

# THE NETHERLANDS

Continent: Europe

[Population](#): 17.7 million

[Life Expectancy \(at Birth\)](#): 81.41 years

[Governance System](#): Constitutional Monarchy

Capital: Amsterdam

[Area](#): 41,850 km<sup>2</sup>

Major Languages: Dutch, West Frisian

[GDP \(2021\)](#): \$1,018,007 (US\$ Millions)

## **Select Global Rankings**

[Human Development Index](#): 10

[Fragile States Index \(Inverted\)](#): 4

[Soft Power 30 rank](#): 10

[Human Freedom Index](#): 11

[World Happiness Ranking](#): 5

[Good Country Index](#): 4

## **Elite Sport System Rankings**

[Global Cup Ranking](#): 12

[Per Capita Cup Ranking](#): 12

[Olympic Medals – Summer '20](#): 36 (9<sup>th</sup>)

[Olympic Medals – Winter '22](#): 17 (9<sup>th</sup>)

## **Football/World Cup Profile**

[FIFA Region](#): UEFA

[FIFA Ranking \(Oct\)](#): 7

World Cup Appearances: 10

*Best World Cup Performance(s): Finalists (1974, 1978, 2010)*

Qualification: UEFA Group G winners

[World Cup Group](#): A

Last World Cup Appearance: 2014

## **Netherlands in INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (by Anthony Samuels)**

The Netherlands, informally referred to as Holland, is a country on the Northwestern coast of continental Europe bordering Germany, France, and Belgium. The largest of the so called 'low countries', which include Belgium and Luxembourg, The Netherlands's geography is characterized by canals and waterways that help to keep the country from flooding. At an average elevation of just 30 metres above sea level, The Netherlands has long been challenged by the encroaching ocean and much of its land area is the result of ongoing reclamation projects dating back to the Middle Ages. The ingenuity and adaptability required to thrive in these lands has led the people of The Netherlands, the Dutch, to a rich history and prominent position in current international affairs.

Inhabited by different Celtic and Germanic groups for much of early history, the territory of The Netherlands formed the northern periphery of the Roman Empire. The area would become an important province of different Frankish and German kingdoms that emerged in the Early Middle Ages, however, local languages began to diverge at this time from those of their overlords. Cultural difference was amplified during the Dutch experience of Viking invaders, leading to the establishment of many semi-independent Dutch states. During the High to Late Middle Ages, these states began

processes of land reclamation that boosted agricultural production and population, as the Dutch people also became renowned seafarers and traders. Under the overlordship of the Hapsburg dynasty, The Netherlands was further consolidated before being made a possession of the Spanish royal family. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, dissatisfaction with Spanish rule and religious tensions led the protestant-majority Dutch people to revolt in the Eighty Years' War, eventually establishing an independent Dutch Republic in 1648. Thus began a 'Dutch Golden Age' with The Netherlands rising to prominence in economic development, scientific advancement, and artistic expression. The Dutch Republic joined other European nations in overseas exploration and colonization, establishing colonies in the Caribbean, Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. The Dutch East India Company even beat out colonial rivals Portugal in establishing exclusive trading rights with the secretive nation of Japan. Wars with European powers and economic decline eventually reduced Dutch power, and The Netherlands was re-established as a constitutional monarchy in 1815 after the Napoleonic Wars. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, The Netherlands was engaged in processes of industrialization and political reform that saw Belgium and Luxembourg break away and establish their own independence. The Netherlands maintained its colonial empire, which included modern-day Indonesia, Guyana, and Suriname. Remaining neutral throughout World War 1, The Netherlands then experienced economic decline during the Great Depression. In World War 2, the country was overrun by Nazi Germany, with the royal family fleeing to the United Kingdom and eventually to Canada. Canadian troops also played a large role in liberating The Netherlands from Nazi occupation, cementing a lasting friendship between the two nations.

In the period following the World Wars, The Netherlands fought a war with Indonesia before eventually engaging in the decolonization of its remaining overseas empire. Shifting its focus to Europe, The Netherlands became a founding member of NATO, the EU, OECD, and the WTO and now hosts several international institutions such as the ICC, giving the nation a disproportionately large international influence in relation to its size. Today, The Netherlands is one of the world's largest agricultural exporters and the Dutch city of Rotterdam is Europe's busiest seaport, making the country a global trade hub. The Netherlands is known for its liberal social policies as well as its highly ranked human development and quality of life.