

# Netherlands

## Introduction

Migrants have been attracted by the relatively high levels of prosperity and religious tolerance in the Netherlands for centuries. Currently, immigrants make up 10.8 percent of the population, and the children of immigrants make up a further 10 percent.

The Dutch long took pride in their country's tolerance towards other cultures and religions. Post-war immigrants, especially those who came as guest workers and their families, were initially encouraged to maintain their own cultures even after it became clear they would stay in the Netherlands. Access to citizenship was easy, and pressures to assimilate were low. During the 1990s it became clear that the former guest workers and, to a lesser extent, immigrants from the former colonies were performing poorly in the labor market. Moreover, the struggles of immigrant



## Background Information

Capital<sup>3</sup>: Amsterdam

Seat of government: The Hague

Official languages: Dutch, Frisian (regional)

Area: 41,540 km<sup>2</sup>

Population (2014): 16,829,289

Population density (2013): 498 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>

Population growth (2013): +0.30%

Foreign nationals as a percentage of population (2013): 4.75%

Allochtonen<sup>4</sup> as percentage of population (2014): 21.36%  
(non-Western<sup>5</sup>: 11.87%)

Labor force participation rate (2013)<sup>6</sup>: 72.1%

Unemployment rate: 8.3% (2013), 6.4% (2012), 5.4% (2011)

Religions (2006): 27% Roman Catholic, 17% Protestant, 6% Islam, 1% Hindu, 48% not religious

children in schools caused concern that their low economic status would continue in the next generation. Lacking Dutch proficiency and knowledge of Dutch society were seen as important contributors to marginalization. Landmark legislation in 1998 introduced an obligation for recent migrants to take a "civic integration course" (*Inburgeringscursus*) covering Dutch language, culture and society.

With the turn of the century came a very turbulent time for Dutch multiculturalism. A heated public debate emerged over (perceived) low levels of integration among long-time immigrants and their children.<sup>1</sup> The debate covered areas such as high unemployment and social welfare use, poor performance in school, residential segregation and high crime rates. Cultural difference and low Dutch proficiency were presented as both a problem in their own right and a source of socio-economic disadvantage.

The electoral success of far-right populist parties since 2002 contributed to the implementation of several restrictive laws. The main goal was to restrict family migration and pressure immigrants to learn Dutch. Although there is little evidence of the results of compulsory civic integration courses, several other European countries have implemented their own versions of this policy.

Even after the implementation of more restrictive legislation, policies in the Netherlands are still comparatively open. Especially political rights and accommodation of minority religions remain extensive. The Netherlands took the

middle road in opening the job market to EU-migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (see below). As part of a move towards a “modern migration policy” the government is developing several programs to attract highly skilled workers.

## Historical Trends in Immigration and Emigration

For centuries, the relative freedom and wealth of the Netherlands have attracted significant flows of immigrants. Many Huguenots – Protestants from France - and Jews from Southern and Eastern Europe came to the Low Countries. Between 1590 and 1800 the estimated foreign-born population in the Netherlands was never less than five percent.<sup>7</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the foreign-born population declined, reaching about two percent in 1880. From 1870, there were more people leaving than entering the country. After the Second World War, the government encouraged emigration because it feared that the high birth-rate would create unemployment. During the 1950s, roughly 350,000 people emigrated. Canada and Australia were the most popular destinations, followed by the U.S., South Africa and New Zealand.<sup>8</sup>

In 1960 immigration again came to exceed emigration. Post-war immigration was dominated by people from the (former) colonies and from guest worker recruitment countries. When the Dutch colony of Indonesia claimed independence in 1945, two groups of migrants came to the Netherlands: about 300,000 Dutch-Indonesian repatriates and 12,500 Malukans.<sup>9</sup> In 1975, Suriname, a small Dutch colony just north of Brazil, gained independence. By the time the Netherlands introduced a visa requirement for Surinamese in 1980, nearly half the population had migrated to the Netherlands.

The Netherlands Antilles, a group of small Caribbean islands that have remained part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, are another important source of migrants. Like upper-class Surinamese, upper-class Antilleans have long come to the Netherlands to study. When the economic situation on the islands became precarious in the 1990s, more and more lower class Antilleans moved to the “mother country.” These migrants often struggle to find their way in the Netherlands, which has led to an increase in return migration.

### Post-War Migration

Like other Western European countries, the Netherlands recruited guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s; the Netherlands signed agreements with Italy (1960), Spain (1961), Portugal (1963), Turkey (1964), Greece (1967), Morocco (1969), Yugoslavia (1970) and Tunisia (1971). Turkey, Morocco and Spain were the most important sending countries. Guest workers from Southern Europe mostly returned to their home countries – especially after Spain and Portugal joined the EU. Return migration to Turkey and Morocco was less common because the economic and political situation in these countries remained poor

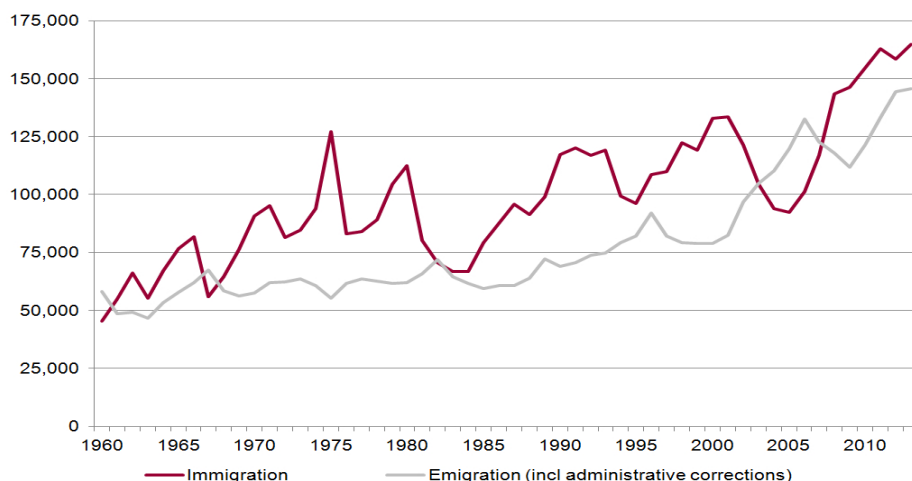
and re-entering the Netherlands or other European countries became more difficult for non EU-citizens. After the recruitment stop in 1975, many guest workers decided to prolong their stay in the Netherlands and were joined by their families. Family reunification peaked around 1980. Initially this process met resistance from the government and society because of the housing shortage the Netherlands was facing. Nevertheless, in the early 1980s family reunification regulations were relaxed. As a consequence of family reunification, family formation,<sup>10</sup> and childbirth, the Moroccan and Turkish origin populations have shown a strong increase in size. From 1975 to 2014 the Turkish origin population grew from about 55,639 to 396,414 and the Moroccan origin population from 30,481 to 374,996.<sup>11</sup>

## Recent Developments in Immigration and Emigration

From 1960 until 2003,<sup>12</sup> the number of immigrants exceeded the number of emigrants. Between 2003 and 2007 a simultaneous increase in emigration and decrease in immigration led to a negative migration balance (see Figure 1). From 2003 onward, well over 100,000 people a year left the Netherlands. About a third of these emigrants were Dutch-born. Native Dutch mostly emigrate to neighboring Germany and Belgium or other European countries.

The drop in immigration from 2003 was mostly due to a drop in asylum and family migration. The increase in immigration from 2007 was mainly driven by an increase in labor migration. Since 2010 immigration has topped 150,000 people a year.

Until 2007 family migration was the main source of migration to the Netherlands,<sup>13</sup> accounting for almost 40 percent of all immigrants. Since 2007, labor migrants make up the largest group. The shift in migration types and increase in overall immigration were mainly driven by migration from Central and Eastern European countries that joined the European Union (EU) in 2004 and 2007. “Old” EU Member States<sup>14</sup> are allowed to put a maximum of seven years restriction on the freedom of movement from new Member States. The Netherlands fully opened its borders to citizens of the 2004-accession countries<sup>15</sup> in May 2007. Because migrants from the new Member States do not need a residence permit and often do not register with the municipal authorities (in part because many are seasonal workers, employed in agriculture or construction) it is difficult to know exactly how many of them are in the Netherlands. Estimates by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) suggest that the number of migrants from the new Member States increased from just below 100,000 in 2007 to about 250,000 in 2012. In this same period the number of migrants from the old Member States increased only from 335,000 to 350,000. Polish migrants are the most prominent group; they make up about 70 percent of all migrants from the new Member States. The large flow of migrants from the 2004-accession countries, led the government to place the maximum restriction period on the freedom of movement from Bulgaria and Romania.<sup>16</sup> Even though the restrictions

**Figure 1: Immigration and emigration, 1960-2013**

Source: CBS

on free movement from these two countries were only lifted in 2014, Statistics Netherlands estimates that by the end of 2012 already more than 30,000 people from these two countries were living in the Netherlands.

## Immigration Policy

### Aliens Act of 2000

In 2001 the Aliens Act of 2000 (*Vreemdelingenwet 2000*, *Vw 2000*), came into effect. This law brought about major changes in refugee and asylum procedures (see below). During the 1990s politicians had become increasingly concerned with the large numbers of migrants arriving for the purpose of family formation. Some of these marriages were “fake”; contracted for no other purpose than to obtain a visa. There were also concerns about the high share of children of – particularly Turkish and Moroccan – immigrants marrying partners from the origin countries of their parents. Since these marriage migrants were often low-skilled there were fears that they would lead to a continuation of socio-economic marginality into the next generation. The law therefore raised the bar for marriage migration.

The minimum income that a Dutch citizen or resident must have in order to sponsor a family migrant was raised to at least 100 percent of the minimum family income (or 120 percent in case of non-permanent residents).<sup>17</sup> In addition sponsors must have an employment contract for at least one year and be at least 21 years of age. The spouse who comes to the Netherlands has to be at least 21. Since 1998 the spouse must await a permit outside of the Netherlands. An exception is made for spouses from the US, Japan, Switzerland, Australia, and EU and EEA Member States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway). These exceptions are based on bilateral treaties, but they also reflect the fear that people from other countries are more likely

to be economic immigrants who use marriage as a way to enter the country. In 2004 the minimum income requirement for family formation was raised from 100 percent to 120 percent of the minimum family income. In 2010 the European Court of Justice ruled<sup>18</sup> that this was unreasonably high and the requirement was brought back down to 100 percent.

### Law on Civic Integration Abroad

In 2006 the law on “civic integration abroad” (*Wet Inburgering Buitenland, Wib*) came into force.

Those who want to come to the Netherlands for the purposes of family migration (formation or reunification) now need to pass a Dutch language and culture proficiency test in the country of residence. Citizens of EU and EEA Member States, Switzerland, Monaco, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States, Japan and South Korea are exempted. In 2011 the Administrative High Court ruled that as a consequence of the association treaty between Turkey and the EU, Turkish nationals and their family members are also exempt.

As part of the study material, applicants can buy a video entitled “Coming to the Netherlands”. This video, which includes images of gay men kissing and topless women lying on the beach, was very controversial when it was introduced, because it seemed designed to provoke Muslim migrants and not everybody considers homosexuality and topless sunbathing to be core Dutch values.

After restrictions on family migration were implemented, numbers initially dropped significantly.<sup>20</sup> Since 2007 the numbers have increased again, but this is mainly due to migrants from the new EU Member States.<sup>21</sup> Dutch residents of Turkish and Moroccan origin increasingly find a spouse from the local co-ethnic community rather than from the origin country of their parents.<sup>22</sup>

### Attracting Highly-Qualified Migrants

The government has been working to improve access for highly skilled workers. Special entry regulations for knowledge workers were introduced in 2004. Employees of companies who have signed an agreement with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) qualify for fast-track admission. Knowledge workers are exempted from the civic integration requirement. Since 2006 academic researchers and medical doctors training to specialize do not need to meet an income requirement; it is sufficient to show they have means of subsistence and work at a recognized institution. In 2007 the income requirement for foreigners with a degree from a Dutch university who find high-skilled employment was lowered.<sup>23</sup> From 2008 to 2011 23,390 knowl-

edge workers and 2,400 foreigners who studied at Dutch universities received residence permits. A program to attract graduates from the top-200 ranked universities in the world<sup>24</sup> has been largely unsuccessful; between 2009 and 2012 fewer than 500 permits were granted.

## Immigrant Population

### Defining Allochtonen and Autochtonen

Statistics on the immigrant population in the Netherlands are based on ethnicity which is measured as (parental) country of birth. Information on parental country of birth is collected in the municipal registration system (*gemeentelijke basisadministratie, GBA*). Dutch statistics distinguish between *allochtonen* and *autochtonen*.<sup>25</sup> *Autochtonen* are native Dutch; people with two Dutch-born parents. *Allochtonen* are officially defined as persons who have at least one parent who was born outside the Netherlands. A further distinction is made between Western and non-Western *allochtonen*. Western *allochtonen* are people from Europe (excluding Turkey), North America, Oceania, Indonesia and Japan. Non-Western *allochtonen* are people from Turkey, Africa, Latin American and the rest of Asia. Many statistics differentiate between *allochtonen* and *autochtonen* (and often further differentiate between individual ethnic groups). Most statistics, and research based on them, focus in particular on the non-Western group, as they are seen as the ones with the most disadvantaged position in Dutch society. In everyday usage the term *allochtonen*

tends to denote the non-Western group, and more specifically Turks and Moroccans.

### Composition of the Immigrant Population

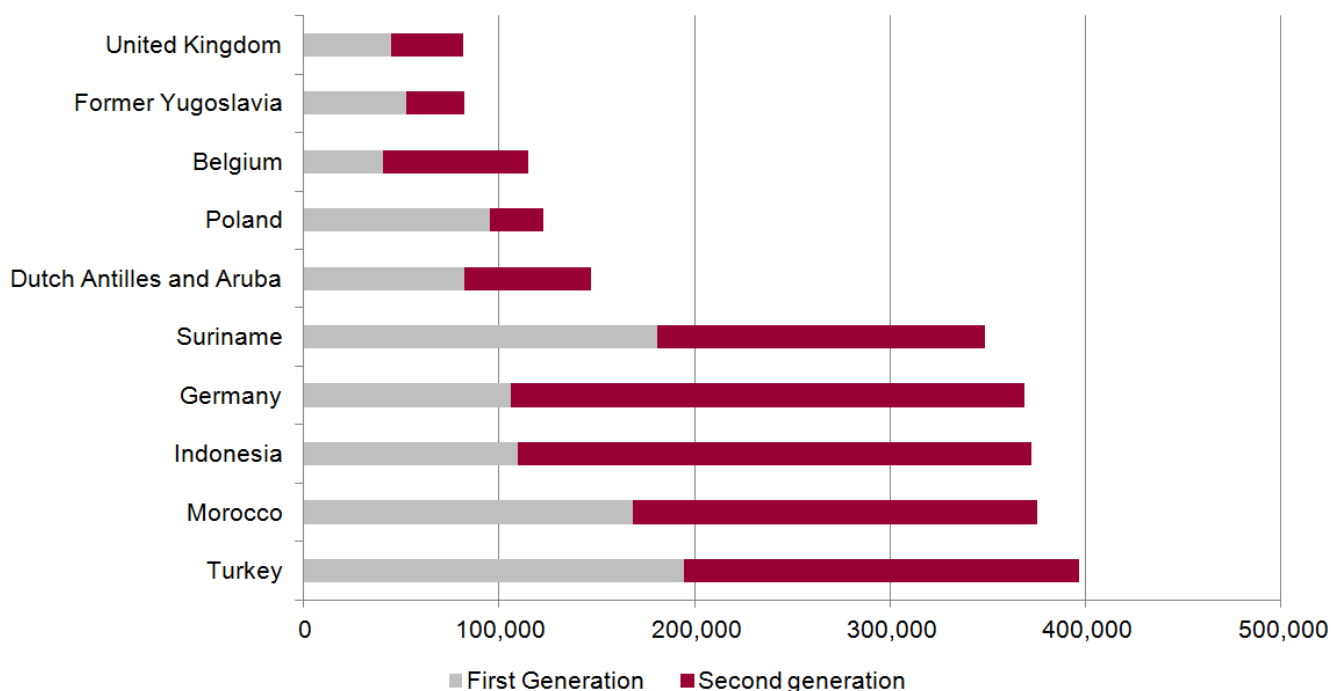
Because naturalization rates are generally high and differ across origin groups, data on *allochtonen* present a different view of the immigrant origin population than data on foreigners. 21.4 percent of the Dutch population is *allochtoon* (11.9 percent non-Western), 10.8 percent is foreign-born and 4.75 percent of the population does not possess Dutch citizenship. The ten largest groups make up two-thirds of the total *allochtoon* population. The top-10 is made up of groups originating from (former) colonies, guest worker recruitment countries, and three neighboring countries, Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom (see Figure 2). Taken together, people born in EU Member States and their children make up 27.4 percent of the *allochtoon* population.

The top-10 of foreign nationals<sup>26</sup> does not include any former colonial groups. This is to be expected as these migrants were often Dutch nationals at the time of migration. Instead, in addition to the former guest worker recruitment countries Morocco and Turkey it includes several EU countries and the U.S. (see Figure 3). According to data from Statistics Netherlands, there are nationals from 190 different countries living in the Netherlands.<sup>27</sup>

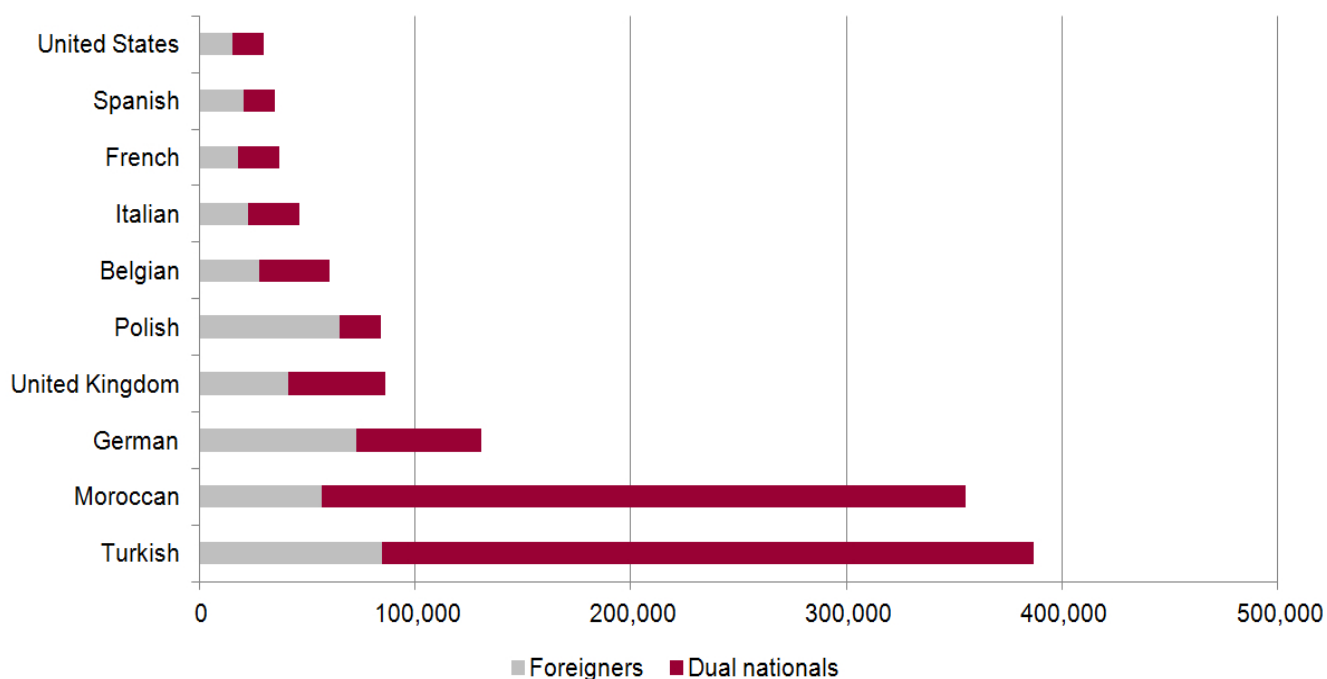
### Spatial Distribution

The immigrant population tends to live in urban areas. Nearly 30 percent of *allochtonen* (38 percent of all non-

Figure 2: Top-10 groups of 'allochtonen', 2014



Source: CBS

**Figure 3: Top-10 foreign nationals and dual nationals, 2012**

Source: CBS

Western *allochtonen*) live in the four largest cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague and Utrecht), compared to 8.9 percent of the *autochtoon* Dutch population. In Amsterdam, Rotterdam and the Hague, *allochtonen* make up around half of the population. Some smaller municipalities also have a high concentration of certain groups, mostly as a consequence of the presence of industries that employed guest workers. Within cities there are high levels of segregation: many immigrants live in neighborhoods with a low percentage of *autochtonen*.<sup>28</sup>

## Integration Policy

### 1960-1997: Culture as an Asset

Initially both the Dutch government and immigrants believed that their stay in the Netherlands would be temporary.<sup>29</sup> Given this “myth of return”, it was considered unnecessary to fully integrate migrants into Dutch society; thus the government only aimed to provide them with good living conditions. Guest workers were allowed to make use of all of the regular provisions of the welfare state. Additionally, cultural and social facilities were set up. The children of guest workers could take special mother tongue classes. All measures were aimed at making the transition back “home” as smooth as possible.

#### *System of pillarization*

This provision of support for cultural maintenance fitted with the Dutch principle of “sovereignty in one’s own circle”, which was part of the system of “pillarization” (*ver-*

*zulling*). This Dutch political system took hold in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and accorded each religious faith, and later the secular socialist and liberal groups, their own “pillar”. The pillars had an elaborate infrastructure that encompassed most of public life including trade unions, newspapers, sport clubs, undertakers and, for the Christian groups, schools.<sup>30</sup> The Netherlands has rapidly secularized since the Second World War, but the institutional structures of pillarization are still in place.

#### *Multiculturalism*

In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a growing realization that immigrants would stay in the Netherlands. There were also concerns that many of the members of the largest migrant groups had a weak socio-economic position; unemployment was well-above that of native Dutch and the children of migrants performed poorly in school. In the early 1980s the ethnic minority policy was introduced with the later infamous slogan of “integration with the preservation of migrants’ own identities.” The maintenance of immigrant cultures was no longer seen as a means of facilitating return to the countries of origin, but as a road to emancipation, similar to the one the Catholic minority had followed. There was generous state support for immigrants’ social and cultural life; there were consultative councils for ethnic minorities at the local and national level; mother-tongue teaching was introduced in primary schools. The first Muslim and Hindu schools were erected using laws from the time of pillarization. Aside from stimulating integration through cultural activities, the policy aimed at equality before the law and equal opportunity in the labor market, housing market and education.

*Change of policy*

In the 1990s, it became clear that the socio-economic position of the four main non-Western immigrant groups (Turks, Surinamese, Moroccans and Antilleans) remained poor and minority youth were overrepresented in crime statistics. The policy focus therefore shifted from cultural preservation to labor market integration and equal opportunities. Mother-tongue teaching was limited and made extra-curricular, and the importance of education and learning Dutch were stressed. The change in integration policy was part of a larger change in discourse on state policy from the rights of citizens to the duties of citizens. In the 1980s and 1990s the welfare state was facing a crisis: the number of people on welfare had become too large relative to the working population, the welfare system needed a reform. A poor socio-economic position was increasingly seen as a result of people's actions rather than a lack of opportunities. This new emphasis on people's own responsibilities also spread to the field of immigrant integration.

**1998-2014: Culture as a Problem**

As early as 1989, the Scientific Council for Government Policy (*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, WRR*) recommended language training programs for newly arrived immigrants to support their integration. It was however not until 1998 that the law on the civic integration of newcomers (*Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers, WIN*) was introduced. The law required all new immigrants aged 18-65 – with the exception of students and temporary workers – to take 600 hours of language and societal orientation classes. Citizens of the EU, the EEA, Switzerland and the U.S. who came for reasons other than marriage or family reunification were exempted. The program was meant to help immigrants find their way in Dutch society and become self-supporting. If new immigrants did not comply, their social security could be cut or they could be fined.

Since the introduction, the law has been amended several times, increasingly turning civic integration into a mechanism to discipline immigrants. Since 2007 new immigrants no longer have an obligation to attend a civic integration course, instead they must pass a civic integration exam to qualify for a permanent residence permit. This requirement does not apply to citizens of the EU, EEA, Switzerland and Turkey.

Migrants have to pay for any course needed to prepare for the exam. They can borrow money from the government for this purpose. In 2007 a civic integration duty (*inburgeringsplicht*) for permanent resident foreigners who arrived before 1998 (*oudkomers*) and who have not attended education in the Netherlands was introduced. This extended integration obligation is mostly aimed at people on welfare and spiritual leaders such as imams. The civic integration exam must be passed within five years after an *oudkomer* has been summoned by the municipality. If s/he fails the test, s/he can be fined.

*Right-wing populism on the rise*

The process of imposing increasing restrictions on family migration (see above) and pressures on Dutch language acquisition that had started in the 1990s accelerated after electoral success of populist far-right parties from 2002 onwards. There have been anti-immigrant parties in the Netherlands since the 1980s, but these parties initially remained marginal. While the general public grew annoyed with the poor Dutch proficiency and perceived lacking cultural adaptation of many of the former guest workers and their families, as well as the alleged delinquency of their children, few politicians responded to these complaints.<sup>31</sup> After the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, several Islamophobic incidents occurred. At that time a new politician entered the public arena: Pim Fortuyn. Fortuyn was fairly well-known for his column in the right-wing magazine *Elsevier*, in which he agitated against immigrants and what he regarded as lenient government policies. Rather than using the nuanced discourse of the political establishment, Fortuyn expressed himself boldly, calling Islam a “backward religion”, and saying that the “leftwing church” had pampered immigrants at the expense of native Dutch. He argued that the Netherlands should close its borders to all immigrants, including refugees, until those already present in the country were fully integrated. This was received by many as a welcome reaction to years of political correctness. It was often stated that Fortuyn “said what people had been thinking all along”.

Fortuyn's political career came to a tragic end when he was assassinated by an environmental activist on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2002, one week prior to the general elections. In the elections the *Christen Democratisch Appel* (Christian Democrats, CDA) won the most seats, but even without its leader, Fortuyn's party, the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (List Pim Fortuyn, LPF) came in second with 17.6 percent of the votes. These two parties along with the right-wing liberal *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, VVD) formed a short-lived coalition government. The LPF lost most of its seats in the 2003 elections, and after the 2006 elections disappeared from parliament. The discourse on immigrants in general – and Muslim immigrants in particular – however, remained ferocious.

In November 2004 a young Moroccan-Dutch extremist Muslim murdered filmmaker Theo van Gogh.<sup>32</sup> In response, several mosques were set on fire. In that same year Geert Wilders left the VVD in a dispute over negotiating EU-accession with Turkey - Wilders was fiercely opposed - and started the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom, PVV). Wilders has made very strong statements against Muslims, warning about a “tsunami of islamization” hitting the Netherlands, calling the Quran a “fascist book” and suggesting a tax on headscarves (*kopvoddentax*). After gaining 5.9 percent of the vote in the 2006 parliamentary elections, party support jumped to 15.5 percent in the 2010 elections. The media uncovered problematic pasts<sup>33</sup> of several of the new PVV parliamentarians and

in the 2012 elections the party dropped to 10.1 percent of the votes. Wilders remains very prominent in Dutch politics and media. Politicians from other parties struggle to deal with him. Wilders continues to express his disdain of Islam and Muslim migrants – especially from Morocco. In recent years he has also become vocally opposed to migration from the new EU Member States and the EU as a whole. In early 2012 the PVV announced a “hotline for Central and Eastern-Europe” (*meldpunt Midden- en Oost-Europeanen*) that people could call to file their complaints about nuisance caused by Central and Eastern European migrants (CEE). Embassies of the countries concerned objected to the hotline, but the government did not intervene. While the hotline received nearly 40,000 complaints about CEE migrants, a newspaper revealed that 135,000 calls to the hotline concerned complaints about the existence of the hotline and the PVV.<sup>34</sup> The hotline has since been closed.

#### *Focus on Muslim migrants*

Most of the current debate surrounding immigrants and integration center on Muslims. There is a widespread fear that some immigrant groups’ views on gender roles, gay rights and the role of religion in society are at odds with those of the liberal mainstream in the Netherlands. Throughout the post-war period, cultural belonging and difference have been important concepts in policies and political debates on immigrant integration. Dutch society’s views of immigrants’ cultures have, however, changed. Culture has come to be seen as something that holds people back, and civic integration courses are thus aimed at correcting this by mandating that immigrants adopt Dutch culture. There is a near parliamentary-wide consensus that immigrants can – and should – be obliged to learn Dutch and accept certain liberal-democratic values. Rather than supporting immigrant culture with public funds, policies are increasingly aimed at surveying immigrants’ conformity to what is perceived as Dutch culture. Policies and discourse have shifted from treating migrants as objects in need of care and support to overcome their disadvantaged position to objects of sanctions to correct behavior that is seen as the cause of their own problems and those of society.

Despite a change in rhetoric about immigrant integration since the early 2000s, changes to policies were initially limited. It remains possible to set up publicly funded religious primary and secondary schools – including Islamic schools. Public support for broadcasting by religion-based broadcasting corporations that air programs on the public channels was available until 2013. In 2004, a Muslim council (*Contactorgaan Moslims en Overheid, CMO*) and a Chinese council were added to the range of ethnic consultative bodies that can advise the government on policies related to immigrants. Only in 2015 will government subsidies for the consultative bodies and their member organizations end.

## Citizenship

The Netherlands has a comparatively open citizenship policy. Since 1953, third generation migrants (i.e. the grandchildren of immigrants) receive Dutch citizenship at birth. In 1985, the Netherlands introduced a new citizenship law that replaced the law of 1892. The law introduced an option-right to Dutch nationality for Dutch born children of immigrants (the second generation) between the ages of 18 and 25. In amendments that came into effect in 2003 the age-limit was removed, but the option right was made conditional on the outcome of a public order investigation.

Immigrants can naturalize after five years of legal residence, or three if they are married to a Dutch citizen. Until 2003 the naturalization requirements were minimal: applicants had to show that they had no serious criminal record and complete a modest oral exam to test their Dutch language ability. This exam usually involved a civil servant asking the candidate to state their name, place of birth, address and year of immigration in Dutch. The low threshold to naturalization was a deliberate choice. The government believed that it was important for the immigrant population to have equal rights, and awarding citizenship was seen as a good way of ensuring this.<sup>35</sup> Naturalization was perceived as an important step towards integration. In the 1980s and 1990s the government organized campaigns to encourage immigrants to naturalize.

Legally resident foreigners have several rights that other countries usually reserve for citizens. Since 1985 foreigners have been allowed to work in the civil service, with the exception of the police force and the army. After five years of legal residence, foreigners have the right to vote and stand for election in local elections.

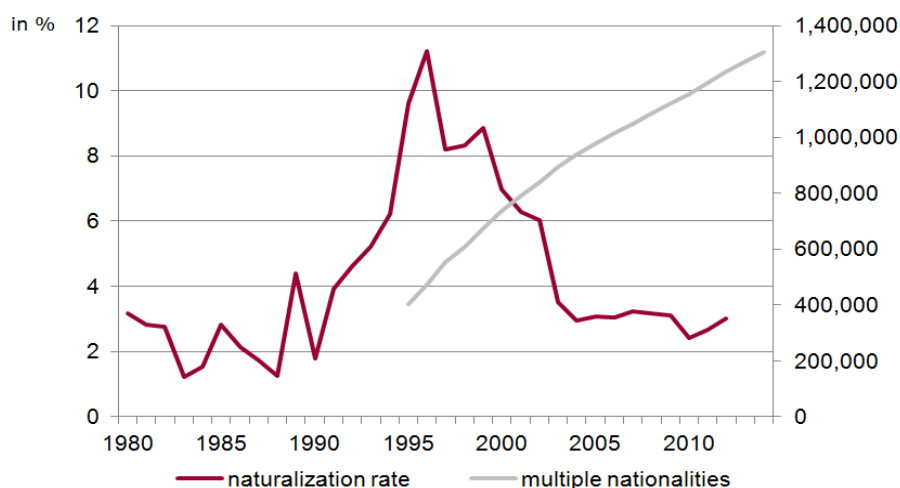
### Dual Citizenship

Dual citizenship was introduced in January 1992, which led to an increase in naturalizations. Dual citizenship was highly contested, and in October 1997 it was withdrawn. As a consequence there was a drop in the naturalization rate,<sup>36</sup> from a peak of 10.9 percent in 1996 to 8.2 percent in 1998 (see Figure 4). There are several exemptions to the renunciation obligation, and the law is not applied very rigidly. Dual nationality is still often granted. The number of dual nationals has continued to rise from 600,000 in 1998 to 1.3 million in 2014 (see Figure 4). The continuing rise of dual citizenship is not only due to ongoing exemptions, but also a product of previous policies. Parents who previously became dual citizens can pass on both citizenships.

### Tightening Access to Citizenship

In line with the stricter approach toward immigrant integration in general, citizenship requirements have been tightened. Granting citizenship is no longer seen as a means of facilitating integration, but more as a reward that should only be given to people who have proven that they have successfully integrated. To test the level of integration, a

**Figure 4: Naturalization rate and number of dual nationals**  
(includes dual nationality acquired at birth)



Source: CBS

formal naturalization test was introduced in 2003. This written exam tests both the applicant's language proficiency and his/her knowledge of Dutch culture and society. The introduction of the test led to a decrease in naturalizations. In 2005 the naturalization rate was 3.1 percent, which is still high compared to other European countries. It has remained stable ever since. Since 2007, people who passed the civic integration exam no longer have to do a naturalization test.<sup>37</sup> In 2008 "naturalization ceremonies" were introduced. These ceremonies are held on national naturalization day (December 15<sup>th</sup>) and on other days selected by municipalities. Applicants for Dutch citizenship have to attend these ceremonies and declare their allegiance to the Netherlands (*verklaring van verbondenheid*).

## Immigrant Integration

Non-Western *allochtoon* groups are generally in a disadvantaged socio-economic position. Although there have been improvements over time, particularly for the second generation in education and the labor market performance, significant gaps remain. Of the four largest non-Western immigrant groups, Moroccans are the group that is performing worst but is also the group that has showing the strongest improvements in education among the second generation. Of the smaller communities, Somalis stand out for suffering from very high unemployment, welfare dependency and high crime rates among young Somali boys.<sup>38</sup> Chinese and Iranians immigrants and their children on the other hand do very well both in education and the labor market.

### Labor Market

In 2012, unemployment among non-Western *allochtonen* was 16 percent of those participating in the labor market, compared to 5 percent among *autochtoon* Dutch. Unemployment was particularly high among Somali (37 percent),

Afghan (21 percent) and Iraqi (20 percent) migrants. Since the beginning of the 2008 economic crisis immigrant groups have suffered a larger increase in unemployment than native Dutch.<sup>39</sup> Youth unemployment among immigrant groups has reached 28 percent and even as much as 37 percent for Moroccan origin 15-24 year olds. This gap can only partially be explained by differences in education, grades and region of residence. Part of the gap may be due to differences in job hunting behavior and social networks,<sup>40</sup> but a study from 2007 found evidence of ethnic discrimination by employers.<sup>41</sup> Although unemployment levels remain comparatively high, there has been an increase of the share of *allochtonen* working in occupations that require at higher education (so-called *Hogere beroepen* which are occupations that normally require at least a bachelor's degree (*HBO* or *universiteit*). Of the second generation nearly 30 percent work in a higher level occupation, which is close to the level of native Dutch.<sup>42</sup>

### Education

The education level among the second generation shows a significant improvement compared to their parents and over time. Performance in elementary school has improved and an increasing share of the second generation attends the two highest tiers of secondary education (*HAVO/VWO*)<sup>43</sup>. The increased participation in higher education is especially notable. In 2011 the share of non-Western *allochtonen* starting higher education (*hogeschool* or *universiteit*) was 53 percent up from 43 percent in 2003, compared to an increase from 53 to 58 percent for *autochtoon* Dutch. People of Surinamese and Antillean origin perform almost at par with *autochtoon* Dutch. Turkish and Moroccan origin women show a strong increase in participation in higher education from about 30 percent in 2003 to close to 50 percent in 2011. A much stronger increase than among men: 34 to 37 percent for Moroccan origin and 26 to 39 for Turkish origin men.

Increased enrollment in higher education is, however, only part of the story. Drop-out rates from high school and vocational tertiary education continue to be high among non-Western groups. While also here there have been improvements over time, less than half of 20-35 year olds of Turkish or Moroccan origin have a degree from the academic tiers of secondary school or a tertiary degree that is considered a starting point for entering the labor market (*startkwalificatie*). The degree completion rate among non-Western immigrant groups in higher education is lower than that of native Dutch. Of those who started their studies in 2003, 75 percent of native and 60 percent of non-Western migrant origin students obtained their bachelor's degree within eight years.<sup>44</sup>



## Crime Rates

Crime levels have been decreasing for all origin groups. However, the relative overrepresentation of Moroccan and Antillean origin youths has been increasing. Sixty-five percent of Moroccan-Dutch and 55 percent of Antillean-Dutch boys have been apprehended between the ages of 12 and 23, compared to 25 percent of *autochtoon* Dutch boys.<sup>45</sup> The high crime rates figure prominently in public debates. These differences are only in part due to socio-economic differences, racial profiling<sup>46</sup> by the police may also play a role.

## Political Participation

The political participation of immigrants is high compared to other countries. Though the percentage of voters is lower than among *autochtonen*, there are a considerable number of *allochtoon* politicians. Out of the 150 members of parliament, 14 are of non-Western immigrant origin – mostly Turkish. In the 2010 local elections, 303 councilors (or three percent) of immigrant origin were elected. Although this number does not yet represent the share of the immigrant population, it is a good record compared to neighboring countries. More than half of these 303 local councilors are of Turkish origin.<sup>47</sup>

## Irregular Migration

It was estimated that in 2009 there were between 60,667 and 133,624 irregular migrants in the Netherlands.<sup>48</sup> This is a considerable drop from the estimates of 150,000 to 200,000 irregular migrants for the period 1997–2003. Irregular migrants come from countries with long-standing migration to the Netherlands such as Turkey and Morocco, refugee sending countries and countries that have more recently started sending labor migrants to the Netherlands such as Ukraine and the Philippines.<sup>49</sup>

The drop in the number of apprehended irregular migrants since 2003 is partly due to EU enlargement; migrants from Central and Eastern European countries who were previously irregular now enjoy the right to free movement.<sup>50</sup> Until 2004, Europeans made up about a third of apprehended irregular migrants.

In the late 1990s there were many protests by so-called “white illegals” (*witte illegalen*), people who were living in the Netherlands without a residence permit but were employed and paid taxes. Several hundred of these “white illegals” were later granted residence permits. The 1998 Linking Act (*koppelingswet*) restricted the ability of irregular migrants to pursue regular employment. The act linked the databases of several government in-

stitutions (tax authorities, immigration services, municipalities), so that irregular immigrants could be easily excluded from public services and prevented from being issued a social security number (a prerequisite for regular employment, social security benefits and subsidized housing). The law does allow access to education for children under 18 and people with “imperative” medical needs access to treatment. Further control measures focus on employers. The police perform regular inspections in sectors that are known to employ irregular migrants, such as agriculture and food services. Employers who are caught employing irregular migrants can be fined.

While staying in the Netherlands without authorization is not a crime, irregular migrants who end up in police custody can be detained in deportation centers if the authorities believe that they can be deported in the near future.

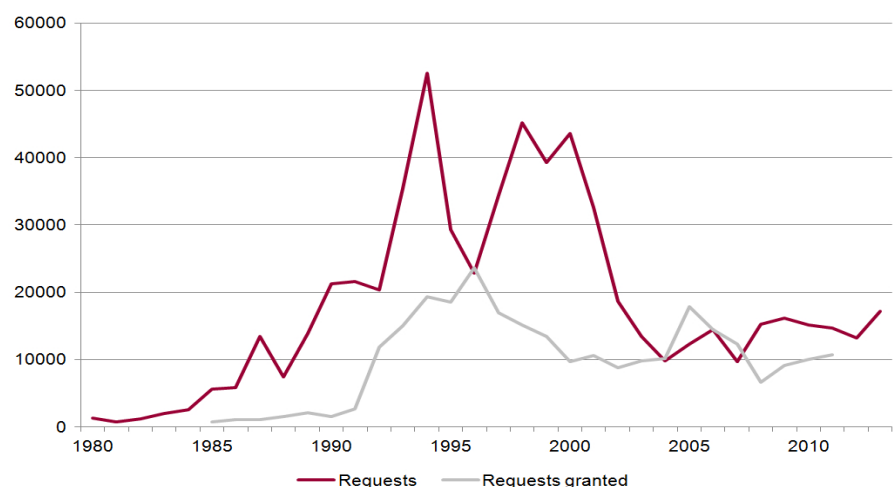
## Refuge and Asylum

Soldiers from Eastern European countries such as Poland, who had helped liberate the Netherlands and subsequently decided to stay when their countries of origin came under communist regimes, were among the first post-war refugees. They were later joined by compatriots fleeing those regimes, as well as refugees from around the world. The Netherlands accepts approximately 500 refugees a year who have been selected for resettlement from UN refugee camps. Currently, the major refugee communities are from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Somalia and Bosnia.

## Numbers

For many years the Netherlands received a relatively high number of asylum seekers.<sup>51</sup> In the second half of the 1980s, the number of asylum seekers increased rapidly. In 1980, 1,330 people claimed asylum in the Netherlands; in 1990 this number had risen to 21,210. However, the rise

Figure 5: Asylum claims and permits, 1980-2013



Source: CBS

in applications did not mean a rise in the number of refugee permits granted (see Figure 5). From 1987 to 1996, 40 percent of claimants were granted a permit. During the 1980s and 1990s several regulations were implemented to discourage people from coming to the Netherlands to claim asylum. These regulations were not very successful in lowering the inflow of asylum seekers; their number peaked in 1994 at over 50,000.

### Legal Framework

Refuge and asylum in the Netherlands is governed by the Aliens Act of 2000 (Vw 2000). Under this act, asylum seekers can be granted refugee status if they meet the criteria of the Geneva Convention on humanitarian grounds, or if they are the dependent partner or minor child who fled together with or within three months of a principal applicant.

To decrease the previously long processing times, the Vw 2000 introduced a “48-hour assessment”. Within 48 working hours from application, a first decision is made on whether or not a person can be considered for refugee status. The 48-hour assessment is also meant as a deterrent for bogus applicants. During the application process, asylum seekers are housed at special reception centers scattered throughout the country, where they can wait for the outcome of their application and appeals. Asylum seekers get a small weekly allowance and are not allowed to work for more than twelve weeks a year.

After the implementation of the Vw 2000, applications dropped from 43,560 in 2000 to 9,780 in 2004. It is difficult to tell whether this is a consequence of the policy, a decrease in conflict, or an economic downturn. In recent years, the number of asylum requests has once again risen. In the first six months of 2014, the Netherlands has registered the largest number of asylum seekers since the first half of 2001; most asylum claims were made by Syrians and Eritreans.

People granted refugee status receive a renewable residence permit which is valid for one year. After five years, refugees are eligible for a permanent residence permit on the condition that they pass the civic integration exam. If they have not passed the exam, they receive another temporary permit. People who are granted refugee status are housed throughout the country to spread the costs of reception across municipalities and prevent geographic concentration. Every municipality has to reserve a share of its social housing for refugees. It is estimated that almost two-thirds of the refugee population live outside the large urban centers. However, many try to move to the cities eventually, to join compatriots, or because they believe that they will have more opportunities there.

### Deportation

The Netherlands does not have a strict removal policy for asylum seekers whose applications were denied. It is the unsuccessful claimant’s responsibility to leave the country. Many people who were denied refugee status consequently stayed on without a legal residence permit, and in 2007,

after lengthy debates, the government passed an amnesty law for all asylum seekers who claimed asylum before 2001 unsuccessfully but had not left the Netherlands since and had not committed any serious crimes.<sup>52</sup> Nearly 30,000 people have been granted a permit as a result of this law.

## Current Developments and Future Challenges

Following the policy path of the past 15 years in which the rights of immigrants have become increasingly conditional on successful integration, the government recently introduced a proposal to increase the residence requirement for naturalization from five to seven years. A vote is expected to take place in late 2014. While there have been debates about further raising the requirements for family migration, policy changes are unlikely because they will conflict with the EU Family Reunification Directive.

Policy changes are not uniformly restrictive. The government is increasingly trying to attract highly skilled workers. In June 2013, the law on a Modern Migration Policy (*wet Modern Migratiebeleid, MoMi*) came into effect. The Netherlands is trying to improve its attractiveness to highly skilled migrants by streamlining visa application procedures and providing access to those with degrees from top universities.

### Debate on Immigration: A Turning Point?

While the recession has replaced immigration as main public concern, emotional debates about immigrant integration are ongoing. Under the guise of freedom of expression, people present their views on “the problem with (Muslim) immigrants” in often disparaging terms. Immigrants and their descendants feel societal acceptance of migrants has decreased.<sup>53</sup> Social contacts between immigrants and natives have decreased between 1994 and 2011<sup>54</sup>. It is unclear whether this is a product of the growing size of immigrant groups or of avoidance. There are some signs that the ferocity of the immigration debate has passed its peak. In March of 2014, Wilders suffered a public backlash at a post-municipal election event when he got his audience chanting “fewer, fewer” in response to his question whether they would like more or fewer Moroccans in the Netherlands. Several representatives left the party. It is too early to gauge the long-term effect on party support, but the response by a right-wing paper (*de Telegraaf*)<sup>55</sup> suggests a turning point may have been reached. Furthermore, in the past few years the share of native Dutch who believe there are too many migrants in the Netherlands has decreased.

Non-Western immigrant groups have made gains in educational and labor market achievement. Nevertheless Dutch residents of non-Western origin still underperform compared to Dutch natives, especially in the labor market. While exact reasons for this underperformance are unknown, discrimination is likely to be a contributing factor. Awareness of labor market discrimination is increasing. While the Netherlands has long had extensive anti-

discrimination legislation, the government has done little to combat the more subtle forms of discrimination that occur in the labor market or in nightlife.

### Immigration from EU Member States

The growing presence of migrants from the new-EU Member States has attracted a range of concerns. There are problems with the housing of migrants who do seasonal and low skilled labor. The workers often live in overcrowded accommodation and are being exploited by landlords and employers. Municipal governments are trying to combat overcrowding and rogue landlords. While the labor market participation of this group is very high, recent increases in benefit claims have caused alarm among politicians. There is very little evidence to suggest that welfare dependence is a (structural) problem among this group, but the experience with the guest worker communities has made politicians wary of problems in this area. There is a rise of crime suspects from Central and Eastern European countries; however this mainly concerns people who come to the Netherlands with the aim to commit criminal acts rather than labor migrants.<sup>57</sup> Finally there are concerns that, like previous waves of migrants, long-term migrants will not learn Dutch. Because of the EU freedom of movement, the Dutch state cannot require these migrants to sit a civic integration exam. However in response to parliamentary questions the minister of the interior noted that in 2010 more than 4,000 Polish migrants voluntarily participated in civic integration programs.<sup>58</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Publicists Paul Scheffer' essay "the multicultural drama" published in the newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* in January 2000 sparked a lot of discussion. <http://vorige.nrc.nl/binnenland/article1572053.ece>.

<sup>2</sup> For example, in Germany a similar program came into effect in 2005 (*Integrationskurse*) and in France in 2007 (*contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*). See Michalowski (2007) and Joppke (2007).

<sup>3</sup> Data from the Statistical Institute of the Netherlands (CBS); data on religions: Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR)

<sup>4</sup> An *allochtoon* is a person who has at least one foreign-born parent. The term covers both foreigners and Dutch citizens. See paragraph on "Immigrant Population" for details.

<sup>5</sup> Dutch statistics differentiate between Western and non-Western immigrants. Western immigrants come from Europe (excluding Turkey), North America, Oceania, Indonesia and Japan. Non-Western immigrants come from Turkey, Africa, Latin America and the rest of Asia.

<sup>6</sup> Share of employed and unemployed labor force (age 15-65) as a share of the total labor force.

<sup>7</sup> Lucassen/Penninx (1997).

<sup>8</sup> Jennissen (2011).

<sup>9</sup> Malukans live on the Maluku Islands in western Indonesia. Malukan soldiers fought with the Dutch army against Indonesian independence. The Dutch government had promised them an independent Malukan state on the island Ambon. Because Indonesia was not willing to create such a state, 12,500 Malukans

came to the Netherlands to wait for its creation. To this day there is no free Malukan republic, and the Malukans have stayed in the Netherlands.

<sup>10</sup> Family reunification is when children and spouses who were left behind at the time of migration come to join the principal migrant. Family formation is when a migrant comes to the Netherlands to live with their partner for the first time. The latter are often referred to as "marriage migrants".

<sup>11</sup> This number concerns the first and second generation.

<sup>12</sup> Except for 1967 when the oil embargo put a halt to guest worker recruitment.

<sup>13</sup> Jennissen (2011).

<sup>14</sup> Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Sweden, Denmark, Finland.

<sup>15</sup> Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary.

<sup>16</sup> These countries joined the EU in 2007.

<sup>17</sup> In July 2014 this was €17,942.40 a year (equal to the legal minimum wage), or €16,148.16 for single parents.

<sup>18</sup> Chakroun vs Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Case C-578/08.

<sup>19</sup> For information on the exam (also in English) see <http://www.naarnederland.nl/>.

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Leerkes/Kulu-Glasgow (2012).

<sup>21</sup> Jennissen (2011).

<sup>22</sup> See also Carol et al (2014).

<sup>23</sup> In 2014, the minimum income is €27,565.92 a year, compared to €38,465.28 for highly-skilled workers under 30 and €52,462.08 for those aged 30 or over.

<sup>24</sup> For information in English see <https://ind.nl/EN/individuals/residence-wizard/work/orientation-year-highly-educated-persons/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>25</sup> A 2007 report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) on Dutch Identity (*Identificatie met Nederland*) recommended that the term *allochtoon* be abolished, because it continues to define people of immigrant descent as not belonging to the Netherlands ("*niet van hier*"). The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) has dropped the term from its publications. The term is still employed by other government bodies, politicians, and journalists, although the term "*migranten*" (migrants) is slowly gaining popularity.

<sup>26</sup> The data presented include both people who do not possess Dutch citizenship and those who possess a foreign nationality in addition to their Dutch nationality (dual nationals).

<sup>27</sup> Of these 190 nationalities, there are 127 nationalities with at least 100 members in the Netherlands, and 88 nationalities with at least 500 people.

<sup>28</sup> CBS (2012): Jaarrapport integratie 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Indonesian immigrants were an exception, as the government realized early on that their stay would be permanent. As part of an effort to assimilate them, social workers were assigned to help the families integrate into Dutch society.

<sup>30</sup> The Netherlands has a complicated school system. There are state schools (*openbare scholen*) that are entirely subsidized by the government and special schools (*bijzonder onderwijs*), which are based on religious belonging. The latter are entitled to the same funds as state schools plus additional funds from parents. They have the right to refuse students because they are not of

the right religion. Freedom of education is part of the constitution (Section 23).

<sup>31</sup>A notable exception is Frits Bolkestein, the leader of the right-wing liberal party Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (*People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, VVD*), who from the early 1990s expressed concerns about the compatibility of Islam with Dutch culture.

<sup>32</sup>See also Michalowski (2005).

<sup>33</sup>Several MP's had been accused of or convicted on assault charges.

<sup>34</sup>[www.nrc.nl/handelsblad/van/2012/december/15/veelbesproken-polenmeldpunt-van-pvv-sterft-een-zachte-1188965](http://www.nrc.nl/handelsblad/van/2012/december/15/veelbesproken-polenmeldpunt-van-pvv-sterft-een-zachte-1188965).

<sup>35</sup>In 1984, the responsible junior minister declared that "identification with the Dutch people and history is not necessary" nor "letting go of the own culture and no longer feeling especially involved with the weal and woe of his country of origin" (quoted in Heijs (1995), p. 193).

<sup>36</sup>The naturalization rate is the number of naturalizations divided by the number of foreign nationals, i.e. the naturalization potential. People who acquire Dutch citizenship via option (i.e. second generation or marriage) are excluded.

<sup>37</sup>See Michalowski (2011) for an interesting analysis of the content of the test.

<sup>38</sup>SCP (2009): Jaarrapport Integratie 2009.

<sup>39</sup>SCP (2013): Jaarrapport Integratie 2013.

<sup>40</sup>SCP (2009): Jaarrapport Integratie 2009.

<sup>41</sup>Andriessen/Nievers/Faulk/Dagevos (2010).

<sup>42</sup>SCP (2013): Jaarrapport Integratie 2013.

<sup>43</sup>Secondary education in the Netherlands is tiered. Students are streamed into a tier based on a test taken in their final year at elementary school at age 12. There are three vocational tiers, (*VMBO basis, kader and gemengd*), a mid-range tier between vocation and academic (*VMBO theoretische leerweg*) and two academic tiers. HAVO is the lower academic tier leading to a *hogeschool* (university of applied sciences), and VWO the higher academic tier preparing for university.

<sup>44</sup>CBS (2012): Jaarrapport Integratie 2012.

<sup>45</sup>SCP (2011): Jaarrapport Integratie 2011.

<sup>46</sup>Racial profiling occurs when a person is treated as a suspect based on his ethnicity, nationality or religion, instead of on evidence of criminal behavior.

<sup>47</sup>[www.prodemos.nl/Media/Files/Allochtonen-in-de-politiek](http://www.prodemos.nl/Media/Files/Allochtonen-in-de-politiek).

<sup>48</sup>Heijden/Cruiff/Gils (2011).

<sup>49</sup>Heijden/Cruiff/Gils (2011).

<sup>50</sup>De Boom/Leerkes/Engbersen (2011).

<sup>51</sup>"Asylum seekers" are people who come to the Netherlands to seek asylum. If their claim is accepted, they receive a residence permit. "Refugees" are people who have successfully applied for asylum.

<sup>52</sup>The amnesty was both for people whose claims had been rejected and people still in appeals.

<sup>53</sup>Huijnk/Dagevos (2012).

<sup>54</sup>Huijnk/Dagevos (2012).

<sup>55</sup>"Opportunisten-kabinet bestraft", March 21 2014, editorial

<sup>56</sup>Huijnk/Dagevos (2012).

<sup>57</sup>Final report by the parliamentary enquiry "Lessons from recent labor migration" (*Parlementair onderzoek Lessen uit recente arbeidsmigratie*), TK 2011-2012, 32680 nr 4.

<sup>58</sup>TK 2011-2012, 257.

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## ABOUT FOCUS MIGRATION

Publishers: Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS) of the University of Osnabrück, Neuer Graben 19/21, 49069 Osnabrück, Germany  
phone.: +49 (0)541 969 4384, fax: +49 (0)541 969 4380, email: [imis@uni-osnabrueck.de](mailto:imis@uni-osnabrueck.de)

Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb), Adenauerallee 86, 53113 Bonn, Germany with the collaboration of Network Migration in Europe e.V.

Editorial staff: Dr. Marcel Berlinghoff, Vera Hanewinkel, Apl. Prof. Dr. Jochen Oltmer (head)

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