

A major cause of rapid global warming is the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. This is a source of great danger to life on earth. Both the Urgenda Foundation and the Dutch State are of the opinion that greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced quickly, and ultimately be discontinued almost completely, but they disagree on the speed at which this is supposed to happen. The Dutch State has a EU target for 2020 of a 20% reduction compared to 1990 levels. Urgenda, on the other hand, believes that, given the serious risks of climate change, the Dutch State's target is not sufficient. Urgenda demands a reduction in Dutch emissions by at least 25% in 2020 compared to 1990 levels.

The Hague District Court agreed with Urgenda. It ordered the Dutch State in 2015 to reduce Dutch greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by the end of 2020. This order was confirmed by The Hague Court of Appeal in 2018. Today, the Supreme Court rejected the Dutch State's cassation appeal against this decision.

The Supreme Court based its judgment on the UN Climate Convention and on the Dutch State's legal duties to protect the life and well-being of citizens in the Netherlands, which obligations are laid down in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the ECHR).

-Supreme Court, Netherlands, "Dutch State to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by the end of 2020" (2019) excerpt.