

Summary

Forecasting the demand on the Dutch justice system until 2026

In this report, the forecasts of the 'demand' for services of the police, prosecutors, courts and prisons until the end of 2026 are described. The forecasts were obtained by applying the so-called forecasting model PMJ that is developed for the Dutch criminal justice system and the civil and administrative justice systems. The base year for our forecasts was 2019. Any changes in law or policy later than 2019 could therefore not be incorporated.

PMJ is based on developments in society that fall outside the sphere of influence of the Ministry of Justice and Security. The model assumes that developments in society are the driving forces behind the trends in crime and private disputes. Four groups of factors can be distinguished: demographic structure of the population, economic conditions, social problems and other changes. Within each category, a number of background factors are distinguished. The combination of these factors represents certain classes of problems like social inequality, cultural conflicts, social isolation, and economic inequality.

The demographic factors used in the model are: the size of the population, the size of different age groups, the number of non-western immigrants in various age groups, the number of minors (in the four main Dutch cities) and the number of migrant men in various age groups. The economic factors are the number of employed and unemployed people in the total labor force and within the age group of 15-24 years in particular, average annual income, purchasing power, the number of social benefits (including those for the unemployed), gross value added, collective tax burden, costs of rental homes, the hourly rate of lawyers, the number of motor vehicles and mopeds, and the number of self-employed people. The social factors are the number of immigrants, the number of applications for political asylum, the number of underage refugees, the number of drug addicts, the yearly number of divorced people, the number of single parent families, the number of families with children, the level of education of children, internet usage and the percentage of people connected to a church. The other factors are the number of police officers and the money that people have to pay when applying for subsidized legal aid.

The forecasts of developments within the justice system are based on forecasts of the above-mentioned factors. If there are no changes in policy or legislation, the number of reported crimes is expected to decrease by 1% per year in the period 2020-2026, and the number of suspects will decrease by less than 1% per year. This decrease will affect the workflow for all partners in the judicial system. Although the decrease cannot be extrapolated in a straightforward fashion, the inflow of cases into the prosecutorial system will also decrease by less than 1% per year, as will the number of cases brought to court. However, the demand for prison capacity for adults will increase with 1% per year and the demand for prison capacity for minors will increase with 2% per year, due to the increase in prison sentence length.

The inflow of minor offences (misdemeanors) into the prosecutorial system will decrease by 1% per year. However, the number of traffic offences will increase by 2% per year.

While the number of new civil cases at the sub district courts with a request is expected to increase with less than 1% per year, civil cases with a summons will decrease by 3% per year in the period 2020-2026. The number of new civil cases at the district courts will increase with 1% annually. The number of tax cases at the district courts will decrease by 5% per year. The number of other administrative cases decrease with only 1% per year.

The expected developments in the number of applications for subsidized legal aid in criminal, civil, and administrative cases vary depending on the type of cases. Overall there is a slight increase.

The forecasts are based on information available at the moment. Both the PMJ forecasts as well as the forecasts of the factors are surrounded by uncertainty. Due to the recent covid-19 crisis this especially holds true for the economic forecasts. The direct effects of the covid-19 crisis are not incorporated in these forecasts. The forecasts are meant for 2022 and onwards and it is assumed, that in 2022 things will return to normal. The indirect effects, like the economic consequences, are included. Therefore, the forecasts should be seen as a signal of what might happen if nothing changes. Unexpected events and new policy or legislation will probably alter the outcomes.