

## NETHERLANDS

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<https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2016/51/dakloos-vaker-jong-en-niet-westers>

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<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2017/12/22/cijfers-maatschappelijke-opvang-2016>

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These reforms were the result of litigation taken and won at EU level by private property developers in cases they took against social landlords accusing them of unfair competition. The European Commission developed a residual definition of social housing from the Services of General Economic Interest in the first legal case that was taken on the matter in 2001, on financing social housing policies in Ireland. Since then, from the Commission's perspective, social housing must be aimed at 'those who are disadvantaged or socially less advantaged groups which, due to solvability constraints are unable to obtain housing at market conditions'. Countries where there is a universal approach to social housing, i.e. it is for use by the entire population irrespective of income, such as the Netherlands, are therefore required to reduce their social housing supply in order to ensure that the organisation of national social housing policies are compatible with competition law. For more information [in French], see Brice Daniel (2018), 'Le procès européen fait au logement social - Le droit européen et la faillibilité du logement social en France, aux Pays-Bas et en Suède' [The European Trial of Social Housing - European law and the fallibility of social housing in France, the Netherlands and Sweden], *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales 2018/1* (N° 221-222), p. 64-79.

## Recent data on homelessness

In 2016, Statistics Netherlands (CBS) estimated that there were 31,000 homeless people aged 18 to 65 years in the Netherlands.<sup>32</sup> This covers people who have been registered as homeless by a local authority (people sleeping rough – ETHOS 1.1, people in short-term and emergency accommodation – ETHOS 1, 2, 3, and people staying with friends or family in an ad hoc manner – ETHOS 8.1). 40% of this homeless population were concentrated in the main cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht (also known as the G4).

The Federatie Opvang (Dutch federation of emergency accommodation) counts the number of people who have requested assistance and/or have been taken into an accommodation structure (and does not take account of people who have never resorted to these measures). In 2016, the members of Federatie Opvang reported that they helped 60,000 people,<sup>33</sup> compared to 58,000 people in 2015.

The number of homeless families in the Netherlands has increased. In 2013, the CBS statistics counted 16,000 women and 2,500 children; in 2016 almost 19,000 homeless women and 4,000 children were counted. The scale of homelessness among young people is also worrying. In 2016, 41% of homeless people were aged between 18 and 30, compared to 27% in 2015, i.e. increasing from 8,300 to 12,400 young homeless people. The young people in question here are more often immigrants (59%) than the rest of the homeless population (49%). The proportion of people who are immigrants from non-EU countries and the proportion of people with learning difficulties are increasing among the homeless population.

Total population on 1 January 2017:  
17,081,507 people

GDP/resident in 2017 (purchasing power parity – Index: EU 28 = 100): 128

Number of homeless people known: 31,000 in 2016 according to official figures/60,000 according to figures from the associations

Percentage of poor households: 13.2%

Sources: Eurostat/EU-SILC 2017 & FEANTSA

## Housing market situation in the Netherlands

Following a housing boom that lasted almost 15 years, the Dutch housing market was impacted by the 2008 recession. However, since the recovery in 2014, property prices have accelerated due to strong demand (fuelled by low interest rates – 2.39% in March 2018, a multiplicity of tax incentives and strong economic growth) and inadequate supply. In March 2018, only 5,986 building permits were issued, a drop of 19.8% in a year. Rents are rising everywhere, not just in the four largest cities (Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht), but also in smaller towns where the biggest increases were observed in 2017.

About 92% of the rental market is classified as rent-controlled (based on social housing rent ceilings). Despite government reforms aimed at reducing the social housing stock,<sup>34</sup> the income ceilings for those benefiting are increased every year (reaching EUR 40,349 in 2017). In terms of regulatory provisions, housing associations must allocate 80% of their vacant units every year to households below the income ceiling, but are allowed to allocate 10% of the vacant units to households above the income ceiling. In reality, a significant number of high-income households are benefiting from rent controls. In

order to limit the effect of this policy, the rates of increase for controlled rents have been dependent on incomes since 2015. As such, households with income below a certain threshold can only have a rent increase of 1.5% per year maximum (above inflation), while the ceiling for households with higher incomes is 4% (above inflation). Waiting lists for rented social housing can be as long as 12 years. Add to this the 8% of the rental market considered the 'free market', where increases on the base rent (not including additional services and charges) can only take effect once per year and are set by clauses in the rental contract. Between 2016 and 2017, these rent hikes were 1.6% on average in the country as a whole (after successive increases since 2013) and 2.5% for Amsterdam.<sup>35</sup>

Rates of arrears and over-indebtedness are high in the Netherlands: public policies have continuously promoted access to ownership since the 1980s, by providing tax relief on mortgage interest (with certain conditions such as the property being the principle residence and the mortgage duration being 30 years maximum). According to the IMF, this policy has had a distorting effect on the property market as the significant tax breaks encourage households to spend more on housing than they can really afford. According to the associations, over-indebtedness is an increasingly large barrier to households accessing housing with one in five households reporting that they are seriously in debt.

Housing First projects continue to spread throughout the Netherlands and are now present in 17 cities<sup>37</sup>.

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<https://www.globalpropertyguide.com/Europe/Netherlands/Price-History>

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FEANTSA (2018), Country Profile for the Netherlands, available at: <https://www.feantsa.org/en/country-profile/2016/10/19/country-profile-the-netherlands?bcParent=27>

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[https://housingfirsteurope.eu/country/netherlands/?content\\_type=research](https://housingfirsteurope.eu/country/netherlands/?content_type=research)

● Key statistics on housing exclusion  
and changes between 2007 and 2017

General population			
Indicator	2017	2007-2017 change	2016-2017 change
Housing cost overburden rate	Total: 9.4% Poor: 40.9%	Total: -47% Poor: -32%	Total: -12% Poor: -5%
Total cost of housing (€ PPP/month)	Total: € 645.3 PPP/month Poor: € 549.4 PPP/month	Total: -23% Poor: -28%	Total: -6% Poor: -7%
Mortgage/rent arrears	Total: 3.1% Poor: 10.5%	Total: +11% Poor: +21%	Total: -3% Poor: +33%
Overcrowding	Total: 4.1% Poor: 14.6%	Total: +116% Poor: +152%	Total: +3% Poor: 0%
Severe housing deprivation	Total: 1% Poor: 4.3%	Total: +25% Poor: +26%	Total: -28% Poor: 0%
Experiencing difficulty in maintaining adequate household temperature	Total: 2.4% Poor: 7.8%	Total: +50% Poor: +70%	Total: -8% Poor: -1%
Young people aged between 18 and 24 years			
Indicator	2017	2007-2017 change	2016-2017 change
Housing cost overburden rate	Total: 19.9% Poor: 63%	Total: +6% Poor: -7%	Total: 0% Poor: -10%
Children under 18 years			
Indicator	2017	2007-2017 change	2016-2017 change
Overcrowding	Total: 5.1% Poor: 17.4%	Total: +112% Poor: +211%	Total: 0% Poor: +2%

Housing costs in the Netherlands remain among the highest in Europe, and particularly impact young people aged between 18 and 24 years. 63% of young people below the poverty threshold are overburdened by housing costs. Between 2007 and 2017, housing cost indicators trended downwards but this must be read with caution as a data break was observed in the EU-SILC data for

2016 in the Netherlands. While proportionally fewer households experience inadequate housing compared to the rest of Europe, the number of poor people living in overcrowded housing has more than doubled since 2007, and has as much as tripled for children living below the poverty threshold.

