbiased recruitment process, start. Recently we became sponsor of a Dutch organisation that draws attention to one of the social challenges of our time: mental health. An inclusive work environment accommodates different thinking patterns. If all minds thrive, we all benefit.”

‘In 2023, the focus of our I&D strategy shifted to better embedding inclusion and equity in the organisation. Our three-year roadmap defines the steps that we need to take to create a truly inclusive culture.’

Our ambition for 2023

Our progress in 2023

Inclusion and diversity

- Our targets for gender diversity and cultural diversity:
- a 50/50 male/female talent pipeline.
 - We will have a safe and inclusive workplace.
 - We will carry out a zero measurement regarding the cultural diversity of our workforce.
- The male/female talent pipeline ratio was 44% male - 56% female.
 - We developed and implemented a three-year roadmap to further promote a safe and inclusive workplace.
 - We carried out a zero-baseline measurement in the form of an I&D scan. The outcome was shared with the firm.

Fringe benefits

- CSR is part of (1) our training and development programme and (2) our fringe benefits.
- We implemented our new commuting policy, which includes measures to stimulate a more sustainable way of commuting.
 - We did not adopt additional measures. Current measures include parental leave and birth leave for all parents, regardless of gender or family composition and gender affirmation leave.
 - We included an ESG and CSR session in the three-day masterclass organised by our Recruitment team for Dutch law students.

Training and development

- We will create clarity regarding career paths and provide guidance along the way.
- We value CSR work in assessments.
 - We invest in the development of our people.
 - We take the specific needs of our female talent and young parents into account.
- Hours spent on our Impact Programme count towards the billable target.
 - We have a large range of training and courses for our employees, including training on young parenting and female leadership programmes and mentorship.
- We invest in the well-being of our people, including through our flexible working policy.
- Our flexible working policy allows working from home part of the week. Start and end times are flexible.
- We measure employee engagement and company pride.
- We carried out a pulse survey with respect to flexible working.

Build community

Our two Inclusion partners and the I&D officer support the Board in developing and implementing I&D in the firm. In the Netherlands, we have reshaped the I&D Committee and established I&D task forces to create, implement and optimise programmes that support the success of I&D in the firm. The task forces focus on separate diversity factors and function as a safe space. ND+ focuses on LGBTQAI+, ND Growth focuses on (bi)cultural diversity and ND Wired focuses on neurodiversity. Our Brussels Think Diversity Committee actively promotes I&D in the Brussels office.

Develop (bi)cultural diversity

We developed multiple (bi)cultural initiatives. Together with Hello Zuidas, we hosted the Code Noir dinner to celebrate Black Achievement Month. We continued our involvement with Stichting Lequal, which promotes cultural and intersectional diversity within the Dutch

Sonja Pfaltzgraff

Manager Secretariat

Amsterdam office



Empowering management assistants

“Our management assistants have a crucial role in delivering excellent services to our clients. In my view, smarter collaboration means empowering everyone to grow as a professional and team member. Personally, it makes me really happy to contribute to the development of our business support colleagues and through that support our management assistants to do their job even better. The training programme consists of five 3-hour modules, including a challenging session with an actor, a self-test to provide insights into behavioural patterns, strengths and areas of development, and one-on-one coaching to reflect and set up a personal action plan. Topics include skillfully standing up for yourself, empathetic listening and effective communication. We have management assistants from across all generations, from seasoned professionals to talent that has only just entered the workforce. I am proud they can all benefit from this programme, and that participating also led to greater connection and energy. Learning together really creates a sense of togetherness.”

commercial law profession, by organising several initiatives and lectures about diversity and inclusion for the legal sector. Our Brussels office expanded its recruitment channels to attract more talent with (bi)cultural backgrounds.

At the 2023 Chambers Europe Awards, NautaDutilh was named ‘Outstanding Firm’ in the ‘Diversity & Inclusion’ category. Our Brussels office was awarded the Diversity Label by Actiris, the Brussels public employment service, for the second time. One of our associates, Mariebelle Timmermans, received the 'Upcoming Talent of the Year 2023' award from Stichting Legal Women. The award celebrates her legal talent and commitment to diversity, inclusion and equality.

Beyond the professional

Our firm is home to the brightest legal minds and highly ambitious business professionals. We invest in the development of the entrepreneurial and leadership skills of our legal and business talent in order to serve our clients to the best of our abilities.

In 2023, we launched a talent development programme (TOP) for management assistants and for new leaders, in addition to the TOP training for partners and legal and business support professionals, which we developed over the past three years. TOP for management assistants focuses on developing communication, time management and teamwork skills. TOP for new leaders focuses on leadership, business development and communication skills for newly appointed partners and counsel. We offer female talent the opportunity to participate in female leadership programmes. In 2023, two female colleagues participated in a national and international female leadership programme respectively.

We believe that training programmes and inspiration sessions, together with peer-to-peer consultancy groups strengthen our collective. Therefore, we offer a wide range of webinars and other training sessions for everyone at NautaDutilh that address the challenges in various stages of life, from young parenthood to menopause and from mindfulness to energy management.

Our Luxembourg office has developed a training programme on soft skills including topics such as giving and receiving feedback, time management and professional behaviour. Our New York office organised team sessions on greater work life balance. Both our Amsterdam and Brussels offices offered sessions for (young) parents.

Facts + figures

Our people

26%

Of the equity partners are female

40%

Of newly appointed partners in 2023 were female

8

People attended the inclusive management training session of the Brussels office: all business support team managers and the entire Human Resources team

65

Colleagues joined the iftar at our Amsterdam office

23

Colleagues firmwide participate in the I&D Committee and task forces

16%

Of the entitled employees took family-related leave; 65% F – 35% M

Shaping tomorrow

Driving inclusion

We have a long-standing commitment to advancing inclusion & diversity (I&D), seeing as how it is essential to attracting, developing, inspiring, and retaining talented people. But more importantly, because we believe it is the right thing to do.



“Diversity is incredibly important to us”, says Sjoerd Meijer, one of NautaDutilh’s three board members, in a conversation with two colleagues of our offices in Belgium and Luxembourg. “It simply means that we recognise, embrace and value the differences between people, with the aim of creating an environment where everyone can bring their whole selves to work. And differences can be anything: from gender diversity, cultural diversity and LGBTQIA+ to neurodiversity. It really is all about corporate culture. Without inclusion, diversity cannot succeed.

While we believe we are on the right track, we also feel we can and want to do much more. We conducted an I&D scan to take stock of our employees’ views. The results have led to a number of new initiatives, including small-group feedback sessions, known as daring dialogues, across the organisation, where we zoom in on topics such as behaviour, communication, equal treatment and opportunities, and a more explicit inclusion of I&D in the onboarding process for new colleagues.”

Diversity label

“Our reputation as a diverse and inclusive firm with good learning and development opportunities puts us in a better position to engage talented people”, comments Dirk Van Gerven, managing partner of NautaDutilh’s Brussels office. “It is essential for our firm and our profession to be creative. We need to avoid tunnel vision or wasting time with a pigeonholing mentality. We pay a lot of attention to this. Our efforts resulted in the Actiris’ Diversity Label, which our Brussels office was awarded again in 2024.

This label is a certification issued annually by the Brussels’ Ministry of Employment to employers who recognise, respect and value differences in the workplace. Every year we look at how we can make further progress. We have an internal Think I&D

Committee that regularly makes suggestions. We can see that things are changing: even colleagues who used to challenge this topic are now making suggestions. To me, this shows that our corporate culture is changing and everyone wants to be part of this culture change. They take part in our conversations about typical behaviour and how to communicate effectively with people of different backgrounds and with different characteristics. As a result, they also share more of themselves. That helps to get things moving.”

Seeing the whole person

“Luxembourg is definitely the most diverse office within NautaDutilh”, states Greet Wilkenhuysen, corporate partner at NautaDutilh Luxembourg. “Because our domestic labour market is relatively small, we also recruit colleagues from neighbouring and other countries. We have colleagues from Luxembourg, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland and beyond. On average, we have 10 to 15 nationalities in the office. We also score well in terms of gender diversity: of our nine partners, five are women. We think it is important to pay attention to diversity and find that both clients and colleagues appreciate working with or in a diverse team. I regularly get feedback that we are perceived in Luxembourg as a firm that really looks at the person behind the professional.

Generational diversity

The bond is particularly strong with and between people who have worked here for three years or more. Many of them live far away from their families and value personal contact with colleagues. We have a Happy Committee that initiates a variety of activities - from training sessions to lunches - and all colleagues can contribute ideas. In 2023, one of the activities was a training session for our partners to gain more insight into the impact and benefits of intergenerational diversity. We are a relatively small office with 80 colleagues, and we like to see our people taking the initiative and sharing ideas.”



Sjoerd Meijer Partner Dispute Resolution

Board member



Greet Wilkenhuysen Partner Corporate

Luxembourg office



Dirk Van Gerven Partner Corporate and Finance

Managing Partner Brussels office



“While we believe we are on the right track, we also feel we can and want to do much more.”

Understanding each other

“An I&D policy should also include a focus on work-life balance”, Greet continues. “This is particularly challenging for colleagues with younger children. That is why we offer flexibility to our lawyers and business support professionals to work remotely, a possibility which they gladly make use of. If there are specific bottlenecks, we try to be pragmatic and work together to find a common solution.”

Sjoerd acknowledges this. “A good work-life balance contributes to health and well-being and therefore also to being a great professional. That is why we are taking a closer look at how we can make it easier for parents to combine a young family with a career. As part of our new young parents policy, we have introduced the Charly Cares babysitting service. This benefit is available to all colleagues with children up to the age of twelve.

Some people wonder if we really need to do this. We find that it helps a lot to understand each other better. Inclusion is about behaviour, values and ground rules. It’s about a way of working together and learning that enables everyone at the firm to reach their full potential. It also means dealing with contradictions and nuances. Not all partners are role models for our younger generation because they prioritise different values. That is fine, of course.”

Creating space

Having a conversation about diversity is not always easy, Dirk knows. “To achieve inclusion, it is crucial to be aware of stereotypes and prejudices. Whether we like it or not: everyone has them. So it’s up to all of us to create space for open conversations. It is not alright if someone is treated differently because of how they see things. It helps a lot to be open to talking about people’s histories and identities together. By having those kinds of conversations, you can soften potential sharp edges.”



‘It helps a lot to be open to talking about people’s histories and identities together.’

Taking part in activities together has proven to be a good way to get people talking. In Amsterdam, for example, colleagues organise an iftar to break the fast during Ramadan. Everyone is welcome, whether they observe Ramadan or not. Sharing a meal and learning about each other’s culture remains an excellent way to foster mutual respect and connection.

Looking ahead

What are the firm’s main I&D goals? Sjoerd: “By 2025, we want to achieve a gender balance at all senior levels, and 20 per cent cultural diversity across the organisation. A key focus is the advancement of colleagues from non-Western backgrounds. We also want to increase the number of female partners. This ratio is well balanced when you look at newly appointed partners and our talent pipeline. Our appointment policy reflects our ambitions.

Society is changing; you have to move with the times and be open to new opportunities. Sometimes this creates tension. This is not an area where you can sit back and watch the world go by. That’s why, in 2022, we appointed an I&D specialist to work alongside our two Inclusion partners. She has launched a three-year roadmap that allows us to build upon our existing I&D approach.

We focus on pillars such as inspiration and education, raising awareness, building community and developing greater cultural diversity. For example, we are exploring how we can make our recruitment and selection processes as unbiased as possible. We challenge ourselves by looking at how we currently select candidates and how we structure an interview. Our aim is to reduce our biases and select people based on their skills and abilities. This will prevent the exclusion of people who have a profile that is different from the norm we are used to.”

Cultural differences

Greet believes that “cultural differences are somehow reflected in how diversity is experienced across the firm’s various home jurisdictions. The focus can be different.” Colleagues in all offices are part of committees and working groups that are very engaged in advancing I&D within the firm. In the Netherlands, there is a strong focus on LGBTQIA+ diversity, spearheaded by the ND+ working group, on cultural diversity through the ND Growth working group and on neurodiversity through the ND Wired working group. The Belgian office has a Think Healthy Committee in addition to the Think Diversity Committee, and the Luxembourg office has its Happy Committee. “These are very active groups. Events such as the annual Women’s Event in London and our 2023 Summer Soirée in New York, which honoured women in M&A, also celebrate diversity”, says Sjoerd.

“Our firm does a lot to encourage our people to speak up and become better at listening and handling feedback. The way you do this has to fit the local culture”, says Dirk. “However, we should never feel uncomfortable discussing I&D. I also think it’s okay to be more proud of what we do well.” Greet agrees: “We could share our successes a bit more. Among ourselves and with our clients.” ●



3

Our operations

In 2023, we reduced our carbon footprint by 38% compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019. This decrease is primarily due to a significant reduction in emissions related to commuting and business travel by air. At the same time, however, our total emissions increased slightly with 1% compared to 2022, indicating that we need to further step up our efforts to reach our carbon reduction goals.

Our carbon reduction ambition is to decrease our carbon footprint by 55% compared to 2019 and to become net zero by 2050, in line with the Paris Climate Agreement. We offset our remaining emissions by investing in certified climate projects. In 2023, we compensated for our 2022 emissions with a VCS-certified reforestation project in China.

Leon Straates

Manager Facility Services

Amsterdam office



Making coffee better together

“A good day at work often starts with a great cup of coffee. That’s why we think it’s important to choose our coffee supplier carefully and responsibly. We learned a lot from our coffee tender process in 2023. The aim was to select great-tasting coffee from a supplier that takes responsibility for its supply chain, including providing a fair living for coffee farmers and using energy-efficient coffee machines. We now serve a coffee with a high sustainability performance, which also came out on top in the taste test.

During the tender process, we found that smaller companies – who often have ambitious sustainability goals – could be at a disadvantage in large tenders and would need to cooperate with others in the supply chain to be competitive. This could conflict with competition rules. That’s why we organised a meeting with these companies, our competition team and our CSR partner MVO Nederland after the tender process. We explored what options they have within the competition law framework to increase their chances in large tenders and thus contribute to positive change.”

Our footprint measurement covers all NautaDutilh offices and includes Scope 1 emissions (company facilities, specific heating with natural gas, and emissions from company vehicles, specifically petrol and diesel lease cars), Scope 2 emissions (purchased electricity, steam, heating and cooling, specifically from grey and green electricity, and electric vehicles) and part of our Scope 3 emissions (purchased goods and services, specifically office paper, drinking water, IT hardware, data usage, and catering from the Amsterdam and Rotterdam office; business travel, specifically flights, private vehicles, and public transportation and employee commuting, specifically public transportation, private vehicles, and homeworking). To calculate Scope 2 emissions from purchased electricity we use the market-based approach, which means that we calculate the emissions based on the actual purchased electricity source.

Embedding new measures

2023 was the first full post-pandemic year without restrictions. We were able to travel and meet again and business returned to normal. Consequently, the carbon footprint measurement for 2023 provides a more realistic insight into our CO₂ footprint than in previous years. We can also better assess the effectiveness of our measures to reduce our footprint.

The 2023 data show that our largest impact lies in Scope 3 emissions, specifically commuting (24.1% of total emissions), air travel for business (19.1%), lease cars (12.7%), working from home (11.7%), and catering (9.8%).

‘We adopted two new policy measures in 2022, which we implemented in 2023: a new commuting policy and a new international travel policy.’

We adopted two new policy measures in 2022, which we implemented in 2023: a new commuting policy and a new international travel policy. These policies encourage colleagues to travel more sustainably and to consider sustainable alternatives to travelling.

Commuting less and more sustainably

Our new commuting policy consists of two components. Under our firm-wide flexible working policy, the majority of our colleagues can work partly from home. In the Netherlands, we implemented a new employee mobility scheme, which includes electrification of our lease cars and a mobility budget with options for public transport passes and lease bikes. In 2023, 90 employees opted for the rail business card and 23 employees chose a lease bike. Our Brussels office offers several incentives to stimulate sustainable ways of

commuting. Employees receive full reimbursement for public transport passes (over and above legal requirements), are granted a bicycle allowance if they use a bicycle for commuting, and can make use of the available free Swapfiets bikes.

The Brussels Green Committee organises an annual ‘Midi du vélo’ activity, inviting colleagues to join a bike ride to the Palais de Justice to highlight the advantages of cycling in Brussels. In 2023, 9% of our Brussels colleagues cycled to work, up from 5% in 2022. Our Luxembourg office encourages electric car leases and offers bicycle schemes. Everyone in our London and New York offices uses public transport or commutes by bike or on foot. In total, we realised a 40% reduction of emissions on commuting in 2023 compared to 2019, taking into account both emissions from commuting and working from home.

Changing international travel behaviour

In 2023, we rolled out our new firm-wide international travel policy. We aim to stimulate sustainable choices while balancing business interests, convenience for travellers, and costs.

In short, we travel and fly less, we travel smarter and more sustainably, and when we do need to take a plane, we choose the lower emission option.

Our ambition is to reduce CO₂ emissions from international travel by 50% by 2030 compared to 2019. This reduction target is in line with the ambition of the Dutch Travel Different coalition. The most relevant guiding principles are:

- We opt for videoconferencing instead of physical meetings where possible.
- We travel by train instead of by plane for distances shorter than 700 kilometres.
- We minimise flying business class.
- We do not travel by plane for NautaDutilh social events.

Our international travel policy is a ‘comply or explain’ policy. Exceptions need to be explicitly approved by the Board.

We realised a CO₂ emission reduction of 34% in 2023 compared to 2019. We substantially reduced the number of short-distance flights: from 531 tickets in 2019 to 151 tickets in 2023, a decrease of 71.5%.

Our ambition for 2023 Our progress in 2023

CO₂ emission reduction

We aim to reduce the carbon emissions from our own operations:	– We realised a reduction of 38% compared to 2019.
– Achieve ‘net zero’ by 2050 and a reduction of 55% by 2030 compared to 2019 (intermediate target).	– We balanced the remaining 2022 emissions with a VCS-certified afforestation project in China.
– Balance remaining emissions with offsets.	– We are still in the process of formulating concrete action plans and a roadmap towards our reduction ambition.
– Formulate a concrete action plan. Actions are prioritised based on their carbon reduction impact.	
We also aim to adopt and implement a sustainable procurement policy.	– We incorporated sustainability criteria in our procurement.
	– The sustainable procurement policy still needs to be developed.

Sijmen Vrolijk

IT Director

Amsterdam office



Prolonging the lifespan of our laptops

“Digital access is a fundamental need. We all rely on it to learn, work, apply for jobs, manage our affairs or connect with others. However, tens of thousands of people in the Netherlands don’t have the means to participate in digital society. By donating refurbished laptops through the non-profit #allemaaldigitaal, our firm supports students and people who need laptops for education, online communication and other essential activities that require internet access.

2023 was the third year we donated our used laptops to #allemaaldigitaal. The laptops are of course still in good condition and deserve a second life where they can be put to good use. Colleagues did a great job preparing them for donation. Our ICT department checked that the hardware was working properly and then wiped the laptops’ hard drives. By working with our partner #allemaaldigitaal, we can help the environment and promote digital access for people who would otherwise be deprived of such access. It’s a small-scale initiative that helps to create big opportunities.”

Meanwhile, train travel increased: from 207 tickets in 2019 to 513 tickets in 2023. This led to an 82% reduction of CO₂ emissions for short-distance travel in 2023 compared to 2019. On long-distance flights we realised a reduction of 13% in 2023 compared to 2019.

Once the COVID-19 travel restrictions were lifted in early 2022, the number of international network events and conferences increased. This is reflected in our data on international business travel, with CO₂ emissions related to air travel increasing by 19% in 2023 compared to 2022. These results show that we should continuously assess the impact of our travel choices and remain focused not only on policy, but also on what we do in practice.

Other measures

In the Netherlands, we initiated an ongoing project with our caterer to make our catering more sustainable. In our tender for a new coffee supplier, we set high standards with respect to the sustainability performance of both the coffee and the coffee machines. Our new supplier’s sustainability performance is demonstrably better in all aspects. We now also offer plant-based drinks in the new coffee machines in the office pantries. We no longer use paper cups, replacing them with porcelain cups in anticipation of single-use plastics legislation which entered into force on 1 January 2024. We replaced liquid soap dispensers with sustainable block soap, which saves water and transport and is microplastic free. We also participated in several projects organised by our partner Green Business Club Zuidas, such as ‘Zuidas doet het licht uit’ (Zuidas turns off the light) and a zero-waste project.

Our Brussels office removed soft drink vending machines and replaced them with a more sustainable option. We now offer still and sparkling water and drinks that are packaging-free, free from added sugar, low in calories, and made with natural ingredients. The Green Committee organised an event on the big issues of food, consumption, transportation, and housing to raise awareness about climate change.

Our Luxembourg office realised a reduction of 10% in electricity consumption, which led to a CO₂ reduction of 6%. The 'SuperDrecksKëscht' label for the office's environmentally correct waste management was extended. Our (smaller) New York and London offices participate in their landlords’ sustainability initiatives, such as waste management and energy saving measures.

Sylvie Grenez

Support Officer Corporate & Finance

Brussels office



Thinking Green

“In our Brussels office, we have a very active Think Green Committee. Partners, associates and support professionals work together to create awareness on sustainability issues. We organise seminars for colleagues on climate change or sustainable choices, and initiate proposals to make our office more sustainable. An important topic on our agenda is mobility. On the list of most congested cities worldwide, Brussel is number 10. Finding alternative ways to commute than taking the car to work is therefore key, both for the climate and for efficiency reasons. With the Think Green Committee, we have developed several initiatives to get colleagues thinking about alternatives to their car ride. Under our SwapFiets initiative, we offer free use of electric bikes for one month, we organise a yearly ‘Midi du Velo’ in which we take colleagues on a bike ride through Brussels, and we gather data on colleagues’ commutes, such as the distance to work and their means to commute, through an annual mobility survey. It is encouraging to see that the number of colleagues cycling to work or using public transport for their commute has increased significantly.”

‘We aim to stimulate sustainable choices while balancing business interests, convenience for travellers, and costs.’

Facts + figures

Our operations

1,426
Tonnes of carbon emissions in 2023

38%
Reduction in carbon emissions compared to 2019

34%
Reduction in carbon emissions by flying compared to 2019

40%
Reduction in carbon emissions by commuting (including working from home) compared to 2019

90
Colleagues at our Amsterdam and Rotterdam offices opted for the rail business card

263,000
Disposable cups saved per year at our Amsterdam and Rotterdam offices by replacing them with porcelain cups



Shaping tomorrow

Unravelling complexity

Iris Kieft is committed to unravelling the legal challenges of the energy transition.

The Netherlands is not yet on track to meet all European energy savings targets by 2030. The greenhouse gas reduction target, however – a 55% reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions – is already in sight. “Everything must go according to plan in order to achieve this target”, emphasises Iris Kieft, Public Law & Regulatory partner. “This will require major changes in the way we use energy – changes that will affect many aspects of business and daily life. And these changes will not happen without a clear and predictable regulatory framework.”

Clear legislation is key

The transition to a low-carbon society poses intricate technical, social and socio-economic challenges. “It is a complicated issue on many levels. This means that the importance of effective legislation and regulation cannot be underestimated. These are essential to encourage the necessary investment. Above all, businesses need clarity, for example on the capacity of the electricity grid and the most appropriate type of renewable energy. An industrial company, for example, may want certainty about the infrastructure and availability of hydrogen before switching to this alternative resource or energy source. And energy producers will only invest in hydrogen if there is a long-term horizon that allows the business case to be made. Clarification, nuance and policy tightening are still needed in several areas.”

Regulatory burden

“The energy transition is driven by regulation”, explains Iris. “For example, European and national legislation and regulations are being drawn up for hydrogen. The hydrogen market is still developing, but governments are modelling the rules on regulations for the gas and electricity markets, both of which are already mature. This leads to problems if the rules are unclear or inadequate. It even raises the question of whether the hydrogen market can develop at all under these regulations.

In addition to pending legislation and regulation with a spatial impact, companies are also grappling with the obligation to fulfil their supply chain responsibility obligations under the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. The majority of businesses currently has more questions than answers. How do they translate this directive into their strategy, policy and business processes? Is the information provided further down the supply chain good enough to identify potential human rights and environmental impacts? And what sustainability risks in their supply chains and procurement activities can they actually take responsibility for?”

Making decisions

Iris argues that the regulator's legal vision is important in breaking down interdependencies and making decisions. “What are the government's and the market's responsibilities? Who bears the risk of climate change, and how do you allocate the costs of the necessary investments? It is precisely because of the technical complexity of many emission reduction measures that companies want to discuss



‘Boards struggle more with the unpredictability of the regulatory framework than with the regulatory burden as such.’

them with the supervisory authority. What is possible, and within what timeframe? How do we record it, how do we deal with it properly, and how do we make sure it's feasible and sufficiently verifiable? In practice, it is often difficult to consult properly about this with the parties involved.”

Moving targets

“Boards struggle more with the unpredictability of the regulatory framework than with the regulatory burden as such. Major changes come relatively quickly and, partly for that reason, are also difficult to implement. Even before the first part of the investment cycle has been implemented, there is an evolution that means that in hindsight earlier steps may not have been ideal. This is because new objectives are set, and the new regulations may also require different technical choices. These changing objectives can even lead to questions about the continuity of a product or company. Will we end up with stranded assets? Would it perhaps be better not to do business in this market or in Europe? In a world of global trade and competition, these are the kinds of questions that need to be addressed.”

A level playing field

The term ‘level playing field’ often comes up in discussions about the energy transition. “If regulations vary from country to country, and the cost of compliance makes it too expensive or unattractive to do business in Europe, industry may move to countries outside the European Union where environmental or climate regulations may be less stringent. This leads to a race to the bottom, with investment going to countries with weak environmental standards. Such downward spiral can be seen, for example, in fast fashion. Clothing is produced in low-wage countries to follow current trends and sold at rock-bottom prices, and is then often seen as a disposable product due to its low price and quality. Textile factory workers and the environment pay the real price.”

Iris explains that the European Commission has proposed guidelines for a fair transition to climate neutrality as part of the ‘Fit for 55’ package. “The basic principle is that the transition to climate neutrality must be fair and that everyone must be actively involved. There will be a Social Climate Fund to tackle energy and transport poverty for vulnerable households, micro-enterprises and transport users. There will also be financial support for industries to achieve this emission reduction.”

Focus on environmental regulations

An increased focus on environmental impact has brought the work of Iris and her team to the forefront. Whether it is infrastructure, the energy sector, or production facilities: environmental regulations are key today and will only become more important. “These regulations concern the impact of an activity on the environment and come in many different shapes and sizes. They cover, for example, environmental protection, air quality, water quality and the regulation of emissions or substances of very high concern. And with space at a premium in the Netherlands, careful consideration must always be given to where each function can best be performed, and how that function can best be implemented. We therefore expect the relevant regulatory framework to continue to grow.”

Board members regularly reach out to the Public Law & Regulatory team to discuss the sustainable or most sustainable performance of activities. “Questions about the application of the rules to a new activity or a change to an existing activity. We also get questions about the environmental impact of a target in a merger or acquisition process. How do you deal with the regulatory framework in the contractual agreements when you want to develop a new or innovative project? For example, we advise industrial companies that want to reduce certain emissions. We discuss how this should be arranged in their permit and what a constructive dialogue with the competent authority and their stakeholders might entail. We also share our thoughts on what lies ahead: new legislation, its preparation and its implementation.”

Responsibility

Enforcement of environmental regulations is not only governed by administrative law, but also increasingly by civil law. “Large spatial projects almost always go to court for a final determination of which interests prevails. NGOs and citizens are increasingly challenging the actions or inactions of companies and public authorities. The Belgian Climate Case underlines the dissatisfaction with the government’s actions to achieve the climate targets. In this civil case, four Belgian supervisory authorities were found to have failed to implement climate policy. The difficulty with these climate cases is that, although the court’s ruling has an impact beyond the case itself, the cases centre on the responsibility of individual governments or organisations. Ultimately, it would be ideal if the same rules applied to every organisation in every country and everyone took responsibility in the fight against climate change.”

“Enforcement of environmental regulations is not only governed by administrative law, but also increasingly by civil law.”

Constructive collaboration

“Our firm takes a multidisciplinary approach to the issues our clients face and to helping them take concrete steps. By joining forces in our Sustainable Business & Climate Change team, we are consciously working on the energy transition in the belief that constructive collaboration is essential to achieve the transition to a sustainable energy supply. We bring together a wide range of expertise such as public law and regulatory, corporate governance and contracting to allow for multiple perspectives and to find comprehensive solutions. We help in considering issues and solutions, bring parties together and are alert to opportunities as they arise.”

The best thing about being a lawyer in what is often called ‘not an era of change, but a change of era’? “For me, that would be helping clients to understand the complexity of the regulations so they can continue to deliver new and innovative projects. Helping, together with colleagues, the various parties – be it businesses or the government – to discover the possibilities and then carefully weigh up all the interests involved and take concrete steps. This is also what we discuss when we organise roundtables on topics such as the market for green hydrogen. The energy transition will only succeed if all parties involved can and want to take responsibility.” ●

“Constructive collaboration is essential to achieve the transition to a sustainable energy supply.”



4

Our society

Together, we can amplify our positive impact on society, by empowering our colleagues to engage in corporate volunteering and pro bono work through our firm-wide Impact Programme. In 2023, the number of our Impact Hours increased by 20% compared to 2022. We further professionalised the programme, launched a communication campaign, created an (internal) impact platform and organised inspiration sessions.

Today's professionals want to use their knowledge and skills more broadly, to make a positive social impact. To inspire and support our professionals in this, our firm has developed a corporate volunteering programme, which was launched in 2022. This firm-wide employee engagement programme focuses on community and network building, both between NautaDutilh and the communities in which we operate and within our firm between colleagues and teams. The Impact Programme reflects our firm's and our employees' commitment to giving substance to our role in society. In 2023, 170 colleagues participated in the programme.

Vincent Wellens

Partner IP & Technology

Luxembourg office



Bridging the gap

"Access to justice is the cornerstone of a fair society. Through our pro bono work, we help bridge the gap between those who can afford top tier legal representation and those who cannot. Sometimes, because Intellectual Property law comes into play in the arts. Every inventor and artist deserves a fair chance to protect their creations, for instance against plagiarism, regardless of their financial means. We also assist non-profit organisations, such as the Luxembourg chapter of Amnesty International, in day-to-day matters. For example, if you stand up for human rights, you need to make sure that how you run your organisation is in line with the General Data Protection Regulation, and we help them do just that. Working with pro bono clients isn't merely about giving back. It's about making sure individuals and non-profit organisations do the right thing and do things right, so that they can focus on what they do best: making our world a better and nicer place."

'Today's professionals want to use their knowledge and skills more broadly, to make a positive social impact.'

Next level

The Impact Programme has taken corporate volunteering and pro bono work within the firm to the next level:

- *The focus is on contributing expertise and skills* rather than donating money. To this end, everyone is given four Impact Days per year, which for legal professionals count towards their billable hours: a potential 20,000 Impact Hours per year.
- *Colleagues take ownership.* All impact activities are developed and coordinated through SDG working groups and the Pro Bono Committee. In addition to participating in the programme's activities, colleagues are encouraged to champion their own projects related to causes they are passionate about.
- *Internal and external collaboration and networking are key drivers.* We have increased the number of partnerships with civil society organisations with whom we develop impact activities. An increasing number of departments carry out impact activities together, as part of team building. We inspire participation by publishing impact stories and interviews and encourage colleagues to share experiences and activities.
- *Contributes to personal development and well-being.* The programme allows colleagues to step out of the day-to-day business and connect with what are often less privileged communities. A popular example is the CSR sabbatical, a one-month paid leave to contribute to a CSR project of the colleague's choice. A new element is the impact inspiration sessions, in which small groups of colleagues spend a day walking in nature, reflecting and discussing their personal values and beliefs and how they can be used for the benefit of society.

Impact focus: quality education (SDG 4)

Education is an essential building block of our society, providing knowledge, skills and an environment to help people thrive – and in turn, these people will help society thrive. That is why, through the Impact Programme, we help provide access to education for young people and children who might otherwise miss out on educational opportunities and possibilities.

In 2023, we continued several long-standing partnerships, notably with IMC Weekendschool in Rotterdam, JINC in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and Be.Face in Brussels. All three organisations focus on empowering children and students from underprivileged backgrounds in their educational and professional lives. We see a lot of enthusiasm and commitment from our colleagues to contribute to the activities organised with these CSR partners, which range from Sunday courses and flash internships to introducing children to the legal system and the different jobs in a law firm, individual coaching sessions and the ‘Baas van Morgen’ programme.

Several colleagues volunteered at ‘De Spelen’ in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, a sports incentive programme aimed at introducing vulnerable children to a variety of sports. We also hosted an event for the Mandeville Academy, a campus-based educational year for highly gifted students between the ages of 16 and 20. Our Luxembourg office organised several sponsorship activities for disadvantaged families and children, including a toy collection and a donation to the Red Cross.

Our Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Luxembourg offices donated used laptops and desktops to organisations that promote social inclusion and digital culture by making information technology accessible to all (Allemaal Digitaal and Digital Inclusion respectively).

Impact focus: (gender) equality and reduced inequalities (SDG 5 and 10)

In 2023, we initiated several impact activities to promote equal treatment and empowerment of women and minority groups. During Ramadan, colleagues organised an iftar, the breaking of the fast, in our Amsterdam office. Over 65 colleagues attended and shared ideas and best practices to further strengthen inclusivity and diversity within the firm.

We organised a Ketu Koti lunch session in the Amsterdam office to commemorate the 150-year anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the (former)

‘The programme allows colleagues to step out of the day-to-day business and connect with what are often less privileged communities.’

Max Mohrmann

Associate Financial Law

Amsterdam office



CSR sabbatical in Ghana

“Volunteering at eight schools in the Ghanaian village of Kokrobite was an extraordinary opportunity to teach local children about a variety of topics. As well as basic English, I taught them about human rights and civil engagement, gender equality, boys’ mental health, environmental protection, social media pressures, and even business and entrepreneurship.

The volunteer programme was run by the NGO GVI, which provides an educational alternative for children who don’t have access to public schools. At the heart of its efforts is the belief that lasting change must come from within the community, respecting local traditions and the impact of collective effort. As my time in Kokrobite drew to a close, I realised that I had received much more than I had given. I will never forget the warm smiles of the Ghanaian people. This sabbatical was much more than a break from work; it was a journey that has affected my perspective on life, justice and communities as a whole.”

Our ambition for 2023 Our progress in 2023

Impact Programme

Increasing the number of Impact Programme participants.	170 Colleagues participated in the Impact Programme in 2023. We do not have data over 2022, since the programme was initiated during the year.
Developing a firm-wide communications campaign.	We set up an internal platform, developed a communication calendar, including stories on impact activities and initiated inspiration sessions.
Achieve a total of 3,000 Impact Hours.	We realised 3,409 Impact Hours.
20% of legal professionals involved in pro bono work.	15% of the legal professionals performed pro bono work in 2023.
25% of colleagues using at least one Impact Day.	20% of the colleagues used at least one Impact Day.

Teun Struycken

Partner Banking & Finance

Amsterdam office



Supporting people and causes pro bono

“Our employee surveys show that our people find a sense of purpose and a source of motivation in working towards a better society. This is why pro bono work resonates so strongly with our firm, especially when it comes to systemic issues such as marriage equality and climate change.

Pro bono work includes both community work and work for idealistic organisations. The latter tends to focus on access to justice, climate change or human rights. But the less high-profile work, such as setting up foundations and drafting articles of association, contracts or data protection rules, is equally important to the NGOs and the people who benefit from it.

We use our skills and experience to provide access to justice for people and organisations who would not otherwise have it. I think this is important because it's the right thing to do, from both a business and a professional perspective, and also for our personal satisfaction.”

colonies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, sharing a meal as well as stories. Some colleagues also volunteered for helping in local kitchens to serve free meals that told the story of our shared history.

Several offices made donations to support female empowerment: our New York office donated to the charity Dress for Success as part of a women's event, and our Luxembourg office raised funds for organisations working on women's rights and gender-based violence.

Impact focus: access to justice (SDG 16)

Access to justice is a human right. As a law firm, we can make a difference by advising on how law can be used to everyone's benefit. With the pro bono work that we do, we help our pro bono clients making use of this fundamental right. Our pro bono work focuses on the protection of human rights, sustainability and support for the cultural sector. Core activities include advising not-for-profit organisations and assisting those who would otherwise have no access to top-tier lawyers in strategic litigation, particularly before the Dutch Supreme Court.

In 2023, three pro bono cases stood out for their strategic importance. The first concerned the ban on same-sex marriages in Aruba and Curaçao. In 2022, the Dutch Caribbean Court of Appeal had ruled that this was discriminatory and therefore unlawful. Curaçao and Aruba appealed in cassation. The second concerned a Sri Lankan adoption case against the Dutch State and an adoption organisation. The Court of Appeal in The Hague ruled in favour of our client on the grounds of malpractice in the adoption of children from Sri Lanka. The Dutch State has appealed in cassation. The third case concerned the pro bono assistance provided by our Luxembourg and Brussels offices to the Association of Accidental Americans in their efforts to stop personal data transfer to the US tax authorities. In all three cases, no decision has yet been taken.

In addition to our legal work, we support Lawyers for Lawyers, a non-profit organisation that defends lawyers whose right to practice is under threat. Several NautaDutilh lawyers contribute to its work and, for instance, participate in its campaign to support lawyers who take on LGBTQIA+ cases. In 2023, we hosted a roundtable for all the law firms working with Lawyers for Lawyers, with a human rights lawyer who is involved in campaigning and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights as the keynote speaker.

We partner with non-profit organisations such as Pro Bono Connect, the clearing house for pro bono cases, and MVO Nederland, the largest business network for sustainable entrepreneurs. In Belgium, we support the non-profit organisation Siréas, which assists people in social difficulties, particularly refugees and immigrants. We also supervise students working at the Legal Clinic in Luxembourg, a non-profit organisation that provides free legal assistance to consumers in minor disputes.

Own initiatives

The number of colleagues using their Impact Days to do voluntary work increased to 170 in 2023. Examples range from allotment gardening and a team activity at a retirement home to working at a summer camp for women with disabilities in Lebanon. Two colleagues spent their CSR sabbatical in Ghana and South Africa respectively, working on education projects to empower children in local communities.

Many colleagues initiated sponsorship and fundraising activities, such as taking part in sports events to raise money for a charity and fundraising for earthquake survivors in Syria and Turkey, and later in Morocco.

Facts + figures

Our society

3,409
Impact Hours in total

1,679
Pro bono hours as part
of Impact Hours

170
Colleagues participated in
the Impact Programme

21
Impact projects and
activities performed

29
Pro bono cases

18
CSR partnerships

104
Pupils and students reached
through our CSR partners JINC,
IMC Weekendschool and Be.Face

Shaping tomorrow

Thriving together

“In the context of ESG reporting, the social pillar is receiving increasing attention. Ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment is an important aspect”, observes Maartje Govaert.



Undesirable behaviour in the workplace regularly makes headlines. According to Employment & Pensions partner Maartje Govaert, despite the increased attention and availability of information, transgressive behaviour still occurs on a regular basis. “Since the #Metoo movement saw the light of day in 2017, it has raised the awareness of this transnational social issue and the sense of urgency to address it. Employers must ensure a working environment that is free from psychosocial pressures such as intimidation, discrimination, bullying, exclusion and transgressive behaviour. Recent sustainability reporting requirements encourage employers to promote social safety. It is up to directors, HR professionals and regulators to ensure that appropriate policies are in place and that the rules are embedded in clear agreements, organisational structures and accountable leadership.”

Risk elements

“As long as people experience excesses in human interactions in their working relations, I will continue to draw attention to this social problem”, says Maartje. She does this through advice, publications and lectures. “Social safety is an important part of the corporate culture and requires a clear framework that includes the reporting infrastructure, the reporting climate and the possibility to talk to a confidential counsellor. But the issue goes far beyond meeting reporting requirements. For example, with the Employment & Pensions team, we regularly discuss risk elements with directors and the supervisory board. These can include systemic issues such as hierarchical culture, power inequalities, ingrained patterns of masculinity or femininity, and the frequent use of temporary contracts.”

She welcomes the fact that the legislator has proposed solutions to promote social safety in the workplace. “This has encouraged directors to discuss the issue, even if it’s not an easy topic for them. In addition to compliance, this discussion should also focus on the rationale behind the rules: the why. Reporting requirements should not replace personal intuition and responsibility. Ultimately, you need to work with the whole organisation to create an open reporting culture where people feel comfortable talking to their manager or the confidential counsellor. Otherwise, things will never move beyond a tick-the-box mentality. Codes of conduct and protocols become paper tigers unless the culture sees real change.

Safeguards and clarity

It is of the utmost importance that the internal checks and balances are clear, as well as the responsibility of each person involved - top down and bottom up. We often see a situation escalate when a complainant feels left out to dry after no one has taken action due to a lack of accountability. A complaints mechanism provides safeguards such as the possibility of reporting anonymously and the confidential treatment of reports. It can also set out the role of the confidential counsellor and the investigation process. This creates clarity for all parties involved: the complainant, the accused and the complaints committee.



“As long as people experience excesses in human interactions in their working relations, I will continue to draw attention to this social problem.”

This clarity is particularly important when it comes to undesirable behaviour. In practice, we see that reports of undesirable behaviour can escalate unnecessarily. An experienced confidential counsellor may be able to prevent this. They can initiate an informal or a corrective talk, mediation or a group discussion. And if an investigation is to take place, it must be independent, which doesn’t necessarily mean external, and there must be clear agreements about what the person making the report can expect.”

“The Netherlands is the only country in the world that has a government commissioner for sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence”, notes Maartje. In April 2022, Mariëtte Hamer was appointed to this position for a period of three years. In May 2023, she published the first version of the Guide for reporting sexual misconduct in the workplace. The guide is a work in progress with input from experts like Maartje as well as people who have been involved in a report. “The first version was about how to handle reports properly. The second edition, which was released in March 2024, adds guidance on developing a strategy for prevention and cultural change in the organisation.

Impact on productivity

Regulators are also increasingly focusing on people, culture and behaviour, and rightly so. The safety of the working environment is key to the productivity and quality of organisations and affects the way employees and managers work. Research by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, for example, shows that undesirable behaviour is also a persistent problem in academia. This has a significant impact on the well-being of the people involved, the trust in the organisation’s leaders and

the organisation's reputation. It also has a significant financial impact in terms of employee absenteeism and redundancy costs. In addition, an unsafe culture in universities and medical institutions can have a negative impact on research and research outcomes.

The attention given to this issue makes it easier for employees to talk about unwanted behaviour. It is important that all issues raised and all reports receive the attention and follow-up they deserve." She says the Employment & Pensions team receives a wide range of questions from (supervisory) board members. "Those concern reporting as well as risk management. How do we know what's going on in the organisation if nobody comes forward? What do we do if a victim goes to a board member directly? Could our company suddenly find itself on the front pages in connection with undesirable behaviour? Are reports reaching the board at all? Is there sufficient monitoring?"

Risk profile

Maartje often advises directors to draw up a risk profile and supervisory board members to put it on the agenda for discussion with the board. "Look at the weaknesses and see how you can mitigate them as much as possible. Are there teams that aren't diverse enough? Is there a lack of transparency, or are there teams that are highly hierarchical? Are there power relationships or dependencies between people? To what extent is senior management informed, accessible and available? What about checks and balances? Is management aware of a potentially unsafe culture so that they can make informed decisions? And can those responsible for risk analysis actually make good assessments?"

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'Codes of conduct and protocols become paper tigers unless the culture sees real change.'



Her main advice: make sure the whole organisation is involved. "The social pillar is a collective effort. Talk to each other and keep the conversation going. Of course, the tone at the top is important, but this concerns the whole workplace. Not just the victims and the offenders, but everyone. Bystanders who see or identify something need to know that it affects them personally. They too are affected by undesirable behaviour. It is important that employees are held directly accountable for behaviour that deviates from the applicable values and moral standards or crosses the personal boundaries of others. The sooner someone does this, the better. Everyone in the organisation benefits when misconduct is stopped quickly, rather than allowed to fester or escalate."

Early warning system

"The necessary cultural change will only be successful if it's gradual, with constant attention to what constitutes desirable behaviour", she concludes. "A proper reporting procedure and a safe reporting climate can prevent a problem from arising when it's no longer controllable. By taking the person who reports undesirable or unacceptable behaviour seriously, you create an early warning system. This enables the organisation to investigate and address a problem before it hits the headlines or the regulator comes calling. Above all, it is how you can ensure that such situations do not happen again." ●

European regulations

Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) contains a legal obligation to produce a sustainability report that forms the basis for stakeholder discussions. Own Workforce (S1) is one of the four social European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), alongside Workers in the Value Chain (S2), Affected Communities (S3) and Consumers and End-users (S4). To this end, the CSRD contains explanatory requirements for, among other things, fair working conditions, safe working environments, diversity and inclusion and investment in local communities.

Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive

On 15 March 2024, EU member states agreed on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), which will come into force in stages from 2027. It requires companies to take responsibility for improving conditions for people, the environment and nature in their value chain. They should not 'look away' from human rights and environmental abuses and must also obtain information on risks from direct and indirect suppliers.

Dutch regulations

Dutch Corporate Governance Code 2022

The updated version of the Dutch Corporate Governance Code 2022 states that directors and supervisory board members must be alert to misconduct in the organisation and the question of whether there is a safe reporting climate.

Whistleblower Protection Act

The Whistleblowers Authority Act (*Wet Huis voor klokkenluiders*) has been amended and is called the Whistleblower Protection Act (*Wet bescherming klokkenluiders, Wbk*) since 18 February 2023. Pursuant to this amendment, all employers with an average of 50 or more employees must have a reporting procedure in place. The same applies to all employers in the financial services, transport, and environmental sectors, regardless of the number of employees. Future, current and former employees may report under protection.

Bill for mandatory appointment of confidential counsellor

The bill to make the appointment of a confidential counsellor for undesirable behaviour mandatory was adopted by the House of Representatives on 23 May 2023. The purpose of this law is to give every employee a statutory right of access to a confidential counsellor and to strengthen the position of the confidential counsellor in the organisation.

Our SDG focus

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



We use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which define global priorities and aspirations for 2030 to address economic, social, and environmental challenges as starting point for our actions within the four pillars of our CSR policy and Impact Programme. We are committed to reducing the potential negative impact of our choices and to increasing the positive impact we can create. In doing so, we focus on SDGs 4, 5 and 10, 13, 16 and 17.

SDG 4: We contribute to equal access to education through partnerships and community involvement activities.

SDG 5 and 10: Our commitment to equality is reflected in our employment conditions, our efforts in the field of inclusion and diversity as well as in our pro bono work and community involvement initiatives.

SDG 13: We are committed to making our operations more sustainable.

SDG 16: As a law firm, contributing to access to justice for all is at the heart of what we do. It is also a key focus in our pro bono work.

SDG 17: We engage in partnerships to bring about positive change, both in our client work and in our CSR activities.

Our ambitions for 2024

General

- We publish a Sustainability & CSR Report report in line with our ambition to be transparent about our goals and performance.
- We work towards a CSRD-compliant report in 2026 (for the year 2025), including a stakeholder consultation.

1. Our clients	2. Our people	3. Our operations	4. Our society
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We promote ESG awareness and compliance in our work for clients.• Our Sustainable Business & Climate Change team plays a leading role in further developing our ESG strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have targets for gender diversity and cultural diversity.• We have a gender balanced talent pipeline.• We have a safe and inclusive workplace.• CSR is part of (1) our training and development programme and (2) our fringe benefits.• We value CSR work in assessments.• We measure employee engagement and company pride.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our ambition is to reduce the carbon emissions from our own operations.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- We aim for net zero by 2050.- We aim for a 55% reduction by 2030 compared to 2019 (intermediary target).- We balance remaining emissions with offsets.- We formulate a concrete action plan. Actions are prioritised based on their carbon reduction impact.• We aim to adopt and implement a sustainable procurement policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will increase the number of participants (legal professionals and business support professionals), the number of Impact Hours and the number of Impact activities under the Impact Programme in 2024 compared to 2023.

Contact with our CSR specialist

We hope to encourage dialogue with you regarding our sustainability and CSR performance. If you have questions or comments about this report, please contact Shirley Justice | [E-mail shirley.justice@nautadutilh.com](mailto:shirley.justice@nautadutilh.com)

Colophon

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