

# Chapter Two

## ►► HOUSEHOLDS, WORK AND FLEXIBILITY Country Contextual Reports

### THE NETHERLANDS

[ Annet Jager, STOAS ]

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## INTRODUCTION

This report describes Dutch demographic trends, labour market policies and social policies related to family and work, especially focused on the last decade of the previous century.

During the last decade the growth in the number of jobs in the Netherlands continued unabated. Between 1991 and 2001 employment grew by almost 1.3 million, or 22 per cent. Furthermore, unemployment was halved in the second half of the 1990s, so that by 2001 registered unemployed had fallen below 3 per cent. The Dutch unemployment rates over the last years are among the lowest in the EU.

The good performance of the Dutch labour market in the past years is often called the 'Dutch Miracle'. During the 1980's, unemployment figures were high and participation rates were low with incentives for people to take a passive role and withdraw from working life, e.g. via disability pensions.

The success is often explained by the unique combination of relatively harmonious labour relations, an extensive system of consultative and advisory bodies and a stimulating labour market policy, generally referred to collectively as the 'Polder model'. During this period the Dutch government pursued these five main policies:

- Wage restraint to increase international competitiveness
- Monetary stability
- Major cuts in public expenditures (and also public employment)

- Reforms of the social security system (e.g. provide incentives to work)
- Lower taxes (and also social charges) for firms to stimulate labour demand in general and in the 'low wage' segment of the labour market in particular.

In general Dutch labour market politics can be defined as broad. They can be considered as a combination of a flexible labour market with a solid monetary and fiscal policy and introducing more dynamic markets. The labour market policy of the last decade represents a turnaround in active labour market measures combined with a great degree of market orientation of public job centres as well as flexible statutory protection for limited employment contracts.

Since Dutch society is changing, welfare policy is changing along with it. As can be read in the first chapter, the Netherlands has an ageing population. So for social and economic reasons, the government is encouraging the older age group to stay in work. At the same time, youth unemployment is being tackled by funding job creation and on-the-job training programs. Dutch social policy is also focused on helping the long-term unemployed persons to tackle problems. In general during the last couple of years the Dutch social welfare system has been reformed to introduce tighter controls, to solve essential problems such as long-term sickness, and to create employment.

The growth of the labour force of the second half of the 1990s is mainly in the form of part-time jobs and flexible jobs. Flexible jobs, however, accounted for only a tenth of the total growth in employment between 1994 and 2000. After 1998 the increase in the number of employees with a flexible employment seems to have passed its peak, partly as a result of the shortage on the Dutch labour market. The longer the state of the economy remains favourable, the more people employers take on as permanent staff. From 1995 to 2000 the number of employees with a permanent job increased to almost 5.6 million. Moreover numbers for both men and women have increased.

The tendency towards labour market flexibility can be found everywhere in Western Europe. However, part-time employment as a specific form of flexibility is far more common in the Netherlands than elsewhere in the world.

It is an accepted phenomenon; a good third of the Dutch working population works part-time, both men and women.

A factor that may have played a role here is that the labour conditions, legal position and social security benefits of part-timers are well arranged for in the Netherlands, in contrast to many other countries. However, part-time work is often not included in the definition of typical flexiwork since most part-time workers are on permanent employment contracts and as a rule the number of hours worked by part-time workers is fixed.

Moreover, in general the increase in flexible labour contracts in general has not led to a split in the labour market or a reduction in labour security (as distinct from job security). This development was shored up by the Flexibility and Security Act which took effect in 1999 and is the basis for the Dutch employment protection law (and the deregulation of the market) for temp work and other flexible work.

Part-time work it is not divided equally between men and women. For men it is (still) an incidental, temporary phenomenon mainly at the

beginning or at the end of their career. The extremely high percentage of part-time work in the Netherlands can be probably accounted for by the special position of (married) women in the Dutch labour market.

The same family traditionalism that caused the Dutch post-war baby boom was also responsible for the fact that women were late in entering the labour market -although nowadays the Netherlands no longer lag behind other Western European countries where the number of working women is concerned. As increasing numbers of married women entered the labour market in the early 1980s, the shortage of childcare facilities was the reason women tended to work part-time. Even nowadays, combining paid work and family raises a problem that falls mostly on women. Part-time work for women in the Netherlands is often an opening to the labour market.

In order to facilitate the combination of work and care for Dutch households and to stimulate women to stay in the labour market, the Dutch government is campaigning for more childcare facilities, raising the standard to that of other West European countries. (e.g. the government is working on the Childcare Basic Provision Act).

Moreover, in the light of combining work and care, there is a full-fledged ongoing discussion about the various forms of leave. Besides childcare and parental leave, other arrangements to provide for a better combination of work and care, like solutions for unexpected circumstances, are to be considered. Until recently, little was covered by law. Existing and new measures are now included in the new Labour and Care Act.

Not only are leave regulations an essential part of current public discourse, but the scheduling of work, care and free-time itself has been very much in the political spotlight since the mid-1990s. For this purpose, in 1996, the government installed the commission on 'Daily Time Structuring' to come up with proposals to improve the 'over-organised existence of multi-taskers' (SCP, 2001). Various studies and local projects were ini-

tiated. The most important contribution of this type of policy towards the combination of work and care is that it provides examples of how dif-

ferent kinds of time expenditure can be better coordinated, and that it puts outdated cultural time-tables into question. (CSP, 2001)

## 1. COUNTRY CONTEXT THE NETHERLANDS

This report provides with information and extensive comments about the contextual situation in the Netherlands during the last decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The notes are organized around the following three main themes:

- Demographic trends
- Labour market policies
- Social policies related to family and work

### 1.2. Literature

In this report extensive use is made of a report of the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP): *The Netherlands in a European Perspective. Social & Cultural Report 2000*.

The Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands is an interministerial institute which conducts independent research on social and cultural developments and social policies.

The official definition of the task is threefold:

- To describe the social and cultural situation in the Netherlands and expected developments.
- To contribute towards considerable choices of policy-objectives and resources and to develop alternatives.
- To evaluate government policy, especially interministerial policies.

The two yearly *Social and Cultural Report* (SCR) is among the most important and voluminous publications of the SCP. It is filled with analyses based on empirical data, official statistics and policy papers. This issue of this Social and Cultural Report is devoted chiefly to answering the question: 'How does the Netherlands compare with the other members of the European family?'

The report portrays Dutch society and policy in a great variety of aspects including demography, economy, public administration, public participation and public opinion, health care, social security, education and leisure. The international comparison is largely limited to members of the EU, but sometimes includes other Western countries as well.

Furthermore, most figures as shown in this report are from Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Statistics Netherlands is a government institution. The information Statistics Netherlands collects incorporates a multitude of societal aspects, from macro-economic indicators such as economic growth and consumer prices, to the quality of life of individual people. To get this information, hundreds of surveys are conducted every year among companies, households and private and public institutions. Statistics Netherlands is committed to the confidential treatment of individual data at its disposal. The survey results provide a wealth of information about Dutch society, and the statistical expertise and scientific analysis of these results guarantee accurate and reliable information.

## 2. DEMOGRAPHIC AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

### 2.1. Population

The Netherlands stands out among EU countries for its relatively high population density and growth rate (at 6.4 per cent in the 1990s). At the beginning of the year 2000, 4.21 per cent of the population of the European Union lived in the Netherlands. This proportion will increase over the next few decades because of a combination of a relatively high birth surplus and a fairly high

influx of residents from other countries. The surplus of births is not in fact linked to high fertility in individual women, but to the age profile of the population: the Netherlands has a relatively large number of women in the fertile age group.

The tables below show the demographic profile of the Dutch population over the last decade.

**Table 1. The Netherlands – Population by sex**

	Total population	Males	Females
1990	14892474	7358482	7534092
1991	15010445	7419501	7590944
1992	15129150	7480422	7648728
1993	15239182	7535268	7703914
1994	15341553	7585887	7755666
1995	15424122	7627482	7796640
1996	15493889	7662289	7831600
1997	15567107	7696803	7870304
1998	15654192	7740074	7914118
1999	15760225	7793271	7966954
2000	15863950	7846317	8017633
2001	15987075	7909855	8077220

Source: CBS, 2001

**Table 2a. The Netherlands – Population by age (absolute figures)**

	Total population	0-19 years	20-39 years	40-64 years	65-79 years	80 years or older
1990	14892574	3822205	4912128	4252617	1477909	427715
1991	15010445	3786164	4960023	4330616	1496394	437248
1992	15129150	3762239	4998563	4408652	1515408	444288
1993	15239182	3746470	5014662	4492523	1529136	456391
1994	15341553	3751154	5011430	4570975	1543699	464295
1995	15424122	3760155	4981153	4649238	1557819	475757
1996	15493889	3771609	4938040	4723368	1579397	481475
1997	15567107	3787364	4893195	4802709	1596420	487419
1998	15654192	3809170	4848625	4886678	1616527	493192
1999	15760225	3839842	4809644	4979805	1634782	496152
2000	15863950	3873008	4761504	5076996	1652103	500339
2001	15987075	3908053	4727104	5177417	1657864	516637

Source: CBS, 2001

**Table 2b. The Netherlands – Population by age (percentage of the total population)**

	Total population	0-19 years	20-39 years	40-64 years	65-79 years	80 years or older
1990	100	25.7	33.0	28.6	9.9	2.9
1991	100	25.2	33.0	28.9	10.0	2.9
1992	100	24.9	33.0	29.1	10.0	2.9
1993	100	24.6	32.9	29.5	10.0	3.0
1994	100	24.5	32.7	29.8	10.1	3.0
1995	100	24.5	32.3	30.1	10.1	3.1
1996	100	24.3	31.9	30.5	10.2	3.1
1997	100	24.3	31.4	30.9	10.3	3.1
1998	100	24.3	31.0	31.2	10.3	3.2
1999	100	24.4	30.5	31.6	10.4	3.1
2000	100	24.4	30.0	32.0	10.4	3.2
2001	100	24.4	29.6	32.4	10.4	3.2

Source: CBS, 2001

**Table 3. The Netherlands – Demographic burden**

	Total demographic burden	Green burden	Grey burden
1990	62.5	41.7	20.8
1991	61.6	40.8	20.8
1992	60.8	40.0	20.8
1993	60.3	39.4	20.9
1994	60.1	39.1	21.0
1995	60.2	39.0	21.1
1996	60.4	39.0	21.3
1997	60.6	39.1	21.5
1998	60.8	39.1	21.7
1999	61.0	39.2	21.8
2000	61.2	39.4	21.9
2001	61.4	39.5	22.0

Note: Total demographic burden: The proportion of all persons aged 0-19 years and 65 years or older to persons in the economically active age group (20-64 years).

Green burden: The proportion of all persons aged 0-19 years to persons in the economically active age group.

Grey Burden: The proportion of all persons aged 65 years or older to persons in the economically active age group.

Source: CBS, 2001

## 2.2. Employment and unemployment

### 2.2.1 Growth in employment

During the last decade the growth in the number of jobs in the Netherlands continued unabated. In

total, between 1991 and 2001 employment grew by almost 1.3 million, or 22 per cent.

One of the reasons for this growth is the labour participation by women. Dutch women entered the labour market late in comparison with

other countries. The same traditional family values that caused the post-war baby boom were also the reason for this according to SCP (2001). This process has accelerated enormously over the past 15 years, and the Netherlands now no longer lags behind other West European countries in terms of the proportion of women who work. Throughout the 1990s (with the exception of 1994, when employment decreased), the employment of women grew more strongly than that of men, both relatively and absolutely. Between 1994 and 2001, 59 per cent of the total growth in employment is accounted for by women. 1999 was the first year that more than 50 per cent of women between 15 and 65 had paid work of at least 12 hours a week (compare SCP, 2001). Detailed figures are given in Table 4.

In addition to the progress made by women, since the mid-1990s there has been a remarkable increase in labour participation by older people. In 1993 the proportion of those aged 55 to 64 still employed dropped to a historical low of 24 per cent, but since then has recovered and in 2001 stood at 34 per cent (see SCP, 2001).

The percentage of men over 60 who are working is much smaller but is also increasing less quickly, from 17 per cent in 1993 to 21 per cent in 1999. This indicates that the increase in the number of older people working has little connection with changes in early retirement schemes (VUT, which generally specify a retirement age of at least 60). The effect of the conversion of the VUT into flexible pension schemes, which by now has occurred in more than half of all collective labour agreements (CAO), will only gradually become visible over the coming years (SCP, 2001).

The cause of the recent rise in labour market participation of older people should rather be sought in the decreased numbers of those entering the WW (unemployment) and WAO (disability) schemes, both because of changes in policy. However, the number of individuals under 65 who are not working or are dependent on some form of social benefit but are not considered among the registered unemployed still remains very large. There are, in fact, still two people entitled to benefit

for every three employed (SCP, 2001). More detailed figure can be found in Table 5.

#### *Unemployment*

Although the labour force also grew substantially, unemployment was halved in the second half of the 1990s. In 2001 the proportion of the labour force that was out of work dropped to approximately 3 per cent. By the end of 2001 the proportion of registered unemployed was fallen below 3 per cent (compare SCP, 2001). The Dutch unemployment rates over the last years are among the lowest of the EU countries. Figure 1 gives an overview over the years 1985-2000.

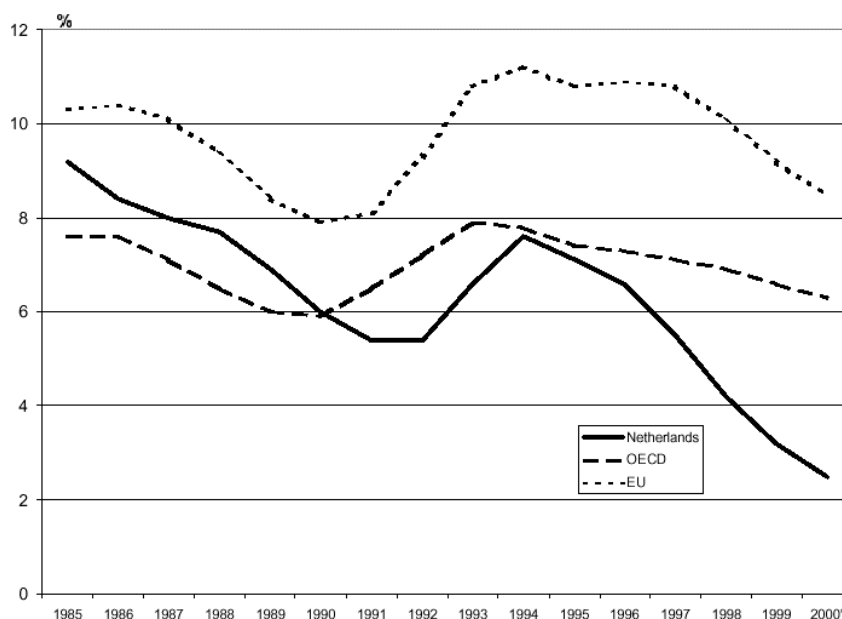
Further elaborated Dutch (un)employment figures are given in Table 4 and Table 5.

SCP (2001) writes that for the first time since the beginning of the 1970s full employment was just around the corner. However, all this refers only to people who are registered as unemployed, available for paid work (for at least 12 hours a week) and enrolled with one of the government-run regional employment offices.

In the second half of the 1990s the number of unfilled vacancies rose steadily, parallel with the fall in unemployment. Whereas in 1994 there were 12 registered unemployed for every vacancy (excluding government and education), in 1999 the ratio was only 1.4 to 1 (SCP, 2001). For the first time since the beginning of the 1970s the situation at the turning point of the centuries is being described as a labour shortage (provisional data over 2001 shows the ratio 0.8 to 1 - 146000 registered unemployed and 181700 vacancies excluding government and education).

However, there does increasingly seem to be a problem of qualitative mismatch: the qualifications of those looking for work often fail to match the qualifications employers require. A high proportion (51 per cent in 2000) of all vacancies are described by employers as 'difficult to fill' (CBS, 2001, SCP, 2001). In 1994 that figure was only 20 per cent (CBS, 2001, SCP, 2001). In contrast to 47 per cent in 1990.

Figure 1. The Netherlands – Unemployment rate, 1985-2000



Source: SER, Sociaal-economisch beleid 2000-2004, 2000. Abstract: Medium-term social and economic policy 2000-2004.

Table 4. The Netherlands – (Un)Employment – Key figures total and by sex (x1,000)

	Total (x1.000)	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Population aged 15-64		1029	10349	10420	10473	10498	10529	10563	10604	10663	10717	10801
		4										
<i>Labour force</i>	Total labour force	6189	6296	6406	6466	6596	6681	6838	6957	7097	7187	7311
	Employed labour force	5790	5885	5925	5920	6063	6187	6400	6609	6805	6917	7064
	Unemployed labour force	400	411	481	547	533	494	438	348	292	270	248
	Unemployment rate	6	7	8	8	8	7	6	5	4	4	3
	Gross participation rate	60	61	61	62	63	63	65	66	67	67	68
	Net participation rate	56	57	57	57	58	59	61	62	64	65	65
	Registered unemployment											
	Registered unemployed	334	336	415	486	464	440	375	287	221	188	146
	Registered unemployed rate	5	5	6	8	7	7	5	4	3	3	2
	<b>Men (x1.000)</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Population aged 15-64		5219	5250	5295	5317	5329	5345	5354	5369	5400	5429	5469
<i>Labour force</i>	Total labour force	3912	3967	3999	4014	4067	4095	4143	4196	4242	4288	4321
	Employed labour force	3732	3781	3771	3747	3814	3872	3951	4047	4121	4174	4215
	Unemployed labour force	180	186	228	266	253	223	192	149	121	114	106
	Unemployment rate	5	5	6	7	6	5	5	4	3	3	2
	Gross participation rate	75	76	76	75	76	77	77	78	79	79	79
	Net participation rate	72	72	71	70	72	72	74	75	76	77	77
	Registered unemployment											
	Registered unemployed	190	195	240	283	260	240	199	155	115	98	
	Registered unemployed rate	5	5	6	7	6	6	5	4	3	2	

**(Table 4: Continued)**

	Women (x1,000)	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Population aged 15-64		5057	5099	5125	5156	5169	5184	5209	5235	5263	5289	5332
Labour force	Total labour force	2277	2330	2407	2452	2529	2586	2696	2761	2856	2898	2990
	Employed labour force	2057	2105	2154	2172	2249	2315	2450	2562	2684	2743	2848
	Unemployed labour force	220	225	253	280	281	271	246	199	172	156	142
	Unemployment rate	10	10	11	11	11	10	9	7	6	5	5
Gross participation rate	60	61	61	62	63	63	65	66	67	67	68	
Net participation rate	45	46	47	48	49	50	52	53	54	55	56	
Registered unemployment												
Registered unemployed		145	141	175	203	204	201	176	132	106	90	
Registered unemployed rate		6	6	7	8	8	8	7	5	4	3	

Note:

- Labour force; age 15-64, (intent to) work at least 12 hours per week.
- Employed labour force: people age 15-64 working at least 12 hours per week.
- Unemployment rate; Unemployed labour force as a percentage of the total labour force.
- Registered unemployment: people registered at employment agency aged 16-64 who do not work, work less than 12 hours per week, are available for/have accepted working at least 12 hours per week.
- Gross participation rate: employed plus unemployed labour force as a percentage of the population aged 15-64.
- Net participation rate: employed labour force as a percentage of the population aged 15-64.
- 2001 provisional data.

Source: CBS, 2002

**Table 5. The Netherlands – (Un)Employment – Key figures by age (x1,000)**

	Age 15-24 (x1,000)	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Population aged 15-64		2255	2208	2153	2100	2012	1955	1913	1875	1865	1861	1883
Labour force	Total labour force	1055	1024	988	945	894	880	878	843	887	879	919
	Employed labour force	950	927	871	819	776	771	789	773	822	819	854
	Unemployed labour force	105	97	117	126	118	109	89	69	65	60	66
	Unemployment rate	10	9	12	13	13	12	10	8	7	7	7
Gross participation rate	47	46	46	45	44	45	46	45	45	48	47	49
Net participation rate	42	42	40	39	39	39	41	41	41	44	44	45
Registered unemployment												
Registered unemployed		74	76	100	104	89	75	54	40	32	23	
Registered unemployed rate		7	7	10	11	10	9	6	5	4		
	Age 25-34 (x1,000)	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Population aged 15-64		2538	2558	2583	2593	2607	2607	2585	2559	2509	2447	2390
Labour force	Total labour force	1961	2002	2053	2056	2097	2124	2131	2139	2119	2068	2012
	Employed labour force	1835	1877	1903	1877	1925	1977	2007	2047	2043	1999	1956
	Unemployed labour force	125	126	150	180	171	147	124	92	76	69	56
	Unemployment rate	6	6	7	9	8	7	6	4	4	3	3
Gross participation rate	77	78	79	79	80	81	82	84	84	85	84	
Net participation rate	72	73	74	72	74	76	78	80	81	82	82	
Registered unemployment												
Registered unemployed		112	113	142	169	159	145	119	86	62	49	
Registered unemployed rate		6	6	7	8	8	7	6	4	3		

(Table 5: Continued)

<b>Age 35-44 (x1,000)</b>		<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	
Labour force	Population aged 15-64	2348	2329	2317	2335	2361	2388	2422	2450	2492	2533	2565	
	Total labour force	1711	1716	1724	1753	1801	1825	1879	1929	1970	2026	2081	
	Employed labour force	1606	1601	1598	1609	1659	1696	1756	1830	1890	1955	2071	
	Unemployed labour force	106	115	126	143	142	129	123	100	80	70	64	
	Unemployment rate	6	7	7	8	8	7	7	5	4	3	3	
	Gross participation rate	73	74	74	75	76	76	78	79	79	80	81	
	Net participation rate	68	69	69	69	70	71	72	75	76	77	79	
	Registered unemployment												
	Registered unemployed	84	85	97	120	117	115	104	79	64	55		
	Registered unemployed rate	5	5	6	7	6	6	6	4	3			
<b>Age 45-54 (x1,000)</b>		<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	
Labour force	Population aged 15-64	1757	1850	1952	2014	2070	2116	2167	2221	2252	2282	2331	
	Total labour force	1105	1190	1281	1336	1416	1446	1527	1589	1620	1656	1727	
	Employed labour force	1054	1129	1208	1255	1330	1354	1440	1517	1565	1601	1678	
	Unemployed labour force	51	61	73	82	86	92	86	72	55	55	50	
	Unemployment rate	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	3	3	3	
	Gross participation rate	63	64	66	66	68	68	70	72	72	73	74	
	Net participation rate	60	61	62	62	64	64	66	68	69	70	72	
	Registered unemployment												
	Registered unemployed	52	52	64	79	85	90	81	69	52	44		
	Registered unemployed rate	5	4	5	6	6	6	5	4	3			
<b>Age 55-64 (x1,000)</b>		<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	
Labour force	Population aged 15-64	1396	1403	1414	1430	1448	1464	1476	1500	1546	1594	1625	
	Total labour force	357	363	361	377	389	405	423	456	501	558	572	
	Employed labour force	345	352	345	360	373	388	408	441	485	542	559	
	Unemployed labour force	13	11	16	17	16	18	15	15	16	16	13	
	Unemployment rate	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	
	Gross participation rate	26	26	25	26	27	28	29	30	32	35	35	
	Net participation rate	25	25	24	25	26	26	28	29	31	34	34	
	Registered unemployment												
	Registered unemployed	13	10	11	14	14	15	15	12	11	16		
	Registered unemployed rate	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	2			

Note:

- Labour force; age 15-64, (intent to) work at least 12 hours per week.
- Employed labour force: people age 15-64 working at least 12 hours per week.
- Unemployment rate; Unemployed labour force as a percentage of the total labour force.
- Registered unemployment: people registered at employment agency aged 16-64 who do not work, work less than 12 hours per week, are available for/have accepted working at least 12 hours per week.
- Gross participation rate: employed plus unemployed labour force as a percentage of the population aged 15-64.
- Net participation rate: employed labour force as a percentage of the population aged 15-64.
- 2001 provisional data.

Source: CBS, 2002

### 2.2.3 Part-time work

A large part of the growth in employment in the second half of the 1990s consisted of part-time and flexible jobs. Between 1994 and 2000 the number of individuals at work increased by 997,000 and those were mainly part-time jobs (of 12 to 34 hours a week) and flexible jobs. According to figures in Table 4 and Table 9 this is 65 per cent (see also SCP, 2001).

The tendency towards labour market flexibility can be found everywhere in Western Europe, it is not unique to the Netherlands. But there is one specific form of flexibility that is far more common in the Netherlands than elsewhere, namely part-time employment. However, international comparisons of part-time work are complicated by the fact that there are many definitions for part-time work. The criterion used by Eurostat in labour force surveys is that respondents themselves spontaneously indicate whether they have a part-time job (SCP, 2001). The OECD on the other hand, defined part-time work as employment between 1 and 30 hours per week. Based on both definitions, the Netherlands is the frontrunner when it comes to part-time work (SCP, 2001).

Part-time work is an accepted phenomenon in the Netherlands, a good third of the working population works part-time; both by men and women. However it is not divided equally between men and women. Part-time work by men is (still) an incidental, temporary phenomenon mainly at the beginning or at the end of their career (Jager, 2001).

In Table 6 to Table 10 detailed figures about part-time employment and Dutch working hours are given.

The extremely high percentage of part-time work in the Netherlands can be probably accounted for by the special position of (married) women in the Dutch labour market (SCP, 2001). For the longest time, Dutch women's participation in the labour force was amongst the lowest in Europe. This partly explains why in the recent

past the Netherlands did not have many childcare centres. In turn, when increasing numbers of married women entered the labour market in the early 1980s, this shortage of childcare facilities was the reason women tended to work part-time (see Jager, 2000) (For example, compare this with countries with childcare facilities, like Denmark or Sweden, where women are more likely to take a full-time job, while in Southern Europe, where such facilities are lacking (except for Portugal) most married women stayed out of the labour market).

A factor that may have played a role here is that the labour conditions, legal position and social security benefits of part-timers are well arranged for in the Netherlands, in contrast to many other countries (SCP, 2001). Part-time work is often not included in the definition of typical flexi-work since most part-time workers are on permanent employment contracts and as a rule the number of hours worked by part-time workers are fixed. Hence, part-time workers do not face the uncertainty of continued or reduced earnings of temporary workers or workers with variable hours contracts. So, part-time work is in no way comparable to short-time work or 'Kurzarbeit'. However, this does not mean that part-time employment does not also introduce an additional element of flexibility (Visser, 2000, Jager, 2001).

According to SCP (2001) the relatively common phenomenon of Dutch men working part-time is more difficult to explain. This may be partly attributed to the high percentage of young men (including school children and university students) who work part-time: about half of the men holding part-time positions are under 25. It is not clear whether there is a real difference with other countries. Smaller jobs seem to be registered more often in the Netherlands than in other countries. In all EU countries (except for Denmark), the share of part-time jobs in the total employment spectrum increased in the 1990s (SCP, 2001).

**Table 6. The Netherlands – Part-time employment as a percentage of the total employment, 1990-1999<sup>a</sup>**

	1990	1996	1997	1998	1999
Australia <sup>b,c</sup>	22.6	25.2	26.0	25.9	26.1
Canada	17.0	18.9	19.1	18.9	18.5
Czech Republic	..	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.4
Finland <sup>b</sup>	7.5	8.4	9.4	9.6	9.9
France	12.2	14.3	14.9	14.8	14.7
Germany	13.4	14.9	15.8	16.6	17.1
Iceland <sup>d</sup>	22.2	20.9	22.4	23.2	21.2
Ireland	9.8	14.1	15.2	18.0	18.3
Italy	8.8	10.5	11.3	11.2	11.8
Japan <sup>b,e</sup>	19.2	21.8	23.3	23.6	24.1
Korea <sup>b</sup>	4.5	4.4	5.1	6.8	7.8
Mexico	..	14.9	15.9	15.0	13.8
<b>The Netherlands</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>30.4</b>
New Zealand	19.6	22.0	22.4	22.8	23.0
Norway	21.8	21.6	21.0	20.8	20.7
Portugal	6.8	9.2	10.2	9.9	9.3
Spain	4.6	7.5	7.9	7.7	7.9
Sweden	14.5	14.8	14.2	13.5	14.5
Switzerland <sup>c</sup>	22.1	23.7	24.0	24.2	24.8
United Kingdom	20.1	22.9	22.9	23.0	23.0
United States <sup>f</sup>	13.8	14.0	13.6	13.4	13.3
European Union <sup>g</sup>	13.3	15.2	15.7	15.9	16.4
OECD Europe <sup>g</sup>	13.2	13.8	14.1	14.3	15.0
<b>Total OECD<sup>g</sup></b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>15.8</b>

Note: a) Part-time employment refers to persons who usually work less than 30 hours a week in their main job. Data include only persons declaring usual hours.  
b) Data are based on actual hours worked.  
c) Part-time employment based on hours worked in all jobs.  
d) 1991 instead of 1990.  
e) Less than 35 hours per week.  
f) Estimates are for wage and salary workers only.  
g) For above countries only.

Source: Table E, Statistical Annex, OECD Employment Outlook, 2000 In: Evans, J.M., Lippoldt, D.C. and P. Marianna (2001). Labour Market and Social Policy – Occasional paper no.45. Trends in working hours in OECD countries. Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD. See also Jager (2001).

Table 7. The Netherlands – Working population &lt; or &gt;= 12 hours per week – total and by sex (x1,000)

		Total population	Total working population	Working population	
				Working population: < 12 hours per week	Working population: ≥ 12 hours per week
Total	1992	10349	6597	712	5885
	1993	10420	6648	722	5925
	1994	10473	6692	772	5920
	1995	10498	6835	771	6063
	1996	10529	6971	784	6187
	1997	10563	7194	794	6400
	1998	10604	7398	789	6609
	1999	10663	7601	796	6805
	2000	10717	7729	813	6917
Men	1992	5250	4001	220	3781
	1993	5295	3980	209	3771
	1994	5317	3979	231	3747
	1995	5329	4047	233	3814
	1996	5345	4109	237	3872
	1997	5354	4194	244	3951
	1998	5369	4289	243	4047
	1999	5400	4361	239	4121
	2000	5429	4419	246	4174
Women	1992	5099	2597	492	2105
	1993	5125	2668	514	2154
	1994	5156	2713	541	2172
	1995	5169	2787	539	2249
	1996	5184	2862	547	2315
	1997	5209	3000	550	2450
	1998	5235	3109	547	2562
	1999	5263	3241	557	2684
	2000	5289	3310	567	2743

Source: CBS, 2001

**Table 8. The Netherlands – Working population < or >= 12 hours per week – by age (x1,000)**

Age	Year	Total population	Total working population	Working population	
				Working population: < 12 hours per week	Working population: > 12 hours per week
15-24	1992	2208	1256	329	927
	1993	2153	1195	324	871
	1994	2100	1162	343	819
	1995	2012	1133	356	776
	1996	1955	1142	371	771
	1997	1913	1168	379	789
	1998	1875	1171	397	773
	1999	1865	1229	407	822
	2000	1861	1236	417	819
35-44	1992	2329	1733	132	1601
	1993	2317	1734	136	1598
	1994	2335	1754	145	1609
	1995	2361	1798	139	1659
	1996	2388	1832	136	1696
	1997	2422	1901	145	1756
	1998	2450	1960	130	1830
	1999	2492	2022	132	1890
	2000	2533	2087	132	1955
45-54	1992	1850	1224	95	1129
	1993	1952	1307	99	1208
	1994	2014	1367	113	1255
	1995	2070	1439	109	1330
	1996	2116	1467	112	1354
	1997	2167	1552	112	1440
	1998	2221	1627	110	1517
	1999	2252	1678	112	1565
	2000	2282	1715	114	1601
55-64	1992	1403	400	48	352
	1993	1414	396	52	345
	1994	1430	411	51	360
	1995	1448	423	50	373
	1996	1464	445	57	388
	1997	1476	465	57	408
	1998	1500	497	56	441
	1999	1546	544	59	485
	2000	1594	605	63	542

Source: CBS, 2001

Table 9. The Netherlands – Working hours employed labour force – total and by sex (x1,000)

Year	Employed labour force	Working hours per week			Regular working hours	Total	Irregular working hours			
		12-19 hours per week	20-34 hours per week	> = 35 hours per week			At night	During the evening	Week-end (day-time)	
Total	1992	5885	360	1075	4451	3028	2833	858	955	1020
	1993	5925	372	1126	4428	3170	2744	829	979	936
	1994	5920	387	1182	4351	3110	2797	858	988	952
	1995	6063	425	1263	4375	3143	2887	881	1011	995
	1996	6187	422	1317	4448	3172	2998	896	1080	1022
	1997	6400	455	1396	4549	3272	3114	949	1152	1013
	1998	6609	526	1462	4621	3318	3271	977	1195	1100
	1999	6805	559	1534	4712	3292	3497	1048	1411	1037
	2000	6917	581	1638	4697	2980	3934	1184	1915	835
Men	1992	3781	52	261	3468	1910	1856	600	583	673
	1993	3771	56	276	3440	1988	1778	582	596	600
	1994	3747	65	287	3396	1936	1807	591	604	612
	1995	3814	74	313	3428	1931	1860	604	603	653
	1996	3872	71	326	3475	1934	1928	610	650	668
	1997	3951	72	344	3535	1984	1960	638	677	646
	1998	4047	90	365	3592	1976	2063	652	700	711
	1999	4121	99	370	3653	1925	2190	703	822	665
	2000	4174	103	406	3665	1713	2460	825	1123	512
Women	1992	2105	308	814	983	1118	977	257	372	347
	1993	2154	316	850	987	1181	966	247	383	336
	1994	2172	321	895	956	1174	990	267	383	340
	1995	2249	351	950	947	1213	1027	277	408	342
	1996	2315	351	991	973	1238	1070	286	430	354
	1997	2450	384	1052	1014	1289	1154	311	475	367
	1998	2562	436	1097	1029	1343	1209	324	495	389
	1999	2684	460	1164	1060	1367	1307	345	589	373
	2000	2743	478	1232	1033	1267	1474	360	792	323

Note: – Employed labour force: people age 15-64 working at least 12 hours per week.  
– Working hours per week: Normal or average working week  
– Regular working hours: Only during daytime  
– At night: between 0.00 and 6.00 a.m.  
– During the evening: between 19.00 and 24.00 p.m.

Source: CBS, 2001

Table 10. The Netherlands – Working hours employed labour force by age (x1,000)

Age	Year	Working hours per week				Regular working hours	Total	Irregular working hours		Week-end (day-time)
		Employed labour force	12-19 hours per week	20-34 hours per week	> = 35 hours per week			At night	During the evening	
15-24	1992	927	54	171	702	468	454	124	150	181
	1993	871	47	172	651	455	415	116	147	152
	1994	819	63	171	584	415	401	109	145	148
	1995	776	68	174	534	380	390	103	139	148
	1996	771	75	183	513	353	416	109	161	147
	1997	789	83	189	518	359	427	116	171	140
	1998	773	109	186	478	332	439	113	180	146
	1999	822	121	192	509	334	485	132	205	148
2000	819	119	184	516	327	492	123	241	128	
25-34	1992	1877	88	317	1472	972	899	317	281	300
	1993	1903	92	338	1473	1034	867	302	282	282
	1994	1877	96	332	1448	989	885	309	283	293
	1995	1925	99	369	1458	997	920	322	296	302
	1996	1977	101	381	1496	1033	939	322	313	304
	1997	2007	97	391	1518	1048	957	322	319	316
	1998	2047	113	407	1528	1044	1000	332	333	334
	1999	2043	120	397	1526	1012	1027	330	386	311
2000	1999	120	415	1464	884	1115	352	515	248	
35-44	1992	1601	112	324	1165	826	768	237	259	272
	1993	1598	115	330	1153	851	744	227	267	249
	1994	1609	111	353	1145	850	757	243	266	248
	1995	1659	127	362	1171	867	785	254	278	252
	1996	1696	122	381	1193	878	813	262	296	255
	1997	1756	135	405	1215	899	853	280	310	263
	1998	1830	148	436	1245	913	910	298	327	285
	1999	1890	155	469	1265	904	982	320	392	270
2000	1955	167	493	1295	840	1114	361	542	211	
45-54	1992	1129	76	199	854	585	539	144	199	196
	1993	1209	88	222	898	654	552	151	213	188
	1994	1255	86	247	921	666	585	160	222	202
	1995	1330	97	273	960	711	612	164	223	224
	1996	1354	91	280	983	713	638	169	233	237
	1997	1440	107	313	1020	757	681	188	269	223
	1998	1517	119	334	1063	802	710	190	266	253
	1999	1565	114	366	1086	796	766	215	314	237
2000	1601	124	400	1078	687	914	276	451	187	
55-64	1992	352	30	64	258	178	173	36	67	70
	1993	345	29	63	252	176	167	34	69	64
	1994	360	30	77	253	190	170	36	72	62
	1995	373	35	85	252	189	181	38	76	67
	1996	388	32	92	263	195	191	34	77	80
	1997	408	33	98	278	210	197	44	83	70
	1998	441	36	99	306	227	212	43	89	81
	1999	485	49	110	326	246	237	52	113	72
2000	542	51	146	344	242	299	72	166	60	

Note: – Employed labour force: people age 15-64 working at least 12 hours per week.  
– Working hours per week: Normal or average working week  
– Regular working hours: Only during daytime  
– At night: between 0.00 and 6.00 a.m.  
– During the evening: between 19.00 and 24.00 p.m.

Source: CBS, 2001

### 2.2.4 Flexible work

SCP (2001) discusses the relationship between part-time work and flexibility in the labour market since part-time work is often mentioned in connection with flexibility in the labour market (SCP, 2001, see also Jager, 2001). The growth of part-time work would therefore be one expression of the rapidly increasing flexibility of labour in the Netherlands. SCP writes however that an increase in flexible labour contracts in the Netherlands has not led to a split in the labour market or a reduction in labour security (as distinct from job security). To shore up this development, the Labour Flexibility and Security Act came into effect in 1999 (SCP, 2001).

According to SCP (2001) the importance of flexibility to the growth in employment is not unequivocal. In the first place, part-time work in itself is not flexible work since most part-time jobs in the Netherlands are permanent jobs. Part-time work can make it possible for employers to adjust the organisation of labour to suit their needs, such as longer business hours for retailers. When one considers flexible jobs, such as temporary, temp agency and standby work, then the Netherlands does not come out in the lead.

Although the wide variety of rules and definitions makes it difficult to make international comparisons, available figures suggest that the position of the Netherlands in the EU is no better than middling, and in some respects comes near the bottom of the list (Smulders and Klein Hesselink, 1997 in SCP, 2001). Nor is the Netherlands very different from other EU-countries in terms of other indicators of flexibility in the labour market, such as protection against dismissal and the rate at which jobs are created and destroyed (OECD, 1996 in SCP, 2001). Moreover, the relationship between flexibility in the labour market and employment growth is not straightforward. Greater flexibility seems mainly to contribute to a greater sensitivity on the part of employment to the state of the economy, rather than to a higher structural rate of growth, as stated by SCP (Delsen and De Jong 1997, Delsen 2000 in SCP, 2001).

In the previous paragraph it is stated that increase of the labour force of the second half of the 1990s are mainly part-time jobs and flexible jobs. Flexible jobs, however, accounted for only a tenth of the total growth in employment between 1994 and 2000. According to Fouarge et al (1999) in 1998 just fewer than 8 per cent of all employees had jobs with flexible characteristics (see Table 11). The definition of flexible work as defined by Fouarge et al (1999) includes working for an employment agency, secondment, on loan, outworking and as a stand-by worker. If flexiworkers are defined as employees with a temporary or other type of flexible contract or with one of the characteristics given above, then the percentage of flexiworkers in 1998 was 12 per cent (Fouarge et al, 1999) Figures from the Labourforce Survey by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) are slightly different since they are based on another definition and sampling method. Statistics Netherlands figures are based on employees who work for at least 12 hours per week. According to these figures 10 per cent of the employees had a flexible job in 1998 (see Table 12 and Table 13).

However, after 1998 the increase in the number of employees with a flexible employment during the nineties seem to have passed its peak. The number of flexible jobs declined in the last two years of that decade; in 2000 530, 000 people or 8 per cent had a flexible job, this was actually 74,000 less than in 1998 according to figures from Statistics Netherlands (CBS).

This was probably to some extent due to a change in the state of the economy: the longer the state of the economy remains favourable, the more people employers take on as permanent staff (compare SCP, 2001). As can be seen in Table 12 from 1995 to 2000 the number of employees with a permanent job has increased to almost 5.6 million. The numbers for both men and women have increased, though still a larger proportion men have a permanent job. In 2000 almost 93 per cent of the male employees and 89 per cent of the female employees had a permanent job.

Temp work as a specific form of flexible work (in Dutch: *uitzendwerk*) involved in 2000

around 3 per cent of all employees in employment, or 37 per cent of all employees with flexible jobs (see Table 12).

According to Visser (2000) the typical temp job is full-time, and concerns low – or semi-skilled work. Temp work is used both in agriculture and industries in case of seasonal work or uncertain

demand, and in commercial services in case of temporary activities. This explains why there are an almost equal number of men and women in temp jobs. Typically, the temp worker is young, has no children; there is in fact a high proportion of two-earning (starting) households involved in these kinds of jobs (see Visser, 2000).

**Table 11. The Netherlands – Flexible job characteristics according to the type of employment, 1998 (as percentage of the total salaried workforce)**

	Types of employment				Total
	Permanent	Temporary with the prospect of becoming permanent	Temporary	Other	
Flexible characteristics of which:	3.7	23	31.3	60	7.7
• via employment agency	0.8	12.6	20.9	16	2.9
• secondment/loan	2.4	5.2	4.3	1.3	2.6
• stand-by worker/outworker	0.6	5.2	6.1	42.7	2.2
No flexible characteristics	96.3	77	68.7	40	92.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fouarge, 1999 (OSA) (see also Jager, 2001)

### 2.2.5 Self-employed work

In the 1990s the absolute number of self-employed rose from 698,000 in 1994 to 799,000 in 2000, a growth of 14 per cent. (Although the percentage self employed of all employees kept relatively stable at 13 per cent see Table 12). According to SCP (2000) some analysts see in this an entirely new trend: employees increasingly preferring self-employment to dependent employment. Between 1997 and 1999, however, the number of self-employed declined by 24,000, which casts doubt on the structural nature of the growth in the previous years although in the year 2000 the number of self-employed rose again with 66,000 (compare SCP, 2001). The number of female self-employed actually rose more than the number of male self-employed. From 1994 to 2000 there was an increase of 21 per cent of self-employed women and almost 12 per cent of self-employed men. In 2000 10 per cent of the female employees and 15 of the male employees were self-employed. Figures are shown in Table 12 and Table 13.

### 2.2.6 Working hours

Working hours have become slightly more flexible, a trend that again occurred more rapidly in the Netherlands in the 1990s than elsewhere. All in all, though in 1997 working hours were still more concentrated in the traditional working day here than elsewhere. However, as can be seen in Table 9 these working hours seemed to become more flexible in the latter years. In 2000 almost 3million employees had regular working hours – 43 per cent of the employed labour force-, a reduction in regard to the previous years. The number of people working irregular hours decreased in 1993 but eventually each year grew till 3.9 million employees or 56 per cent of the employed labour force with irregular working hours in 2000. Evening or weekend work is still less common in the Netherlands than in other countries (SCP, 2001).

Table 9 and Table 10 present figures about the working hours of the working population.

Table 12. The Netherlands - Employed labour force; contract of employment – total and by sex (x1,000)

Gender	Year	Total employees	Employees with permanent jobs	Employees with flexible jobs					Self-employed
				Total with flexible jobs	Temporary workers (temps)	Stand-by workers (on call)	Stand in workers	Other flexible work	
Total	1992	5258	4859	399	102	78	39	181	627
	1993	5261	4868	393	98	79	36	179	665
	1994	5222	4797	425	114	91	36	185	698
	1995	5357	4880	477	149	105	34	189	706
	1996	5459	4920	538	187	114	48	188	728
	1997	5644	5077	566	207	121	43	195	757
	1998	5874	5270	604	223	138	49	195	734
	1999	6072	5502	571	210	112	44	205	733
	2000	6117	5588	530	196	87	29	218	799
	Men	1992	3335	3170	165	53	20	8	84
1993		3301	3136	165	54	23	8	80	470
1994		3260	3068	192	64	29	7	91	488
1995		3322	3103	219	89	33	7	89	492
1996		3367	3120	248	105	34	16	93	505
1997		3427	3175	252	113	35	13	91	523
1998		3541	3275	266	123	41	13	89	506
1999		3624	3369	255	103	39	12	101	497
2000		3629	3370	259	99	34	6	120	545
Women		1992	1923	1689	234	49	58	30	97
	1993	1960	1732	228	44	57	28	99	194
	1994	1963	1729	233	49	62	28	94	210
	1995	2035	1777	258	60	71	27	100	213
	1996	2092	1801	291	83	80	32	96	223
	1997	2216	1902	314	94	86	30	104	233
	1998	2333	1995	338	99	97	35	107	229
	1999	2449	2133	316	106	73	32	104	235
	2000	2488	2218	270	97	53	23	98	255

Note: Employees with permanent jobs: The employment contract is not for a limited period and the employee is employed for an agreed number of hours.

Employees with a flexible job: The employment contract is for a limited period and/or the employee is employed is for a variable number of hours.

Source: CBS, 2001

Table 13. The Netherlands – Employed labour force; contract of employment by age (x1,000)

Year	Total employees	Employees with permanent jobs	Employees with flexible jobs					Self-employed	
			Total with flexible jobs	Temporary workers (temps)	Stand-by workers (on call)	Stand in workers	Other flexible work		
15-24	1992	902	753	149	48	23	11	68	25
	1993	844	692	152	46	22	10	74	27
	1994	795	635	159	52	32	11	64	24
	1995	752	572	180	62	35	11	72	24
	1996	745	549	196	74	40	12	70	26
	1997	764	554	210	84	43	14	69	25
	1998	755	531	224	83	55	14	72	19
	1999	804	587	218	79	50	12	78	18
	2000	800	600	200	75	41	9	76	19
25-34	1992	1743	1628	115	35	19	12	49	134
	1993	1755	1645	110	34	20	11	45	148
	1994	1725	1603	123	40	22	9	52	151
	1995	1769	1631	138	55	26	9	49	156
	1996	1819	1657	162	71	26	15	50	159
	1997	1849	1687	162	72	25	11	55	158
	1998	1898	1732	165	77	28	14	46	149
	1999	1891	1747	144	65	19	12	48	152
	2000	1843	1715	128	61	14	7	46	157
35-45	1992	1409	1328	80	13	22	12	34	193
	1993	1398	1325	73	11	20	10	32	200
	1994	1403	1322	81	15	20	10	36	207
	1995	1453	1363	90	23	24	9	34	206
	1996	1481	1381	100	27	25	13	35	215
	1997	1533	1428	104	33	28	10	33	223
	1998	1600	1480	120	41	30	12	38	229
	1999	1656	1542	113	40	23	11	39	234
	2000	1711	1609	102	39	17	6	41	244
45-54	1992	947	905	42	6	11		22	181
	1993	1017	971	45	5	14	5	21	191
	1994	1037	986	50	6	14	5	26	218
	1995	1114	1056	58	9	17	5	27	216
	1996	1137	1071	65	12	19	8	26	218
	1997	1198	1121	76	17	21	7	31	243
	1998	1289	1213	76	19	20	7	30	229
	1999	1346	1271	75	22	16	7	29	219
	2000	1348	1274	74	18	12	5	39	254
55-64	1992	257	245	12	.	.		8	95
	1993	246	234	12	.	.		7	98
	1994	263	251	12	.	.		7	97
	1995	269	257	12	.	.		7	103
	1996	277	262	15	.	.		7	111
	1997	301	286	14	.	.		8	107
	1998	333	315	18	.	5		9	108
	1999	375	355	21	.	5		12	110
	2000	415	390	26	3	4	2	17	126

Note Employees with permanent jobs: The employment contract is not for a limited period and the employee is employed for an agreed number of hours.  
Employees with a flexible job: The employment contract is for a limited period and/or the employee is employed is for a variable number of hours.

Source: CBS, 2001

### 2.2.7 Occupational structure

Borghans and Heijke (1998) analysed the changing labour market structure in the Netherlands between 1981 and 1993. In this period the extent of the occupational domains of all educational levels increased. This means that overall the switching opportunities for newcomers increased which provided more flexibility to the labour market to adjust supply to demand.

But in 1983 as well as in 1993 the closest competitor one encounters in the labour market is generally not found at the same educational level but one level below or above. The strongest labour market relations are therefore vertical rather than horizontal. The greatest gap is between the levels of secondary and higher vocational education. The labour market positions of academics have become more similar to those of graduates from higher vocational education. At the bottom of the vocational market competition between newcomers from initial and secondary vocational

level is quite high. Recent research confirms this trend (ROA, 2002).

In recent years the average educational level of the labour force still increased somewhat, although less than in the past decades. In 2010 approximately 27 per cent of the labour force will be higher educated, compared to 23 per cent in 1995 (SER, 2001). The share of lower educated (primary school, lower general or vocational level) in the labour force decreases from 35 to 30 per cent. The expected trend of a decrease in unschooled labour market positions in fact did not occur, according to the SER (2001). A gradually declining share of unschooled work in the period 1983-1993 (from 27 to 24 per cent) was fully compensated by the increase in absolute numbers (by 100.000 new jobs). Unschooled jobs in traditional economic sectors are replaced by new jobs especially in personal services (all kinds of substituting activities for homework, childcare), which means better chances for women, less for unschooled men.

**Table 14. The Netherlands – Occupational level employed labour force by sex**

Gender	Year	Occupational level:						Unknown
		Total	Basic Elementaire beroepen	Lower Lagere beroepen	Medium Middelbare beroepen	Higher Hogere beroepen	Scientific Weten- schap- pelijke beroepen	
Men	1992	3781	190	1000	1478	698	316	99
	1993	3771	207	946	1468	715	320	116
	1994	3747	203	947	1461	685	318	134
	1995	3814	230	928	1498	702	320	135
	1996	3872	242	979	1519	757	341	35
	1997	3951	249	971	1553	756	367	56
	1998	4047	256	953	1587	812	385	54
	1999	4121	271	979	1579	819	401	71
	2000	4174	270	994	1602	837	402	68
	Women	1992	2105	150	620	779	365	95
1993		2154	155	596	823	374	107	99
1994		2172	157	589	836	384	101	105
1995		2249	170	582	869	400	115	112
1996		2315	186	609	945	427	135	13
1997		2450	195	635	990	458	154	18
1998		2562	201	640	1010	521	167	23
1999		2684	191	675	1059	548	179	32
2000		2743	213	680	1074	566	182	28

Source: CBS, 2001

**Table 15. The Netherlands – Occupational level employed labour force by age**

Age	Occupational level:		Basic	Lower	Medium	Higher	Scientific	Unknown
	Year	Total	Elementaire beroepen	Lagere beroepen	Middelbare beroepen	Hogere beroepen	Wetenschappelijke beroepen	
15-24	1992	927	76	388	321	50	6	86
	1993	871	73	360	299	42	7	90
	1994	819	74	342	268	37	5	93
	1995	776	82	305	249	37	4	98
	1996	771	104	340	272	41	7	12
	1997	789	97	342	280	46	11	12
	1998	773	110	319	261	60	12	11
	1999	822	107	353	272	64	11	14
	2000	819	108	334	285	67	10	14
25-34	1992	1877	94	469	783	348	126	56
	1993	1903	102	460	809	346	125	61
	1994	1877	103	464	789	339	116	66
	1995	1925	120	458	826	335	118	69
	1996	1977	128	479	852	366	138	15
	1997	2007	128	471	868	371	145	24
	1998	2047	129	462	871	409	154	23
	1999	2043	121	454	846	415	172	36
	2000	1999	116	441	833	411	165	34
35-44	1992	1601	84	385	590	368	142	31
	1993	1598	88	354	606	372	142	36
	1994	1609	92	351	622	351	147	46
	1995	1659	94	354	649	361	154	47
	1996	1696	99	365	676	389	152	14
	1997	1756	105	370	702	392	169	18
	1998	1830	107	386	725	410	180	21
	1999	1890	115	388	751	428	181	27
	2000	1955	126	419	759	433	108	17
45-54	1992	1129	65	288	422	230	142	31
	1993	1208	78	288	440	262	117	23
	1994	1255	71	303	474	264	116	26
	1995	1330	79	309	496	293	126	27
	1996	1354	77	313	509	307	138	10
	1997	1440	90	332	534	321	148	15
	1998	1517	87	329	567	355	162	18
	1999	1565	91	350	592	354	159	19
	2000	1601	95	365	593	369	162	17
55-64	1992	352	21	89	141	67	29	6
	1993	345	21	79	137	67	35	6
	1994	360	21	75	144	78	34	7
	1995	373	25	84	148	75	35	6
	1996	388	20	91	154	81	40	2
	1997	408	23	91	158	84	47	5
	1998	441	24	97	172	99	44	4
	1999	485	29	110	178	106	56	6
	2000	542	37	114	205	123	57	5

Source: CBS, 2001

Table 16. The Netherlands – Economic activities of employed persons – total and by sex (x1,000)

Economic activity	Year	Employed persons			Economic activity	Year	Employed persons		
		Total	Men	Women			Total	Men	Women
Total	1995	7143	4101	3042	Trade, hotels, restaurants and repair	1995	1451	798	653
	1996	7308	4197	3111		1996	1470	814	656
	1997	7544	4318	3226		1997	1507	833	674
	1998	7743	4405	3338		1998	1543	849	694
	1999*	7935	4471	3465		1999*	1609	883	725
	2000*	8122	4546	3576		2000*	1663	904	759
Agriculture forestry and fishing	1995	289	217	72	Transport, storage and communication	1995	401	305	96
	1996	292	219	72		1996	403	304	99
	1997	296	221	75		1997	411	307	104
	1998	282	211	71		1998	425	316	109
	1999*	281	207	75		1999*	440	322	118
	2000*	283	207	76		2000*	455	330	125
Mining and quarrying	1995	10	8	.	Financial and business activities	1995	1175	663	511
	1996	10	9	.		1996	1287	737	550
	1997	9	8	.		1997	1384	800	584
	1998	9	8	.		1998	1470	838	632
	1999*	9	8	.		1999*	1538	878	660
	2000*	9	7	.		2000*	1589	910	680
Manufacturing	1995	1067	838	229	General government	1995	823	500	323
	1996	1051	830	222		1996	811	488	323
	1997	1067	834	233		1997	815	487	328
	1998	1073	837	236		1998	821	491	330
	1999*	1080	831	249		1999*	845	488	357
	2000*	1088	833	256		2000*	859	490	369
Electricity, gas and water supply	1995	43	36	7	Care and other service activities	1995	1448	334	1114
	1996	41	34	7		1996	1498	350	1148
	1997	40	33	7		1997	1550	365	1184
	1998	39	32	7		1998	1605	386	1219
	1999*	38	31	7		1999*	1607	375	1232
	2000*	37	30	7		2000*	1639	379	1260
Construction	1995	437	402	35					
	1996	445	412	33					
	1997	464	430	34					
	1998	474	436	38					
	1999*	487	448	39					
	2000*	499	456	43					

Note \* preliminary data  
 . lack of data

Economic activities: A classification of the economic activities of enterprises according to the Standard industrial classification of 1993 (SBI 1993).

Source: CBS, 2001

### 2.3. Disablement and retirement

SCP (2000) discuss the shadow side of the successful growth in employment as well: a growing army of people who receive an occupational disability benefit and a low rate of labour participation among older employees (as mentioned in a previous paragraph). The rise in the number of employees with an occupational disability led to a crisis in the Dutch social system in the early nineties. In response, the government introduced various reforms (including the privatisation of the Sickness Benefits Act), and at first this did cause the number of people receiving an occupational disability benefit to fall. However, the numbers are rising again, with about 13 per cent of the Dutch labour force currently receiving an occupational disability benefit in 2001. Nevertheless, more than a fifth of all benefits recipients work, often part-time according to SCP (2001). The Disability Insurance Act (WAO) is now subject for debate, it is one of the central issues of the Dutch elections of 2002 (see also SER, 2002).

**Table 17. The Netherlands – Total number of disability pensions (absolute figures)**

	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total	906840	925900	956980	981410
Men	547760	547300	551210	552590
Women	359060	378580	405770	428790
age 15-24	27150	28790	30680	31900
age 25-34	93550	97740	102800	105280
age 35-44	156080	163160	172320	179550
age 45-54	277100	281040	291250	290400
age 55-64	351950	354140	358870	373120

Source: CBS, 2002

Although figures rose from 24 per cent in 1993 to 34 per cent in 2000, SCP (2001) the level of labour participation among employees between 55 and 64 years of age is still strikingly low (See also Table 5 and Table 18). This low figure can largely be attributed to the high percentage of occupationally disabled employees in this age category. In addition, in the eighties early retirement was a

tried-and-tested method to shift jobs from older to younger employees. It was one of the methods used to tackle the fast-rising unemployment rate. In today's tight labour market, however, the disadvantages of this policy are becoming evident. To continue the high rate of economic growth, the labour participation rate will have to increase among older employees as well (SCP, 2001).

**Table 18. The Netherlands – Early retirement (x1,000)**

	Year	Total population	(Early) retirement
Total	1992	10349	231
	1993	10420	245
	1994	10473	259
	1995	10498	267
	1996	10529	279
	1997	10563	281
	1998	10604	265
	1999	10663	267
	2000	10717	.
	Men	1992	5250
1993		5295	216
1994		5317	227
1995		5329	234
1996		5345	241
1997		5354	238
1998		5369	220
1999		5400	221
2000		5429	.
Women		1992	5099
	1993	5125	29
	1994	5156	32
	1995	5169	33
	1996	5184	38
	1997	5209	43
	1998	5235	44
	1999	5263	46
	2000	5289	.

Source: CBS, 2001

In the Netherlands early retirement at age 59 may be provided for in collective agreements for branches of industry or individual companies. Depending on the collective agreement, early retirement may start even earlier at 55. Social partners are now trying to change these arrangements, to adjust to the ageing of the population.

#### 2.4. Family and households

SCP (2001) also describes the special position of the Netherlands, within the group of countries of Western and Northern Europe, concerning family formation and combining family and work. Until the mid-1980s fertility in the Netherlands decreased faster than in any other country, and the delay in having a firstborn child was far greater than in the other countries. In terms of permanent childlessness, the Netherlands was one of the higher-ranking countries. Its line of development does not fundamentally differ from comparable countries, but the course taken is steeper. The post-war baby boom here was more powerful than elsewhere, and it was this large generation that could benefit from the change in social climate and the availability of the contraceptive pill at the end of the 1960s.

Table 19 shows that the age of women having their firstborn child has increased throughout the decades. Nowadays the average age of women bearing their firstborn child in the Netherlands is 29,1 (See CBS, 2001, SCP, 2001).

Furthermore, SCP (2001) mentions that the same family traditionalism that caused the post-war baby boom was also responsible for the fact that women were late in entering the job market (see above); although nowadays the Netherlands no longer lag behind other Western European countries when the number of working women is concerned. But combining paid work and family obligations raises a problem that falls mostly on women, as it does in other countries (SCP, 2001, Jager 2001). Part-time work for women in the Netherlands is often an opening to the labour market. We see more and more that couples delay

The retirement scheme for civil servants has already been changed into a more flexible system that rewards working until at least 63 years of age. Nowadays several political parties (especially right wing) plead for a reintroduction of the compulsory application for unemployed persons of 57½ years and older.

the birth of their first child so that both partners can build a career. When the children come along, women generally work part-time so that they have enough time for their family and care tasks. (compare Jager, 2001, SCP, 2001).

**Table 19. The Netherlands – Birth-rates: Average age mother first born child**

Year	Average age
1950	26.4
1960	25.6
1970	24.3
1980	25.6
1991	27.7
1992	28.0
1993	28.3
1994	28.4
1995	28.6
1996	28.9
1997	29.0
1998	29.1
1999	29.1
2000	29.1

Source: CBS, 2001

SCP (2001) concludes that in this respect, the Netherlands differs from the Scandinavian countries and a number of other West European countries, which are more geared towards providing full-time baby and childcare. According to SCP (2001) this probably explains the inconsistency between equality theory and practice in this country. While the Dutch are just as keen on equality as, say, the Swedes, this is not reflected in the division of tasks between the sexes (compare Jager, 2001, SCP, 2001).

SCP (2001) writes that compared with other Western European countries Dutch people have been establishing new families in increasingly later phases of their lives. Table 20 shows some figures about the Dutch marriage.

In the Netherlands, 60 per cent of all 20-24 year olds live with their family of origin. Over-time, the tendency (of the last decades) in the Netherlands – as in most countries of Western Europe and Scandinavia – has been that they increasingly establish themselves independently before moving on to marriage or a cohabiting rela-

tionship. Growing prosperity as well as a general tendency toward individualisation encourages young people to leave the parental home at an earlier age.

In contrast, extended educational paths and the relative deterioration in the income position of young adults that has occurred in the Netherlands during the 1990's, have worked to keep them at home for a longer period of time (SCP, 2001). The increasing ability to lead an independent lifestyle within the parental home has contributed to the same trend (SCP, 2001).

**Table 20. The Netherlands – Key figures: Marriage**

	Consecration of marriage	Married persons (relative)*		Average age consecration of marriage	
	Total	Men**	Women**	Men	Women
1989	90248	34.2	32.1	30.3	27.6
1990	95649	35.9	33.8	30.7	28
1991	94932	34.9	32.9	31.1	28.4
1992	93638	34.5	32.5	31.5	28.8
1993	88273	32.0	30.1	31.8	29.1
1994	82982	29.5	27.9	32.1	29.5
1995	81469	27.8	26.0	32.4	29.6
1996	85140	28.3	26.5	32.8	30.0
1997	85059	28.0	26.4	33.2	30.4
1998	86956	28.2	26.8	33.6	30.7
1999	89428	28.9	27.3	33.7	30.8
2000	88074	29.5	26.6	34.1	31.1

Note: \* Per 1 000 of the average population with equal marital status, gender and age(class)  
 \*\* married men/women per 1,000 men/women age 15 or older

Source: CBS, 2001

Three-generation households are highly exceptional in the Netherlands and hardly exist in other Northern and Western European countries (except Ireland) (SCP, 2001). On the other hand, a – disproportionately – large number of single-

person households is found in Netherlands and in other Western European countries and particularly in Northern Europe (SCP, 2001). See Table 21 and Table 22.

**Table 21. The Netherlands – Population: Key figures Private households (x1,000)**

	Total private households	One-person household	Multi-persons household	Average number of persons per household
1990	6061	1813	4249	2.42
1991	6164	1844	4320	2.40
1992	6266	1913	4353	2.38
1993	6368	1968	4401	2.36
1994	6445	2003	4442	2.35
1995	6469	2109	4360	2.35
1996	6518	2124	4394	2.34
1997	6581	2158	4423	2.33
1998	6656	2201	4455	2.32
1999	6745	2255	4491	2.30
2000	6819	2301	4518	2.29

Source: CBS, 2001

**Table 22. The Netherlands – Household positions**

		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000*
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15424122</b>	<b>15493889</b>	<b>15567107</b>	<b>15654192</b>	<b>15760225</b>	<b>15863948</b>
Child living at home		4546361	4557089	4545206	4535995	4525716	4542687
Single		2109149	2123782	2157561	2201318	2254631	2300924
	<i>Cohabiting persons</i>						
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7910309</b>	<b>7964162</b>	<b>8017092</b>	<b>8073969</b>	<b>8135415</b>	<b>8175098</b>
Not married couple without children		837115	881994	919742	951495	972064	970750
Married couple without children		2849232	2870894	2911174	2954076	3008044	3042468
Not married couple with children		199212	223668	246574	268096	295079	322714
Married couple with children		4024750	3987606	3939602	3900302	3860228	3839166
Parent in single-parent-household		360754	368776	371642	375104	379627	386781
Other member household		249814	232603	234069	231064	234301	238294

Source: CBS, 2001

## 2.5. Regional inequalities, ethnicity and religion

There are regional inequalities in the Netherlands. Differences between the cities and the country side, between the largest cities in the Western part of the Netherlands<sup>1</sup> and the rest of the country do exist. As can be seen in Table 23 the Western part of the Netherlands is most densely populated. However, in general (considering the entire country) the Netherlands are more densely populated in comparison with other European countries. Therefore these differences are not so large as in countries with less populated areas.

For example there are ethnic and religious differences between regions. The Netherlands have a multicultural society, but most foreign people live in the cities. In 2001 18 per cent of the population was of foreign origin, meaning that either the individual or one of their parents was born abroad. Some foreigners are members of target groups for minority policies; as a result, they are referred to as 'ethnic minorities'. This involves people whose country of origin is among a number of less industrialised countries outside Europe

as well as people from Eastern Europe who have established themselves here. Ten percent of the Dutch population belong to ethnic minorities (SCP, 2001). More figures are given in Table 24.

Since questions concerning ethnicity and religion were not included in the Dutch version of the HWF Survey, these topics will not be further dealt with in this report.

**Table 23. The Netherlands – Population by region (x1000)**

	Total	Northern Netherlands	Eastern Netherlands	Western Netherlands	Southern Netherlands
1990	14893	1594	3036	6967	3293
1991	15010	1598	3065	7027	3319
1992	15129	1603	3094	7090	3341
1993	15239	1609	3122	7144	3363
1994	15342	1615	3150	7190	3385
1995	15424	1622	3177	7218	3406
1996	15494	1627	3203	7239	3424
1997	15567	1634	3226	7267	3440
1998	15654	1641	3252	7304	3457
1999	15760	1648	3284	7351	3477

Note: Northern Netherlands: provinces Groningen, Drente, Friesland  
 Eastern Netherlands: provinces Overijssel, Flevoland, Gelderland  
 Western Netherlands: provinces Utrecht, Noord-Holland, Zuid-Holland, Zeeland.  
 Southern Netherlands: provinces Noord-Brabant en Limburg

Source: CBS, 2002

**Table 24. The Netherlands – People with a foreign background**

	Total population	Total persons with a foreign background	per cent total population	Total non-western	Total western
1996	15493889	2498714	16.1	1171115	1327610
1997	15567107	2554289	16.4	1221120	1333165
1998	15654192	2620400	16.7	1278450	1341955
1999	15760225	2699234	17.1	1346040	1353195
2000	15863950	2775302	17.5	1408770	1366540
2001	15987075	2870224	18.0	1483175	1387050

Note: Persons are considered to have a foreign background if at least one parent is born abroad.  
 Both persons born abroad (first generation) and persons born in the Netherlands (second generation) are included.  
 Persons with a Turkish, African, Latin-American or Asian (except Indonesian and Japanese) background are classified as non-western

Source: CBS, 2002

## 2.6. Educational and training trends

### 2.6.1 Primary education

Overall participation in primary education is dependent mainly on demographic trends. The growing number of children has caused steady growth in the number of primary school pupils over the past few years. (SCP, 2001).

### 2.6.2 Secondary education

Participation in various forms of secondary education has followed two different trends. On the one hand, there has been a clear shift towards higher forms of secondary education (senior general secondary and pre-university education). In the late 1990s this accounted for over a third of students in the third year of secondary school. On the other hand, however, 'problem pupils' have also risen in number. There has therefore been a certain degree of polarisation, with the extremes of the educational spectrum expanding at the expense of the middle ground (junior general secondary and pre-vocational education). A minority of youngsters leave secondary education without any qualifications (SCP, 2001).

### 2.6.3 Senior secondary vocational education and higher education

More and more youngsters with junior and senior general secondary and pre-university qualifications are going on to acquire senior secondary vocational (MBO), higher professional (HBO) and university (WO) qualifications. Some 90 per cent of secondary school graduates now go straight into post-secondary education, and some continue after a year's break. Higher professional education has benefited most from this development (SCP, 2001).

### 2.6.4 Adult education

Many adults do some kind of course or training after they have completed their initial education. These range from short courses connected with a hobby or interest, to courses lasting several years leading to a qualification. Participation in many forms of adult education is reflected only partially in the statistics.

In terms of education, SCP (2001) writes that the Dutch distribution centres far less on the secondary level and more on the two extremes. The proportion of highly educated people is above the EU average (the Netherlands 23 per cent, EU 21). The OECD classifies all of Dutch higher education as university education, and the proportion of Dutch people with a university degree is thus the highest in Europe. However, the majority of Dutch 'university' graduates in fact have a higher professional or HBO qualification (HBO 15 per cent, university 7 per cent; see SCP 1999 In: SCP, 2001).

The Netherlands is one country where the inequality between men and women in education is not too great even in the older generation, although it is certainly not as small as in Denmark and, above all, Sweden.

Young Dutch women still lag slightly behind their male counterparts, but this is due to change in the near future. The proportion of young women with a higher professional qualification is already higher than that among young men, and they will soon no longer lag behind in terms of university qualifications (SCP, 2001).

**Table 25. Percentage of 25- to 64- year-olds with higher education qualifications in 1999 (per cent)**

	EU15	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL*	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK
Total	21	27	27	23	17	20	21	22	10	18	23	11	10	31	29	27
Men	22	26	26	28	19	22	21	23	10	22	25	12	8	28	27	29
Women	19	27	27	18	15	19	21	22	9	15	20	10	11	34	30	25

Note: \*1997.

Source: Eurostat. News Releases. Education levels in EU constantly rising. No.57/2001.

**Table 26. Percentage of persons with upper secondary education by age group in 1999 (per cent)**

	EU15	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL*	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK**
25-29 yrs	71	78	89	83	74	58	78	69	60	68	76	85	35	85	87	69
30-39 yrs	67	68	83	84	65	47	70	60	52	68	72	82	24	86	85	65
40-49 yrs	61	56	80	82	51	33	60	45	46	63	64	74	19	76	78	65
50-64 yrs	48	40	73	74	29	16	46	32	26	52	53	63	12	53	66	56
25-64 yrs	60	57	80	80	50	35	61	49	43	62	65	75	21	72	77	63

Note: \* 1997

\*\* For this table, "O-levels" and "General Certificate of Secondary Education" are regarded as lower secondary education qualifications.

Source: Eurostat. News Releases. Education levels in EU constantly rising. No.57/2001.

**Table 27. Percentage of 25- to 64- year-olds with upper secondary education, 1992-1999 (per cent)**

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L <sup>1</sup>	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK <sup>2</sup>
1992	49.8	74.1	79.9	36.6	23.2	–	42.3	33.0	34.7	–	–	19.9	–	–	49.3
1993	50.8	81.5	79.4	39.1	24.6	55.9	44.5	31.9	39.8	–	–	20.0	–	–	49.9
1994	52.8	76.4	81.9	41.4	26.5	57.5	45.2	33.9	47.4	–	–	20.9	–	–	51.7
1995	54.5	79.5	81.2	42.6	28.4	58.8	47.3	35.4	42.9	....–	68.9	21.9	66.8	74.4	52.7
1996	56.6	77.6	78.5	44.3	31.0	58.8	50.0	36.9	45.4	63.1	70.5	21.8	67.9	73.9	52.5
1997	57.8	78.6	80.4	45.7	32.2	60.0	49.3	38.6	46.0	64.5	73.1	22.0	69.6	74.7	54.7
1998	56.7	78.5	–	47.5	33.1	59.9	–	41.5	–	64.4	74.1	19.9	70.1	75.5	–
1999	57.4	79.6	79.9	49.9	34.9	60.9	–	43.2	62.3	64.7	74.8	21.2	71.5	77.0	63.1

Note: (1) Since 1999, new vocational qualifications at upper secondary level have been taken into account.  
(2) For this table, "O-levels" and "GCSEs" are regarded as lower secondary education qualifications

Source: Eurostat. Statistics in focus. Educational attainment levels in Europe in the 1990's – some key figures. Theme 3-7/2001.

Table 28. Distribution of the population 25 to 64 years of age by level of educational attainment (1998)

ISCED level	Pre- primary and pri- mary edu- cation	Lower sec- ondary educa- tion	Upper secondary education			Post- secondary non-tertiary education	Tertiary- type B educa- tion	Tertiary-type A and ad- vanced re- search pro- grams	All levels of edu- cation
	0/1	2	3C Short	3C Long / 3B	3A	4	5B		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Australia	x(2)	44.0	a	9.6	21.0	x(5)	8.8	16.6	100
Austria <sup>1</sup>	x(2)	26.7	a	51.1	5.9	5.7	4.5	6.2	100
Belgium	20.3	23.0	a	7.4	24.0	x(4)	13.5	11.8	100
Canada	x(2)	20.3	x(5)	x(5)	27.9	12.9	20.2	18.6	100
Czech Republic	x(2)	14.7	a	43.8	31.1	x(5)	a	10.4	100
Denmark	0.1	21.4	a	47.6	5.6	x(5)	19.8	5.4	100
Finland <sup>1</sup>	x(2)	31.7	a	a	38.9	a	16.7	12.8	100
France	21.1	18.2	27.8	2.5	9.7	0.2	10.1	10.5	100
Germany	2.1	14.1	a	54.3	2.0	4.4	9.0	14.0	100
Greece <sup>1</sup>	45.4	9.0	1.4	1.4	23.3	3.9	4.2	11.3	100
Hungary	4.3	32.4	a	23.7	26.4	x(4)	x(9)	13.2	100
Iceland	2.4	35.7	7.1	a	22.9	11.0	5.0	15.9	100
Ireland	23.1	25.6	m	m	30.2	x(5,7)	10.5	10.6	100
Italy	25.5	30.9	2.6	5.2	22.5	4.6	x(8)	8.7	100
Japan	x(2)	20.1	a	x(5)	49.5	x(9)	12.7	17.7	100
Korea	18.6	16.0	a	x(5)	43.3	a	5.1	17.0	100
Mexico	58.7	20.1	a	7.7	x(2)	a	1.2	12.2	100
<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>x(5)</b>	<b>40.1</b>	<b>x(8)</b>	<b>x(8)</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>100</b>
New Zealand	x(2)	27.3	a	20.5	18.6	7.0	13.9	12.7	100
Norway <sup>1</sup>	0.2	16.7	a	38.6	17.6	1.0	2.1	23.7	100
Poland	x(2)	21.7	24.0	a	40.4	3.1	x(8)	10.9	100
Portugal	67.7	12.2	x(5)	x(5)	10.8	x(5)	2.7	6.5	100
Spain	44.5	22.2	0.4	4.1	9.0	n	5.8	14.0	100
Sweden	11.8	12.1	x(5)	x(5)	48.1	x(7)	15.4	12.6	100
Switzerland	x(2)	18.5	a	51.3	7.2	x(4,5)	9.0	14.0	100
Turkey	74.3	8.0	a	3.1	8.5	a	x(8)	6.1	100
United Kingdom	x(20)	19.2	27.7	16.5	13.1	x(9)	8.2	15.4	100
United States	5.0	8.6	x(5)	x(5)	51.6	x(5)	8.3	26.6	100
Country mean	16.2	22.0	3.4	14.4	24.1	2.0	7.7	14.1	100

Note: Column of reference is given in brackets after "x". x (2) means that data are included in column 2  
1. Year of reference 1997

Source: OECD Database (table A2. 1a).

### 3. LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

#### 3.1. Summarising Dutch labour market policy

The good performance of the Dutch labour market in the past years is often called the 'Dutch Miracle'. Before this the Netherlands had a low participation rate with incentives for people to take a passive role and withdraw from working life, e.g. via disability pensions. Dutch labour market policy of the last decade represents a turnaround in active labour market measures combined with a great degree of market orientation of public job centres as well as flexible statutory protection of limited employment contracts. The growth in part-time work included a higher rate of male workers, a strong increase in female participation and the expansion of the service sector. Two thirds of job growth in the latter half of 1980s

may be attributed to wage moderation and one third to the expansion of the world economy. In recent years, the Dutch government has launched several programmes to combat youth and long-term unemployment and to reintegrate people who have lost their eligibility for social assistance or disability pensions as a result of social reforms. Measures to get people into work include job-creation programmes, lump-sum subsidies for the unemployed who are re-integrated into the workforce and income support of up to 24 months for the unemployed who set up a business (The International Reform Monitor of the Bertelsmann Foundation – <http://www.reformmonitor.org>).

#### 3.2. The Dutch Polder Model

During the 1990's the Netherlands witnessed a rapid decline in unemployment. The employment rates reduced to half of their respective post-1980 peaks. One of the sharpest declines in unemployment among the OECD countries (see also Figure 1). Furthermore the Netherlands experienced a rapid growth in employment during the 1990's (Gorter and Poot, 1999).

The good performance of the labour market in the Netherlands in the past years is often explained by the unique combination of relatively harmonious labour relations, an extensive system of consultative and advisory bodies and a stimulating labour market policy, generally referred to collectively as the 'Polder model', a so called consensus model (Although the success of the Dutch Polder model since the nineties is praised nationally and internationally, some recent discussion is about the efficacy and efficiency of the Dutch labour market policy (e.g. De Gier and Sterckx, 2000, Delsen, 2000, Salverda et al, 2000).

During the mentioned period the Dutch government pursued these five main policies:

- Wage restraint to increase international competitiveness.
- Monetary stability.
- Major cuts in public expenditures (and also public employment).
- Reforms of the social security system (e.g. provide incentives to work).
- Lower taxes (and also social charges) for firms to stimulate labour demand in general and in the 'low wage' segment of the labour market in particular (Gorter and Poot, 1999).

In recent years (since 1994) a liberal-labour government has been in power. During the sixties and seventies, the Dutch government was closely involved in the formation of wages but since the eighties refrained from interference in wage determination. The year 1982 is in hindsight, usually marked as the turning point. This year Central Agreement between the leading labour federation and the employers' federation, struck in Wassenaar, and hence dubbed the 'Wassenaar Agreement': wage restraint, reduction in working hours, intended to restore profit levels and create em-

ployment growth (Hartog, 1998). Furthermore the government became more determined to control its expenditures and its deficit, and to reform social security (in particular, the inflow into the disability pension had been incredibly high). More generally, and following the mood in the rest of the world, the policy orientation definitely changed from Keynesian to a neo-classical, market based orientation (Hartog, 1998).

The government nowadays participates in tripartite wage debate with employers and employees' associations to reach **consensus** on 'sensible wage growth'. The government seeks to exert its influence through policy statements and tripartite consultations. Moreover the government is also represented in the Social Economic Council which comments on the economic developments in the country (See also SCP, 2001).

Wage moderation should not be misinterpreted as a unilateral victory for employers' interests, since it also includes developments such as training and (parental) leave, which are hardly free' (Van der Heijden, 1998).

Next to wage moderation a second part of the success of the 'Polder model' is the unique blend achieved between flexibility and security. Although flexible work has become more prevalent in the Netherlands, the legal status of these

workers has not been overlooked. Without making flexible work impossible, the Dutch government has placed pressure on employers to adhere to a package of basic requirements to protect the interests of flexible workers. This eventually led to an agreement between the Labour Foundation and the government to amend the laws concerning flexible work.

As the third part of the 'Polder model' Van der Heijden (1998) mentions the Dutch approach to part-time work. 'Giving as many people as possible the opportunity to engage in part-time work, constitutes a powerful weapon in the battle against unemployment.' (Van der Heijden, 1998).

In general Dutch labour market politics with regard to labour and labour-participation can be defined as broad (a connection of labour politics with social security and conditions of employment). The Dutch 'Polder model' is not limited to the labour market only. It can be considered as a combination of a quiet and flexible labour market with a solid monetary and fiscal policy and introducing more dynamic markets (introduction of markets in public sectors such as railway, public transport, social security, the energy sector and introduction of a new competition law) (<http://flafeber.www.cistron.nl>).

### 3.3. Part-time work

In the Netherlands, with the largest share of part-time work in the EU, the rights of part-time workers are almost always equal to those of full-time workers (SCP, 2001).

In his paper 'The first part-time economy in the world. Does it work?' Visser (2000) gives a relevant and excellent overview of the forces and policies that lie behind the Dutch 'part-time revolution'.

#### 3.3.1 Trade unions

About the role of the trade unions Visser (2000) writes that: 'with regard to part-time employment, Dutch trade unions initially (in the early

eighties) shared the sceptical view of other European unions (Casey, 1983; Conrad, 1982; Delsen, 1995; Hakim, 1997 in: Visser, 2000). The federation did not want to help create a secondary job market and wanted first an improvement in statutory protection for part-time workers.

This position was given up in later years under the influence of women. This is remarkable, considering the fact that the number female membership of Dutch trade unions is rather small. However, by the mid-1980s, provoked by the severe membership crisis of the early 1980s when the trade unions lost scores of members and union density dropped Dutch unions became more out-

wardly oriented. Gradually, the unions moved mentally away from the male breadwinner, at the time still the majority among the membership albeit by a rapidly decreasing margin.

In addition there was a very strong and effective lobby of women within unions. One of the effects of the stronger presence of women in union politics was the campaign for improvement of the rights of part-timers, based on the view that part-time employment was the preferred form of employment of women with children. Upgrading of the rights, earnings, security and status of part-time employment should make these jobs more attractive for male workers as well. A right to switch from full-time to part-time jobs, and the removal of all remaining elements of discrimination on the basis of working hours, should contribute to this strategy of 'normalisation' of part-time employment.

Recent collective agreements do acknowledge this development and try to improve on facilities and rights. In 1993 the Foundation of Labour – in which Dutch unions co-operate with the central employers' federations – published an important report title 'Considerations and recommendations to promote part-time work and differentiation of working hours'. Employers and unions jointly recommended that a request by an employee to adapt his or her working hours should be granted, unless this could not reasonably be expected on grounds of conflicting business interests (with a burden of proof on employers).' (Visser, 2000). In 2000 the Law on the right to adapt working hours has passed.

About trade union membership in general SCP (2001) writes that the Netherlands in the post-war period, particularly since the 1970s has clearly been among the European countries with the lowest level of trade union membership. Particularly in the Scandinavian countries the level of organisation (trade union membership as a proportion of the total number of people receiving wages or benefits) was and still is much higher. In those countries, trade unions play a much more active role in promoting social security, among

other reasons because the unions themselves are responsible for paying out unemployment benefits (SCP, 2001).

### 3.3.2 Employers and employees

Visser (2000) also considers the role of the employers and employees in this process: 'In the early 1980s, the central employers' federations present part-time work as a possible alternative for collective working time reduction. In the 1990s part-time became embedded in the flexibility discussion and once unions accepted 'vari-time work' employers could not but concede improved rights for part-time workers. In the 1994-97 bargaining round over working time various pressures came together (Tijdens, 1998). In capital intensive industries employers are interested in longer operating hours. Just-in-time production, reduction of stocks and traffic congestion push in the direction of broadening the daily range of normal working hours (beginning earlier or ending later) and a reduction of excess pay rates for evening or weekend hours. The concept of 'weekly average working hours' now makes its full entrance. As a consequence, the likelihood of 'overtime' with its higher pay rate is reduced, saving costs to employers. In exchange, workers gain shorter working weeks, or additional hourly pay. It becomes also easier to respond to shifting workloads. In many services and in retailing employers want a better match of consumer behaviour (few peak hours, often in evenings or weekends, and varying during the year) and working hours. Workers, on their part, seek more freedom in determining when to start or end the working day (and avoid traffic peak hours, or get the kids from school). Married women are interested in part-time jobs and some control over when they work and fathers and mothers want extra time as well as more time control in order to meet emergencies at home. More workers want to vary working time during the year or during the life cycle, with extended breaks or the possibility to safe time for early retirement. Union-conducted surveys if their members show that there is a considerable support for increased flexibility in time-arrangements

and collective agreements 'à la carte', introducing choice for individual workers from a menu of possibilities in the collective contract (van Rij 1995). In some contracts workers even have the right to 'sell' or 'buy' extra days-off; initially unions did not believe their own surveys (which consistently show that, on balance, more leisure will be bought than sold) and fear that most workers will go for the money. So far, these fears have proved unfounded' (Visser, 2000).

Finally Visser (2000) discusses the role of the Dutch government; 'The Dutch government has generally supported the move towards the part-time economy by improving rights and quality of part-time jobs. A massive research program in the possibilities and bottlenecks of part-time employment was launched in the mid-1980s. By that time, social security laws are individualised (1987) and some thresholds unfavourable to part-time workers are removed. In comparison to many other countries, the Dutch social security laws were, and are rather friendly to part-time workers (SZW, 1995). The main principle of entry into the system was and is the employment contract, regardless of working time. Coverage for health insurance is also relatively easy for part-time workers. Moreover, the National Old Age Pension Act provides every citizen with a flat-rate old age pension by the age of 65, irrespective of previous employment or earnings.

As from 1994 part-time workers with small jobs can no longer be excluded from participation in these work-related private pension funds. In 1985 employers and unions published a joint advice to make the statutory wage applicable to all

jobs. In 1993 the government changed the law accordingly. Finally, the new Labour Time Act of 1996 includes a provision regarding the obligation of the employer to take into consideration the care duties of the employee.' (Visser, 2000).

In summary, the discussion on part-time employment, particularly in the nineties has concentrated on two topics in the Netherlands: the right to part-time employment and the equality of treatment of full-time and part-time employees. Equality of treatment of part-time employees was arranged by law in 1996. There must be no distinction between primary and secondary conditions of employment based on working hours. The right to part-time work remained a topic of discussion to the end of the nineties. Although over the years more and more people worked part-time and the right to part-time work is included in an increasing number of Collective Labour Agreements (CAO's), the right to part-time work was only regulated in 2000 in the Law on the right to adapt working hours (Wet Recht op aanpassing van de arbeidsduur, 1 July, 2000). An employee can submit a request to work part-time. The employer can only refuse it if there are very strong arguments. This law has become part of the Labour and Care Act (Wet Arbeid en Zorg) - effected in December 2001- in which (new) regulations are included, expanded and more flexible that should ease the combination of work and care, such as the right to ten days paid care leave, pregnancy leave and birth leave, adoption leave, baby leave and the right to long term (care)leave (see also Jager, 2001).

### 3.4. Working hours

In the Netherlands working hours have become slightly more flexible, a trend that occurred more rapidly in the Netherlands in the 1990's than elsewhere in Europe (SCP, 2001).

The amount of working hours is regulated in various ways in the Netherlands. The maximum hours are set down in the Working Hours Act.

The hours agreed are recorded in the Collective Labour Agreements (CAO's) for each industrial sector or company. The hours can then be specified in more detail for each company. The working hours are fixed in the contract for each employee.

So the weekly and yearly working hours are the result of collective or individual agreements between employers and employees. The government also plays a role in this process (SCP, 2001).

Table 29 gives information on the legislation on the maximum work week and the normal work week in collective labour agreements for the mid 1990's for the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Sweden.

The actual working hours in any week can deviate from the contract because of, for example, overtime, illness or holidays (see Tijdens, 1998).

Tijdens (1998) ascertained that the developments in the Collective Labour Agreements indicate that the patterns of work will be more varied in the coming years. The daytime hours will be expanded and work will be carried out more often in hours adjoining the daytime hours.

**Table 29. Legislation on the maximum work week and the normal work week in collective labour agreements for the mid-1990s (in hours per week)**

	maximal legal work week		normal work week
	not including overtime	including overtime <sup>a</sup>	according to collective labour agreement
Netherlands	45	60/48	36-40
United Kingdom	–	–	34-40
Sweden	40	52/48	40

Note: a. If two figures are indicated, the second figure is the average over a longer period (usually 13 weeks or a year).

Source: OECD (1998) In SCP, 2001.

### 3.5. Flexible work/ temporary work

According to Visser (2000) temp work is more widespread in the Netherlands than elsewhere in Europe. Visser writes that the market for temp work has been gradually liberalised. Licensing terms have gradually been eased and from January 1999 no further license is needed. Trade unions initially tried to ban temp agencies but in the 1980s they became partners in a 'non-profit' temp work agency that co-operated with the official public placement office. Gradually unions have come to terms with temp agencies as they accepted a limited need for temp work in particular (seasonal) industries or as replacement for workers on sickness leave. In 1993 they signed a covenant with the aforementioned non-profit agency and two years later the first collective agreement with General Association of Temp Agencies was signed. This agreement became the basis for the central agreement of April 1996, called: 'Flexibility and Security', which has since become the basis for the Dutch employment protection law (and the de-

regulation of the market) for temp work and other flexible work which took effect in 1999: The Flexibility and Security Act (Visser, 2000, SCP, 2001).

The Flexibility and Security Act (in short the 'FlexAct') on the one hand is meant to offer employers more flexibility in their manpower and on the other hand to offer flex workers more certainty on work and income. The rights (and duties) of flexible employees have been laid down in this law. It considers employees who work on the basis of a temporary contract, with some kind of flexible contract such as for instance on-call contracts, 0-hour contracts, stand-by contracts, teleworkers, home workers and temporary workers (temps). For example the law describes when a temporary contract is converted in an unconditional employment contract and describes the dismissal regulation for flex workers.

Because of regulation the increase in flexible labour contracts has not led to a split in the labour security (SCP, 2001).

A recent first evaluation of this Act shows that there has become more space for the flexible use of work, although the shortage on the labour market has limited the actual use of possibilities which this law offers (Van den Toren, Evers, Commissaris, 2002). The greater part of employers prefer to realise flexibility in their organisation through working overtime and changing the working hours of permanently employed personnel. As far as employers use the extended possibilities for flexible labour, they particularly make use of successive temporary contracts. Employees who want or have to have flexible work, have got more clear contracts as a result of the law, but they have not always automatically got a fixed contract. Furthermore, the evaluation makes clear that there appears to be a shift from 'on call' contracts to temporary contracts. Besides that vague, unclear contracts for the greater part seem to have disappeared with the arrival of the *flexwet*.

As mentioned before the share of flex-workers decreased between 1998 and 2000, partly

as a result of the shortage on the Dutch labour market.

Although the labour contracts have become more clear, it appears that only a quarter of the Dutch flex-workers believe that their own legal position has improved by this law. In addition the research shows that in general the law (rights and duties) is rather well-known under employers, but that employees know little about it.

Social partners are allowed to adapt the Flexibility and Security Act by making special agreements in the Collective Labour Agreements (up to a certain level, so called 'three quarter obliged right'). Analysis shows that in 2001 in almost half of the 120 largest Collective Labour Agreements in the Netherlands divergent regulations have been fixed (Van den Toren, Evers, Commissaris, 2002). These tailor made arrangements now mostly consist of a blend of Collective Labour Agreements with old regulations - already longer existing divergent flex-arrangements - and some new flex-arrangements.

### 3.6. General flexibility trend in conditions of employment

Dutch employees are gradually also obtaining more flexibility in their conditions of employment. The Dutch labour market has a great deal of movement and a shortage. Employees are more critical and make more demands on their employer and conditions of work. Employers are obliged to offer adaptable conditions of work in which flexibility and individuality are central. (We also see that the government is slowly pulling out of social security and the responsibility for

conditions of work rests with the employers and the employees.) More and more we see the development of à la carte conditions of work or à la carte collective labour agreements. The employer offers the employee a greater freedom in composing his own conditions of work package. There are also developments in the area of flexible rewards (such as special bonuses in case of shortage of employees, more flexible pensions and (care) leave) (Jager, 2001).

### 3.7. Unemployment

Since the beginning of the 1990s social security policy has been directed increasingly at limiting inflow into the system, by paying more attention to the prevention of illness and strengthening the benefit agencies 'gatekeeper' function, and at encouraging outflow, by wherever possible getting

benefit recipients back in the labour market (SCP, 2001).

Unemployment insurance benefits in the Netherlands mean that unemployed persons receive a flat-rate benefit of 70 per cent of the legal minimum wage for up to 6 months. If they meet

additional requirements, they are entitled to an earnings-related benefit for 6 months to 5 years, depending on contribution period and age. Individuals who are still unemployed after this period receive a benefit of 70 per cent of the legal minimum wage for two more years. If the benefit combined with other family income is less than the social minimum income, supplements may be granted. Furthermore, the national assistance benefit provides a minimum income. It is not limited, but means-tested and closely related to beneficiaries' efforts to find suitable employment (The International Reform Monitor of the Bertelsmann Foundation – <http://www.reformmonitor.org>).

As can be read in the paper of Visser (2000) the Netherlands has a unique system of preventive dismissal control. Employers need a permit from the director of the regional employment office before they can give notice to terminate a standard employment contract. More and more often the formal permit system is circumvented by filing at the lower district court a request to terminate the employment contract on grounds of 'serious cause'. In that case the issue is settled with a pay compensation or severance payment, usually one month for every year worked.

### 3.8. Information about legal arrangements and laws passed

The ways in which employment is protected and flexible work regulated also differ considerably from one EU country to another. The Netherlands is the only country in which an employer must

ask permission in advance before an individual employee can be dismissed. See also elsewhere in this chapter.

## 4. SOCIAL POLICIES RELATED TO WORK AND FAMILIES

During the last couple of years the Dutch social welfare system has been reformed to introduce tighter controls, to solve essential problems as long-term sickness, and to create employment. The underlying goal of the Dutch welfare system is to ensure that everyone can play an equal part in society. In the Netherlands, municipalities are responsible for the implementation of most welfare legislation.

Since Dutch society is changing welfare policy is changing along with it. As can be read in the first chapter, the Netherlands (together with most European countries) has an ageing population. So for social and economic reasons, the government is encouraging this older age group – aged 55 to 65 – to stay in work. At the same time, the government is tackling youth unemployment by funding job

creation and on-the-job training programs. Furthermore, in order to facilitate the combination of work and care for Dutch households – and to stimulate women to stay at the labour market – the Dutch government is encouraging (municipalities to provide) more childcare facilities, raising the standard to that of other West European countries. Dutch social policy is also focused on helping the long-term unemployed persons to tackle problems ranging from debt to mental illness. Additionally, the government is trying to improve the employment positions of ethnic minorities – e.g. Turks and Moroccans, for instance, are five times more likely to be unemployed than ethnic Dutch people – with extra training and incentives for companies to employ them (compare <http://www.minbuza.nl/english/>).

#### 4.1. Social (security) policy

The International Reform Monitor of the Bertelsmann Foundation (<http://www.reformmonitor.org>) gives an overview of Dutch social policy.

'Social spending in the Netherlands is high, except for family benefits, and especially high in disability and unemployment benefits. The major risks are covered by general and occupational insurance schemes. Collective agreements play a major role in social policy and have basically the same standing as legal regulations. Basic protection covers all risks and is available to all residents. Women usually have their own coverage. Social security system is aimed at maintaining a minimum standard of living.'

'The social assistance aims to provide financial assistance to every citizen resident in the Netherlands who cannot meet the necessary costs of adequately supporting himself or his family, or who is threatened with such a situation. The law affords the citizen the opportunity to pay the cost necessary for living. The aim of the allowance is to put people back into a position where they can adequately look after themselves. The level of assistance to meet essential needs is governed by

national rules which are laid down in the National Assistance Act, which specifies the standard rates payable per month. The standard rates are linked to the net minimum wage. All resources, regardless of their nature and origin, are taken into account. If the capital is tied up in a house, the assistance is given in the form of a loan (credit mortgage), which has to be paid back when the claimant's own income becomes adequate. General family allowances are granted in addition to the social assistance.'

'The social assistance is in principle, an individual right; households (married or unmarried couples irrespective of sex): if assistance is applied for and received by one of the partners as a family assistance, an application can be made to have half the amount paid to each partner. The social assistance is available as from 18 years; exceptions are possible for minor children who have left home. If the beneficiary is of working age, he has to register for employment' (The International Reform Monitor of the Bertelsmann Foundation - <http://www.reformmonitor.org>).

#### 4.2. Dutch Social insurance

Information about this topic in English is gathered from the website of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.minbuza.nl/english/>.

Everyone who lives in the Netherlands is compulsorily insured for basic social cover. Dutch social insurance legislation is implemented by the Social Insurance Bank.

The General Old Age Pension Act (AOW) entitles Dutch residents to an old-age pension from the age of 65. A full old-age pension is built up over 50 years, from the age of 15 to 65. Four-fifths of those entitled to an old-age pension also have some other form of pension.

The Surviving Dependents Act (ANW) provides benefit to persons who have lost a spouse, partner, or one or both parents, on condition that

the deceased was insured under the ANW at the time of death. The surviving dependant must also have been born before 1 January 1950, be classified as at least 45 per cent-unfit for work, or have at least one unmarried child younger than 18.

The General Child Benefit Act (AKW) aims to help parents or guardians pay the costs of raising children up to the age of 18. And the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act (AWBZ) provides cover against serious medical risks not covered by public or private health insurance funds (<http://www.minbuza.nl/english/>).

##### *Employee insurance*

Information about this topic in English is gathered from the website of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.minbuza.nl/english/>.

All employees must be insured under the Sickness Benefit Act (ZW), the Unemployment Insurance Act (WW), the Health Insurance Act (ZFW), and the Invalidity Insurance Act (WAO).

Since 1 March 1996, employers have had to pay their employees sick pay equal to 70 per cent of their wage in the first year of sickness, more if laid down in their collective agreement, and at least as much as the minimum wage for which the employee would normally be eligible. The employee himself may have to bear the cost of the first two days of sickness, but if so, it must be stipulated in his contract, the employer's regulations, or their collective agreement.

As mentioned before, the Netherlands has high numbers of people on disability pensions (see also Table 17). This problem is one of the central issues for debate in the government in recent years. As one of the means to prevent (on the front side) more employees to enter the disability scheme (WAO) after a long term illness a new Act 'Wet verbetering poortwachter' is effective since April 2002. This Act is meant for employers and employees to take action more quickly in the first year when an employee becomes ill. Rights and duties of employers and employees in the first year of illness are considerably tightened. Employers who act insufficiently to help an employee back to work, can be obliged to pay the salary for this employee for at most one more extra year. Sick employees who refuse to contribute to their reintegration can be faced with stop in their payment or in the worst case a dismissal (<http://www.minszw.nl>).

Employees on maternity leave are entitled to 16 weeks' sick pay equal to 100 per cent of their wage. They are also be entitled to sick pay if they donate an organ or become sick while pregnant. Disabled employees are entitled to sick pay during their first five years of employment.

The Sickness Benefits Act (ZW) serves as a safety net, providing sickness benefit to employees who lose their jobs in the first year of sickness or become sick while employed via a temporary employment agency. Employers are not required

to pay sick pay to ex-employees. The Act also provides sickness benefit to those employed without a formal contract, such as homeworkers and trainees.

The Unemployment Insurance Act (WW) insures employees younger than 65 against the financial consequences of unemployment. A person is eligible for unemployment benefit if he has been employed for at least 26 weeks during the 39 weeks immediately preceding the loss of his job. If he meets this requirement, he will receive unemployment benefit equal to 70 per cent of the minimum wage for six months.

A person is eligible for earnings-related unemployment benefit if he has been employed for at least 52 weeks in at least four of the five calendar years immediately preceding the year in which he loses his job. The duration of earnings-related benefit depends on the claimant's working history, but it varies from six months to five years. If the claimant is still unemployed once his earnings-related benefit comes to an end, they will be eligible to unemployment benefit equal to 70 per cent of the minimum wage for another two years. If a person aged 57 or older loses his job, they will be eligible for this benefit until his 65th birthday.

The Health Insurance Act (ZFW) provides cover against the costs of medical and paramedical treatment, hospitalisation, and some dental treatment. It also covers the costs of medical appliances, medicines, dressings, and convalescence. It offers health insurance to welfare benefit claimants and employees earning an annual wage below a certain amount. The Act is implemented by several public health insurance funds.

The Invalidity Insurance Act (WAO) insures employees younger than 65 against the financial risk of loss of earnings as a result of long-term unfitness for work. A person is eligible for invalidity benefit if he has been classified as at least 15 per cent-unfit to do his job after a waiting period of 52 weeks. This period is equal to the maximum period during which a person is entitled to receive sickness benefit or continue receiving sick pay from his employer. Invalidity benefit is paid for

five years. If a person wishes to continue receiving it, he must re-apply at least three months before the five years are up.

The amount of invalidity benefit depends on the claimant's level of unfit for work, his wage, and his age when the benefit starts. There are seven classes of invalidity, varying from 15 per cent to more than 80 per cent. Each invalidity class is linked to a percentage, varying from 14 per cent to 70 per cent. Invalidity benefit also comes in two stages: a loss-of-earnings benefit for a maximum of six years and afterwards a follow-up benefit.

Since 1 January 1998, the Invalidity Insurance Act has also applied to civil servants. And the government has introduced two other new compulsory invalidity insurance schemes, for the self-employed and the young disabled.

The Invalidity Insurance (Self-employed Persons) Act (WAZ) provides cover to such persons as freelance workers, clergy, and managing directors who are also major shareholders in their companies. The amount of benefit paid under the WAZ depends on the claimant's level of invalidity and loss of earnings during the financial or calendar year preceding the benefit's commencement. But since the earnings of the self-employed often vary widely from year to year, those eligible may claim loss of earnings equal to the average annual amount earned over five years. The maximum amount paid is equal to the minimum wage. Self-employed women are also entitled to benefit for at

least 16 weeks while on maternity leave. The self-employed are required to take out WAZ cover.

The Invalidity Insurance (Young Disabled Persons) Act (WAJONG) provides minimum benefit to the young disabled, that is, those who were unfit for work on their 17th birthday or became unfit after that date and had been studying for at least six months in the year immediately preceding it (<http://www.minbuza.nl/english/>).

#### *Other benefits*

(Information about this topic in English is gathered from the website of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.minbuza.nl/english/>).

The Dutch government has recently introduced legislation to get the disabled and long-term unemployed back into work. The Disability (Reintegration) Act encourages companies to employ the disabled by covering them against the financial risks and paying the cost of adapting the workplace. The Disabled Jobseekers Act offers additional job opportunities for the disabled. And the Jobseekers Employment Act (WIW) provides jobs and work experience for the long-term unemployed (with or without a disability) and unemployed persons younger than 23. The WIW also funds retraining to improve job opportunities for the unemployed, and it provides lone parents with childcare and out-of-school activities for children younger than 12 (<http://www.minbuza.nl/english/>).

## 4.2. Labour and care

### 4.2.1 Care for children

Table 30 shows a selection of the results of a comparison the various EU countries, limited to childcare services that are government-financed for at least 50 per cent of the total costs.

SCP (2001) refers to a comparative study between several European countries, from Rostgaard and Fridberg (1998) in which they used a measure that takes part-time usage into account

what allows slightly better comparisons between figures. Looking at the situation in 1996 they conclude, according to these calculations, that 6 per cent of children aged 0-4 in the Netherlands could make use of full-time day care. This percentage of coverage is comparable to that of the United Kingdom, whereas 31 per cent of children aged 0-2 in Sweden could be put in full-time day care.

As can be seen in Table 30, the Netherlands in 1993 was definitely not among the countries

with the most extensive childcare facilities. However after 1993 facilities have further expanded and the Dutch government is campaigning for more childcare facilities. According to SCP (2001)

the recommendation for childcare within EU policy has significantly stimulated the expansion of childcare facilities in the Netherlands (SCP, 2001).

**Table 30. Share of children (according to age category) making use of government-financed day care facilities or number of places available within those facilities and school age in EU countries.**

		Day care <sup>d</sup> (in % of the children)			After-school day care <sup>e</sup>
		children aged 0-3	children aged 3 to school age	school age 1997/1998	children aged 6-10
Netherlands	1993	8 <sup>b</sup>	77 <sup>c</sup>	5	<5%
	1998	9 (0-4)			
United Kingdom	1993	2 <sup>b</sup>	60 <sup>c</sup>	5 (E, W, S); 4 (NI)	< 5% (estimate)
Sweden	1994	33 <sup>c</sup>	72 <sup>c</sup>	7	64%

Note: b. Available places.  
c. Children using day care facilities (including children who go to school before reaching school age).  
d. More than half of the costs are paid by the government, mostly between 75 and 100 per cent.  
e. Day care facilities outside school hours.

Source: European Commission (1996); European Commission (2000) (school age figures); Mutsaers and Delemarre (2000) (The Netherlands 1998) In: SCP (2001).

Since 1996, the Dutch childcare policy was decentralised and rerouted towards the municipalities. In the period 1989 - 1998, capacity in childcare facilities<sup>2</sup> (subsidised and non-subsidised) increased from 23,000 to 104,000. Since these are full-time day care facilities, and Dutch children generally do not attend more than 2 to 3 days a week, the total number of children that make use of these facilities is much higher. In 1998, 183,000 children used day care compared to 48,000 in 1989 (Mutsaers and Delemarre 2000 in SCP, 2001). Although this was a substantial increase, the facilities - in 1998 - could accommodate only about 4.1 per cent of all children 12 and younger (SCP, 2001).

The current cabinet aims towards a capacity expansion: in 2002 there would be room for 20 per cent of the younger children and 8 per cent of school children. This would signify a great deal of progress, however, these figures clearly cannot compete with the European leaders in this area, Denmark and Sweden. However, the Netherlands is one of the few countries that are trying to find a solution for facilities for teenagers (SCP, 2001).

From an international perspective, a typical characteristic of the organisational structure of childcare in the Netherlands is the tripartite financing structure. Besides the government and parents, many employers also contribute to childcare facilities (SCP, 2001). However, employers are free to choose whether they will arrange and finance childcare for their employees. As a result, the various business sectors differ in the degree to which they provide childcare facilities (Keuzenkamp et al. 2000, SCP, 2001). In order to stimulate employers to contribute, the government has introduced several fiscal changes that make it more attractive for them to pay for placement in childcare facilities for their employees. As a result, the number of business placements has grown enormously. By the end of the 1990's almost half of the childcare placements were partly financed by the employer (Mutsaers and Delemarre 2000 In: SCP, 2001).

There seemed to be more and more critique on several aspects of this current policy. For one reason there is a great fragmentation of rules for particular groups and of financing arrangements for employers and employees. Moreover, the de-

centralisation to the municipalities may mean a loss of control of quality, quantity and accessibility. The Dutch Ministry of Health Welfare and Sport is now working on the Childcare Basic Provision Act – to be affected in 2003 – which would offer a new financial, administrative and legal framework for childcare. The law should ultimately lead to unequivocal quality of the facilities and an adequate supply of care for children up to age 12 (SCP, 2001, Ministerie Volksgezondheid Welzijn en Sport/ Ministerie Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid/ Ministerie van Financien, 2000). The Dutch government wants to enhance the possibilities for people to combine work and care. Childcare is seen as an important provision for this purpose and by that an instrument for the Dutch labour market policy and policy on working conditions. Furthermore childcare has a second important objective; offering a responsible pedagogical environment for children who make use of the childcare facilities. In this way childcare is seen as part of Dutch youth policy.

#### 4.2.2 Pregnancy leave

In the Netherlands pregnancy leave last 16 weeks. Maternity benefit for insured mothers amounts to 100 per cent. Regulations for fathers do not exist yet (but a bill is progress).

#### 4.2.3 Parental leave

Table 31 gives an overview of parental leave regulations for the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Sweden. In the Netherlands it is possible to take leave until the child is 8 years old. However, the Netherlands is – up to this moment – one of the countries that do not pay for parental leave (SCP, 2001, Ministerie SZW, 2001).

Designing regulations for parental leave does not automatically result in parents actually mak-

ing use of such regulations. In the Netherlands it is very clear that parents, especially men, are more likely to use their parental leave rights if their employer meets them with some kind of payment (Grootscholte et al, 2000 in: SCP, 2001).

As can be seen in Table 31, the Netherlands has started relatively late with setting up parental leave regulations. These were legally established in 1991 in the parental leave act, which was expanded in 1997. The current regulation concerns non-paid leave of a total number of hours equaling 13 weeks of the employee's contractual labour time, per child. The distribution of hours for parental leave and work hours per week can be flexible. However a standard distribution of 50 per cent leave and 50 per cent work may not be refused by employer. The leave has to be taken within the first eight years of the child's life. The leave period should be consecutive, but separate arrangements can be made with the employer to deviate from this rule. Only employees who have been at their job for at least one year are entitled to parental leave. Many business sectors have broadened the parental leave regulations for their employees within their labour agreements. A study into the Dutch collective labour agreements (in Dutch CAO) on work and care has shown that only a few of these agreements arrange for payments. This may be expanded in the future. The Cabinet recently decided to give some fiscal break to employers who make arrangements for parental leave payment on an individual or collective agreement basis. Many collective labour agreements have prolonged the maximum leave period, and at least 41 per cent of non-government employees can count on current regulations being expanded (Peters et al, 2000, in: SCP, 2001).

**Table 31. Parental leave regulations: The Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom, 2000**

	1st regulation	Nature of right: individual / family right	Conditions	Duration and form	Payment	Extra stimulus for fathers
Netherlands	1991	individual right	until child turns 8	13 x work week; maximum half of the weekly working hours, 6-month maximum	–	–
Sweden	1990	family right	until child turns 8 (or the end the first year of elementary school)	18 months full-time; consecutively or in shorter blocks; leaves can also be taken part-time (50% or 25% leave) with corresponding extension of the period; 30-day leave earmarked for fathers (non-transferable)	payment during max. 450 days per family: 80% of salary for 360 days + initial amount of SEK 60 p/d for 90 days (more in case of multiple births); maximum parenting benefits of SEK 273.000 p/y or SEK 627 p/d	30 days leave
United Kingdom	1999	individual right	until child turns 5, or 5 years after child is adopted	13 weeks full-time; not more than 4 weeks/year	–	–

Source: Moss and Deven (1999) In: SCP, 2001.

#### 4.2.4 Other arrangements

In the Netherlands there is a full-fledged ongoing discussion about the various forms of leave. Besides childcare and parental leave, other arrangements to provide for a better combination of work and care, like solutions for unexpected circumstances, are to be considered. Until recently, little was arranged for by law. Existing and new measures are now included in the Labour and Care Act which became effective in December 2001. Besides the previously described parental leave, the proposals also include (improvements, expansion of) pregnancy leave, bonding leave, maternity leave, emergency leave, short-term care leave, longer-term volunteer aid leave and leave savings.

Some arrangements are already effective. For example the Act on financing career breaks (*Wet financiering loopbaanonderbreking*, Ministerie SZW) offers – under certain conditions – a financial concession to people who take leave to take care of a sick person or study.

In addition to the already existing right for emergency leave (in case of instant distress for several occasions in which immediate action of the employee is necessary – e.g. sudden disease or death of relative) within the framework of the Labour and Care Act there is a the legal right (with

stipulations) to ten days of partly paid care leave per employee per year.

Since 2001 it is possible to save for paid leave. Under this scheme, employees can save as much time and money as their employer will allow in order to get paid leave in the future. The possibilities of long-term care leave are still being examined (SCP, 2001).

Not only are leave regulations an essential part of current public discourse, scheduling of work, care and free-time itself has been very much in the political spotlight since the mid-1990s. For this purpose, in 1996, the government installed the commission on 'Daily Time Structuring' to come up with proposals to improve the 'over-organised existence of multi-taskers' (SCP, 2001). This commission had to develop new and creative ideas for the daily schedule in Dutch Society; a schedule that would give society more room to combine work and care and which has a better co-ordination of (opening) times and locations of facilities (see also Jager, 2001).

Various studies and local projects, some of which resemble initiatives in other European countries, were initiated. The most important contribution of this type of policy towards the combination of work and care is that it provides examples of how different ways of time expenditure

can be better co-ordinated, and that it puts outdated cultural timetables into question (SCP, 2001). By now, Dutch policy on timetables has received an additional impulse through a special incentives measure. Various experiments in areas such as schools, local social policy and work/private balance have been set up with this regulation's funds (SCP, 2001).

#### 4.2.5 Tax policies

In the light of the previously mentioned arrangements – to facilitate and stimulate the combination of labour and care – the Dutch government also have created some tax measures (for employers and employees).

People can get several reductions on their tax-levy; for example the so called combination cut (for people who combine work and the care for children under the age of 12).

#### 4.2.6 Laws and provisions

If people want to the balance in work and family live, they will have to deal with existing law and provisions; regulations which can make this combination easier, or on the other hand perhaps might complicate the matter. In the following table some relevant regulations have been put for together.

**Table 32. Dutch Acts that relate to combining work and care**

Act	Effective in	Brief description
Flexibility and Security Act	1999	The rights (and duties) of flexible employees have been laid down in this law. It considers employees who work on the basis of temporary contract, with some kind of flexible contract like e.g. on-call contracts, 0-hour contracts, stand-by contracts, teleworkers, home workers and temporary workers (temps). For example the law describes when a temporary contract is converted in an unconditional employment contract and describes the dismissal regulation for flex workers.
(new) Working Hours Act	1996(7)	How long may employees work successively, which pauses are obliged and which exceptions apply; all subjects which are regulated in this (new) law. This law is particularly important for professions in which irregular shifts and shift work are common. In the Working Hours Resolution special supplements and exceptions for specific groups of employees and economic sectors (e.g. care and transport) are laid down.
Law on the right to adapt working hours	2000	An employee, who is at least 1 year in service at the same employer, can submit a request for extension or reduction of his working hours. The adaptation may amount to a fourth of his working hours. The employer must grant this request, unless he can prove that the company's interest is seriously damaged by the adaptation.
The Equal Treatment Act	1994	This act describes general rules providing protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political option, race, sex, nationality, sexual preference or civil status (and part-time of full-time work). It is forbidden to treat people differently on these grounds of discrimination in the following situations: – In employment relationships; unequal treatment is forbidden in any area that is related to work, from job advertisement to the actual employment contract. This includes salary, holidays, promotion, training and professional education, dismissal and working conditions. – In offering goods and services and in receiving advice about educational or career opportunities.
Law in the matter of the prohibition to make difference between employees according to working hours	1996	Part-time employees have the same rights as people working full-time. There must be no distinction between primary and secondary conditions of emolument based on working hours. So, in proportion of their working hours part-time employees have right to equal wages, holiday, special leave, raining and other labour agreements.
Basic Childcare Provision Act	2004	The aim of this act is to give a framework for the childcare for children up to 12 years. The quality of childcare, the supervision on that, the responsibilities of involved parties and the financing will be better regulated in this law. Moreover (the number of) childcare facilities will be further expanded. The Act is approved by the government and is expected to be effective in 2004.
Labour and Care Act	2001	In this Act several leave regulations are joined and adapted to each other that should ease the combination of work and care. It deals for example with pregnancy-maternity leave, adoption leave, a (paid) 10 day care-related leave and the right to long time (care) leave. The Career Break Funding Act is also transferred to this law.

Source: Annet Jager, based on various Dutch Legal Acts

### 4.3. Housing policies

#### *Trends that might affect regional flexibility and inequalities*

According to SCP (2001) Dutch housing policy has taken an entirely new direction since the beginning of the 1990s. The role of the public authorities has been reined in, building subsidies have been cut back and home ownership is encouraged. In the government's recent draft policy document on housing policy over the next ten years, the case for promoting home ownership is stated more powerfully than in previous policy documents (in addition it focuses on concepts such as people's freedom of choice and housing quality). It foresees considerable growth in home ownership, partly in the new housing developments but mainly from the sale of existing rented units, and states that the number of rented units to be sold will be the subject of negotiations between the authorities and the social housing corporations.

However, since the privatisation of the rented sector the public authorities are no longer in a position to enforce any measures. An incentive scheme has been introduced to make it easier for those in the lower-income groups to purchase their housing. Nevertheless, this will depend to a large extent on the developments in the housing market (SCP, 2001).

Furthermore, SCP writes that as a result of the changes of the role of the home in day to day life during last decades, the location of the home is becoming more important. All household members must be able to get to work (reduced travel times) and leisure facilities should be available close at hand. One of the partners changing jobs can create problems with respect to the housing location (SCP, 2001).

Other characteristics of the Dutch housing situation are:

- In the Netherlands (and United Kingdom) the majority of owner-occupied dwellings are mortgaged (44 per cent).
- The stage in the household cycle appears to be a more important determinant for people's housing situation in the Netherlands than in other countries.
- The Netherlands has the highest proportion of rented social housing of all the EU countries. Furthermore, the Netherlands are most similar to the United Kingdom, with a small private rented sector and fast growing home ownership (SCP, 2001).

### NOTES

1. Randstad; the region of the four largest cities in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and Den Haag (conurbation).
2. Capacity = the number of children that can be taken care of at the same time (Mutsaers and Delemarre 2000 In SCP, 2001).

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