

Netherlands

Geography

Location: Western Europe, bordering the North Sea, between Belgium and Germany

Area:

total area: 37,330 sq km

land area: 33,920 sq km

Land boundaries: total 1,027 km, Belgium 450 km, Germany 577 km

Coastline: 451 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive fishing zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: temperate; marine; cool summers and mild winters

Terrain: mostly coastal lowland and reclaimed land (polders); some hills in southeast

Natural resources: natural gas, petroleum, fertile soil

Land use:

arable land: 26%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 32%

forest and woodland: 9%

other: 32%

Irrigated land: 5,500 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: water pollution in the form of heavy metals, organic compounds, and nutrients such as nitrates and phosphates; air

pollution from vehicles and refining activities; acid rain

natural hazards: the extensive system of dikes and dams, protects nearly one-half of the total area from being flooded

Note: located at mouths of three major European rivers (Rhine, Maas or Meuse, and Schelde)

People

Population: 15,452,903 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 18% (female 1,382,057; male 1,445,451)

15-64 years: 68% (female 5,184,224; male 5,369,018)

65 years and over: 14% (female 1,238,336; male 833,817) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.52% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 12.42 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 8.48 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 1.29 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 6 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 77.95 years
male: 74.9 years
female: 81.17 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 1.56 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Dutchman(men), Dutchwoman(women)

adjective: Dutch

Ethnic divisions: Dutch 96%, Moroccans, Turks, and other 4%
(1988)

Religions: Roman Catholic 34%, Protestant 25%, Muslim 3%, other
2%, unaffiliated 36% (1991)

Languages: Dutch

Literacy:

total population: 99%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Kingdom of the Netherlands

conventional short form: Netherlands

local long form: Koninkrijk de Nederlanden

local short form: Nederland

Digraph: NL

Type: constitutional monarchy

Capital: Amsterdam; The Hague is the seat of government

Independence: 1579 (from Spain)

National holiday: Queen's Day, 30 April (1938)

Constitution: 17 February 1983

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: three equal horizontal bands of red (top), white, and blue; similar to the flag of Luxembourg, which uses a lighter blue and is longer

Economy

Overview: This highly developed and affluent economy is based on private enterprise. Indeed the Netherlands ranks third worldwide in value of agricultural exports, behind the US and France. High unemployment and a sizable budget deficit are currently the most serious economic problems.

Industries: agroindustries, metal and engineering products, electrical machinery and equipment, chemicals, petroleum, fishing, construction, microelectronics

Agriculture: accounts for 4.6% of GDP; animal production predominates; crops - grains, potatoes, sugar beets, fruits, vegetables; shortages of grain, fats, and oils

Illicit drugs: important gateway for cocaine, heroin, and hashish entering Europe; European producer of illicit amphetamines and other synthetic drugs

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 2,757 km

Highways:

total: 104,831 km

Inland waterways: 6,340 km, of which 35% is usable by craft of 1,000 metric ton capacity or larger

Pipelines: crude oil 418 km; petroleum products 965 km; natural gas 10,230 km

Ports: Amsterdam, Delfzijl, Dordrecht, Eemshaven, Groningen, Haarlem, Ijmuiden, Maastricht, Rotterdam, Terneuzen, Utrecht

Airports:

total: 29

Defence Forces

Branches: Royal Netherlands Army, Royal Netherlands Navy
(includes Naval Air Service and Marine Corps), Royal Netherlands
Air Force, Royal Constabulary