



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Dutch population heading for 18 million in 2030

Nearly 16 million people live in the Netherlands at the moment. According to the population forecast just released by Statistics Netherlands, the Dutch population will continue to grow for the next three decades, to reach the 18 million mark somewhere around 2030.

Strong growth in 2000

The population has increased by nearly 120 thousand in 2000, considerably more than the 104 thousand in 1999. The number of births has peaked again at just over 206 thousand, 6 thousand more than in 1999. The migration surplus is ten thousand up on last year at 50 thousand people.

Population up one million in ten years

The 17 millionth Dutch inhabitant will be counted somewhere around 2010 and about twenty years later one million more people will be living here. The two million population increase expected in the next thirty years is the equivalent of the combined populations of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. After 2030 the population will hardly grow at all, mainly because mortality rates will rise as the population ages. Today, 14% of the population are 65 years or older. The ageing process will peak around 2040 at 23%.

Immigration will continue to increase

The new population forecasts assume an annual immigration increase of 130 thousand in the coming decades.

Labour migration accounts for some twenty per cent of immigrants arriving in the Netherlands, and this number is expected to increase in the future as the ageing of the population will result in a structural labour shortage: more old people will leave the labour market than can be compensated by the inflow of young people. In view of the expected expansion of the European Union, a large number of labour migrants are expected to come to the Netherlands from eastern Europe.

In addition to labour migrants, other main groups of immigrants are people coming to join relatives already here, asylum seekers and Dutch nationals returning after a period of residence overseas.

Opposite the immigration of 132 thousand people in 2000, 80 thousand people left the country, bringing the migration surplus to just over 50

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thousand people in 2000. The new forecast expects emigration to increase to around 100 thousand in the long run, gradually reducing the migration surplus to about thirty thousand.

More second births

Many women today have their first child only after their thirtieth birthday, having postponed motherhood because of education and career. Most women go on to have a second baby about three years after the first. In recent years women who had delayed starting a family in the past have reached the age that they want a child. The resulting increase in the number of first children in the last few years will lead to an increase in the number of second children in the next few years.

An expected twenty per cent of today's young women will remain childless. About 15% will have only one child, 45% will have two, and twenty per cent will have three or more children.

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