

Country Profile for Netherlands: Trade Relations With Palestine

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❖ The Netherlands country profile: Facts:

- **Full name:** The Kingdom of the Netherlands
- **Population:** 16.7 million (UN, 2011)
- **Capital:** Amsterdam; seat of government: the Hague
- **Area:** 41,864 sq km (16,164 sq miles)
- **Major language:** Dutch
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **Life expectancy:** 79 years (men), 83 years (women) (UN)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 euro = 100 cents
- **Main exports:** Metal manufacturing, chemicals, foodstuffs
- **GNI per capita:** US \$49,050 (World Bank, 2010)
- **Internet domain:** .nl
- **International dialling code:** +31

1. COUNTRY GDP

- The Netherlands has a developed economy and has been playing a special role in the European economy for many centuries. Since the 16th century, shipping, fishing, trade, and banking have been leading sectors of the Dutch economy. The Netherlands is one of the world's 10 leading exporting countries. Foodstuffs form the largest industrial sector. Other major industries include chemicals, metallurgy, machinery, electrical goods, and tourism (in 2012 the Netherlands welcomed 11.7 million international tourists). Examples include [Unilever](#), [Heineken](#), financial services ([ING](#)), chemicals ([DSM](#), [AKZO](#)), petroleum refining ([Shell](#)), electronical machinery ([Philips](#), [ASML](#)), and car navigation ([TomTom](#)) (Wikipedia, 2014).
- The Netherlands has the 18TH –largest economy in the world, and ranks 10th in GDP (nominal) per capita. Between 1997 and 2000 annual economic growth (GDP) averaged nearly 4%, well above the European average. Growth slowed considerably from 2001 to 2005 with the global economic slowdown, but accelerated to 4.1% in the third quarter of 2007. In May 2013, inflation was at 2.8% per year. In April 2013, unemployment was at 8.2% (Wikipedia, 2014).
- In [Q3](#) and Q4 2011, the Dutch economy contracted by 0.4% and 0.7%, respectively, because of European Debt Crisis, while in Q4 the Eurozone economy shrunk by 0.3%. The Netherlands also has a relatively low [GINI coefficient](#) of 0.326. Despite ranking 7th in GDP per capita, UNICEF ranked the Netherlands 1st in child well-being. On the [Index of Economic Freedom](#) Netherlands is the 13th most free market capitalist economy out of 157 surveyed countries.
- The country continues to be one of the leading European nations for attracting foreign direct investment and is one of the five largest investors in the United States. The economy experienced a slowdown in 2005, but in 2006 recovered to the fastest pace in six years on the back of increased exports and strong investment.

The pace of job growth reached 10-year highs in 2007. The Netherlands is the fifth-most competitive economy in the world, according to the world Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report.

- The Groningen gas field, one of the largest natural fields in the world, is situated near Slochteren. Exploitation of this field has resulted in €159 billion in revenue since the mid-1970s (Wikipedia, 2014).

Table 1: List by the CIA World Factbook (2003–2013), (CIA, 2014):

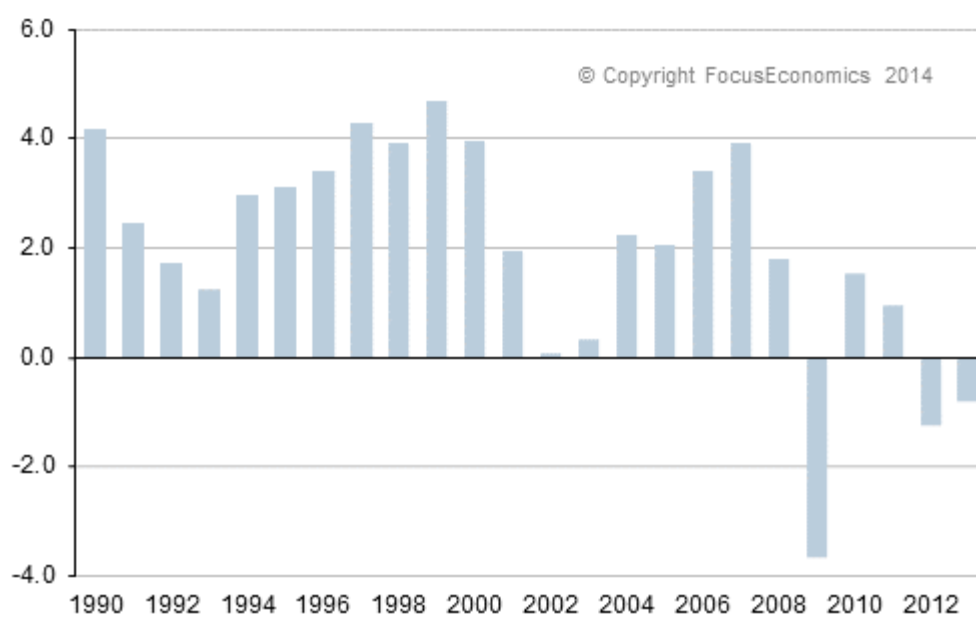
Rank	Country Region	GDP(Millions of US\$)	Year
1	 United States	16,720,000	2013
2	 China	9,330,000	2013
3	 Japan	5,007,000	2013
4	 Germany	3,593,000	2013
5	 France	2,739,000	2013
6	 United Kingdom	2,490,000	2013
7	 Brazil	2,190,000	2013
8	 Russia	2,113,000	2013
9	 Italy	2,068,000	2013
10	 Canada	1,825,000	2013
11	 India	1,670,000	2013
12	 Australia	1,488,000	2013
13	 Spain	1,356,000	2013
14	 Mexico	1,327,000	2013
15	 South Korea	1,198,000	2013
16	 Indonesia	867,500	2013
17	 Turkey	821,800	2013
18	 Netherlands	722,300	2013
19	 Saudi Arabia	718,500	2013
20	 Switzerland	646,200	2013

Table 2 : Annual variation of gross domestic product (GDP) of Netherlands in %.

Netherlands - GDP Data

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Economic Growth (GDP, annual variation in %)	-3.7	1.5	0.9	-1.3	-0.8

Figure 1 : Annual variation of gross domestic product (GDP) of Netherlands.



Source: Statistics Netherlands and Focus Economics calculations, 2014.

1- Agriculture and Food:

The Netherlands is one of the world's largest exporters of agricultural and food products, thanks to its innovative agro food technology. The Dutch agro food sector is a sustainable source of healthy, safe food that is produced with respect for nature and the environment.

The Netherlands is the world's second largest exporter of agricultural products, after the USA. Together with the USA and France, the Netherlands is one of the world's three leading producers of vegetables and fruit. It supplies a quarter of the vegetables that are exported from Europe. The agri-business is one of the driving forces behind the Dutch economy

2- Creative Industries:

The Dutch creative industry is currently gaining considerable international acclaim and has particularly strong profiles in interior design, gaming, fashion, and architecture. For centuries, Dutch creativity has inspired and informed. Geniuses, such as Dutch Masters Rembrandt and Van Gogh transformed the world around them. Today's masters include iconic figures such as fashion designers Viktor & Rolf, architect Rem Koolhaas, illustrator Dick Bruna and DJ/producers Armin van Buuren and Tiësto. They exemplify the strengths of Dutch design: pragmatic, open-minded, conceptual, out-of-the-box, and adhering to the principle 'less is more'. Dutch design also embodies innovation, creativity and business acumen.

3- Chemicals Industry:

The chemicals industry is one of the leading business sectors in the Netherlands, making a significant contribution to the economy. The Netherlands is one of Europe's leading suppliers of chemical products and services. Important raw materials are available or easy to supply while an extensive transportation network

provides access to Europe and beyond.

Some of the leading chemical companies in the Netherlands are AkzoNobel, Shell, DSM, Purac, MSD, and ECN. Research institutions include TNO, Delft University, Twente University, Wageningen University and Eindhoven University.

4- Energy:

The Netherlands has a strong standing in the areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency and a leading position in wind energy at sea, biomass processing and greenhouse farming.

The (energy) sector contributes substantially to Dutch national income, exports and employment. The government has therefore opted for a modern industry policy aimed at making better use of the economic opportunities for both green and grey energy. The Netherlands has embraced a courageous vision: by 2050, the country will have a sustainable, reliable and affordable energy system. As part of this, the Dutch aim to cut CO₂ emissions by half to generate some 40 percent of our electricity from sustainable sources like wind at sea and biomass by that time. Carbon emissions will be reduced by a combination which involves increasing the portion of renewable energy, energy saving, nuclear energy and Carbon Capture and Storage.

5- Water:

Over the decades, the Netherlands has developed sustainable systems for the production and supply of water and for the collection, treatment and partial reintroduction of "used" water into the system.

The history and prosperity of the Dutch nation are inextricably linked with water. Large areas of the Netherlands have been reclaimed from the sea and two-thirds of the country would regularly flood if it weren't for a complex, inter-linked system of dikes and surge barriers. The Dutch also excel in the field of water technology,

including water production, distribution, waste water and sewage treatment and sanitation.

Water is collected, filtered and re-cycled with high levels of quality and service in an integrated cycle, with the focus on sustainable economic development.

6- Logistics:

The Netherlands plays a key role in the globalised economy, by connecting producers and consumers worldwide via sophisticated logistics. Success is based on a combination of cutting-edge infrastructure, world-class service providers, and a coastal location at the heart of Europe. Key factors are the Port of Rotterdam, Europe's largest port and fourth-largest worldwide, and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, a major European air-freight and passenger hub. Both are supported by world-class logistics service providers and an extensive network of roads, railways, inland waterways and pipelines.

7- Horticulture:

The Dutch horticulture sector is a global trendsetter and the undisputed international market leader in flowers, plants, bulbs and reproductive material and the number three exporter in nutritional horticulture products. It forms the heart of an international network for floriculture, bulbs, and decorative trees as well as fruit and vegetables. The country's important logistical hubs – such as the Port of Rotterdam and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol – its proximity to Europe's 500 million consumers, plus the development of high-quality production methods have enabled the Dutch horticulture cluster to become this strong. The Dutch have created efficient supply chains that are able to deliver flowers in New York that have been cut the very same day in the Netherlands. And, true to the Dutch entrepreneurial character, nurseries have been set up in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Costa Rica, France and Portugal.

8- Life Sciences:

The Dutch made impressive contributions to the world's medical science: Hans and Zacharias Jansen invented the microscope around 1590, Dutchman Antoni van Leeuwenhoek (1632 - 1723) is known as 'the Father of Microbiology', biologist Jan Swammerdam was the first, in 1658, to observe and describe red blood cells, Willem Einthoven won the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1924 for his invention of the electrocardiogram and Willem Kolff, who is regarded as one of the most important physicians of the twentieth century, developed and applied the first functioning artificial kidney in 1943, and was involved in many breakthrough developments, such as the first heart-lung machine and an artificial heart (Holland, 2013).

3. INVESTMENT

- Statistics on the level of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Netherlands (by country of origin and industry sector), and comparable data covering the stock of Dutch FDI abroad, are compiled by the Dutch Central Bank (DNB) on an ad hoc basis. The DNB's FDI inflows are based on sources of capital transactions rather than on actual "by country" investment outlays. The FDI to GDP ratio in the Netherlands continues to be among the highest in the EU. The DNB's FDI statistics reveal that the total stock of FDI in the Netherlands amounted to 452 billion euro (roughly \$594 billion), about 77 percent of GDP, at the end of 2010. According to DNB data, total net FDI outflow into the Netherlands was about 660 billion euro (\$868 billion), or about 112 percent of GDP. In 2008, foreign companies established in the Netherlands account for roughly one-third of private sector turnout and 17 of total employment. At the end of 2009, an estimated 36 percent of foreign firms in the Netherlands came from the U.S., 11 percent from Germany, 11 percent from the UK, 17 percent from Scandinavia, 3 percent from the rest of Europe, 19 percent from Asia, and the remaining 3 percent from other non-OECD and non-EU countries (*State, 2012*).

- The reports on promising Dutch market sectors provide detailed sector-specific information which can be very useful to potential investors and exporters. The reports cover the following market sectors:
 - Agriculture and Food.
 - Creative Industries.
 - Chemicals Industry.
 - Energy.
 - Water.
 - Logistics.
 - Horticulture.
 - Life Sciences.

- The UNCTAD 2013 World Investment Report classifies the Netherlands as one of the largest potential investors for 2013-2015. A strong international orientation and a liberal policy towards foreign investment are the characteristics of the Netherlands' policies in this field. Many Dutch companies are multinational by nature and a large number of these are listed on the foreign stock markets. There are no regulatory restrictions on foreign direct investment. After slowing down in 2012, FDI again recovered in 2013, a trend which should become stronger in 2014 thanks to the improvement of the global economic situation.

Table 3 : FDI in figures (Source: UNCTAD,2013):

Foreign Direct Investment	2010	2011	2012
FDI Inward Flow (<i>million</i>)	-7,366	17,179	-244
FDI Stock (<i>million USD</i>)	585,342	585,437	572,986
Performance Index* ,	98	67	-
Potential Index** ,	-	21	-
Number of Greenfield	423	417	315
FDI Inwards (<i>in % of</i>	-5.4	11.5	-0.2
FDI Stock (<i>in % of GDP</i>)	75.1	70.0	74.2

Table 4 : FDI inflows by countries and industry (Source: Santander,2014):

Main Investing Countries		2012, in %
United States		13.4
Luxembourg		12.4
UK		10.5
Germany		10.4
Belgium		9.7
France		9.3
Switzerland		6.9
Main Invested Sectors		2012, in %
Trade and maintenance		59.9
Transport, storage and communications		33.6
Real estate, renting, business		3.3
Electricity, water, gas		2.5

4. TRADE MOVEMENT

Table 5 : Top Exported & Imported products of the Netherlands (Source: PTFP, 2014):

➤ Top Imported Products:	➤ Top Exported Products:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Petroleum ▪ Automatic data processing machines ▪ Electric appliances ▪ Printing machinery ▪ Cars ▪ Parts and accessories of computers ▪ Medicaments ▪ Television receivers ▪ Parts and accessories of vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Petroleum ▪ Television receivers ▪ Tractors ▪ Electro-medical appliances ▪ Parts and accessories of computers ▪ Medicaments ▪ Electrical telephone lines ▪ Printing machinery

Table 6 : Top Importing & Exporting trading partners of the Netherlands (Source: PTFP, 2014):

➤ Top Importing Trading Partners	➤ Top Exporting Trading Partners:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Germany ▪ Belgium ▪ USA ▪ China ▪ UK ▪ France ▪ Russian Federation ▪ Japan ▪ Italy ▪ Spain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Germany ▪ Belgium ▪ UK ▪ France ▪ Italy ▪ USA ▪ Spain ▪ Poland ▪ Russian Federation ▪ Sweden

- **Imports - partners:** Germany 13.9%, China 12%, Belgium 8.4%, UK 6.7%, Russia 6.4%, US 6.1% (2012).
- **Exports - partners:** Germany 26.3%, Belgium 14.1%, France 8.8%, UK 8%, Italy 4.5% (2012).

Table 7 : This table provides the total US dollar amount of merchandise exports of Middel East on an f.o.b. (free on board) basis (Source: Indexmundi, 2014):

Country Name	Exports (Billion \$)	Year of Estimate
Saudi Arabia	360	2011
United Arab Emirates	253	2011
Turkey	144	2011
Iran	132	2011
Qatar	107	2011
Kuwait	104	2011
Iraq	83	2011
Israel	63	2011
Oman	46	2011
Pakistan	25	2011
Bahrain	20	2011
Turkmenistan	15	2011
Uzbekistan	13	2011
Syria	8	2011
Jordan	8	2011
Yemen	8	2011
Lebanon	5	2011
Afghanistan	3	2010
Kyrgyzstan	2	2011
Tajikistan	1	2011

Table 8 : This table provides the total US dollar amount of merchandise imports of Middle East on a c.i.f. (cost, insurance, and freight) or f.o.b. (free on board) basis (Source: Indexmundi, 2014):

Country Name	Imports (Billion \$)	Year of Estimate
Turkey	233	2011
United Arab Emirates	186	2011
Saudi Arabia	117	2011
Iran	76	2011
Israel	72	2011
Iraq	54	2011
Pakistan	36	2011
Qatar	23	2011
Kuwait	22	2011
Oman	21	2011
Lebanon	20	2011
Jordan	16	2011
Syria	13	2011
Bahrain	12	2011
Turkmenistan	10	2011
Afghanistan	9	2010
Uzbekistan	9	2011
Yemen	8	2011
Kyrgyzstan	4	2011
Tajikistan	3	2011

Table 9 : Import and Export Value between Palestine and Netherlands (Source: PTFP, 2014):

Top Imported Products from Palestine:

Product	Percentage
Cut Flowers	87%
Tomatoes	4%
Olive Oil	3%
Herbs	1%
Fruits	3%
Other	2%

Top Exported Products to Palestine:

Product	Percentage
Plastics	49%
Milk and cream	3%
Food preparations	5%
Medicaments	5%
Optical Instruments	10%
Live poultry	3%
Furniture	3%
Other	22%

5. TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH PALESTINE

➤ Country Relationship with Palestine:

<i>Diplomatic Representation (Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)</i>	
<i>in the PA:</i>	Netherlands Representative Office to the PA 12 Hollanda St. Al Bireh P.O. Box 1899, Ramallah Tel: 02-2406639 Fax: 02-2409638 Head: Pim Dumore Deputy: Hans Teunissen
<i>from the PA:</i>	Laan Copes Van Cattenburch 73 2585 EW, Den Haag, Netherlands Tel: 31-70-3604864 Fax: 31-70-3657847 Ambassador Summaya Othman Barghouthi

➤ Trade Agreements with Palestine, (Source: PTFP, 2014) :

- *Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation between the European Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization:*

The interim association agreement on trade & Cooperation grants reciprocal duty free treatment on industrial products complying with the rule of origin. Concerning agricultural items, the European Union grants duty free or reduced tariff treatment on the products exported to the EU within quotas. The same applies to agricultural imports from the EU to the WBGS. The certificate of origin, which grants duty free access, is called EUR. 1.

- In addition, in October 2013 an economic mission from Palestine to the Netherlands took place. 15 Palestinian companies took part from top sectors like IT, agro-food, pharmaceuticals, stone and marble and furniture. The mission was supported by Mr. Ziad Toame, Palestinian Deputy minister of Economy, the

General Delegation of Palestine in the Netherlands and by different BSO's, amongst which was Hanan Taha-Rayyan, CEO of leading development organization PalTrade.

The mission consisted of a conference and a visit to the harbor of Rotterdam, followed by B2B matchmaking. From the Dutch side the conference was joined by Bernard Wientjes, president of VNO-NCW, Salim Rabbani, president of the Dutch Middle-East Business Council, Simon Smits, Director-General of Foreign Economic Relations, Jeroen Roodenburg, Ambassador Private Sector & International Cooperation, both from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dr. Nabil Abuznaid of the General Delegation of Palestine.

The mission was aimed at promoting trade relations between Dutch and Palestinian companies and targeted both Dutch companies that already are doing business in Palestine and those that are not yet doing so. Palestine is a promising business partner for the Netherlands, as it can serve as a gateway to the wider Middle-East. Its small and dynamic economy has great potential because of its entrepreneurial nature and skilled labor force. Fertile soil and a moderate climate provide optimum agricultural conditions. The PNA signed trade agreements that offer preferential treatment for Palestinian exports in regional and global markets, amongst which the EU market.

During the mission the Palestinian companies were brought into contact with Dutch businesses. This happened through seminars, one-on-one meetings for different sectors and a general B2B networking event.

The mission took place in preparation of the Dutch-Palestinian cooperation forum that took place on the 7th and 8th of December 2013 in Bethlehem, Palestine. The purpose of this forum is to strengthen the relation between the Netherlands and Palestine. It has been joined by Prime Minister Rutte, Minister Timmermans, Minister Ploumen and Dutch business and an agreement on Dutch-Palestine cooperation will be signed. Also, the Dutch-Palestine Business Council has been launched during the forum.

The trade mission to Palestine with Dutch organizations and companies was the first of its kind, where the first bilateral Dutch-Palestine cooperation forum was launched. Prime Minister Rutte and Prime Minister Hamdallah opened the first session of the cooperation forum and signed a joint agreement. In this agreement, they welcomed the results reached so far that will further serve as basis for intensifying relationships, including the following issues:

- ✓ Activating flexible and result oriented technical working groups on the area of agriculture & food, energy, ICT and water;
- ✓ Establishment of a Palestinian-Dutch Business Council;
- ✓ Design of an operational water partnership between Videns Evides International and the PWA (Palestinian Water Authority);
- ✓ Establishment of a Dutch-Palestinian Academic Water Consortium;
- ✓ Cooperation agreement between Clingendael and PASSIA (Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs);
- ✓ Cooperation agreement concerning capacity building between the VNG and the new Palestinian city Rawabi;
- ✓ Memorandum of Understanding concerning capacity building of the PA on the area of sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS), and;
- ✓ Support of the PA by making export and marketing strategies for the ict-sector and the horticulture sector.

The Dutch government announced that the Delegation of Palestine in the Hague will be upgraded to a Palestinian Mission, in line with the status of the Palestinian Delegation in other EU member states. There will also be an investigation in possibilities to resume training for young Palestinian diplomats in the Netherlands, such as courses of international law.

The already successful trade mission will be continued in the future with two yearly follow-ups in both the Netherlands and Palestine.

- ***The European Rules of Origin:***

According to the European rule of origin, the product must be wholly obtained (extracted and harvested) in WBGS.

If not wholly obtained (coming from third parties), non originating materials must have undergone sufficient working or processing which is defined according to one of the following methods:

The product would undergo a change in the tariff classification according to pre defined conversion lists.

The product would undergo a specific operation carried out in the WBGS/EU. As a rule, it can be said that washing, cutting up, packaging and simple assembly of parts are considered to be in sufficient working/processing operations using non originating materials or products.

The use of non-originating materials is limited to a specific percentage.

If used in the WBGS, materials originating in the EU are considered as originating as input materials to make a new products used in the EU as input materials.

In order to find out the rule applying to a specific product when using non-originating materials, the producer should refer to the 6-digit code of the HS system for the product in question when making inquiries.

- ***Trade regimes applied by the Netherlands to Palestinian Imports:***

Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation between the European Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Please visit, <http://www.paltrade.org/en/about-palestine/agreements/EU.pdf>

➤ **Other Useful Information,** (Source: PTFP, 2014):

- **Ports**

- ✓ Trade flows through Dutch harbors, continuing its passage by riverboat, train, truck, and pipeline.
- ✓ Maritime traffic accounts for more than half the total amount of goods loaded and unloaded in The Netherlands,
- ✓ Rotterdam has the country's best-equipped modern harbor, the largest on the continent.
- ✓ In petroleum processing too, Rotterdam is one of the world's leading centres, with facilities to receive the largest supertankers.
- ✓ Other important ports, though dwarfed by Rotterdam-Europoort, are Amsterdam and, on the Western Schelde, Flushing and Terneuzen

- **Links:**

- ✓ CBS – Statistics Netherlands
- ✓ CBI – Center for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries
- ✓ Dutch Tax and Customs Administration
- ✓ The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ Government of Netherlands website
- ✓ Agency for International Business and Cooperation
- ✓ Holland International Distribution Council
- ✓ EU Export Helpdesk
- ✓ Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation Between the European Community and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the Benefit of the Palestinian Authority
- ✓ International Trade Center

6. MAJOR ECONOMIC EVENTS

➤ Trade Fairs and Exhibitions in the Netherlands (Source: *Nlembassy, (2014):*

✓ [Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions \(NBTC\) :](#)

The Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions provides an excellent platform to support initiatives for international meetings in the Netherlands. With many years' experience plus extensive knowledge of the Dutch conventions and conferences industry, the NBTC can give you impartial and independent advice.

✓ [Amsterdam Exhibition Centre \(RAI\) :](#)

Every year, Amsterdam RAI hosts more than fifty major international congresses, seventy trade fairs and exhibitions, events and over one thousand conferences, meetings and smaller functions. This modern 87.000 square metre complex is unquestionably one of Europe's foremost venues for major international events.

✓ [Royal Dutch Fairs Utrecht \(Jaarbeurs Utrecht\) :](#)

Fairs, events, congresses, conferences and meetings; from its central location, Jaarbeurs Utrecht forms the stage for business and entertainment. At Jaarbeurs Utrecht, yearly over 100 different fairs and events are being organised.

✓ [Ahoy' Rotterdam :](#)

Ahoy' Rotterdam is a multifunctional venue for exhibitions, events, concerts, conferences and meetings. It provides accommodation and support services and initiates and organises events, exhibitions and conferences so as to meet the needs of the market as effectively as possible.

✓ [MECC \(Maastricht Exhibition and Congress Centre\):](#)

The MECC is an ultramodern, dynamic organization that organises and provides accommodation for fairs and conferences.

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