Netherlands

Overview

Overview

- AIG Travel rates the Netherlands as a LOW threat location due to the country’s stable political environment, relatively few security concerns and well-developed infrastructure.

The Netherlands is a well-developed and largely stable country that is a popular travel and business destination. Located in Western Europe, the country borders Germany to the east, Belgium to the south and the North Sea to the northwest. Dutch and European ethnic groups comprise a vast majority of the densely populated country, and just over half of its approximate 17 million inhabitants do not practice a religion. Some of the prominent religions in country include Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam.

Political concerns in the Netherlands are LOW. The Netherlands is a stable parliamentary constitutional monarchy. Politics have traditionally been dominated by three main parties: the center-left Labour Party (PvdA), the center-right Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) and the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), which is a center-right party but typically more liberal than the CDA on social issues. Additionally, many minor parties have small representation in the parliament, making coalition governments necessary. Civil unrest is a LOW concern. Protests and demonstrations in response to political, social and economic issues occur with relative frequency in the Netherlands; however, these events rarely become violent, and a heavy police presence almost always accompanies them.

Although the country experiences few significant threats, a number of security concerns exist. Crime is a MODERATE risk; petty crime is common and typically occurs in public spaces of larger cities and on public transportation. Criminals often work in small groups to rob their victims. Violent crime, however, is far less common. The risk of terrorism in the Netherlands is LOW, although the potential for attacks does exist. Corruption is a MINOR concern and is unlikely to affect individuals in the Netherlands.

Infrastructure in the Netherlands is advanced and well-maintained, prompting MINOR concerns. The road system is extensive and connects all cities and towns, making driving the most popular mode of travel throughout the country. The telecommunications, electrical and internet infrastructures in the Netherlands are likewise well-developed and extensive.

Political conditions

Political
Political instability is a LOW concern in the Netherlands as the country is a stable parliamentary constitutional monarchy.

The Netherlands is a stable, peaceful democracy with a minimal risk of political violence or instability. While governments are occasionally dissolved, prompting early elections, this occurs within the framework of the democratic system and does not constitute a threat to overall political or governmental stability. While the ongoing European migrant crisis is not a threat to Dutch political stability, it has increased tensions, prompting anti-government rhetoric and occasional protests.

The head of state is King Willem-Alexander, who plays a largely ceremonial role and does not intervene in the political process. The head of government is Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD). The center-right VVD won a plurality of votes during March 2017 general elections and subsequently formed a governing center-right coalition with the Democrats 66 (D66), Christian Union (CU) and Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) political parties in October 2017. Coalition formation is historically a lengthy process in the Netherlands and typically takes over two months.

The Netherlands has historically pursued closer relations with neighboring countries as well as strengthening regional and international bodies. The current government has continued these policies, even in the face of growing euroscepticism. The Hague – a coastal city in western Netherlands – is home to many international organizations such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and frequently hosts U.N. meetings. The Netherlands has also been a traditional supporter of closer European integration and cooperation and was one of the first adopters of the euro currency. Several EU offices are based in The Hague, such as the European Police Office and the European Patent Office.

Domestically, politics in the Netherlands have traditionally been dominated by the PvdA, VVD and CDA. The three major parties traditionally gained two-thirds or more of the seats in parliament, and frequently governed in coalition with one another or with the support of multiple minor parties. As a result of frequent coalitions between the major parties, politics in the Netherlands may be characterized by consensus-based decision making and compromise. In recent years, however, the major parties have lost significant support due to economic difficulties and increasing Euroscepticism. Despite a sense of rising Euroscepticism, populist and Eurosceptic parties were unable to make substantial gains in the European Parliament (EP) elections in May 2019. Mainstream parties continued to retain a large share of the electorate, with the PvdA, VVD and CDA winning 14 of 26 available seats.

Immigration has been a controversial political issue in the Netherlands in recent years. Right-wing and largely Eurosceptic parties such as The Party for Freedom (PVV) and the Forum for Democracy (FvD) have substantially increased in popularity and are some of the largest parties in the Netherlands. While the Netherlands overall favors European Union membership, Euroscepticism is growing as a result of increasing anti-immigrant sentiment, with the PVV and FvD calling for the Netherlands to withdraw from the EU as a measure of restricting immigration. Anti-EU sentiment is also increasing as austerity measures such as spending cuts and privatizations are not perceived as beneficial by some. Financial bailouts of periphery countries and the resettlement of refugees and migrants in EU countries are perceived by some to hold little benefit for the Netherlands, increasing anti-EU and anti-immigrant sentiment even further. If this perception continues to rise, the PVV and FvD could see increased electoral success as it is the only large anti-EU party in the Netherlands. Although the FvD won very few seats in the EP elections, the party won a plurality in the 2019 provincial elections, receiving nearly 15 percent of the vote. The next national parliamentary election is not scheduled to occur until March 2021.

Economy
The economy is heavily dependent on exports, logistics and transportation, as the city of Rotterdam is the largest commercial port on the continent. Weak international demand for products could lower trade levels and damage the economy. However, the government has implemented austerity measures and other economic reforms with some success. The economy has grown slowly but steadily in recent years, and both imports and
exports have remained strong enough to increase economic performance. Low fuel prices have also been a boon to the logistics sector. The economy has shown healthy growth and is expected by some forecasters to outperform those of other eurozone countries in 2019, with falling unemployment and rising consumer confidence.

**Corruption**

- **Corruption is a MINOR concern as it is not prevalent in any level of government, and the country’s security force is law-abiding and transparent.**

The Netherlands does not have significant levels of corruption. Corruption is not prevalent in any level of office and the country’s security force is considered to be law-abiding and transparent. The government has a commitment to transparency and strong protocols to fight corruption when it occurs.

Transparency International, a non-governmental organization that monitors global corruption, gave the Netherlands a score of 82 out of 100 in its 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The CPI measures levels of perceived corruption ranging from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (extremely transparent). The Netherlands’ score suggests minor levels of corruption, and the country was rated as the 8th least corrupt out of 180 surveyed.

**Security issues**

**General crime**

- **Crime is a MODERATE concern in the Netherlands. While violent crime does not occur often in the Netherlands, petty crime is more common, especially in larger cities and towns.**

Crime in general in the Netherlands is a moderate security risk. Although violent crime is relatively rare, petty street crime and scams pose a higher threat. Opportunistic crimes such as pick-pocketing, bag-snatching and the theft of unattended items most commonly occur in the public spaces of larger cities and on public transportation.

Particular caution should be exercised in central Amsterdam, especially around the Central Station, red light district, in coffee shops and on trams and trains, as opportunistic and non-confrontational offenses are often reported at these locations. Small gangs are known to operate on trains, using diversion tactics to rob unsuspecting commuters; distractions typically involve one individual asking a commuter for directions, while a partner quickly steals luggage or other valuable items. More specifically, trains from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (EHAM/AMS) to the city center and between Amsterdam and Rotterdam are at higher risk for petty theft. Sleeper trains are also targeted by thieves who board carriages between main stops and steal from sleeping passengers. Laptops and smartphones are among the most commonly stolen items.

Additionally, the risk of petty crime has increased in the vicinity of ATMs in recent years, especially during the nighttime hours. Robberies at ATMs are typically carried out by groups of two criminals, who use the same distraction technique as noted above for trains. These smaller gangs are also often involved in scamming. In one such scam, thieves pose as plainclothes police officers and ask individuals to inspect money or credit cards, claiming to be looking for counterfeits. Criminals then rob individuals that surrender these items and escape quickly. These incidents are generally nonviolent but continue to pose a risk to those in country, especially if important identification documents are stolen.

Marijuana and hashish remain controlled substances in the Netherlands, although their possession, sale and use are not enforced in some tourist areas, particularly in Amsterdam. Establishments that sell controlled substances are often frequented by petty criminals who may take advantage of those under the influence of
drugs. Illicit substances are also often counterfeit and can cause illness or death. These establishments are a security risk and should be avoided where possible.

Women should exercise vigilance in the Netherlands, especially when traveling alone and in nightclubs and bars. There have been instances reported of criminals spiking the drinks of solo women before robbing and/or assaulting them.

Police response is generally good, and police are widely considered courteous and professional. However, Dutch police will generally not respond to traffic accidents that do not involve serious injury or a related crime, such as driving while intoxicated. Police stations in urban areas are accessible 24/7 but stations in rural areas may not be open to the public outside of normal business hours, resulting in slower response times.

Terrorism

- There is a LOW threat of terrorism in the Netherlands; however, radicalized networks are present, especially in urban centers.

Terrorism remains a risk in the Netherlands, and credible threats do exist. In March 2019 a lone-wolf attacker opened fire on a tram in Utrecht near 24 Oktoberplein, killing three and injuring five. The attack prompted a citywide lockdown amid a search for the suspect, who was ultimately arrested. Prosecutors are investigating a terrorist motive for the attack. Following the incident, counterterror procedures and an elevated security presence were implemented nationwide.

The largest threats according to the government relate to international jihadist networks in the Netherlands, as well as domestic Dutch jihadist movements that pose a violent threat. For instance, in late August 2018 two American tourists in Amsterdam were stabbed by an Afghan citizen who authorities deemed had terrorist motives. Meanwhile, the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) has warned of rising left- and right-wing extremism in country. As migrants and asylum seekers continue to settle in the Netherlands the threat of a right-wing extremist attack in response remains a concern. Right-wing anti-immigrant sentiment, driven by a perceived loss of identity and culture, has increased in recent years.

Though specific threats have been made against the Netherlands in recent years, the country’s previous support of the U.S.-led war in Iraq and its commitments in Afghanistan have contributed to the credible risk of terrorism. In early 2016 the Dutch government began contributing to the international military coalition against the Islamic State (IS) and carried out air strikes in Syria. This could increase the potential for domestic attack, both from IS operatives and so-called self-radicalized lone wolves who may sympathize with IS.

In June 2019 government officials added an anti-wind energy group to the list of ongoing terror threats in country following threatening letters sent to wind turbine producers and protests that have led to the illegal dumping of asbestos on potential turbine sites. Although authorities have made some arrests regarding these actions, further violence associated with anti-wind energy groups remains possible.

The Netherlands has implemented various counterterror initiatives, including legislation granting police greater powers of arrest and surveillance as well as increased police presence at all airports, transport hubs and places of economic and political significance. Along with other European countries, the Netherlands increased its security posture following the November 2015 terror attacks in Paris, France. These security measures remain in place and are likely to continue in the near to medium term.

Civil unrest

- Civil unrest is a LOW concern in the Netherlands as demonstrations occur periodically to protest political, social and economic issues, but rarely incite violence.
Public protests and demonstrations take place periodically in the Netherlands; these activities are largely nonviolent and are usually supervised by police officials. Major protests typically occur in The Hague, Amsterdam and Rotterdam. In The Hague, a prominent location for demonstrations is at Malieveld, but they can also occur near embassies and government installations. Museumplein and Dam Square are also common protest sites in Amsterdam. Civil actions are often organized to protest political, social and economic issues as well as foreign relations. Although prior notification is required for public demonstrations, unannounced rallies have taken place in the past and caused localized disruptions to road traffic and public transport.

A May 2019 demonstration by an anti-Islam group ended in violence as counter-protesters clashed with protesters in Eindhoven city. Mounted riot police were used break up the crowd, and several arrests were made. In March 2019 approximately 40,000 people attended a march in Amsterdam protesting climate change. The march was part of an international series of climate change protests attended by thousands of students. The demonstration, which took place in Dam Square, occurred peacefully, though a heightened police presence was in place. Further similar protests are likely.

 Strikes occur on occasion in the Netherlands and are usually staged to protest labor-related issues. These can cause disruptions to public transportation or business operations. Work stoppages are typically announced well in advance, and employers are able to implement contingency plans that minimize disruptions.

Travel logistics

Entering the country

Entry Requirements

- Citizens of EU countries require only a valid passport or national identification card to enter the Netherlands.
- Citizens from countries such as Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States need passports valid for three to six months beyond date of entry for visits of less than 90 days.
- Other travelers from outside of the Schengen Area are required to have a valid passport and may also require a Schengen Area visa.
- Travelers who are not citizens of EU member states and whose countries of nationality do not have visa-free access to the Schengen Area are required to have a valid passport as well as a valid Schengen Area visa or EU residency permit to enter the Netherlands.
- As entry requirements are subject to change, individuals are advised to consult their nearest Dutch diplomatic mission prior to travel for the most up to date requirements.

Political/Security Risks

AIG Travel rates the Netherlands as a LOW threat location due to the country’s stable political environment, relatively few security concerns and well-developed infrastructure.

- Political instability is a LOW concern in the Netherlands as the country is a stable parliamentary constitutional monarchy.
- Corruption is a MINOR concern as it is not prevalent in any level of government, and the country’s security force is law-abiding and transparent.
- Crime is a MODERATE concern in the Netherlands. While violent crime does not occur often in the Netherlands, petty crime is more common, especially in larger cities and towns.
- There is a LOW threat of terrorism in the Netherlands; however, radicalized networks are present, especially in urban centers.
- Civil unrest is a LOW concern in the Netherlands as demonstrations occur periodically to protest political, social and economic issues, but rarely incite violence.
Infrastructure

Infrastructure in the Netherlands is a MINOR concern, as it is modern and reliable.

- The road network is extensive and well-maintained, both in urban and rural areas.
- Rail transportation is fast and reliable, and large cities have extensive public transportation options.
- Water, electricity and other public utilities are reliable and available throughout the country.
- Telecommunications facilities, such as internet and cellular networks, are ubiquitous and of good quality.

Air travel

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (EHAM/AMS) is the main airport in the Netherlands and is located 6 mi (9 km) southwest of Amsterdam. The facility is accessible by train, bus and taxi. The airport offers a full range of facilities and services, including banks, currency exchange centers, shops, restaurants and car rental agencies. Additionally, there are a range of accommodations for passengers with special needs. Most international carriers fly to Schiphol, and domestic flights cover the entire country. Private, pre-arranged transportation is recommended for all travel to and from the airport.

Getting around

Traveling in the Netherlands presents few risks as the country provides extensive public transport services and a well-maintained road network. However, private, pre-arranged transportation is recommended for all travel in the Netherlands.

- **Road** – Roads in the Netherlands are generally in good condition, well-maintained and connect all cities. Traffic drives on the right.
  - **Self-Driving** - Rental car facilities are available at most airports as well as in major cities. To rent a car, individuals are required to present a valid passport or ID and an international driving permit (IDP). The minimum age for driving in the Netherlands is 18; however, foreign nationals must be 21 or older and have held their license for at least a year in order to rent a car. Inner-city driving, especially in Amsterdam, can be difficult due to traffic congestion and minimal parking space.
  - **Bus** - Bus services are available for local and international travel and also provide night and weekend services. A national fare system, the OV-chipkaart, covers city buses, trams and long-distance buses. The card carries an electronic chip that debits balances from an associated account with each use.
  - **Taxi** - Taxis are available and can be pre-booked or hailed from the street; these are distinguishable by their blue license plates and a taxi sign on the roof. Train taxis (treintaxi), a traditional means of transport in country, are usually shared.
  - **Bicycle** - Bicycling is an extremely common mode of transportation in the Netherlands. The country has well-developed cycling infrastructure, including dedicated cycling lanes, protected intersections and extensive bicycle parking.

- **Rail** – The country has an efficient, nationwide rail network comprising trains, light rail services (metro) and trams. Tickets can be purchased from various outlets or aboard the train. The same fare system in place for buses applies to all public rail transport and Nederlandse Spoorwegen rail trips.

- **Water** – It is possible to travel on canals in major cities by ferry or by renting a canal bike, which is a small, cycle-powered boat.

Culture

- Prostitution is legal but well-regulated by the government. Since 1996, local bylaws require all prostitution businesses to have a license to operate.
• The Netherlands has liberal drug policies, and certain drugs are allowed for personal use in small quantities. Coffee shops are highly regulated and have to abide by a strict set of rules. No drug, seed, plant or extract may be taken over any border; ports are well-monitored, buses are regularly searched, and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (EHAM/AMS) is one of the most advanced in combating the shipment and movement of all forms of drugs.
• When conducting business, handshakes should be exchanged with both men and women upon arrival and departure.
• It is advisable to greet people upon entering a shop or business and to only use first names once invited to do so; a more formal approach should be maintained in all social and business settings.
• In business, educational qualifications should be included on business cards.
• Punctuality is expected in social and business settings, and privacy is respected.
• If invited into a home, it is appreciated to bring a small gift, such as flowers. Also, if presented with a gift, it is customary to open it immediately.
• English is widely understood and spoken at a high level of proficiency in the Netherlands, particularly in business circles.
• The legal status of drugs in the Netherlands is complex. Certain drugs are tolerated for personal use in small quantities; while marijuana can be purchased at coffee shops, it is highly regulated. It is illegal as well as dangerous to purchase drugs on the street, which can lead to arrest and detainment. Hard drugs such as cocaine, heroin, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and ecstasy are strictly illegal.

**Important Dates in 2019**

- 1 January – New Year’s Day
- 19-22 April – Easter holidays
- 27 April – King’s Day
- 5 May – Liberation Day
- 30 May – Ascension Day
- 9 June – Pentecost
- 10 June – Whit Monday
- 25 December – Christmas Day
- 26 December – Boxing Day

**Health concerns**

The standard of medical facilities and care is generally excellent across the country, and most medical personnel have a good knowledge of the English language. Medical care in the Netherlands is based on a referral system that requires patients to see a local doctor (huisarts) first; specialists will usually only see patients who have been referred to them by huisarts. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate payment for medical services, although the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is accepted throughout the country. Pharmacies (known locally as apotheek) are available in all cities and towns, and all basic medical supplies are readily available. However, some common medicines are not obtainable in the Netherlands without a doctor’s prescription.

Rabies is a viral infection that can affect animals and humans and is spread through the saliva of infected animals. Rabies can occur throughout the country.

Vaccinations are recommended against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, measles and rabies.

Travelers should ensure that their routine vaccinations are up to date for influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus. Individuals should visit a doctor or clinic that specializes in travel-related medicine at least four to six weeks prior to their intended departure. This timeframe should allow any prescribed vaccinations to take effect. Travelers should visit a medical professional even if their departure is within four weeks. Comprehensive medical insurance, including
provision for medical repatriation or evacuation, is strongly recommended. Travelers should bring with them an appropriate supply of any prescription medication accompanied by written doctor’s instructions that explain the purpose and justify the quantities.

In June 2019 a measles outbreak was reported in Urk municipality, located in Flevoland province. The outbreak is likely due to low vaccination rates in the city.

Travelers should consume only sterilized or bottled water; this precaution extends to water used for brushing teeth, making ice and washing foods. Individuals should not bathe or swim in rivers or lakes. Unpasteurized milk should be avoided, and fruits and vegetables should be consumed only if they have been peeled or cooked. Food from street vendors and undercooked meat and fish should be avoided.

The emergency number in the Netherlands is 112. Emergency services provide good coverage and response times countrywide.

Money

- **Currency** – The euro (EUR) is the official currency of the Netherlands and is divided into 100 cents. Banknotes are issued in 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 euro denominations. Coins are issued in 1 and 2 euros as well as 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents.
- **Foreign exchange** – Foreign exchange offices can be identified by the letters GWK. GWK Travelex is a national organization with offices in main cities throughout the country. Many hotels and other independent money changers also exchange foreign currency but tend to charge high commissions.
- **ATMs/Credit Cards** – ATMs are widely available and accept all major credit cards. MasterCard, American Express and Visa are widely accepted throughout the country.
- **Tipping** – Tipping is common throughout the country. Waiters usually expect to be tipped 10 percent of the bill, while porters, taxi drivers and toilet attendants expect one euro or less.
- **Business hours** – Business hours are generally Monday to Friday from 09:00 – 17:00, and most banks are generally open Tuesday to Friday from 09:00 – 16:00.

Contact Information

- International dialing code: +31
- International dialing prefix: 00
- Police: 112
- Ambulance: 112
- Fire: 112

Cultural factors

General

Prostitution is legal but well-regulated by the government. Since 1996, local bylaws require all prostitution businesses to have a license to operate. The Netherlands has liberal drug policies, and certain drugs are allowed for personal use in small quantities. Coffee shops are highly regulated and have to abide by a strict set of rules. No drug, seed, plant or extract may be taken over any border; ports are well-monitored, buses are regularly searched and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (EHAM/AMS) is one of the most advanced in combating the shipment and movement of all forms of drugs.

Etiquette and norms
• When conducting business, handshakes should be exchanged with both men and women upon arrival and departure
• It is advisable to greet people upon entering a shop or business and to only use first names once invited to do so; a more formal approach should be maintained to all social and business settings.
• In business, educational qualifications should be included on business cards.
• Punctuality is expected in social and business settings, and privacy is respected.
• If invited into a home, it is appreciated to bring a small gift, such as flowers. Also, if presented with a gift, it is customary to open it immediately.
• English is widely understood and spoken at a high level of proficiency in the Netherlands, particularly in business circles.

Dos and don'ts

• The legal status of drugs in the Netherlands is complex. Certain drugs are tolerated for personal use in small quantities; while marijuana can be purchased at coffee shops, it is highly regulated. It is illegal as well as dangerous to purchase drugs on the street, which can lead to arrest and detainment. Hard drugs such as cocaine, heroin, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and ecstasy are strictly illegal.

Useful information

Useful information

• Public holidays
• Weather forecast
• Maps
• Netherlands tourism
• Electricity: 230 volts, 50 Hz; for the most commonly used plug types, please click here.

Contact details

Important contact details

• International dialing code: +31
• International dialing prefix: 00

Emergency numbers

• Police: 112
• Ambulance: 112
• Fire: 112

Embassies

Australian Embassy
Carnegieelaan 4
2517 KH The Hague
Tel: +31 70 310 8200
Fax: +31 70 310 8250

British Embassy
Lange Voorhout 10
2514 ED The Hague
Tel: +31 70 427 0427
Email: ukinnl@fco.gov.uk

Chinese Embassy
Willem Lodewijklaan 10
2517 JT The Hague
Tel: +31 70 306 5099
Fax: +31 70 355 1651
Email: chinaemb_nl@mfa.gov.cn

French Embassy
Anna Paulownastraat
2518 BJ The Hague
Tel: +31 70 312 5800
Fax: +31 70 312 5824
Email: info@ambafrance-nl.org

German Embassy
Groot Hertoginnelaan 18-20
2517 EG The Hague
Tel: +31 70 342 0600
Fax: +31 70 365 1957

Japanese Embassy
Tobias Asserlaan 5
2517 KC The Hague
Tel: +31 70 346 9544
Fax: +31 70 310 6341
Email: info@hg.mofa.go.jp

Mexican Embassy
Nassauplein 28
2585 EC The Hague
Tel: +31 70 360 2900

Saudi Arabian Embassy
Koninginnegracht 26
2514 AB The Hague
Tel: +31 70 361 4391
Fax: + 31 70 427 61833
Email: nlemb@mofa.gov.sa

South African Embassy
40 Wassenaarseweg
2596 CJ The Hague
Tel: +31 70 392 4501
Fax: +31 70 346 0669
Email: info@zuidafrika.nl

United States Embassy
John Adams Park 1
2244 BZ Wassenaar, The Hague
Tel: +31 70 310 2209
Health advisory

Health infrastructure

The standard of medical facilities and care is generally excellent across the country, and most medical personnel have a good knowledge of the English language. Medical care in the Netherlands is based on a referral system that requires patients to see a local doctor (huisarts) first; specialists will usually only see patients who have been referred to them by huisarts. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate payment for medical services, although the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is accepted throughout the country. Pharmacies (known locally as apotheek) are available in all cities and towns, and all basic medical supplies are readily available. However, some common medicines are not obtainable in the Netherlands without a doctor’s prescription.

Pre-travel recommendations

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if traveling to the Netherlands:

- Hepatitis A (recommended)
- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Measles (recommended)
- Rabies (recommended)

Travelers should ensure that their routine vaccinations are up to date for influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

Individuals should visit a doctor or clinic that specializes in travel-related medicine at least four to six weeks prior to their intended departure. This timeframe should allow any prescribed vaccinations to take effect. Travelers should visit a medical professional even if their departure is within four weeks.

Comprehensive medical insurance, including provision for medical repatriation or evacuation, is strongly recommended. Travelers should bring with them an appropriate supply of any prescription medication accompanied by written doctor’s instructions that explain the purpose and justify the quantities.

Significant diseases

The following is one of the more significant diseases that might affect individuals in the Netherlands:

- Rabies is a viral infection that can affect animals and humans and is spread through the saliva of infected animals. Rabies can occur throughout the country.

Recent outbreaks

- In June 2019 a measles outbreak was reported in Urk municipality, located in Flevoland province. The outbreak is likely due to low vaccination rates in the city.

Food and water safety
Travelers should consume only sterilized or bottled water; this precaution extends to water used for brushing teeth, making ice and washing foods. Individuals should not bathe or swim in rivers or lakes. Unpasteurized milk should be avoided, and fruits and vegetables should be consumed only if they have been peeled or cooked. Food from street vendors and undercooked meat and fish should be avoided.

**Emergency response**

The emergency number in the Netherlands is 112. Emergency services provide good coverage and response times countrywide.