

The Netherlands

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Thomas Karlsson and Esa Österberg (2002)

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The country

The Netherlands, unofficially Holland, is situated in north-western Europe, west of Germany and north of Belgium and bordered on the west and north by the North Sea. The Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, islands in the Caribbean Sea, also belong to the country. The European part of the Netherlands has a total area of 41,526 km². The capital and largest city is Amsterdam. The second largest city, Rotterdam, is one of the largest harbour cities in the world.

With a population of more than 16 million inhabitants, the Netherlands is one of the world's most densely populated countries, with nearly 500 inhabitants per km² (CBS, 2005) Some 89 per cent of the people live in urban areas. The official language in the Netherlands is Dutch. Roman Catholics constitute about 33 per cent and Protestants about 23 per cent of the population. About 39 per cent of the population are not members of any church.

Trade and services are essential parts of the Dutch economy. Industrial production was relatively unimportant until the development of chemical and electronics industries after the Second World War. Nowadays the Netherlands is the world's sixth largest exporting country, and the sixth largest source of investment. The work force numbers 6.8 million, and in the mid-1990s about 23 per cent of the population worked in the industrial sector, approximately 4 per cent in the agriculture and about 73 per cent in the service sector. In 2004 unemployment stood at around 6.6 per cent (CBS, 2005).

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. The head of the state is the monarch. The parliament (Staten-Generaal) consists of two chambers, the indirectly elected First Chamber with 75 members and the directly elected Second Chamber, whose 150 members control the government and propose legislation. Members of both houses serve a four-year term. The cabinet consists of ministers and is chaired by the prime minister.

Alcohol production and trade

Two producers, Heineken and Bols, dominate the production of distilled spirits in the Netherlands. They produce about 80 per cent of all Dutch distilled spirits. In 1996 total Dutch spirits production amounted to 486,500 hectolitres. Dutch consumers prefer domestic distilled spirits. For instance, in the mid-1990s about 70 per cent of the Dutch spirits consumption constituted of domestically distilled spirits. Exports of distilled spirits have been increasing in the 1990s. In the mid-1990s, exported spirits accounted

for nearly 60 per cent of the total spirits production. Ten years earlier, the corresponding figure was 20 per cent (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997).

In 1996, there were 15 brewery companies operating altogether 17 breweries in the Netherlands. Two companies, Heineken and Allied Breweries, dominate the Dutch beer production, and they also produce the great majority of beer consumed in the Netherlands. In the mid-1990s only 5 per cent of Dutch beer consumption consisted of imported beer. On the other hand, nearly 50 per cent of all beer produced in the Netherlands was exported. In 1996 the total production of beer was 23.5 million hectolitres. In 1960 the corresponding figure was only 3.5 million hectolitres (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997).

In the Netherlands wine production is on a very low level because the climate is not suitable for growing grapes. Consequently, virtually all of the wine consumed in the Netherlands is imported (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997). This holds both for still and sparkling wine, as well as for fortified wine.

At the start of 2003, there were nearly 2940 off-premise licensed retail outlets for distilled spirits in the Netherlands. Their number has increased by some 8 per cent during the last decade. Nowadays these licensed retail outlets account for about 21 per cent of total beverage sales. Grocery stores without a licence cover about 82 per cent of beer sales and some 67 per cent of wine sales. There are about 43,000 on-premise licences in the Netherlands, some 25,000 being bars or restaurants open to the general public (personal communication Van Ginneken, 2005).

Around 10,000 people are employed in breweries and plants distilling spirits. In the same year around 100,000 people are employed in the horeca industry, and around 7,500 in licensed liquor stores (personal communication Van Ginneken, 2005).

Alcohol consumption

Drinking alcohol is nowadays deeply rooted in the Dutch society (Bongers, van de Goor & Garretsen, 1998). In 1961 consumption was 2.8 litres of pure alcohol per capita. It rose over the years to reach a high in the end of the seventies: 9.4 litres per capita in 1979. A slow decrease brought consumption to 7.9 litres per capita in 1993/1994. From then on total consumption increased slightly again and more or less stabilised around 8.1/8.2 litres per capita. In 2000 total consumption was 8.2 litres, in 2001 8.1 litres of alcohol per capita (World Drink Trends, 2003).

Table 13.1. Consumption of alcoholic beverages by beverage categories in the Netherlands in litres of pure alcohol per capita and as percentages of total recorded alcohol consumption in the years 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985 and 1995, five years' averages

	1955	1965	1975	1985	1995*
Total alcohol consumption	2.10	3.89	8.22	8.56	8.21
Consumption of distilled spirits	1.15	1.58	2.83	2.30	1.77
Consumption of wines	0.16	0.45	1.43	2.00	2.14
Consumption of beer	0.80	1.87	3.96	4.26	4.29
Percentage of distilled spirits	55	41	34	27	22
Percentage of wines	8	12	17	23	26
Percentage of beer	38	48	48	50	52

* Hurst, Gregory & Gussman (1997) and World Drink Trends (2002) are using somewhat different alcohol contents for wine and beer. According to World Drink Trends the figure for total alcohol consumption in 1995 is 8.0 litres.

Sources: Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997; World Drink Trends, 2002.

Since the mid-1980s, the figure for yearly beer consumption has fluctuated around 85 litres per capita, including an increase to about 90 litres in the early 1990s. This increase was attributed to a developing market for no- or low-alcohol beers (which is also counted in the figures). In 2000 beer consumption was down again to 82.4 litres per capita. The decline seems to continue. In 2003 beer consumption was 79 litres (World Drink Trends, 2003; CBS, 2005).

Wine consumption increased steadily from the early 1950s until 1984, when it reached the figure of 15.2 litres per capita. During the 1950-1984 period, wine consumption increased at a rate considerably faster than that of beer. In the latter part of the 1980s wine consumption was fairly stable but increased again in the 1990s. In 2003 the consumption of wine was 19.6 litres per capita (World Drink Trends, 2003; CBS 2005).

The consumption of distilled spirits increased in the 1960s and early 1970s. It peaked in 1975 at 3.4 litres of pure alcohol per capita. Since then the consumption of distilled spirits has steadily decreased until the mid nineties and then stayed at the same level. From 1999 until 2002 it was 1.7 litres of pure alcohol per capita. In 2003 it was 1.5 litres of pure alcohol (World Drink Trends, 2003; CBS, 2005).

In the Netherlands the national spirits drink is jenever, a beverage that dates back to the sixteenth century. In the early 1980s it accounted for nearly 50 per cent of the consumption of distilled spirits. Another important feature in the Dutch consumption pattern has been the consumption of fortified wines. In the late 1970s fortified wines accounted for one third of the total wine consumption in the Netherlands (Brown, Dewar & Wallace, 1982).

The growth in beer and especially in wine consumption has resulted in a substantial decrease in the proportion of distilled spirits of the total alcohol consumption since the 1950s. In 1950 distilled spirits represented 71 per cent of the total alcohol consumption. In 1995 its proportion had declined to 20 per cent. For beer the development has been quite the opposite. In 1950, beer accounted for 26 per cent of the total alcohol

consumption. By the mid-1960s, this figure had increased to nearly 50 per cent. Since then the consumption rate of beer has been quite stable. In 1995, it accounted for 52 per cent of the total alcohol consumption. The proportion of wine has increased from 4 per cent of the total alcohol consumption in 1950 to 24 per cent in 1995.

The consumption of alcoholic beverages is very common among the adult population in the Netherlands. A survey from 1998 showed that 85 per cent of the population aged 16 years and over consumed alcohol. As drinking in the Netherlands is closely associated with hospitality and sociability, much more alcohol is consumed in the home than in licensed establishments. Nearly 83 per cent of the beer consumed is purchased for consumption off the premise. For wine the corresponding figure is about 95 per cent and for distilled spirits about 89 per cent (personal communication Van Ginneken, 2005). In 1950 the corresponding percentages were 30, 25 and 25 (Brown, 1972). Alcoholic drinks are traditionally [not consumed at ordinary meals, only at festive dinners](#) in the Netherlands. In this regard the Dutch drinking patterns are very much like those in the Nordic countries (Davies & Walsh, 1983; see also Simpura & Karlsson, 2001).

According to Lemmens (2000), there is almost no illegal home production of alcoholic beverages in the Netherlands, and unrecorded alcohol consumption is also generally speaking of insignificant magnitude. He gives an educated guess stating that at maximum the unrecorded alcohol consumption could be some 3 to 5 per cent of the total alcohol consumption (Lemmens, 2000). According to Harkin (1995), there are signs of growing private imports of wine and distilled spirits by Dutch tourists returning home (Harkin, 1995). The Dutch experts interviewed during this study could not, however, confirm any signs of large border trade in alcoholic beverages with the neighbouring countries. The other findings in the ECAS project with regard to unrecorded alcohol consumption include on the one hand Trolldal's (2001) estimate on tourist surplus and duty-free purchases and on the other hand Leifman's (2001) summary report of unrecorded alcohol consumption in the ECAS countries. In Leifman's summary report, the Netherlands together with Belgium are countries where unrecorded alcohol consumption is about 0.5 litres of pure alcohol a year, which is the smallest amount of unrecorded alcohol consumption in the ECAS countries (Leifman, 2001).

Counted in litres of the beverage, consumption of alcoholic beverages was about 108 litres per capita in 1980. In 2000 it was about 107 litres. In the same year the consumption of commercial non-alcoholic beverages was about 480 litres per capita. It consisted of 151 litres of coffee, 93 litres of milk, 97 litres of tea, 90 litres of soft drinks, 33 litres of juices and 17 litres of bottled waters. Since 1980 the consumption of soft drinks has increased by 31 litres per capita, the consumption of juices by 15 litres, the consumption of tea by 14 litres, the consumption of milk by 10 litres and the consumption of bottled waters by 11 litres per capita. During the last two decades the consumption of coffee has decreased by 32 litres per capita (World Drink Trends, 2002).

Administrative structure of preventive alcohol policies

In the Netherlands the present alcohol control legislation goes back to the year 1881 when a law was enacted introducing the so-called maximum system for both off- and on-premise retail sales of distilled alcoholic beverages. This legislation required a municipal licence for retailing distilled alcoholic beverages, and the number of licences to be issued was dependent on the size of municipal population (de Lint, 1981; Armyr, Elmér & Herz, 1982).

The 1881 legislation was completely renewed for the first time in 1904 and later on both in 1931 and in 1964. After the last reform, the law was called the Alcohol Licensing and Catering Act. It came into force in 1967, and was amended in 1996 and recently in the year 2000. Other laws that could be seen as parts of alcohol control system are the Commodity Act, which regulates the quality of alcoholic beverages, and the Road Safety Act, which regulates the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit in traffic.

Dutch alcohol control legislation from the early 1880s till 1967 tried to control the retail sales and the distribution of alcoholic beverages mainly by limiting the number of licensed outlets on the basis of the number of inhabitants in the area to be served. After 1967, licences were issued on the basis of guarantees for the commercial viability of the business according to the 1964 Alcohol Licensing and Catering Act (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997). This act contained restrictive rules on the retail sales of alcoholic beverages and formed a central part of alcohol control legislation in the Netherlands.

In 1995 the government decided as part of the general policy trend towards a more liberal business climate, to withdraw the proposed Retail Trade Licensing Act. Instead, the government decided to amend the 1954 Company Establishment Act and the 1964 Alcohol Licensing and Catering Act. Consequently, from the beginning of 1996, all applicants for a licence to retail alcoholic beverages must apply for two separate licences: an alcohol licence from the municipality, under the amended Alcohol Licensing and Catering Act, and an establishment permit from the Chamber of Commerce, under the Company Establishment Act. Only a small part of the earlier regulations stayed in the amended Alcohol Licensing and Catering Act.

In 1975, in response to a growing concern over alcohol misuse, the Health Minister advocated a policy of discouragement. This resulted in the installation of a special commission of the Health Council. However, this did not lead to any new regulations, because the commission did not get enough political support. It took several years before the time was ripe for a new initiative. In 1982, the existing Inter-ministerial Committee on Drugs Misuse Policy was charged with the development of an alcohol policy and was, therefore, transformed to the Inter-departmental Steering Group on Alcohol and Drugs Misuse Policies. The steering group included a number of key governmental departments and acted as an advisory committee to the Ministry of Health. Finally the government published a policy document in 1986 entitled Alcohol and Society (Alcohol en Samenleving, 1986). This policy document advocated a more comprehensive preventive alcohol policy (Bongers, van de Goor & Garretsen, 1998, 141). The new policy retained the total alcohol consumption model, but began to pay more attention to problems arising from excessive use of alcoholic beverages, to problems from alcohol consumption by vulnerable groups and to problems from alcohol

consumption in high-risk situations. More emphasis was also put on developing treatment and preventive activities (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997; Bongers, van de Goor & Garretsen, 1998).

In the last decades the priorities in the national alcohol policy have been directed at reducing the availability of alcoholic beverages, mass media campaigns to encourage moderation, encouraging non-drinking in work settings, increasing the role of primary health care in the prevention and early detection of alcohol problems, using tax and price policy to reduce the demand for alcoholic beverages, developing the role of the criminal justice system in the prevention and management of alcohol problems, especially drunk driving, developing specialised treatment for problem drinkers, and addressing particular alcohol problems such as drinking among adolescents (Harkin, 1995).

The intentions of the alcohol policy document of 1986 were only partly realised, and the realising of them took a very long time. Various proposals in the Alcohol and Society document were not accepted until 2000. Some of the proposals in the 1986 document; for instance, the proposed ban on radio and television commercials of alcoholic beverages, were never realised because of the effective lobbying of the alcohol industry. Instead, a number of voluntary agreements were reached with the alcohol industry on how they should advertise. The use of excise duties to restrict the availability of alcohol was never realised. One immediate outcome of the proposal was the launching of the national alcohol campaign "drinking can break your heart" (Drank maakt meer kapot dan je lief is), starting in 1986 (Dutch policy on alcohol on the move, 1999).

In November 2000 a new amendment to the Alcohol Licensing and Catering Act came into force. The main new restrictions and changes are:

- a ban on selling alcoholic beverages in non-food stores and petrol stations,
- a statutory obligation for alcohol suppliers to check the age of all customers,
- authorisation of the Ministry of Health to regulate alcohol advertisements, and
- authorisation of the Ministry of Health to ban alcohol sales at soccer stadiums, schools, swimming pools, hospitals etc.

The new Act, however, will not lead to great changes in the preventive alcohol policies. The main purpose of the new bills are to sharpen the control of existing policy measures and to ensure that the existing rules are better followed (Dutch policy on alcohol on the move, 1999, 2-3).

In December 2000, only one month after the amended Alcohol Licensing and Catering Act came into force, a new policy memorandum (Alcoholnota; nota over de intensivering van het beleid tegen alcoholmisbruik, 2001-2003) was sent to the parliament. This document gives an overview of new alcohol policy proposals for the coming years, such as higher alcohol excise duties, tougher penalties for licensing law offences, a ban on the commercial sale of alcohol in schools, more education and an extra budget for treatment and the Food Inspection Department.

There are nowadays several authorities responsible for preventive alcohol policies in the Netherlands. The primary responsibility lies with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. In this ministry, the Directorate for Mental Health and Addiction Care is

responsible for the care of alcoholics, and the Directorate of Public Health for the preventive alcohol policy and for the prevention of alcohol misuse. The ministry consults independent researchers or commissions outside its organisation to undertake special projects. As an example, the Trimbos Institute (the Netherlands Institute of Mental Health and Addiction) was commissioned to do health surveys on the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco in the Netherlands in 1984, 1989, 1992 and 1996 (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997). The latest surveys was held in 2003. The National Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NIGZ) gives advice on alcohol prevention and education matters and carries out the national alcohol campaign. STAP (National Foundation for Alcohol Prevention) is commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport to monitor alcohol marketing. This institute has a special focus on parents education and promotes local alcohol policy.

The responsibility for alcohol prevention at the local level is mainly given to the municipal health services in accordance with the Collective Preventive Public Health Act. All facilities involved in the treatment of addiction also have a preventive task. There is also a movement towards a joint approach to issues related to alcohol, drugs and tobacco. Joint education programmes already exist related to these issues.

Licensing policy

There is a licence required for producing alcoholic beverages in the Netherlands. The licence is required, however, only to facilitate collecting excise duties, and not for public health reasons per se. Dutch importers and wholesalers do not need a licence to operate (ECAS APQ, 1999).

Off-premise retailers of alcoholic beverages need a licence for selling distilled spirits but not for selling beer or wine. Present licensing legislation in the Netherlands came into force in 1967 and was amended in 1996 and 2000. All food stores have the right to sell any alcoholic beverage of less than 15 per cent alcohol by volume. In addition, normal fortified wines with an alcohol content of over 15 per cent by volume can also be sold in ordinary grocery shops. Ordinary fortified wines include port, sherry, vermouth and beverages that are sold as established products in the country of origin.

A special licence is required for selling distilled alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content of over 15 per cent by volume off the premises. These special liquor stores may also sell beer, wine and soft drinks, and some minor goods related to drinking, like glasses. No food, however, may be sold from these outlets. A local authority, usually the municipal government, grants the licence. The decision of a granted licence is sent to the Ministry of Health to be confirmed. Normally, the licence will be valid after six weeks from the date of approval by the local authority. During this period, however, the Ministry of Health can announce that the licence should not be granted. Then the local authority has to cancel the licence.

The licensing terms are fairly strict. Firstly, the personal situation of the applicant is examined. The applicant should not have committed any serious crimes during the last five years or be a habitual offender of less serious crimes, like drunk driving. In addition to this, the applicant should have passed a course on management of alcohol affairs and

other issues of social hygiene. Generally the course is included in the syllabus of restaurant schools. If the applicant has not studied the trade, he or she has to pass a special course. These requirements do not apply to the licence candidate only, but also to the person who tends the shop. If one of these persons is changed, a new licence is required. The permit is valid until further notice, but since one of the licensees will often be changed, there are a lot of renewals. The licence-holder and the tender should be at least 21 years old.

Another important matter is the terms concerning the outlet. The outlet has to be a separate establishment, or it should not be in direct connection with an ordinary food store. In practice, this means that the liquor store has to be at least divided by a wall from any ordinary food store, so that the licensed liquor store has a separate entrance. Consequently, to buy distilled spirits, the customer has to enter the liquor store through a separate door. The minimum area of a liquor store is 15 m². Alcoholic beverages are not allowed to be sold in kiosks; that is, through a window. Neither is it since many years admissible to have an off-premise retail outlet and an on-premise retail outlet in the same establishment with the exception of enterprises with old licensees gaining from transitional provisions in the law. Therefore, restaurants are not entitled to sell alcoholic beverages to be taken away.

Local authorities can put special requirements on licences, but they should not be in conflict with the nationwide regulations. In other words, the local restrictions can make the general regulations more stringent, but not more liberal. In principle, the licence has to be granted if the applicant complies with the national and local conditions. The same administrative organ that has originally issued the licence can also cancel it, if the licensee has broken the rules. According to the licensing law the Food Inspection Department acts as supervisor. Both this department and the police are entitled to do criminal investigations. The most serious offence is selling to an underage person. The offence also goes through the normal criminal procedure. Matters dealing with the licence can be appealed to an administrative court. As of March 2005 small misdemeanours are handled by administrative fines (tit-for-tat policy).

Licence fees vary greatly according to municipalities and places. The lowest fee is about 16 euro and the highest around 364 euro. There is no fee for supervision. There have been attempts by some local authorities to introduce a supervision fee but they have not succeeded in these attempts.

The licence system also applies to on-premise drinking places, i.e. to bars and restaurants. There are about 49,000 on-premise licences, some 34,000 being bars or restaurants open to the general public. There are different categories of licences for on-premise retail sales depending on the type of alcoholic beverages on sale (ECAS APQ, 1999).

Special restrictions on alcohol availability

In the Netherlands the legal age limit for buying alcoholic beverages is 16 years for beer, wine and intermediate products, and 18 years for distilled spirits stronger than 15

per cent alcohol by volume. These age limits apply both to off- and on-premise alcohol retail sale (ECAS APQ, 1999).

There are some general restrictions on hours and days of off-premise retail sale of alcoholic beverages and on types of outlets retailing alcoholic beverages. Liquor stores and supermarkets have to be closed during evening hours and on Sundays, except on 12 Sundays a year. The opening hours are from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. These rules are not, however, alcohol-specific but general, and regulate opening hours of all kinds of stores. The current rules have been in force since 1996. Before 1996 these rules were more restrictive (ECAS APQ, 1999).

There are no general alcohol-specific country-wide restrictions concerning on-premise sale of alcoholic beverages. Local governments have the right, however, to impose restrictions on on-premise sale of alcoholic beverages (ECAS APQ, 1999). Although there are no formal restrictions regarding sale of alcoholic beverages in work canteens, alcoholic beverages are very rarely available there. In theatres and concert halls and during normal sporting events alcoholic beverages are available. Concerning football matches that are regarded as high-risk events, local restrictions regarding sale of alcoholic beverages may be imposed.

Alcohol taxation

In the Netherlands excise duties are levied on all alcoholic beverages containing more than 0.5 per cent alcohol by volume. For beer, the excise duty rises progressively with the alcohol content, and is levied within certain intervals according to categories expressed in degrees of Plato (Table 13.2). For wines the excise duty is different for beverages containing at most 8.5 per cent alcohol by volume and for stronger wines. Inside these categories the excise duty is also different for still and sparkling wine. For intermediate products the excise duty is different for products containing at most 15 per cent alcohol by volume and for those over 15 per cent. With regard to intermediate products, the Dutch taxing system also makes a difference between still and sparkling beverages. For distilled spirits, the excise duty is levied as a set amount per hectolitre of pure alcohol in the finished product. Excise duties have gone up by about 20% (personal communication Van Ginneken, 2005).

In 1950 the average excise duty rate for strong beer (zwaar beer), by far the most popular beer in the Netherlands with an alcohol content of five per cent alcohol by volume, was 19.10 guilders per hectolitre. In 1960 the corresponding figure was 17.81 guilders. By 1970 the excise duty rate for strong beer had increased to 23.92 guilders per hectolitre, which means that in the 1950-1970 period excise duty rate for beer went up by 25 per cent in nominal terms (Brown, 1972). The excise duty rate for beer stayed the same throughout the 1970s but increased by 96 per cent in January 1982, increasing the average excise duty rate for strong beer to 47 guilders per hectolitre (Brown, Dewar & Wallace, 1982). In January 1984 the excise duty rate for beer was further raised, increasing the average excise duty rate for beer to 50 guilders.

Table 13.2. Excise duty rates for alcoholic beverages in the Netherlands in 2000 in Dutch guilders and in euro

* For details of the lower limits of alcoholic beverages and other EU rules concerning alcohol taxation, see Chapter 2.

** Breweries that produce less than 200,000 hectolitres per year get a 7.5 per cent reduction in their excise rates.

Alcoholic beverage category*	HFL	EUR
Beer, per hectolitre of the product**		
Not exceeding 7 degrees of Plato	20.00	9.08
Over 7 to 11 degrees of Plato	35.20	15.97
Over 11 to 15 degrees of Plato	46.90	21.28
More than 15 degrees of Plato	58.65	26.61
Wine, and fermented beverages other than wine and beer, per hectolitre of the product		
Not exceeding 8.5% alcohol by volume, still	53.75	24.39
Not exceeding 8.5% alcohol by volume, sparkling	69.50	31.54
Over 8.5 to 15% alcohol by volume, still	107.50	48.78
Over 8.5 to 15% alcohol by volume, sparkling	366.50	166.31
Intermediate products, per hectolitre of the product		
Not exceeding 15% alcohol by volume	132.75	60.24
Over 15% alcohol by volume, still	187.00	84.86
Over 15% alcohol by volume, sparkling	366.50	166.31
Distilled beverages, per hectolitre of pure alcohol in the finished product	3,315.00	1,504.28

Source: European Commission, DG XXI, Excise Duty Tables, November 2000.

In the early 1970s, the excise duty on beer was set on the basis of hectolitre per degree of alcohol in the finished product and it was graduated on the basis of the amount of beer produced. In 1972, for instance, the excise duty rate for beer was 4.12 guilders per hectolitre per degree alcohol in the finished product for the first 50,000 hectolitres produced, 4.50 guilders from 50,000 to 1,250,000 hectolitres, and 4.75 guilders per hectolitre per degree alcohol in the finished product for production over 1,250,000 hectolitres (Table 13.3). On wine there was a basic excise duty per hectolitre of the product for all wines up to 12 per cent alcohol by volume. An additional tax was charged for stronger wines for each alcohol percentage over 12 per cent by volume at rates dependent on the strength of the wine. For spirits the excise duty was set on the basis of hectolitre of pure alcohol in the finished product.

In March 1985 the system for setting the excise duty on beer was altered to reduce the number of excise duty rate categories. The excise duty rate for beer produced by large breweries did not change to any significant degree, but the rate increased for the smallest breweries. The tax effect on the brewing industry overall was considered to be neutral. However, according to Brazeau et al. (1992), the average excise duty rate for strong beer decreased to 47.50 guilders per hectolitre of the product. The current system for setting the excise duty on beer, as well as the current excise duty rates for beer, came into effect in October 1991 without changing the average excise duty rate for strong beer.

Table 13.3. Excise duty rates for beer in the Netherlands from 1972 to 1991 in Dutch guilders per hectolitre per degree alcohol in the finished product according to the yearly production of breweries

From (year and month)	First 50,000 hectolitres	First 10,000 hectolitres	10,000- 50,000 hectolitres	50,001- 1,250,000 hectolitres	Over 1,250,000 hectolitres
1972	4.12	-	-	4.50	4.75
1973, 1	-	3.76	4.06	4.45	4.76
1982, 1	-	7.52	8.12	8.90	9.52
1984, 1	-	8.12	8.76	9.61	10.28
	-	-	Less than 90,000 hectolitres	First 800,000 hectolitres	Over 800,000 hectolitres
1985, 3	-	-	8.69	9.19	10.28

Source: Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997

In 1960 the excise duty rate for wine with 12 per cent alcohol by volume was 43.44 guilders per hectolitre of the product (Brown, 1972). As a harmonisation measure, the excise duty rate was decreased in January 1973 to 41.38 guilders (Brown, 1976). Next time the excise duty rate for wine was changed was in January 1984, when it was increased by 100 per cent to 82.76 guilders per hectolitre of the product (Table 13.4). The current excise duty rate, 107.50 guilders per hectolitre of the product, was reached in January 1994, which meant an increase of 30 per cent in the excise duty rate taxes for wine.

Table 13.4. Excise duty rates for distilled spirits and wine in the Netherlands from 1972 to 2000 in Dutch guilders per hectolitre of pure alcohol in the finished product for distilled spirits and in Dutch guilders per hectolitre of the product for wine

From (year and month)	Distilled spirits	Wine under 8.5% by volume	Wine 8.5 to 15% alcohol by volume	Wine at most 12% alcohol by volume	Additional duty for wine over 12 to 15% per cent alcohol by volume*	Wine over 15% alcohol by volume
1972	1.700	-	-	43.44	78	123
1973, 1	1.593	-	-	41.38	75	118
1976, 1	2.100	-	-	41.38	75	118
1980, 1	2.667	-	-	41.38	75	118
1981, 1	2.740	-	-	41.38	75	118
1982, 1	2.740	-	-	41.38	75	118
1984, 1	3.178	-	-	82.76	75	118
1985, 3	3.178	-	-	82.76	75	118
1991, 10	3.178	-	-	82.76	75	118
1994, 4	3.315	53.75	107.50	-	-	187

* Additional duty is calculated for each per cent of alcohol by volume over 12 per cent alcohol by volume.

Source: Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997

In 1950 the excise duty rate for distilled spirits was 550 guilders per hectolitre of pure alcohol in the finished product. In 1960 the corresponding figure was 1,193 guilders and by 1970 it had increased to 1,700 guilders. Consequently, in two decades the excise duty rate for distilled spirits had increased by over 200 per cent (Brown, 1972). After a small decrease to 1,593 guilders per hectolitre of pure alcohol in the finished product in January 1973, the excise duty rate for distilled spirits has been on the increase (Table 13.4). It increased in January 1976 to 2,100 guilders, in January 1980 to 2,667 guilders, in January 1981 to 2,740 guilders, in January 1984 to 3,178 guilders and finally in April 1994 to the current level, 3,315 guilders per hectolitre of pure alcohol in the finished product.

A value added tax (VAT) of 17.5 per cent is nowadays applied to all alcoholic beverages. In 1972 the VAT was only 14 per cent. It increased in 1973 to 16 per cent, in 1976 to 18 per cent, in 1984 to 19 per cent and in 1986 to 20 per cent. In 1989 it was reduced to 18.5 per cent and in 1992 to the current 17.5 per cent VAT rates (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997).

Current excise duty rates are about the same for beer and still wine when calculated per centilitre of pure alcohol. On the other hand, the excise duty rate for distilled spirits per centilitre of pure alcohol is 3.5 times that of beer or still wine. If the VAT is also included in these calculations the relative difference between these beverages is reduced and taxes on distilled spirits are 2.5 times the taxes on beer and still wine (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997).

There have been quite important changes in the relative burden of excise duties on different beverage categories. In 1950 alcohol in the form of distilled spirits was taxed 50 per cent more than alcohol in the form of strong beer. By the year 1970 this relation had grown to 3.6 to 1 and in 1980 to 5.6 to 1. In 1980 alcohol in the form of beer was taxed 40 per cent more than alcohol in the form of still wine.

Nowadays some 34 per cent of the price of beer consists of the VAT or excise duties. The corresponding rate for still wine is 28 per cent, and for distilled spirits 82 per cent (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997). In the early 1980s, the corresponding rates were 38 per cent, 28 per cent and 83 per cent.

The changes in the excise duty levels referred to above are given in nominal values. During the 1950-2000 period the value of the Dutch currency has decreased because of inflation. The increase in the general price level in the Netherlands in the 1961-2000 period as described by the consumer price index (CPI) is given in table 13.5.

Table 13.5. Consumer price index in the Netherlands, 1961-2000, 1995 is 100

Year	1961	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
CPI	23.1	26.9	34.0	51.3	68.7	84.3	87.4	100.0	111.4

Source: OECD, Main Economic Indicators, March 2000 CD-ROM.

When relating changes in alcohol excise duties to developments in the consumer price index it can be concluded that the real burden of alcohol excise duties has decreased in the 1961-2000 period by half. This has most certainly affected the developments in the real prices of alcoholic beverages. However, these figures do not describe the developments in real prices of alcoholic beverages, as excise and value added taxes only form a part of alcohol prices.

Referring to a report from the EC, Sulkunen (1978) concluded that real prices of wine decreased in the Netherlands by a third in the 1951-1967 period (Sulkunen, 1978, 18). According to the same report, the real price index for all alcoholic beverages was about the same in 1951 and 1967. However, there had been a fall of some 10 per cent from 1951 to 1956, and then an increase of the same magnitude in 1957. Between 1957 and 1965 there was a fall in the real prices of alcoholic beverages of some 15 per cent, and again an abrupt increase in 1966. This was caused by the sharp increase in the excise duty rate for distilled spirits in 1966. According to Engelsman (1990), alcohol became 38 per cent cheaper in relation to the consumer price index in the 1960-1983 period (Engelsman, 1990). Combined with the data presented by Sulkunen, this leads to the conclusion that alcoholic beverages were on the average some 40 per cent cheaper in 1983 than they were in the early 1950s. As the burden of the excise duties on beer, wine and distilled spirits increased in real terms during the first half of the 1980s, also the real prices of alcoholic beverages may have increased during that time. According to the data collected in the ECAS project, the real price of alcohol decreased by a third during the 1970s, increased somewhat in the 1980s, and has decreased a little in the mid-1990s, reaching in the late 1990s the same level as prevailed in the early 1980s (Leppänen, 1999).

State revenues from alcohol excise duties have risen from 390 million euros in 1970 to 946 million euros in 2004 in nominal terms. This means that in real terms state revenues from alcohol excise duties in 2004 were some 124 per cent of their level in 1970.

Alcohol advertising

Marketing and advertising of alcoholic beverages are not controlled in the Netherlands by legislation.

There is a voluntary code for advertising of alcoholic beverages. It was established in 1990 under pressure of the government. In 1987 the alcoholic beverage industry was given responsibility for regulating its own advertising and promotional activities. Negotiations between the industry, government and the Advertising Code Foundation resulted in a strengthening of the existing rules and the establishment of the Code for Alcoholic Beverages, which took effect in September 1, 1990. In 2000 the Code was

completely renewed and renamed Advertising Code for Alcoholic Beverages. The current code was made public in januari 2002 by the Dutch Social Responsibility Organisation of the alcohol industry (STIVA). The Code is incorporated as a special rule of conduct in the Dutch Code for the Advertising Community, where people can complain to. A penalty up to just over 45,000 euro can be imposed in the event of infringements by members of STIVA, otherwise only advice can be given by the Code Committee (Tweede Kamer, 2001).

Among other things, the Code states that the object of advertising may not increase alcohol consumption. Generic advertising is prohibited. The Code also prohibits messages that are critical towards moderate alcohol consumption or dismissive of non-alcoholic beverages or that promote immoderate alcohol consumption. Advertising shall make no reference to effects favourable to health that result from the consumption of alcoholic beverages or be aimed at pregnant women. Advertising may not either be specifically aimed at minors or show persons younger than twenty-five who drink alcoholic beverages or who encourage the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Advertisements are also not allowed to be directed on audiences of which a quarter or more is younger than 18 years of age (minors). Alcoholic beverage advertisements are prohibited on radio or television immediately before, during or immediately after programmes that, according to generally accepted listening or viewing figures, are heard or seen by an audience of whom twenty-five percent or more is minors. Moderation or educational slogans must appear in advertisements of alcoholic beverages. 40 Per cent of all advertisements on television must contain an educational slogan. No advertising is permitted by a member of the sector or with the active participation of a member of the sector by which an alcoholic beverage is offered to private persons free of charge or for less than half the normal sale price. (<http://www.reclamecode.nl/indexengels.html>)

Education and information

In addition to the Ministry of Health, various general and specialised private institutions are engaged in alcohol information and education at the national level. Popular and scientific publications are distributed on a broad scale.

In 1986, a widespread mass-media campaign known as the Alcohol Education Project (AEP) was launched (van Ginneken & van Iwaarden, 1989). The campaign, started by the Ministry of Health in cooperation with private organisations, employed a variety of media to achieve more knowledge and awareness and to promote moderation. The goal of the AEP was to distribute information about the risks of alcohol, change the attitude to drinking and to decrease both the frequency of alcohol consumption and the amount of alcohol drunk per occasion. The target group consisted of drinkers between 15 and 40 years who consume between 15 and 50 glasses a week. Originally the AEP was planned to last three years, but it is now being executed on a continuous basis with different target groups and themes. In the first years the campaign budget was 1.5 million guilders. From 2005 on the AEP will focus on local action rather than mass-media campaigns.

Since 1996 the AEP is carried out by the National Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NIGZ). The campaign budget (3.2 million guilders or 1.5 million

euro per year) comes indirectly from the Ministry of Health. Many alcohol prevention actions are organised in the AEP, with the help of 16 regional offices operating as preventive departments of treatment facilities.

In addition to this, treatment facilities have their own education programmes. Also local authorities (Municipal Health Services) have health education departments in which alcohol education and information is included. In addition to this the Society for Safe Traffic participate in different education and prevention campaigns.

In 1982 the producers and importers of beer, wine and distilled spirits in the Netherlands established the Dutch Foundation for the Responsible Use of Alcohol (STIVA). The objective of the group is to contribute to a decrease in alcohol misuse by encouraging responsible use of alcoholic beverages. STIVA has its own public information campaigns with the slogan: "Enjoy your drink, but be moderate".

Drunk driving

Between 1970 and 2003 the share of drinking drivers (BAC >0.5 g/l) in the Netherlands decreased by 75%. Most of this decrease was realized after the mid-1980s, when random breath testing was introduced. Between 1980 and 2003, the share of drinking drivers decreased by 65%. The share of alcohol-related road fatalities and serious injuries, however, decreased less than proportionally, by 25% between 1980 and 2003 (Mathijssen, 2004). The main reasons for this somewhat disappointing development were (Mathijssen, 2005):

- An increase of combined drink and drug driving since the 1990s, especially among young males. During the period 2000-2003, an estimated 40% of the alcohol-related road toll was associated with combined drink and drug driving.
- A less than proportional decrease of high-BAC drivers (>1.3 g/l) who, during the period 2000-2003, accounted for approx. 75% of the alcohol-related road toll.

In the period 2000-2003, 4% of drivers were over the legal limit during weekend nights (AVV, 2004), and 1% during the whole week. It is estimated that 25-30% of road fatalities and serious injuries were associated with drink driving, amounting approx. 300 fatalities and 4,500 serious injuries (hospitalizations) per annum. The total cost of the alcohol-related road toll was estimated to be €2 billion per annum.

In order to efficiently combat drink driving and its detrimental effects, the Dutch government is planning to implement the following countermeasures in the near future:

- The introduction of a 0.2 g/l BAC limit for novice drivers (foreseen for 2005).
- License withdrawal for second offenders, in the framework of a broader penalty point system (foreseen for 2006).
- The introduction, under administrative law, of an alcolock program (foreseen for 2007).

Apart from these legal measures, police enforcement activities might be directed somewhat more to times and places where high-BAC drivers can be expected.

Administrative structure of treatment for alcoholism

Treatment of alcoholism in the clinical and outpatient settings is primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. Treatment of alcoholism in the ambulatory setting on the other hand is primarily the responsibility of local authorities (Municipal Health Services).

Considerable attention is paid to the treatment of alcoholics, much of which is carried out through community facilities. There are extensive social welfare and subsidised treatment facilities that can be used to deal with alcohol problems. During the 1990s there has been a growing commitment to reinforcement of programmes concerning the management of problems in the employment environment.

There are psychiatric hospitals and specialised addiction clinics and many consultation bureaux (80 branches) that deal with alcohol clients. In 1996 the number of patients in inpatient facilities was 5,606, and in 1999 the number of patients in consultation bureaux was 22,554. Secondary prevention of alcohol problems is well-developed and is provided by the general mental health service as well as by the eight specialised addiction clinics (such as the Jellinek Clinic in Amsterdam).

Summary

Statistics pertaining to the sale of alcoholic beverages have been routinely collected in the Netherlands since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the 1830-1910 period alcohol consumption fluctuated around 6 litres per capita. The lowest rates of alcohol consumption during its recorded history are to be found during the First and Second World Wars, from 1916 to 1918 and from 1942 to 1945 (de Lint, 1981). In the 1930s as well as in the 1950s alcohol consumption was about 2 litres per capita in the Netherlands, which is quite low when compared to alcohol consumption figures in the neighbouring countries. In Belgium, for instance, per capita alcohol consumption was about 6 litres per capita in the mid-1950s. One way to try to explain this situation is to consider the temperance activities that began to affect the Dutch alcohol field round the mid-1850s.

The Society for the Abolition of Strong Beverages, founded in 1842, advocated a reduction in the number of outlets for on-premise consumption of distilled beverages, the removal of beer taxes, and the prohibition of distilled beverages in governmental institutions like military bases or prisons. The Society later joined with the People's League against Alcohol Abuse which campaigned for a reduction in the number of liquor outlets and was engaged in activities like the establishment of public houses where only beer, coffee, milk and soft drinks were to be served, and also lobbied for cheaper beer. Surprisingly, the temperance activists did not seek to increase taxes on distilled spirits as a means to discourage alcohol consumption. The logic behind this was that according to the temperance activists the state was already too dependent on revenues from liquor trade and high taxes on distilled spirits would only worsen the widespread poverty (de Lint, 1981).

The activities of the temperance movement were directed to members of the parliament and the cabinet. In the 1880s the actions of the temperance movement led to government action when the so-called Maximum System was introduced. It required municipal licences for the sale of distilled beverages for on- and off-premise consumption. The number of licences to be issued was dependent on the size of the municipal population. However, the requirements for a licence were very easily met. In 1904 a new Alcohol Act passed the parliament. In this piece of legislation the central government, and no longer the municipality, specified the requirements for a licence to retail distilled beverages. Licences to sell beer and wine for on-premise consumption were also needed, although not subjected to a maximum rule. As before, all licences had to be obtained from the municipal governments. No licence, however, was needed for the sale of beer and wine for off-premise consumption.

To the members of temperance movement the 1904 Alcohol Act was a disappointment, because they felt it allowed too many outlets and did not include any local option. Thus the temperance movement continued to put pressure on the government and collected in 1912 almost 700,000 signatures to demand the right for local option, which was finally introduced in a proposed bill in 1921. However, the local option was withdrawn from the final bill accepted in 1931. In other words, despite the fact that dry sentiment was widespread in the Netherlands during the first half of the twentieth century only a few alcohol control measures were ever implemented, and even those few that were implemented did not have a great impact on alcohol availability.

The low rates of alcohol consumption until the 1960s may be seen as the result of a large reservoir of dry sentiment, the massive anti-drink propaganda during the early twentieth century and the temperance atmosphere. Since the Second World War, the dry sentiment as well as the temperance movement have in practice disappeared in the Netherlands. For instance, in the mid-1970s, when alcohol consumption had already reached the current level of over 8 litres per capita, anti-drink groups were only able to collect 50,000 signatures for a petition demanding government actions on the promised discouragement policy (de Lint, 1981, 99).

Garretsen and Knibbe (1985) speculate that in addition to the increase in leisure time and disposable incomes, drinking habits in the neighbouring countries and a secularisation process reducing the influence of calvinistic attitudes have also contributed to the development of alcohol consumption. The proportion of drinkers within the adult population was estimated to be 83 per cent as early as in 1958 (de Lint, 1981). Therefore, the increase in alcohol consumption in the second half of the twentieth century cannot be attributed to an increase in the proportion of drinkers. The percentage of daily drinkers, on the other hand, has increased from about 9 per cent of all drinkers in 1958 to about 23 per cent in 1976. Garretsen and Knibbe (1985, 153) summarise changes in drinking habits by saying that in the late 1950s the large majority drank occasionally and rather small amounts. In the mid-1980s the younger generation drank quite a high number of glasses per drinking occasion at weekends, and in the older male age groups drinking had become a regular element of daily life at home.

It is commonly agreed in the Netherlands that neither the decrease in alcohol consumption in the first half of the twentieth century nor the increase in alcohol consumption in the second half of the twentieth century can be explained with changes

in alcohol control measures (de Lint 1981, 88; Armyr, Elmer & Herz, 1982, 66, 71; Garretsen & Knibbe, 1985). The Netherlands entered into the 1950s with considerable alcohol control legislation. It is, however, hard to see any changes in alcohol control measures in a more liberal direction in the 1950s and 1960s which could explain the more than tripling of alcohol consumption in the 1960s and 1970s.

It is true that in the 1952-1965 period real prices of alcoholic beverages decreased some 15 to 20 per cent but increased again to the 1952 level in 1966. After 1966 real prices of alcoholic beverages seem to have fallen until the late 1970s by at least a third, which of course is one contributing explanatory factor for the growth in alcohol consumption during that period. Since the late 1970s real prices seem to have stabilised. From the 1950s to the 1980s, excise duties on distilled spirits became heavier relative to excise duties on beer and wine, and this may have contributed to changes in the structure of alcohol consumption by beverage categories (see Table 13.1).

The standstill in alcohol consumption in the 1980s and 1990s could be better in line with developments in alcohol control. Even if alcohol control has not been very strict during these decades in the Netherlands, these decades have nevertheless seen an introduction of certain preventive alcohol control measures, including some voluntary and statutory restrictions in alcohol advertising, making use of blood alcohol levels in controlling drunk driving, and introducing national programmes on alcohol education and prevention.

Along with increases in alcohol consumption since the Second World War, the Netherlands has also experienced a strong increase in the numbers of heavy alcohol consumers, in alcohol-related morbidity and, to a lesser extent, in alcohol-related mortality (van Ginneken, van der Wal & de Zwart, 1983; Garretsen & Knibbe, 1985). The negative consequences of alcohol consumption, however, seem not to have affected public attitudes to drinking or alcohol control. The percentage of Dutch people who would not mind their close relative being occasionally tipsy has increased greatly between the late 1950s and the mid-1990s. The percentage who would mind if their relatives were to be drunk every week has decreased slightly from the late 1950s to the mid-1990s, but was still on a very high level in the mid-1990s (Bongers, van de Goor & Garretsen, 1998, 144). In the mid-1990s the great majority of Dutch people were in favour of restricted alcohol consumption in public places, and a majority was in favour of raising the age limits for buying alcoholic beverages (Bongers, van de Goor & Garretsen, 1998, 146). On the other hand, only about one third was in favour of reducing the number of off- or on-premise retail shops for alcoholic beverages, raising the prices of alcoholic beverages significantly or prohibiting alcohol advertisements.

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