**PRESS RELEASE**

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**University of Illinois to host Dutch Ambassador for 14th Annual EU Day**

Champaign, February 17th – What is the state of the European Union? Will 2016 be the last year of the Schengen agreement? How can EU Member States cope with an increasing number of migrants? Will the EU and its Member States be able to adopt a new Global Security Strategy permitting the Union to deal with pressing security crises? Can the EU continue its transition toward becoming a Green power? And can the Union renew itself for economic growth, fiscal soundness and stable rates of employment? These are the [priorities](http://english.eu2016.nl/eu-presidency/input-and-priorities) identified by the Netherlands EU Presidency at the beginning its mandate on January 1st, 2016

The European Union Center at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign is privileged to welcome for its 14th [Annual EU Day](http://europe.illinois.edu/events/2016-eu-day/) His Excellency [Henne Schuwer](http://www.the-netherlands.org/organization/embassy-washington-d.c/ambassador-henne-schuwer.html), Ambassador of the Netherlands to the United States on February 29th, 2016. Mr. Ambassador will address the audience to present the views and policy agenda of one of the original six Member States.

The Netherlands is an important EU Member State considering its [stature on the international stage](http://www.the-netherlands.org/news/2016/01/foreign-policy-january-18-newsletter.html), its leadership in growing jobs and working toward a digital single market, its influence in promoting human rights and international law, and a central Eurozone member.

In terms of economic and political situations, the Netherlands is rarely mentioned in the media, but is doing quite well compared to its Eurozone partners. For instance, the Netherlands has seen a decline in the level of unemployment (around 6.9% in 2015) and a predicted GDP growth by 0.2 points in the coming two years (around 2% in 2015). However, in recent years, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has been facing serious internal challenges with the rise of populist parties, such as the Party for Freedom (PVV) led by Geert Wilders, whom has been calling for stricter migratory policies and more protectionist measures.

The 2016 EU Day will be the opportunity to reflect on an important EU Member State at an axiomatic moment of the European integration project.

**Schedule of the Event for Monday, February 29th, 2016 – Open to the Public**

Location: Alice Campbell Alumni Center Ballroom, 601 S. Lincoln Ave., Urbana, IL 61801

10am-11:30am “State of the European Union”

His Excellency Henne Schuwer

The Ambassador of Netherlands to the United States

11:30-12:20pm Reception