IPMERC Research

# Supervision grows twice as fast as the state

Seven Dutch regulators that have existed unchanged since 2010 employ 75% more staff than they did then. The central government grew 40%, the economy 20%.


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**Summary**

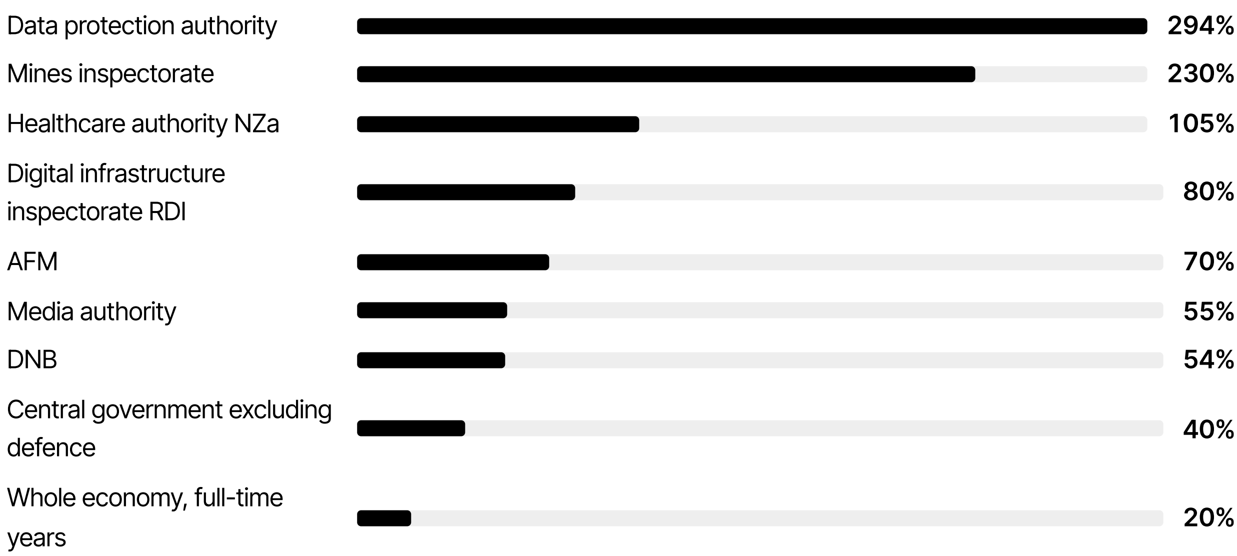
Seven Dutch regulators that have kept the same form since 2010 grew from 2,730 to 4,772 full-time staff, a rise of 75%. The data protection authority went from 79 to 312, the mines inspectorate from 57 to 188, the healthcare authority from 254 to 521. The financial markets regulator AFM grew 70% and the central bank DNB 54%. The central government as a whole employed 160,016 full-time staff at the end of 2025 against 114,328 at the end of 2010, up 40.0%. The whole Dutch economy grew 19.6% in full-time years over the same period. Inside the central government, inspection work grew 33.5% between 2021 and 2025, against 22.0% for all staff. The growth tracks new legal duties: the GDPR in 2018, online gambling in 2021, the Groningen earthquakes, and new European financial rules. The Jetten cabinet books €1.4bn of savings on the government apparatus in 2030. The CPB, the government's own forecaster, counts €0.2bn of it and calls the rest implausible while no tasks are dropped. Growth already stalled in 2025: the competition authority shrank, the health inspectorate shrank, the healthcare authority stood still, and the central government added 1.9%.

## Where the growth is

The people who supervise on behalf of the Dutch state have been growing in number faster than the state for fifteen years, and the state has been growing faster than the economy. That is the short version. The long version sits in the regulators' own annual reports, which count more precisely than any average.

Seven regulators have existed in the same form since 2010, with no merger or split, and publish a staffing figure for both years. Together they employed 2,730 full-time staff in 2010 and 4,772 in 2025, a rise of 75%. The central government excluding defence employed 114,328 full-time staff at the end of 2010 and 160,016 at the end of 2025, up 40.0%. The labour volume of the whole Dutch economy rose from 7.035 million to 8.413 million full-time years between 2010 and 2025, or 19.6%.

**75%** more full-time staff at seven regulators unchanged since 2010




Growth in full-time staff between 2010 and 2025, read from the seven organisations' annual reports, the Jaarrapportage Bedrijfsvoering Rijk 2011 and 2025, and CBS StatLine 85918NED. NZa compares end 2009 with end 2025. Measurement point per organisation in the method section.

## What the annual reports say

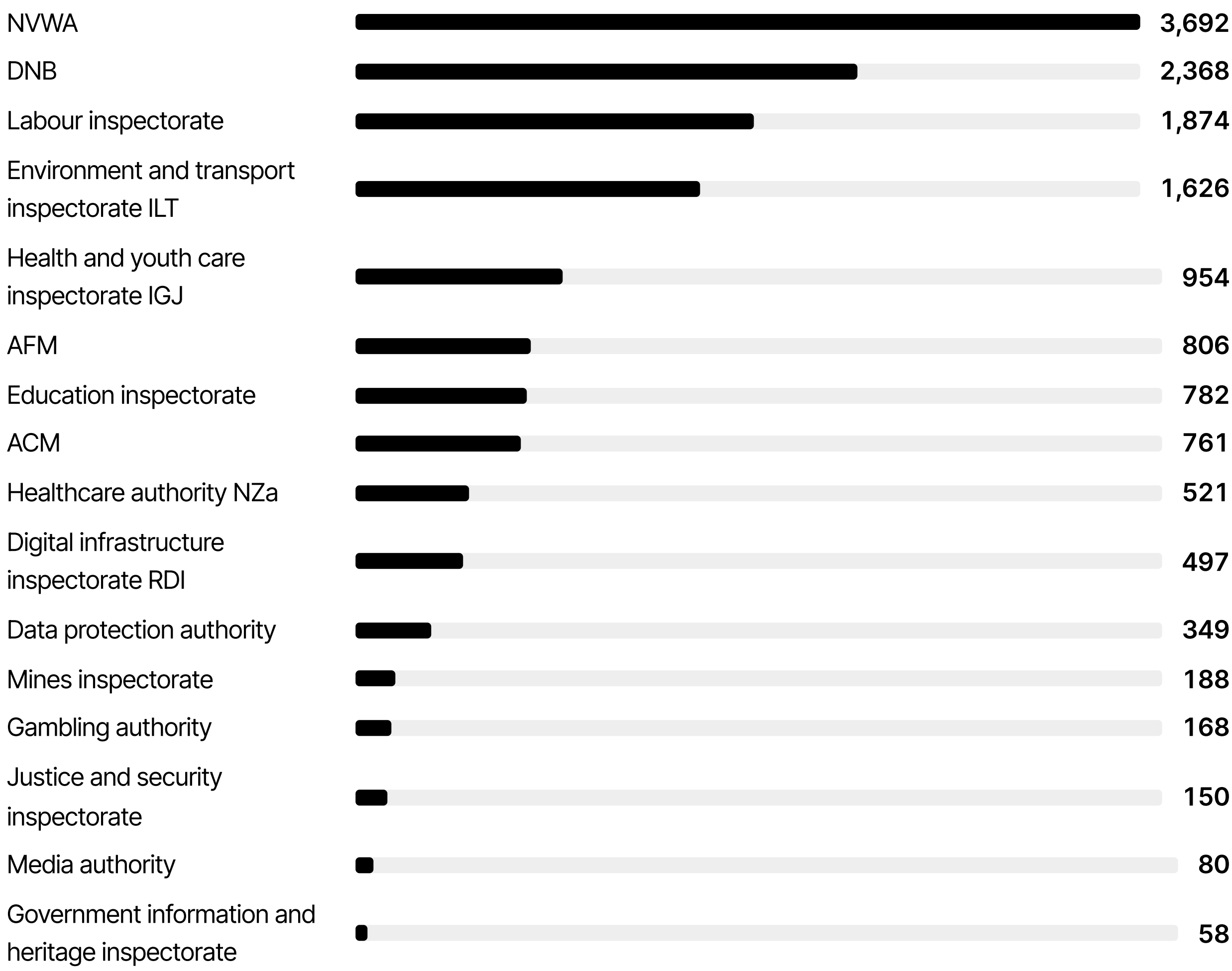
The data protection authority is the outlier. The College bescherming persoonsgegevens, as it was then called, averaged 79 full-time staff in 2010 and ended the year at 79.6. In 2025 the Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens averaged 311.5 of its own staff and ended December at 349 including contractors and secondees. On its own staff that is 294% growth, on the year-end figure including contractors 338%.

The mines inspectorate, Staatstoezicht op de Mijnen, employed 57 full-time staff on 31 December 2010 and 188 on 31 December 2025. The healthcare authority NZa went from 254 at the end of 2009 to 520.89 at the end of 2025. Agentschap Telecom, now the Rijksinspectie Digitale Infrastructuur, averaged 276.6 in 2010 and 497.4 in 2025. The media authority, the Commissariaat voor de Media, grew from 51.62 at the end of 2010 to 80 at the end of 2025.

The two financial supervisors grew more slowly, and are far larger. The AFM averaged 474 permanent staff in 2010 and 806 in 2025, up 70%. Including temporary hires it went from 495 to 827. The AFM itself attributes its 2025 growth mainly to new supervisory duties. DNB averaged 1,538 full-time staff in 2010 and 2,368 in 2025, up 54%. DNB is not a pure supervisor: the central bank also runs monetary policy and payments, and 748 of its 2025 posts sat in the supervision budget.

The country's largest supervisor is not among the seven, because it was formed from three agencies in 2012. The food and consumer product safety authority NVWA averaged 3,692 full-time staff in 2025, excluding external hires. For 2011, the first year with a realised figure for the merged body, the ministry's annual report gives 2,347, and on 1 January 2011 it stood at 2,422. Against 2011 that is 57% growth. But of the 475 posts added in 2025, about 300 came from the Kwaliteitskeuring Dierlijke Sector, a meat inspection body absorbed on 1 January 2025. Without that takeover the growth since 2011 is 45%.

**14,873** full-time staff at sixteen regulators and inspectorates in 2025




Full-time staff over or at the end of 2025 from each organisation's annual report. The justice and security inspectorate publishes an establishment only (149.55). Data protection authority including contractors and secondees. The sixteen together are 0.18% of all full-time years worked in the Netherlands.

For the inspectorates merged in 2012 no clean comparison with 2010 exists, and this paper does not make one. The Arbeidsinspectie employed 784 at the end of 2010; the Nederlandse Arbeidsinspectie, which also absorbed the work and income inspectorate and the social security fraud unit, employed 1,874 at the end of 2025. The transport inspectorate IVW employed 798 at the end of 2010; the ILT, merged with the housing and environment inspectorate, employed 1,626 in 2025. The justice and security inspectorate had 59 staff at the end of 2012, its first year, and an establishment of 149.55 in 2025.

What can be followed across the whole central government is the job category inspection in the Jaarrapportage Bedrijfsvoering Rijk, the annual staffing report. It counted 7,924 full-time posts at the end of 2021 and 10,580 at the end of 2025, up 33.5% in four years. All central government staff grew 22.0% over those four years, from 131,132 to 160,016. Supervision therefore grows one and a half times as fast as the average inside the state as well.

## Why supervision grows

The growth follows the law. Every large jump in an annual report coincides with a new statutory duty, and the organisations say so themselves.

The data protection authority grew from 75.7 full-time staff at the start of 2017 to 157.1 at the end of 2018, the year the GDPR took effect. Then came supervision of algorithms and of cookies, for which the cabinet found extra money at the end of 2023. The gambling authority employed 91.6 in 2021 and 168 in 2025: the online gambling market opened in October 2021 with a licensing regime and supervision of advertising and addiction prevention. The mines inspectorate tripled after the Groningen earthquakes; the 57 staff of 2010 supervised extraction, the 188 of 2025 also supervise its wind-down, geothermal energy, and the storage of gas and carbon dioxide.

At the financial supervisors the growth comes from Europe. The AFM names new supervisory duties as the main reason for the 66 net posts it added in 2025. DNB says in its 2025 annual report that costs have risen since 2020 through new legal duties, higher wages, stronger IT, and the renovation of its head office. The digital infrastructure inspectorate grew from 373.8 in 2021 to 497.4 in 2025, the years in which the European rules on network security and on products with digital elements reached the Netherlands.

The central government as a whole made its biggest jump between 2018 and 2022, from 113,533 to 138,376 full-time posts. That is 21.9%, or about 25,000 posts, and it is the figure with which the budget annex to the 2024 outline agreement justified the first apparatus cut. Growth slowed after that: 6.2% in 2024, 1.9% in 2025.

## What cuts against it

Three things blunt the figure, and they belong in the paper.

First, 2010 is a convenient starting year. The central government shrank after 2010, to 109,150 full-time posts in 2015, and only then began to grow. Counting from 2015 gives 46.6% growth, counting from 2010 gives 40.0%. For the public administration sector as a whole the opposite holds: it shrank from 585,000 full-time years in 2010 to 532,000 in 2018 and stands at 638,000 in 2025. Over the whole period that is 9.1% growth, less than half the economy's. Public administration as a whole grew more slowly than the market. Only the central government, and supervision within it, grew faster.

Second, growth had already stalled in 2025. The competition authority ACM fell from 784.4 full-time staff at the end of 2024 to 760.6 at the end of 2025, after a hiring freeze until July. The health and youth care inspectorate fell from 994 to 954. The healthcare authority stood at 520.89 against 520.41 a year earlier. DNB announced in November 2025 that it would cut 10% of its budget, about €60m, and says that will come with job losses. The AFM and the data protection authority were still growing in 2025.

Third, supervision is small. The sixteen organisations in the second figure employ 14,873 full-time staff between them, 0.18% of the 8.413 million full-time years worked in the Netherlands. Growth of 75% on a small base is noticeable in the labour market for lawyers, auditors, and inspectors. For the public finances it is a rounding difference beside healthcare and education.

The figures have edges of their own. The AFM and DNB publish annual averages, most inspectorates a headcount on 31 December. The data protection authority counts contractors and secondees in its year-end figure, the NVWA does not. Wherever this paper compares two years, they are read on the same definition from the same annual report. Where that was not possible, the text says so.

## The saving the CPB does not believe

The budget counts on shrinkage. The Schoof cabinet imposed an apparatus cut in May 2024 rising to €1bn a year, citing the 2018 to 2022 growth as its reason. The Jetten cabinet added two items in January 2026: an efficiency target rising to €392m in 2030 and a renewal-of-the-civil-service target of €1bn from 2030. Together €1.4bn in 2030, on top of Schoof's €1bn.

The CPB counts €0.2bn of it. In its February 2026 analysis of the coalition agreement the CPB says it does not find the assumed cut on core ministries and executive agencies plausible while it remains unspecified which government tasks will lapse, and that large cuts to the apparatus proved too ambitious in the past. For the €1bn renewal target the CPB books nothing, because no further generic cut is possible on top of the maximum generic cut. In 2024 the CPB said the same about Schoof's cut and counted €0.4bn instead of €0.9bn in 2028.

The cabinet has handed the detail to a committee. On 26 June 2026 it set up the Commissie Toekomst Rijksdienst, chaired by Herna Verhagen, with a brief to review the civil service and recommend how to make government more decisive. The report is due with the minister by the end of December 2026. The targets themselves spare the police, prisons, the public prosecutor, and the courts. Regulators are not on that list. In the answers to parliamentary questions of February 2026, the ILT budget falls from €232m in 2024 to €229m in 2030 and the NVWA budget from €510m realised in 2024 to €488m in 2030, subject to how the targets are allocated.

## The Netherlands beside its neighbours

In Eurostat's national accounts, Dutch employment in public administration and defence grew 9.8% between 2010 and 2025, from 623,000 to 684,000 persons. Total employment grew 18.0%. The share of public administration therefore fell from 7.1% to 6.6%. The pattern is European: in every one of the eight countries compared except Ireland, the share fell.


Growth in employment in NACE section O (public administration and defence) from 2010 to the latest year, followed by growth in total employment. Netherlands, France, and Denmark to 2025 (Netherlands and France provisional), the other countries and the EU-27 to 2024. Eurostat nama_10_a64_e, persons, domestic concept. Extracted 9 September 2026.

The Dutch series has a kink the others lack. Between 2010 and 2016 public administration here shrank from 623,000 to 564,000 persons, 9.5% fewer. Since 2019 it has grown again: 18.1% against 8.2% for total employment, and the share rose every year except 2022. The Dutch state is making up for a contraction in the 2010s, and doing so faster than its neighbours.

The scale stays modest. The OECD puts general government, which includes education and public healthcare, at 12.3% of Dutch employment in 2023, against an OECD average of 18.4%. That measure is not the same as the Eurostat section, which counts only administration and defence regardless of who the employer is, and the two do not belong in one chart.

## What this means in practice

- Regulators' demand for lawyers, auditors, IT auditors, and data analysts was a structural competitor to employers in financial and business services between 2018 and 2025. That competitor is braking in 2026.
- The cuts reach core ministries and support functions before front-line supervision. DNB says its reorganisation concerns the Intern Bedrijf, the support services, not supervision itself. Anyone hiring in support functions will see public sector supply from 2027.
- The CPB counts €0.2bn of the €1.4bn saving. Anyone planning around a shrinking state is planning around a political intention, not a costed figure. The Commissie Toekomst Rijksdienst report in December 2026 is the first moment that changes.
- Supervision grows with legislation, not with the business cycle. New European rules on artificial intelligence, digital resilience, and sustainability reporting bring new duties. A regulator that is shrinking now may be hiring again in two years.
- For an agency with government clients, demand sits with the merged inspectorates that are still growing: the labour inspectorate, the ILT, and the education inspectorate each grew in 2025, the last by 46% since 2021.

## Method and sources

The lead was a count by the newspaper FD, published in September 2026, which arrives at more than 18,000 full-time staff at regulators and inspectorates in 2025 against 11,000 in 2010, growth of about 60%. This paper has not read the underlying article and does not use that count as a figure of its own. FD does not publish which organisations it counts, so the 18,000 cannot be reconstructed. The sixteen organisations here total 14,873 in 2025; the difference lies in organisations FD counts and this paper does not, or the reverse. Every figure in this paper was read from the organisation's own annual report, from the parent ministry's annual report, from the Jaarrapportage Bedrijfsvoering Rijk, from CBS StatLine, from the Eurostat API, or from the CPB publications named.

The seven organisations in the first figure were chosen because they have not merged or split since 2010 and publish a staffing figure for both years. Measurement points: AFM average permanent staff (474 in 2010, 806 in 2025); DNB average full-time staff (1,538, 2,368); data protection authority average staff (79, 311.5); NZa year-end 2009 and year-end 2025 (254, 520.89), because the 2010 accounts are not online; media authority year-end (51.62, 80); mines inspectorate year-end (57, 188); Agentschap Telecom and RDI average staff (276.6, 497.4), where the 2010 figure includes 24 non-civil-service posts. The sum is 2,730.2 against 4,771.8.

Central government: Jaarrapportage Bedrijfsvoering Rijk 2011, table 2.8, 114,328 full-time posts in the Rijk sector on 31 December 2010, from the payroll systems; Jaarrapportage 2025, table 34, 160,016 at the end of 2025 from the O&P Rijk system, with the same source for 2021 to 2024 and Jaarrapportage 2022, table 34, for 2018 to 2022. Both count the ministries excluding defence, the judiciary, and the High Councils of State under the central government collective agreement. The inspection job category is in table 32 of the Jaarrapportage 2025 (7,924 in 2021, 10,580 in 2025). The Jaarrapportage 2011 gives an inspection and supervision category of 6,597 for 2010, but for a wider population including independent administrative bodies, so the two series are not joined here.

Economy: CBS StatLine 85918NED, labour volume by industry from the national accounts, annual averages, employees and self-employed. Full-time years A-U 7,035,000 in 2010 and 8,413,000 in 2025; section O 585,000, 532,000 in 2018, and 638,000 in 2025. The years 2024 and 2025 are provisional. This table replaced tables 84166NED and 84164NED in 2025 and cannot be mixed with them.

Europe: Eurostat nama_10_a64_e, employment in persons by industry, domestic concept, section O and total, for the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Ireland, and the EU-27. For 2025 only the Netherlands, France, and Denmark are available; the Netherlands and France are provisional. The labour force survey (lfsa_egan2) gives 34.3% growth in section O for the Netherlands, but has a series break in 2021 and was not used. OECD: Government at a Glance 2025, employment in general government as a share of total employment, 2023.

Not found in a primary source: the 2010 staffing of the housing and environment inspectorate, the healthcare inspectorate IGZ, the education inspectorate, the heritage inspectorate, the work and income inspectorate, the social security fraud unit, and the consumer authority, and the separate 2010 staffing of the VWA, AID, and plant protection service. For the ACM it therefore only holds that the NMa (411.7 at the end of 2010) and OPTA (143 at the end of 2009) together employed 554.7 against 760.6 for the ACM at the end of 2025, without the consumer authority. DNB has not published the size of its reorganisation in full-time posts in any document this paper could read; press reports in early September 2026 give 290, and that figure stands here as an unread source, not as a figure of ours. The August 2026 budget agreement had not been published by 9 September 2026; the 2027 budget appears on 15 September 2026.

Named but not checked: the KPMG costing on which the data protection authority based its growth path to 470 posts, and the 2012 ABDTOPConsult report Doorpakken on the establishment of the healthcare inspectorate. Both are mentioned in annual reports and are not used as sources here.

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Government, Growth, Recruitment, All markets, Business services

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