

The Netherlands Compared With The United States

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1.

The Netherlands follows a policy of separating the market for illicit drugs. Cannabis is primarily purchased through coffee shops. Coffee shops offer no or few possibilities for purchasing illicit drugs other than cannabis. Thus The Netherlands achieve a separation of the soft drug market from the hard drugs market - and separation of the 'acceptable risk' drug user from the 'unacceptable risk' drug user.

Source:

Abraham, Manja D., University of Amsterdam, Centre for Drug Research, Places of Drug Purchase in The Netherlands Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, September 1999!, pp. 1-5.

2.

Comparing Important Drug and Violence Indicators

Social Indicator
Comparison Year
USA
Netherlands

Lifetime prevalence of marijuana use ages 12+!

2001		
	36.9%	1
	17.0%	2

Past month prevalence of marijuana use ages 12+!

2001		
	5.4%	1
	3.0%	2

Lifetime prevalence of heroin use ages 12+!

2001

1.4%	1
0.4%	2

Incarceration Rate per 100,000 population

2002

701	3
100	4

Per capita spending on criminal justice system in Euros!

1998

€379	5
€223	5

Homicide rate per 100,000 population

Average 1999-2001

5.56	6
1.51	6

Source:

1: US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Volume I. Summary of National Findings (Washington, DC: HHS, August 2002), p. 109, Table H.1.

2: Trimbos Institute, "Report to the EMCDDA by the Reitox National Focal Point, The Netherlands Drug Situation 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, Nov. 2002), p. 28, Table 2.1.

3: Walmsley, Roy, "World Prison Population List (fifth edition) (London, England: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office), Dec. 2003, p. 3, Table 2.

4: Walmsley, Roy, "World Prison Population List (fifth edition) (London, England: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office), Dec. 2003, p. 5, Table 4.

5: van Dijk, Frans & Jaap de Waard, "Legal infrastructure of the Netherlands in international perspective: Crime control" (Netherlands: Ministry of Justice, June 2000), p. 9, Table S.13.

6: Barclay, Gordon, Cynthia Tavares, Sally Kenny, Arsalaan Siddique & Emma Wilby, "International comparisons of criminal justice statistics 2001," Issue 12/03 (London, England: Home Office Research, Development & Statistics Directorate, October 2003), p. 10, Table 1.1.

3.

"There were 2.4 drug-related deaths per million inhabitants in the Netherlands in 1995. In France this figure was 9.5, in Germany 20, in Sweden 23.5 and in Spain 27.1. According to the 1995 report of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction in Lisbon, the Dutch figures are the lowest in Europe. The Dutch AIDS prevention programme was equally successful. Europe-wide, an average of 39.2% of AIDS victims are intravenous drug-users. In the Netherlands, this percentage is as low as 10.5%."

Source:

Netherlands Ministry of Justice, Fact Sheet: Dutch Drugs Policy, Utrecht: Trimbos Institute, Netherlands Institute of Mental Health and Addiction, 1999!, from the Netherlands Justice Ministry website at http://www.minjust.nl:8080/a_beleid/fact/cfact7.htm .

4.

"The number of problem opiate/crack users seems to have remained relatively stable in the past ten years (3.1 per 1000 people aged 15-64 years). In the past decade, local field studies among traditional groups of problem opiate users have shown a strong increase in the co-use of crack cocaine, a reduction in injecting drug use, and an increase in psychiatric and somatic comorbidity."

Source:

Trimbos Institute, "Drug Situation 2006 The Netherlands by the Reitox National Focal Point: Report to the EMCDDA" (Utrecht, Netherlands: Trimbos-Instituut, 2007), p. 9.

5.

"Cannabis use among young people has also increased in most Western European countries and in the US. The rate of cannabis use among young people in the US is much higher than in the Netherlands, and Great Britain and Ireland also have relatively larger numbers of school students who use cannabis."

Source:

Netherlands Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, Drug Policy in the Netherlands: Progress Report September 1997-September 1999, The Hague: Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, November 1999!, p. 7.

6.

"The figures for cannabis use among the general population reveal the same pictures. The Netherlands does not differ greatly from other European countries. In contrast, a comparison with the US shows a striking difference in this area: 32.9% of Americans aged 12 and above have experience with cannabis and 5.1% have used in the past month. These figures are twice as high as those in the Netherlands."

Source:

Netherlands Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, Drug Policy in the Netherlands: Progress Report September 1997-September 1999, The Hague: Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, November 1999!, pp. 7-8.

7.

"The prevalence figures for cocaine use in the Netherlands do not differ greatly from those for other European countries. However, the discrepancy with the United States is very large. The percentage of the general population who have used cocaine at some point is 10.5% in the US, five times higher than in the Netherlands. The percentage who have used cocaine in the past month is 0.7% in the US, compared with 0.2% in the Netherlands."

Source:

Netherlands Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, Drug Policy in the Netherlands: Progress Report September 1997-September 1999, The Hague: Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, November 1999!, p. 6. The report notes ""The figures quoted in this paragraph for drug use in the US are taken from the National Household Survey 1997, SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, Washington, DC".

8.

"The National Youth Health Surveys (in 1988, 1992, 1996, 1999) among pupils (12-18 years) showed that the increase in cannabis use since 1988 stabilised between 1996 and 1999 (De Zwart et al. 2000). According to the Health Behaviour in

School-aged Children study, this trend continued in 2001 (Ter Bogt et al. 2003). Use of other drugs showed a similar trend or slightly decreased (LTP of ecstasy and amphetamine)."

Source:

Trimbos Institute, "Report to the EMCDDA by the Reitox National Focal Point, The Netherlands Drug Situation 2003" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, Dec. 2003), p. 19.

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