



The Netherlands



Country Overview:

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

Size: 41,543 sq km

Population: 16,805,037 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Amsterdam

Exports-commodities: machinery and equipment, chemicals, fuels, foodstuffs

Imports-commodities: machinery and transport equipment, chemicals, fuels, foodstuffs, clothing

Currency: Euro (EUR)

Ethnic groups: Dutch 80.7%, EU 5%, Indonesian 2.4%, Turkish 2.2%

Religion: Roman Catholic 30%, none 40%, Dutch Reformed 11%, Calvinist 6%

Government type: constitutional monarchy

Chief of State: King WILLEM-ALEXANDER (since 30 April 2013)

Head of Government: Prime Minister Mark RUTTE (since 14 October 2010)

Language: Dutch (official), Frisian (official)



Kingdom of the Netherlands / Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

Meetings and Negotiations

- The handshake is the common form of greeting. It is firm and swift, accompanied by a smile, and repetition of your name.
- Shake hands with everyone **individually**, including children.
- Older, more bureaucratic companies may still judge you by how you are introduced so it is wise to have a third-party introduction if possible, although it is not mandatory.

-In general, ideas will be discussed quite openly at meetings, with everyone entitled to their opinion.

-Business counterparts will want to know your academic credentials and the amount of time your company has been in business.

-The Dutch prefer to get down to business **quickly** and engage in relatively little small talk.

-Business is conducted slowly. The Dutch are **detail-oriented** and want to understand every innuendo before coming to an agreement.

Business Attire

-Most businessmen wear dark suits, muted ties, and white shirts; women typically dress in dark suits and white blouses.

-You may be surprised to find that the higher a person's rank, the more **informally** he or she is permitted to dress.

Behavior

-Since the Dutch value their **personal time**, do not ask them to work late or come in over the weekend if you want to foster a good working relationship.

-They do **not** touch one another and appreciate it when those they do business with maintain the proper distance.

-Generally, the Dutch will not

appreciate being invited out at a moment's notice.

-They are shy with strangers.

-Outdoor activities are mostly done only with good friends.

-Do not demonstrate emotion or use exaggerated hand gestures.

Gift Giving

-**Wait** until you have established a relationship with your Dutch contacts before presenting them with gifts..

-Gifts are usually opened when received.

Appropriate Gifts:

- Books about your home country or city, desk accessories, imported liquor, quality pens

Gifts to Avoid:

- Pointed items (such as knives or scissors), white lilies, chrysanthemums

Business Tips continued

Conversation

-Always appear **modest** and do not make exaggerated claims about what you or your company can deliver.

-Your word is your **bond** and making claims that later prove to be untrue will brand you as unreliable.

- Maintain direct eye contact while speaking.

-Use facts and figures to confirm your statements.

-Make it clear that you are aware that the country is officially called the **Netherlands**. (Holland is just a region in the country.)

-The Dutch tend to be keen on

discussing politics. Don't, however, get involved in a political discussion if you are not well informed.

Topics to Discuss: your home town, the weather, sports

Topics to Avoid: religion, boasting about your income or possessions, legalized prostitution, commenting on the royal family

