

THE NETHERLANDS

Social and economic information

Area:	41,526 sq km
Population:	16.9 million (June 2015)
Population growth:	0.4% (2014)
Literacy rate:	99%
Gross domestic product:	€ 662.8 billion (2015)
Per capita GDP:	€ 39,217 (2015)
Inflation rate:	0.3% (2015)
Unemployment rate:	6.9% (2014)
Exports:	€ 618.3 billion (2014)
Imports:	€ 540.5 billion (2014)
Age structure:	0-14 years: 16.9%, 15-24 years: 12.2%, 25-54 years: 40.4%, 55-64 years: 12.9%, 65 years and older: 17.6% (2014)

Sources: Germany Trade & Invest - Wirtschaftsdaten kompakt; country information of the German Federal Foreign Office; Eurostat; Statista

Information on the Dutch book market

The Dutch book market has recorded an upwards trend for the first time since 2009. The first half of 2015 ended with a 3 % rise in turnover. There was very specific good news from two former branches of the book retail chain Polare, which filed for bankruptcy at the start of 2014. In Amsterdam, the Scheltema bookshop announced its reopening in a prestige location, while in Rotterdam, the Donner store is planning a spectacular expansion in new premises in mid-2017.

The e-book trade, which until 2010 had developed only slowly in the Netherlands, is now growing continuously. While it still only had a 1 % share of the market in 2010, the figure for 2014 was 5.4 %. In 2014, some important players in the digital field established themselves here. Kobo began a partnership with the Dutch online shop bol.com, and Tolino is cooperating with the booksellers Libris and blz, while Amazon has opened a webshop and signed contracts with the largest publishers.

Figures for book production

Publishers

There are around 1,480 registered publishers in the Netherlands, although just 100 of these produce about 95 % of all titles. As everywhere, there is a strong move in the Netherlands towards consolidation. As a rule, however, the separate publishers more or less retain an individual profile. Despite this trend, the Dutch market also has space for many smaller, independent publishers: Prometheus Bert Bakker, De Geus, Podium, Cossee, Wereldbibliotheek, Van Oorschot

The largest publishers in the Netherlands are:

- Reed Elsevier and Wolters Kluwer (both internationally established in the scientific and specialist information segment)
- Verlagsgruppe WPG (Weekbladpers Groep): press, school books, fiction and non-fiction; active both in the Netherlands and in Flanders; subsidiaries include: Bruna, De Bezige Bij, Querido, Ploegsma, Leopold, Davidsfonds Uitgeverij, Manteau, Standaard
- VBK: press, school books, fiction and non-fiction; active both in the Netherlands and in Flanders; subsidiaries include: Luitingh-Sijthoff, Kosmos, Van Dale, De Fontein, Veen Media, Ambo/Anthos, Atlas/Contact
- Lannoo Meulenhoff Publishing Group

Booksellers

Largest bookshop chains:

- Bruna (not related to the publisher A.W. Bruna): 375 sales outlets
- AKO: 85 sales outlets, many of them at airports and railway stations
- Boekenpartners: a central purchaser that cooperates with 110 independent bookshops
- Libris: an alliance of around 100 independent bookshops

There is a large number of independent bookshops in the Netherlands, although most of these are very small. An exception is Athenaeum, one of the biggest book stores in Amsterdam.

Online booksellers present the high-street bookshops with strong competition, and since November 2014 Amazon has also operated a web shop in the Netherlands. In all, there are about 75 online booksellers. Of these, the largest player is Bol.com (until 2002: Bertelsmann on Line), which now cooperates with Kobo.

Book sales (general literature, not including schoolbooks)

For 2014, the members of the publishers association registered sales of around € 467 million (2013: € 508.7 million).

The shares of the separate segments:

Non-fiction: 43 %
Fiction: 38 %
Children's books: 16 %

About 35.3 million copies were sold, which likewise represents a moderate decline (2013: 39.3 million copies).

In the Netherlands, the average print run is between 2,000 and 3,000. 10,000 sold copies are outstanding, and 25,000 already counts as a bestseller.

The average price of a book is about € 13

Distribution

CB Logistics (formerly Centraal Boekhuis) has an effective monopoly on the distribution of books. 500 publishers, 1,800 bookshops and 74 online booksellers cooperate with them. As well as storage and deliveries, CB Logistics provides publishers with print-on-demand service.

Some 88% of consumer sales take place through traditional bookshops.

Licensing statistics

An estimated 75 % of book production in the Netherlands consists of translations. By far the most important language of origin is English. This is followed by the Scandinavian languages, thanks to the successful crime writers, and then, to a lesser extent, titles from Spain, Germany, Italy and France. More and more Chinese titles are also finding their way onto the Dutch book market. In comparative terms, it is evident that Dutch literature enjoys a greater degree of interest in the German-speaking areas than the other way round.

In terms of rights sold from Germany, translations into Dutch accounted for a 4 % share in 2014, thereby dropping out of the top-10 languages for licence sales (in 2013 it still ranked seventh). From a total of 255 titles translated into Dutch, the children's and young adult book segment proved particularly strong, with 92 translated titles. This was followed by fiction, with 72, and self-help books, with 52.

Imports

Original versions of English books are highly successful in the Netherlands, and pose genuine competition for the Dutch translations. Titles for a general readership in original English make up around 10 % of the overall book sales.

Exports

The primary export market is Belgium, with its Flemish speaking population of about 6 million. However, many of the larger publishers supply the Belgian market from their Belgian subsidiaries. In 2014, sales from book exports amounted to roughly € 177 million.

Regulation of prices

Prior to 2005, fixed book prices were agreed in the course of negotiations between publishers and booksellers. After that, this agreement was made legally binding. The publisher or wholesaler determines the bookshop price; the maximum discount available to end customers is 10 %, and to public libraries 25 %. Bookshops can receive discounts of between 33 % and 38 %. In the Netherlands, books are subject to a reduced rate of 6 % VAT. This tax advantage does not apply to e-books, which are subject to the standard 21 %.

Book fairs

Manuscripta (September)

- Organisers: Nederlandse Vereniging van Antiquaren + Bond van handelaren in Oude Boeken
- www.manuscripta.nl

Amsterdam Antiquarian Book, Map & Print Fair (October)

- Organiser: Stichting Collectieve Propaganda van het Nederlandse Boek
- www.amsterdambookfair.com

Reading promotion

At the beginning of the 1930s, publishers and booksellers came together to launch an extensive reading campaign. In 1983, the organisation of that campaign was taken over by CPNB (Collectieve Propaganda van het Nederlandse Boek). The campaign is financed by publishers, booksellers and libraries, as well as through state subsidies and private sponsors. Various events are staged over the course of each year, including the Book Week, Children's Book Week and the Campaign for Crime Novels

Associations

- KVB: Royal Netherlands Book Trade Association - its members are publishers and booksellers, above all, but also include other book industry players
- NUV: Dutch Publishers Association
- KBb: Royal Dutch Booksellers Association
- VOB: Association of Dutch Libraries
- Nederlands Letterenfonds/Dutch foundation for literature: an institution promoting Dutch authors as well as Dutch literature abroad

Sources

“L’Edition aux Pays-Bas”, market study by Karne Politis, Département Études du BIEF, February 2012 ; Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 2015 ; Dutch Publishers Association (NUV) - GfK/KVB-SMB; Buchreport Nr. 46 (November 2015); Publishing Perspectives “An Affluent Affinity: Dutch-German Publishing Relations”, October 2014