



Statistics Netherlands: 18.1 million inhabitants in 2060

According to the population forecast published today by Statistics Netherlands, the Dutch population will continue to grow in the coming decades, to 18.1 million inhabitants in 2060. The growth is the result of more migrants arriving in the than leaving country, and increasing life expectancy. More children will be born in the coming years, although not enough to compensate the increasing mortality. The future population of the Netherlands will comprise more older people than people with a foreign background.

Births up again, more immigrants

Fewer and fewer children were born in the last three years. Young couples, in particular have been postponing starting a family, probably in connection with the economic recession. This trend turned around in 2014: 175 thousand children were born, 3 thousand more than in 2013. The birth rate will probably increase further in the next few years, as the number of women aged around 30 will rise. As a result, from 2018 onwards primary schools can expect a 16-year period of increasing pupil numbers. Around 2030 the number of births is expected to be some 193 thousand a year, after which - according to the forecast - it will start to decrease again. The number of immigrants is also rising. In 2014, an estimated 180 thousand immigrants came to the Netherlands, 15 thousand more than in 2013; there were more asylum as well as labour immigrants. The number of emigrants fell by a few thousand, to 144 thousand. Immigration is expected to rise further, but emigration is also expected to increase. The forecast predicts an average net immigration of 19 thousand migrants per year in the next decades.

Migration will continue to expand population

The Dutch population has increased by 2.4 million inhabitants in the last thirty years. People with at least one parent born outside the Netherlands accounted for three-quarters of this increase. In the coming decades, too, international migration is expected to contribute significantly to population growth. By 2060, the Netherlands is expected to have 0.9 million more first-generation immigrants, and 1.2 million more second-generation immigrants (born in the Netherlands). The number of inhabitants of whom both parents were born in the Netherlands will decrease by 0.9 million.

Longer lives also pushing up population

The increasing length of life also contributes to population growth. Based on the current state of public health and medical technology, boys born in 2014 will live to an average age of 79.9 years, and girls to 83.3 years. This 'virtual life expectancy' is constantly increasing, however - as a result of medical progress for example - and will be 7 years longer in 2060 than it is now.

Without this increase, just over one million more inhabitants would die in the next 45 years than predicted by the forecast. In that case the population would hardly be larger than it is now. Obviously, this increasing length of life will lead to a stronger increase in the number of elderly. According to the forecast, the number of over-65s will rise from 3.0 million today to 4.8 million in 2040 and 4.7 million in 2060. The number of over-80s will rise from 0.7 million now to an expected 2 million in 2060.