



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Sixteen millionth inhabitant expected next spring

The Netherlands counted its 15.9 millionth inhabitant on 16 May, according to the latest figures from Statistics Netherlands. The sixteen millionth Dutch inhabitant is expected in the spring of 2001.

Population growing by just over 100 thousand people a year

In the last twelve months the number of people living in the Netherlands increased by just over 105 thousand. Nearly 205 thousand babies were born, and 120 thousand immigrants came to live here, while 140 thousand people died and an estimated 80 thousand left the country to live elsewhere.

Sixteen million inhabitants

If the population continues to grow at this rate, the sixteen millionth inhabitant will arrive next spring. There has been a strong surge in population growth since the mid-nineties, caused by both higher birth rates and higher immigration. This trend is probably connected with the strong economy in the Netherlands: in times of economic growth more children are born and more immigrants are drawn to the country.

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Strong growth last century

Five million people lived in the Netherlands at the beginning of the 20th century. In the space of one hundred years this number increased by 11 million people. The ten millionth inhabitant was counted round 1950, the fifteen millionth forty years later in 1990. The highest growth rates were observed in the fifties and sixties, mainly caused by increased birth rates.

Slower growth in coming years

The population will continue to grow in the coming years, but at a slower rate. On the one hand this deceleration will be caused by increased mortality as a consequence of the ageing population; and on the other hand by the lower birth rates as the number of women aged around thirty (the age at which most of today's women have their first baby) will diminish. This is the effect of the strong drop in the number of births after 1970. Immigration is not expected to be able to compensate for these developments.

Peak below 18 million people

Because of the slower growth rate it will take another twenty years for the Dutch population to reach 17 million. After that it will continue to increase but will probably never reach 18 million. The maximum will be in 2030 when nearly 17.5 million people will live in the Netherlands.

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