

OECD Anti-Corruption and Integrity Outlook: Country Fact Sheet 2024

The Netherlands

Contextual factors

State structure	Executive power	Legislative system	Legal system
Unitary	Parliamentary	Bicameral	Civil law

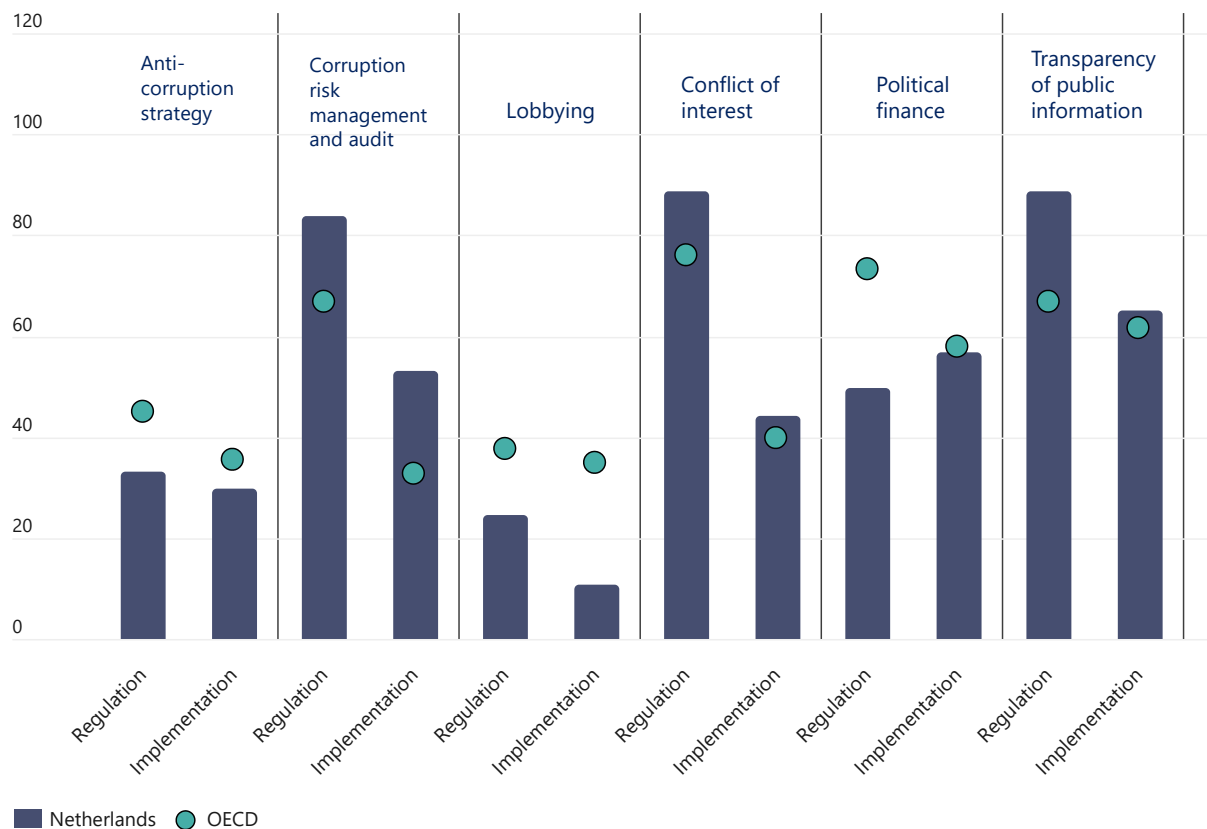
Strategy and institutions on anti-corruption and public integrity

In the Netherlands the [Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations](#) is responsible for promoting public integrity and the prevention side of corruption, while the [Ministry of Justice and Security](#) is responsible for combatting corruption. Current strategic objectives for public integrity are set by the [Parliamentary Letter of 25 April 2023](#).

The Netherlands has no single entity monitoring conflict-of-interest situations across the public sector, as this is the responsibility of each individual government employer (Civil Servants Act 2017). The [Compliance Officer of the Top Management Group](#) focuses only on senior civil servants. The Netherlands has no single entity supervising lobbying. The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations oversees the financing of political parties and has the mandate to impose fines for breaches of political finance regulations. Furthermore, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is advised by the [Commission for supervision of finances of political parties](#). The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is the government institution responsible for open data and freedom of information policies. The [Advisory Board on Openness and Information Management](#) monitors the implementation of public information disclosure. Finally, the [Ministry of Finance](#) oversees internal control and internal audit across the public sector.

Overview

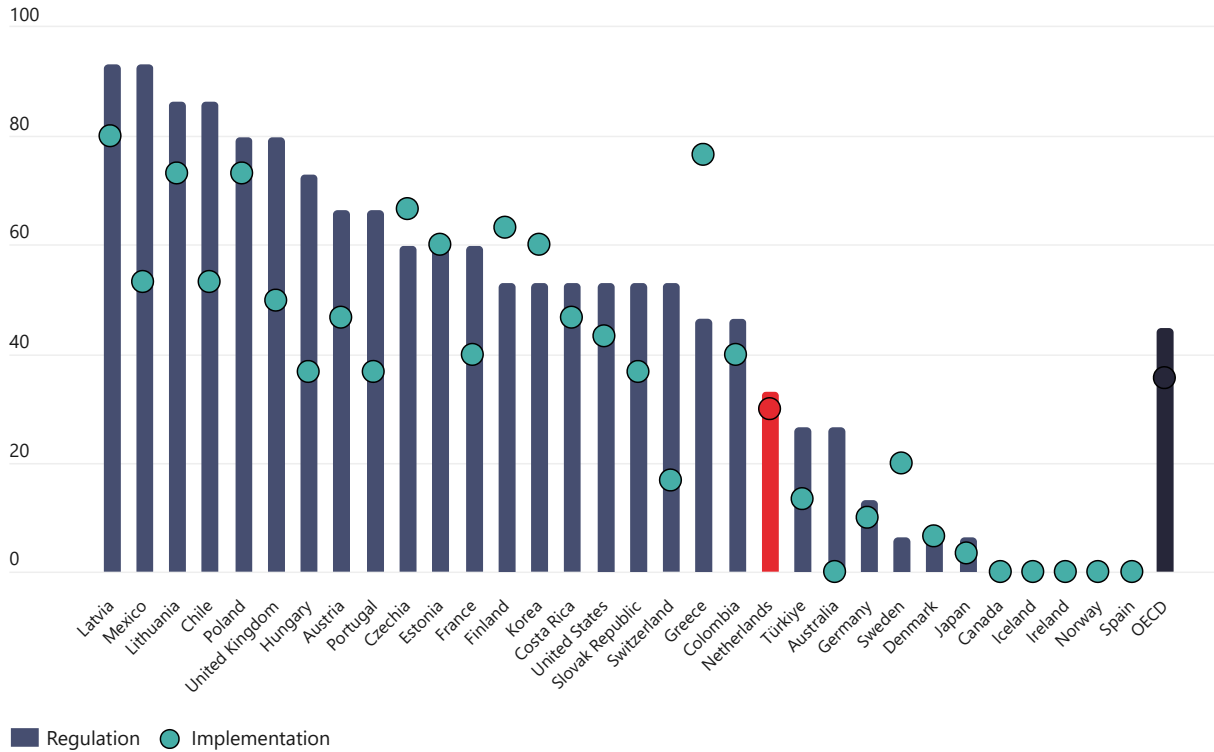
Figure 1. Overview



Greatest strengths	Areas to improve
Conflict of interest	Lobbying
Transparency of public information	Political finance
Corruption risk management and audit	Anti-corruption strategy

Anti-corruption strategy

Figure 2. Anti-corruption strategy

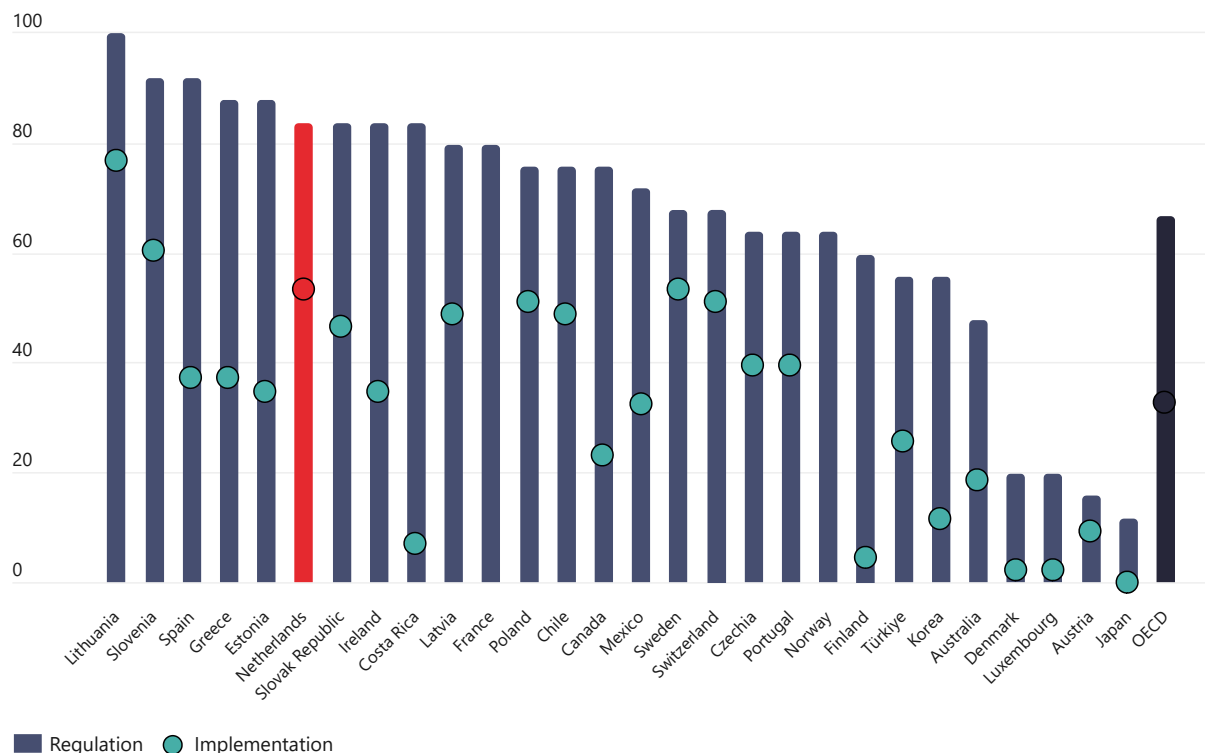


The Netherlands fulfils 33% of OECD criteria on the quality of its strategic framework and 30% for implementation in practice, compared to the OECD average of 45% and 36% respectively.

On 25 April 2023, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations informed the House of Representatives about the policy on integrity of political office holders at the decentralised and national levels. With this policy document, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations announced his intention to make the integrity policy for officials and administrators more effective and coherent. The document starts by presenting figures on integrity of the public administration, explains how the policy has evolved and describes its purpose and direction, as well as the responsibilities for its development. At the end, the Minister proposes several measures, such as clearer standards and frameworks, the standardisation of rules where necessary and better support for political office holders. However, the strategy is not based on a formal risk assessment, does not contain outcome level indicators for strategic objectives, and did not undergo public consultation.

Corruption risk management and audit

Figure 3. Corruption risk management and audit

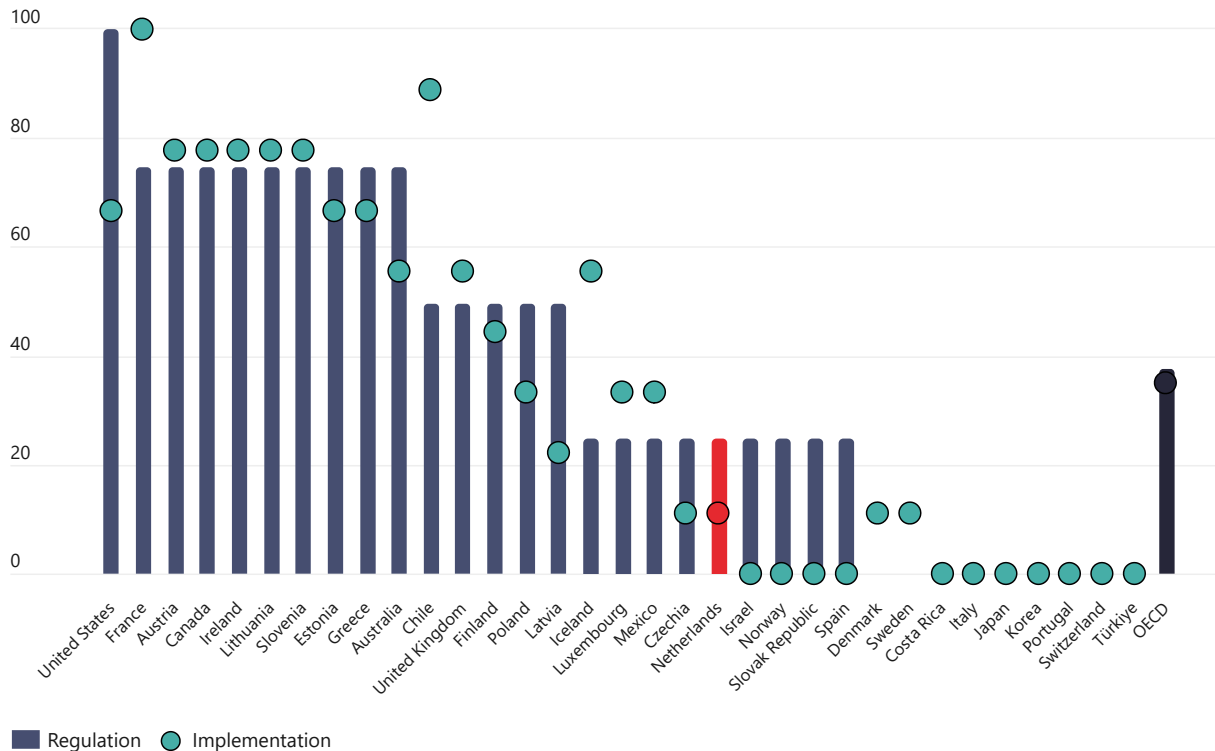


As measured against OECD standards on risk management, which include internal control and internal audit, the Netherlands fulfils 84% of criteria for regulations and 53% of criteria for practice, compared to the OECD average of 67% and 33% respectively.

Regulations are based on the Accounts Act and the Government Audit Service Decree, which establish objectives, responsibilities and reporting arrangements for internal control and internal audit. The Ministry of Finance develops this regulation and monitors the implementation at the national government level. The Netherlands also has a central harmonisation unit within the Ministry of Finance, which promotes standards for internal control and internal audit based on international standards. The budget for the whole public sector of the Netherlands is covered by internal audit, and all public organisations at the national level were audited in the past five years (all ministries are audited annually). However, the implementation rate for audit recommendations is not tracked centrally.

Lobbying

Figure 4. Lobbying

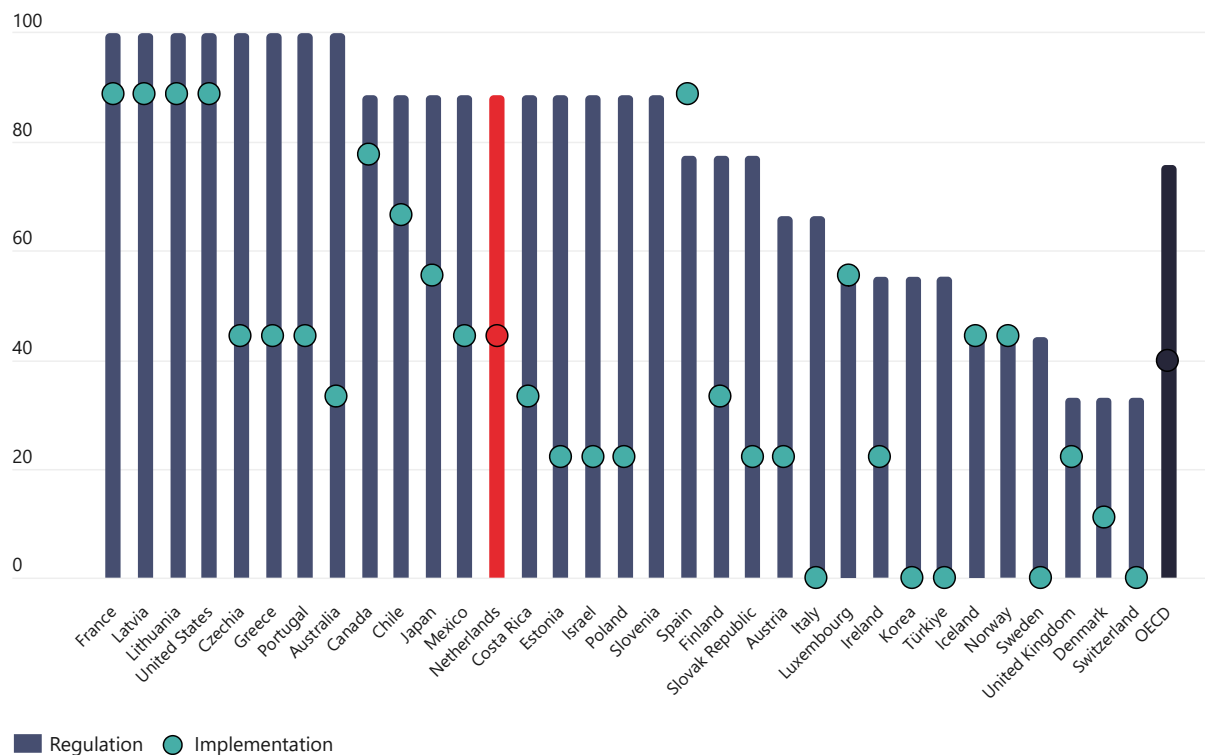


As measured against OECD standards on lobbying, the Netherlands fulfils 25% of criteria on regulations and 11% of criteria regarding practice, compared to the OECD average of 38% and 35%, respectively.

In the Netherlands there is no entity supervising lobbying activities. Safeguards against high-risk situations rely on codes of conduct applicable to ministers, members of Parliament, central government civil servants and lobbyists. However, there is not yet a mandatory cooling-off period applicable to former public officials becoming lobbyists. Moreover, registration tools for lobbyists are not publicly available, and the lobbying register is published only for the lower chamber of Parliament, the Tweede Kamer. The available register also does not include information on lobbyists' area of intervention, the piece of legislation targeted, or lobbyists' budget/expenses for lobbying.

Conflict of interest

Figure 5. Conflict of interest

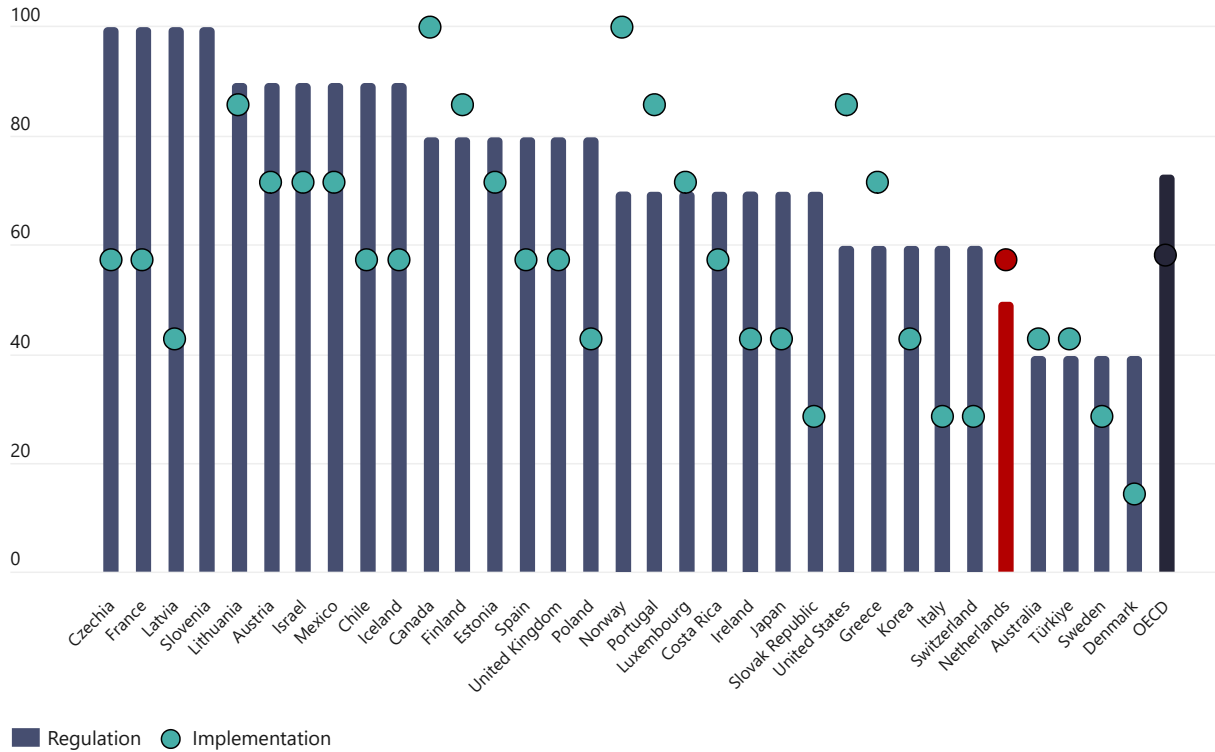


As measured against OECD standards on conflict of interest, the Netherlands fulfils 89% of criteria on regulations, compared to the OECD average of 76%. At the same time, the country fulfils 44% of criteria on practice, while the OECD average is 40%.

In the Netherlands, members of the Government, members of Parliament, judges, and central government civil servants must submit interest declarations. While procedures for the submission and verification of interest declarations for different categories of officials are established in various regulations, there is no centralised requirement for a risk-based approach in verifying the content of these declarations. While submission rates were 100% for members of the Government and Parliament over the past six years and were above 90% for both judges and high-level civil servants over the past four years, there is no data available on the rate of verification of declarations, recommendations for resolution issued, or sanctions applied.

Political finance

Figure 6. Political finance

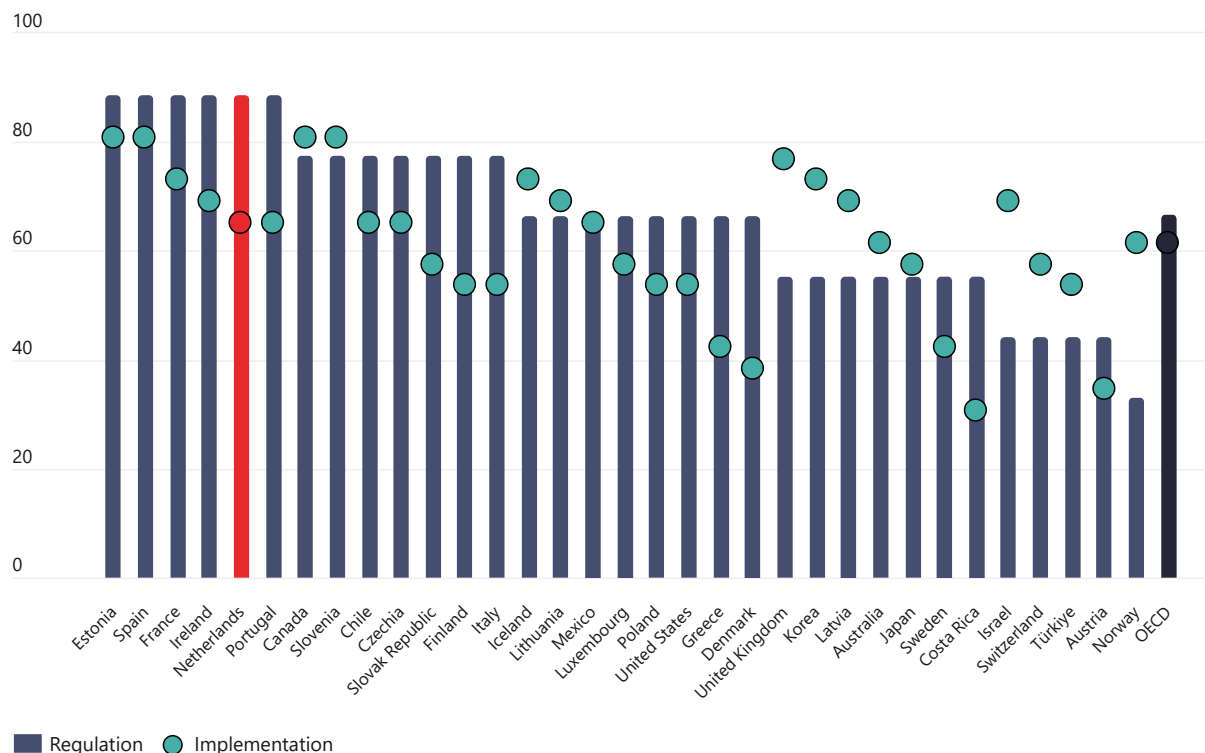


As measured against OECD standards on political finance, the Netherlands fulfils 50% of criteria for regulations, and 57% of criteria for practice, compared to the OECD average of 73% and 58%, respectively.

In the Netherlands there is no ban on contributions from state owned enterprises and no ceiling for campaign expenses. Moreover, the entity overseeing political finance, the Commission for supervision of finance of political parties, is an advisory body employing no certified auditors and does not sanction non-compliance. The body is also dependent on the Ministry of the Interior for budgetary and recruitment decisions. Nevertheless, the financial reports of all political parties represented in parliament are available online and were submitted by statutory deadlines. Legislative changes in 2023 introduced a ban on contributions from foreign states and enterprises and a maximum threshold on for personal contributions to election campaigns of €100 000, and further planned changes aim to strengthen independent oversight of political finance.

Transparency of public information

Figure 7. Transparency of public information



As measured against OECD standards on public information, which include access to information and open data, the Netherlands fulfils 89% of criteria for regulations and 65% of criteria for practice, compared to the OECD average of 67% and 62%, respectively.

The Netherlands has a strong access to information law—the Open Government Act—which establishes a right to access information in all forms available and that information must be provided completely free of charge. The Netherlands is one of the top performers among OECD countries in terms of the availability of key integrity-related datasets. Consolidated versions of primary laws, government sessions and agendas, the national budget, comments provided during public consultations, and conflict of interest declarations of elected officials, judges and top civil servants are all publicly available. Moreover, the Advisory Board on Openness and Information Management, monitors the implementation of public information disclosure, although it cannot issue sanctions for non-compliance.