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**To**

Municipal Council of Wageningen  
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By e-mail: [raadsgriffie@wageningen.nl](mailto:raadsgriffie@wageningen.nl)

Wageningen, 18<sup>th</sup> of December, 2017  
Subject: Kieskompas Translation to English

Dear members of the city council,

Wageningen has a large percentage of international citizens. In the academic year 2015/2016, there were 2,364 international students at the WUR of which 1,259 were eligible to vote and about 1000 international promovendi. Additionally, there is a large group of expats that live and work in Wageningen. As representatives of a large international community in Wageningen, we would like to take this opportunity to express the interest to make the Kieskompas available in English. If the Kieskompas is not made available in English, a large group of citizens will not be reached, for which there is no valid reason to not include them. We believe that by making the Kieskompas available in English, we raise the inclusiveness and social cohesion in Wageningen to which we are committed to.

Since we are considering a significant group, it is very important that they are enabled to make an informed choice.

1. One of the biggest challenges for the non-Dutch speaking citizens in Wageningen is the language barrier. This is evident from the international meetings we regularly organize. Since many of the international community are not fluent in Dutch, they are unaware of what is happening in Wageningen and therefore experience hardship. Reducing this hardship could result in higher connectedness to the city and to being citizens of Wageningen. Also, the promise in A8 would be better reflected. "Clear communication to the city is important". In this case, clear communication also means inclusive communication in English.
2. You show your commitment to keeping promises in your administrative agreement on strengthening relations with the city. For example as stated in A2., 'With each project, consideration is given to, and is described, how the process of participation takes effect, in which it is made clear, among other things, who the target group is for this policymaking, what is expected of that target group and what the target group of the college can expect'. At this moment the international community is not actively included in projects and sharing ideas – yet, decisions made do in fact influence their surroundings. Meeting certain conditions, international citizens have an equal right to vote. Therefore, a realistic inclusion means equal opportunities of all voting-eligible citizens, to participate in the elections. As long as the

Kieskompas is not made available in English, there is no room or equal opportunity for international citizens in Wageningen to participate in the elections.

3. By providing the Kieskompas in English, it also becomes easier for other political parties to reach many of the international citizens with voting eligibility. This avoids polarisation and extremist parties that want to exclude parts of our society. There are very few political parties that make their election program available in English. This is not a problem as no one expects every political party to master the English language either. However, the municipality can adhere to the promises of inclusiveness by providing information in the English language. In fact, mastering the Dutch language is not a precondition for voting rights. In our opinion, that should not be the case in practice either. This only seems fair.

Finally, we want to make it clear that we are not law graduates, but only a well-meaning group of Wageningen citizens committed to inclusion and social cohesion in our city. Resultantly, we strongly encourage the translation of the Kieskompas to English to facilitate all voting-eligible non-Dutch speaking friends, colleagues and neighbours to participate in our local elections.

Due to time pragmatic reasons, this letter reaches you from Connect Wageningen. However, it could have been sent from each of the signatories of this letter. Therefore, we kindly ask you consider this letter as a joint request.

We trust that you take this letter into serious consideration.

With kind regards,

Rani Temmink

Spokeswoman Internationalisation and Integration – Connect Wageningen

Signatories:

**Name:** Giulia Homs

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**Name:** Amit Chaudhary

*Organization:* Chair – S&I, Student Party for Sustainability and Internationalisation

**Name:** Claudius van de Vijver

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