



# You share everything with everyone: does that include your financial affairs?

European survey into financial behaviour among consumers.

Featuring results from the Netherlands.



# Contents

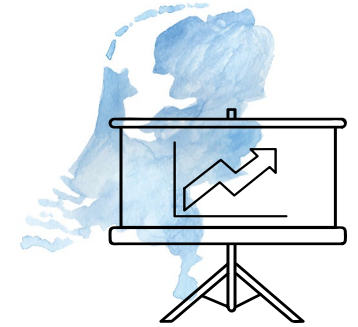
Introduction .....	3
--------------------	---

## Themes:

① Are you aware of your financial situation? .....	4
② Do your finances cause you to feel stressed? .....	6
③ Is there a difference in the financial behaviour of men and women? .....	8
④ Does money make you happy? .....	9
⑤ How do you think your financial position compares with that of others? .....	11
⑥ Do you discuss your finances with others? .....	12
⑦ For whom do you feel financially responsible? .....	13
⑧ Are you financially prepared for the future? .....	14

Conclusion .....	15
------------------	----

# European survey into financial behaviour among consumers



In collaboration with the University of Tilburg, NN Group conducted an international survey into consumers' financial behaviour. The survey was conducted in 2015. Around 9,300 people in 14 European countries took part. The objective was to obtain an analysis based on different segments (gender, age, income, etc.). The results will allow NN Group in the Netherlands to shape its policies to better meet the wishes of its customers and help them achieve their financial objectives in a more targeted manner.

The impetus behind the survey was the question of people's financial behaviour and their level of awareness around it. In practice, the degree to which people **feel** in control of their financial future does not correspond with the degree to which people **have** control of their financial future.



## Results

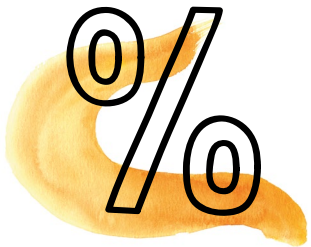
The results of the survey for the Netherlands are presented on the basis of eight major themes:

- 1 Are you aware of your financial situation?
- 2 Do your finances cause you to feel stressed?
- 3 Is there a difference in the financial behaviour of men and women?
- 4 Does money make you happy?
- 5 How do you think your financial position compares with that of others?
- 6 Do you discuss your finances with others?
- 7 For whom do you feel financially responsible?
- 8 Are you financially prepared for the future?

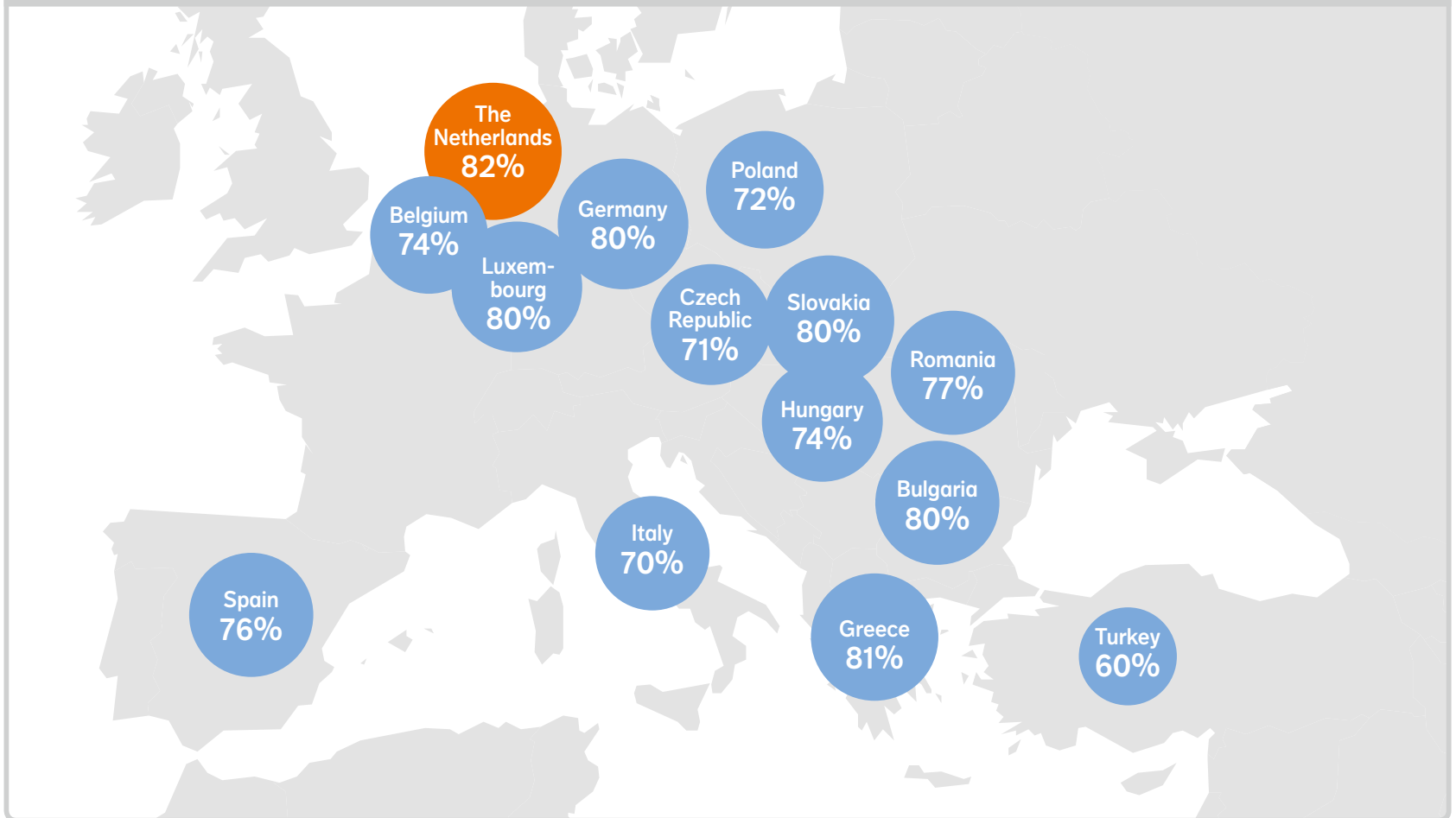
These themes reveal interesting findings on financial behaviour in the different segments. A brief explanation of these is provided on the following pages.

# Are you aware of your financial situation?

In this theme we examine how aware people are of how they handle their money. In other words, where is your income going? Are you aware of financial matters such as interest rates, investments and your pension? What do you pay for your home? And for your car? Do you know what your monthly fixed costs are?



## I am generally aware of my monthly fixed costs



## Results

The majority of Dutch people are well aware of their financial situation.

For instance, 86% know what their bank balance is. Two-thirds of Dutch people are cautious when it comes to spending money. Nearly 70% think that they handle their money in an organised, objective manner. A similar number say that they take well-considered decisions on financial matters.

The Dutch have always been known as thrifty people and this does indeed seem to be the case. We feel that we are responsible for our actions. Most Dutch people say that their own actions are important to their financial future. The Dutch are therefore proactive and 67% take measures in order to manage their money well. We are also well aware of our monthly fixed costs and expenditures; around 80% indicated that they were aware of these deductions. This makes the Dutch the European front-runners. Our score is a good 20% higher than Turkey, which has the lowest score in this area at just under 60%.

Older Dutch people (50-65) and pensioners (65+) score higher than the average; they are better aware of their finances. The scores of the self-employed are almost 15% below the average.

**The Dutch have always been known as thrifty people. We say that our own actions are important to our financial future.**



**86%**

of Dutch people know what their bank balance is.



**67%**

of Dutch people are cautious when it comes to spending money.



**82%**

of Dutch people are well aware of their monthly fixed costs and expenditures.

# Do your finances cause you to feel stressed?

This theme is about whether an individual's financial situation is grounds for stress and worry or is sound. What is important is what that individual earns and how this amount relates to their spending patterns.

## Results

The survey reveals that the majority of Dutch people are able to manage very well on their income. That is an exception when compared with the rest of Europe. In 12 of the 14 countries surveyed, more than a third of people say that they can't manage. Nevertheless, the figure in the Netherlands is still 28%. It is primarily people in the 18-24 and 34-49 age brackets who find it hard to manage on their income. People aged 25-34 and 50-65 feel somewhat more secure.

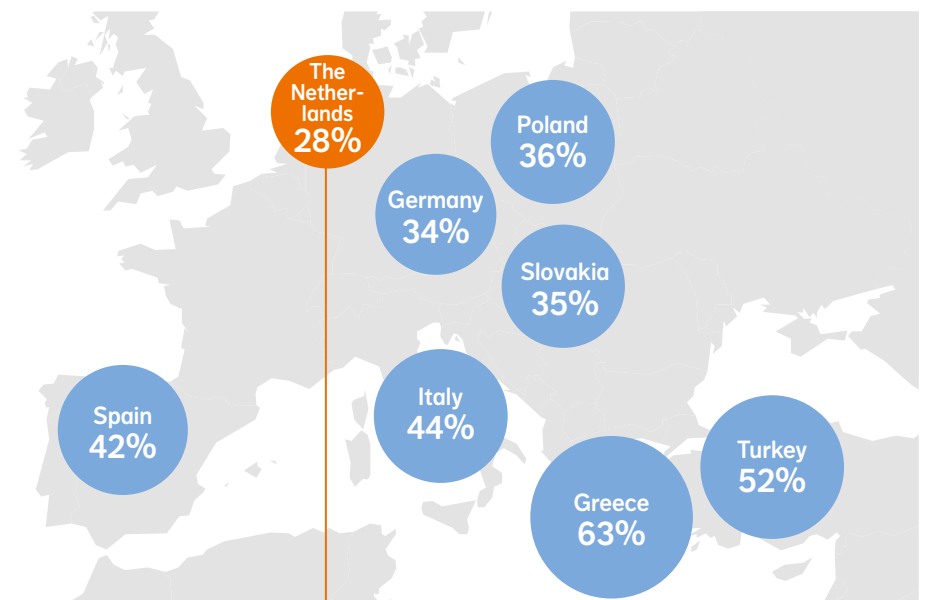
One striking outcome is that women seem to find it harder to manage than men. Dutch people who rent their homes also find it harder to manage than home owners.

Although the majority of Dutch people manage each month, financial issues remain a stress factor for more than half of the Dutch population. This is a particular problem for women, those on low incomes, those without partners and those aged around 35.



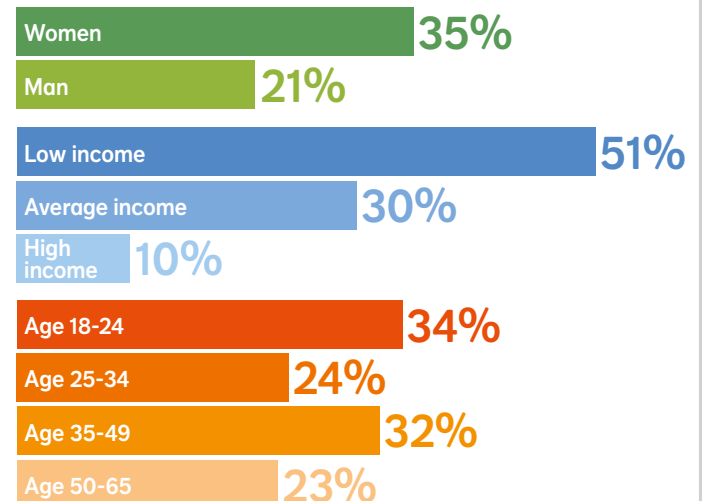
**Women find it harder to manage on their income than men.**

## I find it hard to manage on my income

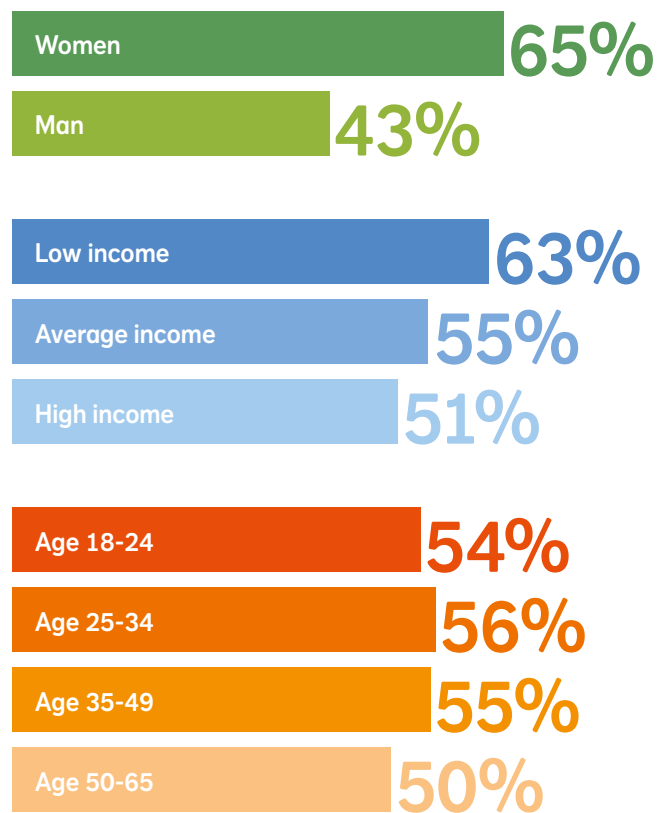


**28%**

of Dutch people cannot manage on their income



## Percentage of Dutch people who feel stressed due to financial issues



**54%**

of Dutch people  
feel stressed due to  
financial issues.

# Is there a difference in the financial behaviour of men and women?

The survey revealed that women feel stressed about their financial situation more often than men. But how do men and women handle money? What are the differences and similarities?

## Differences

It is interesting that men and women have a very different perspective regarding their financial future and financial issues. In general, women feel less in control of their financial future than men. While 58% of women say they feel in control of their financial future, no less than 87% of men feel in control. It is clear that financial issues cause women more stress than is the case with men.

In general, men feel more confident about their finances and their financial future than women. Women generally worry more about what is around the corner. Men live more in the present and are more inclined to spend money on a whim in order to have a good time now. Women are more likely to adopt a wait-and-see approach.

## Financial areas in which men manage better than women in the Netherlands



Living on their income.



Finding their way through the maze of financial products.



Determining their own financial future.



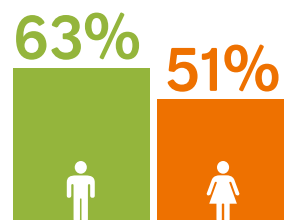
Evaluating complex products.



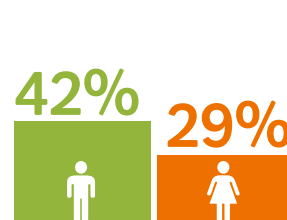
Knowing which financial products they need.

## The most significant differences between men and women in the Netherlands

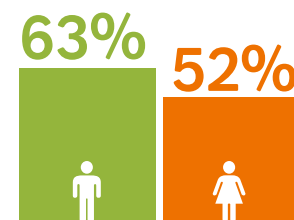
Women think they are less skilled when it comes to planning their financial future than men.



Women find it much harder to predict their financial future than men.



Women feel that their financial future is less under their control than men.



## Similarities

Despite their differences, men and women do not differ much when it comes to focussing on a better future. Some 42% of men and 43% of women say that they focus on this goal. Ultimately, both men and women have the same objectives.



# Does money make you happy?



If thinking about financial matters and our financial future causes most people such stress, we need to reflect on whether money makes us happy.

## Results

Does money make us happy? A difficult question, which is why it still remains unanswered after all this time. The value of money and how you handle it obviously plays a part. For instance, we can see that the Dutch prefer to save up before they buy something, but 3% would borrow money to buy it straight away. Something else that stands out is that 38% of Dutch people say they like spending money to enjoy themselves straight away.

It also seems that the Dutch are happy with what they have, although slightly over one in seven say their ambition is to achieve a more luxurious life. On the other hand, the Dutch would definitely not be prepared to take a step backwards if faced with the need to do so. Nearly three-quarters said they wanted to hold onto their present standard of living, no matter what.

This is by no means unique. Some countries, such as Turkey and Slovakia, score around 10% lower in this regard, while Luxembourgers are out in the lead with a score of almost 85%.



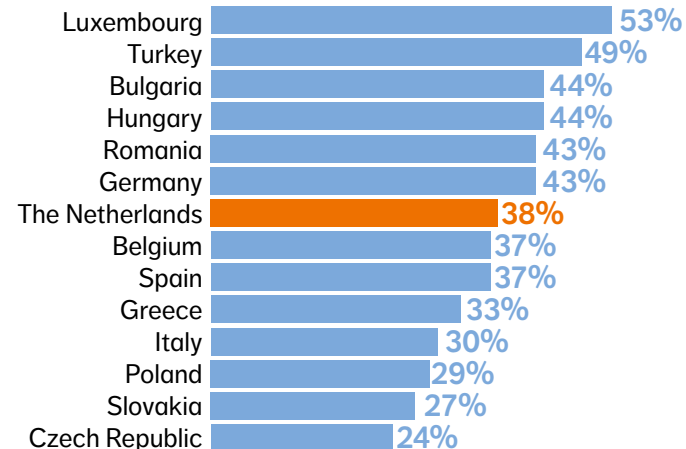
8%

of Dutch people  
are prepared to take  
a step backwards  
financially.

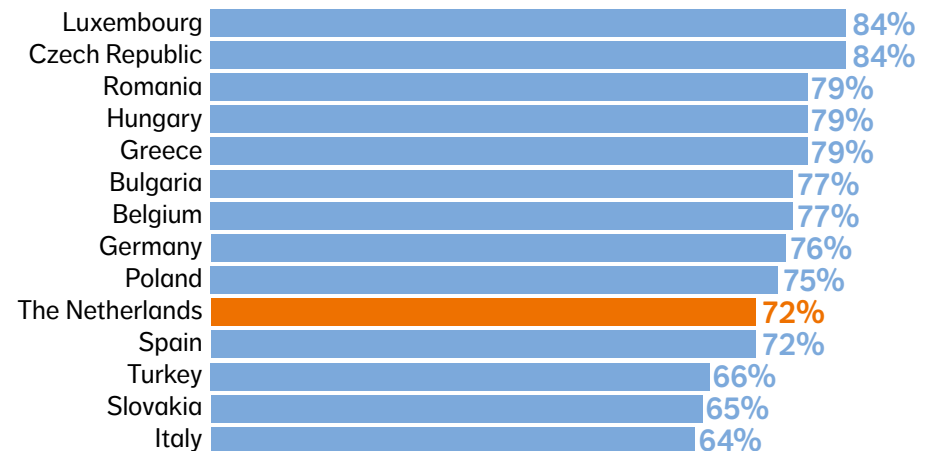
72%

of Dutch people  
want to maintain  
their current living  
standard.

## I spend money to enjoy myself now



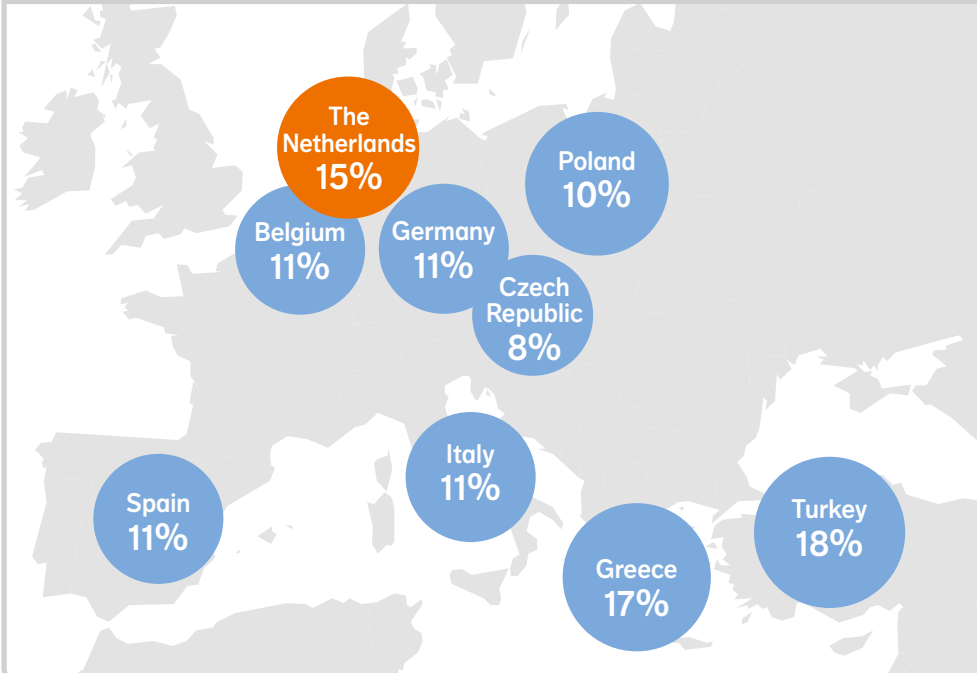
## I want to at least maintain my current living standard



### Abroad

Only 15% of Dutch people agreed that money was not very important. This puts us among the top scorers, with only Greece (17%) and Turkey (18%) scoring higher. The scores in the other countries were markedly lower, which shows that Europe attaches great importance to money.

#### Money isn't important to me



For the Dutch, money is not the most significant motivation in their lives, but it is important to them that they do not go backwards financially.



'As a student, it is important to me that my current standard of living remains at least the same in the future.'

# How do you think your financial position compares with that of others?

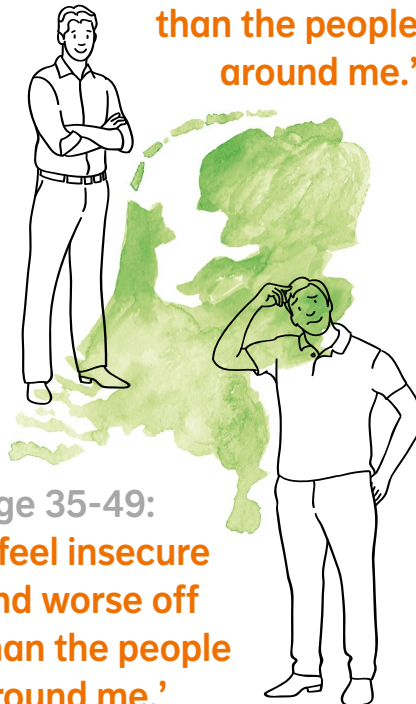


The Dutch therefore want to maintain their current standard of living. But who plays a role in making this decision? To what degree does our sense of financial well-being depend on those around us?

## Results

Around a third of Dutch people believe that those around them have less control over their finances than they themselves do. Those in the 18-24 age range in particular think they are financially better off than their friends. Students are especially prone to think this. A surprising outcome: you would think that Dutch people on lower incomes would be less secure about their finances, but that is not necessarily the case. Is it to do with income levels? Those in the 35-49 age range are the most insecure about their own incomes compared to those of their friends. In addition, men are more inclined than women to think that they are financially better off.

Age 18-24: 'I feel confident and financially better off than the people around me.'

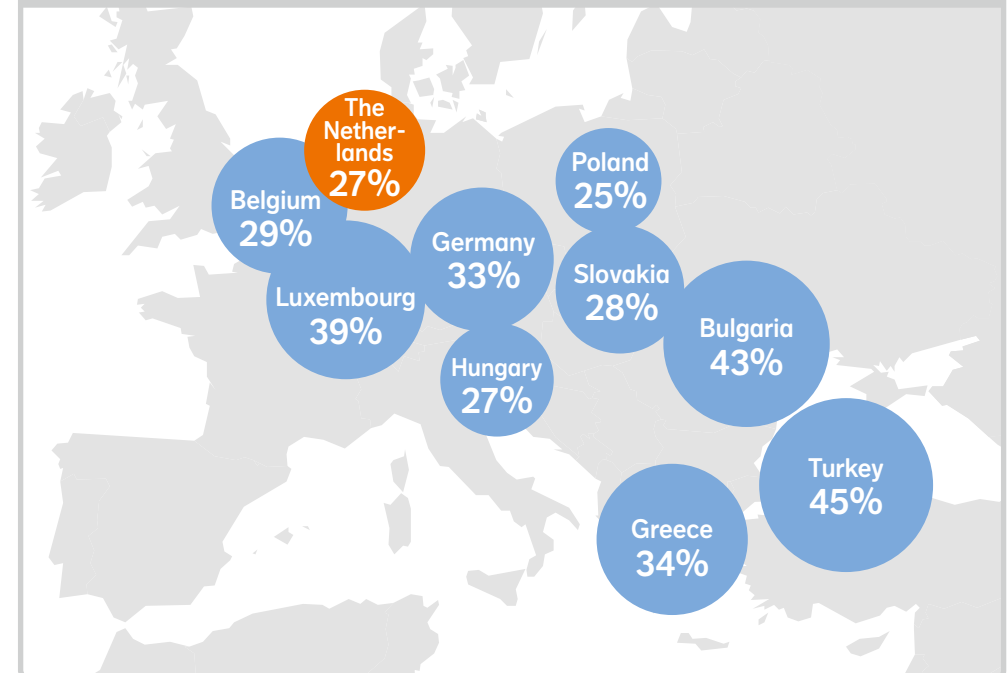


Age 35-49: 'I feel insecure and worse off than the people around me.'

## Abroad

Compared with the countries around us, we in the Netherlands are very modest. Most Europeans are somewhat more complacent when it comes to comparing their finances with the people around them.

### I am financially better off than my friends



# Do you discuss your finances with others?

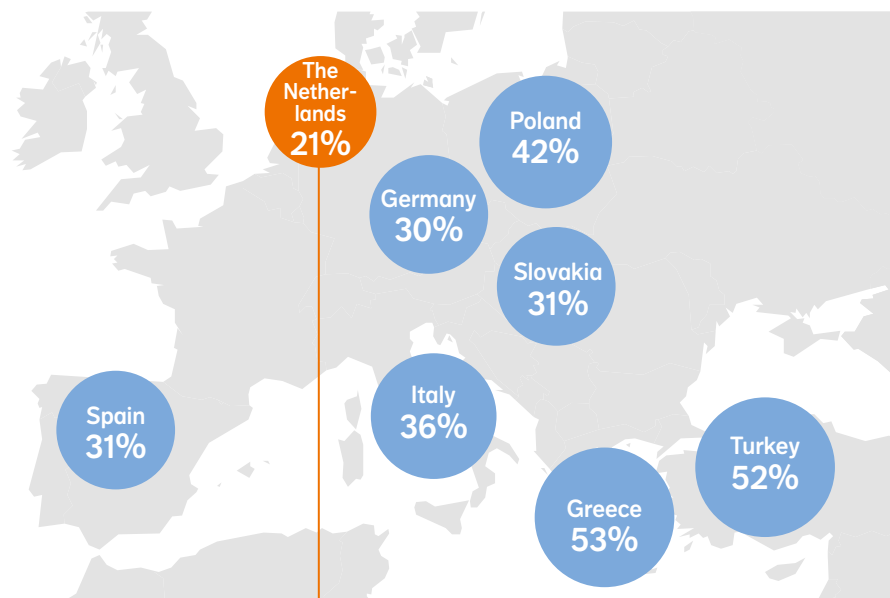


DIY is a relaxing hobby for many (and a necessity for some), but is doing it yourself a good way to handle your financial products and future?

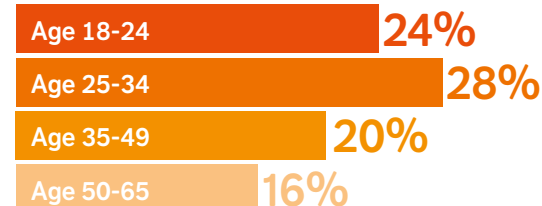
The average Dutch person seems to think so. Nearly 70% make their financial decisions themselves, regardless of what others think of this. Furthermore, only 15% say they feel that they are influenced by other people. The Dutch have the lowest score in Europe on this point and a wide margin can be seen in comparison with the frontrunner, Turkey, where more than half feel influenced.

Three-quarters of Dutch people also think it is a bad idea to embark on a large investment with friends. In general, the Dutch are very self-sufficient, but a fifth of them say they discuss their financial futures with others. This makes the Dutch the most 'private' people in Europe when it comes to their financial future; neighbouring Belgium is somewhat similar at 28%, in contrast to Greece, for instance, which is out in the lead, with 53% of Greeks saying that they discuss their financial future with others. The reason that the Dutch have such a low score may be the taboo attached to talking about money. Ultimately, the Dutch like to do everything for themselves, with around three-quarters saying that they organise their own financial future. Again, this reveals the financial taboo: the Dutch organise their own financial affairs, do not involve those around them in their decision-making and do not see the need to discuss these things with others.

## I regularly discuss my financial affairs with others



If we zoom in on the Netherlands, we see that age is the main differentiator when it comes to discussing money with others; in particular, when the younger generation is compared with the older.



The reason that the Dutch have such a low score may be the taboo attached to talking about money.

**75%**  
of Dutch people think it is a bad idea to embark on a large investment with friends.

**70%**  
of Dutch people make their financial decisions themselves.

# For whom do you feel financially responsible?

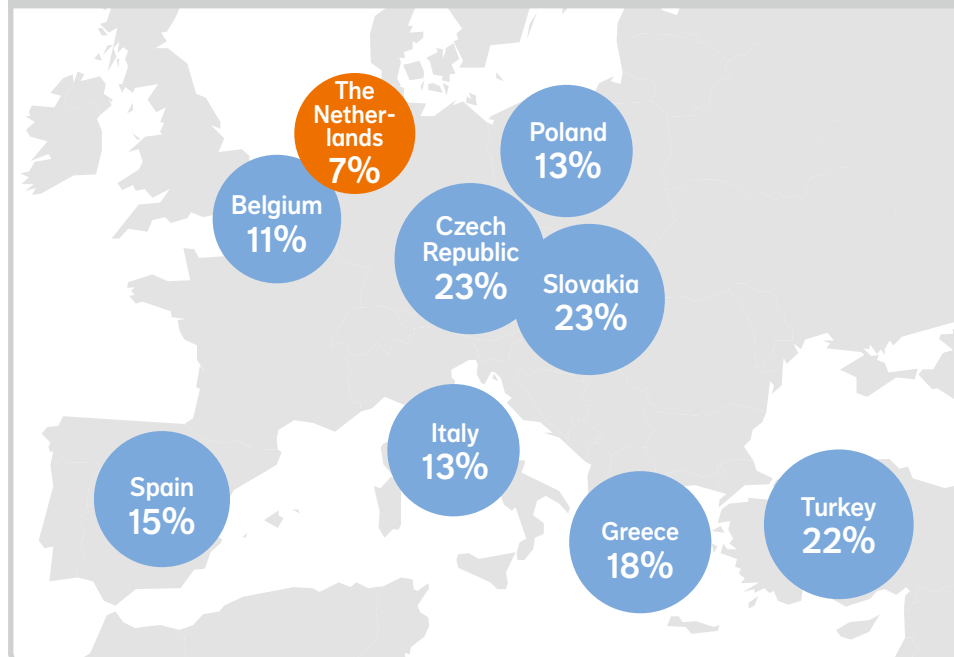
**Who is important to you? Who can you fall back on if you experience financial problems and who can count on you for support in difficult times?**

This varies significantly in the Netherlands. Half of Dutch people feel that parents are responsible for the financial future of their children. It is, however, interesting to note that this feeling of responsibility declines sharply when the children become adults.

By way of contrast, they do not think that children should be responsible for their parents, although 7% do consider children to have this responsibility. While 67% of women do not believe their children are financially responsible for their parents' financial future, only 60% of men share this opinion. It is also interesting that there is a consensus within European countries about the responsibilities parents have to their children. There is, however, no European consensus when it comes to children's responsibilities; children are considered to be more responsible for the financial futures of their parents in Turkey (22%), the Czech Republic (23%) and Slovakia (23%), which are considerably higher scores than that observed in the Netherlands.

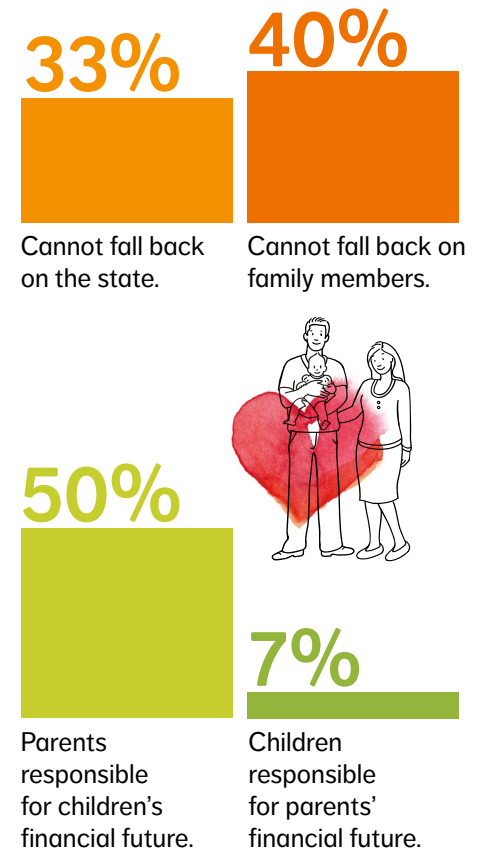


## Children should feel responsible for the financial futures of their parents



The Dutch do not really feel that they can fall back on family members: 40% share this viewpoint. They do feel supported by the government, although a third feel that they do not wish to fall back on the government for support.

## Who do you fall back on when things aren't going so well?



# Are you financially prepared for the future?

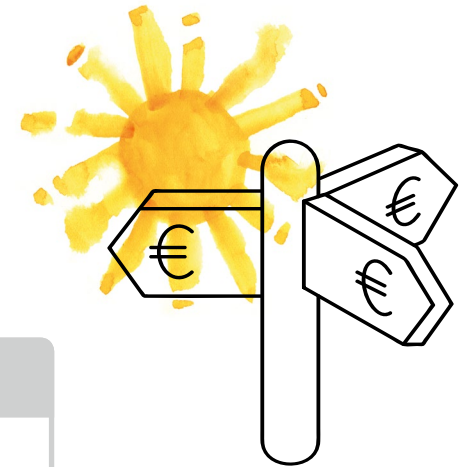
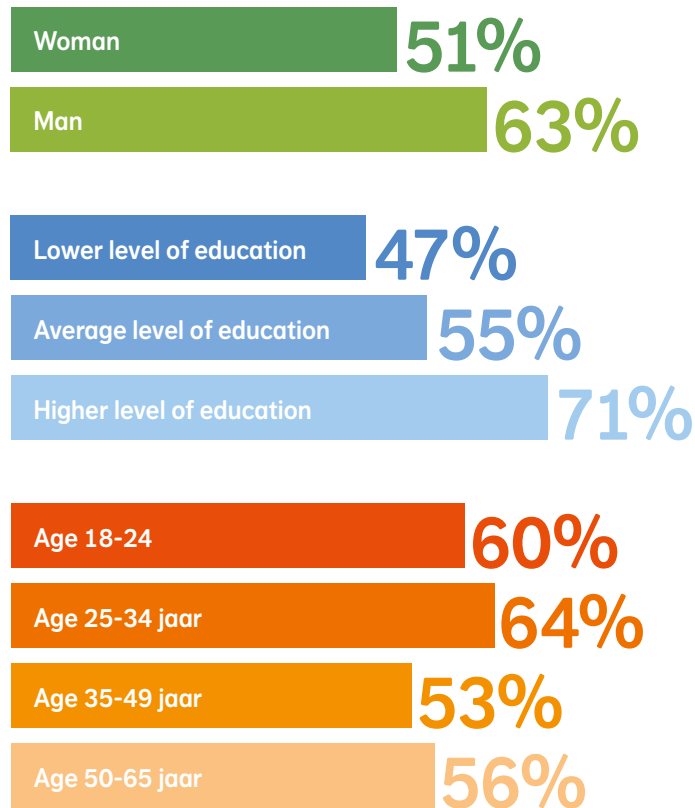
Taking everything into account, can we therefore conclude that the Dutch are well prepared in terms of their financial future? Do they have a realistic view, are they positive or negative, what are their plans for the future and do they regularly check whether their financial products still match their goals in life?

## Results

More than half the Dutch population believes their financial future is sound – they are reasonably positive about the future. In general, the Dutch also believe that their generation has a better financial future than the generation following them. The highly educated, young people and home buyers feel most secure about the future and adjust their goals accordingly.

Some 57% of Dutch people say that they have sufficient skills to plan their own financial future, but only two in five Dutch people check regularly to ensure that their financial products still meet their future objectives. One striking finding is that the Dutch do not have an adequate insight into their pensions. Only a third of Dutch people say that they have a clear picture of how much money they will need when they retire. The Dutch are therefore not lacking in self-confidence, but we still can't say that we are 100% prepared for the future.

### I feel secure about the future



The Dutch are therefore not lacking in self-confidence, but we still can't say that we are 100% prepared for the future.



40%

of Dutch people check regularly to ensure that their financial products still meet their future objectives.

# Conclusion



The survey has revealed the highly diverse behaviour that characterises the Netherlands with regards to financial matters. We have seen, for instance, that financial issues cause women more stress than men, that the younger generation finds it easier to talk about money than the older one and that in the Netherlands we have a reasonably good idea of our future objectives, but are not fully aware of our pension arrangements. We have compared the conclusions with the results obtained in the rest of Europe. In Slovakia, for instance, maintaining your current standard of living is much less important than in the Netherlands and Belgians find it considerably harder to manage each month than the Dutch.

Compared with most other countries in Europe, the Dutch are reasonably in control of their financial affairs. We are reasonably aware of our income and outgoings and take sufficient interest in financial matters. Not only do we feel in control, in general we actually are in control.

Nationale-Nederlanden helps people to safeguard their financial future. We achieve this by working with our independent advisers. Based on the themes that the survey has highlighted, we want to make people aware that everyone can play a significant role in this area themselves. We want to help people take matters into their own hands and challenge them to discuss financial matters more often with each other, so that they can make better financial choices. In other words, Nationale-Nederlanden offers help and inspiration, for your present and your future.

**We want to help people take matters into their own hands and discuss financial matters more often with each other.**



Copyright © 2016 NN Group N.V.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a database and/or published in any form or by any means, without specifying NN Group as the source. This publication is made available for information purposes only and does not constitute advice, a recommendation or a solicitation or offer to buy or sell financial instruments. While due care has been taken in order to ensure that this publication is an accurate representation of the state of affairs at the time of publication, NN Group cannot guarantee that this information is and/or will remain accurate and complete. No rights may be derived from this publication.

The information contained in this publication may be changed by NN Group without notice.

