

Toespraak

van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Mei Li Vos, bij de ontvangst van de president van Finland, Alexander Stubb

datum 12 december 2025

Mr President,

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

Your visit is one in a long tradition of meetings between your country and ours. A tradition which we find of great importance and value highly.

The Netherlands recognised the Republic of Finland on 28 January 1918, two months after Finland declared its independence from Russia.

Diplomatic relations were established on 14 August 1918.

Finland and the Netherlands both have a tradition of intensive multilateral and bilateral cooperation. Your visit here today is proof of the latter.

Finland has been working with the Nordic countries in the Nordic Council since 1952. The Netherlands formed the Benelux Union together with Belgium and Luxembourg a few years earlier in 1944.

Both fora still have an important position and work closely together, next to our shared membership of the European Union.

The partnership between the Nordic countries of Finland, Sweden and Denmark, the Baltic states and the Benelux countries bundles mass and gives influence within the EU.

And of course, since Finland joined the NATO alliance in 2023, cooperation has also been strengthened on the military and defense level.

That historic step for Finland was a direct result of the invasion of Russia in Ukraine.

Until then, your country held a special position – and still does! – in the world, because of the role Finland played in the post-World War II years.

It has been an admirable and delicate balancing act between the Eastern and Western parts of the world, known as the Paasikivi-Kekkonen doctrine that has earned admiration throughout the world.

President Kekkonen managed to organise the 'Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe' in 1975.

This resulted in the signing of the Helsinki Declaration which is a fine example of what is known as active neutrality.

One can conclude that the Helsinki Declaration has played an important role in easing the tensions between East and West and has eventually led to the end of the Cold War.

And that all changed on 24 February 2022.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has shocked us deeply. Of course, since Finland shares a 1300 kilometer long border with Russia, the war is so much closer to the people of Finland.

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Therefore, it is not only important to continue to support Ukraine, but to continue to support all European countries that neighbour Russia, and feel threatened by the aggression of President Putin.

The past years are proof of the importance of European and international cooperation and solidarity.

Between governments, and between people.

We have witnessed great solidarity across the European continent and beyond.

I think I speak on behalf of the whole Dutch delegation that we would like to hear more about the current situation in Finland, and especially the border region.

Mr President,

As President of the Dutch Senate I was intrigued when I read that your government and its palace used to be called 'Senate', and that the square in front of your government building in Helsinki is still called 'Senaatintori' – Senate square.

As I understand the Senate Square has been used to perform 'Finlandia' – the unofficial anthem of Finland – to celebrate the work and legacy of the composer Jean Sibelius whose 160th birthday was celebrated four days ago.

Sibelius composed 'Finlandia' to protest the censorship from Russia at the end of the 19th century.

I can imagine that the sentence 'Beneath oppression's yoke thou never liest' has new meaning in light of current affairs.

Your Excellency,

Allow me to give the floor to my colleague from the House of Representatives, Mr Thom van Campen.

Kiitos. Thank you.