

The Franco-Dutch Economic Year 2025

"A great occasion for Dutch entrepreneurs"



March 2025, Paris - Throughout the Franco-Dutch Economic Year 2025, the Dutch Embassy in Paris, along with the Netherlands France Chamber of Commerce (NFCC) and other key partners, will host high-level meetings, trade missions, and networking events.

Company representatives and entrepreneurs may wonder in which concrete ways the Franco-Dutch Economic Year could enhance their business activities in France.

To give an answer to this question, NFCC's Business Director Mascha Wismans interviewed Martijn Adelaar, Head of Economic Affairs at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Paris.



Mascha Wismans (MW): 2025 is a special year for the economic and commercial relations between the Netherlands and France. What is the purpose of the Franco-Dutch economic year?

"The Economic Year is a great occasion for Dutch entrepreneurs interested in the French market to participate in a trade mission and start making connections in France."

Martijn Adelaar (MA): "When the two heads of government met two years ago during President Macron's state visit to the Netherlands, they agreed that 2025 would put the spotlight on the close economic ties between our countries and highlight the areas where cooperation can be deepened.

We do this through existing frameworks like the Pact for Innovation and Sustainable Growth and regional cooperation initiatives such as with the Hauts-de-France region, as well as through the organisation of round tables, trade missions, company visits and other events.

Like we are doing here, the French embassy (together with the office of Business France) in the Netherlands organises similar activities. The purpose of these events is to facilitate cooperation in trade, investment and innovation. And the figures are already impressive!

The total bilateral trade volume in 2023 was around €96 billion. The Netherlands is the second destination for French foreign direct investment (FDI) worldwide, with an investment volume of €195 billion in 2022. Conversely, the Netherlands is the fourth largest foreign investor in France, with a total FDI value of €101 billion in 2023. In addition, France is the Netherlands' third largest trading partner; in 2023, we exported for more than €60 billion to France. And we believe there is still room for growth.”

MW: Indeed, there is a lot of potential for Dutch entrepreneurs in France. How can Dutch companies benefit from this bilateral initiative?

MA: “France is one of the most important trading partners for the Netherlands, and vice versa. We are preferred partners because of our proximity, the complementarity of our economies, and our joint membership of the European Union (we both operate within the EU’s internal market). Once working relations are established, many companies appreciate the way they can do business in France. Not to forget the French market is one of the largest in Europe. French and Dutch companies and entrepreneurs are increasingly able to find each other.

For instance within the context of the Innovation Pact French and Dutch agri tech companies work together on innovation. Just an example to demonstrate how solving societal challenges and profitability can go hand in hand.

The attention that the Economic Year generates and its events can fast-forward such initiatives. In addition to the powerful network of the NFCC, the Economic Year activities can help your companies as well to meet potential local business partners.

The embassy and the regional NBSO (Netherlands Business Support Offices in Nantes, Lyon and Lille) play a facilitating role here.”

MW: Why is 2025 a good year for Dutch companies to expand to or invest in France?

MA : “I find it fascinating to see how our economies are getting more and more intertwined, certainly compared to say 15 years ago.

This is happening at different levels: with AirFrance-KLM and Euronext, France and the Netherlands share two world-leading companies. The CEO of ASML, Christophe Fouquet is French, as is the future CEO of ABN Amro, Marguerite Bérard, and the CEO of Euronext, Stéphane Boujnah. Danone and Decathlon are investing heavily in R&D divisions in the Netherlands. Thales has an important Dutch subsidiary.

Several Dutch multinationals are operating successfully in the French market: ING, Randstad, Action and Arcadis to name but a few. And for the Olympic/Paralympic Games last year, Amsterdam-based architecture bureau Venhoeven CS built the Olympic Swimming Complex together with French Ateliers 2/3/4.

This comes as no surprise to your readers as many of these companies are NFCC members. With all the geopolitical turmoil at the moment, it makes sense that companies will be looking closer to home for expansion, collaboration and investment.”

“The NFCC is a key partner for us in making the Economic Year a success.”

MW: What are current sectors in France with great potential for Dutch entrepreneurs?

MA : “France and the Netherlands are forerunners within Europe in the dual transition: to a digital economy, and to a sustainable economy. With this, the economic year brings, among other things, opportunities for AI applications, semiconductors, the defence industry, sustainable aviation, nuclear energy and robotics in agriculture.”

MW: How do the Embassy and the NFCC collaborate during this Franco-Dutch economic year?

MA: “The NFCC is a key partner for us in making the Economic Year a success. As Minister of Economic Affairs Beljaarts said during the opening event, together with his French counterpart Minister Lombard: the success of this economic year depends on the participation of as many companies as possible. For one, the NFCC network provides valuable expertise to ‘new arrivals’ on the French market and can offer specific services and guidance for companies and entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, we are exploring the possibility of co-organising events during this French-Dutch economic year. I would also like to mention our joint 'Barometer' project: with input from PwC and ING, this annual business barometer offers insight into the bilateral trade- and investment relations and into the perception of entrepreneurs and companies."

MW: Are there events or trade missions that companies can participate in? How can they stay informed?

MA :“Absolutely! On the website [NLinFrankrijk](#) you can find the most recent version of the event calendar of economic year activities in France. The embassy is organising more than 30 events around trade promotion across France, including presence at international trade fairs such as JEC World, Forum InCyber and VivaTech.

We also bring together policymakers every month to work on key sectors at the political level. While some events are by invitation only, please do reach out to us, either through the NFCC or directly, to get more details and information. A good starting point for information on upcoming trade missions is the [“Zakendoen in Frankrijk”](#) pagina on the RVO (Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland) website. Finally I suggest you follow our [LinkedIn channel](#) to see updates by the embassy on upcoming activities and past events.

We also use our communication channels to share lessons about French-Dutch cooperation within the business community in different sectors.”

MW: Is there anything else you would like to share with NFCC members and, in general, Dutch entrepreneurs interested in the French market?

MA :“It’s a great time to explore business opportunities in France! Personally I’ve seen many great innovations and opportunities come by in the months I’ve been in this position, and thanks to the hard work of my colleagues at the embassy, at the NBSO’s and at different ministries and agencies in the Netherlands we’ve managed to valorise those opportunities for Dutch businesses.

The Economic Year is a great occasion for Dutch entrepreneurs interested in the French market to reach out to RVO in order to participate in a trade mission and start making connections in France. Of course I hope to see many of these companies thrive in the French market and become members of the NFCC soon!”

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