
ENVIRONMENTAL DUTIES OF THE POLICE IN THE NETHERLANDS

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SUMMARY

Since 1992 over a third of all police-officers, i.e. basis-policeofficers, specialists and managers, have followed one of the specially designed environmental courses. An information module on environmental police-information was designed, to make communication possible on interregional and national level. The module is based on a handbook on the environmental task. All the necessary arrangements and studies have been carried out to establish an environmental information and expertise centre for the police.

The number of official reports and facts found on environmental matters have increased drastically over the last years. The police have in 1994 reported 8924 facts and in 1995 11385. The year 1996 seems to show a stabilisation. On serious environmental crime 56 cases were started 1995. Over 30 of those are still in process. The CITES-project (Convention on Illegal Trade in Endangered Species) has directly contributed to the start of 7 specific investigations. Much effort has also been put into designing-training modules, providing information and education on CITES and operating a help desk.

1 ORGANIZATION, AUTHORITY AND MANAGEMENT

The police force of the Netherlands is comprised of 25 independent regional police forces, which vary in size from 400 to 5000 officers, and a National Police Force of about 3000 officers. The regional forces are subdivided into districts and operating units. The total police force numbers about 40,000 officers on a population of 15 million.

The authority and management of the police are organized on a regional basis: this rests with the Chief Public Prosecutor, and the regional head of the police force who is the mayor of the largest city in the region. A board of all mayors in the region has an important voice in management questions. The local authority on matters of public order is the mayor of the municipality concerned. Criminal enforcement is conducted under the authority of the Public Prosecutor.

The enforcement of environmental legislation is based on the regions as defined in connection with the 'Joint Regulations Act'. This is a level of collaboration in which a number of (mostly smaller) municipalities synchronize their efforts. On occasion they also make agreements with other enforcement authorities active in this area. The synchronization activities concern the setting of priorities, and the approach to the enforcement of the environmental legislation.

The police play a part in this consultation and synchronization process. An environmental coordinator (a staff officer or an officer involved with policy-making) often participates in these consultations. The line management is also becoming involved to an increasing extent. Local consultations are also often held within each municipality, in which the police also participate. Enforcement activities are also synchronized in provincial environmental consultations.

The police have also been entrusted with the enforcement of environmental legislation by the Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment. In the first instance the attention of the police was focused on participation in the above-mentioned enforcement organization. This participation has now been realized throughout the Netherlands.

2 SUPPORT, TRAINING, AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

2.1 Training

Since 1992 much energy has been devoted to environmental training courses. About one third of all police officers have now taken one of the specially-designed courses; most have taken the general basic courses for enforcement of environmental legislation (see table). Fewer officers have taken the specialized courses, although the situation did improve in 1994. The course in environmental investigation and the course on the environment and traffic are examples of courses with increased attendance. The number of police in management positions who have taken an environmental course has also slowly increased since 1994. The course designed to be given jointly to the entire management of one district has proved particularly popular.

Newly developed courses include a course dealing with the enforcement of nature conservation legislation, and a course on the taking of samples by police officers. The first indications are that both courses are generating sufficient interest.

The number of police officers who have taken a course varies considerably across the regions. In some regions all junior police officers have taken a course, while in other regions many have yet to do so (see table 1).

2.2 Information systems

Work has been carried out on an information system since 1992. This began with the compilation of a concise handbook on the environment. The handbook is now finished, and is being continually revised to keep pace with the continual developments in environmental matters. Pilot studies were made in two regions in which an environmental module was added to the basic police task processes system. These studies are now complete, and the modules are now ready for use. Messages are now being prepared to allow for the exchange of interregional and national environmental information. It is expected that trials can be run in the course of 1996.

2.3 Environmental Information and Expertise Centre

In 1995 a survey was made of the needs and requirements of the regional police forces. It transpired that many regions considered a central Environmental Information and Expertise Centre to be of great importance. Each regional force would supply information about new situations, ideas, and developments in their region. This information would be made available to the other regional forces, where the centre would be responsible for the organized exchange of the information. The next step would be to provide expertise and advice to those requesting assistance. A strategic policy plan to establish such a centre is now complete. It is expected that the actual exchange of information via the Environmental Information and Expertise Centre can begin in the latter part of 1996, once the necessary finances have been made available.

(See also report on the Environmental Information and Expertise Centre in the exhibition)

Table 1. Participation in courses
Summary of environmental examinations held in compulsory and optional modules

Number of candidates

Modules

YEAR	BEL	CEL	TEL	AEW	ANA	ARA	AWA	AAG	AEI	EEP	TOTAL
1992	283	133	313	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	729
1993	1268	246	1905	0	34	11	55	33	47	92	3691
1994	1016	411	2621	172	0	58	25	103	88	42	4536
1995	531	150	2830	121	61	63	51	92	59	63	4021
1996											
1997											
1998											
1999											
2000											
TOTAL	3098	940	7669	293	95	132	131	228	194	197	12997

- BEL Basic course on the enforcement of environmental legislation
 CEL Compulsory section of advanced course on the enforcement of environmental legislation
 TEL Combination of basic course and compulsory section of advanced course on the enforcement of environmental legislation
 AEW Advanced course on the environment and waste
 ANA Advanced course on the environment and nature areas
 ARA Advanced course on the environment and residential areas
 AWA Advanced course on the environment and water
 AAG Advanced course on the environment and agriculture
 AEI Advanced course on the environment and industry
 EEP Environmental enforcement expert

3 OPERATIONAL DUTIES: THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL REPORTS, SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME, WASTE STREAMS, #CITES

3.1 Number of official reports

The police are making increasing efforts in the area of the enforcement of environmental legislation. These efforts cannot be measured solely by the number of official reports that have been made, although this does give a good indication. There has been a clear increase in the number of official reports from 1994 onwards. It can also be seen that there is a reasonable range in the kinds of official reports made.

Summary of the official reports made by the police in 1994 and 1995:

- 1994 - 8.924 facts
- 1995 - 11.385 facts

The Dutch national police corps is not included in these figures. The figures of the first half of 1996 show a stabilisation of the number of official reports. The exact number is close to the number of the first half of 1995. The figures shown give no information about the character/size of the reports made or the type of facts involved. This information was not yet available for me.

3.2 (Serious) environmental crime

Dealing with serious environmental crime is a matter which is receiving increasing attention from many authorities, including the regional police forces. Problems are often encountered with the manpower available, and the knowledge which is required. These are two of the reasons for the formation of the 'core' environmental team. The team formed to investigate the notorious TCR/TCA case in the Netherlands was not disbanded, but remained in existence in order to help the regional forces build up the knowledge they need. The TCR case yielded an amount of information which would have been sufficient to start seven cases immediately.

The acquisition of the required knowledge and the necessary manpower within the regional forces is now in progress. The forces are gradually developing their potential to be able to deal with increasingly larger cases. As such cases often need more resources than can be supplied by one police force, agreements are often used to enable a number of regions to collaborate on the case. Information from the Criminal Information Department of the National Police Force indicates that the police dealt with the following numbers of cases in 1994. The number of cases started in 1995 is 56. Over 30 cases are still in process. There have also been about 10 pre-investigations that were closed as such; the information was not enough to start a case.

If the share of the investigative authorities and the total of the environmental cases under the Economic Offences Act are examined then it can be seen that the share of the regional police forces is by far the largest. The share of the regional police forces increased from 56% in 1992 to 62% in 1994.

The share of official reports from the General Inspectorate decreased during this same period from 23% (1725 reports) in 1992, to 16% (1456 reports) in 1994. The reason for this decrease was the improved compliance with the Determination of Year-End Form Regulations.

Table 2. Share of cases (%) between the various investigative authorities in the period 1990 to 1994 inclusive (*)

Authority, share in percentage	1990 (N=4500)	1991 (N=2974)	1992 (N=7030)	1993 (N=6861)	1994 (n=8852)
General Inspectorate	27	28	23	24	16
Regional Police Forces	49	47	56	56	62
Port Authorities	11	12	6	5	2
Health Protection Inspectorate	3	5	6	5	3
Provinces / Municipalities	2	0	2	3	3
Purification boards and Water Control boards	1	3	4	3	3
Others (**)	6	3	3	2	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

(*) The figures for 1990 cover all 19 Public Prosecutor's Offices, but not all cases. The figures for 1991 cover all cases for 7 Public Prosecutor's Offices. The figures for the other years cover all cases of all Public Prosecutor's Offices.

(**) Including the National Transport Inspectorate, Customs, the military constabulary, and the Inspectorate for the Environment.

N Total number

The figures also reflect a decrease in the number of official reports made by the port authorities, in particular the Municipal Port Management of Rotterdam, on the grounds of the Pollution of Surface Waters Act. In 1992 387 official reports were made, which fell to 210 reports in 1994.

Another striking development is the increase in the share of 'others' in the number of official reports. This is caused by the increased enforcement of the Endangered Exotic Animal and Plant Species Act and the Import and Export (Endangered Exotic Animal and Plant Species) Decree by Customs.

3.3 Waste streams

During 1992 it became clear that extra efforts were needed to obtain an insight into waste, in particular waste streams, both within the country and transfrontier. This was the duty of the National Police Force, which is entrusted with the supervision of the through roads and waterways, the regional police forces, the National Transport Inspectorate, Customs, and the Inspectorate for the Environment. A joint project was initiated to train a large number of officers for the enforcement of the European Regulation on the supervision and control of shipments of waste.

The above-named authorities collaborated in several major waste inspections (the video in the exhibition shows an example). The police are also conducting an increasing number of independent smaller-scale inspections. The National Police Force is using inspection forms in order to obtain an indication of the movement of waste streams over the larger transportation routes. A comprehensive national project under the direction of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment together with initiatives by the National Police Force have the aim of giving a new impulse to the enforcement of the legislation on the transport of waste substances.

3.4 CITES

A national agreement has been signed between the police forces of Rotterdam/Rijnmond, the National Police Force/Criminal Information Department and the General Inspectorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries. This purpose of this agreement is to stimulate the enforcement of the Endangered Exotic Animal Species Act and the CITES Decree. At the beginning of 1996 the agreement was prolonged for a further two years. A lot of patience is needed to get a clear picture of this area, and ensure that specific enforcement activities are taken.

The project has contributed towards the current situation in which 7 specific investigations are in progress. One case is already brought to court.

Apart from having contributed to judicial cases, the project has implemented a helpdesk on the CITES-subject. Another major activity has been the designing of education and training-programmes, especially for police-officers working in the general task as well as for those working in the criminal departments. Last but not least providing information and education on CITES has taken a lot of time and energy.