

The Netherlands



The Kingdom of the Netherlands was formed in 1815. In 1830 Belgium seceded and formed a separate kingdom. The Netherlands remained neutral in World War I, but suffered invasion and occupation by Germany in World War II. A modern, industrialized nation, the Netherlands is also a large exporter of agricultural products. The country was a founding member of NATO and the EC (now the EU), and participated in the introduction of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in 1999.

NETHERLANDS FACTS

Population: 16.1 million (UN, 2003)

Capital: Amsterdam; seat of government: the Hague

Major language: Dutch

Major religion: Christianity

Life expectancy: 76 years (men), 81 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 Euro = 100 cents

Main exports: Metal manufacturing, chemicals, foodstuffs

Average annual income: US \$24,330 (World Bank, 2001)

Internet domain: .nl

International dialing code: +31

The Netherlands has produced many of the world's most famous artists from Rembrandt and Vermeer in the 17th century to Van Gogh in the 19th and Mondrian in the 20th.



Flag Description: three equal horizontal bands of red (top), white, and blue; similar to the flag of Luxembourg, which uses a lighter blue and is longer; one of the oldest flags in constant use, originating with William I, Prince of Orange, in the latter half of the 16th century. To listen to the Dutch national anthem go to http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1043423.stm