

## Statement by Jan Peter Balkenende on the Dutch referendum (1 June 2005)

**Caption:** In the evening of 1 June 2005, following the rejection by his fellow citizens of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, the Netherlands Prime Minister, Jan Peter Balkenende, issues an official statement in which he expresses his disappointment at the outcome of the referendum.

**Source:** Balkenende, Jan Peter, Announcement Balkenende on referendum. [ON-LINE]. [Den Haag]: Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, [12.07.2005]. Available on [http://www.minbuza.nl/default.asp?CMS\\_ITEM=3C923A33D4F7444FAB4A793824C9C85EX1X53013X48](http://www.minbuza.nl/default.asp?CMS_ITEM=3C923A33D4F7444FAB4A793824C9C85EX1X53013X48).

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**URL:** [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/statement\\_by\\_jan\\_peter\\_balkenende\\_on\\_the\\_dutch\\_referendum\\_1\\_june\\_2005-en-823053ef-b8ec-4188-9a81-b61d76c7876d.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/statement_by_jan_peter_balkenende_on_the_dutch_referendum_1_june_2005-en-823053ef-b8ec-4188-9a81-b61d76c7876d.html)

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## Announcement Balkenende on referendum (1 June 2005)

After the polls closed tonight, the Dutch prime minister, Jan Peter Balkenende, offered his views on the results of the referendum on the European Constitution: "I'm disappointed, of course, and so are many other people. The government, along with many political parties and civil society, campaigned for a 'yes'. So, of course, we aren't happy about this result."

Mr Balkenende said that Dutch voters have sent a clear signal, which cannot be misunderstood. "But there is also good news, like the high turnout and the energetic debate that has emerged all over Europe. Despite the outcome, I am happy with those positive effects." The prime minister added that it should also be clear that the Dutch government has complete respect for this outcome.

The referendum was an initiative of the Dutch House of Representatives. Its purpose was to advise the House about what position to take on the proposed European Constitution. Therefore, Mr Balkenende said, it is now primarily up the House to decide what happens next, and its members will meet tomorrow to debate that issue.

As for the bigger European picture, the prime minister said that the agreement made in Brussels was that all twenty-five member states would consult their parliaments about the Constitutional Treaty: "The Dutch government believes this ratification process should now continue as planned in other countries. At the end of the process, it will be important for us to see how each country has responded to the treaty."

He added that the Dutch people voted against the proposed constitution, not against European cooperation. "The Netherlands, as one of the founding fathers of the Union, will remain a constructive partner within Europe for taking on the problems that matter to all of us," Mr Balkenende said. "I will tell my fellow European leaders that they must do justice to the Dutch 'no'. Because we understand the Dutch voters' concerns. About losing sovereignty. About the rapid pace of change, in which the public doesn't feel involved. And about our financial contribution. The European Union must take account of these issues."

The prime minister closed his press conference with the remark that, in recent years and for the Netherlands, Europe has too often been more a matter for politicians than for the public. "That has to change," he said. "In the period ahead, we must put all our effort into getting the public more involved in the future of Europe. This government will devote its energies to that goal."