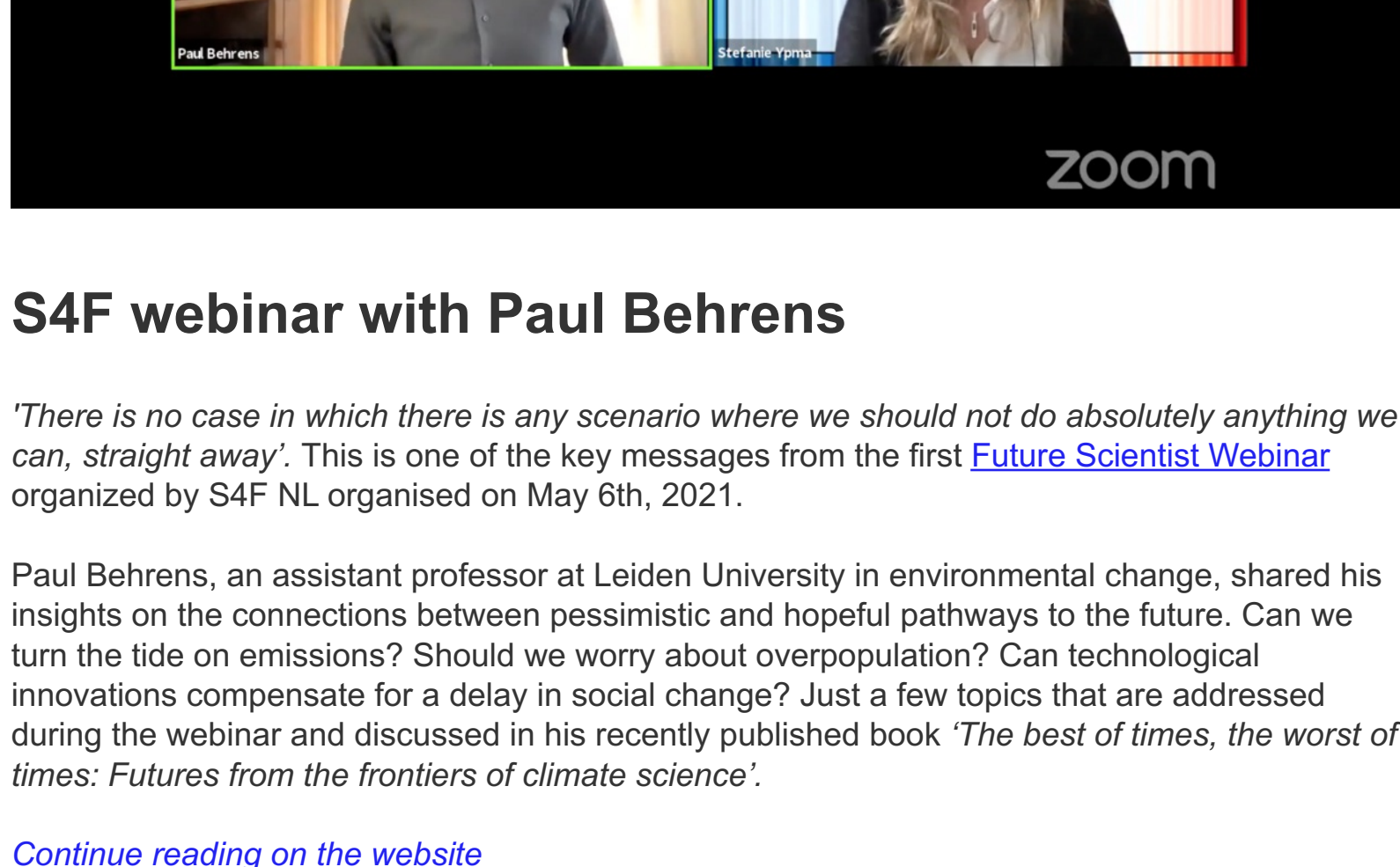


Dear {{voornaam}},
This is the Scientists4Future NL newsletter of April 2021, this month coordinated by **S4F Twente**. To subscribe, click [here](#). To unsubscribe, use the link at the bottom of this email.

In this newsletter:

- Webinar 1 report
- Update on various local S4F groups
- The Shell court case
- EU "Conference of the Future"
- Book: Philosophy and Climate Science
- Get involved!
- Upcoming events



S4F webinar with Paul Behrens

'There is no case in which there is any scenario where we should not do absolutely anything we can, straight away'. This is one of the key messages from the first [Future Scientist Webinar](#) organized by S4F NL organised on May 6th, 2021.

Paul Behrens, an assistant professor at Leiden University in environmental change, shared his insights on the connections between pessimistic and hopeful pathways to the future. Can we turn the tide on emissions? Should we worry about overpopulation? Can technological innovations compensate for a delay in social change? Just a few topics that are addressed during the webinar and discussed in his recently published book *'The best of times, the worst of times: Futures from the frontiers of climate science'*.

[Continue reading on the website](#)

Updates of local S4F groups

S4F-Twente - Fireside Chats

Since the start in December 2020 about 75 UT staff and PhDs registered, building a base from which we hope we can develop some action. At the moment most activity is in the so-called weekly Fireside Chat, where generally about 25 S4F-ers from the University of Twente join (upon invitation) to have lively discussions about Climate-Crisis related topics after a short introduction; all in a very informal way. For example 31st of May the topic was the Shell verdict.

S4F-Delft

Team Delft is still fairly small at this point, with around 5 people that meet every two weeks. On [our website](#) we maintain a blog where we write about things relating to the climate crisis. Then, we also try to remain in contact with the other local environmental groups such as Klimaatalarm, XR, Milieudefensie and FossilVrij. For example, one of us attended the Klimaatalarm with a letter signed by multiple people from TU Delft. More recently, an idea relating to "green" technology is pursued, we are in contact with an existing Podcast from the Delft/Leiden/Rotterdam sustainability institute and want to see if maybe we can contribute some episodes.

S4F-Leiden

Team Leiden kicked off with a first online gathering on February 18 this year. During this open brainstorm session, two ideas sprung out that might take on a more concrete form in the future: 1) set up a green label/sustainability certificate for laboratories, and 2) launch a Leiden sustainability guide and community for (international) people that are new to Leiden city. Further, team Leiden has contributed to make and spread the ABP fossil free poll. A second meeting will be scheduled soon, to form project groups and blow life into team Leiden. Interested to join or would you like to get into contact? Find us in the Slack channel #team-leiden or contact contact@scientists4future.nl.

S4F-Nijmegen

Team Nijmegen consists of a couple members. In this newsletter, we would like to call for new members or initiatives! Find us in the Slack channel #team-nimma or contact contact@scientists4future.nl.

The Climate Case against Shell

Shortened version. To read a more detailed analysis of the ruling, visit the [S4F-Twente blog](#).

At the end of last year, the Dutch NGO Milieudefensie, together with several other NGO's and more than 17,000 individual claimants, filed a procedure with the District Court in The Hague in which they asked the court to order Royal Dutch Shell to reduce its global CO2 emissions.

On May 26, the court ruled on the climate case:

- *Shell is one of the world's largest producers and suppliers of fossil fuels. The CO2 emissions of Shell, its suppliers and customers exceed those of many countries.*
- *This contributes to **global warming**, which causes **dangerous climate change** and creates serious human rights risks. It is generally accepted that **companies must respect human rights**.*
- *Shell's [CO2 emissions] **policy is not concrete, has many caveats and is based on monitoring social developments** rather than the company's own responsibility for achieving a CO2 reduction*
- *Therefore, **the court orders Shell to reduce the CO2 emissions of Shell, its suppliers and its customers by net 45%**.*

The order applies to the emissions of all entities of the Shell group (1100 companies in 80 countries), as well as to the emissions of Shell's suppliers and its customers.

Shell has an "obligation of result" regarding the reduction of its own emissions and a "significant best effort obligation" regarding the reduction of the emissions of its suppliers and customers. Shell announced that it would appeal "against the disappointing court decision". The order is provisionally enforceable, so an appeal will not suspend the order. This ruling is unique because it is the first time that a court has ordered a global energy company to reduce its emissions in order to avoid dangerous climate change.

According to the court Shell has a reduction obligation that ensues from the unwritten standard of care, which considers that a violation of unwritten law pertaining to proper social conduct may constitute an unlawful act (Dutch Civil Code). This has been interpreted by the Dutch Supreme court as an obligation to take safety or security measures when an actor creates a situation that is dangerous to others.

The court weighed "the compelling common interest" to negative consequences and commercial interests:

- *The court considers that the CO2 emissions for which Shell can be held responsible by their nature pose a very serious threat. The compelling common interest that is served by complying with the reduction obligation outweighs the negative consequences Shell might face due to the reduction obligation and also the commercial interests of Shell.*

The court was critical of Shell's plans to reduce CO2 emissions:

- *Shell's policy, policy intentions and ambitions .. amount to **rather intangible, undefined and non-binding plans** for the long-term. These plans ('ambitions' and 'intentions') are .. not unconditional.*
- *Emissions reduction targets for 2030 are **lacking completely**.*
- *Shell's planned investments in new explorations are not compatible with the reduction target. **Shell lets states and other parties play a pioneering role [and] disregards its [own] responsibility**.*

The court didn't agree with Shell's argument that a reduction obligation will have no effect because the place of Shell will be taken by competitors:

- *Even if this were true, this argument cannot justify assuming beforehand there is no need for Shell to not meet this obligation. **Each reduction of greenhouse gas emissions has a positive effect**.*
- *Shell cannot solve this global problem on its own, [but] this does not absolve Shell of its individual partial responsibility to do its part.*

The court weighed Shell's argument that imposing a reduction obligation would lead to unfair competition:

- *Shell seems to ignore that it is necessary to reduce CO2 emissions that cause dangerous climate change; other companies will also have to make a contribution. This defence therefore does not hold.*
- *The court assumes that the reduction obligation .. could curb the potential growth of Shell. However, the interest served with the reduction obligation outweighs Shell's commercial interests.*
- *Due to the serious threats and risks .. **private companies .. may be required to take drastic measures** and make financial sacrifices to limit CO2 emissions to prevent dangerous climate change.*

Shell's own target for reducing CO2 emissions is 20% by 2030. It now has been ordered to reduce its emissions by 45% by 2030. The verdict will undoubtedly have a major impact because it can serve as input for lawsuits against other companies in The Netherlands with high CO2 emissions, for example Tata Steel, KLM and Schiphol, the animal farming industry as well as others with high CO2 emissions.

Link to the [text of the ruling](#) (English).

Author: *Emile Sprenger* (emile.sprenger@gmail.com)

Conference on the Future of Europe

On the occasion of the 70-year anniversary the European Parliament, the European Council and the European Commission are organizing a year long event on the future of the European Union. In the scope of this conference, every European citizen is invited to share their suggestions, opinions and desires for the future path of the EU. The three institutions have committed to swiftly examining how to follow up on the outcomes of the event within their respective sphere of competences.

There are four main ways for citizens to participate in this project:

- By sharing ideas and proposals on the website
- By discussing, commenting and supporting the ideas of others
- By joining an online or in person event
- By organizing an event themselves

The online hub for sharing and discussing ideas is using a multi-lingual model, to simplify communications between people from all across Europe and from all levels of education. To make sure that there is a large incentive for the EU to act on these results, it is important to have a high level of participation, so check out the digital hub of the [event](#).

by *Sven Pfeiffer* (S4F-Delft)

Recommended Reading

Book: *Philosophy and Climate Science* by Eric Winsberg

For those with an interest in philosophy of science and in how scientists try to understand climate change, **Eric Winsberg** wrote the aptly titled *'Philosophy and Climate Science'*. As society is nervously looking towards climate science for understanding what climate change will entail, this book explains how climate scientists actually arrive at their conclusions. The book deals with numerous aspects that appear in the lifecycle of scientific knowledge of the climate: from how scientists gather observations, to the skeleton of climate models, all the way to the meaning and importance of scientific consensus. Winsberg especially gives an especially detailed account of how climate scientists deal with uncertainty and confidence, and how decision makers should interpret these concepts. Many of the topics, such as those related to chaos, probability and social epistemology are undoubtedly important to other scientific fields too (think of epidemiology). This book will be less interesting to people interested in broader philosophical themes that climate crisis is a great case study for, such as ethics and existentialism; they may want to search for 'Philosophy and Climate Change' instead. Winsberg's book explores a wealth of science-related themes in a textbook fashion - with some inherent dryness in the more technical chapters - but it truly is a treasure chest for philosophers of science or climate scientists who want to learn more about the philosophical underpinnings of climate science, as well as anyone else interested in exploring these topics (some grit required!).

By *Daan Reijnders* (S4F-Utrecht)

Get involved!

1. Hosting the S4F-NL Facebook page

Would you like to help out with the visibility of Scientists4Future NL on [Facebook](#)? Please let me (Arthur Oldeman) know through Slack! In addition, we are also looking for someone to help out with the website, or help with the move from Slack to another platform.

2. A fossil free pension for all government and education employees

Together with the Young Academies, Scientists4FutureNL has sent a letter to the university boards of all Dutch Academies expressing the need for Dutch universities to speak out against fossil fuel investments by pension fund ABP. But we're not done yet!

Fill out & share our 1-minute survey

Scientists4Future NL has launched a 1-minute [survey](#) to find out about university students and staff's views on their pension funds' investments in fossil fuels. Fill it out to share your views with us and help us by sharing the survey in your network!

Help us reach out to your university

The ABP FossilVrij campaign would like to reach out to all university councils, green offices, and sustainability officers to see if we can collaborate on trying to shift university pensions away from fossil fuels. We're especially looking for people in Groningen, Tilburg, Rotterdam and at universities of applied science (hogescholen) that want to help us in contacting their universities. Is your university already setting good examples? Let us know the good practices you observed! Contact us at contact@scientists4future.nl.

3. Mobilisation strategy for the scientific community

S4F NL launched a new project to explore ideas to help more scientists and academics involved in climate action. Are you interested in brainstorming and setting up a mobilisation strategy for the scientific community? Join us in Slack channel #team_mobilizing_academia or contact contact@scientists4future.nl.

Upcoming events

- **17 June: S4F Webinar with Jaap van der Steijl**

A special newsletter has been sent out previously for this event. All details on the [webinar page](#).

- **June 23: Panel discussion with academics on civil disobedience**

Extinction Rebellion NL is organizing a panel discussion about civil disobedience and the climate crisis. The discussion will feature four academics working on civil disobedience from different perspectives (its history, how it relates to democracy, its legitimacy) and how the climate movement uses this tactic. The discussion will be followed by a Q&A session and will take place in English. Further details in the [Facebook event](#) and on the [website](#).

- **June 25: FossilVrij ABP Demonstration**
- Students, scholars and ABP-members from universities, education and governments all over the Netherlands will travel to Amsterdam an Heerlen to demonstrate. If you are interested to join, visit the [website](#).

Local groups

- Amsterdam
- Utrecht
- Leiden
- Delft
- Twente
- Nijmegen
- Deventer/Zutphen
- Groningen (starting)
- Maastricht (starting)

Starters Guide for new active members

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) where we will be sharing national and international news regarding the role of scientists in times of the climate crisis.

Local S4F-NL groups
Adapted from [original](#)

This email has been sent to [{{email}}](#). • If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, you can [unsubscribe here](#). • You can also [view and edit your subscription](#). • Please add contact@scientists4future.nl to your address book to ensure our emails continue to reach your inbox.

