

Amsterdam Summer 2009

The usefulness of this handbook depends on student input.
If you find erroneous information, please contact *overseas@indiana.edu*.



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THE NETHERLANDS

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PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The program is designed to expand the opportunities for learning and stimulate the intellectual creativity of IU students interested in criminal justice, law and society, and gender studies. Engagement with Dutch approaches to social problems will expose students to new ways of understanding the world and acting in it. This process will enrich the international, cross-cultural dimensions of these popular undergraduate fields of interdisciplinary study. Students returning to Bloomington will enliven classroom discussion, and their experiences may inspire them to pursue graduate study and/or employment or research opportunities overseas. The courses proposed are designed to widen the students' comparative knowledge base, develop scholarly understanding of law, policy and social problems in the context of globalization, and provide unique, inspiring, and safe conditions for students to find friends and colleagues from other countries while exploring everyday life in a cosmopolitan multicultural setting.

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a supplement to the *Getting Started* handbook. While it contains specific program information, *Getting Started* contains information relevant to all students on Indiana University Overseas Study programs. Both booklets should be used now as you prepare to leave and later while you are abroad. Since most student questions are addressed in these handbooks, please consult them before calling the Office of Overseas Study.

This handbook is also available on the web: www.indiana.edu/~overseas/programs/handbooks/amsterdam.pdf

The Program in Amsterdam

CALENDAR 2009

July 1.....	Depart for Europe
July 2	Arrive in Amsterdam by 11 a.m.
July 3	Orientation Program
July 6	First day of classes
July 17.....	Excursion to North Holland, Almere, Edam and Zuiderzee Museum in Enkhuizen
July 24	Excursion - destination to be determined
July 31.....	Concluding seminar and luncheon
August 1	Depart Amsterdam

ARRIVAL IN AMSTERDAM

When you arrive at Schiphol Airport on Thursday morning July 2, head directly for the International School for Humanities and Social Sciences (formerly ISHSS). Arrangements for group transport may be made if there are students arriving at the same time. Otherwise, follow these instructions:

Attention! Beware of pickpockets, especially during your train journey from Schiphol to Amsterdam Central Station. Trains, trams and stations locations where visitors are often targeted. Also take care of tram traffic and taxis when crossing the streets!

Schiphol Airport to Amsterdam Central Station (CS)

By train: The main hall of Schiphol Airport also functions as a shopping area and train station. Ask for a one-way ticket to Amsterdam Central Station at the ticket counter. The price for a ticket is about 3 Euro (€). You will need to change money to purchase a strip ticket for the tram or bus.

Trains run every 15 minutes (from 1 to 5:30 a.m. they run only twice an hour). Trains leave from the platforms located below the main hall. In about 15 to 20 minutes you will arrive at Central Station.

By taxi: You can get a taxi just outside the main hall of the airport. It should cost you about 50 Euro to get from the airport to the center of Amsterdam. **Do not accept a taxi offered to you inside the airport.** (These are often illegal taxis.) For taxi service, dial 020-677-7777.

On trams and buses: drivers and conductors sell 2- and 3-strip tickets and 24 hours tickets.

Pre-purchased strip tickets are significantly cheaper than buying your ticket on the tram or bus. An eight-strip ticket costs about the same as a 15-strip ticket purchased in advance at a GVB outlet, post office, Albert Heijn supermarket or tobacconist. That means almost twice as much travel for the same price.

<http://www.gvb.nl/english/travellers/tickets-and-fares/Pages/Ticketsandfares.aspx>

CS to the ISHSS and the apartments

On foot: The ISHSS is located close to CS, about a 10-minute walk. When you walk outside the station from the main exit, you need to turn left toward the buses. Follow the buses to the street that begins where the last bus cues. This is the Prins Hendrikkade. Walk in the direction of the Botel (left from the station) and continue until you see the beginning of the Ij Tunnel. The International School is located on the opposite side of the street, after a major traffic intersection. (See map on www.indiana.edu/~culturex/netherlands.html)

By bus: You can also take the bus to the ISHSS. Walk toward the bus stops located slightly to the left in front of the main exit. You can take bus #22, stop Kadijksplein (it is the second stop from CS). From the bus stop, walk back in the direction of CS. The ISHSS is on the same side of the street as the stop (about a three-minute walk from the bus stop).

When you arrive, you will be given a welcome pack with a “*strippenkaart*” (a paper strip that allows you to get on local buses and trolleys for a certain # of trips) and a program booklet. You have the rest of the day to settle in and recover from the flight. Use the time to get to know the neighborhood and meet your fellow students.

On Friday at 9:30 a.m., there will be an orientation session during which you will meet UvA staff and be greeted by officials of the International School for Humanities and Social Sciences. A walking

tour of the neighborhood, computer facilities, library, and other resources available for your use is scheduled for 3 p.m. At 5 p.m. a canal boat tour of Amsterdam is planned followed by a welcome dinner.

You then have the weekend free to explore the city.

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

The Netherlands is historically renowned for its pragmatic, flexible and open approach to social policy. It is an ideal site for studying the local and global dimensions of social justice issues. As the Dutch host the world's only International Criminal Court in the Hague and take part in the development of the new European Union legal system, their distinctive approach to social problems creates fascinating dilemmas. Moreover, the cosmopolitan city of Amsterdam is a major cultural center in Europe, boasting some 50 museums, over 70 theaters and concert halls. The University of Amsterdam, founded in the 17th century, is one of the most comprehensive universities in contemporary Europe today, with 22,000 students, over 60 degree programs, and strong faculty in the Humanities and the Social Sciences. In addition, the University teaches many courses in English, and indeed, most Dutch speak excellent English.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM



Students will take two 3-credit hour courses over the course of four weeks. Classes meet Monday through Thursday. The Conflict Resolution class will be from 9:30-11:30 a.m. (including a coffee break). Lunch is scheduled from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Social Policy in the Netherlands will be held from 1-3 p.m. (including a tea break). You will receive a syllabus for both courses. The courses will be taught principally by faculty from the University of Amsterdam and from other institutes. Professor Leon Pettway will teach two sessions per week in each course. The purpose of his sessions is: 1) to help the students establish links between U.S. and European scholarship and integrate their academic experiences at home and abroad, and 2) to teach the basic ethnographic skills of participant observation so that students can develop their own unique cross-cultural approaches to the Dutch experience. There are no Dutch students in either class. Course descriptions are as follows:

Conflict Resolution [IU equivalent: ANTH-A 496, CJUS-P 380,

GNDR-G 302, POLS-Y 353 (SH)] This course offers an introduction to social and political conflict and violent and non-violent forms of dealing with it. We will address political violence and non-violent action and study choices the state has for dealing with challenges to its authority, ranging from punishment and policing to war. We also will look at peaceful ways to deal with conflict, including prevention, mediation, and negotiation. Students will gain knowledge of theories and research results prevalent in the general area of conflict studies and criminal justice. Emphasis will be placed on the study of actual conflicts and current methods of intervention. Through this course, students will become better able to place current and future conflicts into theoretical contexts and to critically analyze and assess initiatives that are employed to resolve these conflicts. The continuing use of violence as a means of achieving goals, as a way of organizing society, and as a crucial part of the lives of so many people makes this area of academic study a highly relevant focus. The themes will be Conflict Analysis, Political (non-) Violence, The Criminal Justice System, and Conflict Resolution.

Social Policy in the Netherlands [IU equivalent: ANTH-A 496, CJUS-P 300, GNDR-G 399, POLS-Y 366 or SPEA-V 450] This course will introduce students to a selection of vanguard issues in Dutch social policy taught by Dutch scholars active in their fields. The aim will be to develop understanding of the principles and strategies for implementing policies that deal pragmatically and rationally with contemporary issues in urban environments. The focus will be on governmental and non-governmental regulation of behaviors which cross boundaries between the legal and illegal. As currently scheduled, the first week will be devoted to social and historical introduction to the Netherlands and urban development issues in Amsterdam.

Dutch Instructional Style

You will find a striking difference between instructional styles in the U.S. and those in the Netherlands. Adjusting to the new academic environment will be part of the challenge of the program. The European educational tradition gives the student greater responsibility and initiative in a much less structured environment. Professors often provide an extensive bibliography, but no specific reading assignments per lecture, no study questions, and few quizzes. As a result, American students in semester-long programs may be

lulled into feeling that the first part of a course is easy and the last part unbearably intense. You should keep up with the readings, setting a reasonable pace so you cover the recommended readings. In the case of the summer Amsterdam program, the professors will be giving you regular writing assignments or quizzes to help you set your pace.

LIBRARIES

The Central University Library (Universiteitsbibliotheek) is located in the city centre. It contains over four million books, 70,000 manuscripts, 500,000 letters, and 125,000 geographical maps.

In the General Library you will also find specialized collections in the Department of Rare and Precious Works, the Manuscript and Writing Museum, the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana with its collection of material relating to Jewish history and culture, and the Department of Documentation on Social Movements. The General Library also has three reading rooms, which provide students with a space where they can study quietly. In addition to the General Library, there are approximately 70 department libraries spread over the centre of Amsterdam.

Your passport and student ID card are required for registration at the General Library. To register for departmental libraries, a student ID card is usually sufficient.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (Universiteitsbibliotheek)

Singel 425

1012 WP Amsterdam

Telephone: 020-525 2324

Library of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences

Bushuis Bibliotheek

Kloveniersburgwal 48

1012 CX Amsterdam

Telephone: 020-525-2403

Fax: 020-525-2179

TEXTBOOKS

You will be given instructions regarding two course packets to purchase in the U.S. and bring with you to Amsterdam.

COMPUTERS AND EMAIL

ISHSS computer room is located on the entresol of the GSSS building at the Prins Hendrikkade 189-B. This facility has 38 computers available for exclusive use of the GSSS students. Their opening hours are Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-8p.m. and Friday, 9a.m.-5p.m. Here, students are able to have access to a computer center and email.

ISHSS students can also use most of the large computer centers of the UvA, listed below.

Locations	Opening Hours
Studiecentrum Binnengasthuis Turfdraagsterpad 9, ground floor	Mon-Thurs: 9a.m.-9:45p.m. Fri: 9a.m.-5:45p.m. Sat and Sun: 10a.m.-5:45p.m.
Studiecentrum P.C. Hoofthuis Spuistraat 134, ground floor	Mon and Thurs: 9a.m.-9:45p.m. Tues and Wed: 9a.m.-6:45p.m. Fri: 10a.m.-5:45p.m.
Studiecentrum Bushuis Kloveniersburgwal 48, ground floor/attic	Mon-Thurs: 9a.m.-9:45p.m. Fri: 9a.m.-5p.m.

A password to get access to your student internet account will be giving to you by Eva Visscher-Simon upon arrival.

Laptop Computer

The dorms are equipped with Internet, sometimes there is wireless service.

With your own laptop computer you can write papers at your convenience in your room and avoid possible crowds of students at the computing center. Note that the computer center has much shorter hours than we are accustomed to at IU.

Life in Amsterdam

HOUSING

Students will either be housed in various UvA facilities around center city or in a new facility where GSSS is located not far from the Central Station. The new facility includes rooms for students with cooking facilities, as well as classrooms, administrative offices, a library, a cafeteria, a computer center and conference halls. Students will use computer and email facilities and classrooms in the new building, whether housed there or not. Students can also use a sports complex, located outside center city.

TIME

The Netherlands is six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. When it is noon in New York, it is 6 p.m. in Amsterdam.

MONEY

Make sure that you have sufficient funds in your U.S. account so that you can withdraw money from an ATM in Amsterdam. This method provides the best currency exchange rates. The euro hit an all-time high this year for its exchange rate against the U.S. dollar. Be sure that you consider this as you are planning your budget.

FOOD AND GROCERY SHOPPING

Students will have the option to prepare their own meals or use the cafeteria. All shops, including grocery stores and markets, are closed on Sunday and many are closed on Monday mornings as well. In general, shops are open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the other days. In Dutch shops bargaining is not customary; the customer is expected to pay the price that is marked. Bring a shopping bag with you when you shop for groceries. Even in the supermarkets you must pack your own groceries.

The traditional Dutch diet consists primarily of bread and vegetables:

bread with cheese, thinly sliced cold meat, or jam for breakfast; much the same for lunch with the addition of tomato or fruit; and for the evening meal large quantities of potatoes and other vegetables together with fish or a small serving of meat. As you would expect, this diet is also the most economical in Holland. Vegetables especially are plentiful, of high quality, and inexpensive. Restaurants can be quite expensive.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

The Dutch seldom fail to keep an appointment and are usually punctual. Professors expect punctuality. If you are invited to a Dutch home, it is customary to bring a small gift, most often flowers. It's the thought that counts so don't go too far with an expensive gift. It will

Student Advice

“The Dutch are very open and speak their mind, so don't be offended or surprised. Social customs are not very different from home. Europeans are friendly once you talk to them first. Everyone is nice and willing to help. Europeans dress nicely as opposed to our college look, and they don't drink to get drunk.”

only embarrass you and make them feel obliged to do the same if they are invited to your home. When Dutch people are out in company, everyone expects and is expected to pay their share of the costs. Tipping is not as widespread as in the U.S., but if you are satisfied with service, give a 5-10% tip to waiters and taxi drivers.

Despite being basically reserved, the Dutch speak in a manner that may startle you with its directness. They may sound abrupt but they do not mean to be impolite. They are quite literal in their speech and like to come to the point quickly.

MEDICAL CARE

Students will have access to medical services at UvA as the same rate as Dutch students. A department of University Doctors exists specifically for students of the Universiteit van Amsterdam, located at Oude Turfmarkt 151.

The healthcare system and philosophy of care are very different, so do not expect the same treatment as at home.

From : http://www.nrc.nl/international/Features/article2161402.ece/The_Hague_wants_to_be_even_more_international

A survey recently commissioned by the foreign affairs ministry entitled “Be our guests” showed that foreigners see the high costs of living (especially housing) as one of the greatest disadvantages of the Netherlands. Another long standing point of criticism is the healthcare. Expats especially have problems with the “egalitarian system” and the role of the family doctor (‘huisarts’).

Healthcare plays a different role abroad than it does in the Netherlands. In the U. S. it is customary to get an extensive diagnosis even for relatively minor complaints.

For example, doctors in the Netherlands rarely prescribe antibiotics.

TELEPHONE

To make **local telephone calls** from public telephones, you need a KPN calling card (can be bought at post offices in Holland). Public telephones are slowly disappearing due to the use of mobile phones and can mainly be found at airports, train stations and touristic areas.

For international calls, especially transatlantic calls, you should get yourself an international calling card. They are available at telephone centers and some money exchange offices in Amsterdam. The costs for the cards may differ, so it is advisable to shop around a bit for the best rate for your country. With an international calling card, which can be used on any telephone, you can make a collect call or charge the call at the lowest available rates. In some phone booths, you can also make phone calls with a credit card.

If you want people to be able to reach you, you can get a pager or mobile phone. They are widely available throughout Amsterdam.

In case of emergencies **dial 112** and state whether you need the fire department, police, or ambulance. The operator will connect you at once. Don't panic, speak slowly and clearly and give your address and phone number (operators understand English).

Information about other telephone numbers in Holland can be obtained at 0900-8008; for information about telephone numbers abroad, call 0900-8418.

WEATHER

Summer weather in northern Europe is much like April weather in Indiana: unpredictable and variable. There will be occasional cold and drizzle as well as mild days with generous sunshine. Do not expect the heat and humidity of an Indiana summer.

PACKING

PACK AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE. Experienced travelers rely on coordinated mix-and-match outfits and don't worry if they are seen frequently in the same skirt or jacket. Dutch students dress conservatively and are not sloppy. They seldom wear white socks or sneakers.

- one (or two) dressy outfits or business suits
- raincoat with hood, umbrella
- windbreaker
- sweater
- good walking shoes
- warm bathrobe and slippers
- small knapsack for books
- larger knapsack (with zip-off bags) or weekend bag for travel
- digital camera
- MP3 or CD player and CDs
- travel alarm clock
- towels and washcloths
- deodorant
- laptop computer (optional)
- small English dictionary
- notebooks and classroom supplies
- a good European map
- *Let's Go: Europe*, *Lonely Planet*, *Michelin*, or other travel guides
- International Student ID card
- favorite recipes

- photos of family and friends
- pocket knife, small bottle opener, corkscrew for travel
- prescription medication
- typewritten copy of your prescription using generic, not brand name, terms; typewritten copy of your eye prescription
- first aid kit with medications for colds, headaches, upset stomach,

Note: U.S. electrical appliances work poorly in Europe, even with converters, and small items like hair dryers can be purchased inexpensively in the Netherlands.

GUIDE BOOKS

Prepare yourself for life in Europe by reading student-oriented guide books, such as Let's Go, Lonely Planet, On the

Loose or Culture Shock: The Netherlands. Traveling will be easier if you understand in advance how to read a train schedule, identify a second class train car, change money, locate a youth hostel, etc. Take the guide book with you, as it can be difficult to obtain general European travel information in English in the Netherlands. A small guide to Dutch phrases might also come in handy.

Student Advice

“Don't travel EVERY weekend—take time to meet other people.”

You can also read the Dutch news in English: <http://www.nrc.nl/international/>

Student Advice

“Pack light. Bring Nike hiking boots, raincoat, umbrella, Let's Go: Europe, good backpack for travel, lots of film, more than one pair of shorts, older clothes and one nice outfit. Get a cheap bike.”

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Trains

The public transportation is excellent in the Netherlands. The trains, especially in the western part of the country, run frequently and on time. The distances are short: Amsterdam The Hague, 45 minutes; The Hague Delft, 10 minutes; Delft Rotterdam, 15 minutes; Amsterdam Maastricht, 2 hours 30 minutes. Train carriages are first

or second class A first class ticket is about 50 percent more expensive than second class, and the difference in comfort is slight. Tickets must be purchased in the station or at the machines in front of the train stations. In the train station you can also inquire about the many special bargain rates offered by the Dutch Railways. (See *www.ns.nl* for more Railway information.)

Schedules are posted on every spoor, or track. Trains stick to their schedules and stop only briefly at each station. Inside the Netherlands take advantage of the inexpensive day passes. Three persons traveling together may purchase a cheaper group ticket good after 9 a.m. on weekdays and anytime on weekends.

When traveling by train overnight you may wish to reserve a bed (couchette) in a compartment that sleeps six passengers. These cost about \$15. Train seats may be reserved for a small fee, a good investment on crowded routes.

Traveling by train is the best way to see Europe. Students recommend purchasing a Eurail pass for extensive vacation travel. It gives you the freedom to roam about as you wish, without having to spend time in train stations trying to purchase tickets in a language you do not understand. Since you obtain the pass in the U.S., you won't need cash for rail fares in

Europe. There are many Eurail options, all of which must be purchased in the United States. Check with STA Travel or another travel agent about the best option for you. Read carefully the instruction booklet, maps, and schedules that accompany your rail pass.

Buses

Local bus transportation is frequent and inexpensive. Outlying villages are linked by bus. At the train station you can buy a *busboek*, which contains a complete schedule for all the rural buses.

Weekly or monthly passes are available. Strips for three or eight rides can be purchased for about 50 cents per ride. For city buses, purchase a *strippenkaart*, good for multiple rides, at the post office or train station. They are cheaper and more convenient than tickets purchased individually on the bus. You can also save money by purchasing a one month bus pass.

Travel Tip

You'll need to bring a passport photo to purchase a monthly pass. Bring one along with you or use inexpensive photo machines at the Central Station.

The central station in each city is its transportation hub; train, bus, taxi, and bicycle routes converge there, and you will find travel information, connections, and food. Near most central stations is the office of the VVV, which offers tourist information and assistance in booking rooms in pensiones or hotels (for a small charge). Do not confuse the central station with the centrum, which is the town center.

Bicycles

For short distances or for poking around the country roads, no form of transportation is better than the one used most by the Dutch themselves. In a country of 14 million people, there are about 10 million bicycles.

Buying a bicycle is not expensive, especially if you choose a simple model. Second-hand bicycles are readily available, and you can sell the bike before you head back to the U.S. Don't buy a flashy model. The general crime rate in the Netherlands is low, but for some reason bicycle theft is almost a sport. Invest in a stout bike lock.

YOUTH HOSTEL CARD

Youth hostels provide clean, inexpensive, albeit spartan accommodations throughout Western Europe. You must have a hostel card in order to spend the night. Cards cost \$28 for the year and are available from American Youth Hostels (www.hiayh.org). You can also purchase memberships at any youth hostel overseas, and sometimes they are less expensive there.

SAFETY IN AMSTERDAM

Advice from the U.S. Department of State

The U.S. Department of State reports that American visitors are generally safe in the Netherlands and are not singled out or targeted based on nationality, but rather for looking like a tourist. Americans tend not to experience crime in any large numbers and are safer from violent crime in the Netherlands than in most large American cities. This does not mean that people and visitors are immune from crime.

Most often travelers are targets of pickpockets and luggage thieves, which operate in groups. The theft of laptop computers at airports, trams, trains, and their stations in and around American, Rotterdam, and The Hague occur frequently.

Thieves, who often operate in pairs, particularly plague the train from Schiphol airport to Amsterdam Central Station, Leiden, and The Hague, and operate in the trams in the city centers. One thief distracts the victim, often by asking for directions or by pretending to drop something, while an accomplice moves in on the victim's momentarily unguarded handbag, backpack, or briefcase. Thieves typically time their theft to coincide with train and tram stops so they can quickly exit the scene. Within Amsterdam, thieves are very active in and around Central Station, wic/zuid train, tram stops near the Red Light District, in restaurants, hotels, and on public transportation routes, especially trains 1, 2, and 5 between Central Station and the Museum district.

The Netherlands tolerates the use, possession, and sale of some kinds of soft drugs, including cannabis, under determined circumstances. The policies toward hard drugs, such as ecstasy, cocaine and heroin are similar to those in the U.S. People violating Dutch laws may be expelled, arrested, and held for trial, and may face possible imprisonment upon conviction and sentencing. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the U.S. for similar offenses.

Recently the U.S. Department of State has reported a sharp increase in drug-spiking crimes. Motives include theft or robbery, kidnapping, extortion, sexual assaults, and even amusement. There are reportedly over 60 different drugs recognized as "spiking" agents. Many of them are cheap and readily available. These drugs, for the most part, are odorless, tasteless, and colorless, and most will leave the body before 72 hours of ingestion. Never accept a drink from a stranger. Never leave your drink unattended. If a drink looks or tastes different or has been moved or topped off, do not drink it.

General advice from the U.S. Department of State for safeguarding valuables is as follows:

- **While on Foot:** Be cognizant of your surroundings. Know where you need to go and walk with a purpose. Do not give the impression that you are off balance in your walking style or appear to be lost or wandering. There is evidence that criminals will observe these

vulnerabilities and target these types of individuals. Also, do not walk close to the street or too close to the buildings. Care should be given to walk, as much as possible, in the middle of the sidewalk. Whenever possible, walk against the traffic.

- **Public Transportation:** Be attentive to your surroundings and keep control of your personal items. While waiting in line, keep your luggage close to your person, or put the luggage straps through your arm or one of your legs to keep control of your personal belongings.

The Netherlands

LAND USE

The Netherlands is extremely flat. There are a few hills in the southeast corner of the country. There are no obstacles to the wind, which is an almost constant feature. Water criss-crosses the land with perfect geometric regularity; even the fields where Holland's five million cows graze are separated not by fences, but by water. Land is very precious in the Netherlands. Through enormous efforts over the centuries thousands of hectares have been reclaimed from the sea. Creating dikes along the coast and rivers with draining polders behind them has added a great deal of land. Forty percent of the country lies below sea level.

Hardly any patch of ground is wasted. Complexes of garden allotments, called people's gardens, occupy land that cannot otherwise be used. The allotments are rented very cheaply by city dwellers who leave their flats behind on weekends to tend their vegetables and flowers.

The high value placed on land can also be seen in the careful spatial planning. Urban areas are kept within strict bounds. Extreme care in land use permits the second most densely populated country in the world (after Bangladesh) to be an exporter of food. It is possibly this attitude toward the land that has caused the Dutch to place great value on cleanliness and orderliness.

POPULATION DIVERSITY

Over 14 million people live in an area that is less than 37,000 square kilometers, or about 1/3 the size of Indiana. The area defined by drawing a line connecting Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht has four million inhabitants. This area, known as the West Holland conurbation, or Randstad, has a high population density.

The Netherlands is inhabited by a largely homogeneous population, but there are small minorities of Indonesians and Surinamese, testimony to Holland's former colonial role. In the 1950s and 1960s when Dutch industry was growing fast and there was a shortage of

cheap unskilled labor, workers were brought in from Turkey, Italy, Spain, Morocco, Yugoslavia and Tunisia. Many of these gastarbeiders (guest workers) brought their families to Holland and settled permanently.

The employment situation has now been reversed because of automation, more working women, population growth and economic stagnation, and unemployment is a serious and persistent problem.

The Netherlands has a wealth of different religious and political persuasions. The largest religious group is Roman Catholic (40%), followed by the various groups of Protestants (35%). On the nation's two television channels and four radio stations, broadcasting time is divided among nine different organizations, each with its own political or religious bias. Each organization is allotted time according to the number of its supporting members.

POLITICS

The Netherlands is a monarchy, whose Queen, Beatrix of Oranje Nassau, has been on the throne since 1980. But the monarch has had very little real power since the present constitution was adopted in 1848. All men and women have had the right to vote in the Netherlands since 1922. In order to govern, the Cabinet needs a majority in the two chambers of parliament. The first chamber, or Senate, is elected by the members of the Provincial States, the elected officials who govern the provinces. The second chamber is the main arena of Dutch politics. Its 150 members are engaged full time, unlike the 75 members of the first chamber whose positions are part-time. The first chamber reviews all proposals that have been approved by the second chamber but hardly ever presents a divergent point of view.

General elections for the second chamber must be held at least every four years. The Netherlands has a multiple-party system (and more than 20 political parties), so it relies on coalitions for governing. Arriving at a workable combination to form a cabinet can take months. The major parties are: the Labor Party, or social democrats (PvdA), the Christian Democratic Alliance (DCA), the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, or liberals (VVD), the Democrats '66, a fast growing progressive liberal party founded in 1966 (D'66).

There is probably no other country with as many protest demonstrations as the Netherlands. The orderly, often silent, demonstration or vigil has become a fairly standard form of political expression in recent years. Many demonstrations focus on the courtyard of the parliament buildings in The Hague.

