

Preface

In the dynamic landscape of governance, where challenges demand innovative solutions, the Government of Flanders stands at the forefront of transformation. To address the complex interplay of global forces, from the far-reaching impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the complexities of climate change and geopolitical shifts, foresight is the compass for navigating uncertainty.

It is my privilege, as the Secretary General of Flanders Chancellery and Foreign Office, to introduce a report that explores our government's strategic foresight system, which has been thoroughly assessed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). By examining the current landscape, the OECD's assessment focuses on the strengths and areas for improvement in our strategic foresight initiatives. Besides being a current-state assessment, it lays the groundwork for a blueprint for the future. The recommendations outlined are not mere suggestions; they are a call to action, an opportunity to invest in our collective future. It is an invitation to envision Flanders as a leader in resilient policymaking, fostering collaboration with other governments.

In our commitment to being a governmental leader in multi-level strategic foresight, Flanders Chancellery and Foreign Office frequently organises initiatives, such as the Science-to-Policy Dialogue held with the Netherlands in September 2022. As part of our "Knowledge Government" project, it played a crucial role in broadening the scope of long-term transformations, especially in times of crisis. During this strategic dialogue, researchers from the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) and Flanders engaged in discussions with policymakers, focusing on a long-term perspective after recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. It served to break out of "narrow circles" and contribute to the government's strategic policy advice with scientifically grounded insights and analyses.

This dedication to multi-level strategic foresight is not just a matter of evidence for policy, but a conscious effort to shape a future with resilience, innovation, and adaptability. Understanding strategic foresight goes beyond its methods and knowledge outputs. It involves considering the systemic elements that contribute to its development, dissemination, and use as a connected ecosystem.

Let us undertake this transformative journey with strategic foresight as our guiding principle for a future-proof and resilient Europe. May this report inspire policymakers, decision makers, and all those dedicated to shaping Europe's future.



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