



# Press release

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## ***Slowdown population growth in 2012***

- Population growth 48 thousand in 2012
- Net foreign migration down from 30 thousand to 13 thousand
- Immigration down for the first time since 2006; substantial increase emigration
- Natural population growth at historically low level

Nearly 16.8 million people were living in the Netherlands on 1 January 2013, an increase by 48 thousand relative to one year previously. On balance, 13 thousand people from abroad settled in the Netherlands in 2012, i.e. 17 thousand fewer than in 2011. Altogether, 156 thousand immigrants arrived in the Netherlands and 143 thousand emigrants left the country. Last year, immigration was down for the first time since 2006. Emigration rose for the third year in a row. With 35 thousand, natural population growth (births minus deaths) was the lowest since 1871, according to the most recent figures released by Statistics Netherlands.

### ***Net migration Central and Eastern Europe down***

Last year, 156 thousand immigrants came to the Netherlands, 7 thousand fewer than in 2011. The number of asylum seeking immigrants from Asia and Africa obviously declined and fewer native Dutch living abroad returned to the Netherlands.

The immigration growth from Central and Eastern Europe came to a standstill in 2012, while the number of emigrants in this category continued to grow. With 12 thousand, net migration from Central and Eastern Europe was 6 thousand down from 2011.

Despite the fact that total immigration declined, immigration from Southern Europe continued to rise, probably as a result of the economic crisis raging across these countries. Net migration from Southern Europe exceeded 4 thousand last year.

The number of immigrants from the traditional countries of origin (Turkey, Morocco, Surinam and the former Netherlands Antilles and Aruba) diminished further last year. Emigration in this group was marginally higher than immigration in 2012.

### ***On balance 18 thousand native Dutch left the Netherlands in 2012***

On balance, 10 thousand second-generation people with a foreign background left the Netherlands in 2012, i.e. 1.5 thousand more than in 2011.

With 8 thousand more departures than arrivals (almost the same as in 2011), net migration in the category of native Dutch was negative. Just as in 2011,

emigration of native Dutch to Belgium and Germany exceeded immigration of native Dutch from these countries by approximately 1.5 thousand. Emigration of native Dutch to the traditional emigration countries<sup>i</sup> also exceeded immigration by 1.5 thousand. Although net migration with the countries in Southern Europe is almost zero, a relatively large number of retired migrants left for the Mediterranean, just as in previous years. France and Thailand were also very popular destinations among pensioners.

### ***Fewer births, more deaths***

The natural population growth declined from 44 thousand to 35 thousand in 2012. The number of live births fell by 5 thousand to 175 thousand, the smallest number since the mid-1980s, but annual mortality rose by 5 thousand to 141 thousand. The higher mortality rate was mainly recorded in February and March and was at least partly due to the severe cold that swept the country in February and – to a lesser extent – to the flu outbreak in March. The higher mortality rate had a negative effect on rising life expectancy.

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<sup>i</sup> Central and Eastern European countries: Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Southern Europe: Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

Traditional countries of origin: Morocco, Surinam, Turkey and (former) Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

<sup>i</sup> Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States of America and South Africa.