

Dear students of Tilburg University,

We are writing you this letter to inform you that this year, due to the actions of Student Party Front, an electoral covenant could not be established. On the afternoon of Wednesday, February 17, 2021, Student Party Front walked away from the negotiation table and indicated that they were not willing to negotiate any further. Through this joint statement of five student parties, we would like to draw your attention to the negative consequences that this will inevitably have for the interests of Tilburg University students.

Representing the students in the best possible way is the main objective and primary motivation for the student parties of Tilburg University. Every year the students of our university elect representatives from their ranks to represent their interests. During these elections, each party tries to raise its profile and win seats in the relevant councils.

In 2018, this electoral battle got so out of hand that 25 presidents of Tilburg study associations and student bodies drafted and signed a [letter](#) to the Executive Board of Tilburg University. This letter called for strict agreements to curb the election violence. Since that year, an election covenant contains agreements to minimize the burden on students during the elections and also to make the election campaign fair. Thus, the election covenant contains agreements to ensure fair and independent elections with the goal of minimizing the burden on students with the election circus.

As a result of Student Party Front's decision to break off negotiations, new agreements cannot be made by all parties this year to ensure that the elections are conducted in an orderly, but above all, fair manner and content-orientated. The latter has been the main focus for the signatory parties this year. However, the [entry](#) of four new parties at the faculty level as an initiative of Student Party Front last year has jeopardized the most important principle of the elections; fair and content-oriented elections. This, as a result of that the initiative did not come from the students themselves, but was pushed through by Student Party Front.

Initiatives to ensure fair elections were submitted by Student Party SAM, Student Party Dante (TSHD), Student Party ECCO (TiSEM), Student Party Stimulus (TSB) and Student Party Vrijspraak (TLS) during the negotiations. Student Party Front brushed aside several of these initiatives. Agreeing on digital elections in advance was also a so-called 'deal-breaker' for Student Party Front, despite a strict lockdown declared until early March due to the corona pandemic. We, the aforementioned parties, consider the creation of an election covenant so important that it was decided to make concessions on some of these initiatives, so that the negotiations could continue.

For us, one of the most important safeguards for fair and independent elections was the provision that the various parties and their campaigners must not promote each other (since they are all independent parties). A proposal that, in our view, does nothing but ensure fair elections. For Student Party Front, this provision was a bridge too far and it was not willing to negotiate further on a covenant that would contain such a provision.

In our opinion, no other conclusion remains than that Student Party Front does not place the same value on fair and independent elections, for the benefit of student representation of all students at Tilburg University, as the signatory parties do.

Student Party SAM, Student Party Dante, Student Party ECCO, Student Party Stimulus and Student Party Vrijspraak would like to emphasize that they are willing to continue negotiating and sign an election covenant with all parties that place the same value on basic principles of good elections. Fair, independent, and safe elections are in the best interest of the participation, student representation, and the students themselves.

Hopefully, through this letter, the seriousness of the situation has become clear in which no covenant will be reached.

Yours faithfully,

Veronique Coenen, on behalf of Student Party SAM (University Council)

Marieke van der Pol, on behalf of Student Party Dante (Faculteit TSHD)

Tim van Doorn, on behalf of Student Party ECCO (Faculteit TiSEM)

Jordi Heesters, on behalf of Student Party Stimulus (Faculteit TSB)

Pim van Kuijk, on behalf of Vrijspraak, Student Party of Magister JFT (Faculteit TLS)