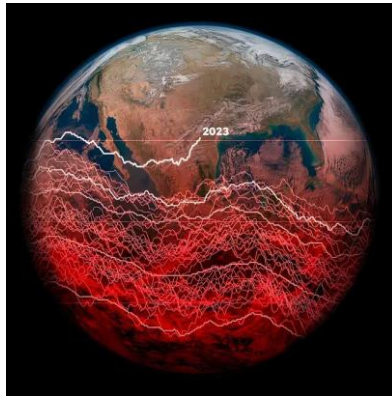


**Bart Flos**

# OUR INNER LIMITS



## Addendum VI

### The Frontal Confrontation: Climate Change



The Frontal Confrontation: Climate Change

Our Inner Limits - ADDENDUM VI

The Frontal Confrontation: Climate Change

**Bart Flos**

# **OUR INNER LIMITS**

## **ADDENDUM VI**

### ***The Frontal Confrontation: Climate Change***



**Previously published by Bart Flos:**

*Het anti-klaagboek – Het anti-sleurboek – Het perfecte project  
De kenniskermis – Vooruitkijken voor gevorderden*

*De mens als grens ('Our Inner Limits')*

*The Anti-Complain Book – The Perfect Project*

*De hoogvolwassen organisatie – De klimaatconfrontatie*

*De zelfmoordsoort – The Suicide Kind*

*As addenda to 'De mens als grens':*

*Addendum I – Het begin van het einde: onwetendheid  
Addendum II – De frontale confrontatie: klimaatverandering  
Addendum III – Het grote probleem: overconsumptie  
Addendum IV – Het laatste taboe: ineenstorting*

*As addenda to 'Our Inner Limits':*

*Addendum V – The Beginning of The End: Ignorance  
Addendum VI – De Frontal Confrontation: Climate Change  
Addendum VII – The Big Problem: Overconsumption  
Addendum VIII – The Final Taboo: Collapse  
Addendum IX – The Next Step: Collapse Awareness  
Addendum X – The Last Resort: Collapse Acceptance  
Addendum XI – The Tough Choice: Collapse Resilience*

*Self-knowledge is the first step to adulthood.*

**Jane Austen**

*Civilization begins with order, grows with freedom, and dies  
with chaos.*

**Will Durant**

*We are only allowed to live on this planet as long as we treat  
all of nature with compassion and intelligence.*

**Aldous Huxley**

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# Introduction

In 2015 I published my fifth book, *Vooruitkijken voor gevorderden – Hoop voor de toekomst van mensaap en moederplaneet* ('Futurology for Fanatics – Hope for the Future of Man Ape and Mother Planet'). It is an easy-to-read book with the same design as its predecessor *De kenniskermis – Overleven in een zee van informatie* ('The Knowledge Fair – How to Survive in an Ocean of Information'). Short chapters of approximately 800 words, provided with QR codes and TED(x) talks, nice pictures and numerous references to other interesting books.

In *Futurology for Fanatics*, I not only discuss humanity's major problems, but I also provide hopeful solutions. By (daring to) look ahead 100, 1.000 and even 10.000 years, I paint a picture of the limitless possibilities that Homo sapiens has to shape its own future. The final goal? Preserving our planet to prepare it as a home base for the exploration of the cosmos.

I still remember someone calling me a 'naive idealist' then. I defended this fiercely at the time and replied that I preferred to call myself an 'incurable optimist'. "Yeah, yeah," was the response, "Dream on." But it really was true, I was sitting on a comfortable pink cloud and I was looking through rose-colored glasses, which turned out to be a cold, metal telephoto lens and microscope. It wasn't until I got into my helicopter, flew as high as I could and started looking down that the scales fell from my eyes.

*Fast forward to 2022*

Since the publication of *Futurology for Fanatics* more than half a billion people have been added to the population, we have emitted another 285 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> and the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>-level has risen from 400 to 418 ppm. That has categorically transformed me from an incorrigible optimist to a 'confrontealst', someone who confronts those around him head-on with hard science, with observation, research, facts and evidence.

My own research over the past two years has led me to write my sixth book, my Magnus Opus, which brings together all my previous work. *De mens als grens – Over de onbuigzame barrières van ons bestaan* ('Our Inner Limits – On the Unbending Barriers of Being') is much less hopeful as a plea, unfortunately, but it still contains solutions. These are now the last solutions we have left.

I'm sorry that this time I don't share hopeful dreams about the human species, which first preserves its planet and then seeks refuge among the stars. But it is time that we recognize, acknowledge and confess what we are: social group primates and hunter-gatherers, who are extremely proficient at surviving and reproducing. At the expense of everything and everyone. It's the nature of the beast.

*Fast forward to 2024*

When I delivered the final manuscript of *Our Inner Limits* to my publisher in October 2022, I could not have imagined how quickly things would get so much worse. The year 2023 is the year that we passed the 'elbow' of the exponential curve. This means that from now on, events affecting the environment,

biodiversity and climate will no longer follow a relatively linear path, but a chaotic, completely unpredictable one.

Since the publication of my sixth book, I have written almost 1.000 posts on *LinkedIn*, about 60 per month, 2 every day. In order not to let them go to waste in the endless timelines, I have included them in eleven addenda to *Our Inner Limits*: four in Dutch and seven in English. In these addenda I'm taking you on that accelerating path of decline as we embark on a journey from ignorance to climate change to overconsumption and collapse.

I would have liked to tell you something different, but it's not 2015 anymore. It is no longer 1970 either, when we could still do something. Or 1990, pretty much humanity's last chance to avoid collapse. I was forced to give up the 'hopeful future of man ape and mother planet'. In turn, I hope you'll stick with it to work your way through the addenda, because it's a story that needs to be told. Science, truth and reality now tell us that we have actually waited too long. It is too late. Collapse is now locked into the system.

With these eleven addenda, I hope to arm you not only with facts and evidence and the latest insights from the scientific community. I especially hope that it will make you and your loved ones more collapse aware and resilient to what is coming. Because our future is no longer a few hundred years away, or in the next century, or at the end of this century, or in 2070 or 2050. Our future takes place in the next ten years.

To conclude, I don't think it would be prudent to wish you 'much reading pleasure'. I wish you lots of wisdom and strength instead.

The Frontal Confrontation: Climate Change

# About this book

The great thing about writing a post on *LinkedIn* is that, even more so than on Twitter and unlike Facebook, you are forced to limit your message to about 500 words (3.000 characters) for a post and about 200 words (1.250 characters) for a comment. *Schrijven is schrappen* ('To write is to delete' – thank you Simon Carmiggelt) is, as it were, enforced here, accurate to the very punctuation mark and that is good. Because it forces authors to shorten the message to a length that should be manageable even for the hurried, overloaded, *I'm-very-busy*-reader, without losing sight of the core message.

This book is an addendum, a supplement to my sixth book *Our Inner Limits*. There are a total of eleven addenda, four in Dutch and seven in English. The English addenda are not direct translations of the Dutch addenda. On *LinkedIn* I often respond to English posts in English. Sometimes I translate them into Dutch, but they also stand alone. The same applies the other way around: sometimes I translate a Dutch post into English, sometimes I do not. So, if you speak the English language – and who doesn't in the Netherlands? – and if you want to be completely informed, read all eleven. (If you don't master the Dutch language, I'm glad I am able to offer you seven English addenda. The gist of my message is just the same).

At an average reading speed of about 250 words per minute, each subchapter in this book will only take you a few minutes. So, I would like to say: do you have a little less time now? Then choose a few chapter titles that appeal to you and spend ten or fifteen minutes on them. Each post stands alone and all I did was put them into a book template and made sure that the information I referenced and responded to was not lost. So, you can pick up the addenda and

put them away whenever you want. In any case, it is best to take in the information in steps. I wouldn't want you to be overwhelmed.

Because the addenda are published as PDF books, the website links remain active. So, you can step out and take a trip to related information elsewhere and look for further depth there. In addition, you can find more links and information that apply generically in the appendices.

Each of the eleven addenda is the size of an average management book, between 30.000 and 40.000 words. The layout is like a complete book, so if you prefer to read on paper, you can easily submit the PDF as a print file to a print shop and voilà, you have a physical book in your hands, *easy peasy*.

The almost thousand posts were written from October 2022 through March 2024. All posts are presented in more or less chronological order and even though I present them in the form of a book, it is still a relatively loose collection of stories, insights and reflections. So don't be surprised by repetition and progressive insight. For a more structured foundation of my view on the coexistence and collaborating of the human species, I recommend that you read my book first or check out the website, which acts as a management summary to my book.

Each addendum is classified into 11 fixed chapters:

1. *The frontal confrontation*
2. *The collapse*
3. *Economy versus ecology*
4. *The Almighty Algorithm*
5. *Distraction, deception, doubt and deceit.*

6. *The climate collision*
7. *About climate stupidity*
8. *Looking down from above*
9. *Pollution, waste and destruction*
10. *Global consultation doesn't work*
11. *Science, truth and reality*

Please note: not all chapters appear equally in all addenda.

If you've worked your way through all eleven books, you'll have taken a journey from ignorance to climate change to overconsumption, collapse and acceptance. Not all journeys are equally enjoyable to make, and this journey is one of the beginning of the end, of frontal confrontation, major existential problems and the very last, ultimate taboo: the collapse of human civilization as we know it today. That, by the way, does not necessarily mean 'the end of the world': the extinction of the human species. But it has now become a serious option indeed.

Finally: while in my book *Our Inner Limits* I leave it to the dear reader to draw their own conclusions about where the human species is going, I am much more explicit in these eleven addenda, more 'right to your face' and perhaps a bit blunt here and there. Because as a self-proclaimed *confrontealist*, I passionately believe that only a frontal confrontation with truth and reality can, perhaps, open our eyes to what is coming our way.

Good luck and success!

Bart Flos, Helmond | February 2025

The Frontal Confrontation: Climate Change



# Chapter 1

## The frontal confrontation

### 1.1

#### SM257

### Why world population decline might just save us

I saw a post stating that more people are starting to switch to a diet with less meat, more fruit and vegetables, maybe even try to mix it up with a bit of a vegetarian or even vegan lifestyle. And that alternatives such as meat substitutes and cultured meat are on the rise. ‘More power to the vegetarians, absolute power to the vegans!’ (I’m paraphrasing here).

This was my response:

“It’s not enough. Not by far. Despite these statistics, and despite the fact that you can’t get everybody on this planet to turn vegetarian or vegan, the world population will grow with 1% each year, from 8 billion today to 10 billion in 2050, before it starts to level out and maybe even decline. All of these people will want to get rich, healthy, happy and grow old. Nobody wants to decline; we all want to at least keep what we’ve got and preferably get a little more. That’s simply unsustainable.

Our global strategy to mitigate overshoot (\*) is wrong. We should take far more drastic action. For instance, if we decrease the human population with 1% each year (which is the opposite of the current growth rate), we'll reach 6 billion people in 2050 (instead of 10, which is a good start) and 1,3 billion by the end of the next century (the ideal number). This planet might be able to cope with 1 or 2 billion people, but not 10. Not by a long shot.

So yeah. Let's go. Let's decline, let's reduce the world population and let's start right now. Does anyone have any practical suggestions on how to start such a process and keep it going for decades on end?

(\*) Overshoot or overconsumption, when a population exceeds the carrying capacity of its habitat. Overshoot isn't just beginning. It's been going on for over half a century now and is currently in its accelerating phase. Overconsumption is always met with collapse. It's locked into the system. For us that implies the collapse of our suprasystemic infrastructure.

If you're interested in the concept of overshoot, see Appendix IV.

## 1.2

### SM269

## Reversing the Stripes of Doom

Attempts were made on the social media to have us wear the ‘doomsday-stripes’. This is a well-known picture of increasing global average surface temperatures, depicted as stripes varying in color from left to right, starting with an ice-cold deep blue on the left, via white, to a flaming deep red on the right, representing today’s boiling status.

It was suggested we should all wear these stripes, literally on t-shirts and hoodies, to communicate the high alert status of climate change. I protested the whole idea. You probably want to know why. Thus was my response:

‘Why do you show the ‘doomsday-stripes’?’

Apparently there’s some new climate change initiative going around that encourages us to wear and therefore show the ‘doomsday-stripes’, those depictions in which the rising average surface temperature on Earth is shown as a ‘barcode of doom’, with colors going from year to year, changing from cold blue to red hot, over the past 50 years, chronically going from left to right.

I adamantly refuse to wear or show them in any way, shape or form! I will spit on it if it’s displayed on buildings and objects. I have explained myself about all that in previous posts. But I have also nuanced these posts and tempered my radical stance in this matter. Because it’s not that I do not want to wear and show these stripes. I just don’t want to show them the way they are now.

Because this 'doomsday barcode' is self-explanatory and anyone can extrapolate what's coming our way.

So, I'm perfectly fine showing these stripes in about 50 years from now, when they look like the exact opposite. I inserted a depiction that was turned upside-down, with the stripes now starting with a flaming deep red on the left, via white, to an ice-cold deep blue on the right, depicting the situation at around 2070.

Because then we'll have something to show for ourselves. Then we have proven to ourselves that we're nót all talk and no action. Then we can proudly keep our heads up high, because we have cleaned the environment, restored the biodiversity and reversed climate change.

Thén I'll be one hell of a proud motherfucker, wearing my strips with dignity, respect and honor! Proud to be part of a species that was able to go from fundamental division to global unification. Proud to be part of a transition that involved all of us, all 200 nations and all 8 to 10 billion specimens of the species *Homo sapiens*, 'the wise, thinking, modern man'.

Until such time I'll consider us *Homo infantilicus*, 'the stupid, ignorant cave man'.

## 1.3

### SM271

# Understanding the hypocrisy of the fossil fuel industry

It was all over the news in 2023: the fossil fuel industry backed down on previous promises and pledges and started to delay their strategy to phase out oil, coal and gas. Cunning tactics and clever wording were used to deceive us, distract us and providing us with the impression that it was only temporary and that they would ‘pick up the pace again in 2030, 2035, 2040...’.

Outrage ensued within the climate change movement, and it was suggested we should see right through it and confront them with their outright hypocrisy.

This was my reaction:

“I agree that we should be able to recognize these delay tactics and try to outmaneuver them. Be smarter than the delayers, rise above the climate deniers. But how can we do that if we fail to recognize WHY people are behaving this way? I mean, everybody is able to see the extreme weather, the climate disasters roaming the planet and the increase of the frequency and intensity of these events (\*).

People do recognize it, but choose to ignore it, deny it, diminish it, swipe it away, be afraid of it, don’t want it to be true and hope it will go away. The why-question is éverything! People deny climate change (or delay actions to reduce

the emissions of greenhouse gasses, as the fossil fuel industry shamelessly does), not because they don't see the shit storm, but because it goes against their primary, supralocal interest: their individual wellbeing and prosperity and that of their small social groups of family, household, friends, colleagues and teammates.

The world community is an illusion! We are hopelessly fragmented into hundreds of millions of small social groups, that are, in general, taking care of themselves first. Everybody wants to be rich, healthy, happy and grow old. Nobody wants to decline or reduce. Everybody wants to at least keep what they've got, preferably get a little more.

It's simply unsustainable.

(\*) In fact, environmental pollution, destruction of the biodiversity and climate change are mere symptoms of the overarching problem: overshoot or overconsumption, when a population exceeds the carrying capacity of its habitat. Overshoot is not just beginning. It's been going on for over half a century now and is currently in its accelerating phase. Overconsumption is always met with collapse. It's locked into the system.

If you're interested in the concept of overshoot, see Appendix IV.

## 1.4

### SM279

# What does 1% population decline per year mean?

Those who follow me here on LinkedIn know that I am critical of the proposed solutions to deal with our existential crisis. This crisis is called overshoot or overconsumption, when a population exceeds the carrying capacity of its habitat.

Homo sapiens, the "wise, thinking man," is, from standpoint of evolution and natural selection, wholly unfit to be numbered in the billions. We are hunter-gatherers, evolved to roam the savannas in small social groups. But we are also very fertile. The world's population is currently growing at 1% per year. That means that the 8 billion people on the planet today will have multiplied to 10 billion by 2050.

All those people want to become rich, healthy, happy and grow old. No one wants to decline or decrease. We all want to keep at least what we've got, preferably a little more. That is simply unsustainable. Overshoot is always punished with collapse; it is embedded in the system. There are simply too many of us, we consume too much, waste too much, pollute too much and heat too much.

Population reduction is the only solution. With a population decline of 1% per year, we will have 6 billion people in 2050 (a good start) and 1,3 billion by 2200 (the ideal number). Let me now make this fact concrete for our country.

The Netherlands has 17,5 million inhabitants. Every year there are about 170.000 deaths and 167.000 people are 'born alive'. If the Netherlands has to reduce its population by 1% per year, then the deaths must first be compensated. So theoretically, 170.000 people are allowed to be born every year.

But 1% decline per year means that a net 175.000 people per year have to 'subtracted'. That means that the population must be er, 'reduced' by at least 5,000 extra people per year. The simple conclusion is: no more pregnancies in the Netherlands! The population will not decrease by itself and those 5,000 fewer people per year will have to be actively, ehm, 'declined'.

Do you also feel an extremely uncomfortable feeling coming on? No more pregnancies and every year 5,000 people have to eh, 'disappear', on top of the people who die every year anyway, so that every 10 years 1,75 million people 'get subtracted' and we will have 13,4 million inhabitants in 2050 and 2,9 million in 2200. That is the target number for the end of the century.

(Note: 1% shrinkage per year is not a linear process but an exponential one — in case you're doing the math yourself).

Doesn't feel right, does it? Because how do you accomplish something like that? And of course, it applies to all 200 countries of the world. Each nation must achieve a 1% contraction in order to reach 1,3 billion people worldwide by 2200. But yes, if we do nothing, we will continue to grow at 1% per year to



10 billion people in 2050. That simple fact, based on current trends, has collapse written all over it.

## 1.5

### SM291

## Imagine you were born in the year 2000

Somebody wrote:

*“Imagine you were born in the year 1900.*

- *When you're 14, World War I begins and ends when you're 18 with 22 million dead.*
- *Soon after a global pandemic, the Spanish Flu, appears, killing 50 million people. And you're alive and 20 years old.*
- *When you're 29 you survive the global economic crisis that started with the collapse of the New York Stock Exchange, causing inflation, unemployment and famine.*
- *When you're 33 years old the nazis come to power.*
- *When you're 39, World War II begins and ends when you're 45 years old with a 60 million dead. In the Holocaust 6 million Jews die.*
- *When you're 52, the Korean War begins.*
- *When you're 64, the Vietnam War begins and ends when you're 75.*

*A child born in 1985 thinks his grandparents have no idea how difficult life is, but they have survived several wars and catastrophes. Today we have all the comforts in a new world, amid a new pandemic. But we complain because we need to wear masks. We complain because we must stay confined to our homes where we have food, electricity, running water, Wi-Fi, even Netflix!*

*None of that existed back in the day. But humanity survived those circumstances and never lost their joy of living.*

*A minor change in our perspective can generate miracles. We should be thankful that we are alive. We should do everything we need to do to protect and help each other.”*

This was my response:

“Imagine you were born in the year 2000.

— When you’re 7, the first iPhone is presented. Your parents are thinking about getting you one.

— When you’re 8, the financial crisis hits the globe. Almost 9 million jobs are lost and \$ 19 trillion of capital is vaporized.

— When you’re 19, the Corona-pandemic starts, robbing you of your right to have fun. Almost 7 million people die globally.

— When you’re 23, atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>-level is at 420 ppm and the atmosphere, biosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere and cryosphere are entering a state of cascade failure, leading to unprecedented ocean and surface temperatures.

— When you’re 24, the El Niño / La Niña reversal intensifies heat all over the world. Temperature records are smashed and extreme heatwaves, droughts, downpours and floodings wash over the planet.

— When you’re 40, the average global surface temperature has breached the 2C limit and climate disasters are roaming the planet. During the summer you have to stay indoors. CO<sub>2</sub>-level is now at 460 ppm.

— When you’re 50, the average global surface temperature has gone beyond the 2,5C limit, CO<sub>2</sub>-level is at a staggering 500 ppm. Mass migrations lead to

conflict, crisis and war. Countries are tightening their borders. A climate disaster occurs every day, the weather has become a lethal phenomenon.

— When you're 60, the world as you know it has totally changed. Average surface temperature has now surpassed the 3C marker and CO<sub>2</sub>-level is at 530 ppm. Hundreds of millions of people have fled the shores and migrated towards the poles. The infrastructure is in ruins, supply of energy and food is severely interrupted all over the planet.

— When you're 70, the situation has gone completely out of control. Global warming has passed the 3,5C marker and is moving towards 4C of warming: hell on Earth. The death toll has risen to billions of people across the globe and countries are fighting wars over the remaining food and water sources. There is no prosperity, no wellbeing; it's everybody for themselves. Human civilization is reverting to its state at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

— When you're 80, you make the mistake of going outside during a killing heatwave with wet bulb temperatures of 37C (and air temperatures surpassing 45C for days in a row) and you die of organ failure due to a heat stroke. You are one of the hundreds of millions of people to suffer and die as a result of environmental pollution, destruction of the biodiversity and climate change (\*).

I think that we would be wise not to cry victory over the past. The present is already giving us all the signs of what our future is going to be like. It will be far worse than the most destructive global events we've seen so far. World Wars and pandemics will pale in comparison.

This generation will see the beginning of the end. Our children will live on the edge of hell and our grandchildren will inherit a world that is devoid of prosperity and wellbeing. We're not Homo sapiens, the 'wise, modern, thinking man'. We're Homo infantilicus.

(\* Environmental pollution, destruction of the biodiversity and climate change are symptoms of overshoot or overconsumption, when a population exceeds the carrying capacity of its habitat. Overshoot is not just beginning. It's been going on for over half a century now and is currently in its accelerating phase. Overconsumption is always met with collapse; it's locked into the system. See also Appendix IV".

## 1.6

### SM320

#### Ignoring the big ‘IF’s

Hopefully bright and shiny renewables projections permeate the internet and lay it out before us: it’s all going to be simply great, all swell and dandy, if we only sit back and see events unfold. Yes, we’re making a mess, for sure, and we are ashamed, but it’s not too late to fix it. Look at these numbers rising, whilst these numbers are falling. We just need to sit tight and see it through.

Perhaps. But I guess we just don’t see the big ‘IF’ in these kinds of reports. These projections are all well and good – well, they’re actually horrifyingly bad – but they assume that the fossil fuel industry will hold itself to its own projections.

– *‘IF we stick to our targets and change our habits, we might reduce fossil fuel demand so that the industry will have no choice but to follow.’*

– *‘IF the production of green energy continues to develop, the fossil fuel industry will have no choice but to adapt.’*

– *‘IF we start changing right now, we can still do something about our existential predicament.’*

See where I’m going with this? Because in the mean while we burn 100 million barrels of oil, 22 million metric tons of coal and 11 billion cubic meters of natural gas every day. We produce, on a daily basis, 190.000 non-electrical vehicles, 1 million metric tons of plastic, 5,5 million tons of waste and 11 million tons of cement.

As a consequence, we add 150 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent to the atmosphere every day and our atmosphere, biosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere and cryosphere have now entered a state of cascade failure, the prelude to suprasystemic collapse.

What the HECK are we doing? Are we so daft that we don't see what's coming our way? Are we so obtuse?





In 2015, author, public speaker and change specialist Bart Flos published his fifth book, *Vooruitkijken voor gevorderden* ('Futurology for Fanatics'). In this book he paints a hopeful picture of the limitless possibilities of the human species *Homo sapiens* to shape its own future.

*Fast forward to 2022*

Since the publication of that book, things have quickly gotten out of hand with the environment, biodiversity and climate. It prompted Flos to write his sixth book: *Demens als grens* ('Our Inner Limits'). It was much less hopeful as a plea, unfortunately, but it still contained solutions to turn the tide.

*Fast forward to 2024*

"After the publication of *Our Inner Limits*, I could not have imagined how quickly things would get so much worse. The year 2023 is the year that we passed the 'elbow' of the exponential curve. What we are left with now is chaos and unpredictability. I wrote almost a thousand posts about it and I didn't want them to get lost in the endless timelines of our social media platforms," says Flos.

This is one of the eleven addenda to *Our Inner Limits*, in which Flos's posts are included in book form. It takes you on a head-on confrontational journey from ignorance via climate change to overconsumption and collapse. We will break the last ultimate taboo together: daring to say that we have waited too long, that it is now too late and that we will have to suffer the consequences of our destructive collective behavior as a human species.

**Want to learn more? Go to [www.demensalsgrens.nl](http://www.demensalsgrens.nl)**