

Netherlands



Women in decision-making: **1.85/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **3.07/5**

Violence against women: **3.5/5**



38.6%

women in parliament and 38% senior ministers

Legislation for parity on corporate boards but no sanctions

18.5%

gender pay gap

50%

of infants under 3 and 91% of those between 3 and school-age in formal childcare

100%

of dependent elderly persons have access to formal care



National Action Plan on violence against women

Abortion is available on demand free of charge

TRENDS:



In June 2011, the Netherlands adopted legislation for the promotion of parity on corporate boards of administration. Currently, 19% of board members of the largest companies are women; there are no women presidents. The legislation foresees no sanctions but there will be an evaluation of progress in 2016.

The number of women ministers increased following the September 2012 general election from 29% to 38%. The minister of defence is for the first time a woman.

Tackling violence against women and domestic violence were set as government priorities in November 2012. A range of awareness-raising actions have been launched.



The number of women in parliament decreased following the September 2012 elections from 41% to 38.6%.

The new government has introduced spending cuts affecting public services, including subsidies to education and childcare, and availability of services for persons with disabilities. Such cuts particularly affect women as they lose public sector jobs as well as benefits and services of which they are prime recipients. The major burden of the care services returns to women.

UNDERSTANDING THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands scores comparatively well for the representation of women in political decision-making. Of the 11 political parties represented in parliament, 4 have a female leader. There are, however, no legal requirements for gender balance on electoral lists; only 2 parties have quotas in place.

In the Netherlands, 60% of women participate in the labour market, but there is a strong gender divide to the quality of women and men's employment. In 2011, 76.7% of employed women worked part-time, by far the highest rate in the EU. Surveys find that women perform an average of 35 hours per week in unpaid work, as compared to 20 hours per week for men. In addition, there is a clear segregation of employment sectors, with most women active in "traditional" female sectors such as education, care and services.

Yearly, there are an estimated 200,000 cases of domestic violence in the Netherlands, with 83% of perpetrators being men, and 60% of victims being women. Some 20% of cases are reported to the police.¹ Approximately 177,500 women are also victims of sexual violence, compared to 10,700 men. Police training to deal with violence against women has improved significantly in recent years. However, with regards to domestic violence, a new gender-neutral approach has led to a loss of adequate services for women victims, as well as preventive measures. There is no National Action Plan to tackle violence against women.

Procurving was decriminalised in the Netherlands in 2000, leading to a rise in prostitution. The Netherlands is listed by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime as a top destination for victims of human trafficking. A 2008 police report found out that 50 to 90% of the women in licensed prostitution "work involuntary".²

¹ Research and Documentation Centre & INTERVICT Institute (2011).

² National Centre against Human Trafficking