



# Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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## *Population growth rate remains high*

The Dutch population is expected to increase in 1999 by some 106 thousand people. According to the figures by Statistics Netherlands, this would bring the growth rate to the same level as in 1998. This substantial growth rate is partly due to the booming economy.

The Netherlands will enter the year 2000 with almost 15.9 million people. So in the 20th century the Dutch population has tripled.

There is hardly any increase in the population of the four biggest cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht), but there is a change in the composition of the population, with an increasing immigrant population.

### **The 20th century boom**

In 1900 the Dutch population numbered 5.1, on 1 January 2000 there will be an expected 15.9 million. This means the population has tripled. There were huge fluctuations in the 20th century. The post World War baby boom produced the highest increase, averaging 150 thousand people a year over an almost twenty-year period. The introduction of "the pill" meant a sharp fall in the population growth rate during the seventies. Trends in society such as secularisation, individualisation and emancipation led to a drop in the average number of children per family. On the other hand, immigration went up in the seventies and stayed up.

Statistics Netherlands  
Press Office

P.O. Box 4000  
2270 JM Voorburg  
The Netherlands  
tel. +31 70 337 58 16  
fax +31 70 337 59 71  
e-mail:  
persdienst@cbs.nl

Statistics Netherlands  
is a department of  
the Ministry of  
Economic Affairs

## **Population growth and the economy**

There is a clear correlation between economic growth and population growth. When confidence in the economy goes up, the birth rate figure follows a year and a half later. There is also a relationship with immigration and emigration. A fall in unemployment is followed by more immigrants and fewer emigrants.

The economic boom of the early nineties led to an increase in immigration and in the birth rate. The economic slump in the mid nineties put the brakes on the birth rate again. The recovery came in the late nineties: in 1998 the population increased by 106 thousand, the highest growth rate since 1992. In 1999 the population growth rate is expected to be at about the same level as in 1998.

## **Changes in immigration**

The expectation is that almost 120 thousand immigrants will take up residence in the Netherlands in 1999. This is almost the same number as in the early nineties. However the immigrant population shows some differences, according to the figures from Statistics Netherlands.

In comparison with the early nineties the number of immigrants with the Dutch nationality will be higher in 1999 (42 thousand in 1999 against 35 thousand in the early nineties). This is explained by the higher immigration rates from the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba (from 5 thousand in the early nineties to 9 thousand in 1999) and by the increase in the number of Dutch people returning from a long stay abroad (from 22 to 24 thousand).

In the early nineties most immigrants came from Turkey, Morocco and Suriname. The number of immigrants from these countries has fallen from 25 to 13 thousand by 1999. On the other hand many immigrants are asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran.

## **Immigrant populations in the big cities**

The changes in the immigration patterns influence the regional spreading. For instance people from Turkey, Morocco, Suriname and the Antilles often go to the big cities. Many Turkish people reside in The Hague, many people from Suriname in Amsterdam. Asylum seekers often move to places outside the big cities. Whether they will eventually move to the big cities remains to be seen.

Despite the fact that the immigrants outnumber the emigrants, the populations of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague saw hardly any growth in recent years. This is because relatively many people exchange the bigger cities for the suburbs. This changes the composition of the population in the four big cities. The number of non-western immigrants increased by 117 thousand since 1992 to 558 thousand on 1 January 1999. In that same period the number of the native Dutch fell by 112 thousand.

The non-western immigrants make up 28% of the population in the four major cities, and 9% for the Netherlands as a whole. The percentage of immigrants is higher among young people, 50% in the major cities and 14% for the population under 18 for the Netherlands as a whole.

J.J. Latten, tel. +31 (70) 337 52 32

J. de Beer, tel. +31 (70) 337 52 29.

***Population growth in the nine-  
ties/Bevolkingsontwikkeling in de jaren negentig,  
Annual averages/ gemiddelde aantallen per jaar***

	1990/1993	1994/1997	1998/1999
	x 1 000		
Geboorte/births	198	192	199
Overledenen/deaths	132	136	139
Immi- gratie/immigration	118	104	121
Emigratie/emigration	58	63	59
Administratieve cor- rec- ties/administrative corrections	-14	-19	-17
Bevolkingsgroei/popul ation growth	112	78	106

Bron: CBS