ZEYNEP ALAZ AYAN

COUNTRY: Netherlands

COMMITTEE: WHO

Agenda Item: Uncontrolled use of technology and digital obesity.

The Netherlands is a nation of thriving modern cities with attractive canals, coastal fishing towns, and open-minded, welcoming, and enlightened people. The country has over 17 million people, making it one of the densely inhabited countries. According to Statistics Netherlands (CBS, 2023) as of January 2022, there were roughly 2.5 million immigrants among Dutch citizens two-thirds of whom had non-European backgrounds. The typical countries of immigration to the Netherlands are mainly Turkey Syria and Morocco. The Netherlands, whose independence from Spain was officially proclaimed in 1581 and recognized in 1648, is also one of the major economies in the world with a GDP of $1.01 trillion. According to STATISTA's figures, from 2011 to 2021, the Netherlands' GDP was distributed throughout several economic sectors. A little over 1.55 percent of the Netherlands' GDP comes from agriculture in 2021, compared to 18.06 percent from industry and 69.44 percent from service sector. The level of education of the Dutch population is relatively high, based on the most recent data released by CBS in September 2021. By 2020, around 51% of people in the 25–74 age group had finished postsecondary education, which includes university and higher vocational training. Admitted in 1945, the Netherlands has been one of the most committed supporters of the United Nations and takes part in UN missions aiming at the preservation of peace and the safety of civilians. The Netherlands has also advocated human rights both domestically and internationally. Digital safety is another area where the nation is prospering.

Technology is ubiquitous and told to be a great benefit. However, as it becomes more pervasive in our lives, it begins to shift into an addiction. As expected, like other addictions, overconsumption of technology, which can be referred to as “digital obesity” might create serious problems for the mental and physical health of individuals such as living a sedentary life due to the over-reliance on technological devices which also comes along with allocating fewer hours for sleep, preparing nutritional and healthy food, and socialization. At this point, it is crucial to take effective measures. The Netherlands promotes a research program called Digital Society conducted by fourteen Dutch universities that aim to address the challenges brought about by digitalization. The aim of this organization is to get the experts together to do research about the effects of the digitalization of data; thus, creating a safe environment for data engineering, data science, and data management. The research activities of these scholars in the organization address different aspects of digital deterioration to provide a healthy platform for new research activities and partnerships for wider impact. They mainly study the fields of artificial intelligence, namely machine learning, and the law and ethics of bioinformatics. Additionally, as it is released in the "The Dutch Digitalisation Strategy 2021" report, an agreement to establish the Cybersecurity Competence Centre (CSCC) in 2020 was reached in order to foster and spread cybersecurity knowledge across Europe. The agreement aims to encourage European countries to combine expertise in cybersecurity, technology, and industrial growth and form a European cyberspace expertise community. The CSCC will collaborate with state coordination centers. This group's members are chosen from the business and academic communities and governments. The CSCC will provide financial support for the Horizon Europe and Digital Europe (DEP) organizations in respect to cybersecurity. Additionally, excessive gaming is now recognized as a mental health disease by the World Health Organization (WHO), which has included "gaming disorder" to its International Classification of Diseases (ICD and urged deeper study into how technology affects mental health and issued digital usage guidelines.

The Netherlands is well aware of the detrimental effects of digital dependency and aims to promote healthy and responsible use of digital technology among young people. One of the solutions to this problem might be launching a campaign which provides information and resources for parents, educators, and young people themselves on topics such as screen time, social media use, and online safety. An educational curriculum for digital literacy may be incorporated into the primary school curricula in accordance with the requirements and goals of UN member nations for this campaign to be effective globally. Parents should also be guided by WHO on how to benefit most from the opportunities of the digital world and how to monitor and guide their own children.

References:

* <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/netherlands/report-netherlands/>
* <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/dossier/migration-and-integration/how-many-residents-have-a-foreign-country-of-origin->
* <https://www.imuna.org/resources/country-profiles/netherlands/>
* <https://www.government.nl/>
* <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2021&locations=NL&start=1960&type=shaded&view=chart>
* <https://www.thedigitalsociety.info/themes/responsible-data-science/>
* <https://www.nederlanddigitaal.nl/binaries/nederlanddigitaal-nl/documenten/publicaties/2021/06/22/the-dutch-digitalisation-strategy-2021-eng/210621-min-ezk-digitaliseringstrategie-en-v03.pdf>
* https://www.statista.com/statistics/276713/distribution-of-gross-domestic-product-gdp-across-economic-sectors-in-the-netherlands/#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20agriculture%20contributed%20around,percent%20from%20the%20service%20sector.