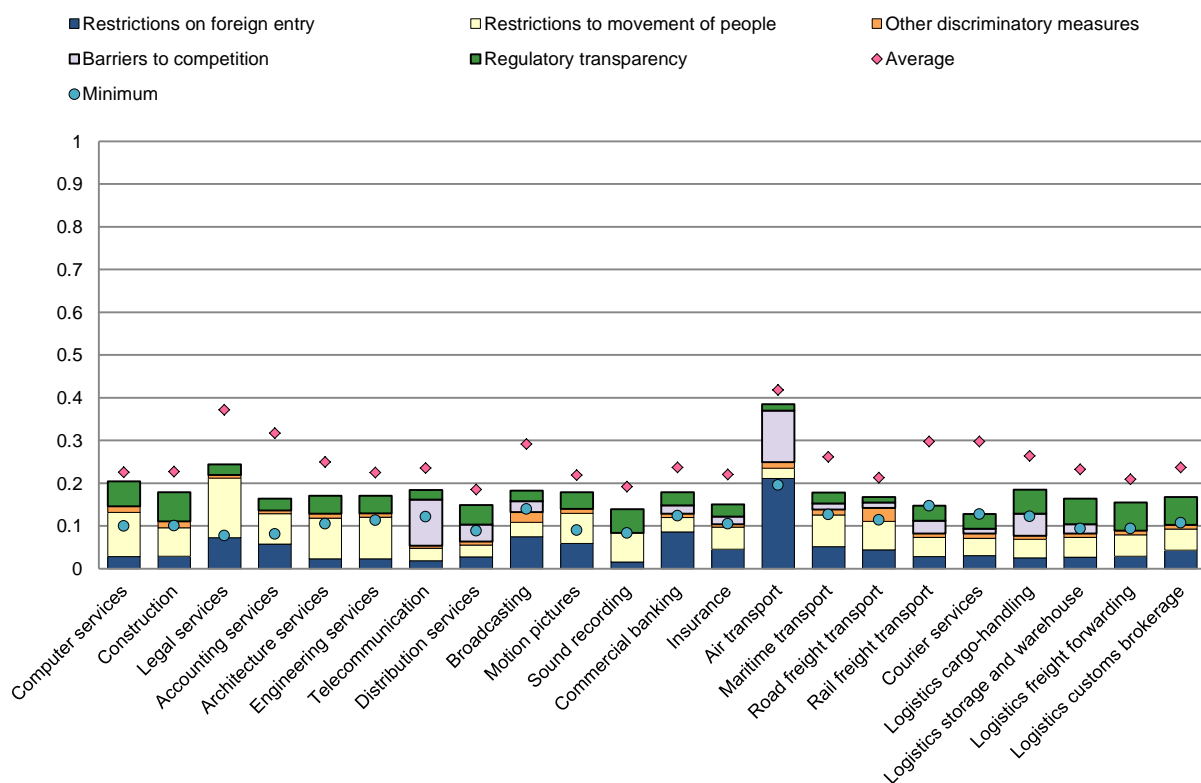


OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI): Netherlands

The Netherlands exported services worth USD 146 billion and its services imports amounted to USD 149 billion in 2015. The largest services export category was business services (research and development, professional and technical services) while the largest import category was charges for the use of intellectual property.

The Netherlands' score on the STRI index in the 22 sectors covered by the STRI project is shown below, along with the average and the lowest score among the 44 countries included in the STRI database for each sector.

STRI by sector and policy area



Note: The STRI indices take values between zero and one, one being the most restrictive. They are calculated on the basis of the STRI regulatory database which contains information on regulation for the 35 OECD Members, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Lithuania, Russia and South Africa. The STRI database records measures on a Most Favoured Nations basis. Preferential trade agreements are not taken into account. Air transport and road freight cover only commercial establishment (with accompanying movement of people).

Horizontal policy measures

The Netherlands scores below the average STRI score in all sectors. A general regulation that contributes to the country's STRI index in all sectors is the economic needs tests for natural persons seeking to provide services in the country on a temporary basis as contractual services suppliers or independent services suppliers. The duration of stay for these categories is limited to 12 months on their first entry permit. In addition to the economic needs test, services suppliers must demonstrate access to housing and must be between 18 and 45 years old. For intra-corporate transferees, wage parity with local employees is required. The standards for cross-border transfer of personal data are set at the EU level. Transfers to non-EEA economies can only take place when these ensure an adequate level of protection that is substantially similar to that required in the EU or when private data processors, both senders and receivers, establish various safeguards approved by the data protection authorities.

The sectors with the relatively lowest STRI scores

Courier services, rail freight transport services, and accounting services are the three sectors with the lowest score relative to the average in the Netherlands. In courier services, the score is largely driven by horizontal measures. The main sector-specific limitation relates to the preferential treatment that the designated postal operator receives during customs procedures. Similarly in rail transport services, the score reflects mainly general regulations. Additional impediments include the exemption of certain technical agreements from competition law and the prohibition of transfer or trading in rail infrastructure capacity. In accounting services, which covers also auditing services, the manager and the majority of board of directors in auditing firms must be licensed professionals. Furthermore, foreigners willing to provide accountancy services must pass a competence exam on Dutch law. Temporary licensing is not foreseen either for accountants or for auditors.

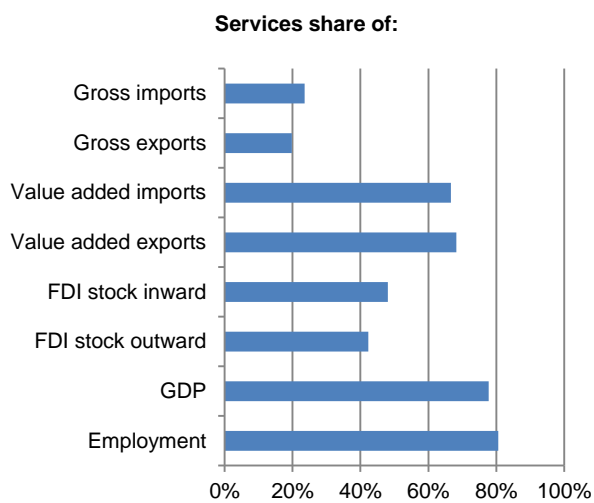
The sectors with the relatively highest STRI scores

Motion pictures services, computer services and air transport services are the three sectors with the highest score relative to the average. In motion pictures and computer services, the score can be explained in a large part by restrictions that apply across the economy. In addition, in motion pictures, the cross-border streaming of media is subject to limitations. In the air transport services sector (covering establishment only), the Netherlands employs foreign equity restrictions as a result of common European Union (EU) regulation on air services. Pursuant to this regulation, non-EU nationals cannot own more than 49% in Dutch airlines. The EU-wide exemption of certain airline arrangements from competition law, and regulations on airport slot allocation and slot trading further contribute to the score in this sector.

Recent policy changes

There are no policy changes that affect the score on the STRI during the period 2015-2016.

Efficient services sectors matter



Services account for 20-23% of gross imports and exports in the Netherlands, but for 68% in value added exports and 67% in value added imports. Exports of goods are highly services-intensive as indicated by the difference between the services share of gross exports and value added exports amounting to 48 percentage points. Cost-effective services are therefore of utmost importance for the international competitiveness of goods exports.

The Netherlands could further improve the efficiency of its economy by prioritising reforms that enhance competition in services markets, particularly by focusing on the remaining horizontal measures that affect all types of services and the few sectors where a higher STRI is observed.

More information

- » Access all of the country notes, sector notes and interactive STRI tools on the OECD website at <http://oe.cd/stri>
- » Contact the OECD Trade and Agriculture Directorate with your questions at stri.contact@oecd.org