

# INEQUALITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS

## NETHERLANDS – ABOVE AVERAGE IN THE EU BUT THERE ARE WORRYING TRENDS

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### Introduction

The first Netherlands national report on the SDGs paints a mixed picture. There is positive progress on several goals – decent work and economic growth; responsible consumption and production; and peace, justice and strong institutions. In contrast, the trends for SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) are not so encouraging.

### Poverty, income inequality, employment

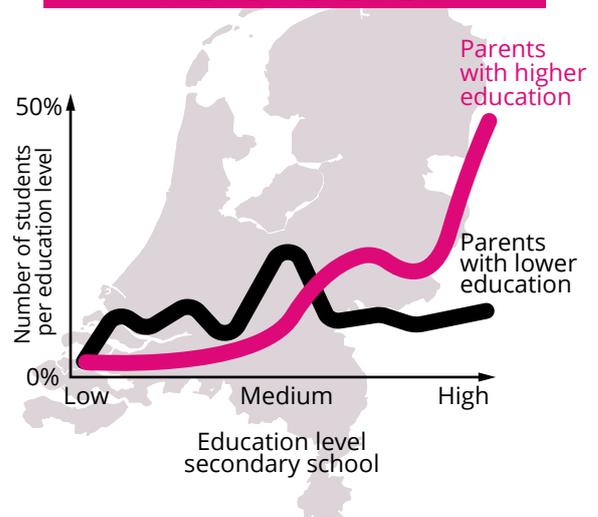
Netherlands' per capita income of USD 51,340, the ninth highest among OECD countries.<sup>1</sup> This prosperity is not equally shared, however: the top 20% of the population earn four times as much as the bottom 20% (Gini coefficient is 0.28,<sup>2</sup> slightly below, and therefore better than, the EU average of 0.30);<sup>3</sup> over 1.4 million people (8.8% of the population) live below the poverty line; and 125,000 children (7% of all children) are growing up in long-term poverty.

There is low unemployment overall – 3.3%<sup>4</sup> (down from 7.9% in 2014) but rates are higher or lower for different groups of workers/employees. People with a migrant background are more likely to be unemployed, and it is worse if they are from a non-western background.<sup>5</sup> However, in 2017, having a job is no longer a guarantee of that a household is not at risk of poverty – the number of working poor has risen by 60% since 2000, from 210,00 to 320,000,<sup>6</sup> but this is still low compared to other European countries.<sup>7</sup>

### Gender

The hourly wage rate is 5% higher for men in the public sector and 7% higher in the private sector. Netherlands has by far the highest rates of part-time work in the European Union for both women and men: more than three-quarters of the 61% of women who have paid employment work part-time; more than a quarter of men work part-time.<sup>8</sup> The proportion of women in the national parliament and local government in the Netherlands is high (38%, 57 seats) and stable. The proportion of women in top positions and on supervisory boards has not yet reached the 30% target set by the government.

### EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS



Source: <https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/onderwijsinspectie/documenten/rapporten/2019/04/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2019/Rapport+De+Staat+van+het+Onderwijs+2019+.pdf>

## Education

Children of professionals and university educated parents more likely to go to university and enjoy better opportunities in life. Teachers appear to have lower expectations of children of parents of lower educational achievement or of parents with a migration background and as a consequence they receive less support from schools in their attempts to access tertiary education, even when they have satisfactory test scores.<sup>9</sup> Changes in the loan system, selection in education and internationalization may exacerbate these differences.

## Environment

The level of atmospheric PM2.5 particles that are small enough to enter and damage the lungs, is 14.0 micrograms per cubic metre, exceeding the 10 micrograms limit set by the World Health Organisation. Negotiations are under way to agree to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 49% by 2030 with the target to be underpinned by law.

## International cooperation

The Netherlands' large agro-food sector has an unsustainable carbon footprint with negative impacts in third countries. The 2017 VNR<sup>10</sup> stated that 'high environmental pressures are placed on low-income countries and middle-income countries to meet the Netherlands' food production needs.'<sup>11</sup>

Netherlands is the eighth-largest donor country, spending US\$5 billion on net ODA in 2017 (0.6% of GNI, down from 0.65% in 2016). Its four priorities are security and the rule of law; water management; food security; and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR, including HIV/AIDS).

## Migration, young people and discrimination

The Netherlands has a higher than average population of people born outside the EU, 11.5%<sup>12</sup> (EU average is 4.1%).<sup>13</sup> With regard to migration generally the Netherlands is performing less well, falling from a score of 69/100 in 2010 in the Migration Policy Index to 60/100 in 2014.<sup>14</sup>

Life is becoming more difficult for young people. Increases in flexible working practices and precarious work means that gap in income and wealth between generations is growing.

## Recommendations

- Make agriculture and agro-food business sustainable and reduce Netherlands' carbon footprint.
- Speed up climate adaptation.
- Do more to promote emancipation – provide social security and equal treatment for every individual; advance the economic independence of women and promote them to higher positions.
- Do more to narrow the growing opportunity gap in Dutch education, based on ethnicity and socio-economic class - this is a cause for concern and demands action.
- Invest in achieving the SDGs, both in the Netherlands and in developing countries.

**To read the full national report and the comprehensive Europe-wide report with all references, please visit:** [www.sdgwatcheurope.org/SDG10](http://www.sdgwatcheurope.org/SDG10)



This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this factsheet are the sole responsibility of "Make Europe Sustainable For All" project and can under no circumstances be taken as reflecting the position of the European Union.

- <sup>1</sup> OECD, Data. The Netherlands Gross domestic product (GDP), <https://data.oecd.org/gdp/gross-domestic-product-gdp.htm> (20.02.2019).
- <sup>2</sup> OECD, OECD Data. Income inequality, <https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm#indicator-chart> (20.02.2019).
- <sup>3</sup> OECD, Better Life Index. The Netherlands <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/netherlands/>
- <sup>4</sup> Eurostat, March 2019. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics)
- <sup>5</sup> In 2017 the unemployment for migrants with a non-Western background was 11.1% compared with 5.7% for migrants with a western background. In the Netherlands only first and second-generation (with one parent born in a non-Western country) are regarded as having a non-western background.
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2018/10/number-of-working-poor-has-risen-by-60-this-century/>
- <sup>7</sup> [https://www.scp.nl/Nieuws/Aandeel\\_werkende\\_armen\\_in\\_Nederland\\_gegroeid\\_en\\_overtreft\\_dat\\_van\\_Denemarken\\_en\\_Belgi](https://www.scp.nl/Nieuws/Aandeel_werkende_armen_in_Nederland_gegroeid_en_overtreft_dat_van_Denemarken_en_Belgi)
- <sup>8</sup> Statistics Netherlands (2018). Sustainable Development Goal 10: the situation of the Netherlands. Page 30.
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/documenten/rapporten/2019/04/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2019>
- <sup>10</sup> [https://www.sdgnederland.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/VNR-Kingdom-of-the-Netherlands\\_final.pdf](https://www.sdgnederland.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/VNR-Kingdom-of-the-Netherlands_final.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> [Statistics Netherlands Press Release](#)
- <sup>12</sup> Migration Integration Policy Index 2015. Netherlands. <http://mipex.eu/netherlands>
- <sup>13</sup> Eurostat 2016 [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=People\\_in\\_the\\_EU\\_-\\_statistics\\_on\\_origin\\_of\\_residents#Foreign-born\\_residents\\_from\\_countries\\_outside\\_the\\_EU](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=People_in_the_EU_-_statistics_on_origin_of_residents#Foreign-born_residents_from_countries_outside_the_EU).
- <sup>14</sup> <http://mipex.eu/netherlands>