



Netherlands — Va-PoReg Country Report

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11/03/1848 Start Constitutional Monarchy: On 07/26/1581 the Plakkaat van Verlatinghe was signed declaring independence from Spain. Since 03/16/1815 the Kingdom of the Netherlands is an independent monarchy.¹ In 1848, the Constitution of the Netherlands was amended to make ministers responsible to the States General and no longer responsible to the king, who acted as the leader of cabinet. The new Constitution was proclaimed on 11/03/1848.² In the parliamentary elections from 1848 only a small minority of the population had the right to vote. The part grew from 1.8 per cent in 1848 to 16.5 per cent in 1917 (Andeweg/Ridder/Irwin 2010: 1396f.). According to LIED, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period. In this timeframe, LIED identifies political liberties as present except during World War I, and V-Dem's PCLI is likewise classified by us as showing that political liberties are present. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive was subordinate to or held equal power with other institutions, indicating executive parity or subordination. For this regime period, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating comprehensive constraints on the executive.

07/03/1918 End Constitutional Monarchy/Start (Monarchical) Electoral Oligarchy (Patriarchal): On this date, the first parliamentary elections after a series of reforms that introduced universal male suffrage and pure proportional representation took place.³ From 1917 on full suffrage for men aged 23 and above was granted. In 1917, women were given a limited form of suffrage known as „passive“ voting rights, which allowed them to stand for political office and be elected but did not grant them the right to vote in elections.⁴ From 1919 on suffrage was extended to women. Ruijs de Beerenbrouck was prime minister during this regime period and headed a right-wing government consisting of the Christian parties in parliament and some liberal independent representatives.⁵ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Following LIED competitiveness for the elections was scored. Moreover, V-Dem's CEI reflects cleanliness of elections in this period. The overall election conditions are stated as free and fair by V-Dem's EF&FI. For the relevant period, LIED identifies political liberties as present, and V-Dem's PCLI is also classified by us as indicating that political liberties are present. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive was subordinate to or held equal power with other institutions, indicating executive parity or subordination. For this regime period, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating comprehensive constraints on the executive.

07/05/1922 End (Monarchical) Electoral Oligarchy (Patriarchal)/Start (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy: On this date the first parliamentary elections under universal suffrage took place.⁶ De Beerenbrouck remained in office until August 1925 when he lost elections to Hendrik Colijn, who headed another right-wing government, but only until March 1926, when he resigned. After Colijn, Dirk Jan de Geer formed yet another government of Christian parties (the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party and the Christian Historical Union) and liberal independents. De Geer stepped down from office in 1929 and was replaced by earlier prime minister de Beerenbrouck, who continued the same coalition composition. In May 1933 de Beerenbrouck was again replaced as prime minister by Colijn who served until 1939 and was, again, replaced by de Geer. De Geer's coalition included the Social Democratic Worker's Party among the Christian parties. When Nazi-Germany invaded the Netherlands in May 1940, de Geer and his government fled to London.⁷ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns

with the observations of LIED. For the entire time the elections were competitive per LIED. Moreover, electoral cleanliness is scored according to V-Dem's CEI. Freedom and fairness during the elections are given (V-Dem EF&FI). For this period, LIED identifies political liberties as present until 1932 and as absent afterwards. V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as showing that political liberties are present. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive was either equal to or subordinate to other institutions, demonstrating strong constraints on decision-making authority. For the years 1922-1939, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating comprehensive constraints on the executive.

05/15/1940 End (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Germany, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]: On this date, the Dutch armed forces surrendered to the German forces, after the Netherlands were invaded by German forces, in spite of the country's neutrality policy, and without a formal declaration of war on 05/10/1940. The German troops also advanced into Belgium and Luxembourg simultaneously. The objective of this move was to distract Allied forces away from the Ardennes, as well as entice British and French forces into Belgium. Additionally, it was done to prevent a prospective British invasion in North Holland.⁸ According to LIED, no elections were held during this period. For that period, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as showing that political liberties are not truly present. For 1940-1945, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were comprehensive, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent.

05/05/1945 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Germany, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]/Start (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy: From this date on the Netherlands were free from Nazi occupation due to the surrender. The first parliamentary elections after World War II were held on 05/17/1946. Following the elections, the Catholic People's Party formed a grand coalition government with the Labour Party.⁹ The Netherlands has a parliamentary system of government with a bicameral parliament, consisting of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The monarch continued to take on a mainly ceremonial role. The political landscape is characterized by freely operating parties competing with each other. Competitiveness is underscored by regularly changing coalitions of usually three to four parties.¹⁰ Equal political rights are granted to all citizens by the constitution. According to FH, for the assessed regime period, the country is categorized as free with a score between 2 and 4, which corresponds to our interpretation of free. LIED and V-Dem's PCLI score full political liberties ever since the end of German occupation. As per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was on par with or below that of other branches, reflecting executive parity or subordination. For 1946, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were comprehensive, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. From 1947 onward, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating comprehensive constraints on the executive. The judiciary operates independently in both theory and practice. From 1971 on men and women aged 18 and older could vote in national elections.¹¹ On 11/22/2023 general snap elections were held, with the right-wing Party for Freedom emerging as the largest party and subsequently forming a coalition government. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Since the end of the German occupation constant competitiveness for the is achieved (LIED). V-Dem's CEI scores constantly a cleanliness of elections and thus the absence of irregularities in the election process. Moreover, ever since 1946 the elections were free and fair following V-Dem's EF&FI.

(Monarchical) Liberal Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional Sources (Lepszy/Wilp 2009, Lijphart 1975)

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy_of_the_Netherlands

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_Reform_of_1848

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1918_Dutch_general_election

⁴ <https://stacker.com/world/when-women-got-right-vote-50-countries>

⁵ <http://www.chisols.org/narratives.html> , see narratives for version 5.0, Netherlands_V: 1

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_suffrage#cite_note-centralasiainstitute.org-37

⁷ <http://www.chisols.org/narratives.html> , see narratives for version 5.0, Netherlands_R: 1-2, Netherlands_V: 1-2

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands_in_World_War_II#German_invasion

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1946_Dutch_general_election

¹⁰ <http://www.chisols.org/narratives.html> , see narratives for version 5.0, Netherlands_R: 2-4, Netherlands_V: 2-3

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_suffrage#cite_note-centralasiainstitute.org-37

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