



Save the dates:

## 21 May

Pre-Defence Workshop on 'Finance for a (Climate) Resilient Economy' moderated by Vinzenz Peters

## 22 May

Job Zomerplaag's lecture at University of Vienna: 'Brown Bag Lunch: When Transitions Hit Home: The (Un)making of Publics in Domestic Heat Transitions'

## 10 June

Maastricht University Alumni Event in Amsterdam and 'The Bottom Line' lecture

## 17 June

Deepdive: Op weg naar een veerkrachtig Limburg, with Nicole Rijkens and Gemeente Maastricht

## 25 August

MORSE conference Call for Papers deadline

## 23-24-25 October

5<sup>th</sup> MORSE Conference

## 24 October

SDG Café: SPARK Limburg: Networking event, exploring specific sustainable theme

## MORSE Blogs

MORSE continues with its blog series! **Between May and July 2025**, MORSE will publish blog entries every Monday.

Read the [last blog](#) about the take-aways from the MORSE Panel Debate over the Dutch plastics-recycling, authored by René Kemp and Laura Nieboer.

The next blog will be published on 19 May and is authored by **Therese Grohnert**.

Follow MORSE on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) to not miss out on any new blog posts!

Let us know at [morse-sbe@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:morse-sbe@maastrichtuniversity.nl) if you want to publish a blog.

## News and Events

News:

### Shared benefits, shared burdens: how environmental funds really make an impact

How environmental funds can strengthen both support for the energy transition and local communities.

The promise of environmental funds is that part of the profit from sustainable energy projects flows back to the local environment. But do they really work? As a thesis supervisor, Job Zomerplaag worked together with Mara Hermse, who investigated the impact of these funds for her graduation at University College Maastricht.

Together they have listed the most important insights and recommendations for [HIER](#), a foundation that gets people moving to do something about the climate problem.

Read their [full article](#) on the Klimaatstichting website, to know more about their findings and recommendations for real local impact.

### Een Nieuw Samenspel (“A New Teamwork”)

**Praktijkessay over participatie in de transitie naar aardgasvrije wijken**

How do we get residents excited about a natural gas-free neighborhood?

PhD candidate and MORSE member Job Zomerplaag stood in front of municipal professionals from South Limburg to present his practical essay "Een Nieuw Samenspel". They talked about the "dramaturgy of participation". Based on concepts from the theatre world, they discussed how the story, the setting, the design of meetings and the division of roles determine who wants and can participate in the heat transition. Afterwards, Job was invited by the Maastricht city council to share his

vision: he explained how, study after study, what the residents really need is not only more information but a greater sense of control on the process.

The practical essay has currently only been shared with those directly involved. Later this year, a public version and a practical tool will be published that can help municipalities and residents to more consciously shape participation in the heat transition.



## EEN PRAKTIJKESSAY

- Gemeentelijke professionals als doelgroep
- Leestijd circa 30 minuten
- Ervaringen uit actie-onderzoek in de Maastrichtse wijkenaanpak aardgasvrij
- Gebundeld met tussentijdse inzichten proefschrift
- Opgebouwd rondom reflectievragen

## EEN NIEUW SAMENSPEL

Job Zomerplein

REGIONAAL  
TRANSITIE  
PLATFORM

Maastricht University  
Gedrukt door Maastricht

## MILL updates

The Maastricht Immersive Learning Lab submitted two grant proposals to NRO. One to fund the proper experimental implementation of “The Bottom Line” in our first year Corporate Finance Courses and at the Hogeschool Zuyd (200k) and one in which we proposed to take the MILL to the central UM level to bring immersive learning to all UM faculties (500k). Unfortunately, both proposals have not been granted after a second round. The good news is that MILL has developed important connections across UM faculties and to Hogeschool Zuyd for future initiatives.

The Bottom Line has been taken into production. With support of the SBE Board there is now a batch of 500 playsets. Some 80 have been reserved for educational purposes in the first year Corporate Finance course coordinated by Rob Bauer, Pomme Teunissen and Kimon Ivanov. We are currently collecting data and thanks to the strike on April 16 we even have a natural experiment with a control group to investigate the effect of playing this game on grades, motivation and student engagement. In the newsletter of September we hope to be able to tell you more.

Some 250 sets have been reserved for SBE Marketing and Communication and our Alumni Office, who will use the game as a gift for SBE relations. On June 10 Mark Sanders will deliver a lecture and the game will be played with UM-SBE alumni in Amsterdam, after which participants will receive a game set.

The remainder is now for sale through a website at a price of 30 euro. If multiple sets are ordered for educational purposes, there is a discount of 5 euros per set. [You can order your game set\(s\) soon, we will send you an email with the link.](#)

Finally, MILL has connected with the safety regions South and North Limburg to discuss creating an engaging, scenario based game to play with citizens and non-professionals to train disaster preparedness in Limburg. This project may be extended into a full blown European Horizon project in November.

## MORSE in 2025

With the strategy dialogues in SBE, also the strategic spearheads have formally been terminated. MORSE, nevertheless, is still alive. We do not have base funding from the faculty board, but the research support office has kindly agreed Veronica can still support our activities and the MORSE-executive board has decided to stay on. In 2025 MORSE has organised its research day in January and our call for papers for the annual MORSE conference has gone out with this newsletter. We will cover the costs of the conference from registration fees and funding we intend to acquire from other sources (e.g. SWOL). With an established conference we have good hope that other funding sources will be available.

### Past Events:

## Looking back at the MORSE Guest lectures

- **Dr Federico Esposito Public Lecture over 'Climate Change and Economic Resilience'**. It was great hosting **Dr Federico Esposito (Tufts)** on **16 April** to give a public lecture on Economic Resilience and Climate Change. Federico walked us through three different facets of this topic through the lens of his recent research on the economic impact of climate change on global supply chains and employment and touched upon the critical role of policy in mitigating its adverse effects. This is very timely as global firms are increasingly exposed to climate risk, and his research investigates how do firms adapt their supply chain to climate risk and the size and nature of the aggregate effects.
- **Dr. Prof. Leandro Prados de la Escosura open lecture over "Human Development and the Path to Freedom"**. The Easterlin paradox identifies the surprising, for many, decoupling between economic growth and happiness beyond a certain point. **On 15 May**, Prof. Dr. Leandro Prados de la Escosura explored this phenomenon from a long-run perspective, drawing on a welth of data and a broader, yet sharp, conceptual framework from the standpoint of Well-Being. In this MORSE public lecture, Prof. Prados de la Escosura presented compelling evidence showing that, over the past 150 years, it is Well-Being and not Economic Growth that has consistently emerged as the true measure of progress, demonstrating greater resilience through wars and crises than economic growth has managed so far.



## Workshop on Ecooptimism

**'Positive Psychology for a Best Possible World' SUM2030 seed grant project Eco-optimism – 24 March 2025**

In the context of SUM2030 seed grant project Eco-optimism, Mark Sanders, Job Zomerplaag and Mark Sanders and FPN colleagues Nicole Geschwind and Marjolein Haassen, organised a workshop on Ecooptimism in Heerlen-Noord on March 24. Read the full report (in Dutch) [here](#).

## MORSE Research Day and Thesis Award Ceremony

**Monday 27 January 2025**

MORSE hosted the annual Research Day, followed by the Thesis Award Ceremony. The awarded students were:

- **Yves Baljet**, winner of the MSc award with a thesis about *'Are Dutch Social Housing Institutions Prepared for Flood Risk?'*
- **Matilde João Mota**, first runner up for the MSc award with a thesis about *'Gender Norms and Female Labour Market Participation: empirical evidence from European countries'*
- **Laurin Alexander Victor**, second runner up for MSc award with a thesis about *'Foreign Aid, Inequality and Poverty The Impact of Donor's Level of Selfishness'*
- **Anna Katharina Rücker**, winner of the BSc award with a thesis about *'Risk and Resilience: The Influence of Economic Development on Firm Financial Strategy Amid Geopolitical Risk in Emerging Asia'*
- **Johannes Kleinschmidt**, first runner up for BSc award with a thesis about *'The impact of artificial intelligence integration announcements onto DAX listed companies'*
- **Nina Mennen**, second runner up for BSc award with a thesis about *'Real effects of the announcement of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive: Evidence from Belgium'*





### The speakers

- Arjen Wittekoek (ceo Umincorp)
- Nelleke van der Puil (Vice President Materials Engineering & Quality at Lego)
- Laura Nieboer (entrepreneur and plastic industry expert)



MORSE  
Science for a  
sustainable, engineered  
and sustainable future

Beside the Thesis Award Ceremony, the MORSE Research Day this year convened a high-level panel—featuring **Arjen Wittekoek (CEO Umincorp)**, **Nelleke van der Puil (Vice President Materials Engineering & Quality at Lego)** and **Laura Nieboer (entrepreneur and plastic industry expert)**—to unpack the Dutch plastics-recycling crisis. Read more in the insightful [blog authored by René Kemp](#) and Laura Nieboer. Together with Henk Diepenmaat, they investigate Dual Track Governance measures for promoting plastics recycling in the Limburg border region. The work is part of the Syschemiq project funded by the EU through the Horizon Green Deal programme. <https://www.syschemiq.eu/>

## MORSE contributed to students excursions

In October, MORSE contributed to two student excursions.

The first took place **on 9 October 2024**, when 80 students visited The European Central Bank (ECB) in Frankfurt for an ECB board meeting simulation with Prof. Olaf Sleijpen. Read more about it [here](#).

The second one was scheduled for **18 October 2024**, when some 45 students from Economics of Transition and Resilience course visited the European Commission in Brussels for the **Third Student Conference on the Economics of Transition and Resilience**, presenting their solutions to the many transition challenges the European Union is facing. Read the conference report [here](#).

## Prof Ann Vanstraelen invited to “Tafelwetenschapper” in the “[Avond van Wetenschap en Maatschappij 2024](#)”

For 7 of October 2024 event, 25 scientists were invited to chair a table and have a discussion over relevant topics for the society, and they have to bring a junior scientist along. Prof. Ann Vanstraelen participated with the PhD candidate Benjamin Noordermeerher and they discussed about ‘*Mandatory sustainability reporting and assurance: a way to tackle climate change?*’ Read more [here](#).

## Future Events:

### **Pre-Defence Workshop on ‘Finance for a (Climate) Resilient Economy’ moderated by Vinzenz Peters**

On 22 May, the PhD candidate – and MORSE member – Vinzenz Peters will defend his doctoral thesis "[Economic Resilience to Physical Climate Shocks: The Roles of Financial and Firm Structures](#)". The defence starts at 10.00 h sharp in the Aula of Maastricht University ([Minderbroedersberg 4-6, 6211 LK Maastricht](#)). You can also follow the defence online [here](#).

On 21 May, Vinzenz will host a **Pre-Defence Workshop at 13:30-15:30 (TS53 Room C-1.05)**. Click [here](#) to know more about programme, speakers and abstracts.

### **Brown Bag Lunch organised by Urban Futures**

#### **When Transitions Hit Home: The (Un)making of Publics in Domestic Heat Transitions**

On 22 May, PhD candidate and MORSE member **Job Zomerplaag** will deliver a seminar in the context of Brown Bag Lunch, organised by [Urban Futures](#).

The event will take place at 12:00 at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, at the University of Vienna, and can be attended in person only.

Click [here](#) to read the abstract and register.

What happens when energy transitions reach our doorsteps - but the tools for public participation are missing? Job Zomerplaag explores how publics are formed and included or excluded, in the Dutch shift away from natural gas. Drawing from in-depth fieldwork and critical theory, Job investigates the everyday politics of domestic heating transitions and the challenges of designing truly inclusive participatory processes.

Bring your lunch, your questions, and join the conversation !

### **Maastricht University Alumni Event in Amsterdam and ‘The Bottom Line’ lecture**

UM/SBE Alumni Office, in cooperation with the UM Alumni Circle Committee of Amsterdam, are organising a Maastricht University Alumni Event in Amsterdam.

In occasion of this event, Prof. Mark Sanders will deliver an interesting lecture about **“The Bottom Line”, an interactive tabletop game**. He will present this game and reflect on how it can be used in educational contexts. Register [here](#).

## Deepdive: Op weg naar een veerkrachtig Limburg

With Nicole Rijkens and Gemeente Maastricht

Tuesday 17 June 13:30-16:30 Tapijnkazerne, Maastricht University (Dutch speaking)

How sensitive is Limburg to shocks in the energy transition?

Climate change, geopolitical tensions, technological developments: the energy transition is taking place in a world full of uncertainties. The power outages in Spain and Portugal showed how vulnerable societies are to disruptions in our energy supply. What started as a technical outage grew into a national crisis in just a few hours, affecting millions of people and causing almost 400 million euros in economic damage. Limburg faces similar challenges. As a border province, we are not immune to unexpected twists and turns or "shocks" that can affect the energy transition.

Led by [Nicole Rijkens](#), an interdisciplinary team of [Maastricht University](#) and [Gemeente Maastricht](#) has been investigating this issue over the past year. Together, they mapped out various shock scenarios that could affect our province: from weather extremes and abrupt trade conflicts to sabotage of energy infrastructure and severe grid congestion.

**On Tuesday afternoon, 17 June**, they will share these scenarios in a 'deep dive' and discuss the vulnerability and resilience of our energy supply. Are you involved in the energy transition in Limburg as a researcher, policymaker, entrepreneur or stakeholder?

Then sign up for the deepdive [here](#) (the event is held in Dutch)

## MORSE Conference 2025

**MORSE Spearhead will host the 5<sup>th</sup> annual conference on 23-24-25 October 2025 at SBE premises in Tongersestraat 53.**

This year, we will have at least 10 tracks, the call for papers for each track will soon be published [here](#) so that you can spread it around your networks. The deadline to present papers will be set around the half of August 2025. Stay tuned !

## PhD-Defenses

**22.05.25 at 10:00 - Vinzenz Peters**

**Supervisors:** Prof. Dr. Mark Sanders (UM) and Prof. Dr. Stefan Straetmans (UM)

**Title of the thesis:** Economic resilience to physical climate shocks. The Roles of Financial and Firm Structures

**20.06.25 at 10:00 – Maria Tomai**

**Supervisors:** Prof. Dr. Shyama V. Ramani, Maastricht University / UNU-MERIT Dr. George Papachristos, Eindhoven University of Technology

**Title of the thesis:** SBE sociotechnical transitions towards circular & sustainable economies: the case of solid waste management in Ghana



## Research:

## Highlighted Publications

- Nanditha Mathew, Serdar Türkeli, and Lili Wang. 2025. Research Agenda on Reorienting Innovation for Inclusive and Sustainable Development. United Nations University.  
[https://unu.edu/sites/default/files/2025-02/Policy\\_Brief\\_MA\\_TU\\_WA.pdf](https://unu.edu/sites/default/files/2025-02/Policy_Brief_MA_TU_WA.pdf)
- Schmid, B., Debourdeau, A., Fahy, F., Kemp, R., Puente, L. L., Markantoni, M., Thalberg, K. & Vadovics, E. (2025). Four pathways for energy citizenship initiatives to contribute to a more democratic European energy system. *Journal of European Integration*, 47(2), 339–360.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2025.2458592>
- Heinzl, Christian and Langford, W. Scott and Peters, Vinzenz and Sanders, Mark, Young and Small Firms and Resilience to Extreme Weather Events (April 08, 2025). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4993710>
- Wim Van Opstal, Nancy Bocken, Jan Brusselaers, Smart, circular and renewable: The role of cooperative governance in accelerating a sustainable energy transition, *Energy Research & Social Science*, Volume 123, 2025, 104049, ISSN 2214-6296, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2025.104049>

## Grants and PhD-proposals

No new Grants and Proposals have been submitted

This is (inevitably) only a short list of the events, publications and projects MORSE-members are involved in. If you can use our support in developing your proposals or would like your project to be announced and shared in the next April 2025 New Endeavours, don't hesitate to send an email to [morse-sbe@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:morse-sbe@maastrichtuniversity.nl).