

## **The Netherlands: from tolerance haven to a land of rules, and the beat goes on...**

Psytrance in The Netherlands was born underground in the Ruigoord and developed in clubs like the Mazzo, 114 and Trance Buddha. These were the well missed psychedelic golden days, that culminated in the parties of The Silo and The Elf, both squats that had a huge influence in the scene.

When these legendary clubs stopped doing psy nights and large squat parties became less possible due to political rules, organizations found a solution by making parties in commercial clubs. Some adopted the idea of mixing different styles of music to attract more people and cover the higher costs. So now it is common to have a psychedelic floor and a D&B, techno or minimal floor in the same night. This may keep Psytrance alive, but commercializes the scene and some say it made it lose its charm.

The warmer dutch days usually bring illegal outdoor parties and some can be quite well produced. Legal parties, on the other hand, are hard to pull off. Too many rules and a small public make it too risky for organizations. We saw this happen in 2008 with the Day Trip festival in Amsterdam, which had a good line-up and excellent organization, but was not very busy.

Adding to the growing list of rules are the prohibitions of mushrooms and tobacco. Still people are adapting as they get used to smoke-free places and you can, after all, enjoy psychedelic truffles since these remain legal. On the other hand, the dutch government may yet pass another rule where organizations become responsible for any drug taking at their parties and that can be serious.

But regardless of the increasing political pressure to control entertainment, underground indoor and outdoor parties are again flourishing and club nights keep going on. We also have the Ruigoord Summer Solstice and the open air Queensday celebration from Bom Voyage on 30 April, which is still the psychedelic event of the year.

And to top it up, the creativity of the scene keeps growing as talented dutch producers put this little country into the world spot. More artists are releasing their tracks on top labels, as Zen Mechanics, Bassid, Pradox, Kurofusion, Fitalic, Aerophobia, SQL, Liftshift, Jocid, Mad Contrabender and Supergroover. We also have a psychedelic online label: Cytopia Records, where you can buy tracks and even download free music.

So this is The Netherlands in 2009: while tolerance is flying out of the window and commercialization of the music and the scene have been pushing Psytrance around, it still manages to survive in the heart of the underground movement, organizers and producers. And although the government is trying to regulate, cut and flatten out alternative forms of expression, the spirit of the scene goes on...