



## Ban on coffeeshop tourism?

**ONLY FOR THE DUTCH? —** A new card licensing scheme for Dutch residents may put the Netherlands famous cannabis-tolerant shops out of the reach of Americans and other tourists. Photo: Original Bulldog coffeeshop in Amsterdam.

Photo courtesy of Derrick Bergman / GONZO Media

large number of shops will have to close. The northern city of Leeuwarden, for example, would have to shut down 11 of its 13 coffeeshops. On top of this, an “adjustment” of the legal distinction between soft and hard drugs is planned, a measure that would threaten the foundation of Dutch cannabis policy.

Activists are deeply concerned that, while parliament hasn’t debated cannabis policy in almost three years, regulations are getting ever more repressive.

The VOC (Society for the Abolition of Cannabis Prohibition, [voc-nederland.org](http://voc-nederland.org)) coordinates opposition against the Dutch war on cannabis among consumers, scientists, activists and the industry. Their common goal is summed up in a slogan: ‘Cannabis? Don’t criminalize, regulate!’

A new study by economist Martijn Boerman published in the *Amsterdam Law Review* concludes that legal cannabis would net up to \$1.2 billion annually for the Dutch treasury.

## Incoming Dutch government wants foreigners kept out

By Derrick Bergman, GONZO Media

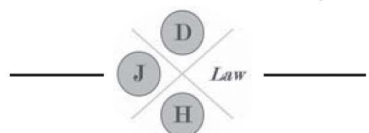
The new right-wing government of the Netherlands has announced drastic measures against coffeeshops. All foreign visitors are to be banned from coffeeshops through a membership card system, and rules are tightened for coffeeshops near schools, threatening hundreds of businesses throughout the country.

The new government is a minority coalition of Christian party CDA and conservative-liberal VVD, as ‘condoned’ by the extreme right anti-Islam party PVV led by Geert Wilders. This means PVV has no ministers in the government, but supports the coalition in Parliament.

For the cannabis industry, this coalition is a worst-case scenario. Prime Minister Mark Rutte wants to ban all foreigners from coffeeshops, introduce mandatory passes, and increase the minimum distance between schools and coffeeshops from 250 meters (820 feet) to 350 (1150 feet).

This ‘distance criterion’ would include primary schools, even though coffeeshops very strictly enforce the age limit of 18 years. If the measure passes Parliament, a

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