



# Dutch Republic

Coordinates: 52°05′N 4°18′E

**This is an old revision of this page, as edited by Cnwilliams (talk | contribs) at 06:14, 20 May 2018 (*Disambiguated: confederacy* → *Confederation*). The present address (URL) is a permanent link to this revision, which may differ significantly from the current revision.**

The **Dutch Republic** was a republic that existed from the formal creation of a confederacy in 1581 by several Dutch provinces (which earlier seceded from the Spanish rule) until the Batavian Revolution in 1795. It was the predecessor state of the modern Netherlands and the first nation state of the Dutch people.

## Name

The republic was also known as the **Republic of the Seven United Netherlands** (Dutch: *Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden*), **Republic of the United Netherlands**, **Republic of the Seven United Provinces** (*Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Provinciën*), the **United Provinces** (*Verenigde Provinciën*), **Seven Provinces** (*Zeven Provinciën*), **Federated Dutch Provinces** (Latin: *Foederatae Belgii Provinciae*), or the **Dutch Federation** (*Belgica Foederata*).

Common names in Dutch for the Republic in official correspondence were:

- De Republiek ("the Republic")
- Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden ("Republic of the United Netherlands")
- Republiek der Verenigde Provinciën ("Republic of the United Provinces")
- Republiek der Zeven Provinciën ("Republic of the Seven Provinces")
- Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden ("Republic of the Seven United Netherlands")
- Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Provinciën ("Republic of the Seven United Provinces")
- Verenigde Provinciën ("United Provinces")

## Republic of the Seven United Netherlands

*Republiek der Zeven  
Verenigde Nederlanden*

1581–1795 part of Spanish Netherlands  
before 1648



*Statenvlag*



*Coat of arms*

**Motto:** *Concordia res parvae  
crescunt*<sup>[1]</sup>

"Unity makes strength"

**Anthem:** *Het Wilhelmus*

"The William"

0:49



- Verenigde Provinciën der Nederlanden ("United Provinces of the Netherlands")
- Verenigde Staten der Nederlanden ("The United States of the Netherlands")
- De Verenigde Gewesten ("The United Regions" or one translation would be "The United States")
- De Zeven Verenigde Gewesten ("The Seven United Regions" or one translation would be "The Seven United States")

And in Latin:

- Belgica Respublicae Foederatae<sup>[3]:58</sup><sup>[4]</sup>

## History

Until the 16th century, the Low Countries – corresponding roughly to the present-day Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg – consisted of a number of duchies, counties, and prince-bishoprics, almost all of which were under the supremacy of the Holy Roman Empire, with the exception of the county of Flanders, which was under the Kingdom of France.

Most of the Low Countries had come under the rule of the House of Burgundy and subsequently the House of Habsburg. In 1549 Holy Roman Emperor Charles V issued the Pragmatic Sanction, which further unified the Seventeen Provinces under his rule. Charles was succeeded by his son, King Philip II of Spain. In 1568 the Netherlands, led by William I of Orange, revolted against Philip II because of high taxes, persecution of Protestants by the government, and Philip's efforts to modernize and centralize the devolved-medieval government structures of the provinces.<sup>[5]</sup> This was the start of the Eighty Years' War.

In 1579 a number of the northern provinces of the Low Countries signed the Union of Utrecht, in which they promised to support each other in their defence against the Spanish army. This was followed in 1581 by the Act of Abjuration, the declaration of independence of the provinces from Philip II.

In 1582 the United Provinces invited Francis, Duke of Anjou to lead them; but after a failed attempt to take Antwerp in 1583, the duke left the Netherlands again. After the assassination of William of Orange (10 July 1584), both Henry III of France and Elizabeth I of England declined the offer of sovereignty. However, the latter agreed to turn the United Provinces into a protectorate of England (Treaty of

Location of the Dutch Republic in 1789



The seven provinces together with an eighth not represented in the federal government (Drenthe) and the Generality Lands (in blue)

<b>Capital</b>	None <u>The Hague</u> ( <i>de facto</i> )
<b>Common languages</b>	<u>Dutch</u> , <u>Zeelandic</u> , <u>West Flemish</u> , <u>Dutch Low Saxon</u> , <u>West Frisian</u>
<b>Religion</b>	<u>Dutch Reformed</u>
<b>Government</b>	<u>Confederative republic</u>
<b>Stadtholder</b> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1581–1584</li> <li>• 1751–1795</li> </ul> </div>	<div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>William I</u> (first)</li> <li><u>William V</u> (last)</li> </ul> </div>
<b>Grand Pensionary</b> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1581–1585</li> <li>• 1787–1795</li> </ul> </div>	<div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Paulus Buys</u> (first)</li> <li><u>Laurens van de Spiegel</u> (last)</li> </ul> </div>
<b>Legislature</b> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State council</li> </ul> </div>	<div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Council of State</u></li> </ul> </div>
<b>Historical era</b> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Union of Utrecht</u></li> <li>• <u>Act of Abjuration</u></li> </ul> </div>	<div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23 January 1579</li> <li>26 July 1581</li> </ul> </div>

Nonsuch, 1585), and sent the Earl of Leicester as governor-general. This was unsuccessful and in 1588 the provinces became a confederacy. The Union of Utrecht is regarded as the foundation of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces, which was not recognized by the Spanish Empire until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

During the Anglo-French war (1778), the internal territory was divided into two groups: the Patriots, who were pro-French and pro-American, and the Orangists, who were pro-British.<sup>[6]</sup> The Republic of the United Provinces faced a series of republican revolutions in 1783–1787. During this period, republican forces occupied several major Dutch cities. Initially on the defence, the Orangist forces received aid from Prussian troops and retook the Netherlands in 1787. The republican forces fled to France, but then successfully re-invaded alongside the army of the French Republic (1793–95), ousting stadtholder William V, abolishing the Dutch Republic, and replacing it with the Batavian Republic (1795–1806). After the French Republic became the French Empire under Napoleon, the Batavian Republic was replaced by the Napoleonic Kingdom of Holland (1806–1810).

• <u>Peace of Münster</u>	30 January 1648
• <u>Batavian Revolution</u>	19 January 1795
<b>Population</b>	
• 1795	1880500 <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Currency</b>	<u>Guilder</u>
<b>Preceded by</b>	<b>Succeeded by</b>
 <u>Spanish Netherlands</u>	<u>Batavian Republic</u> 
<b>Today part of</b>	 <u>Belgium</u>  <u>Netherlands</u>

The Netherlands regained independence from France in 1813. In the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814 the names "United Provinces of the Netherlands" and "United Netherlands" were used. In 1815 it was rejoined with the Austrian Netherlands and Liège (the "Southern provinces") to become the Kingdom of the Netherlands, informally known as the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, to create a strong buffer state north of France. On 16 March 1815, the son of stadtholder William V crowned himself King William I of the Netherlands. Between 1815 and 1890 the King of the Netherlands was also in a personal union the Grand Duke of the sovereign Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. After Belgium gained its independence in 1830, the state became unequivocally known as the "Kingdom of the Netherlands", as it remains today.

## Economy

During the Dutch Golden Age in the late 16th and 17th centuries, the Dutch Republic dominated world trade, conquering a vast colonial empire and operating the largest fleet of merchantmen of any nation. The County of Holland was the wealthiest and most urbanized region in the world.<sup>[7]</sup>

The free trade spirit of the time was augmented by the development of a modern, effective stock market in the Low Countries.<sup>[8]</sup> The Netherlands has the oldest stock exchange in the world, founded in 1602 by the Dutch East India Company, while Rotterdam has the oldest bourse in the Netherlands. The Dutch East-India Company exchange went public in six different cities. Later, a court ruled that the company had to reside legally in a single city, so Amsterdam is recognized as the oldest such institution based on modern trading principles. While the banking system evolved in the Low Countries, it was quickly incorporated by the well-connected English, stimulating English economic output.






















Between 1590 and 1712 the Dutch also possessed one of the strongest and fastest navies in the world, allowing for their varied conquests, including breaking the Portuguese sphere of influence on the Indian Ocean and in the Orient, as well as a lucrative slave trade from Africa and the Pacific.

## Politics

The republic was a confederation of seven provinces, which had their own governments and were very independent, and a number of so-called Generality Lands. The latter were governed directly by the States General (*Staten-Generaal* in Dutch), the federal government. The States General were seated in The Hague and consisted of representatives of each of the seven provinces. The provinces of the republic were, in official feudal order:

1. The Duchy of Guelders (*Gelderland* in Dutch)
2. The County of Holland
3. The County of Zeeland
4. The Lordship of Utrecht (formerly the Episcopal principality of Utrecht)
5. The Lordship of Overijssel
6. The Lordship of Frisia
7. The Lordship of Groningen and Ommelanden.

In fact, there was an eighth province, the County of Drenthe, but this area was so poor it was exempt from paying federal taxes and as a consequence was denied representation in the States General. Each province was governed by the Provincial States, the main executive official (though not the official head of state) was a

History of the Low Countries										[show]
Frisii				Belgae						
Cana- nefates		Chamavi, Tubantes		Gallia Belgica (55 BC–c. 5th AD) Germania Inferior (83–c. 5th)						
Salian Franks				Batavi						
unpopulated (4th–c. 5th)		Saxons		Salian Franks (4th–c. 5th)						
Frisian Kingdom (c. 6th–734)		Frankish Kingdom (481–843)—Carolingian Empire (800–843) Austrasia (511–687)								
Middle Francia (843–855)				West Francia (843–)						
Kingdom of Lotharingia (855– 959) Duchy of Lower Lorraine (959–)										
Frisia										
 Frisian Freedom (11–16th century)	 County of Holland (880–1432)	 Bishopric of Utrecht (695–1456)	 Duchy of Brabant (1183–1430)  Duchy of Guelders (1046–1543)	 County of Flanders (862–1384)	 County of Hainaut (1071–1432)  County of Namur (981–1421)	 P-Bish. of Liège (980–1794)	 Duchy of Luxem- bourg (1059–1443)			
Burgundian Netherlands (1384–1482)										
Habsburg Netherlands (1482–1795) (Seventeen Provinces after 1543)										
 Dutch Republic (1581–1795)				 Spanish Netherlands (1556–1714)  Austrian Netherlands (1714–1795)						
				 United States of Belgium (1790)		 R. Liège (1789–'91)				
 Batavian Republic (1795–1806) Kingdom of Holland (1806–1810)				associated with French First Republic (1795–1804) part of First French Empire (1804–1815)						
 Princip. of the Netherlands (1813–1815)										
Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815–1830)								 Gr D. L. (1815–)		
 Kingdom of the Netherlands (1839–)				 Kingdom of Belgium (1830–)				 Gr D. of Luxem- bourg (1890–)		



Dutch East-India trading ship 1600



raadspensionaris. In times of war, the stadtholder, who commanded the army, would have more power than the raadspensionaris.

In theory, the stadtholders were freely appointed by and subordinate to the states of each province. However, in practice the princes of Orange of the House of Orange-Nassau, beginning with William the Silent, were always chosen as stadtholders of most of the provinces. Zeeland and usually Utrecht had the same stadtholder as Holland.

There was a constant power struggle between the Orangists, who supported the stadtholders and specifically the princes of Orange, and the Republicans, who supported the States General and hoped to replace the semi-hereditary nature of the stadtholdership with a true republican structure.

After the Peace of Westphalia, several border territories were assigned to the United Provinces. They were federally governed Generality Lands (*Generaliteitslanden*). They were Staats-Brabant (present North Brabant), Staats-Vlaanderen (present Zeelandic Flanders), Staats-Limburg (around Maastricht) and Staats-Oppergelre (around Venlo, after 1715).

The States General of the United Provinces were in control of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Dutch West India Company (WIC), but some shipping expeditions were initiated by some of the provinces, mostly Holland and Zeeland.

The framers of the US Constitution were influenced by the Constitution of the Republic of the United Provinces, as Federalist No. 20, by James Madison, shows.<sup>[9]</sup> Such influence appears, however, to have been of a negative nature, as Madison describes the Dutch confederacy as exhibiting "Imbecility in the government; discord among the provinces; foreign influence and indignities; a precarious existence in peace, and peculiar calamities from war." Apart from this, the American Declaration of Independence is similar to the Act of Abjuration, essentially the declaration of independence of the United Provinces,<sup>[10]</sup> but concrete evidence that the former directly influenced the latter is absent.

## Religion

---

In the Union of Utrecht of 20 January 1579, Holland and Zeeland were granted the right to accept only one religion (in practice, Calvinism). Every other province had the freedom to regulate the religious question as it wished, although the Union stated every person should be free in the choice of personal religion and that no person should be prosecuted based on religious choice.<sup>[11]</sup> William of Orange had been a strong supporter of public and personal freedom of religion and hoped to unite Protestants and Catholics in the new union, and, for him, the Union was a defeat. In practice, Catholic services in all provinces were quickly forbidden, and the Dutch Reformed Church became the "public" or "privileged" church in the Republic.<sup>[12]</sup>

During the Republic, any person who wished to hold public office had to conform to the Reformed Church and take an oath to this effect. The extent to which different religions or denominations were persecuted depended much on the time period and regional or city leaders. In the beginning, this was



Onrust Island near Batavia, 1699



Courtyard of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, 1653

especially focused on Roman Catholics, being the religion of the enemy. In 17th-century Leiden, for instance, people opening their homes to services could be fined 200 guilders (a year's wage for a skilled tradesman) and banned from the city.<sup>[13]</sup> Throughout this, however, personal freedom of religion existed and was one factor – along with economic reasons – in causing large immigration of religious refugees from other parts of Europe.<sup>[12]</sup>

In the first years of the Republic, controversy arose within the Reformed Church, mainly around the subject of predestination. This has become known as the struggle between Arminianism and Gomarism, or between Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants. In 1618 the Synod of Dort tackled this issue, which led to the banning of the Remonstrant faith.

Beginning in the 18th century, the situation changed from more or less active persecution of religious services to a state of restricted toleration of other religions, as long as their services took place secretly in private churches.



Interior of the Oude Kerk at Delft during a Sermon, 1651

## Decline

---

- Long-term rivalry between the two main factions in Dutch society, the *Staatsgezinden* (Republicans) and the *Prinsgezinden* (Royalists or Orangists), sapped the strength and unity of the country. Johan de Witt and the Republicans did reign supreme for a time at the middle of the 17th century (the First Stadtholderless Period) until his overthrow and murder in 1672. Subsequently, William III of Orange became stadtholder. After a stadtholderless era of 22 years, the Orangists regained power, and his first problem was to survive the Franco-Dutch War (with the derivative Third Anglo-Dutch war), when France, England, Münster and Cologne united against this country.
- Wars to contain the expansionist policies of France in various coalitions after the Glorious Revolution, mostly including England, burdened the republic with huge debts, although little of the fighting after 1673 took place on its own territory. The necessity to maintain a vast army against France meant that less money could be spent on the navy, weakening the Republic's economy. After William III's death in 1702 the Second Stadtholderless Period was inaugurated. Despite having contributed much in the War of Spanish Succession, the Dutch Republic gained little from the peace talks in Utrecht (1713). The end of the War of Austrian Succession in 1748, and Austria becoming allies with France against Prussia, marked the end of the republic as a major military power.<sup>[14]</sup>
- Fierce competition for trade and colonies, especially from France and England, furthered the economic downturn of the country. The three Anglo-Dutch Wars and the rise of mercantilism had a negative effect on Dutch shipping and commerce.

## See also

---

- History of the Netherlands
- List of Grand Pensionaries

- Financial history of the Dutch Republic

## References

---

1. In full *concordia res parvae crescunt, discordia maximae dilabuntur*. Hubert de Vries, *Wapens van de Nederlanden. De historische ontwikkeling van de heraldische symbolen van Nederland, België, hun provincies en Luxemburg*. Uitgeverij Jan Mets, Amsterdam, 1995, pp. 31–32.
2. Demographics of the Netherlands (<http://www.populstat.info/Europe/netherlc.htm>), Jan Lahmeyer. Retrieved on 10 February 2014.
3. Rowen, Herbert H. (1978). *John de Witt, Grand Pensionary of Holland, 1625–1672*. Princeton University Press.
4. De Witt, Johan (10 May 1652). *Brieven van Johan de Witt*. Vol. I. pp. 61–62. "De Witt to Shaep(?), 'these United Provinces must not be given the name of respublica (in the singular) but rather respublicae foederatae or unitae (in the plural).'"
5. Pieter Geyl, *History of the Dutch-Speaking Peoples, 1555–1648*. Phoenix Press, 2001, p. 55.
6. Ertl 2008, p. 217.
7. In 1650 the urban population of the Dutch Republic as a percentage of total population was 31.7%, while that of the Spanish Netherlands was 20.8%, of Portugal 16.6%, and of Italy 14%. See "Population, Urbanisation and Health", in Chris Cook and Philip Broadhead, *The Routledge Companion to Early Modern Europe, 1453–1763* (Abingdon and New York, 2006), p. 186. In 1675 the urban population density of Holland alone was 61%, that of the rest of the Dutch Republic 27%. See Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, "Urbanization, Culture and the Dutch Origins of the European Enlightenment", *BMGN: Low Countries Historical Review*, 125/2-3 (2010), p. 143.
8. Arrighi, G., (2002), *The Long Twentieth Century*, (London, New York: Verso), p. 47
9. James Madison (11 December 1787). *Fœderalist No. 20* ([https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Federalist\\_Papers/No.\\_20](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Federalist_Papers/No._20)).
10. Barbara Wolff (29 June 1998). "Was Declaration of Independence inspired by Dutch?" (<http://www.news.wisc.edu/3049>). University of Wisconsin–Madison. Retrieved 14 December 2007.
11. "Unie van Utrecht - Wikisource" ([https://nl.wikisource.org/wiki/Unie\\_van\\_Utrecht](https://nl.wikisource.org/wiki/Unie_van_Utrecht)). *nl.wikisource.org*.
12. Israel, J.I. *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995
13. van Maanen, R.C.J., *Leiden: de geschiedenis van een Hollandse stad. II. 1574–1795*, Stichting Geschiedschrijving Leiden, 2003
14. O. van Nimwegen, *De Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden als grote mogendheid. Buitenlandse politiek en oorlogvoering in de eerste helft van de achttiende eeuw en in het bijzonder tijdens de Oostenrijkse Successieoorlog (1740–1748)*

## Further reading

---

- Adams, Julia. *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*. Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2005
- Boxer, C. R. *The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600–1800*. London: Penguin Books, 1990
- Ertl, Alan W. (2008). *Toward an Understanding of Europe: A Political Economic Précis of Continental Integration* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=X9PGRaZt-zcC>). Universal-Publishers. ISBN 978-1-59942-983-0. {{cite book}}: Invalid |ref=harv (help)
- Israel, J. I. *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995

- Kuznicki, Jason (2008). "Dutch Republic" (<https://books.google.com/books?id=yxNgXs3TkJYC>). In Hamowy, Ronald (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Libertarianism*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE; Cato Institute. pp. 130–31. doi:10.4135/9781412965811.n83 (<https://doi.org/10.4135%2F9781412965811.n83>). ISBN 978-1412965804. LCCN 2008009151 (<https://lccn.loc.gov/2008009151>). OCLC 750831024 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/750831024>).
- Reynolds, Clark G. *Navies in History*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1998
- Schama, Simon *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*. New York: Random House, 1988
- van der Burg, Martijn. "Transforming the Dutch Republic into the Kingdom of Holland: the Netherlands between Republicanism and Monarchy (1795–1815)," *European Review of History* (2010) 17#2, pp. 151–70 online (<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/viewarticle?data=dGJyMPPp44rp2%2fdV0%2bnjisfk5le42eqLtaashd%2ff7Ebj3u2L8ra2R7GlsEivqJ5Jr7CyTLiotTjOw6SM8Nfsi9%2fZ8oHt5Od8u6yxTrKptEyxrKSE3%2bTIVePkpHzgs%2baB35zyeeWzv2ak1%2bxVsq%2buULSm sE6k3O2K69fyVe7a5F7z4ups4%2b7y&hid=113>)

## External links

---

- [Dutch Golden Age 1588–1702 – Documentary](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNc0mDrA-zQ) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNc0mDrA-zQ>) on YouTube
  - [Template:En icon Template:La iconThe Dutch Republic, Enlarged and Edited: Produced with the Care and Work of](http://www.wdl.org/en/item/1115/) (<http://www.wdl.org/en/item/1115/>) [Matthaeus Seutter](#) from around 1730
- 

Retrieved from "[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dutch\\_Republic&oldid=842097476](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dutch_Republic&oldid=842097476)"

▪