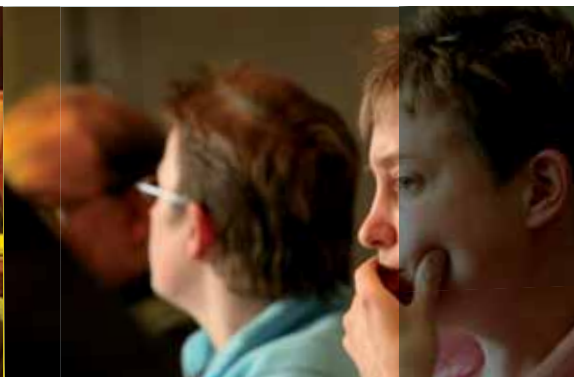




≡ provincie
Gelderland

Provincial life
Past, present and future



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1096

The castle of Gelre in use

1340

Count Reinald II made a Duke
by the German Emperor

1543

Gelderland is part of the 17
Low Countries of Emperor
Charles V

1579

Seven provinces establish the
Union of Utrecht

1795

The arrival of Napoleon ends
the power of the provinces



History of the Province of Gelderland

The provinces in our country have a history that goes back as far as 1579. On 23 January of that year, seven provinces established the Union of Utrecht. This effectively created the Republic of the Seven United Provinces. With the arrival in 1795 of Napoleon, the power of the provinces came to an end. Napoleon established the Batavian Republic creating a unified state with central authority. The provinces lost their independence and served from that time onwards merely as administrative bodies subject to the authority of the central power.

In 1813, Napoleon lost his position and the Netherlands regained its sovereignty. Although the new Constitution of 1814 re-established the provincial structure, power remained with the central authorities. The new Kingdom of the Netherlands became a unified state within which were a series of provinces.

In the 1814 Constitution and subsequent Provincial Act (1850), the tasks and

authorities of the provinces were clearly laid down. The Provincial Act was replaced in 1962 by the Provinces Act. This was in turn replaced in 1992 by a Provinces Act revised 'in legal technical respects'.

Over the years, the number of provinces has increased. The Republic started in 1579 with seven provinces. Today there are twelve.

1813

Dutch sovereignty recovered

1814

New Constitution re-establishes the old provincial structure

1850

Tasks and authorities of provinces demarcated

1962

Provincial Act replaced by Provinces Act

1992

Provinces Act replaced by revised Provinces Act ('legal technical changes')



Once upon a time there was

The history of Gelderland goes back to the year 1096. In that year, the castle of Gelre was first used.

The counts who lived here called themselves the Counts of Gelre. In 1340, Count Reinald II was raised in status to Duke, by the German Emperor. Gelre came under the authority of the Duke, and thus became a Duchy. Geldern (a town to the northeast of Venlo) became the capital of the duchy. After 1543, Gelderland became part of the Seventeen Provinces of Emperor Charles V. He had the area governed by a representative called 'stadhouder'.

The 80 years war divided the Seventeen Provinces. Gelderland, alongside a number of other Dutch provinces, took their own sovereignty. Together they formed the Republic of the Seven United Provinces. Following the 1795 revolution, the republic itself fell, and the Province of Gelderland became part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. After Napoleon, Gelderland once again became a separate province in 1815. At that time, the province had 264,000

inhabitants, as compared with the almost two million today.

Coat of arms

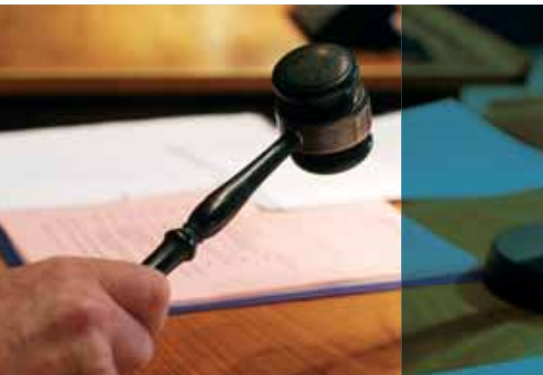
The coat of arms of Gelderland is a combination of the coat of arms of the Dukes of Gelre and Gulik (now called Jülich), from the period 1339-1538. The crowned lion in gold (with the double tail) in the first and most important section of the coat of arms was employed from 1339 onwards by Reinald II, when he was made Duke of Gelre. The lion of Gulik, which appears in the second section opposite the lion of Gelre, became part of the coat of arms in 1393 when the then Duke of Gelre, Willem, also became Duke of Gulik. His brother Reinald IV, who succeeded him in 1402 in both duchies, placed Gulik in section I and Gelre in section II, representing the fact that he viewed the duchy of Gulik as his most important possession. In 1423 he died without any legal heirs, and his territory collapsed. Gulik was no longer part of Gelre.



Central, provincial and municipal government

The Netherlands is divided into twelve provinces. Provincial government does work for which central government is ‘too big’ and municipal government ‘too small’. The provinces are responsible for tackling social problems in the region. They for example find answers to such questions as: how should we distribute the limited space for new nature, economic activities and house building? Can a hospital be maintained in a given region or must it merge with other care institutions? Is there sufficient public transport from and to any one place, or is alternative transport required? How do young people get in touch with the right care provider, in an emergency situation? Provincial government is therefore active in a wide range of fields including culture, economics, financial supervision, youth care, quality of life of rural areas, the environment, nature development, urban and rural access, education, spatial planning, social issues, safety,

water, accommodation and care. In other words, the province is involved in numerous activities which have a direct or indirect influence on the day-to-day life of everyone living there. It is however unusual for the province to be the only body involved in these issues, although the province is often the party that takes the lead when it comes to tackling a particular problem, and bringing together all the stakeholders. In many areas, the province therefore cooperates closely with other levels of government (central and municipal, and the water boards), business and industry and social organisations and institutions.



Flag

According to the guidelines from the Supreme Council of Nobility, in the flag of a province and a municipality, the colours must appear which also occur in the official coat of Arms. The coat of arms of Gelderland features a yellow lion on a blue ground and a black lion against a yellow ground. As a consequence, the flag of Gelderland consists of three horizontal stripes of equal height, from top to bottom blue, yellow and black. The provincial parliament of Gelderland officially adopted the flag of the province on 13 April 1953.

Democracy

The way in which government in the Netherlands is regulated is known as democracy. In a democracy, the people have the power. The term democracy is derived from two Greek words, demos meaning people and kratos meaning power. But who are the people? In our country there are more than sixteen million inhabitants, all of whom have their own opinions about what should

be done. Of course, it is impossible for everyone to come together to talk and to take decisions.

Because we cannot all govern our country together, we elect people's representatives. At national level these are the members of the Upper and Lower Chamber of Parliament; at municipal level, our democratically elected government consists of the Municipal Council and in the provinces, the Provincial Parliament. All of these public representatives, whether in the Upper or Lower Chamber of Parliament, the Municipal Council or the Provincial Parliament, have important tasks, including (assisting in) the drawing up of laws and policy and monitoring their implementation. In practice, however, there are differences in the way in which they carry out their work and the resources they have available to implement their tasks.

Elections for the Lower Chamber can in principle take place at any given



moment. This is because a Cabinet can fall between election dates, as a consequence of which - in most cases - the Lower Chamber is dissolved. Elections for the Municipal Council and for the Provincial Parliament take place once every four years on a predetermined date. For provinces and municipalities, interim dissolution of the Provincial Parliament or the Municipal Council is not possible. The Upper Chamber of the National Parliament is also elected once every four years by the members of the Provincial Parliament from all twelve provinces.

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy. The head of the country is a monarch – a king or queen – who is required to comply with the rules of the Constitution. The Constitution states that the king or queen is inviolate and that the Ministers are responsible. The parliament can never call the monarch to account, whereas it can hold one or more Ministers accountable. The monarch places a

signature under all laws and Royal Decrees, such as the appointment of a mayor. What the statutes are for any association, so is the Constitution for the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Constitution regulates the authorities of the parliament, the Ministers and the monarch. It also describes how the municipalities and provinces must function, how laws are made and how the legal system operates. The fundamental rights and duties of all Dutch men and women are however also contained in the Constitution.



Provincial Parliament

Just like any city, association or club, the province has a general council known as the Provincial Parliament - fifty-three men and women from the entire province, who are elected once every four years by the residents of Gelderland. These politicians represent different parties. At the start of the period of four years, a 'Parliamentary Agreement' is drawn up. This agreement lays down the key objectives for the next four years, for example reducing waiting lists in youth care or improving public transport. The Provincial Parliament meets once a month to discuss the proposals from the Executive board. Before a proposal reaches the Provincial Parliament, it is discussed in committee meetings. The majority of members of the parliament are also members of one or more committees. In these committees, the important subjects on which the Provincial Parliament must reach a decision are discussed in advance. During these committee meetings, the residents of the Province can join the

discussion on a particular subject. Being a member of the Provincial Parliament is not a full-time position, so the majority of members have other employment too. In other words, they are part-time politicians.



Executive board

The members of the Provincial Parliament elect the Executive board. Together with the Queen's Commissioner, the Executive board forms the day-to-day management of the province. They implement the decisions taken by the Provincial Parliament in its monthly meetings. The Parliament members supervise the Executive board. Unlike for the Parliament members, the work of the members of the Executive board is a full-time task. Each member of the Executive board has his or her own portfolio, but they are jointly responsible for their decisions. The Executive board meets every Tuesday under the chairmanship of the Queen's Commissioner. These meetings are not public, but the decisions are subsequently made public.

Queen's Commissioner

The chairman of the Provincial Parliament and the Executive board is the Queen's Commissioner. Unlike the other governors of the province, he is not elected, but is appointed by the Queen and the government (the Crown).

The Queen's Commissioner has no voting rights in the meetings of the Provincial Parliament. He is however able to issue recommendations. If decisions have to be taken in the Executive board, he does vote. In the event of a tie, his vote may even be decisive.



Administrative organisation

The province employs almost 1500 civil servants in four services: Environment & Water (MW), Space, Economy and Welfare (REW), Roads, Traffic and Transport (WVV) and Services.

- *The Environment and Water (MW)* service works on improving the living environment in Gelderland.

All activities are focused on dealing with that living environment with the greatest possible care, be it the protection of the groundwater, promoting the economic use of energy and raw materials or the remediation of soil contamination;

- *The Space, Economy and Welfare (REW)* service is involved in subjects relating to spatial planning in the broadest sense of the term. The objective is to maintain and preferably increase the quality of life. This includes encouraging the establishment of business estates, the construction of homes and a

whole range of other facilities. The employees of this service, together with municipalities and other organisations and institutions, ensure there is sufficient space for recreation and cultural enjoyment. They also have supervisory and monitoring tasks. For example assessing zoning plans of the municipalities;

- *The Roads, Traffic and Transport (WVV)* service improves accessibility, road safety, quality of life and the environment. These issues are increasingly under pressure due to the increased number of residents and cars in the province. The work of the WVV service can be divided into two components: developing and implementing policy in the field of goods transport, public transport, bicycle and road safety, and construction and management of roads, cycle paths and other infrastructure;



- The Services division

ensures that the officials from the other three services are able to carry out their work efficiently and effectively. This includes human resources management, catering, communication, IT, business management, library, archiving and all other departments which support the overall organisation.

In addition, the province has a Clerk's Office that supports the Provincial States. Their work includes preparing for the meetings and managing the secretariat of the States committees. The Clerk's Office also advises and supervises States members in implementing their public representation, framework setting and supervisory functions. The Clerk's Office is an independent organisation unit in relation to the rest of the administrative organisation.

More information

Other brochures are available about the province and its government:

- Introduction to the province: Who's who in the administration (only in Dutch);
- The listening province: In touch with the province (only in Dutch).

To order brochures or for more information contact

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