

An eye on the chain

Beverages



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The beverage chain operates in a dynamic market in which the flourishing trade in alcoholic products is countered by a stringent alcohol policy. The Department of Trade and Industry helps companies in the chain conduct their business in accordance with the prevailing trading standards.

The chain

The beverages chain consists of all companies involved in the markets for beer, spirits, wine, cordials, and mineral waters, i.e. manufacturers, importers, bottlers and wholesalers. The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) serves as the contact point for the entire chain; Trade and Industry focuses on the chain's processing and trade.

Trade and Industry's specific role

Trade and Industry monitors developments in the beverage chain and their consequences for the business community. The Department is the contact point for issues relating to Dutch trade or the competitive position. The Department often collaborates with the Centraal Brouwerij Kantoor (the Dutch Brewers' Association, CBK), the Productschap Dranken (Beverages Marketing Board), the Productschap Wijn (Wine Marketing Board) and the relevant trade organizations, as well as with the Stichting Verantwoord Alcoholgebruik (Foundation for Responsible Alcohol Consumption, STIVA). The various LNV councils in Trade and Industry's network also identify relevant issues. The Department is the spider in the web of a market with a wide range of differing interests. Trade and Industry devotes continual attention to the companies' competitive position.

Assistance

Trade and Industry assists companies in modifying their operations to accommodate new regulations and existing policies. The environmental policy, in particular the packaging policy, has a major impact. An Order in Council came into force on 1 January 2006 in which the authorities laid down producers' responsibilities and set targets for the reuse of packaging materials and the reduction of litter. The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) is responsible for the implementation of this Order, whereby LNV and the Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ) also cooperate. The business community can raise issues either directly with Trade and Industry or via the CBK, the Marketing Boards, or the relevant trade associations.

Mediation

Where necessary Trade and Industry plays a role as mediator. Trade and Industry addresses international trading issues either directly or via LNV councils. Trade and Industry's comprehensive network enables the Department to submit issues to the relevant parties and, where relevant, take the requisite action. Subsequent to the determination of the Department's standpoint Trade and Industry tackles the issue or, where relevant, raises the question with the EU. For example, one current issue relates to more stringent labelling requirements. The timely identification of relevant issues is essential to successful lobbying. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports (VWS) keeps LNV informed about proposed new legislation relating to issues such as the Licensing and Catering Act and the policy on alcohol and young people. In addition, the Ministry of VWS organizes the Regulier Overleg Alcoholbeleid (Standing Alcohol Policy Consultations, ROA).

Key words for the chain

- excise duty
- national and European alcohol policy
- responsible consumption of alcoholic beverages
- packaging policy
- sounding board
- labelling

Key figures

- The Netherlands is the world's largest beer exporter, with annual exports of approx. 13 million hectolitres, equivalent to more than half of the country's production of beer.
- The Netherlands has 17 soft-drink manufacturers; with export mainly to Germany, Belgium and France. Exports fell substantially – by more than 45% – in 2002. Imports, primarily from Belgium and France, remained unchanged. Export volume (2004): 238 million litres.
- Dutch gin accounts for 30% of the total consumption of spirits.

Network

Major players are the CBK and the Beverages, Wine and Arable Products Marketing Boards, as well as LNV's Food Quality and Animal Health and International Affairs departments, the Food and Non-Food Authority (VWA), the Ministries of VWS and EZ. STIVA coordinates the Advertising Code for Alcoholic Beverages. The STIVA's members are comprised of the Dutch manufacturers and importers of beer, wine, and spirits.

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