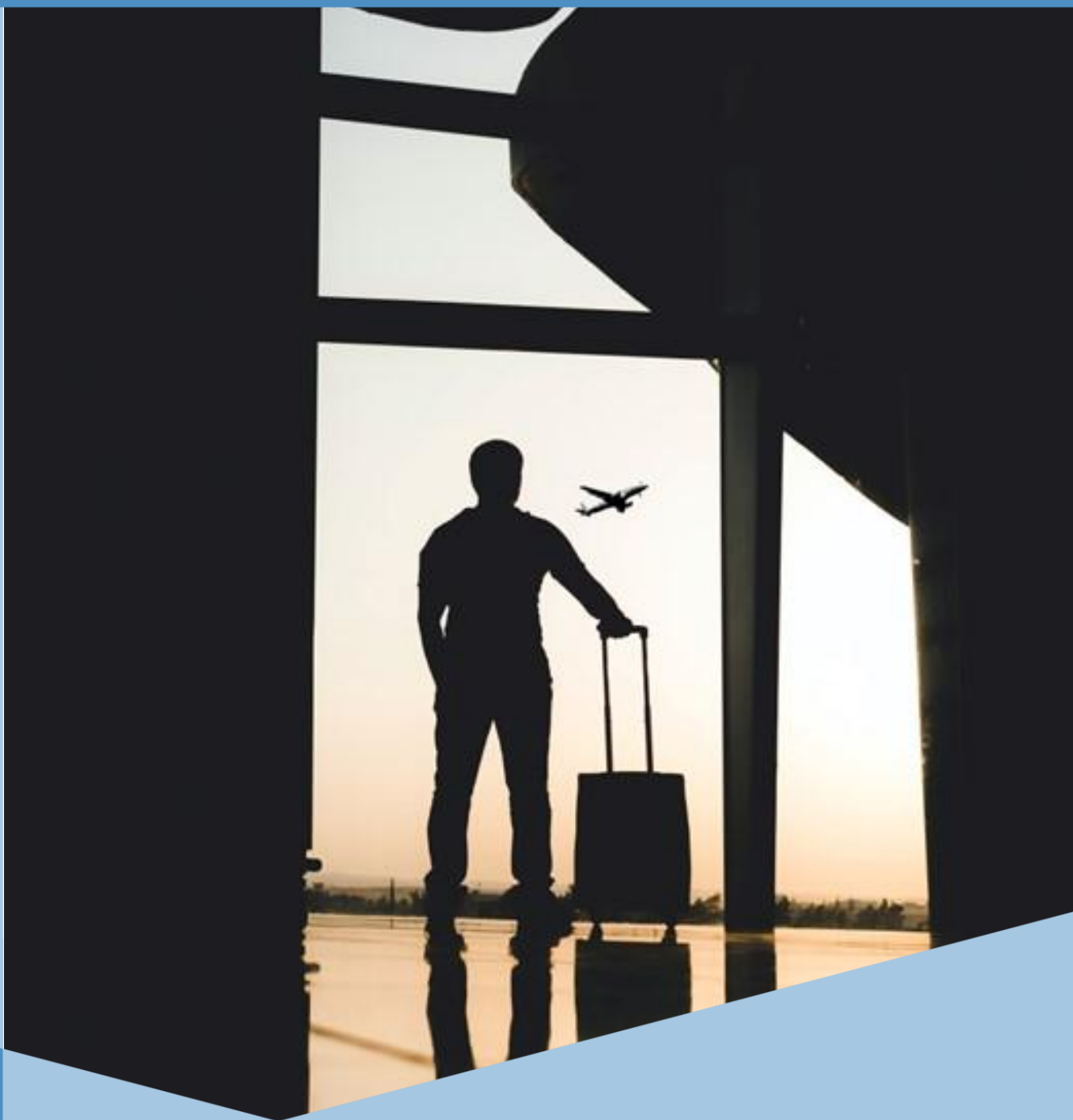




DUTCH SOPEMI REPORT 2025

Migration Statistics and Migration Policies in the Netherlands

- FINAL REPORT -

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The Dutch SOPEMI-reports are yearly published on behalf of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Justice and Security. RegioPlan has been asked to write these reports since 2014. The national reports are key input to the OECD work on international migration, not only to prepare the annual OECD International Migration Outlook, but also on a daily basis as a reference document.

The content of this report is largely based on the guidelines as provided by the OECD in Paris (International Migration Division). Central elements are:

- Recent developments in immigration and integration policies, as well as information on ongoing policy debates and emerging issues.
- Data for the full year 2024 and as well for 2025, to the extent possible. These statistics on migration and integration patterns are especially useful to identify emerging trends. Also breakdowns by age, gender and nationality are considered extremely useful.
- A brief summary and explanatory text, accompanying the quantitative information provided in the report (tables and charts) on migration and integration.

This report contains extensive information on policy decisions and developments. Both parliamentary documentation, annual publications from the European Migration Network on migration and asylum, and various evaluation reports have been used for this purpose. This edition of the national report will make it clear that the current government has set a significantly different course than in previous years. The course is focused in particular on combating the influx of asylum migrants. This is hoped to be achieved by reducing reception facilities, promoting return and limiting the possibilities for various groups of asylum migrants to stay in the Netherlands. This cabinet has also opted for a less generous labour migration policy, although the plans for this have been worked out less extensively.

Statistical information on migration is mostly based on population data of Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Population data in the Netherlands is processed by the digitized municipal population registers. All Dutch municipalities are required to record and store population data on all their residents and non-residents living within the municipal boundaries. In addition to Statistics Netherlands, the following main (data) sources have been used: Eurostat Statistics; the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND); the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA); the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV); and the Dutch Education Executive Agency (DUO).

On the basis of these data sources, recent migration statistics are given for the full year 2024. The main categories to be explained are: (a) migration movements (immigration, emigration and net migration by different categories and/or permit types, with particular attention to family migrants, labour migrants, asylum migrants and international students, (b) trends in foreign-born and foreign population stocks, and (c) main changes in labour market outcomes of immigrants and their children. In addition, a separate chapter focuses on the arrival and participation of Ukrainian displaced persons in the Netherlands. Chapters 2 up to and including 7 provide for all relevant migration policies and statistics. Chapter 1 contains a summary of the most important developments and statistical data.

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Management summary

1

1 Management summary

This chapter provides a short overview of main migration statistics in the Netherlands. It also discusses the most prominent legislative and political changes in relation to migration and integration issues. The statistical and policy data mainly relate to the year 2024.

1.1 Statistics on migration

Immigration and emigration

During the last three decades, there has been an overall increase in the number of migrants coming to the Netherlands. With regard to the year 2023, the following patterns are worth mentioning:

- Between 2023 and 2024, the number of immigrants to the Netherlands decreased from about 336,000 to a little over 316,000. In 2024, the volume of emigration from the Netherlands amounted to 208,537 people. The total migration surplus was around 108,000 in 2024, indicating that many more people entered than left the country.
- Between 2023 and 2024, the number of immigrants to the Netherlands from EU-27 countries decreased from 138,258 to 129,611. The number of migrants from other European countries also decreased, from 52,230 in 2023 to 42,602 in 2024. In 2024, 144,092 non-European immigrants came to the Netherlands, which is almost the same as in 2023 (143,180).
- With regard to migration from other EU/EFTA countries to the Netherlands, returning Dutch migrants are the most important category with 44,880 migrants coming to the Netherlands. Labour migrants are also a prominent category, with 43,900 immigrants. These numbers refer to 2023, the most recent year for which these figures are available.
- With respect to migration from non-EU/EFTA-countries in 2024, family migration was the most important category in numbers (with 39,665 immigrants). In that year, asylum migration was the second largest group (39,390), followed by study migration (22,330) and labour migration (21,150).
- In 2025, 5.1 million people with a migration background were living in the Netherlands. That equates to 28.5% of the total population in this country.
- The largest ethnic groups in the Netherlands have a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Indonesian, or German background. Together, these groups amount to almost 2 million people in the Netherlands (i.e. about 40% of the people with a migration background).

Labour-based immigration

Numerical developments in labour migration to the Netherlands show a variable pattern. Migration from other Member States continues to increase, particularly in the form of posted workers. Knowledge migration from countries outside the EU/EFTA is declining.

- In December 2023, 649,230 employees and 64,900 self-employed people from other EU Member States were employed in the Netherlands. Another 35,290 immigrants with employment in the Netherlands originated from the United Kingdom.
- The total number of unique service providers (posted workers) reported to the national counter was 102,410 in 2024 (against 96,290 posted workers employed in the Netherlands in 2023). This number is exclusive of reporting of postings in road transport.
- Of these posted workers, 75,100 had an EU nationality and 27,300 employees had a nationality from outside the EU, EEA or Switzerland.
- In 2024, 7,080 self-employed persons from the EU submitted one or more reports, for a total of 16,530 reports.
- The total number of issued work permits for migrant workers from non-EU/EEA countries or Switzerland increased from 16,142 in 2023 to 25,379 in 2024.
- The number of granted residence permits for highly skilled workers from outside the EU/EEA or Switzerland decreased from 17,569 in 2023 to 13,170 in 2024. This continues the sharp decline from 2022 onwards. The number of issued permits for researchers from these countries decreased from 3,494 in 2023 to 3,071 in 2024.
- A large part of the combined number of issued work permits and favourable decisions were granted to nationals of India, China and Syria (together 30%).

Immigration for reasons of asylum

The number of asylum applications in the Netherlands slightly decreased between 2023 and 2024. This is mainly due to a declining influx of refugees from Syria. The following patterns can be identified for the most recent period:

- Between 2023 and 2024, the number of (first and follow-up) asylum requests in the Netherlands slightly decreased from 49,890 to 45,640.
- In 2024, 32,175 first asylum requests were made. By far most asylum requests came from Syrian refugees (11,525). Next in line were Iraqi (2,220), Turks (1,870), Eritreans (1,465) and Yemeni (1,080).
- In 2024, 15,960 first asylum requests were granted and 5,275 asylum requests were rejected.
- The number of resettled refugees decreased from 830 in 2023 to 738 in 2024. These numbers also include resettled refugees under the EU-Turkey Statement.
- In 2024, the number of asylum applications by unaccompanied minors increased to 5,935 (from 5,805 in 2023). Unaccompanied minors account for 18% of the total number of asylum requests.
- On 31 December 2024, Dutch asylum centres accommodated 72,500 asylum migrants (compared to 64,410 residents a year before).
- In 2024, the influx of new asylum seekers in reception centres was just over 52,000 persons.

Foreign students in higher education

The number of foreign students enrolled in Dutch research universities and universities of applied sciences strongly increased during the last decade. The following stands out:

- The number of foreign students enrolled in Dutch institutes for higher education (research universities and universities of applied sciences) has steadily increased since 2010. In 2024, more than 131,000 foreign students participated in Dutch higher education, accounting for 17% of the total student population.
- A significant proportion of international students come from Western European countries (46% in 2024/25). However, this share has decreased significantly over the past ten years (in favour of students from both Central and Eastern Europe and from outside the EU).
- German students represent by far the largest group of foreign students in Dutch institutions for higher education with 19,997 students in the academic year 2024/25. More than 15% of all international students originate from Germany.
- In the academic year 2024/25, more foreign students were enrolled in Dutch research universities (over 92,000) than in universities of applied sciences (over 38,500).
- The number of admission requests from international students slightly decreased between 2023 and 2024 (22,040).

1.2 People with a migration background in the Netherlands

The following statistics are relevant with regard to the size and composition of the population with a migration background in the Netherlands:

- On 1 January 2025, 5.1 million people with a migration background were living in the Netherlands. This number equates to 28.5% of the total Dutch population. Of the people with a migration background, 41.2% were born in the Netherlands.
- The largest ethnic groups in the Netherlands have a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Indonesian, or German background. Together, these groups amount to almost 2 million people in the Netherlands (i.e. about 40% of the people with a migration background).
- The non-Western immigrant population is largely concentrated in the four largest cities (e.g. Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht), whereas foreign residents from other European countries live widely spread across the Netherlands (also including some border regions).

1.3 Labour market integration

In general, the socio-economic position of people with a migration background in the Netherlands is much less favourable than that of people without a migration background. Based on the most recent information, the following can be mentioned:

- In 2024, the labour market participation of those born outside Europe lags behind that of persons born in the Netherlands and Europe. In 2023, the difference between the two groups was 12 percentage points.
- In 2024, persons born outside Europe were almost twice as likely to be unemployed as persons born in the Netherlands. Unemployment rates are highest among those with a Moroccan background.
- In 2024, people born outside Europe were more than seven times as likely to receive social assistance benefits than those born in the Netherlands. However, over the last decade, the use of social assistance slightly decreased among the largest migrant groups.
- Differences in income level between those born in the Netherlands and outside the Netherlands are relatively stable over the years. People born outside Europe reveal the least favourable income levels. However, there has been a considerable increase in the average hourly wage earned by these migrants over the past 15 years.
- Refugees in the Netherlands have a low net labour participation rate and are relatively strongly dependent on social assistance benefits. Of those who received a residence permit in 2014, 55% participated in the labour market in 2024 and a lower share (31%) was dependent on social assistance benefits in that year.

1.4 Policy measures

This section provides a brief summary of the main institutional changes in recent years, including legislative changes and policy measures. The main changes are summarised below for a number of migrant groups and migration-related topics.

Family migration

The Marital Captivity Prevention Act (*Wet tegengaan huwelijkse gevangenschap*) took effect on 1 July 2023. This law is intended to make it easier to end a religious marriage through a court decision. In 2024, the State Secretary for Justice and Security established explicit authority to investigate suspected fraud cases, such as sham marriages, sham partnerships, or sham adoptions. This amendment followed a ruling by the Council of State, which found that a legal basis for such investigations, as required by the EU Family Reunification Directive (2003/86/EC), was lacking. This legislative amendment now provides a legal basis for investigating fraudulent activities, with clear frameworks on which suspicions of fraud must be based before an investigation can be initiated.

The Aliens Employment Act (Wav)

The Aliens Employment Act was amended in 2021, entering into effect from January 2022. Due to the amendment of this act, a work permit can be granted for a maximum of 3 years, instead of a maximum of 1 year. In addition, a work permit with a full labour market test can be granted for a maximum of 2 years, instead of 1 year. Another measure obliges employers to pay the wages stated on the work permit to the employee via a bank account, over a maximum earnings period of one month. This allows the Dutch Labour Inspectorate to better check wage payments. Last but not least, in 2022, the special arrangement for Asian cooks ended. In 2024, there were no significant changes with regard to the possibilities for persons from outside the EU/EEA or Switzerland to work in the Netherlands.

New measures to protect temporary foreign workers in the Netherlands

To combat undesirable practices in temporary employment, the government has introduced the *Wet toelating terbeschikkingstelling van arbeidskrachten (Wtta)*. The essence of this admission system is that temporary employment agencies may only operate on the labour market if they are allowed to do so. In order to be allowed, they must, among other things, submit a Certificate of Good Conduct, transfer a financial deposit, and demonstrate that they pay the correct wages and pay their taxes properly. The

proposed act passed the House of Representatives in April 2025. In November 2025, the Senate approved the bill. The *Wtta* will take effect on 1 January 2027.

The government has also been working on a system that makes it possible to register contact details of non-residents who stay in the Netherlands for less than 4 months. Since October 2022, temporary residence addresses and other contact details can be registered on a voluntary basis in a separate registration system. Also, the Good Landlordship Act (*Wet goed verhuurderschap*) came into effect on 1 July 2023. This law sets general rules for renting homes to migrants. Municipalities are responsible for the enforcement of these standards.

Asylum policies

On 16 July 2024, the family reunification policy for adult children of refugees in the Netherlands was amended. This amendment means that a certain degree of dependency on parents is insufficient for the right to family reunification. For adult children applying for family reunification, three conditions now apply: (1) the adult child is dependent on material support from the sponsor for basic necessities at the time of the application, (2) the adult child has not formed an independent family, and (3) he or she lived with the sponsor until the flight. The child must demonstrate that the material support is genuine and necessary. This is in line with the European Family Reunification Directive (Article 10, paragraph 2).

The Schoof I cabinet – installed in July 2024 but in caretaker mode since 3 June 2025 – aims for the toughest asylum regime and the strictest admission requirements ever. Together, different proposals were announced to:

- eliminate permanent residence permits;
- shorten temporary asylum permits;
- restrict family reunification to members of the nuclear family;
- implement a Two-Status System for asylum seekers (with restrictions of family reunification for certain categories of asylum migrants).

On 3 July 2025, the House of Representatives passed the Asylum Emergency Measures Act (*Asielnoodmaatregelenwet*), as well as the Two-Status System Act (*Wet invoering tweestatusstelsel*). The approval of the Asylum Emergency Measures Act means that the validity of asylum permits will be reduced from five to three years. The law also restricts subsequent travel for unmarried partners or adult children. In addition, the law makes illegal residence in the Netherlands a punishable offense. The Act on the Introduction of the Two-Status System introduces a distinction between refugees (A status) and persons entitled to subsidiary protection (B status). Permit holders with B status will face stricter requirements for family reunification. In December 2025, the Senate had not yet voted on the aforementioned bills.

Civic integration law and policies

A significant change in the civic integration law entered into effect on 1 January 2022. This change concerns the civic integration system, and puts the responsibility for the civic integration of newcomers with an integration obligation on municipalities. The new system is centred on a subdivision into three civic integration routes that newcomers can follow. The route is decided in a customised personal integration plan, which is drafted by the municipality in consultation with the newcomer. Another change concerns the standard language requirement, for which the level has been raised from A2 to B1. In 2024, the final attainment levels of the part of the civic integration examination concerning the knowledge of Dutch society were renewed, and they became applicable in the summer of 2025. The new attainment targets focus on developing knowledge and skills that support newcomers in finding their way in Dutch society and learning customary etiquette, standards and values within Dutch society.

From 1 January 2025, Turkish citizens must submit a civic integration diploma when applying for a permanent residence permit in the Netherlands. This requirement also applies to applications for a long-term EU resident residence permit. In April 2024, the State Secretary for Justice and Security amended the legal framework to establish explicit authority to investigate suspected fraud cases, such as sham marriages, sham partnerships, or sham adoptions.

Citizenship legislation

The government programme of 13 September 2024 announced a more restrictive citizenship legislation. The cabinet intends to increase the required level of Dutch to B1 as well as increase the required length of the period of residence in the Netherlands before a person can apply from five to ten years. These proposals have not yet been discussed or adopted in the Dutch Parliament.

Policies to combat discrimination

In 2021 a National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism (NCDR) was appointed with the main task of drawing up a multi-year national programme with clear targets and full attention to signals from society. In June 2025, the cabinet decided to extend the mandate of the NCDR until 1 January 2030. However, the new establishment decree will change the NCDR's role. While the coordinator was previously responsible for drafting the National Programme against Discrimination and Racism, these plans will now be developed by the individual ministries. The NCDR will take on a more advisory and monitoring role. This means that the NCDR will primarily support ministries with their own policies with advice based on its knowledge and experience.

The previous cabinet (2022-2024) aimed to combat discrimination in the labour market by introducing a bill intended to facilitate equal opportunity employment by forcing employers and intermediaries (such as employment agencies) to consider unconscious bias in recruitment and selection procedures. The bill was passed by the House of Representatives in March 2023 but was rejected by the Senate in March 2024. Nevertheless, the cabinet is still committed to combating discrimination in the labour market, for instance by enabling employers to take action to combat discrimination and by offering practical measures and interventions for objective recruitment.

Announced measures to restrict citizenship policies

The new Dutch cabinet intends to make the rules for obtaining Dutch citizenship more restrictive. As such, the cabinet intends to increase the required level of Dutch to B1 as well as increase the period required to live in the Netherlands before applying for Dutch citizenship from five to ten years. Legislation on this matter is being prepared.

Study migration

The increasing number of international students in Dutch higher education in the past few years has garnered a lot of attention and discussion on whether limits should be imposed. The Dutch ministry of Education and Culture holds the position that while internationalisation carries risks for Dutch higher education, the benefits of the international dimension of higher education is very important for the Dutch knowledge economy, education, and science. In line with this position, the government is working on plans to manage the flows of international students, including introducing capacity limits for university programmes. At the same time, the government aims to combat housing shortages for all students, including international students, by creating 60,000 additional student housing units by 2030. The government also aims to create more support from universities for the accommodation of international students, as well as more protection from abusive housing practices.

In 2024, the Rutte IV cabinet announced measures to restrict international study migration. The government wished to strengthen Dutch as the primary language in research universities and universities of applied sciences and decrease the pressure of international study migration on student housing. To accomplish these goals, the cabinet intended to rely on the proposed a bill to balance internationalisation (*Wet Internationalisering in balans*) which was presented to the House of Representatives in the spring of 2024. The House of Representatives suggested some changes in the spring of 2025, due to which the bill is being amended. In the autumn of 2025, no definite decision has been made yet, although there is broad support in the House for the bill in general.

1.5 Displaced persons from Ukraine

Since February 2022, tens of thousands of people from Ukraine have fled to the Netherlands. These refugees have been received throughout the Netherlands, both by municipalities and private individuals. By mid-2025 around 125,000 refugees from Ukraine had been registered in Dutch municipalities.

Displaced persons from Ukraine can receive temporary protection in the Netherlands under the European Union Temporary Protection Directive. In June 2024, the Council agreed to extend the protection for Ukrainian displaced persons based on the Temporary Protection Directive until 4 March 2026.

The Temporary Act on the Reception of Displaced Persons in Ukraine (*Tijdelijke wet opvang ontheemden Oekraïne, TWOO*) entered into force on 1 July 2024. This Act replaces several temporary emergency provisions (Articles 2c and 4) of the Population Transfer Act by providing a more detailed legal basis for the reception of Ukrainian displaced persons. This includes responsibility for medical care, for continuing the Funding Scheme for the Reception of Displaced Persons in Ukraine and for the processing of personal data. The law places the responsibility for these tasks with the municipal executive board of mayor and aldermen.

Under the temporary protection directive, Ukrainians are entitled to living allowances and access to health care in kind. From 1 July 2024, Ukrainian displaced persons aged 18 or older no longer receive a living allowance if they have a job or receive an income in another way, for example through unemployment benefits. Ukrainian displaced persons with an income and residence in a municipal shelter also pay a personal contribution as of 1 July 2024. This contribution is paid to the municipality where the Ukrainian displaced person lives. With this money the municipality can pay part of the costs for reception.

Mainly due to the legal possibilities for this group to participate in education and the labour market, the participation figures compare favourably with other refugees in their first year in the Netherlands. Some statistics:

- Around 125,000 refugees from Ukraine had been registered in Dutch municipalities by mid-2025. In June 2025, the number of registered Ukrainians increased by about 390 on a weekly basis.
- As of mid-2024, 12,300 students of Ukrainian nationality were enrolled in primary education institutions and 8,400 Ukrainians participated in secondary education.
- Of the approximately 92,000 Ukrainian refugees between the ages of 15 and 65 who were staying in the Netherlands on 1 November 2024, 59% had paid work as an employee. This amounts to almost 54,500 people.
- By the end of 2024, most working Ukrainian refugees were employed as agency workers (38%), on-call workers (24%) or had other temporary employment contracts (29%).
- At the same time, most working Ukrainian refugees were employed in the business services sector (50%), also including temporary employment agencies. In addition to business services, a large number of Ukrainian refugees also worked in the trade, transport and the hospitality sector (32%).

Short-term problems are mainly related to insufficient reception capacity at municipalities for newly arrived Ukrainians. Problems that are related to a possible longer stay in the Netherlands concern sufficient suitable housing, the possibilities to offer education to a large number of Ukrainian young people, language problems and finding work at a higher qualification level.



Main migration and policy trends

2

2 Main migration and policy trends

This chapter is about migration policy for regular migrants who want to come to the Netherlands. Attention is paid in particular to the category of family migrants. Other migration categories will be discussed in the following chapters. The main principles of Dutch migration policy, the possibilities and obligations in relation to migration (including the obligation to pass a civic integration exam abroad) and a number of initiatives to combat human trafficking and improve economic development in a number of countries of origin are consecutively explained. In addition, a few topics having attracted a lot of media attention in 2022, and which are related to the presence of migrants in the Netherlands are shortly discussed. Subsequently, a large number of statistical aspects of migration to and from the Netherlands is clarified. Finally, some socio-demographic characteristics of foreign residents in the Netherlands are discussed.

2.1 Main statistical findings

- Between 2023 and 2024, the yearly number of immigrants to the Netherlands decreased from about 336,000 to a little more than 316,000.
- In 2024, the volume of emigration from the Netherlands amounted to 208,537 people. This represents the highest annual number of emigrants in the last two decades.
- Between 2023 and 2024, the number of immigrants to the Netherlands from EU-27 countries decreased from 138,258 to 129,611. The number of migrants from other European countries also decreased, from 52,230 in 2023 to 42,602 in 2024. In 2024, 144,092 non-European immigrants came to the Netherlands, which is almost the same as in 2023 (143,180).
- With regard to migration from other EU/EFTA countries to the Netherlands, returning Dutch migrants are the most important category with 44,880 migrants coming to the Netherlands. Labour migrants are also a prominent category, with 43,900 immigrants. These numbers refer to 2023, the most recent year for which these figures are available.
- In 2024, family migration from non-EU/EFTA-countries was the most important category in numbers (with 39,665 immigrants). In that year, asylum migration was the second largest group (39,390), followed by study migration (22,330) and labour migration (21,150).
- On 1 January 2025, 5.1 million people with a migration background were living in the Netherlands. This number equates to 28.5% of the total Dutch population. Of the people with a migration background, 41.2% were born in the Netherlands.
- The largest ethnic groups in the Netherlands have a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Indonesian, or German background. Together, these groups amount to almost 2 million people in the Netherlands (i.e. about 40% of the people with a migration background).

2.2 Main migration laws and policies

This section discusses the most important parts of the Dutch legislation and regulations regarding the possibilities for regular immigration to the Netherlands. The subjects discussed are the legal framework for migration to the Netherlands, the existence of different residence permits, an explanation of the possibilities for family migration (including civic integration obligations abroad), measures against forced marriages and marriages of convenience, projects aimed at the economic development of important countries of origin of migrants, and a number of prominent discussions about migration in the Dutch media. First of all, the main principles of the Dutch migration policy will be explained.

2.2.1 Comprehensive agenda on migration

In March 2018 the Dutch government launched the so-called Comprehensive Agenda on Migration, meant to integrate several policy domains in relation to migration and integration.¹ This agenda involves that (1) different policy areas are considered as interrelated, (2) it is considered important to take action at all points of the migration chain, and (3) it is considered crucial to work together at different levels and with all relevant actors simultaneously. Six different policy intentions are described in the agenda:

¹ Parliamentary Papers II 2017/18, 29362, no. 266. Integrale migratieagenda.

1. Preventing illegal migration by tackling the root causes of migration in the countries of origin and by international cooperation to combat human trafficking, strengthen border control and promote return migration;
2. Strengthening reception and protection for refugees and displaced persons in the region by providing emergency assistance and setting up resettlement programs, investments in education and employment in the region, and by special attention to the most vulnerable groups;
3. The establishment of a solid Dutch and EU asylum system, with specific regard to ensuring equal protection levels within the EU, by discouraging secondary migration movements and by a solidarity-based asylum policy, in which Member States support each other in times of increased asylum inflows;
4. Less illegality and more return migration through intensive case management aimed at individual migrants and through the introduction of positive and negative incentives to encourage countries of origin to take back their own subjects;
5. Promotion of legal migration by providing information about existing possibilities for labour migration, internships by foreign students, scholarships and circular labour migration;
6. Stimulating integration and participation, by allowing integration efforts to take place as early as possible, by changing the civic integration policy and by paying even more attention to preschool and early childhood education.

Following this agenda, different governments have indicated that they wish to adopt this principle for the policy to be pursued. The coalition of Rutte IV that took office on 10 January 2022 (and fell on 7 July 2023 after failing to reach an agreement on separate treatment of refugees fleeing from war) reiterated its commitment to a just, humane, and effective asylum and migration policy, with an emphasis on well-managed migration. This should be done in accordance with international treaties and EU regulations.² The current government, which took office in July 2024, also seems to endorse most of the above principles. However, a markedly different tone is noticeable. The Schoof 1 government is particularly keen on a strict policy for asylum seekers, a cutback in reception facilities and the return of illegal migrants.

2.2.2 The Aliens act

In April 2001, the Aliens Act 2000 entered into force. This act regulates the admission and expulsion of foreign nationals, border control, and the supervision of foreign nationals residing in the Netherlands. The Aliens Act 2000 makes a distinction between aliens who migrate to the Netherlands through a regular procedure and aliens who come to the Netherlands through the asylum procedure. Below some important parts of the regular procedure will be explained, with special attention to the possibilities for short stay and long stay (particularly within the framework of family migration). The legal framework for labour migration, knowledge workers and students will be dealt with in chapter 4 and 6. The legal possibilities for those who seek asylum in the Netherlands is further explained in chapter 5.

Short stay in the Netherlands

Foreign nationals wanting to stay in the Netherlands for no more than three months must be in possession of a valid passport. In case these foreigners originate from outside the EU, they also may need a visa – a Schengen visa – in order to travel to the Netherlands (as part of the Schengen area). This visa must be lodged with the Dutch embassy, the Dutch consulate, or through external service providers. Nowadays, a substantial number of 62 countries – most of which are part of the more industrialised countries in the world – are exempt from the visa requirements.³

Currently, the fees for short-stay visas are €80 for adults and €40 for children aged 6-12. Renewing a visa costs €30.⁴ In addition, to ensure that short-stay visa holders are able to support themselves financially during their stay, the Dutch embassy/consulate in the country of the foreigners' residence asks the foreigner to prove that he has at least €55 per day during his stay in the Netherlands.⁵

² <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-f3cb0d9c-878b-4608-9f6a-8a2f6e24a410/pdf>.

³ Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018. Since 1 January 2024, Kosovo has also been included in this list.

⁴ <https://ind.nl/nl/leges-kosten-van-een-aanvraag>.

⁵ <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/netherlands-visa/>.

A stay for longer than three months in the Netherlands

The start of the procedure for a stay of more than 90 days in the Netherlands is the application for a residence permit. This application can be made by the migrant himself or by a (recognised) sponsor in the Netherlands. A condition for a residence permit is a provisional residence permit (*Machtiging tot voorlopig verblijf*, Mvv). An Mvv is a special visa that allows migrants to travel to the Netherlands. The application to obtain the document must be lodged at a Dutch diplomatic post in the country of origin or current residence. The residence permit is issued by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) upon arrival in the Netherlands. The application for the Mvv and the residence permit have been merged with the MoMi Act of 2013 in a combined procedure (TEV-procedure) for Entry and Residence (see box 2.1).

Foreigners with the nationality of an EU/EEA country, Australia, Canada, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Vatican City, United Kingdom, United States, South Korea or Switzerland are exempt from this provisional residence permit. In addition, there are situations in which the foreign national does not need an Mvv, for example in case the migrant is a family member of a citizen of the EU, EEA or Switzerland. The government has drawn up an extensive list that includes all situations in which no Mvv is required.⁶

Box 2.1 **Modern migration policy**

An important achievement within the framework of international migration has been the introduction of the Modern Migration Policy Act (*Wet modern migratiebeleid*, MoMi) in 2013. Modern migration policy particularly relates to modernising the processes regarding applications for residence permits and the admission procedures for migrants coming to the Netherlands for regular purposes of stay, such as labour, study and family reunification. From 1 June 2013, sponsors and foreign nationals may use the Entry and Residence Procedure (*Toegang en verblijf*, TEV). A more detailed explanation of Dutch Modern migration policy can be found in the previous editions of the Dutch SOPEMI-report. The Modern Migration Policy Act was evaluated in June 2019.⁷

Different types of residence permits

After a positive decision on the application for a residence permit, the IND issues the permit for the specific purpose of stay. Below, a number of prominent purposes will be explained shortly.

Members of the nuclear family can come to the Netherlands to stay with a Dutch citizen or a foreign national who is lawfully resident in the Netherlands. This concerns (marriage) partners and minor children. The possibilities apply to families already existing abroad as well as new families to be formed. Notable conditions which apply to both the (marriage) partner abroad and his or her (future) partner in the Netherlands are related to age, means of support, civic integration requirements, and the nature of the relationship between the partners. More specifically:⁸

1. The partner or sponsor in the Netherlands must have had sufficient long-term means of support for at least 12 months.
2. Both partners are aged 21 or older.
3. The (marriage) partner abroad has passed the Civic Integration Exam Abroad or is exempt from this examination (see also section 2.2.3).
4. The partners must have a long-term and exclusive relationship.

In addition, family migration may be permitted if required by Article 8 ECHR. This right of residence is derived from the right to family life, as laid down in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This concerns the assessment of whether there is a so-called positive obligation on the Dutch government to enable the exercise of this family life. The scope of application of Article 8 ECHR is broad.⁹ Ad-

⁶ <https://ind.nl/nl/mvv-vrijstellingen>.

⁷ Lodder, G. (2019). *Selectief naast restrictief. Evaluatie van de Wet modern migratiebeleid*. Leiden, Instituut voor Immigratierecht.

⁸ The costs for families and single parents are expressed in percentages of the Dutch statutory minimum wage. For families the income requirements correspond to 100% of the statutory minimum wage, while for single parents this is 90% of the statutory minimum wage. For the requirements, see: <https://ind.nl/Formulieren/3076.pdf>.

⁹ Ministry of Justice and Safety (2023) *De Staat van Migratie 2022*.

mission under Article 8 ECHR includes, for example, the residence of a parent with a minor child. Residence applications from adult children with parents residing in the Netherlands and from parents with adults who reside in the Netherlands are also assessed against this article.

Children whose parents are Dutch nationals acquire Dutch nationality by operation of law. Children who are born in the Netherlands and whose parents both have a non-Dutch nationality, need their own regular residence permit. This permit depends on that of the parents.

Fees for residence permits in 2025

As of 1 January 2025, fees for the application of a residence permit are:¹⁰

1. for a residence permit in order to stay with a family member (incl. partner): € 243;
2. for a residence permit as a family member of a long-term resident: € 228;
3. for a residence permit in order to stay with a Turkish family member (EC-Turkey Agreement): € 81;
4. for a residence permit to work as an employee or knowledge worker: € 405;
5. for a residence permit for study: € 243.

2.2.3 Civic integration requirements abroad before migrating to the Netherlands

Foreign nationals wanting to live permanently in the Netherlands must have a basic knowledge of the Dutch language and Dutch society prior to their arrival. For both elements, foreigners must pass a civic integration exam abroad. The exam must be taken by everyone aged between 18 and retirement age wishing to come to this country for an extended period of time. This mainly includes people who want to (re-)unite with a partner in the Netherlands. Also migrants wanting to work in the Netherlands as a cleric (e.g. imam or pastor) are subject to the civic integration programme abroad.

The exam is held at the Dutch embassy or consulate in the migrant's country of origin or at the nearest Dutch embassy or consulate abroad. Migrants coming to the Netherlands can only apply for a visa (a so-called Mvv) after they have passed the civic integration exam. If a migrant fails to pass the exam abroad, their visa application may be rejected. The Mvv should be lodged at the embassy or consulate after taking the exam.

The following groups of people are exempt from the civic integration exam abroad:

- (1) children aged under 18 and adults who have reached their retirement age;
- (2) nationals of an EU or EEA country, or one of the following countries: Switzerland, Monaco, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Vatican City, the US and South Korea;
- (3) Surinamese nationals who have received at least their primary education in Dutch and have written proof of this;
- (4) people who come to the Netherlands for a limited period, for work, study, employment as an au pair, on an exchange scheme or for medical treatment (their family members are also exempt);
- (5) family members of a person with an asylum residence permit;
- (6) people with a serious physical or mental disability.

The Civic Integration Abroad Act (*Wet inburgering buitenland, Wib*) came into force in 2006. Over time, two measures were subsequently introduced aimed at further tightening the civic integration requirements. Firstly, the level of the language test was raised from level A1 minus to level A1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Secondly, a literacy and reading comprehension test (Dutch: *Test Geletterdheid en Begrijpend Lezen*) was added to the requirements as part of the examination. Both measures were implemented in 2011. As a result, family migrants entering the Netherlands are expected to be better prepared and to be sufficiently aware of the demands they are expected to meet prior to their arrival.

¹⁰ For a complete overview of all fees per residence permit or visa: <https://ind.nl/nl/leges-kosten-van-een-aanvraag#kosten-verblijfsvergunning>.

In October 2024 the highest administrative court, the Administrative Law Department of the Council of State, announced that it will ask a preliminary ruling from the EU Court of Justice whether the Civic Integration Abroad Act is discriminatory on the basis of nationality and/or contrary to the stipulations of the family reunification directive.

2.2.4 Recent policies in family migration

This section describes a few changes in Dutch family migration policies implemented in 2024 and 2025.¹¹

Turkish citizens will be required to integrate from 2025 onwards to gain stronger residency rights

From 1 January 2025, Turkish citizens must submit a civic integration diploma when applying for a permanent residence permit in the Netherlands.¹² This requirement also applies to applications for a long-term EU resident's residence permit. This measure is part of the Civic Integration Act 2021, which has been in effect since 1 January 2022. A transitional period was in effect until 1 January 2025. This means that Turkish citizens who submitted their application for a permanent residence permit before this date did not need to submit a civic integration diploma. They must, however, meet other conditions, such as sufficient income. There are exceptions to the new rule. Turkish citizens who fall under the standstill provision of the EU-Turkey Association Agreement, such as employees and their family members, do not need to submit a civic integration diploma after 1 January 2025. In addition, young people under 18 and elderly people receiving AOW (state pension), may also be exempt from the integration requirement.

Legislative amendment strengthens legal basis for fraud investigations

On 9 April 2024, the State Secretary for Justice and Security amended the legal framework to establish explicit authority to investigate suspected fraud cases, such as sham marriages, sham partnerships, or sham adoptions.¹³ This amendment followed a ruling by the Council of State (RvS) of 19 June 2023, which found that a legal basis for such investigations, as required by the EU Family Reunification Directive (2003/86/EC), was lacking.¹⁴ This legislative amendment now provides a legal basis for investigating fraudulent activities, with clear frameworks on which suspicions of fraud must be based before an investigation can be initiated.

Policy Adjustment for Family Reunification Applications in Non-Marital Partnerships

On 26 April 2023, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) revised its policy regarding family reunification applications.¹⁵ The amendment stipulates that an application for family reunification of a non-EU partner cannot be denied solely on the grounds that the family relationship, as defined in the Aliens Decree (Vb) 2000, is not exclusive. However, this non-exclusive relationship must be durable; that is, it must be comparable to the state of a marriage. This adjustment was implemented to align practice with the 2021 case law. A ruling by the Council of State (AbRvS) on 24 November 2021, clarified the conditions of exclusivity in non-marital partnerships.¹⁶

Revision application procedure for the 'EU Law Assessment Procedure for Family Members of EU Citizens'

To improve efficiency in application procedures, on 1 July 2023, a change was made to the 'EU Law Assessment Procedure for Persons from Outside the EU who are Family Members of EU Citizens'.¹⁷ Previously, there were two separate application procedures: one for the non-EU family member and one for the EU citizen who is the sponsor. The separate procedure for the EU citizen was abolished; the requirement for the EU citizen's lawful EU residence remains, but this is assessed during the application process for the non-EU family member. The EU citizen no longer needs to register with the Immigration and Naturalisation Service.¹⁸

¹¹ The explanation of new policy measures is partly based on EMN (2022, 2023, 2024) *Jaaroverzicht Migratie en asiel in Nederland*. The Hague, European Migration Network.

¹² <https://schengenvisum.info/turken-inburgeringsdiploma-nodig-aanvraag-permanente-verblijfsvergunning-nederland/>.

¹³ *Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, 2024, No. 83.

¹⁴ ECLI:NL:RVS:2023:2357, *Raad van State*, 202105376/1/V3, 19 juni 2024.

¹⁵ IND (2023) 'IB 2023/36 Afdelingsuitspraak exclusiviteitseis bij ongehuwde partnerrelaties', 26 April 2023.

¹⁶ See, in more detail, https://www.emnnetherlands.nl/sites/default/files/2024-08/EMN_jaaroverzicht2023_EN_def.pdf, page 21.

¹⁷ Government Gazette, 2023, nr. 17810.

¹⁸ See, in more detail, https://www.emnnetherlands.nl/sites/default/files/2024-08/EMN_jaaroverzicht2023_EN_def.pdf, page 22.

2.2.5 Amendments concerning a proper enforcement of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement¹⁹

On 31 March 2023, the Dutch government made changes to the Aliens Act Implementation Guidelines 2000 (Vc). This amendment followed a clarification request by the Dutch government to the European Commission regarding Article 15(2) of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement. The Commission's response clarified that British nationals with a non-permanent Brexit residence permit may be absent from the Netherlands for a maximum of 6 months per year, or, in case of compelling reasons, a total of 12 uninterrupted months. Exceeding this maximum permitted absence period results in the loss of residence rights under the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement. The Dutch government decided, however, not to enforce it immediately due to its sudden and significant impact. Enforcement of this provision started on 1 October 2023.²⁰

2.2.6 Measures against marriages of convenience and forced marriages

The Law on the prevention of forced marriages (*Wet tegengaan huwelijksdwang*) came into force on 5 December 2015. With this law, marriage can only take place between partners aged 18 years or older. The same age limit applies to the recognition of foreign marriages. In addition, The Marital Captivity Prevention Act (*Wet tegengaan huwelijkse gevangenschap*) took effect on July 1, 2023.²¹ This law allows a judge to not only dissolve the civil marriage, but also to issue an order obliging a spouse to cooperate in the dissolution of the religious marriage. Both the ex-partner who blocks the religious divorce and family members or third parties who assist in this process can be prosecuted. Marital captivity is one of the so-called harmful practices that are punishable in the Netherlands.

2.3 Measures against human trafficking and cooperation with third countries

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has initiated several initiatives against human trafficking and also promotes activities in the field of migration and development. In addition, several grant opportunities are made available for those – often non-government organisations (NGOs) – that seek funding for migration and economic development projects. Several eye-catching projects will be discussed briefly below.²²

The COMPASS programme (2024-2027)

The COMPASS programme was launched in 2021. Its mission is to strengthen migration governance and cooperation with third countries, and support services that facilitate safe, orderly, and regular migration while protecting the rights of migrants. From direct assistance and policy engagement to community-based approaches, COMPASS works to prevent trafficking, support victims, and strengthen protection systems. Experiences from the first phase of COMPASS (2021-2023) provide an important foundation for continuing this mission until the end of 2027. In June 2024, the launch of a new phase of the COMPASS programme (2024-2027) was announced to support safe migration and the protection of migrants' rights in 14 countries. The new phase of the COMPASS programme will focus primarily on sustainable and long-term solutions for irregular migration.

The Dutch Africa Strategy 2023-2032

The Africa Strategy is the first Dutch continent-wide strategy on Africa adopted by the Dutch parliament in October 2023. The strategy promotes equal cooperation with African countries and the African Union based on mutual interests and partnerships that benefit both partners. The strategy encompasses an integrated vision of political and economic cooperation with the continent of Africa regarding economic development, security, migration, poverty reduction and human rights. The Africa Strategy also forms the basis for Dutch contribution at a European level and Dutch commitment to a strong position for the European Union in Africa through diplomacy, economic cooperation and development cooperation. In the field of migration, too, the aim is to develop equal partnerships with African countries in order to,

¹⁹ See, in more detail, EMN (2024) Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands Annual Report 2023, page 24.

²⁰ Government Gazette, 2023, nr. 26470.

²¹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/huwelijksdwang/aanpak-huwelijkse-gevangenschap>.

²² The project descriptions are to a great extent based on an overview of migration and development projects presented by the European Migration Network (EMN (2022, 2023 and 2024) Annual Policy report for The Netherlands).

among other things, prevent irregular migration, facilitate return, cooperate on border management, combat smuggling of migrants and human trafficking, and protect migrants.

Together against human trafficking

In 2018, the programme Together Against Human Trafficking was set up. The Dutch coalition agreement of the Rutte IV cabinet stipulated that this programme would be continued in 2023 and later years. For the execution and implementation of this programme, €2 million is structurally available as of 1 January 2023. Further to the debate in the House of Representatives on 21 December 2023, an additional €500,000 has been made available for the implementation of this enhanced Action Plan over the next four years starting in 2024. The government takes a comprehensive approach to combating human trafficking and enlists all parties that can help.²³ It also offers victims support. In order to combat human trafficking, it is vital that various parties work together. Recognising victims of human trafficking often involves spotting a combination of signs. The action lines of the Action Plan Together Against Human Trafficking are (1) creating broad awareness, (2) increasing willingness to report, (3) investing in and working towards better identification of victimisation and protection of victims, (4) improving (supra-regional and regional) cooperation, (5) improving information sharing and data processing and (6) strengthen the position of underage victims. Together with experts, investigation services, municipalities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and other organisations involved, an Action Plan was drawn up according to the method of Task-oriented Work.

Other projects with a longer history can be found in earlier versions of this annual report. See the Regio-plan website (www.regioplan.nl) for more information.

2.4 Remigration

The opportunity to apply for a remigration benefit has ended on 1 January 2025. Those who applied for a remigration benefit before 1 January 2025 are still eligible. The Remigration benefit is available to migrants who:

- are 55 years or older;
- have legally resided in the Netherlands for at least eight years;
- have received social benefits for at least one year;
- are first-generation migrants;
- were 18 years or older when arriving in the Netherlands

2.5 Some issues from the public debate

The most discussed issue in 2023 was that of deficiencies in the asylum chain, with the result that the reception of asylum seekers and housing of those with a residence permit fell far short of what is needed. In addition, due to insufficient housing for refugees with residence status in municipalities there is no outflow from the reception centres. Agreements have now been made between the central government and municipalities, but the acute problems have not yet been resolved. Eventually, the Rutte IV coalition cabinet resigned in July 2023 due to mutual disagreements about reducing asylum applications in the Netherlands in order to solve the capacity problem with regard to the reception of migrants seeking asylum in the Netherlands. The new cabinet, installed in July 2024, has announced various measures to reduce the number of asylum seekers in the Netherlands and thus also relieve the pressure on reception facilities (see also chapter 4).

Furthermore, the final report of a Boosting Team for the Protection of Migrant Workers concluded in October 2020 that a significant group of poorly skilled labour migrants are being abused by a (limited) number of employers in the Netherlands.⁸⁴ Limited labour market legislation and inadequate enforcement contribute to this undesirable result. The report has led to a broad political and social discussion

²³ <https://www.government.nl/topics/human-trafficking/combating-human-trafficking>.

about the persistence of undesirable practices in the Dutch labour market. New fact reports and discussions on this issue also took place in 2023 and 2024.

In addition, the past year saw a heated discussion about ethnic profiling. The reason for this were the fraud detection practices at the Tax and Customs Administration, which especially affected people with a non-Western migration background. Amnesty International's conclusions point to a deliberate link between ethnic origin and alleged fraud in the daily working practices of the tax authorities.²⁴ This conclusion is, however, contradicted by both the Tax and Customs Administration itself and by an investigation by the Dutch Data Protection Authority. The latter organisation does nevertheless call the tax authorities' working method discriminatory and extremely inappropriate. There was also discussion about the fraud team of the Education Executive Agency (DUO) after it emerged that the supervisors remarkably often focused their activities on students with a migration background.²⁵

Last but not least, the debate on the influx of foreign students has intensified in 2022 and 2023. The reason for this is that higher education institutions increasingly notice that the continued growth in the number of students from abroad can also lead to immediate problems. In particular, reference is made to the lack of opportunities for Dutch students, the workload among teachers and the lack of housing for these students. The problem with all this is that universities themselves can take few measures to reduce this influx. In the meantime, the current cabinet has announced that it will take measures to gain more control over the desired number of foreign students in the Netherlands (see also chapter 5).

2.6 Statistical overview of migration to and from the Netherlands in 2022

In this section we discuss the most important statistical information about migration to and from the Netherlands. First of all, total immigration and emigration is discussed. Subsequently, the immigration of Dutch nationals and foreigners is explained. We then discuss the main motives for migration to the Netherlands. We conclude with a description of some demographic characteristics of migrants in the Netherlands.

2.6.1 Main migration trends

The main migration trends in the Netherlands from 2000 to 2023 are presented in figure 2.1 in terms of immigration, emigration and migration surplus.

Immigration. The highest number of immigrants was reached in 2022 with around 403,000 individuals entering the Netherlands. After the downward trend in immigration during the COVID pandemic, we have seen that the number of immigrants increased sharply again between 2021 and 2022. Naturally, this increase is also related to the war in Ukraine. Between 2022 and 2024, the number of immigrants decreased again. In 2024, the number of immigrants in the Netherlands was just over 316,000 persons.

Emigration. In 2024, the volume of emigration from the Netherlands amounted to 208,537 people. This is the highest annual number of emigrants in the last two decades. Between 2022 and 2024 the number of emigrants increased by about 16%.

Surplus. The migration surplus, also referred to as the 'net migration rate', is the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants. Hence, a positive value represents more individuals entering than leaving the country, while a negative value implies a reverse picture. Figure 2.1 reveals that, after a dip in the surplus between 2019 and 2020, the surplus reached its ultimate peak in 2022 (200,708 persons). However, in 2023 the surplus of migrants was at a significantly lower level (137,366 persons) and continued to decrease to 74,573 in 2024. Incidentally, in Dutch statistics a distinction is drawn between two types of data: the *uncorrected* net migration rate and the *corrected* net migration rate. In this chapter we will only report data including these corrections. See box 2.2 for an explanation.

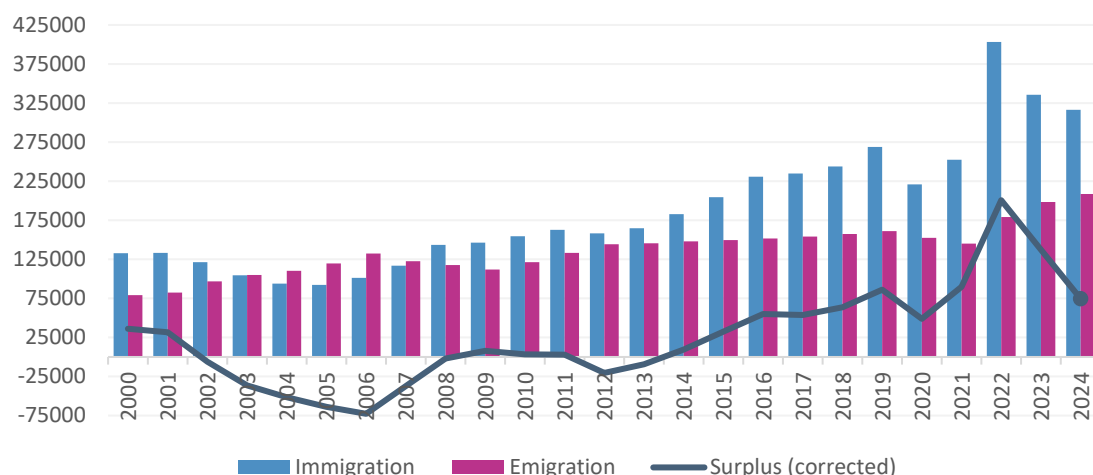
²⁴ <https://www.amnesty.nl/actueel/kabinet-moet-stoppen-met-het-toestaan-van-discriminerende-risicoprofielen>.

²⁵ <https://nos.nl/op3/artikel/2479700-studenten-met-migratieachtergrond-opvallend-vaak-beschuldigd-van-fraude-minister-wil-systeem-grondig-nagaan>.

Box 2.2 Corrected net migration rate

The uncorrected net migration rate is calculated by subtracting the total number of emigrants from the total number of immigrants per year. The corrected net migration rate is based on the same method, but also includes the balance of administrative corrections. These corrections consist of both entries in and removals from the municipal population register for reasons other than birth, death, arrival or departure.²⁶

Figure 2.1 Immigration to and emigration from the Netherlands, and net migration rate (surplus)¹, 2000-2024



Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025); ¹ Net migration has been corrected for administrative errors.

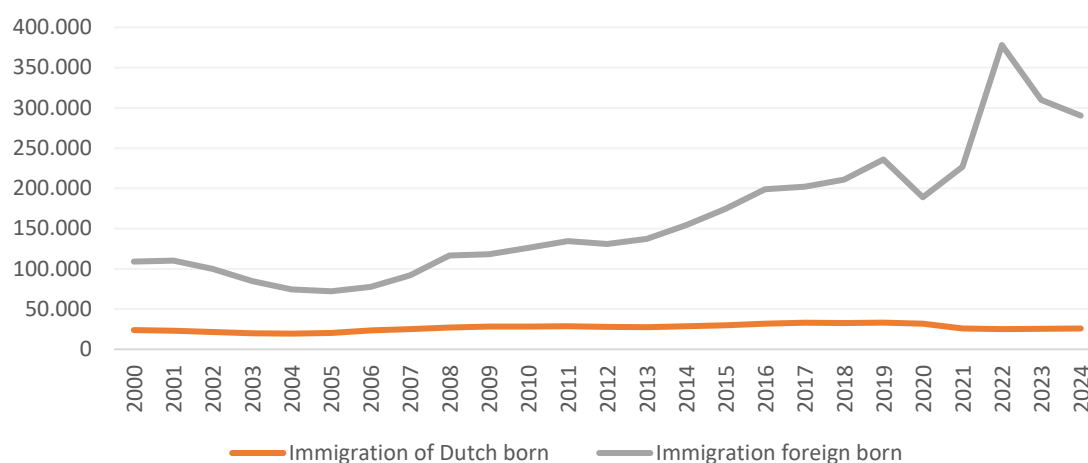
2.6.2 Immigration of Dutch born and foreign born

The official Dutch migration statistics draws a distinction between persons born in the Netherlands and persons born in foreign countries. In this section we will discuss some statistics for Dutch-born immigrants who are re-entering the Netherlands.

A rather modest share of immigrants entering the Netherlands were originally born in the Netherlands (see figure 2.2). Compared to the number of non-Dutch immigrants, the size of this group of immigrants remained fairly small between 2000 and 2024. On the other hand, the number of non-Dutch immigrants has increased sharply since 2020. Both the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have contributed to this growth (from approximately 189,000 in 2021 to 378,122 in 2022). After 2022, we see a notable decline in the number of foreign-born immigrants coming to the Netherlands, decreasing to 290,545 persons in 2024.

²⁶ An administrative *entry* is a decision by a municipality to include a person in its population while the municipality has not received information on birth, immigration or establishment of that person from another municipality in the Netherlands. An administrative *removal* is a decision by a municipality to no longer include a person in its population, once it has been established that the address of the person is unknown, the person cannot be contacted and probably no longer resides in the Netherlands.

Figure 2.2 Immigration by Dutch and foreign-born individuals, 2000-2024



Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

In addition, the category of foreign-born nationals can be discussed in more detail. In figure 2.3 a distinction is made between immigrants (i) from the EU-27 countries (as of 2020 excluding the United Kingdom), (ii) from other countries within Europe (such as Switzerland, Norway and Turkey), and (iii) non-European countries.

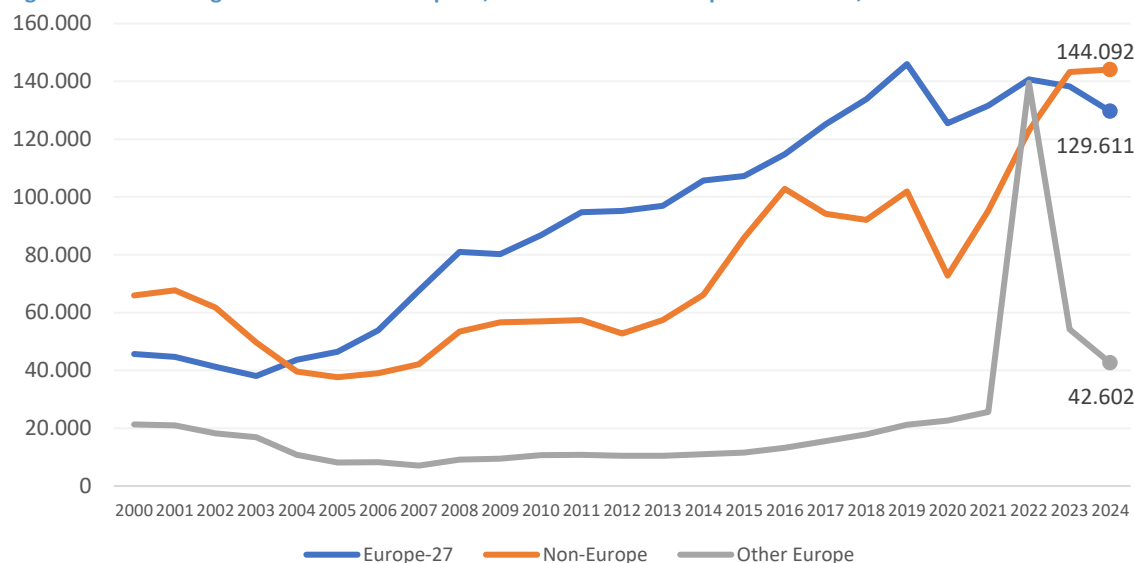
EU-27 countries. The number of immigrants from EU-27 countries steadily increased from 20,000 in 2000 to 145,979 in 2019. Between 2019 and 2020, the number of immigrants from EU-27 countries significantly decreased, mainly due to the travel restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and a downturn in employment opportunities for (Eastern-)European labour migrants.²⁷ Between 2021 and 2023, the number of immigrants from EU-27 countries increased again to 143,180, only to decrease again to 129,611 in 2024.

Other European countries. Between 2000 and 2021, the influx of immigrants born in other European countries gradually increased to a number of about 25,674 immigrants. This number strongly increased in 2022, mainly due to the war in Ukraine. In that year, more than 138,000 immigrants from other European countries entered the Netherlands. Immigration from other European countries declined again to a number of 42,602 immigrants in 2024.

Non-European countries. Between 2005 and 2019, we see a gradual increase in the number of immigrants from non-European countries. However, between 2019 and 2020, these numbers slightly decreased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2020 and 2024, the number of non-European immigrants strongly increased (from 72,757 to 144,092).

²⁷ <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2021/29/vooral-minder-immigranten-van-buiten-de-eu-in-2020>.

Figure 2.3 Immigration from non-European, EU-27 and other European countries, 2000-2024

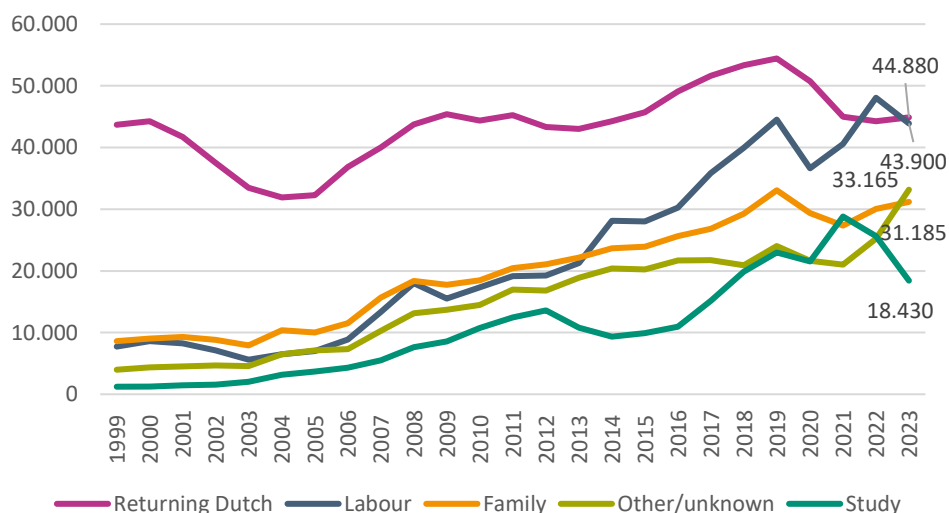


Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

2.6.3 Migration motives of migrants from (non) EU/EFTA countries

With regard to migration from other EU/EFTA countries to the Netherlands, returning Dutch people are the most important category (see figure 2.4). Almost 45,000 Dutch people came to the Netherlands from other EU/EFTA-countries in 2023. Labour is also a prominent category with nearly 44,000 immigrants migrating for economic reasons. In absolute numbers, study and family are slightly less important categories. Between 2022 and 2023, we notice a modest increase in returning Dutch people and family migrants, compared to a notable decrease in study migrants and labour migrants.

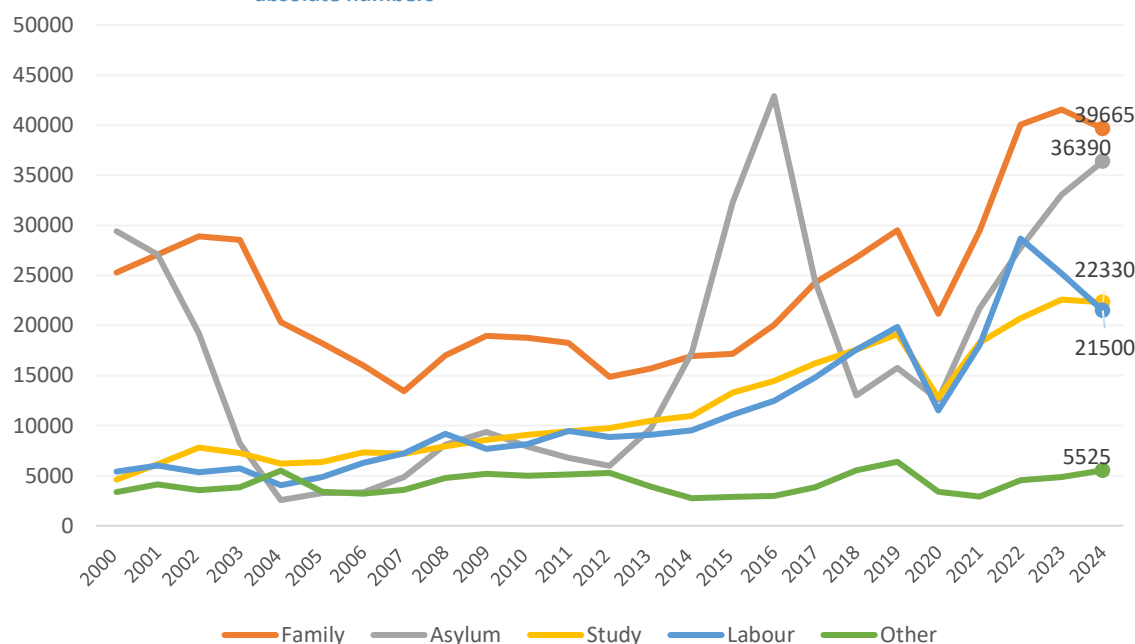
Figure 2.4 Migration motives of immigrants from EU/EFTA countries by year of migration (2000-2023), absolute numbers



Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

The motives of migrants who originate from outside the EU/EFTA-countries differ from those originating from EU/EFTA-countries (see figure 2.5). In 2024, family migrants from non-EU/EFTA-countries were the most important category in numbers (with almost 40,000 immigrants). In that year, asylum was another important motive with a little more than 36,000 immigrants coming to the Netherlands. Migration from outside the EU/EFTA for study and economic reasons are less important categories (23,300 study immigrants and 21,500 labour immigrants).

Figure 2.5 Migration motives of immigrants from non-EU/EFTA countries by year of migration (2000-2024), absolute numbers



Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

2.6.4 Top 10 nationalities by migration motive

In table 2.1, the top 10 nationalities of immigrants from within the EU/EFTA region are shown by migration motive. In 2023, most labour migrants originated from Poland (22.8%), Romania (12.7%) and Spain (9.6%). Poland (23.6%), Bulgaria (10%) and Romania (9.6%) were the most import countries of origin in terms of family migration in the same year. Finally, most of the study migrants in the Netherlands originated from Germany (14.2%), followed by Bulgaria (10.5%) and Italy (9.3%) in 2023.

Table 2.1 Top 10 nationalities within the EU/EFTA by migration motive, 2023

Labour (N=43,900)		Family (N=31,195)		Study (N=18,430)	
	%		%		%
Polish	22.8	Polish	23.6	German	14.2
Romanian	12.7	Bulgarian	10	Bulgarian	10.5
Spanish	9.6	Romanian	9.6	Italian	9.3
Italian	9.1	German	7.7	Romanian	8.9
Bulgarian	8.6	Italian	7.6	Polish	8.3
Portugese	6.2	Spanish	7.1	Spanish	7.4
German	4.9	Portugese	5.2	Greek	5.7
Greek	4.7	French	4.7	French	5.6
French	4.6	Greek	4	Hungarian	3.9
Hungarian	3.4	Belgian	3.9	Portugese	3.7
Other	13.4	Other	16.6	Other	22.5
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

In table 2.2, the top 10 nationalities of immigrants from outside the EU/EFTA region are shown by migration motive. In 2023, most labour migrants originated from India (15.9%), China (12.5%), and Turkey (11%). The numerically most important countries of origin among family migrants were Turkey (10.1%), India (9.4%), Syria (7.8%) and Morocco (4.8%). Most study migrants came from China (14.8%), Turkey (9.9%), and the United States (9.1%). Finally, more than half of the asylum migrants came from Syria (62.2%), followed by Eritrea (5.5%), and Turkey (4.2%) in that year. It is worth mentioning that the Ukrainians who migrated to the Netherlands within the framework of the Temporary Protection Directive are not included in this table.

Table 2.2 Top 10 nationalities outside of the EU/EFTA region by migration motive, 2024

Labour (N=21,500)		Family (N=39,665)		Study (N=22,330)		Asylum (N=36,390)	
	%		%		%		%
Indian	15.9	Turkish	10.1	Chinese	14.8	Syrisch	62.2
Chinese	12.5	Indian	9.4	Turkish	9.9	Eritrean	5.5
Turkish	11	Syrian	7.8	American	9.1	Turkish	4.2
American	7.3	Moroccan	4.8	Indian	8.2	Somali	4.1
British	6.3	Surinamese	4.5	Indonesisch	4.7	Iraqi	3.5
South-African	6.2	American	4.3	Iranian	4.6	Afgha	1.7
Iranian	3.8	Iraqi	3.9	South-Korean	3.8	Iranian	0.9
Japanese	3.2	Chinese	3.7	British	3.1	Chinese	0.3
Russian	3.1	South-African	3.5	Russian	2.3	Russian	0.3
Brazilian	3	Iranian	3.2	Canadian	2.1	Moroccan	0.1
Other	27.7	Other	44.8	Other	37.4	Other	17.2
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

2.6.5 Country of destination and demographic characteristics of emigrants

Below we discuss the demographic characteristics of migrants leaving the Netherlands and their most important countries of destination. The first column of table 2.3 shows that most emigrants from the Netherlands moved to other European countries in 2024. Germany (15,347 emigrants) was the most popular destination, followed by Poland (14,552) and Spain (13,733). Popular destinations outside the EU were the United States (7,556) and Ukraine (7,231). Another notable country of emigration in 2024 was the UK (5,877). In general, emigrants often migrate to the countries in which they were born (table 2.3, 5th column). However, there are notable exceptions to this pattern. For instance, people who emigrate to Belgium or Spain are more often born in the Netherlands.

Table 2.3 Demographic background (sex and country of birth) of emigrants from the Netherlands, 2024 (uncorrected immigration figures)

Country of destination	Total emigrants ¹	% of total	% male	% female	% born in country of destination	% born in the Netherlands	% born in other countries
Total	175,342	100.0	49.9	50.1	53.7	24.6	21.7
Total EU27	121,915	69.5	49.9	50.1	54.0	24.2	21.7
Total Europe	102,762	58.6	51.6	48.4	53.1	25.8	21.1
Germany	15,347	8.8	48.0	52.0	42.4	26.0	31.6
Poland	14,552	8.3	55.5	44.5	86.0	8.2	5.8
Spain	13,733	7.8	49.6	50.4	31.4	43.2	25.4
Belgium	11,389	6.5	49.4	50.6	17.4	52.2	30.4
United States of America	7,556	4.3	47.6	52.4	42.9	25.4	31.6
Ukraine	7,231	4.1	25.0	75.0	93.3	0.6	6.1
France	6,607	3.8	47.2	52.8	46.9	29.7	23.4
Italy	6,042	3.4	50.2	49.8	69.6	13.5	16.9
United Kingdom	5,877	3.4	49.5	50.5	37.6	21.8	40.6
Romania	5,224	3.0	60.2	39.8	88.5	3.8	7.7

Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

¹ The emigration statistics in this table are uncorrected and therefore do not match with figures presented in figures 3.1 and 3.2, which display corrected emigration statistics. For this table we use uncorrected figures because we only know the country of destination for emigrants who deregister from the municipality themselves.

2.6.6 Demographic characteristics of foreign residents in the Netherlands

Table 2.4 shows the number of foreign-born residents in the Netherlands. On 1 January 2025, 6.1% of the population in the Netherlands was born in another European country and 10.7% was born outside Europe. Expressed in absolute numbers, more than 3.0 million people in the Netherlands were born abroad.

Table 2.4 Number of foreign-born residents by birth country, 1 January 2025

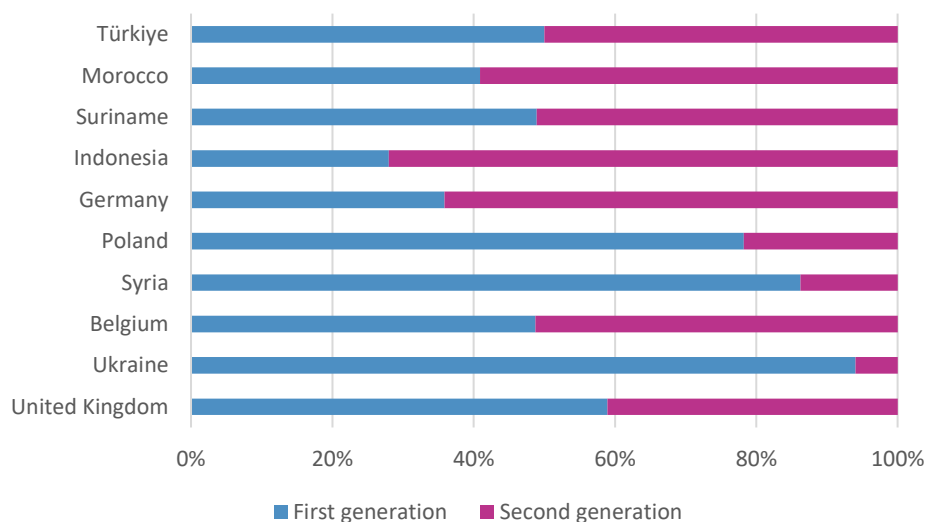
	Abs.	% of total Dutch population
Total Dutch population	18,044,027	100.00
Foreign-born residents	3,025,656	16.77
<i>of whom</i>		
Born in Europe (excl. The Netherlands)	1,100,557	6.10
Born outside Europe	1,925,099	10.67

Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

In addition to foreign-born residents, Statistics Netherlands registers whether residents have a migration background. A person is considered to have a migration background if the person himself or at least one of his/her parents was born outside the Netherlands. On 1 January 2025, 5,141,838 people with a migration background were living in the Netherlands. That equates to 28.5% of the total Dutch population. Of the people with a migration background, 41.2% were born in the Netherlands.

Figure 2.6 shows the proportion of persons born in and outside the Netherlands among the top 10 migrant groups. In particular, migrant groups who have recently come to the Netherlands as labour migrants (i.e. from Poland) and recent asylum groups (Syrian and Ukrainian migrants) consist to a significant extent of first-generation migrants. Migrants from countries from which migration to the Netherlands has been ongoing for some time show a higher proportion of second-generation individuals (see for example Germany, Indonesia and Morocco).

Figure 2.6 Proportion of persons born in and outside the Netherlands by county of origin, 1 January 2025 (percentages)



¹ The Top-10 largest groups with a migration background based on population size are presented.

Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

Table 2.5 shows the (numerical) size of different migrant groups in the Netherlands. The table refers to persons of both the first and second generation. The largest groups are people with a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Indonesian or German background. Together they make up more than 11% of the total population in the Netherlands.

Table 2.5 Top 10 Migrant groups in the Netherlands, 1 January 2025

Country of origin	Abs.	% of total Dutch population
Turkey	468,726	2.6
Morocco	433,337	2.4
Suriname	367,771	2
Indonesia	352,259	2
Germany	342,649	1.9
Poland	244,547	1.4
Dutch Caribbean	197,449	1.1
Syria	192,421	1.1
Curacao	150,106	0.8
Belgium	138,022	0.8
Total non-native residents	5,141,838	28.5

Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

There are some apparent differences between the population pyramids of native Dutch residents, residents originating from another European country, and residents originating from outside Europe (see figure 2.7). What is particularly striking is that population groups with a migration background have a larger representation of young people. In contrast, the proportion of people in the older age cohorts is smaller among the groups with a migration background.

Figure 2.7 Population pyramids by country of origin, 1 January 2025



Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

2.6.7 Regions of settlement

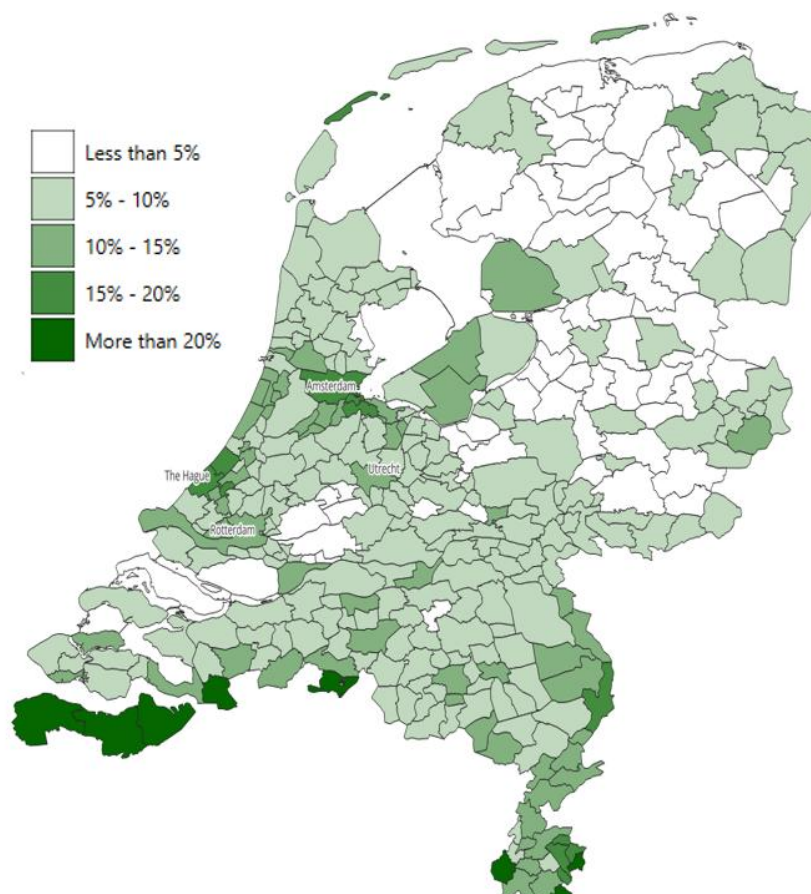
In this section we present the main regions of settlement of foreign-born residents in the Netherlands.

Residents born in Europe (excluding the Netherlands). European immigrants tend to live near the border areas of the Netherlands, particularly the southern parts. In addition, the larger cities of the Netherlands are popular locations for these immigrants, especially Amsterdam and The Hague. See figure 2.8a for a graphical overview of the main regions of settlement of European immigrants on 1 January 2025.

Residents born outside Europe. Immigrants from outside Europe tend to live in large cities, particularly in the metropolitan areas of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht (also referred to as G4 cities). See figure 2.8b for a graphical representation of the Dutch regions of settlement of immigrants from outside Europe on 1 January 2025. In addition, immigrants originating from major 'refugee coun-

tries' live relatively equally spread across the Netherlands. This pattern is likely to arise from the arrangements between the national government and all municipalities throughout the country to provide housing for people with a refugee status.²⁸

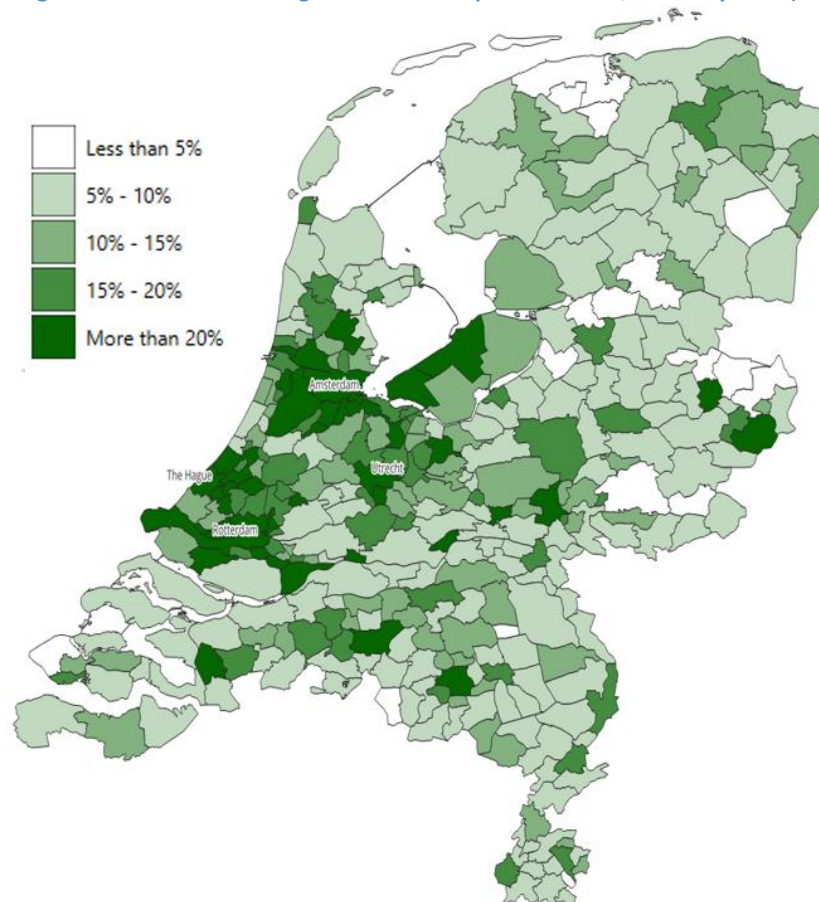
Figure 2.8a Region of settlement of foreign born European residents, 1 January 2025 (in %)



Source: Statistics Netherlands (2025), adapted by Regioplan

²⁸ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/asielbeleid/huisvesting-asielzoekers-met-verblijfsvergunning>.

Figure 2.8b Region of settlement of foreign-born non-European residents, 1 January 2025 (in %)



Source: Statistics Netherlands (2025), adapted by Regioplan



Labour migration

3

3 Labour migration

This chapter deals with labour-based migration patterns to the Netherlands. Firstly, laws and policies for labour migrants from other EU Member States are explained, also including an overview of the main labour migration flows from these countries. Secondly, laws and policies with regard to labour migration from so-called third countries are described, followed by an outline of the most important labour migration patterns from these countries. We start with an overview of the main statistic findings.

3.1 Main findings

- In December 2023, 649,230 employees and 64,900 self-employed people from other EU Member States were employed in the Netherlands. Another 35,290 immigrants with employment in the Netherlands originated from the United Kingdom.
- Since 2020, foreign service providers and self-employed people from other EU-countries are required to report it when they carry out work in the Netherlands. The total number of unique service providers (posted workers) reported to the national counter was 102,410 in 2024. This number is exclusive of reporting of postings in road transport.
- Of these posted workers, 75,100 had a EU nationality and 27,300 employees had a nationality from outside the EU, EEA or Switzerland.
- In 2024, 7,080 self-employed persons from the EU submitted one or more reports, for a total of 16,530 reports.
- The total number of issued work permits for migrant workers from non-EU/EEA countries or Switzerland increased from 14,913 in 2023 to 31,259 in 2024.
- The number of granted residence permits for highly skilled workers from outside the EU/EEA or Switzerland decreased from 17,569 in 2023 to 13,170 in 2024. This continues the sharp decline from 2022 onwards. The number of issued permits for researchers from these countries decreased from 3,494 in 2023 to 3,071 in 2024.
- A large part of the combined number of issued work permits and favourable decisions were granted to nationals of India, China and Syria (together 30%).

3.2 Political ambitions regarding labour migration by the cabinet Schoof I

With regard to labour migration, cabinet Schoof I (from July 2024) intended to address the balance between the economic needs for labour migration, and the pressure that migration can put on public services. Based on the coalition agreement, three important ambitions were distinguished: (1) to address excesses and abuse of labour migrants in lower-skilled sectors, (2) plans for a targeted labour migration policy (i.e. migration must be more in balance with the broader social and welfare needs of the Netherlands), (3) to make the rules for highly skilled migration more restrictive and to address abuse, for instance by using a higher salary threshold or by implementing more stringent requirements for employers to become a recognised sponsor.

As such, it was indicated that the positive and negative impacts of labour migration require a more coherent approach. In the autumn of 2024, these ambitions were developed into more concrete plans regarding labour migration.²⁹ However, many of the aforementioned ambitions and plans are still in an exploratory phase. Major legal interventions (such as a sectoral ban on temporary employment agencies for sectors with persistent reports of abuse, and the proposals concerning changes to the highly skilled migrant scheme) have not yet been formally adopted.³⁰ However, in November 2025 the Senate voted in favour of an admission system for temporary employment agencies. A more detailed overview of the policy measures for 2024 and 2025 follows below.

²⁹ Parliamentary letter of 14 November 2024 'Naar een selectiever en gericht arbeidsmigratiebeleid'.

³⁰ Parliamentary letter of 4 July 2025 'Verkenning aanscherping kennismigrantenregeling'.

3.3 Laws and policies for labour migration within the EU

Below, the legal framework for labour mobility from other EU Member States is briefly discussed. A distinction is made between employed labour migrants, secondment structures and self-employed workers. A number of undesirable practices related to these forms of migration are also taken into account.

Legal framework for labour immigration from within the EU

Since the completion of the internal market in 1992, citizens of the EU/EEA countries and Switzerland have the right to move and work freely within the territory of the EU. The free movement of persons, workers and services is enshrined in the European Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).³¹ Central to these rights is the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of nationality of workers from the EU/EEA Member States and Switzerland. Therefore, the number of EU labour migrants cannot be limited. Neither can these migrants be obliged to have a work permit. In 2020, the Dutch Council of State reaffirmed these rights of free mobility and concluded in its advice that EU law does not permit measures that limit the number of labour migrants from other Member States in the Netherlands. These restrictions are considered contrary to the prohibition of discrimination based on nationality within the EU.³²

Protection from undesirable labour practices and labour exploitation

The existence of regulations protecting the position of workers from the EU does not alter the fact that the arrival of these migrants is accompanied by various problematic developments, such as poor working conditions, public health issues and inadequate housing facilities. These problems prompted the government to appoint a Taskforce with the task of making concrete recommendations to improve the position of European migrant workers (see also the box below).

Box 3.1 Task force Protection of Migrant Workers in the Netherlands³³

When dealing with labour migrants in the Netherlands, the Taskforce distinguishes between three types of Dutch employers. In the first place, there is a large group of employers who treat migrant workers well. They provide fair and safe work. In addition, there are employers who benefit from the limited regulations in the Netherlands to protect migrant workers. Their revenue model consists of maximising the costs for the labour migrants and minimising their earnings. This is considered highly undesirable, however, it is not illegal. Finally, there are employers who deliberately abuse the vulnerable position of labour migrants. They do not pay full wages, offer unsafe work and are responsible for poor housing. The starting point for the recommendations is that labour migrants should be treated as full and equal participants in Dutch society. The recommendations form a comprehensive system of clear legislation, effective enforcement and ex post control. Most importantly, the advice refers to a mandatory certification of employment agencies, better registration of migrant workers, improved housing for migrants, and permanent access to the health care system, also after an employment contract has ended.

During the cabinet period of Rutte IV, starting on 10 January 2022 and ending on 2 July 2024, the government was committed to countering undesirable labour practices and labour exploitation, in response to the recommendations of the Task Force for the Protection of Migrant Workers. The progress of the measures undertaken by the government to respond to the recommendations of the Task force Protection of Migrant Workers is kept track of in governmental yearly reports on labour migrations.³⁴ The annual reports for 2023 and 2024 list a significant number of measures that the Dutch government has taken or is committed to take in combatting undesirable labour practices.

³¹ Title IV of the TFEU enshrines the free movement of persons, services and capital. Articles 45-48 TFEU regulate the free movement of workers, Articles 49-55 the right of establishment, Articles 56-62 the services and Articles 63-66 the capital.

³² Information from the Council of State of 18 November 2020, Parliamentary Papers II 2020/21, 35359, no. 23.

³³ Aanjaagteam Bescherming Arbeidsmigranten (October 2020) *Geen Tweederangs burgers. Aanbevelingen om mistanden bij arbeidsmigranten tegen te gaan*. Advisory committee commissioned by the Minister of SZW.

³⁴ <https://www.arbeidsmigratieingoebanen.nl/documenten/publicaties/2024/11/14/jaarrapportage-arbeidsmigranten-2024>.

Among the most important measures is a new admission system for employment agencies.³⁵ To combat undesirable practices in temporary employment, the government is introducing a new admission system for temporary employment agencies. The essence of this system is that these agencies may only operate on the labour market if they are allowed to do so. In order to be allowed, they must, among other things, submit a Certificate of Good Conduct, transfer a deposit of one hundred thousand euros, demonstrate that they pay the correct wages and pay their taxes properly. This system contains better rules and better enforcement in a sector where many people depend on a temporary employment agency for work, housing and health insurance. The WTTA Act (*Wet toelating terbeschikkingstelling van arbeidskrachten*) was passed by the House of Representatives in April 2025.³⁶ In November 2025, the Senate approved the bill.³⁷ The law will take effect on 1 January 2027. Employment agencies must register with the *Nederlandse Autoriteit Uitleenmarkt (NAU)* before that date. The Dutch Labour Inspectorate will begin enforcement on 1 January 2028. Employment agencies operating without authorization will be fined. This fine also applies to companies that hire people through temp agencies that are not registered with the NAU.

In addition, since October 2022, all labour migrants who register as a non-resident can also opt to have their address and other contact details entered in the Personal Records Database. As of 2023, this data is provided to authorised users and municipalities in 2023. In the meantime, the National Office for Identity Data (RvIG) is working on various quality measures to keep this data as up to date and accessible as possible. As a result, municipalities will gradually get a clearer idea of who is living in their area, and this will enable them to improve their policies and monitor the situation more effectively.³⁸

The Good Landlordship Act (*Wet goed verhuurderschap*) came into effect on 1 July 2023.³⁹ The law sets general rules for renting homes to migrants. For example, from the date mentioned it is mandatory to offer the employment contract and the rental contract separately when renting housing to migrant workers.⁴⁰ Municipalities are responsible for the enforcement of these standards. Local authorities can also introduce a permit requirement for landlords from 1 July 2023. In addition, a policy plan has been prepared to offer more customised measures to homeless EU citizens.⁴¹ Finally, investments have been made to facilitate a more effective supervision and better enforcement.

Protection from human trafficking

The government is taking action to modernize the human trafficking legislation (Article 273f of the Dutch Criminal Code). The aim is to make the criminal law approach to human trafficking, also including labour exploitation and serious harm to labour migrants, more effective and to improve the prosecution of offenders and the protection of victims.⁴² The proposed bill has been submitted to the House of Representatives on 25 April 2024 and was approved on 10 June 2025.⁴³ The Senate had not yet approved the bill in the autumn of 2025, the approval is pending on answers to questions and comments.⁴⁴

Self-employed workers from the EU

Under Article 49 TFEU, access of self-employed workers to the Dutch labour market is permitted under the same conditions as those laid down for own nationals. Directive 2006/123/EC19 (Services Directive) regulates the freedom of establishment of service providers. Conditions that apply to the establishment of service providers may not discriminate on the basis of nationality and must be necessary and proportionate.

³⁵ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2023/10/10/nieuw-toelatingsstelsel-moet-misstanden-bij-uitzendbureaus-tegen-gaan>.

³⁶ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/hervormingen-arbeidsmarkt/aanpak-misstanden-bij-uitzendbureaus-en-andere-uitleeners>

³⁷ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2025/11/11/eerste-kamer-stemt-in-met-strengere-regels-voor-de-uitleenmarkt>.

³⁸ <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-17987f607b6b04a7f9c8beedaa4a135d403a5d57/pdf>.

³⁹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/buitenlandse-werknemers/nieuws/2023/03/21/eerste-kamer-stemt-in-met-wets-voorstel-goed-verhuurderschap>.

⁴⁰ [Wet goed verhuurderschap | Home | Volkshuisvesting Nederland](#).

⁴¹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2022/09/13/plan-van-aanpak-kwetsbare-dakloze-eu-burgers>.

⁴² Wetsvoorstel Modernisering en Uitbreiding Strafbarestelling Mensenhandel van 25 april 2023, www.internetconsultatie.nl

⁴³ [Wet modernisering en uitbreiding strafbaarstelling mensenhandel \(36.547\) - Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal](#).

⁴⁴ https://www.eerstekamer.nl/behandeling/20250716/verslag/document3/f=/vmp6b7luk0xx_opgemaakt.pdf.

A critical issue regarding the position of EU self-employed workers in the Netherlands is the problem of false self-employment. False self-employment applies to those who are formally hired as self-employed persons, but who in daily practice are treated or act as employees. According to the European Court of Justice, a self-employed person is considered an employee if he is, like an employee, obliged to comply with the time, place and performance of the tasks. People who are working under these conditions thus inevitably acquire the status of employee.⁴⁵

In the Netherlands, the question of whether someone is self-employed or in paid employment is regulated in the Civil Code (*Burgerlijk Wetboek*) and the regulation regarding payroll tax (*Wet op de Loonbelasting 1964*). This law states that an employment contract applies to someone who carries out activities over a certain period of time, who is paid for the activities and who is subject to a relationship of authority with the person for whom these activities are performed. Yet this law has not put an end to the problem of false self-employment. According to the Netherlands Court of Audit, several problems have contributed to an insufficient enforcement, including the existence of an enforcement moratorium, limited capacity at the Tax and Customs Administration and unclear regulations, in particular with regard to the criterion of authority.⁴⁶ The previous government set as an intention to improve the position of the self-employed by making the rules more future-proof. To achieve this, the government aimed for a level playing field between contract types (line 1), more clarity about the question whether a person works as an employee or as a self-employed person (line 2) and improving enforcement of false self-employment (line 3).⁴⁷ The government is currently working on a bill (Clarifying the Assessment of Employment Relationships and Legal Presumptions Bill, *Wet Verduidelijking Beoordeling Arbeidsrelaties en Rechtsvermoeden, VBAR*) to combat false self-employment and unfair competition on employment conditions. This proposed bill is scheduled to take effect as of July 2026, however, the bill still needs to be passed by the House of Representatives.⁴⁸ In September 2024, the Dutch government announced that it would lift the enforcement moratorium on false self-employment. This means that as of 1 January 2025, the Tax and Customs Administration enforces payroll tax on companies that hire falsely self-employed persons. Where 2025 was a transition year with warnings for companies, it has been announced that from 2026 fines will be imposed if the law is violated.

The position of posted workers from other EU Member States

The mobility of posted workers within the territory of the EU is legally enshrined in Directive 96/71/EG. However, over the past decades, the Commission has proposed a number of reforms to this framework. The two most important legislative proposals are the Enforcement Directive 2014/67/EU and the Revised Posting of Workers Directive of 28 June 2018 (Directive 2018/957/EU). In the Netherlands. The Posting of Workers Directive, the Enforcement Directive and the Revised Posting of Workers Directive have been converted into the Employment Conditions of Posted Workers in the European Union Act (*WagwEU*). The Implementation Act Revised Posting of Workers Directive (*Implementatiewet herziene detacheringsrichtlijn*) of 2020 constitutes a recent amendment to the *WagwEU*.

The Act on Combatting Sham Arrangements came into force in 2017. It is meant to protect employees against underpayment and to protect employers against unfair competition. This is done, among other things, by introducing a system of chain liability for wages, requirements with regard to the payment of wages, checks by the Netherlands Labour Authority (*Nederlandse Arbeidsinspectie*, formerly called I-SZW, a public inspection authority) and by exchanging information about practices of employers. The *WagwEU* was introduced in 2016 and replaced the *Waga* (*Wet arbeidsvoorwaarden grensoverschrijdende arbeid*). The *WagwEU* describes the terms and conditions of employment for posted workers with a foreign employer established in another EU/EEA country or Switzerland. This law provides better protection for these employees and attempts to combat unfair competition on the basis of working conditions. In addition, an obligation of notification for foreign employers and self-employed persons who work in the Netherlands on a temporary basis has entered into force in 2020.⁴⁹ This online

⁴⁵ The Court of Justice has introduced this term false employment in the so-called FNV Kiem judgment of 2014.

⁴⁶ Algemene Rekenkamer (2022) *Focus op handhaving Belastingdienst bij schijnzelfstandigheid*. Den Haag, Algemene Rekenkamer.

⁴⁷ <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-f98f32872a47dfb3ee3d073cf1273827fdfe0de/pdf>.

⁴⁸ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2025/07/07/wetsvoorstel-vbar>.

⁴⁹ The transport sector is excluded from the notification obligation and it is possible to use an annual notification for road freight transport.

registration desk is designed to provide a better overview of European service providers in the Netherlands. Only very specific forms of transport are excluded from the reporting obligation (e.g. passenger transport by rail and transit transport).⁵⁰

The Revised Posting of Workers Directive has been implemented in the WagwEU via the Implementation Act of 2020. The emphasis of this law is on ensuring the protection of posted workers during their work in the Netherlands by establishing additional provisions on the terms and conditions of employment. It is noteworthy that after 12 months – with a possible extension of another 6 months – posted workers are entitled to all Dutch employment conditions, in addition to the employment conditions for posted employees from the EU. These workers are, however, not entitled to a supplementary pension or protection under the law of the receiving country in the event of dismissal.⁵¹ The rights of posted agency workers and national agency workers have also been largely aligned. In addition, the basic terms and conditions of employment have been expanded to include conditions of workers' accommodation where provided by the employer to workers away from their regular place of work, and certain allowances.⁵²

As of 1 June 2023, the Netherlands has adopted new European rules on the posting of drivers in international road transport.⁵³ This legislation is meant to ensure a level playing field across the EU and to guarantee fair labour conditions. The legislation concerns drivers that work for a transport company in another EU country, but carry out certain activities in the Netherlands. The legislation specifies regulations on what counts as posting of drivers, and the rights these drivers are entitled to. The enforcement is ensured by the Netherlands Labour Authority (*Nederlandse Arbeidsinspectie*), in cooperation with the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (*Inspectie Leefomgeving en Transport*).

Despite all these legal provisions and reforms, the aforementioned drawbacks in relation to the free movement of workers within the EU also apply to the category of posted workers. These migrants often deal with low salaries, poor working conditions and inadequate housing. As argued by the Taskforce for the Protection of Migrant Workers in the Netherlands, the employment of posted workers is a strategy used by some employers to keep labour costs as low as possible.

Better support for migrant workers: project Work in NL (WIN)

To organise information provision, assistance and services close to migrant workers, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment of the Netherlands launched the project Work in NL at the beginning of 2024.⁵⁴ The core of the project consists of coordinating effective support for migrant workers in all 35 labour market regions. This includes setting up physical and mobile information points, providing digital information and specialistic assistance. As part of the project, an alliance was formed in the summer of 2025 by public and private organisations, such as companies, municipalities and sector organisations.⁵⁵ These organisations can make agreements within each labour market region about the support they offer, in order to align the agreements with the ambitions and specific characteristics of the region.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ <https://www.postedworkers.nl/werkgever/uitzonderingen>.

⁵¹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/buitenlandse-werknemers/arbeidsvoorwaarden-buitenlandse-werknemers>.

⁵² See, more in detail, *Implementatiewet herziene detacheringsrichtlijn*, Articles II, III and IV.

⁵³ <https://www.postedworkers.nl/opdrachtgever/nieuws/2023/06/01/nederlandse-wetgeving-over-detachering-in-het-internationaal-wegvervoer-van-kracht-per-1-juni-2023>, see also <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/wetsvoorstellen/detail?id=2022Z14786&dossier=36166>.

⁵⁴ Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid (2024). Jaarrapportage arbeidsmigranten 2024. <https://www.arbeidsmigratie-ingoedebanen.nl/documenten/publicaties/2024/11/14/jaarrapportage-arbeidsmigranten-2024>

⁵⁵ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/convenanten/2025/06/18/alliantie-work-in-nl>

⁵⁶ <https://www.arbeidsmigratieingoedebanen.nl/thema-informatie--dienstverlening-maatregelen/landelijk-dekkende-informatie-voorziening>

Box 3.2 Official proposals for a different labour migration policy⁵⁷

The IBO-report 'What Works for the Future' is a government-sponsored study conducted independently. The IBO provides five building blocks with concrete policy options to manage the scale, composition, and circumstances of labour migration in the Netherlands.

- First, demand for low-wage labour must be reduced by increasing the quality and price of labour.
- Labour migration should also be more focused on the major societal transitions facing the Netherlands.
- Furthermore, the report recommends making more conscious choices when supporting certain sectors, for example, by phasing out tax subsidies for sectors that employ many migrant workers.
- The social costs of labour migration must also be reduced and shared more fairly. Where possible, employers should contribute to these costs.
- Finally, more knowledge and data on labour migration must be gathered. This requires improving the registration of migrant workers in the Netherlands.

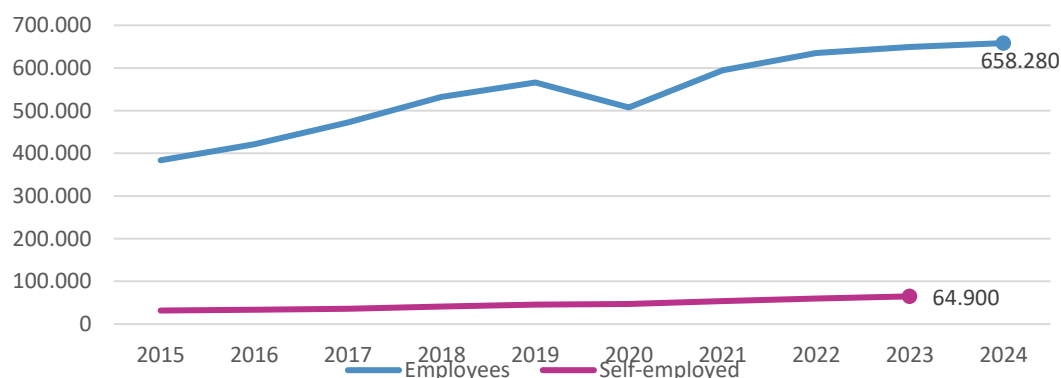
The overall goal is to reduce the number of people coming to the Netherlands and ensure that those who do come primarily work in high-quality jobs. According to the report, all these building blocks are necessary for an effective approach. It will be up to the new cabinet to make concrete plans for the future.

3.4 Working migrants from EU-27 countries

Figure 3.1 shows the number of employees and self-employed people from EU-27 countries between 2015 and 2024. Because figures on both employees and self-employed migrants are not yet available for 2024, we report on the total figures of 2023. In December 2023, 714,130 first generation migrants from other EU Member States were employed in the Netherlands. This number consists of all persons employed, not just those who had labour as their migration motive (see paragraph 2.6.3 for figures on persons with employment as (derived) migration motive). Another 201,480 with employment in the Netherlands originated from the candidate Member-States⁵⁸ and 35,290 employed immigrants came from the United Kingdom. Within the group of EU-27 countries, 438,940 immigrants with employment in the Netherlands originated from the EU-11 Member States (particularly Central-Eastern Europe).

As also shown in figure 3.1, the number of migrants from EU Member States working as an employee in the Netherlands increased from 383,840 in 2015 to 566,400 in 2019. Then – as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic – the number of employees from the EU decreased slightly, but after 2021 we saw an increase again (to 658,280 in 2024). In addition, between 2015 and 2023 we notice a slight continuous increase in the number of self-employed migrants from other EU countries (from 31,710 in 2015 to 64,900 in 2023).

Figure 3.1 The number of employees and self-employed people from EU-27 countries, 2015-2024



Source: CBS Migrantenmonitor (2015-2024)

⁵⁷ Rijksoverheid (2025) IBO Arbeidsmigratie. *Wat werkt voor de toekomst*. The Hague, 11 July 2025.

⁵⁸ The candidate countries are Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

The largest labour market region in terms of employed EU migrants in 2023 in the Netherlands was Greater Amsterdam with 110,600 persons, followed by Rijnmond (Rotterdam) with 53,200 persons and Haaglanden (The Hague) with 61,800 (see table 3.1). In addition, labour market regions traditionally known for high employment in agriculture, particularly in the provinces of Brabant and Limburg, are also in the list of regions with most employed EU migrants in the Netherlands. No numbers are yet known for the year 2024.

Table 3.1 Employed persons in the Netherlands in December 2023 from EU-27, EU-11 and candidate countries, by top 10 labour market region

Labour market region	Total	EU-27 (incl. EU-11)	EU-11	Candidate countries
Groot Amsterdam	362,100	110,600	45,600	34,600
Rijnmond	178,800	53,200	33,000	22,900
Haaglanden	161,000	61,800	44,100	20,900
Midden-Utrecht	99,200	30,900	15,700	10,100
Zuidoost-Brabant	78,900	34,700	18,500	8,400
West-Brabant	64,700	35,600	26,100	6,300
Noordoost-Brabant	50,600	25,400	19,300	5,500
Zuid-Limburg	49,500	27,200	8,300	4,000
Midden-Brabant	47,700	25,900	19,300	4,900
Holland Rijnland	44,400	18,600	11,900	3,900

Source: CBS *Migrantenmonitor* 2023

In December 2023, more than two-fifths of all employed migrants from the EU and candidate countries worked in business services (table 3.2), including temporary work agencies. Other economic sectors that are highly attractive to workers from the EU are industry, trade, transport, hotels and catering and public services (including health care). Workers from Central-Eastern Europe (EU-11) are relatively strongly oriented towards agriculture and the business services. Many migrants from the EU and candidate countries work in the temporary agency sector and work via these agencies in other sectors.

Table 3.2 Persons with a job in the Netherlands in December 2024 from EU-27, EU-11 and candidate countries, by employment sector

Sector	Total	EU-27 (incl. EU-11)	EU-11	Candidate countries
A Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	27,300	20,430	18,650	3,320
B-E Industry (no construction), energy	177,660	70,760	39,020	23,930
F Construction	33,000	12,510	7,040	4,900
G-I Trade, transport, hotels, catering	452,110	158,910	83,490	49,330
J Information en communication	77,320	21,040	6,540	7,010
K Financial institutions	42,930	11,430	3,470	4,740
L Renting, buying, selling real estate	6,700	2,150	930	690
M-N Business services	536,240	280,950	217,960	63,730
O-Q Government and care	267,640	67,310	17,000	23,960
R-U Culture, recreation, other services	50,970	12,800	4,230	6,420
Unknown	0	0	0	0
Total	1,671,860	658,280	398,310	188,010

Source: CBS *Migrantenmonitor* 2024

3.4.1 Posted workers originating from the EU

Since 1 March 2020, foreign service providers must report their arrival, the nature, and the duration of the work they perform in the Netherlands in the online reporting desk that can be reached via www.postedworkers.nl. In 2023 it was decided that road transport postings must be reported to the European Road transport posting declaration portal.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stb-2023-153.html>.

The total number of posted workers (excluding road transport) reported in 2024 was 102,410. 75,110 of these migrant workers were nationals of one of the EU Member States, and the other 27,300 persons were nationals of countries from outside the EU, EEA or Switzerland. Most posted workers come from Poland, Germany or Lithuania (table 3.3). Remarkably, a significant part of the reported employees from Poland, Croatia and Portugal are persons with a non-EU nationality. According to the national reporting desk, there were 96,290 posted workers employed in the Netherlands in 2023.

Table 3.3 Top countries of residence by number of reported posted workers, excluding road transport, 2024

Country of residence	EU citizens	Outside the EU	Total
Poland	13,130	11,640	24,760
Germany	17,040	2,920	19,960
Lithuania	12,380	5,080	17,470
Belgium	10,220	370	10,590
Portugal	2,190	2,610	4,800
Romania	3,160	20	3,180
Croatia	980	1,310	2,290
Spain	1,760	340	2,100
Slovakia	1,600	190	1,790
Italy	1,600	90	1,690
Other	11,050	2,740	13,790
Total	75,110	27,300	102,410

Source: *Staat van Migratie* 2025

Table 3.4 shows the origin of posted workers in the transport sector in the Netherlands at a certain time in 2022.⁶⁰ Once again, Polish companies appear to be the main suppliers of these employees. Lithuanian companies are now in second place. The numerical importance of workers from third countries also becomes evident. This is especially true for Poland and Lithuania.

Table 3.4 Top countries of residence by number of reported posted workers* in road transport in 2022

Country of residence	EU citizens	Third-country nationals	Total
Poland	58,070	53,780	111,850
Lithuania	6,250	40,690	46,940
Spain	20,500	3,650	24,150
Romania	19,460	210	19,670
Germany	18,690	760	19,440
Belgium	12,160	350	12,510
Bulgaria	10,770	70	10,840
Portugal	8,300	1,850	10,840
Hungary	7,130	720	7,850
Czech Republic	4,730	900	5,630

Source: *De Staat van Migratie* 2023

*By EU-member state and nationality at one time.

⁶⁰ Please note that these data refer to 2022 for this information was not updated in the most recent publication of *De Staat van Migratie*. There are no reliable figures available on the nature and extent of posting in road transport. It is not always clear when drivers qualify as posted workers. Because submitting a declaration is easy, many transport companies file notifications for all countries the driver might potentially pass through, even if the driver does not actually travel through them or is not posted there. As a result, there is significant overreporting and data pollution.

3.4.2 Reported self-employed persons from other EU Member States

Since 1 March 2020, foreign service providers including self-employed persons in certain sectors which are considered to have a higher risk of unfair working conditions⁶¹ must report their arrival, and the nature and duration of the work they perform in the Netherlands in an online reporting desk at www.post-edworkers.nl. In 2024, 7,080 self-employed persons from the EU submitted one or more reports, for a total of 16,530 reports.⁶² A self-employed person can submit several reports per year. Most reports came from individuals originating from Poland, Slovakia, Belgium, Czech Republic and Germany.

3.5 Laws and policies for third-country labour migration

The principle of selectivity forms the core of the Dutch policy on labour migration for third country nationals. Policies for migrants for whom there is deemed to be an economic need (the 'highly skilled and talent' category) are inviting while policies for other categories of labour migrants are restrictive. The legal framework for labour based migration is the 2013 Modern Migration Policy Act (*MoMi*) and the Aliens Employment Act (*Wet arbeid vreemdelingen, Wav*).

3.5.1 Aliens Employment Act

An employer who wants to employ a non-EU/EEA-national must apply for a work permit (*Tewerk-stellingsvergunning, TWV*) at the Public Employment Service (*UWV WERKbedrijf*) if the labour migrant stays shorter than 90 days; if they stay longer, the labour migrant must apply for a single permit. These permits are only granted if there are no Dutch or EU/EEA jobseekers, the so-called prioritised labour supply, available for the job. Also, the wages paid to non-EU/EEA workers must be in accordance with the applicable collective labour agreements. The aims of the Aliens Employment Act (*Wav*) are to regulate and protect the labour market, prevent and combat illegal employment and to protect employees.

In accordance with Directive 2011/98/EU, measures were implemented to facilitate the application process for a work permit. As of 1 April 2014, non-EU/EEA workers coming to the Netherlands to work for a period longer than three months must apply for a single permit (combined residence and work permit)⁶³ at the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (*Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, IND*). For non-EU/EEA workers with a shorter contract period in the Netherlands, a work permit and short stay visa is required. In addition, advice concerning the availability of prioritised labour supply is requested from the Employee Insurance Agency (*UWV*) for these foreign workers.

In addition, within the Aliens Employment Act a distinction is made between third-country nationals who migrate as 'knowledge and talent' migrants and third-country 'labour migrants'. The first group is only required to obtain a residence permit without a labour market test. These workers must, however, earn a minimum salary and the employer in the Netherlands must be a recognised sponsor (see also Section 3.3.4). For the second group, the admission policy is considered more restrictive. These migrants are required to obtain a work permit, and in case they stay more than 90 days employers need to apply for a single permit (combined residence and work permit or *Gecombineerde vergunning voor verblijf en arbeid, GVVA*). Table 3.5 provides an overview for which groups residence permits or work permits are required.

3.5.2 Revisions in the Aliens Employment Act in 2022

The amended Aliens Employment Act entered into effect in January 2022.⁶⁴ Due to the amendment of this act, a work permit can be granted for a maximum of 3 years from 1 January 2022, instead of a maximum of 1 year. A work permit with a full labour market test (see 3.5.5) can be granted for a maximum of 2 years, instead of 1 year.

⁶¹ These sectors are mentioned in article 8 Decree on employment conditions of posted workers.

⁶² Ministry of Justice and Safety (2025). *De Staat van Migratie 2025*.

⁶³ Dutch: *GVVA (Gecombineerde vergunning voor verblijf en arbeid)*.

⁶⁴ Staatscourant 2021, 48624.

Another change is that the employer must pay the wages stated on the work permit to the employee via a bank account, over a maximum period of one month. This allows the Dutch Labour Inspectorate to better check wage payments. If the employer does not pay the wages in this way, the work permit or single permit can be revoked or is not extended. The application for a permit can also be rejected within the amended Aliens Employment Act if no economic activities are taking place at the employer's company. This is to prevent a foreign employee from coming to the Netherlands while the employer is unable to pay wages.

On 21 March 2023, the government applied an amendment to the Implementation Decree of the Aliens Employment Act. This amendment exempts third-country nationals employed in cruise ships that serve as shelters for asylum seekers from needing a work permit (TWV).⁶⁵ This decision has retroactive effect and is meant to ensure enough personnel in these cruise ships, given the shortages in shelter for asylum seekers and the necessity of using cruise ships for this purpose.

Table 3.5 Required permits for third-country nationals who come to the Netherlands for remunerated activities

	Residence permit	Work permit
'Knowledge and talent'		
• <i>Highly skilled</i> : a foreign national coming to the Netherlands to work as a highly skilled employee, thus making a contribution towards the Dutch knowledge-based economy. No work permit is required for this category.	V	
• <i>Scientific researcher</i> : a foreign employee involved in a research project approved by a Dutch research institute in the Netherlands. No work permit is required for this category.	V	
• <i>Self-employed and freelance workers</i>	V	
• <i>Recent graduates with an orientation year</i>	V	
• <i>Highly skilled staying shorter than three months</i>		V
'Labour migrants'		
• <i>Labour migrants staying longer than three months</i>	V (SP)	
• <i>Labour migrants staying shorter than three months</i>		V
• <i>Migrants staying longer than three months who are already in possession of a residence permit (e.g. foreign students)</i>		V

Source: EMN (2015); IND website (2016)

3.5.3 New regulation for chefs from Asia

From 1 January 2022, the special arrangements for cooks from Asia have been abolished.⁶⁶ As of this date, the rules of the *Wav* again apply in full to these workers. This means that employers must first search for employees in the Netherlands, the EU/EEA countries and Switzerland. The vacancy must also be officially reported at the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV). If the search fails and the vacancy has been open for at least 5 weeks, the employer can apply for a work permit for a cook from Asia at the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND).

3.5.4 Highly qualified workers

The Netherlands has various schemes aimed at attracting highly qualified workers who are expected to make a positive contribution to the Dutch economy. The various schemes (Highly Skilled Migrant Scheme (*Regeling Kennismigranten*), a Scheme for Intra Corporate Transferees and measures aimed at foreign graduates) were discussed in the previous SOPEMI-reports. Wage criteria are used in the various schemes to define highly skilled labour. Table 3.6 provides updated wage criteria used in the various schemes.

⁶⁵ Kamerstukken II, 2022-2023, 30573 nr. 201.

⁶⁶ These requirements put an end to the special arrangement for Asian cooks. This arrangement was in effect between 2014 and 2021.

Revision of the Blue Card Directive (2021/1883/EU)⁶⁷

The Dutch government implemented a number of legislative changes in 2024, as part of the transposition of the European Blue Card Directive.⁶⁸ This directive updates the conditions for access and residence of highly qualified workers from non-EU/EFTA countries. The Blue Card is a European work and residence permit, which makes it easier to apply for a residence permit in another EU country.

When transposing the directive into national legislation, the Netherlands made specific policy choices, based on the principle of aligning the Blue Card with the national highly skilled migrant scheme wherever possible. These choices are set out in an explanatory memorandum. Part of the choices are:

- **Salary thresholds:** in order to make the European Blue Card more attractive, the Netherlands has decided to align the salary threshold with the salary criterion of the national highly skilled migrant scheme. This means a reduction in the salary threshold.
- **Recognition of work experience:** in order to make the Blue Card more accessible to talented professionals without formal education, the Netherlands has decided to take relevant work experience into account alongside qualifications when assessing applications for the European Blue Card residence permit.

The changes do not replace the national residence permit for highly skilled migrants, but make the Blue Card more attractive than before. The national scheme remains more attractive because only a salary criterion applies to this permit. However, the Blue Card makes it easier for permit holders (and their family members) to move to another EU country and work there. The bill was passed in May 2025 by the House of Representatives and is awaiting consideration by the Senate.⁶⁹

Table 3.6 Wage criteria as of 1 January 2025 (in gross monthly wages)

	Excl. 8% holiday allowance
Highly Skilled Migrant Scheme: knowledge workers >= 30 years	€ 5,688
Highly Skilled Migrant Scheme: knowledge workers < 30 years	€ 4,171
'Foreign graduates'	€ 2,989
EU Blue Card	€ 5,688

Source: [Inkomenseisen normbedragen | IND](#), visited on 4 August 2025

3.5.5 A reimbursement scheme for foreign employees with specific skills

The 30% facility is for employees who come from outside the Netherlands and work temporarily in the Netherlands. If these employees meet certain conditions, they pay no tax on a maximum of 30% of their wages. In so doing, the government compensates them for the extra costs they incur to be able to work in the Netherlands. The 30% ruling is meant to make the Netherlands attractive for foreign employees with specific skills which are scarce in this country. In 2019, the government shortened the term of the 30% facility from a maximum of 8 to 5 years. Those employees who were already using the scheme before 2019, are subject to these changes as of 1 January 2021.⁷⁰

From 1 January 2024, the government introduced even more restrictions on the scheme. The 30% tax-free ruling applied to the first 20 months of work in the Netherlands. For the 20 months after this period 20% of the wages of these foreign employees was exempt from tax, and for the last 20 months of the five years 10% of their wages was exempt from tax. This change applied to everyone employed from 1 January 2024.⁷¹ However, the Schoof I cabinet decided to abolish this staggered reduction in the tax benefit and instead proposed to apply a slightly lower flat rate of 27% tax-free ruling for foreign workers for their first five years of working in the Netherlands. At the same time, it has been proposed to increase the salary threshold: the standard salary threshold would increase from €46,107 to €50,436

⁶⁷ EMN Netherlands (2025). Migratie en asiel in Nederland. Jaaroverzicht 2024.

⁶⁸ Amendment of the Aliens Act 2000 in connection with the implementation of Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions for entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC (OJ EU 2021, L 382/1).

⁶⁹ https://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/36332_verblijf_en_toegang.

⁷⁰ <https://www.government.nl/topics/income-tax/shortening-30-percent-ruling>.

⁷¹ <https://www.government.nl/topics/income-tax/shortening-30-percent-ruling>.

(2024 price level) and from €35,048 to €38,338 for employees under 30 with a master's degree. The measures are expected to take effect on 1 January 2027, for new applications, with transitional provisions for previous users. Those who already used the 30% ruling before 1 January 2024, will retain the 30% and the 'old' salary thresholds for the duration of their stay. The House of Representatives adopted the 2025 Tax Plan package on 14 November 2024, including the amendments regarding the 30% ruling. The Senate approved the 2025 Tax Plan on 17 December 2024.⁷²

3.5.6 Foreign investors

In October 2013 an admission scheme for foreign investors was introduced in the Netherlands. Under this scheme foreign investors who invest a minimum of € 1.25 million in a Dutch company or Dutch investment fund can obtain a temporary residence permit for a period of three years (*Regeling voor Buitenlandse Investeerders*). In 2021, the government decided to abolish the regulation as very limited use was made of this rule.⁷³ As of 17 April 2024, it is no longer possible to apply for new residence permits for foreign investors.

3.5.7 Residence permit for foreign startups⁷⁴

In order to facilitate the establishment of innovative foreign entrepreneurs in the Netherlands, the so-called start-up visa scheme was introduced on 1 January 2015.⁷⁵ This scheme makes it possible for ambitious entrepreneurs to apply for a temporary residence permit for the Netherlands. Originally, the scheme allowed these entrepreneurs to launch an innovative business within a one-year period. After an evaluation of the start-up scheme, published on the IND website in September 2022⁷⁶, the government has decided to extend the duration of the residence permit from one to two years, but the adaption has not yet entered into effect.⁷⁷ A prerequisite for obtaining a visa is that this start-up must be guided by an experienced mentor (facilitator) who is based in the Netherlands. After two years, successful start-ups have to apply for a residence permit as an independent entrepreneur. Their spouse and children can join the permit holder in the Netherlands.

3.5.8 Residence scheme for essential staff of start-ups⁷⁸

As of 1 June 2021, a pilot started for a new residence permit for essential or experienced staff of start-ups. The permit is supposed to make it possible and/or easier for young, innovative businesses in the Netherlands to attract staff from outside the European Union. The driver of this change were signals from the business sector that start-ups experience barriers when trying to employ staff, because the residence permit for highly skilled migrants is not yet fitting in relation to the starting character of their company. Therefore, a lower salary criterion applies for this new residence scheme (€2,989 as per 1 January 2025)⁷⁹, with the additional requirement that the desired employee is given at least a 1% share in the company.⁸⁰ The pilot has a duration of four years and will be evaluated twice: mid-2023 and at the end of the pilot.⁸¹ The mid-term evaluation (2023) was done by the IND in cooperation with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO). The evaluation shows that executing the scheme is feasible for both the IND and RVO, but the complexity of the scheme affects the efficiency of the IND. Due to this complexity, the evaluation also identifies a risk in the target group not making use of this pilot.⁸²

⁷² <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2024/09/17/aanbiedingsbrief-belastingplan-2025>.

⁷³ Letter to Parliament from the Minister of Justice and Security concerning Admission scheme for foreign investors (Toelatingsregeling voor buitenlandse investeerders), 11 January 2021, ref 3119981.

⁷⁴ <https://business.gov.nl/coming-to-the-netherlands/permits-and-visa/residence-permit-for-foreign-startups/>.

⁷⁵ There is an exception for startup entrepreneurs of Australian, Canadian, Japanese, New Zealand, USA and South Korean nationality. These entrepreneurs can submit a Netherlands visa application directly with the IND using the application form on the website.

⁷⁶ [Evaluatie: regeling voor het aantrekken van start-ups is succesvol | IND](#). This evaluation has been carried out by the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND).

⁷⁷ Kamerstukken II, 2022 – 2023, 31 311 & 30 573, nr. 245.

⁷⁸ The information is largely based on EMN Netherlands (2022) Annual report Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands. The Hague, October, 2022.

⁷⁹ <https://ind.nl/en/required-amounts-income-requirements>, Accessed 14 September 2023.

⁸⁰ <https://ind.nl/en/residence-permits/work/residence-permit-for-essential-start-up-personnel>, Accessed 14 September 2023.

⁸¹ See, in more detail, Ministry of J&V (2022) *De Staat van Migratie 2022*, page 69.

⁸² <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2024/04/25/tk-bijlage-onderzoeksrapport-tussenevaluatie-pilot-essentieel-startup-personeel>.

3.5.9 Working holiday programme⁸³

Young people from non-EU/EEA countries aged 18 to 30 can participate in the Working Holiday Programme (WHP) or Working Holiday Scheme (WHS). Currently, the Netherlands has a WHP/WHS agreement with nine countries, namely: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan, Uruguay and Japan. Taiwan, Uruguay and Japan joined the programme in 2020. A quota of 100 young people per year applies to Argentina, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Uruguay. For Japan and South Korea a quota of 200 applies. No quota applies to the other countries. Young people aged 18 to 30 from these countries can reside in the Netherlands temporarily under certain conditions in the context of the cultural exchange programme. The main purpose and the basis of a WHP/WHS is to become acquainted with Dutch culture and society. This basis is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two partner countries. The partner country also admits Dutch young people to their country on the same basis. The participating young person may not do any work that is contrary to the main purpose of the WHP/WHS. The applicants may therefore only work occasionally to support their holiday financially.

3.5.10 Au pair regulations

In the Netherlands it is possible to work as an au pair for a host family under certain conditions.⁸⁴ Au pairs coming from outside of the European Union must be older than 18 years old and hosted by families made up of at least two people with the Dutch nationality or a Dutch residence permit. The residence permit can only be requested through an au pair employment agency. An additional requirement applies from 30 September 2022, namely that third-country nationals who want to work as an au pair in the Netherlands must be unmarried and must not have any (foster) children. The age requirement was also increased: the au pair must not be older than 25 years old (previously the age limit was 30) at the moment of the filing of the residence request.⁸⁵ Other rules and regulations applicable to hosting an au pair relate to labour rights meant to protect the au pair from exploitation, such as two free days a week (guaranteed) and no more than 30 hours a week of light household tasks.⁸⁶

3.6 Statistical Developments related to the Aliens Employment Act

In this section, we provide information on residence permits issued to third-country nationals who come to the Netherlands for work. Special attention is given to highly skilled migrants and scientific researchers. Next, we describe the number of issued work permits or favourable advice procedures on combined residence and work permits, required for the category 'labour migrants'.

3.6.1 Decisions on resident permits

In the Netherlands, the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (*IND*) is responsible for issuing residence permits to certain categories of labour migrants (see also table 3.5). Most third-country labour migrants who apply for a residence permit belong to the 'knowledge and talent' category. Due to the restrictive labour market policy towards employees in the 'labour migrants' category, the number of applications by this group is much smaller. Between 2015 and 2019, the number of applications for both categories increased (see figure 3.2). Between 2019 and 2020, however, we notice a sharp drop in the number of applications, especially among 'knowledge and talent' migrants. This decrease can be explained by the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in 2020. Between 2020 and 2022, the number of residence permit applications in the 'knowledge and talent' category increased again to a new high of 33,030. After 2022, we observe a notable decline to 21,730 in 2024 in this category. The number of residence permit applications in the 'labour' category increased during these years (from 2,480 in 2020 to 6,840 in 2024).

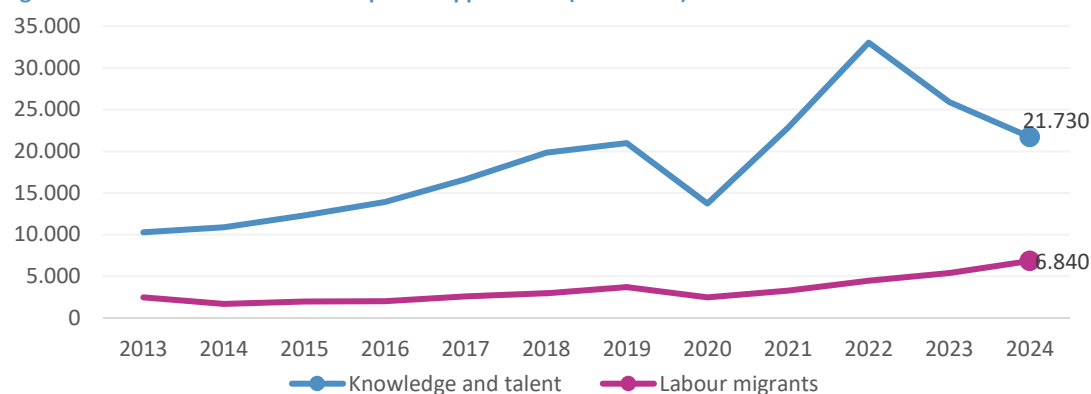
⁸³ See, in more detail, Ministry of J&V (2025) *De Staat van Migratie 2025*, page 42.

⁸⁴ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/buitenlandse-werknemers/vraag-en-antwoord/wanneer-mag-een-au-pair-in-nederland-werken>.

⁸⁵ The information is largely based on EMN Netherlands (2023) Annual report Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands. The Hague, September 2023.

⁸⁶ <https://www.nlarbeidsinspectie.nl/onderwerpen/au-pairs>.

Figure 3.2 Number of residence permit applications (2013-2024)



Source: Annual report IND 2024 (2025)

Table 3.7 shows that most applications for residence permits result in a favourable decision by the IND, although the approval rate is much higher for the 'knowledge and talent' category (87% in 2024) than for the 'labour migrants' category (68% in 2024).

Table 3.7 Positive decisions on residence permit applications, in percentages (2016-2024)

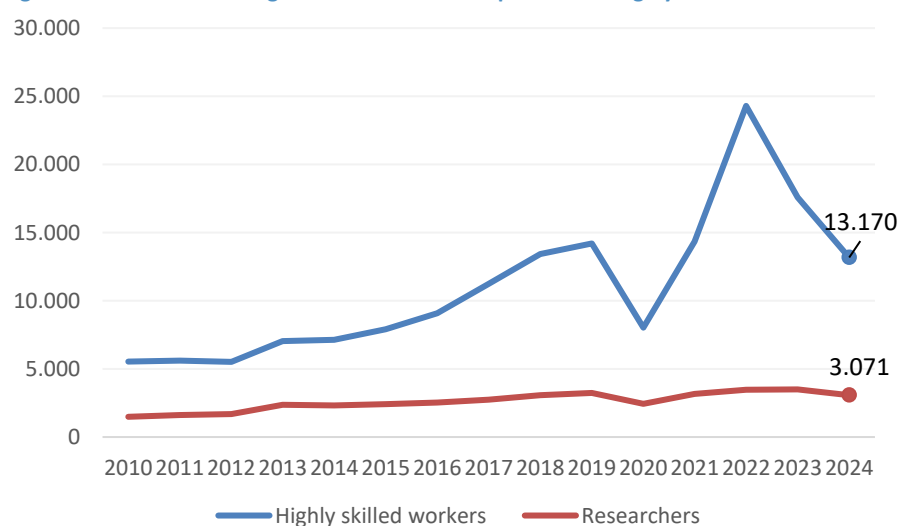
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Knowledge and talent	93%	94%	94%	94%	91%	94%	94%	91%	87%
Labour migrants	79%	74%	78%	78%	70%	72%	64%	68%	68%

Source: Annual report IND 2024 (2025)

3.6.2 Highly skilled migrants and scientific researchers

In this section, the number of residence permits issued to highly skilled migrants and scientific researchers is discussed in more detail. These are two prominent subcategories of the 'knowledge and talent' group. The number of residence permits issued to these categories was increasing until 2019, as shown in figure 3.3. After a sharp decline between 2019 and 2020, the number of granted residence permits increased again in the following years, to 24,488 for highly skilled workers and 3,492 for researchers in 2022. After 2022, we see a sharp decline in highly skilled workers being granted residence permits, to 13,170 in 2024. The number of researchers remained about the same in 2024.

Figure 3.3 Number of granted first residence permits for highly skilled workers and researchers (2010-2024)



Source: Eurostat, online statistics (2025)

3.6.3 Work permits⁸⁷

In this section we will discuss the statistics on issued work permits and favourable advice procedures on combined residence and work permits. Work permits are particularly required for the different categories of 'labour migrants' (see Table 3.5).

In the Netherlands, the Employee Insurance Agency (*UWV*) assesses employer applications for work permits (*Tewerkstellingsvergunning, TWV*). There are two different ways to obtain a work permit, depending on the duration of stay:

1. If labour migrants stay for a shorter period than three months the employer must apply for a TWV. This is also the case for asylum seekers (who are allowed to work for a limited period pending the outcome of their asylum procedure).
2. If the migrant stays longer, the employer must apply for a different permit, namely the Combined residence and work permit (GVVA). This permit combines the work permit (TWV) with a residence permit. Applications for a GVVA must be lodged at the IND, after which the IND sends a request to the UWV to advice on admission to employment. The IND almost always follows this advice.

3.6.4 Decisions on work permits and advice procedures

In this section we will discuss the statistics on issued work permits and favourable advice procedures on combined residence and work permits. In 2024, most decisions on requests for work permits were positive (81%, see table 3.8). The total number of issued work permits increased strongly between 2021 and 2024 (from 8,992 in 2021 to 25,397 in 2024). With respect to the advice procedures (GVVA), 77% of the decisions were positive in 2024 (see also table 3.7).

Table 3.8 Handled requests for work permits and advice procedures (abs.) and decisions (%) (2017-2024)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Handled requests for work permits (TWV) (abs.)	6,565	7,864	9,746	6,866	8,992	14,913	19,067	31,259
Work permit denied (%)	8.9	6.7	7.3	7.8	7.7	6.4	5.2	7.67
Work permit issued (%)	86.9	89.5	89.7	87.8	86.8	86.8	84.6	81.25
Requests withdrawn (%)	3.5	3.5	3.1	3.9	4.9	4.7	7	9.49
Handled requests for advice procedures (GVVA) (abs.)⁸⁸	3,970	3,691	5,471	4,023	4,853	5,373	5,499	5,133
Unfavourable advice (%)	16.5	14.3	14.2	15.2	14.5	17.6	19	15.6
Favourable advice (%)	79.2	81.7	82.6	79.5	79.1	74.7	74.3	77.4
Requests withdrawn (%)	3.4	3.4	3.2	4.6	4.5	5.1	4.9	4.2
Total handled requests (for work permits or advice procedures) (abs.)	10,535	11,555	15,217	10,889	13,845	20,286	24,566	36,392
Work permits denied/unfavourable advice procedures (%)	11.8	9.1	9.7	10.7	10.1	9.4	8.3	8.8
Work permit issued/favourable advice procedures (%)	84.0	87.0	87.1	84.7	84.1	83.6	82.3	80.7
Requests withdrawn (%)	3.4	3.5	3.1	4.1	4.8	4.8	6.6	8.7

Source: UWV annual reports on the implementation of the labour aliens act (*Wet Arbeid Vreemdelingen*) (2024), supplied on request

⁸⁷ The numbers in the tables below are much higher than the previous data on residence permits for 'work' issued by the IND. It should be noted that the tables below also include permits issued to asylum seekers in the Netherlands and to international students. The total number of work permits issued to these groups amounted to 21,659 in 2024. These groups do not need to apply for a residence permit, but they do need a work permit.

⁸⁸ The number of residence permit applications for the category 'labour migrants' is not comparable to the number of GVVA advice procedures by the UWV (there are more advice procedures than applications). The number of GVVA advice procedures includes both applications for paid employment as well as for learning & working combinations, while the residence permit applications in the previous chapter only includes applications for paid employment.

3.6.5 Labour market tests

Employers are only allowed to hire an employee from outside the EU/EEA after proving they are unable to find a suitable candidate from within an EU/EEA country (also including the Netherlands). UWV assesses whether the employer has undertaken sufficient efforts to fulfil this requirement. There are three degrees of strictness of this so-called labour market test: (i) a full labour market test, (ii) a limited labour market test, and (iii) no test.⁸⁹

The decision to select one of the three procedures depends on the type of employment for which a work permit is required. In the case of a full labour market test, a work permit is only granted if an employer can demonstrate that, after active attempts to find suitable candidates in the Dutch and/or European labour market within a certain period of time, the vacancy could not be filled.⁹⁰ In the case of a limited labour market test, the employer does not need to meet all the criteria (e.g., it is not necessary to post the vacancy on the UWV website). This limited version applies, for example, to an IT specialist with high educational qualifications or management staff and specialists receiving an above-average gross monthly salary. Finally, there are also situations in which employees are hired without being subjected to a labour market test. For example, a labour market test is not needed for intercompany transferees in an executive position.

Table 3.9 shows the number of granted TWVs and favourable advice procedures for different labour market tests (no test, limited test and full test). This overview gives rise to the following conclusions:

- The total number of granted TWVs and favourable advice procedures increased from 16,958 in 2022 to 29,370 in 2024.
- For 92,4% of the applications, a limited labour market test was carried out in 2024. In 7.6% of applications, full tests were conducted.
- Between 2022 and 2024, the share of work permits issued after a full labour market test decreased (1.2% in 2022 to 0.8% in 2024).
- The share of full labour market tests that led to a favourable advice considerably increased (from 17.0% in 2023 to 48.5% in 2024).

Table 3.9 Granted TWVs and favourable advice procedures for different labour market tests (absolute figures and in %), 2022-2024

		Issued work permits		Favourable advice		Total	
		<i>abs</i>	%	<i>abs</i>	%	<i>Abs</i>	%
2022	No test	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Limited test	12,785	98.8	3,330	83.0	16,115	95.0
	Full test	159	1.2	682	17.0	841	5.0
	Unknown	2	0	0	0	2	0
	Total	12,946	100	4,012	100	16,958	100
2023	No test	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Limited test	15,981	99.0	2,724	66.7	18,705	92.5
	Full test	161	1.0	1,362	33.3	1,523	7.5
	Unknown	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Total	16,142	100	4,086	100	20,228	100
2024	No test	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Limited test	25,205	99.2	1,927	48.5	27,132	92.4
	Full test	192	0.8	2,046	51.5	2,238	7.6
	Unknown	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Total	25,397	100	3,973	100	29,370	100

Source: UWV annual reports on the implementation of the labour aliens act (*Wet Arbeid Vreemdelingen*) supplied on request

⁸⁹ In a full labour market test, the employee must show that they exhausted all means to find a suitable candidate for the position in the Netherlands or within the European Economic Space (EES). In a limited test, this is not required. The limited test is used for, among others, working students, trainees, key personnel from international concerns, and chefs in the Asian catering industry.

⁹⁰ For all conditions, see revised Aliens Employment Act (*Wav*), Article 8.

3.6.6 Characteristics of third country labour migrants

Table 3.10 shows the composition of issued permits and positive advice per nationality of the applicants. In 2024, the combined number of issued TWVs and favourable advice procedures were most often granted to people from India and China, followed by immigrants from Syria. In 2024, people from India most often received a TWV, while Chinese people most often received a positive advice with regard to the single permit. From this we may conclude that migrants from India generally spend a shorter time in the Netherlands for work than Chinese labour migrants.

Table 3.10 Top 15 highest numbers of issued work permits and favourable advice procedures by nationality, 2022-2024

2022				2023				2024			
Nationality	Issued work permits	Favourable advice procedures	Total	Nationality	Issued work permits	Favourable advice procedures	Total	Nationality	Issued work permits	Favourable advice procedures	Total
Indian	2,427	365	2,792	Indian	3,207	392	3,599	Indian	3,468	411	3,879
Chinese	923	1,816	2,739	Chinese	1,252	1,869	3,121	Chinese	1,424	1,691	3,115
American	666	288	954	American	705	249	954	Syrian	1,866	0	1,866
British	618	176	794	Vietnamese	817	80	897	Turkish	1,414	140	1,554
Turkish	568	133	701	Turkish	702	135	837	Iranian	1,429	22	1,451
Vietnamese	598	85	683	British	622	179	801	Nigerian	1,054	24	1,078
Indonesian	624	56	680	Indonesian	713	70	783	American	811	262	1,073
Iranian	472	19	491	Iranian	712	17	729	British	835	168	1,003
Surinamese	385	67	452	Surinamese	500	133	633	Yemeni	935	0	935
Bangladeshi	416	36	452	Syrian	549	3	552	Vietnamese	842	49	891
Russian	386	22	408	Nigerian	502	31	533	Indonesian	694	128	822
Nigerian	370	11	381	Russian	423	21	444	Surinamese	584	192	776
South-Korean	281	24	305	South-Korean	347	25	372	Bangladeshi	681	49	730
Thai	213	66	279	Bangladeshi	279	48	327	Pakistani	523	47	570
Japanese	167	105	272	Pakistani	217	56	273	Russian	512	30	542

Source: UWV annual reports on the implementation of the labour aliens act (*Wet Arbeid Vreemdelingen*) (2024), supplied on request

Table 3.11 shows the total number of issued TWVs and favourable advice procedures per profession in 2023 and 2024, sorted by the total number of positive decisions. Only the fifteen professions with the highest numbers of total favourable applications were included in the list. Professions related to food services (food preparation and serving: waiter/waitress), as well as cleaning and delivery were high on the list in 2023. However, there has been a significant decrease in these activities in 2024. Food preparation no longer appears on the list at all. This may be related to the discontinuation of the scheme for Asian chefs. As of 1 July 2024, Asian restaurants can no longer use the scheme to bring specialized chefs from outside Europe to the Netherlands.

Table 3.11 Top 15 highest numbers of issued work permits and favourable advice procedures, 2023-2024

2023	Issued work permits	Favourable advice procedures	Total	2024	Issued work permits	Favourable advice procedures	Total
Food preparation	887	2,429	3,316	Serving: waiter/waitress	834	16	850
Serving: waiter/waitress	2,910	20	2,930	Cleaning: Home/office	638	0	638
Teaching	2,014	85	2,099	Delivery/transport/carrying	599	0	599
Delivery/transport/carrying	1,608	0	1,608	Caretaking/helping: people	102	331	433
Cleaning: Home/office	1,056	0	1,056	Religious worker	58	309	367
IT: development/ consulting	697	43	740	IT: development/consulting	304	38	342
Sales	679	3	682	Unknown	341	0	341
Advising: technical/technology	538	41	579	Serving (max 16 h/w)	321	0	321
Research/analysis	417	71	488	Production work	288	13	301
Caretaking/helping: people	232	206	438	Advising: technical/technology	237	73	310
Religious worker	76	316	392	Teaching	184	53	237
Leadership: department	297	36	333	Student assistant (max. 16 h/w)	239	0	239
Production work	323	4	327	Student assistant (max. 16 h/w)	237	0	237
Educate/inform	258	2	260	Leadership: department	168	65	233
Other functions	4,150	830	4,980	Other functions	20,847	3,073	23,920
Total	16,142	4,086	20,228	Total	25,397	3,971	29,368

Source: UWV annual reports on the implementation of the labour aliens act (*Wet Arbeid Vreemdelingen*) (2024), supplied on request

3.6.7 Issued work permits by duration

Table 3.12 shows the duration of issued work permits by the maximum period for which these permits were issued. Between 2017 and 2024, a significant increase in the number of issued work permits for a period of 3 to 12 months is visible, with a huge increase between 2023 and 2024. The number of permits for a maximum of 3 months was higher in 2024 than in 2017, after a sharp decrease between 2019 and 2020 and an increase between 2021 and 2022. Once again, we see the influence of the corona pandemic, which greatly reduced the possibilities for short-term mobility. In 2023, we saw a sharp increase in the number of 12 months work permits being issued, a figure which decreased again in 2024, although it was still much higher than in the 2017-2022 period. In 2024, the number of permits for a period of 1 to 3 years increased sharply, from 315 in 2023 to 1,302 in 2024.

Table 3.12 Duration of the issued work permits (TWV) (2017-2024)

Duration	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
< 3 months	3,460	3,269	3,612	1,586	1,558	3,214	3,562	4,682
3-12 months	2,105	3,666	3,858	4,267	6,033	9,474	8,359	17,898
12 months	22	10	947	108	6	31	3,902	1,512
1-3 years	120	92	110	67	207	221	315	1,302
Unknown	1	2	10	0	1	6	4	3
Total	5,708	7,039	8,739	6,028	7,805	12,946	16,142	25,397

Source: UWV annual reports on the implementation of the labour aliens act (*Wet Arbeid Vreemdelingen*), supplied on request



Immigration and reception of asylum migrants

4

4 Immigration and reception of asylum migrants

This chapter deals with the legislation and regulations relating to asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. First of all, the most important legal and policy measures with regard to the possibilities for admission and reception are discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the rules regarding voluntary and forced return. The statistical section deals with a large number of topics related to the number of asylum seekers, decisions about possible residence, and reception. The most important statistical findings are first listed below.

4.1 Main statistical findings

- Between 2023 and 2024, the number of (first and follow-up) asylum requests in the Netherlands slightly decreased from 49,890 to 45,640.
- In 2024, 32,175 first asylum requests were made. By far most asylum requests came from Syrian refugees (11,525). Next in line were Iraqi (2,220), Turks (1,870), Eritreans (1,465) and Yemeni (1,080).
- In 2024, 15,960 first requests for asylum were granted and 5,275 asylum requests were rejected.
- The number of resettled refugees decreased from 830 in 2023 to 738 in 2024. These numbers also include resettled refugees under the EU-Turkey Statement.
- In 2024, the number of asylum applications by unaccompanied minors increased to 5,935 (from 5,805 in 2023). Unaccompanied minors account for 18% of the total number of asylum requests.
- On 31 December 2024, Dutch asylum centres accommodated 72,500 asylum migrants (compared to 64,410 residents a year before).
- In 2024, the influx of new asylum seekers in reception centres was just over 52.000 persons.

4.2 Asylum laws and policies

In this section attention is paid to the Dutch asylum chain programme, measures in relation to COVID-19, the issue of reception capacity shortages, measures in relation to immigrants from safe countries, decisions with regard to a departure moratorium, a new work instruction for medical advice (within the framework of the Dublin Regulation), measures regarding asylum seekers causing public nuisance, austere reception facilities, hosting schemes for refugees and measures with respect to unaccompanied minors. Most of the legal and policy changes that are discussed are from 2021.

4.2.1 Flexibilisation of the asylum system

One of the six pillars of the Comprehensive Agenda on Migration of the Dutch government is the establishment of a solid Dutch and EU asylum system, with specific regard to ensuring equal protection levels within the EU, by discouraging secondary migration movements and by a solidarity-based asylum policy, in which Member States support each other in times of increased asylum inflows. This part of the Comprehensive Agenda on Migration is addressed in the Flexibilisation Asylum Chain Programme (*Programma Flexibiliserend Asielketen*) of 2018. In so doing, the Dutch government intends to create an asylum system that is more efficient, flexible and robust. Measures are being developed in five related fields⁹¹:

- increasing predictability, transparency and efficiency of asylum procedures;
- reducing processing times;
- better alignment of reception capacity with fluctuations in asylum applications;
- better alignment of asylum procedure with either settlement and integration in municipalities or return in case of a rejected asylum application;
- improved cooperation with civil society actors and other levels of government.

⁹¹ Letter from the Ministry of Justice and Security to Parliament, dd 5 July, 2018. Flexibiliserend asielketen, Ref.: 2301074.

Reception facilities

In May 2020 the so-called Agenda on the flexibilisation of the asylum system (*Uitvoeringsagenda flexibilisering asielketen*) was established. The agenda encourages local, provincial and national governments to work together in order to create flexible forms of reception for asylum seekers and improved support and guidance of asylum seekers towards either integration or return. Provincial governments are to coordinate regional action plans to meet the new requirements for the reception of asylum seekers based on current estimations on the needed reception capacity. It is anticipated that the transition to the new system can take several years and that the timeline of implementation will differ regionally.⁹²

In the new asylum system three types of reception facilities are envisaged:

- Common alien reception centres (*Gemeenschappelijke Vreemdelingenlocatie - GVL*): a medium-sized reception centre locating all stakeholders in the asylum procedure in one location. This includes the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND, the organisation for admission), the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA, the organisation for reception), the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V, the organisation for return), the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (KMar), and the Unit Foreign National's Identification and Human Trafficking (AVIM) of the National Police. Asylum seekers are supposed to stay at a GVL from the beginning of their procedure until the time of admission or rejection.
- Satellite locations: locations that provide alternative reception capacity when GVL maximum capacity is reached as well as reception for specific groups of asylum seekers.
- Regional reception centres: locations at which asylum seekers (i.e. those who are likely to obtain a residence permit) or already been granted one, can make a start with their integration process near the municipalities where they ultimately will be housed (the relation between these locations and satellite locations is still under discussion).

From 25 June 2021 onwards, several changes to the asylum procedure have entered into effect:⁹³

- Termination of the initial personal interview in the general asylum procedure. To avoid duplication, there is no longer a separate initial personal interview within the general asylum procedure.
- The possibilities to cancel the 'rest and preparation period' (RVT) have been adjusted and expanded (e.g., in case of caused nuisance in a reception facility). During the RVT, the asylum seeker has a minimum of six days in order to rest from the travel to the Netherlands and prepare for the registration interview.
- The general asylum procedure has been shortened: in the new situation, the asylum procedure takes 6 days (instead of 8). In addition, the possibility has been added to extend the asylum procedure (AA) by three days (AA+). This extension can be used in complex cases, and in cases where there are special procedural guarantees or a medical advice indicating that more time is needed for the interview.
- The working method for asylum applications of persons from safe countries of origin or persons who benefit international protection in another EU Member State has been formalised. This means that the third country national will be informed by his/her legal assistance provider and the Dutch Council for Refugees (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland - VWN), and that there will be one day for submission of views.

Validity of asylum permit

In November 2019, the government announced several measures aimed at 'structural system improvements in the asylum procedure which in addition may contribute to alleviation of bottlenecks, such as backlogs in the application procedure'.⁹⁴ A notable proposed change in legislation was the reduction of the validity from five to three years of the temporary asylum permit. In December 2020, the Council of State advised the government not to bring the bill before Parliament. This high advisory body pronounced serious objections against the proposed changes as the costs (due to processing of requests, legal aid and court cases) would exceed possible benefits. Moreover, it was argued that current legislation already makes it possible to withdraw a residence permit within five years if changes in the country

⁹² <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/migratie/uitvoeringsagenda-flexibilisering-asielketen>.

⁹³ <https://ind.nl/en/news/application-interview-and-first-interview-combined-flexible-general-asylum-procedure-aa-introduced>.

⁹⁴ Letter from the Ministry of Justice and Security to Parliament, dd 11 April 2019. Stand van zaken programma Flexibilisering asielketen, Ref.: 2553175.

of origin would occur.⁹⁵ Currently, the length of temporary residence permits for asylum seekers is still five years.⁹⁶

Processing times and penalty payments

In July 2020, the Temporary Act on the Suspension of Penalties for the IND (*Tijdelijke wet opschorting dwangsommen IND*) has been adopted by the Dutch Parliament. With this Act the obligation for the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) to pay a penalty to asylum applicants when the legal timeframe for processing the application is exceeded, was (temporarily) suspended. The Act was in effect from 11 July 2020 to 11 July 2021. On 6 July 2022, the Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State rendered a decision on the Temporary Act on the Suspension of Penalties for the IND. The Division ruled that the elimination of the option to submit an appeal against failure to take a decision in time is contrary to EU law and therefore non-binding.⁹⁷ The ruling and its implications for the implementation of the Temporary Act are currently being studied by the government.⁹⁸

4.2.2 Shortage of reception capacity

The problem of acute shortages of reception facilities for asylum seekers and housing for asylum migrants with a residence permit continued to exist in the year 2023. To prevent shortages in reception facilities, the Minister for Migration announced a package of measures on 10 February 2023 for COA to increase reception capacity by 19,000 places by 1 July 2023. These measures included keeping some existing reception locations open, opening new locations, expanding hotel accommodations, using flexible accommodations in asylum seekers' centers, and creating atypical reception places.⁹⁹

On 7 June 2023, COA and the Red Cross signed a declaration of intent for sustainable cooperation.¹⁰⁰ In collaboration with COA, the Red Cross continues to provide daily reception for applicants for international protection at certain, often smaller, reception locations, but on a more structural basis. Where possible and necessary, the Red Cross will expand its involvement. COA remains responsible for resident administration and retains final responsibility.

At the beginning of 2023, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) stated that 75,500 extra places will be needed this year. This is because more asylum seekers were expected to come to the Netherlands.¹⁰¹ Based on a more recent asylum forecast of the Ministry of Justice and Security, COA calculated that 77,100 reception places would be needed on 1 January 2024.¹⁰²

4.2.3 Immigrants from safe countries

Since 2021, based on a ruling by the Council of State (RvS), the designation of a safe country of origin in the Aliens Circular 2000 must be reassessed every two years. In 2023, the following countries were reassessed as safe countries of origin: Georgia, Morocco, Tunisia, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Ghana, and Senegal.¹⁰³ Exceptions are made for Morocco, Tunisia, and Senegal for individuals facing potential criminal prosecution, particularly those who can demonstrate that their rights and freedoms cannot be guaranteed by the state. For Ghana and Senegal, based on consulted sources, there was no reason to continue the previously made exception for individuals facing discrimination. However, this exception does still apply to journalists and LGBTI individuals from Ghana.

⁹⁵ Council of State Advice concerning the Bill to amend the Aliens Act of 2000 in order to adapt the period of validity of the asylum residence permit for a fixed period (Advies Raad van State inzake het voorstel van wet tot wijziging van de Vreemdelingenwet 2000 teneinde te voorzien in aanpassing van de geldigheidsduur van de verblijfsvergunning asiel voor bepaalde tijd). Date: 16 December 2020.

⁹⁶ <https://ind.nl/nl/verblijfsvergunningen/asiel/asiel-aanvragen-in-nederland#de-verblijfsvergunning->.

⁹⁷ <https://www.raadvanstate.nl/actueel/nieuws/@131914/opschorting-dwangsommen-ind/>.

⁹⁸ https://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/35476_tijdelijke_wet_opschorting.

⁹⁹ Ministry of Justice and Security, 'Uitwerking maatregelen opvangopgave', 10 February 2023.

¹⁰⁰ COA, 'Langdurige samenwerking tussen het COA en Rode Kruis', 7 June 2023.

¹⁰¹ <https://nos.nl/nieuwsuur/artikel/2461058-opvang-asielzoekers-tekort-aan-bijna-40-000-plekken>.

¹⁰² <https://www.coa.nl/nl/nieuws/de-groeiopgave-voor-de-asielopvang-stijgt-licht-2023>.

¹⁰³ Government Gazette, 2023, 24054. <https://cmr.jur.ru.nl/cmr/tbv/tbv13/23/wbv.2023.21>.

4.2.4 Decisions with regard to a departure moratorium

A decision moratorium is a decision made by the Minister for Migration to extend the deadline for making a decision on applications for international protection for a certain category of applicants. The uncertainty with regard to the civil war in Sudan prompted the Dutch government by the end of 2023 to announce a 6-month suspension of decisions on applications for international protection and the execution of return decisions for Sudanese nationals. During this period, Sudanese nationals applying for asylum in the Netherlands retained their right to reception.¹⁰⁴ Also, in December 2023, the government announced a suspension of decisions on applications for international protection and return decisions for applicants from the Palestinian territories.¹⁰⁵ Since then, the IND has not made decisions on Palestinian applications for international protection, and no Palestinians have been deported from the Netherlands. In contrast, in June 2023, the Dutch government decided to no longer suspend applications and return decisions for Russian conscripts.¹⁰⁶

In 2024, a moratorium on decisions and departures was imposed for two countries. Due to the uncertain situation in Lebanon and Syria, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) temporarily suspended decisions on asylum applications from people from these countries.¹⁰⁷ People whose applications had previously been rejected were also temporarily suspended from being forced to depart to these countries of origin. Two other moratoriums on decisions and departures expired in 2024. As of 8 July 2024, the moratorium on decisions and departures for Sudan, which had been imposed a year earlier and extended once, expired.¹⁰⁸ On 24 April 2024, the Council of State annulled the moratorium on Palestinian territories due to insufficient substantiation and insufficient up-to-date information.¹⁰⁹ From that point on, the government was required to process asylum applications from Palestinians again. The departure moratorium expired automatically on 19 June 2024 (six months after its entry into force on 19 December 2023).

More recently, the policy regarding Syria has changed. The temporary moratorium on decisions and departures from 2024 was lifted in June 2025. The admission policy has also been tightened. Syria now receives the lowest tier of protection. General subsidiary protection is no longer applicable, meaning that more applications are assessed individually and more rigorously.¹¹⁰ Forced return to Syria is not yet possible, but voluntary return is actively supported.¹¹¹ As of 17 June 2025, Syrians are eligible for return and reintegration support at the regular rates. The support amounts are in line with those applicable to other countries of origin. Per adult, this amounts to €200 for basic departure support at Schiphol Airport and €615 for post-arrival assistance in the country of origin. Reintegration support amounts to €2,000 per adult.¹¹² To further stimulate voluntary return to Syria return and reintegration support for Syrians wishing to voluntarily return to Syria has been temporarily increased between 17 November 2025 and 1 January 2026 to €5.000 per adult and €2.500 per child.

4.2.5 Measures regarding asylum seekers causing public nuisance and criminality

In 2022, the Dutch government allocated a structural budget of € 45 million per year to tackle disruptive behaviour of asylum seekers. This approach encompassed various initiatives under four pillars: quick decision-making in the asylum procedure, providing tailored solutions in accommodation, implementing an immediate response policy in public spaces, and focusing on return.¹¹³ In 2023, this approach to dealing with disruptive behaviour was enhanced.¹¹⁴ In 2023, COA also implemented various pilots to prevent disturbances and to maintain the safety of reception facilities for both asylum seekers and COA staff. In

¹⁰⁴ Ministry of Justice and Security, 'Kamerbrief over besluit en vertrek moratorium Sudan van 26 juni 2023'.

¹⁰⁵ Ministry of Justice and Security, 'Kamerbrief over besluit en vertrek moratorium Palestijnse Gebieden van 19 december 2023'.

¹⁰⁶ Government Gazette, 2023, 17940, 'Besluit van de Staatssecretaris van Justitie en Veiligheid van 28 juni 2023, nummer WBV 2023/17, houdende wijziging van de Vreemdelingen-circulaire 2000'.

¹⁰⁷ Ministry of Justice and Security, 'Kamerbrief over een besluit- en vertrek moratorium voor Libanon', 14 November 2024, nr. 5850626 and 'Kamerbrief over een besluit- en vertrek moratorium voor Syrië', 9 December 2024, nr. 5986574.

¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Justice and Security, 'Kamerbrief over nieuw landenbeleid voor Soedan', 27 June 2024, file 19637, nr. 3268.

¹⁰⁹ EMN Netherlands (2025) Migratie en asiel in Nederland. Jaaroverzicht 2024, page 29.

¹¹⁰ <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/1b04b67e-4c71-46ad-a5d9-5e275e362fa6/file>.

¹¹¹ <https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/actueel/nieuws/2025/06/20/meer-ondersteuning-bij-terugkeer-naar-syrie>.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ EMN (2023) Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands 2023. European Migration Network, The Netherlands, July 2024.

¹¹⁴ Government of the Netherlands (2023, 10 November) 'Voortgangsbrieven aanpak overlast en crimineel gedrag door asielzoekers'.

case of serious disturbances, COA could take measures such as relocating asylum seekers to a special enforcement and supervision location.¹¹⁵ Additionally, in September 2023, the government made € 2 million available for municipalities to implement local and small-scale measures to address disturbances caused by asylum seekers in public spaces via a so-called Special Grant (SPUK).¹¹⁶

4.2.6 Reception facility with austere nature

In September 2020, a pilot started to place asylum seekers with low chances of receiving a positive decision on their application in the Netherlands (often from safe countries of origin) in separate, austere reception and more closely supervised facilities. This pilot ended on 1 January 2022. During the processing of the asylum application, people from safe countries of origin now stay in a sober COA location in Ter Apel or Budel-Cranendonck. Asylum seekers can appeal against the rejection of their asylum application. During the appeal phase, the COA places them in regular asylum seekers' centers spread across the country. COA is looking for new locations where they can also use all austerity measures in the appeal phase.¹¹⁷

4.2.7 Hosting scheme for refugees

Asylum seekers who have been granted a residence permit often have to wait for appropriate housing in Dutch municipalities. Refugees can reside for three months with family and friends or a Dutch host family in expectation of (permanent) housing in a municipality. An external evaluation showed positive effects of this scheme on learning the Dutch language and creating a social network. Additionally, it can help to reduce pressure on the available reception capacity within COA facilities.¹¹⁸

4.2.8 Extension of the decision period

In August 2022, the State Secretary for Justice and Security announced that the decision period in the asylum procedure will be extended by nine months, from six to fifteen months. The reason for this extension is the increased number of asylum applications since August 2021 and the subsequent backlogs of the IND.¹¹⁹ Following jurisprudence, the extensions have been reversed for all applications lodged after January 2024.¹²⁰ Under the standard rules of the Dutch Aliens Act 2000, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) must make a decision on an asylum application within six months. There are, however, two exceptions to this rule. Asylum applications submitted before 1 January 2023 (and for which the original statutory decision period of six months had not yet expired on September 27, 2022) and applications submitted between 1 January 2023 and 1 January 2024 can still count on the longer period of 15 months (instead of 6 months) for a decision.

4.2.9 Dublin Procedures

On 20 January 2023, the Minister for Migration informed the House of Representatives about the resumption of transfers of Dublin claimants to Croatia.¹²¹ Earlier, on 13 April 2022, the Council of State (RvS) ruled that migrants could not be transferred from the Netherlands to Croatia under the Dublin Regulation until the situation for Dublin claimants in Croatia was investigated by the Dutch government. Investigation showed that the Croatian authorities adhered to the European Dublin Regulation and that Dublin claimants in Croatia received reception and access to the national asylum procedure.

On 26 April 2023, the RvS ruled that the Netherlands could not rely on the principle of interstate trust regarding Italy.¹²² The RvS inferred from reports by the Italian authorities that there were no reception facilities available for Dublin claimants in Italy. This created the risk that they would end up in a situation

¹¹⁵ EMN (2023) Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands 2023. European Migration Network, The Netherlands, July 2024.

¹¹⁶ Government of the Netherlands (2023), 'Lokale maatregelen overlast asielzoekers', 26 september 2023.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/asielbeleid/vraag-en-antwoord/wat-gebeurt-er-met-asielaanvragen-van-mensen-uit-veilige-landen>.

¹¹⁸ De Gruijter et al. (2019) *Evaluatie Logeerregeling COA*. Utrecht: Verwey-Jonker Instituut.

¹¹⁹ Letter from the State Secretary for Justice and Security of 26 August 2022, 1. Parliamentary Papers II, 2021-2022, 19637, no. 2982.

¹²⁰ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2025/02/17/ek-wijziging-van-de-vreemdelingenwet-2000-in-verband-met-verlenging-van-de-beslisttermijnen-in-asiel-en-nareis zaken>.

¹²¹ Parliamentary Papers II, 19637 nr. 3061.

¹²² Ministry of Justice and Security, 'Kamerbrief van de Staatssecretaris van Justitie en Veiligheid over Italiaanse Dublinzaken van 23 mei 2023'.

not meeting international standards for basic needs such as shelter, food, and running water. In response to this ruling, the IND stopped making transfer decisions in Italian Dublin cases and processed these asylum applications itself.

4.2.10 Unaccompanied minors (UAM)

Unaccompanied minor foreigners (amv) are accommodated in small-scale reception locations where they are intensively supervised in their development towards adulthood. If the minor asylum seekers are younger than 15, they will in principle end up in a foster family under the responsibility of the Nidos foundation. If they are older than 15, they will end up in the small-scale reception of the COA. However, due to the great shortage of reception places, many young people are now (forcedly) accommodated in emergency shelters.¹²³ In 2023, all efforts were focused on changing this as quickly as possible. However, the 2022 measure that makes it possible to place minor asylum seekers in temporary emergency shelters is still in effect.¹²⁴ On 6 April 2023, the House of Representatives adopted a motion calling on the government to report on a quarterly basis on the reception and housing of these asylum seekers.¹²⁵

4.2.11 Adjustment of Family Reunification for Adult Children

On 16 July 2024, the family reunification policy for adult children was amended.¹²⁶ This amendment means that a limited degree of dependency on parents is insufficient for the right to family reunification. The amendment should lead to a clearer decision-making framework for family reunification applications from adult children, greater emphasis on the independence of these children, and a higher burden of proof for the applicant. For adult children applying for family reunification, three conditions now apply: (1) the adult child is dependent on material support from the sponsor for basic necessities at the time of the application, (2) the adult child has not formed an independent family, and (3) he or she lived with the sponsor until the flight. The child must demonstrate that the material support is genuine and necessary. This is in line with the European Family Reunification Directive (Article 10, paragraph 2).

4.2.12 End of a maximum 24-week requirement for asylum seekers

For many years asylum seekers without residence status in the Netherlands were allowed to work for a maximum of 24 weeks per year. The limitation was mainly set to prevent entitlements of this group to unemployment benefits. However, on 29 November 2023, the Council of State ruled that the 24-week limit for access to the labour market for applicants for international protection was in violation with European law (i.e. the EU Directive on Reception Conditions 2013/33/EU). This ruling meant that the Employee Insurance Agency (*UWV*) could no longer limit the access of applicants to the Dutch labour market to 24 weeks per year. Now that there is clarity from the highest administrative court, a work permit can be issued for longer than 24 weeks.¹²⁷

4.2.13 The Act Municipal task enabling asylum reception

Another law that was discussed at length within the government in 2022 and 2023, and on which ultimately agreement was reached, is the Municipal task enabling asylum reception Act (so-called *Spreadingswet*).¹²⁸ The law must ensure a better distribution of reception places across the Netherlands and provides financial resources to municipalities when they voluntarily offer places for asylum reception. If necessary, this law can force municipalities to arrange reception places for asylum seekers. Notwithstanding the demissionary status of the Rutte IV cabinet, a majority in parliament voted in favour of this bill in October 2023. On 23 January 2024, the Senate also voted in favour of the *Spreadingswet*. The law intended to enable a more equal distribution of asylum seekers across the country have become effective from 1 February 2024. However, the current cabinet, installed on 2 July 2024, has announced that it will withdraw this law.¹²⁹

¹²³ <https://www.coa.nl/nl/asielopvang-van-jongeren-die-alleen-naar-nederland-komen>.

¹²⁴ EMN (2023) *Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2023*. European Migration Network, July 2024, page 47.

¹²⁵ Parliamentary Papers II, 2022-2023, 19637 nr. 3089.

¹²⁶ EMN Netherlands (2025) *Migratie en asiel in Nederland. Jaaroverzicht 2024*, page 27.

¹²⁷ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2023/11/29/asielzoekers-mogen-meer-dan-24-weken-per-jaar-werken>.

¹²⁸ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2023/06/22/tk-bijlage-2-infographic-spreidingswet-juni-2023>.

¹²⁹ <https://www.kabinetformatie2023.nl/documenten/publicaties/2024/05/16/hoofdlijnenakkoord-tussen-de-fracties-van-pvv-vvd-nsc-en-bbb>.

4.2.14 Temporary internal border controls

Temporary internal border controls have been reintroduced starting in December 2024. The government announced the reintroduction of internal border controls on November 11, 2024, to combat irregular migration and cross-border crime, such as human smuggling. The controls were initially scheduled for a six-month period, until June 8, 2025. On April 25, 2025, it was decided to extend them until December 8, 2025. On November 10, 2025, the Minister of Asylum and Migration announced the prolongation of internal border controls until June 8, 2026.

4.3 Policies on return

Policies to stimulate the return of undocumented migrants form an integral part of the Comprehensive Agenda on Migration (see chapter 2). Implying more effective cooperation within the EU (harmonisation of asylum procedures, more surveillance of the EU-border) and with third countries (reception in the region of origin, cooperation with transit countries) are central parts of this policy. The government also intends to implement positive and negative sanctions to induce countries of origin to accept the return of their citizens. Ideas concerning this were the provision (or denial) of bi-lateral aid, measures regarding the issuance (or refusal) of visa for government officials, limiting entry to preferential trade status and the granting (or withdrawal) of landing rights.

4.3.1 Return of undocumented migrants

Data from the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V) shows the absolute number of returnees between 2016 and 2024 (see table 4.1). From 2021 we notice a significant increase in the number of independent and forced returnees. The largest share is however made up of the category 'independent return without surveillance'. It is important to note that within this category the actual departure of a significant group cannot be determined.

Table 4.1 Number of returnees by category in 2016-2024

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Independent return	6,760 (40%)	3,400 (22%)	3,610 (24%)	4,460 (26%)	2,630 (24%)	2,100 (23%)	2,450 (28%)	3,380 (31%)	3,240 (28%)
Forced return	2,220 (13%)	2,700 (18%)	2,650 (18%)	2,760 (16%)	1,650 (15%)	1,630 (17%)	1,850 (21%)	2,360 (22%)	2,750 (23%)
Independent return without surveillance (*)	8,100 (47%)	9,020 (60%)	8,620 (58%)	9,660 (57%)	6,880 (62%)	5,600 (60%)	4,310 (50%)	4,950 (46%)	5,740 (49%)
Total	17,080	15,120	14,880	16,880	11,160	9,330	8,610	10,690	11,730

(*) Returnee is no longer under surveillance of the Repatriation and Departure Service, actual departure from the Netherlands was not established.

Source: <https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/over-dtv/cijfers>.

4.3.2 Repatriation support

Through the Subsidy Scheme Support Independent Departure 2023 (OZV 2023), DT&V finances projects by non-governmental organisations that provide reintegration support to foreigners. In addition, this scheme subsidises projects aimed at actual departure of foreigners from the Netherlands. The emphasis should be on activities aimed at encouraging foreigners who are obliged to depart to leave the Netherlands independently. In 2024, the State Secretary for Justice and Security introduced a new period and opened a subsidy ceiling of €2,700,000.¹³⁰pers

4.3.3 Expansion of Dutch Support for Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)

On 1 July 2023, the Dutch government expanded support for Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR). The AVRR (Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration) is a programme of the IOM (International Organization for Migration), aimed at the humane return and reintegration of migrants who cannot or do not wish to stay in the Netherlands, a host country, or a transit country, and who voluntarily

¹³⁰ <https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/ondersteuning-bij-terugkeer/subsidieregeling-ondersteuning-zelfstandig-vertrek>.

wish to return to their country of origin. Migrants from Algeria, Belarus, Egypt, Lebanon, Mongolia, Morocco, Turkey, and Tunisia were temporarily excluded from this programme. With the expansion, migrants from these countries can once again apply for assistance with voluntary return and reintegration.¹³¹

4.3.4 Detention

In the Netherlands, a foreign national who resides illegally or does not leave voluntarily can be detained until their departure to the country of origin. Following a ruling by the Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State (*AbRvS*) on 15 November 2023, the procedure for detaining foreign nationals was amended.¹³² To fulfill the duty to inform detained foreign nationals, the State Secretary must henceforth inform them in writing in a language they understand. Previously, this was done orally. The duty to inform does not require a full translation of the detention measure.¹³³

4.3.5 The bed, bath and bread-discussion: pilot National Immigration Facilities (LVVs)

For many years, there has been a discussion between the national government and the municipalities on providing basic support to undocumented migrants who have exhausted all legal means. In 2018 the Ministry of Justice and Security signed an agreement with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (*VNG*) on the construction of so-called *Landelijke Vreemdelingen Voorzieningen* (*LVVs*). In 2019, five municipalities started pilots for third-country nationals without a right of residence in the Netherlands and without access to other forms of shelter and support. By providing counselling for assisted voluntary return, the facilities aim to prevent irregular stay and to limit the consequences of irregular stay for the local environment. In 2020, an evaluation study showed that no more than 10% eventually returned to their country of origin.¹³⁴ In anticipation of a national scheme for these undocumented migrants, the five pilot municipalities have received a total of 24 million euros annually in 2022 and 2023 for the reception costs.¹³⁵ However, the new cabinet, installed in July 2024, has announced that it will end the central government contribution to the National Immigration Facilities (*LVV*).¹³⁶ The national government ended funding effectively on 1 January 2025. Since then, a number of municipalities have indicated that they will finance the scheme themselves.¹³⁷ With the termination of the return facilities, the national policy aimed at return still remains in force.

4.3.6 Return of unaccompanied minors

Following a CJEU ruling, the Netherlands amended the Aliens Act Implementation Guidelines to provide unaccompanied minors whose asylum application had been denied – but for whom it had not been ascertained that they had access to adequate reception and care in the country of return – with a legal right to stay in the Netherlands for the period in which adequate reception and care was investigated.¹³⁸ Throughout the investigation, unaccompanied minors have lawful residence in the Netherlands.

4.3.7 Returning people with medical issues to their country of origin

The Netherlands introduced two specific changes to the Aliens Act Implementation guidelines, following case-law on people with medical issues that had to be returned to their country of origin.¹³⁹ Applicants can appeal to medical issues to prevent expulsion when the access to necessary medical care in the country of return is limited. In legal migration procedures, when an applicant appeals to medical issues to prevent expulsion and their identity is deemed trustworthy, the IND must take the information provided by the applicant on their access to necessary medical care in the country of return into account. This is also the case when they are unable to provide original identification documents. Previously, their

¹³¹ IOM Netherlands, 'AVRR-assistentie uitgebreid', 10 July 2023. AVRR-assistentie uitgebreid - IOM Nederland (iom-nederland.nl)

¹³² Council of State, 'Staatssecretaris schendt informatieplicht bij vreemdelingenbewaring', 15 november 2023.

¹³³ EMN (2024) Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands. Annual Report 2023, page 66.

¹³⁴ RegioPlan (2020). *Plan- en procesevaluatie Landelijk Vreemdelingenvoorzieningen*; Verwey-Jonker Instituut (2021) *Tussenevaluatie pilot landelijke vreemdelingen voorzieningen*.

¹³⁵ NRC (11 mei 2023) Ongedocumenteerden. *Plots is er toch geld voor bed-bad-brood*, written by Wafa Al Ali.

¹³⁶ <https://vng.nl/sites/default/files/2024-05/20240517-eerste-analyse-van-het-hoofdlijnenakkoord-voor-gemeenten.pdf>.

¹³⁷ https://www.gemeente.nu/bestuur/gemeenten-willen-door-met-bed-bad-broodregeling/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

¹³⁸ <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0012288/2023-07-13>.

¹³⁹ EMN (2023) *Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2022*. European Migration Network, July 2023, page 49.

identity had to be confirmed with official identification documents before this access to necessary medication could be investigated. Changes were also linked to the information that foreign nationals must provide when seeking to prove that care is not accessible in their country of origin. For the assessment, it is crucial that the foreign national provides insight into the costs of treatment locally, their financial situation, the possibility of taking out health insurance, wage expectations and the extent to which family members can contribute to the cost of care. The frequency of travel to the healthcare facility and the time involved are also considered relevant. The response time for the supporting documents was extended from two to four weeks because the information must be requested in the country of origin.

In addition, the previously strict 3-months period for decisions on temporary suspension of deportation due to medical reasons may no longer be strictly applied. Following a ruling by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in case C-69/21 on 22 November 2022, the Immigration Circular 2000 (Vc) was amended on 1 July 2023.¹⁴⁰ From that date, an indicative period can be established, but the immigration service must take into account the condition of the migrant concerned. Since the amendment in the Immigration Circular 2000 (Vc) on 1 July 2023, the Netherlands applies this indicative period when deciding on the suspension of deportation. Within the indicative period of 3 to 6 months, an accurate assessment of the disease progression and the availability of necessary care in the country of origin can be made.¹⁴¹

4.4 Intended plans of the new cabinet for 2024 and 2025

The Schoof cabinet, installed in July 2024, aimed for the toughest asylum regime and the strictest admission requirements ever. Together, different proposals were announced to eliminate permanent residence permits, shorten temporary asylum permits (from five to three years), restrict family reunification, and implement a two-status- system for asylum seekers. In the letter of 25 October, the government proclaimed different laws to relieve the asylum chain immediately and to reduce the influx of asylum seekers.¹⁴²

In December 2024, three legislative proposals were approved by the Schoof cabinet and sent to the Council of State for advice.¹⁴³

- The Asylum Emergency Measures Act (*Asielnoodmaatregelenwet*) was introduced to ease the pressure on the Dutch asylum and reception system. This act concerns a total of ten measures with the aim of managing inflow while stabilising the reception system. Significant measures include a reduction in the duration of temporary permits from five to three years and a tightening of the options for family reunification (*nareis*) to reduce inflow. Municipalities can also be required to provide reception places, with stronger central government control.
- The cabinet also proposed a so-called two-status system. The Two-Status System bill (*Wet invoering tweestatusstel*) in the Dutch asylum framework aims to differentiate more strictly between refugees entitled to protection under the Refugee Convention and those granted subsidiary protection. Convention refugees would receive a residence permit of five years with stronger rights, while subsidiary protection holders would get a shorter, three-year permit with more limited rights, particularly on family reunification. The proposal is intended to reduce inflow by means of stricter conditions and to align rights more closely with the level of protection required.
- The Repatriation and Detention of Aliens Act (*Wet Terugkeer en Vreemdelingenbewaring*) aims to modernise and tighten the legal framework for the detention and return of foreign nationals without legal residence in the Netherlands. It sets clearer rules for when and how immigration detention can be applied, with a stronger focus on preparing for actual return. The law provides authorities with broader powers to restrict movement, visitation, and activities in detention centers under exceptional circumstances. This legislative proposal also provides that non-cooperation with deportation will become a criminal offence.

¹⁴⁰ Government Gazette, 2023, 16. https://ind.pucoverheid.nl/doc/PUC_1309435_1/.

¹⁴¹ See, more in detail, EMN (2024) Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands. Annual Report 2023, page 66.

¹⁴² <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2024/10/25/brief-over-nadere-afspraken-uitvoering-hoofdstuk-2-hoofddlijnenakkoord-grip-op-asiel-en-migratie>.

¹⁴³ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2024/10/25/brief-over-nadere-afspraken-uitvoering-hoofdstuk-2-hoofddlijnenakkoord-grip-op-asiel-en-migratie>.

On 10 February 2025, the Council of State issued its advice on the Asylum Emergency Measures Act and the introduction of a two-status system.¹⁴⁴ Although the Council of State advised against submitting the bills to Parliament in their current form, the cabinet approved them virtually unchanged on 7 March. On 24 March, the Council of State issued an advisory opinion on the Repatriation and Detention of Aliens Act.¹⁴⁵ The advisory opinion consists of three key components: proposals that deviate from fundamental rights must be substantiated in more detail, the data processing method must be better explained, and the relationship with the European Pact on Asylum and Migration must be more clearly defined. To date, it is unclear what the cabinet has done with these opinions. It is also unknown when Parliament will vote on the bill.

The cabinet has been in caretaker mode since 3 June 2025, after the largest party, the PVV, decided to leave the coalition following a disagreement over asylum measures. The caretaker government initiated several major legislative proposals to tighten asylum and reception policy. On 3 July 2025, the House of Representatives passed the Asylum Emergency Measures Act, as well as the Two-Status System Act.¹⁴⁶ This implies the following:

- The approval of the Asylum Emergency Measures Act means that the validity of asylum permits will be reduced from five to three years. Permits for an indefinite period will be abolished. The law also restricts subsequent travel for unmarried partners or adult children.
- The House of Representatives also approved an additional measure to criminalise illegal residence. However, this measure will only take effect after advice from the Council of State (expected in September 2025) and renewed debate in the House.¹⁴⁷
- The proposal (by the PVV) to immediately repeal the Distribution Act (*Spreidingswet*) did not receive support from the cabinet. However, a motion was passed requesting the cabinet to repeal the Distribution Act by 1 February 2026.¹⁴⁸
- The Two-Status System Act introduces a distinction between refugees (A status) and persons with subsidiary protection (B status). Permit holders with B status will face stricter requirements for family reunification.
- The House also approved the new Housing Act, intended to give the central government more control over house-construction. At the insistence of the PVV, the bill includes an amendment prohibiting municipalities from giving priority to refugees with refugee status in the allocation of social housing.

The next step is Senate consideration, scheduled after the summer recess. In September 2025, however, the Senate unanimously decided that it would take additional time to deal with the asylum laws.¹⁴⁹

4.5 Asylum requests

For the purpose of displaying not only the long-term trend in total asylum applications (first and follow-up), but also figures based on the new asylum definition in the Netherlands, figure 4.1 includes two different trend lines. The blue line depicts the trend between 1975-2024 in accordance with the old definition of asylum and, therefore, also includes applications of family members of refugees. The purple line shows the trend between 2007-2024 in accordance with the new definition and does not include applications of family members of refugees (see box 4.1 for a more detailed description on this amendment).

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.raadvanstate.nl/actueel/nieuws/februari/adviezen-asielnoodmaatregelen-tweestatus/>.

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.raadvanstate.nl/adviezen/@147744/w03-24-00363-ii/>.

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.binnenlandsbestuur.nl/juridisch/kamer-stemt-in-met-omstreden-asielwetten>.

¹⁴⁷ In August 2025, the Council of State issued an advisory opinion on the criminalization of illegal residence. Following this opinion, an amendment was added to clarify that providing assistance is not a criminal offense.

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail?id=2025Z11382&did=2025D26143>.

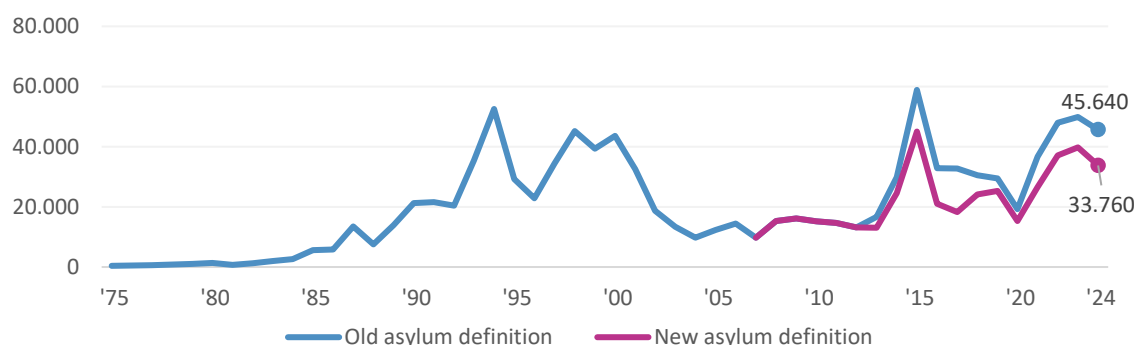
¹⁴⁹ NRC Handelsblad (10-09-2025) *Senaat behandelt omstreden asielwet*. NRC, page 14.

Box 4.1 Change of definition of asylum requests in asylum statistics

In January 2014, an amendment was introduced to the Dutch definition for asylum requests in asylum statistics. Previously, lodged requests for family reunification within a period of three months after granting an asylum seeker with a residence permit were counted as asylum applications. According to the new definition, this way of counting is no longer applicable. Now, family members of asylum seekers who have been granted a status, no longer have to file an asylum application in order to receive a residence permit. Therefore, these family members are no longer included in statistics on asylum applications. By changing the definition, Dutch statistics have become better aligned with the definition used in other Member States.

Figure 4.1 shows that the number of total (first and follow-up) asylum requests fluctuated substantially during the past forty years. In 2015, the political crisis in Syria caused a large influx of refugees to the Netherlands. In the five years that followed, the annual number of asylum applications in the Netherlands decreased sharply again. The COVID-19 crisis led to a further reduction in the number of asylum seekers in 2020, due to both travel restrictions and closed borders. More recently, the number of asylum requests increased in 2021, mostly due to the political conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of asylum applicants decreased again.

Figure 4.1 Total numbers (first and follow-up) of asylum requests, 1975-2024



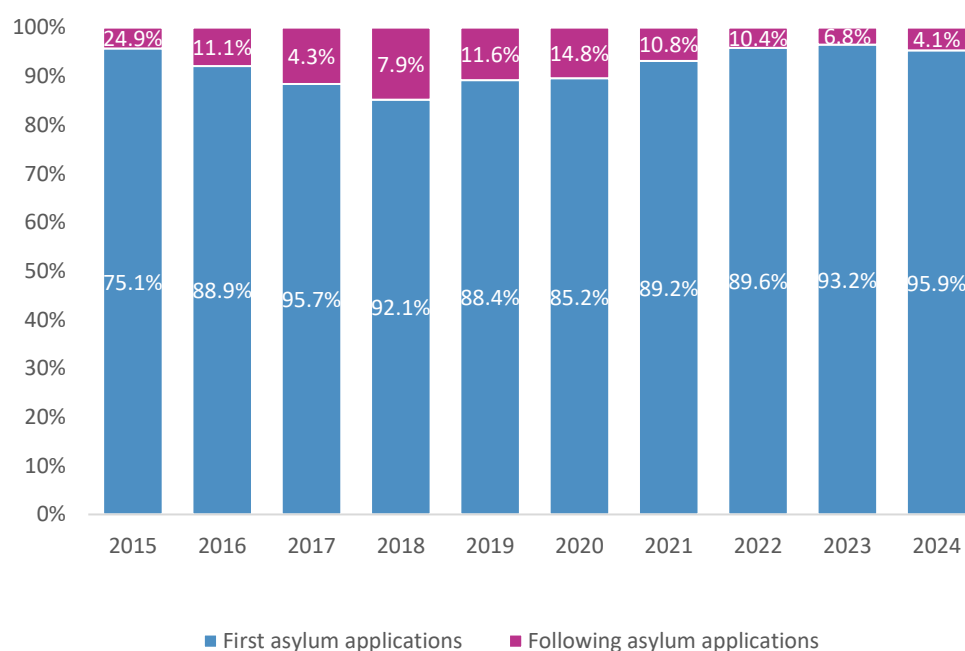
Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

4.5.1 First and follow-up asylum applications

Asylum seekers can submit a follow-up application after rejection of the first application. This possibility may be used in the event of new relevant facts for the assessment of the application or in case the situation in the home country has changed. Figure 4.2 shows the share of first and follow-up applications according to the new definition.

Over the years, the number of follow-up applications fluctuates within the total number of applications. After 2018, we see that the share of follow-up applications continues to decline. In 2024, 4.1% of all asylum applications consisted of follow-up applications.

Figure 4.2 First and follow-up applications, 2015-2024



Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

4.5.2 First asylum request by country of nationality

Table 4.2 shows the number of first asylum requests in the Netherlands by nationality. In 2024, 32,175 first asylum requests were made.¹⁵⁰ By far most asylum requests came from Syrian refugees (11,525). Next in line were Iraqi (2,220), Turks (1,870), Eritreans (1,465) and Yemeni (1,080).

Table 4.2 Top 10 first asylum applications in the Netherlands by nationality¹, 2022-2024

Total of 2022			Total of 2023			Total of 2024		
Nationality	Abs.	%	Nationality	Abs.	%	Nationality	Abs.	%
Total	35,535	100	Total	38,375	100	Total	32,175	100
Syrian	12,650	35.6	Syrian	13,030	34	Syrian	11,525	35.8
Afghan	2,730	7.7	Turkish	2,860	7.5	Iraqi	2,220	6.9
Turkish	2,685	7.6	Eritrean	2,345	6.1	Turkish	1,870	5.8
Yemeni	2,430	6.8	Yemeni	1,980	5.2	Eritrean	1,465	4.6
Somali	1,455	4.1	Somali	1,805	4.7	Yemeni	1,080	3.4
Eritrean	1,365	3.8	Algerian	1,555	4.1	Somalian	1,075	3.3
Algerian	1,205	3.4	Iraqi	1,495	3.9	Algerian	950	3
Ukrainian	1,060	3	Iranian	1,120	2.9	Nigerian	770	2.4
Pakistani	875	2.5	Moroccan	885	2.3	Iranian	705	2.2
Moroccan	720	2	Sudanese	810	2.1	Moroccan	605	1.9
Other	8,360	23.5	Other	10,490	27.2	Other	9,910	30.7

Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

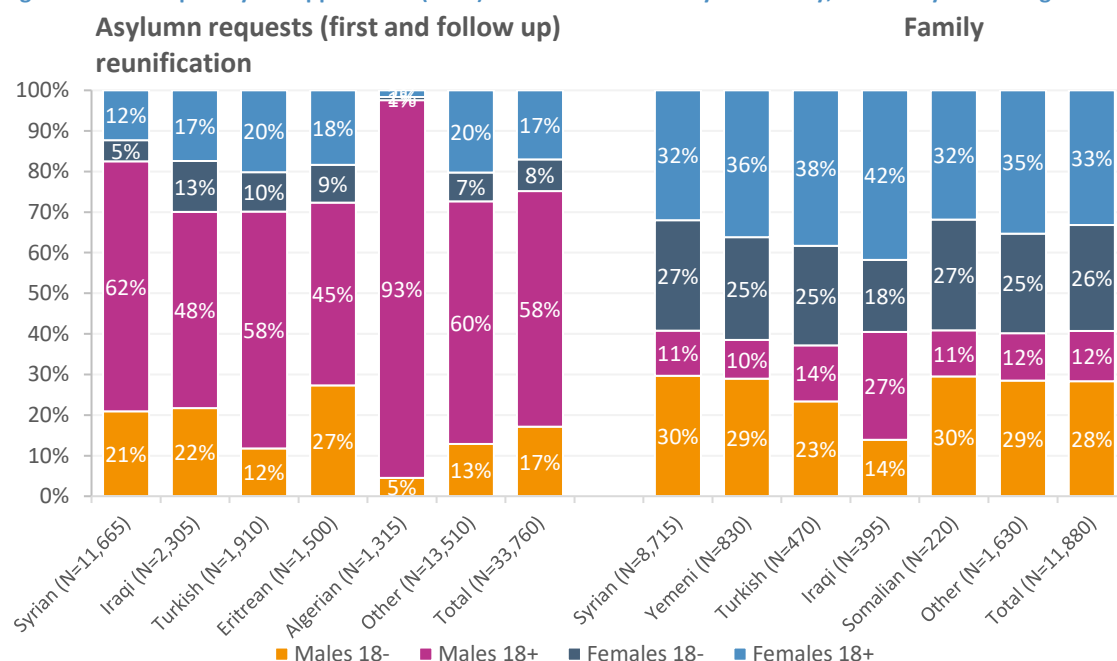
¹ The figures in the table are rounded to the nearest five to prevent possible identification of individuals.

4.5.3 Demographic characteristics of asylum seekers and family members

Figure 4.3 shows the demographic composition of asylum seekers and their family members for the most prominent countries of origin in 2024. More men than women applied for asylum. A large majority of these men are 18 years or older, especially among the Algerians. Only among the Eritreans did we find relatively many young men (under 18 years). Conversely, more women than men applied for a permit within the framework of family reunification. A significant proportion of these women are under the age of 18.

¹⁵⁰ In accordance with the new definition of asylum: family members of refugees are not included.

Figure 4.3 Top 5 Asylum applications (2024)¹ in the Netherlands by nationality, divided by sex and age



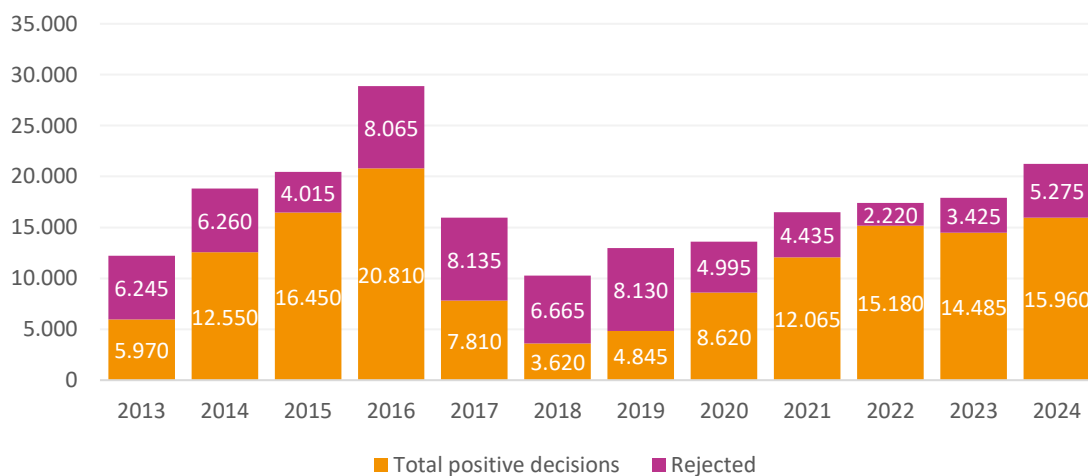
Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

¹ The figures in the table are rounded to the nearest five to prevent possible identification of individuals. As a result, it may occur that the sum of the numbers is different from the total.

4.6 Decisions on asylum requests

Figure 4.4 reveals the number of first asylum decisions in the Netherlands between 2013 and 2024. The number of positive decisions and rejections fluctuates over the years. For example, between 2014 and 2016, we see that the proportion of positive decisions is relatively high compared to other years. This is also true for the most recent years. In 2024, 15,960 first requests for asylum were granted and 5,275 first requests were rejected, which amounts to a rejection rate of 25 percent.

Figure 4.4 Total number of first asylum decisions in the Netherlands divided by positive decisions and rejections¹, 2013-2024



¹ The absolute data are rounded to the nearest five. As a result, it may occur that the sum of the detail data is different from the total.
Source: Eurostat (2025)

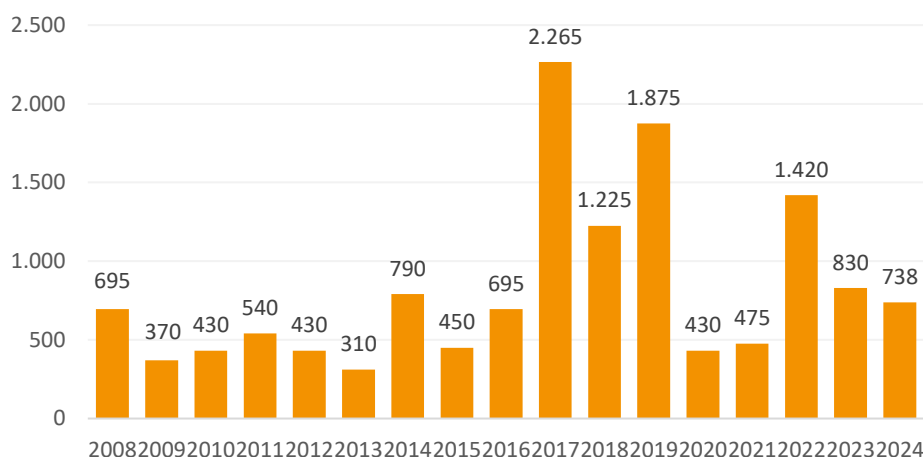
4.7 Resettled refugees

The Netherlands takes part in the UNHCR 'resettlement programme' to help resettle refugees from a third country as a safe, viable and durable solution.¹⁵¹ UNHCR determines on the basis of its own criteria which refugees in a host country are eligible to be nominated for resettlement because they fall within certain vulnerability categories. UNHCR nominates candidates ('refers') to the Netherlands. The final decision on acceptance for resettlement is made by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service.

In 2024 it was announced that the national resettlement quota will be lowered to 200 refugees per year as of 1 January 2025. Besides the resettlement effort in the framework of (EU) migration cooperation with third countries (notably the EU-Türkiye Statement) for 2025 was set at 500 resettled refugees.¹⁵² The eligibility is assessed on the basis of the Dutch country-based and general asylum policies and the resettlement profile of individual refugees (including integration related considerations, compiled by the reception authority COA).

Figure 4.5 shows the annual number of refugees resettled to the Netherlands. This number includes those who have been resettled to the Netherlands under the EU-Turkey deal. After a more limited number of resettlers during the COVID years, the number increased to more than 1,400 resettled refugees in 2022. After 2022, the number of resettled refugees coming to the Netherlands decreased again to 738 in 2024.

Figure 4.5 Total number of resettled refugees in the Netherlands per year of arrival, 2008-2024



Source: IND Asylum Trends (2025)

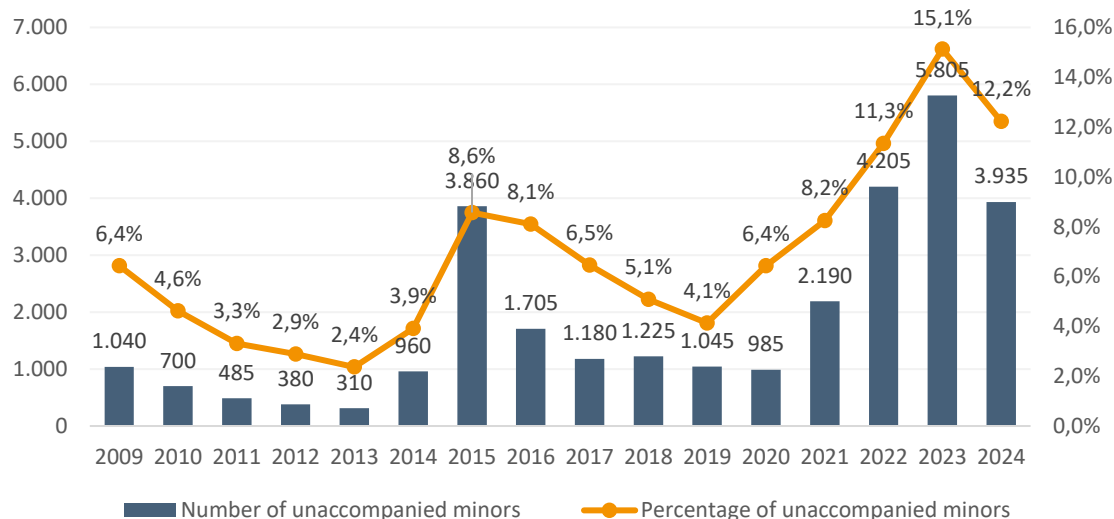
4.8 Unaccompanied minors

Asylum seekers below the age of 18 who are travelling alone (unaccompanied by an adult) are referred to as unaccompanied minors. Figure 4.6 reveals that the total number of asylum requests by unaccompanied minors was relatively large in 2015. In the following years, a sharp decline could be observed, although the number of requests by unaccompanied minors remained slightly higher compared to the years before 2015. Since 2021, we observe a steady increase in the total number of requests by unaccompanied minors. In 2024, these asylum applications amounted to a number of 3,935. Nowadays, unaccompanied minors account for about 12% of the total number of asylum requests.

¹⁵¹ <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a16b1676.html>.

¹⁵² See Parliamentary letters of 25 October 2024 (<https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/24494cec-a2de-4d34-ad2e-526d038affa9/file>) and 18 December 2024 (19 637, nr. 3324, dpc-afa760d4dcd8002be934af484847471c2d49ac01).

Figure 4.6 Asylum applications in the Netherlands by unaccompanied minors¹, 2009-2024 (new definition)



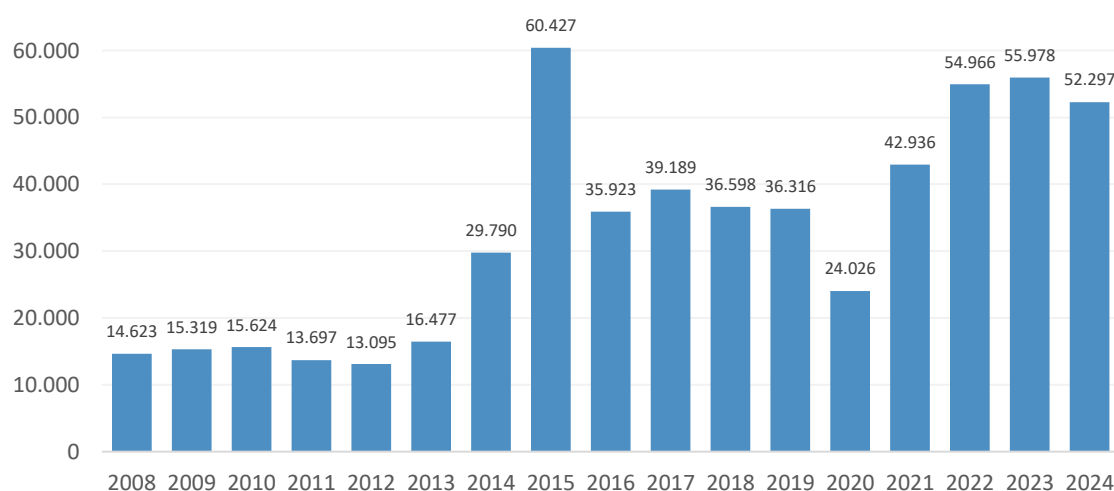
Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

¹ The absolute data are rounded to the nearest five. As a result, it may occur that the sum of the detail data is different from the total.

4.9 Size of influx in asylum centres

In the Netherlands, COA is responsible for the reception of asylum seekers and the supervision and provision of information and necessities to asylum seekers. When asylum seekers arrive in the Netherlands, they await further decision on their asylum application in one of the COA centres. Figure 4.7 shows that in 2015 a relatively large number of new asylum seekers (60,427) were received in reception centres. Thereafter, the size of the influx of new asylum seekers in reception centres decreased and remained largely stable. In 2020 there was a decline in the size of influx, mainly caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. After 2020, the influx of asylum seekers in reception centres again increased to a number of almost 56,000 people in 2023, only to decrease slightly to a little over 52,000 people in 2024. On 31 December 2024, Dutch asylum centres accommodated 72,500 asylum migrants (compared to 64,410 residents a year before).¹⁵³

Figure 4.7 Influx of asylum seekers in reception centres, 2008-2024



Source: Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, Annual report 2024

¹⁵³ Ministry of Justice & Safety (2025) De Staat van Migratie, 2025.



Study migrants

5

5 Study migrants

This chapter is about migration to the Netherlands for reasons of study. In the first part, the policy framework for international students is outlined. This concerns the legal possibilities and obligations for both EU students and non-EU students. In the second part, some statistical aspects of this migration flow are discussed. Both the total numbers and the absolute numbers for a few categories – according to nationality and type of education – are part of this analysis. We continue this chapter with information on the number of foreign students who have changed their residence permit in order to stay in the Netherlands after finishing the study in this country.

5.1 Main statistical findings

- The number of foreign students enrolled in Dutch institutes for higher education (research universities and universities of applied sciences) has steadily increased since 2010. In 2024, more than 131,000 foreign students participated in Dutch higher education, accounting for 17% of the total student population.
- A significant proportion of international students come from Western European countries (46% in 2024/25). However, this share has decreased significantly over the past ten years (in favour of students from both Central and Eastern Europe and from outside the EU).
- German students represent by far the largest group of foreign students in Dutch institutions for higher education with 19,997 students in the academic year 2024/25. More than 15% of all international students originate from Germany.
- In the academic year 2024/25, more foreign students were enrolled in Dutch research universities (over 92,000) than in universities of applied sciences (over 38,500). The share of international students at research universities and universities of applied sciences has steadily increased since 2006.
- The number of admission requests from international students slightly decreased between 2023 and 2024 (22,040).
- The number of international students who changed their residence permit in order to stay and work in the Netherlands after completing their study increased between 2021 and 2024. This increase corresponds to the increasing trend during the years preceding the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.2 Laws and policies for foreign students

In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (*OCW*) is the responsible instance for all education policies. Nuffic is an important organisation with regard to the implementation of policies specifically for foreign students. Its main goal is to support Dutch institutions and the Dutch government in different activities with regard to the internationalisation of higher education.

To gain access to the Dutch education system, international students have to meet admission requirements as specified in the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (*Wet op Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek, WHW*). In addition, most third-country students wishing to stay longer than 90 days (and are not already residing lawfully in another Schengen Member State) need to apply for a provisional residence permit (*MVV*) - this application for a *MVV* and the application for a temporary residence permit are combined in one application procedure. The requirements are specified in the Modern Migration Policy Act (*MoMi*).¹⁵⁴ As of 1 January 2017, the maximum decision-making time on residence permit applications for study and scientific research was reduced from 90 to 60 days.²⁷ If the application is complete, a target period of 2 weeks applies for the decision.¹⁵⁵

Previously, the Dutch policy was mainly focused on increasing the numbers of international students. However, gradually, since 2019¹⁵⁶ the Dutch policy got a new twist, directed towards a more balance in

¹⁵⁴ This act came into force on 1 June 2013, and enabled amendments to the existing Aliens Act 2000, particularly in relation to application processes and admission procedures. Through the Modern Migration Policy Act (*MoMi*), the admission process is accelerated and simplified by merging different procedures (see, in more detail, section 2.1.1 in the 2019 SOPEMI-report).

¹⁵⁵ <https://ind.nl/nl/na-uw-aanvraag/beslistermijnen>.

¹⁵⁶ Meer balans in internationalisering hoger onderwijs | Nieuwsbericht | Rijksoverheid.nl.

the higher institutions system with regard to internationalisation.¹⁵⁷ And more recently, since the summer of 2024 the Dutch government has been focusing on the reduction of the growth of the number of international students. The most important measures are listed below.

Working parallel to studying

As of May 2018, students from third countries who study in the Netherlands are allowed to work 16 hours per week parallel to their studies, or full-time during the months of June, July, and August. Previously this was maximised to 10 hours per week. The amendment is pursuant to EU Directive 2016/801.¹⁵⁸ In order to work in the Netherlands, students need to be provided by their employer with a personal work permit connected to the employer.¹⁵⁹

The 'search year' following graduation

In addition, policies have been implemented to allow foreign students to stay in the Netherlands for as long as possible after they have graduated. International graduates may apply for a one year residence permit with the purpose of taking a so-called 'search year' in order to look for employment in the Netherlands.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, international students can start internships in the Netherlands as part of their study, even if this is not an obligatory part of their curriculum. This measure is expected to increase the chances to find a suitable job in the Netherlands.¹⁶¹ Finally, these measures include a relaxation of the salary criterion to work as a highly skilled migrant in the Netherlands (see chapter 3) for those who possess a 'search year' permit or find a job in the Netherlands (while abroad) within three years after graduating in the Netherlands.

Screening of students in sensitive study programmes

On 9 April 2019, a joint task force (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice and Security) was formed for the screening of students in so-called sensitive study programmes.¹⁶² On 27 November 2020, the government presented a set of measures to improve knowledge security in the area of higher education and (applied) sciences.¹⁶³ The measures aim to promote international cooperation, while increasing the awareness about knowledge security and the development of specific security policies by knowledge institutions. In addition, the government is developing a screening mechanism against the unwanted transfer of knowledge and technology in fields with a heightened risk from the perspective of national security.

No work permit needed for student board activities

As of 1 January 2020, international students no longer need a work permit (TWV) for engaging in participation and student board activities at their higher education institution. The objective of this measure is to make these activities more accessible for and open to international students. Multiple universities had noted difficulties for international students engaging in such activities. Previously, international students without a work permit could only do an internship, whereas those with a work permit could have a part-time job of a maximum of 16 hours a week. With the decision to exempt international students from the work permit requirement for participation and student board activities, the government emphasises the importance of student access to participation activities.

Discussion about limiting the number of foreign students

In recent years, there has been a discussion on whether the government should seek to limit the number of international students to the Netherlands. The position of the ministry of Education and Culture

¹⁵⁷ See Letter of 21 April 2023 from the Minister of Education, Culture and Science to the House of Representatives on managing the influx of international students in higher education.

¹⁵⁸ *Staatscourant*, 2018, no. 23392.

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.nl labourauthority.nl/publications/publications/2019/09/13/flyer-working-while-studying-in-the-netherlands>

¹⁶⁰ European Migration Network (2019) 2018 Annual Policy Report Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands. The Hague, Ministry of Security and Justice (V&J), chapter 3 (section 3.2.2).

¹⁶¹ European Migration Network (2017) Policy Report Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands. Annual Report 2016, Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.2). The Hague, Ministry of Security and Justice (V&J),

¹⁶² European Migration Network (2020) Policy Report Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands. Annual Report 2019, Chapter 3 (Section 3.2.2). The Hague, Ministry of Security and Justice (V&J).

¹⁶³ European Migration Network (2021) Policy Report Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands. Annual Report 2020, Chapter 4 (Section 4.3). The Hague, Ministry of Security and Justice (V&J).

under cabinet Rutte IV (January 2022 to July 2024) has been that while internationalisation carries risks for Dutch higher education, the benefits of the international dimension for higher education are very important for the Dutch knowledge economy, education, and science. Therefore, the government sought to create a balance between measures that encourage internationalisation of higher education, and the presence of international students in the Netherlands, and measures that ensure some aspects of Dutch higher education remain more national in scope, such as the usage of Dutch as an academic language in many situations.¹⁶⁴ The plans of the previous government were outlined in a parliamentary letter from 2023 on managing international student flows to higher education, include introducing capacity limits for programmes, with priority given to Dutch and European Economic Area (EEA) students.¹⁶⁵

The Rutte IV cabinet (Januari 2022-July 2024) proposed a bill to balance internationalisation of higher education in the Netherlands (*Wet Internationalisering in balans, WIB*).¹⁶⁶ This bill would enable the government to exercise more control over the mobility of international students in the Netherlands, and would foster and strengthen Dutch as a language for teaching and research in Dutch higher education. The bill recognises the added value of internationalisation in higher education but seeks to prevent decreases in quality and accessibility that unmanaged internationalisation can bring. The proposed bill was presented to the House of Representatives on 8 May 2024. The House of Representatives have suggested some changes in the spring of 2025, due to which the bill is being amended.¹⁶⁷ In the autumn of 2025 no definite decision has been made yet, although there is broad support in the House for the bill in general.

One of the proposed measures in the bill is a compulsory Foreign Language Education Assessment (*Toets Anderstalig Onderwijs, TAO*). However, Dutch universities did not agree with this measure.¹⁶⁸ Instead, they unitedly proposed alternative measures by which they take action themselves to balance internationalisation in higher education. The proposed measures focus on the influx of international students and on the Dutch language in study programmes. They also include the introduction of a numerus fixus for English programmes. With these measures, the universities hope to offer an alternative for the TAO. Dropping the TAO is one of the proposed amendments that is being considered by the legislator.¹⁶⁹

Housing for international students

A National Action Plan for Student Accommodation aims to create 60,000 additional student housing units by 2030.¹⁷⁰ The plan also calls for more transparency regarding rents charged by student accommodation providers, given that international students are more vulnerable in the Dutch housing market: they pay often more per room than their Dutch counterparts and they are often excluded from housing opportunities by student houses that are unwilling to accept international students.

5.3 A statistical overview of foreign students in Dutch higher education

In this part, some statistical aspects of this migration flow are discussed. Both the total numbers and the numbers for a few categories – according to type of higher education – are part of this analysis. Also, the main nationalities of international students are presented. We continue this chapter with information on the number of foreign students who have changed their residence permit in order to stay in the Netherlands after finishing their study in this country. These numbers include both international students from the EEA and outside of the EEA.

¹⁶⁴ <https://open.overheid.nl/repository/ronl-4391266e044aaa8a3b62cac97e4cf66864774a29/1/pdf/aan-de-tweede-kamer-internationalisering.pdf>.

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2023/04/21/beheersing-internationale-studentenstromen-in-het-hoger-onderwijs>.

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/wetsvoorstellen/detail?cfg=wetsvoorstel&gry=wetsvoorstel:36555>

¹⁶⁷ Parliamentary Letter 36555. Nr. 12 https://www.eerstekamer.nl/behandeling/20250703/brief_regering_uitvoering_moties/info

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.universiteitenvannederland.nl/actueel/nieuws/universiteiten-gaan-zelf-internationalisering-verder-in-balans-brengen>

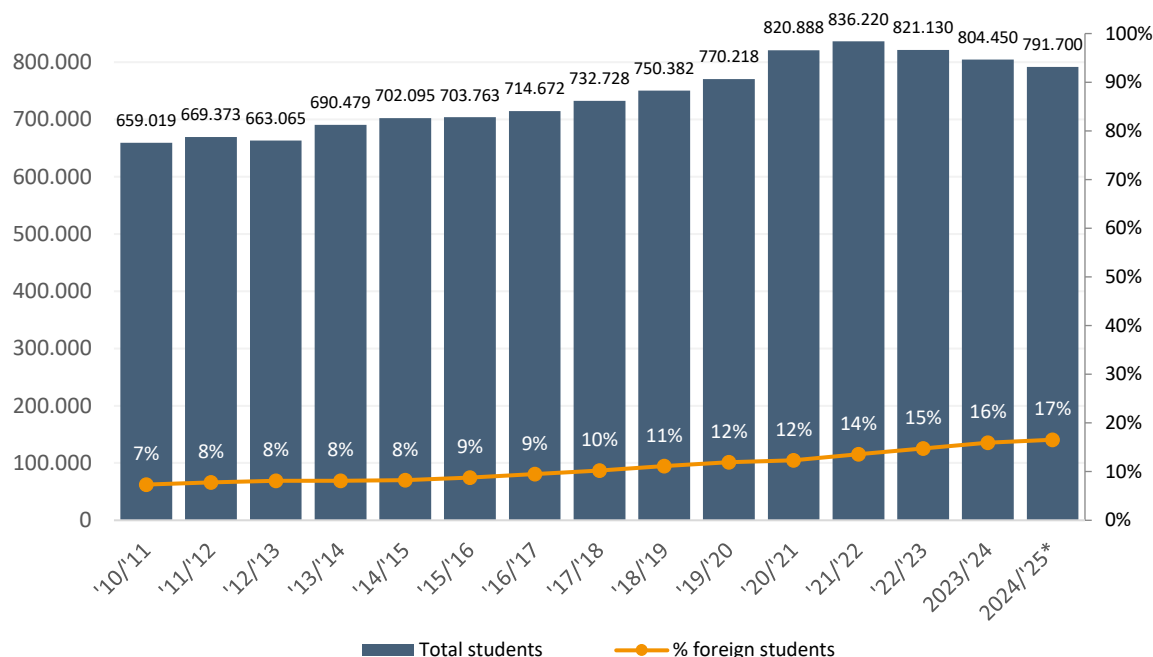
¹⁶⁹ Parliamentary Letter 36555. Nr. 12 https://www.eerstekamer.nl/behandeling/20250703/brief_regering_uitvoering_moties/info

¹⁷⁰ <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-76afe98803cfc20d9fc1f8ac882b3a6c57223826/pdf>.

5.3.1 Number of (new) international students in Dutch institutes for higher education

Over time, the number of foreign students in the Netherlands steadily increased (see figure 5.1). Whereas in 2010 48,340 foreign students participated in Dutch higher education, this number increased to 131,004 foreign students in 2024.¹⁷¹ Not only the absolute number of foreign students increased, the proportion of foreign students compared to Dutch students also steadily increased, from 7 percent in 2010 to 17 percent in 2024.

Figure 5.1 Number of students in higher education and the proportion of foreign students, college years 2010/2011 to 2024/2025



* Data of 2024/2025 are provisional.

Source: Own calculations based on Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025) and Nuffic (2025)

The increased number of new enrolments of international degree students in Dutch public institutions has stabilised for the last two years.¹⁷² In the academic year 2024/25 public institutions of higher education in the Netherlands received 51,796 new international enrolments, equal to 24 percent of the total number of new enrolments (Dutch and international enrolments combined).¹⁷³ In fact, international students accounted for 29.9 percent of all new enrolments in research universities' (RU) programmes this year, compared to 9.1 percent of the new enrolments in universities of applied sciences (UAS) programmes.

5.3.2 Admission requests and numbers of non-EU/EEA/Swiss students in the Netherlands

Students from outside the EU/EEA/Switzerland need to apply for a residence permit in order to participate in Dutch institutes for higher education. Over the last years, more students have made an admission request in order to study in the Netherlands (see table 5.1). Between 2021 and 2023, the number continued to rise, with 23,170 requests in 2023. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of admission requests slightly decreased to 22,040. The main countries of origin of students who made a request in 2024 to study in the Netherlands are China, the United States, and India.

¹⁷¹ 2009 refers to school year 2009/10 and 2019 refers to school year 2019/20, etc.

¹⁷² New enrolments are considered as degree students who not been previously enrolled in a given study programme, as opposed to those re-registering for a programme.

¹⁷³ Nuffic (2025) Incoming degree mobility in Dutch higher education 2024/25. The Hague, Nuffic.

Table 5.1 Admission requests of students 2018-2024

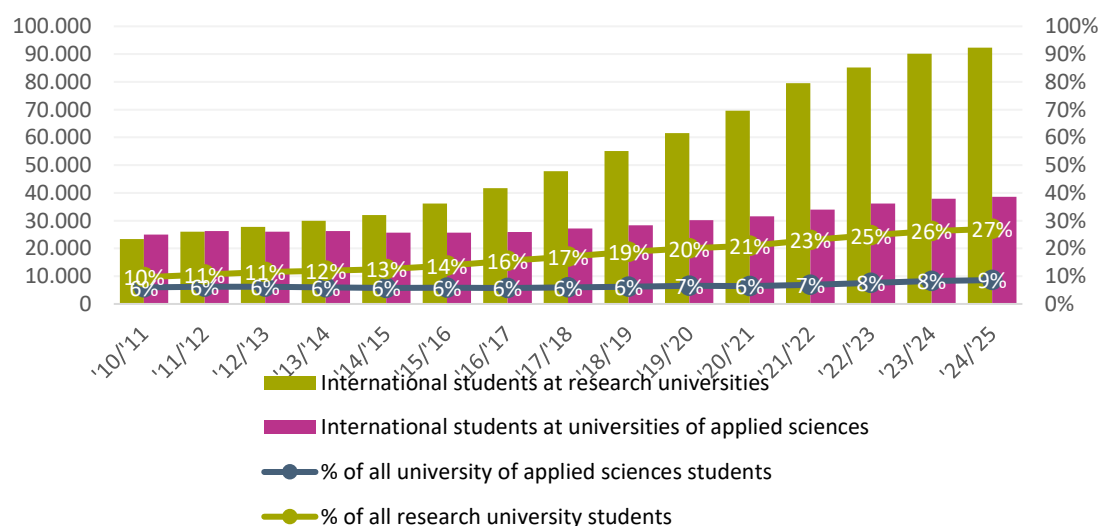
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Requests	18,640	20,430	12,310	20,560	22,210	23,170	22,040
Decisions	18,670	20,630	12,640	20,600	22,300	23,110	22,240
Positive decisions (%)	98%	99%	96%	99%	98%	99%	98%

Source: IND annual figures 2024

5.3.3 Foreign students in research universities and universities of applied sciences

In this section we describe the differences in numbers of foreign students participating in research universities and universities of applied sciences. As shown in figure 5.2, the proportion of foreign students enrolled in research universities (compared to all university students) steadily increased between 2010 and 2024. A similar tendency is visible for the universities of applied sciences. In 2024/25, 92,372 international students participated in Dutch research universities (27% of all students), and 38,632 international students were enrolled in universities of applied sciences (9% of all students).

Figure 5.2 Foreign students in research universities and universities of applied sciences, college year 2010/2011 to 2024/2025 (absolute numbers and percentages of all students)



* Data of 2024/2025 are provisional.

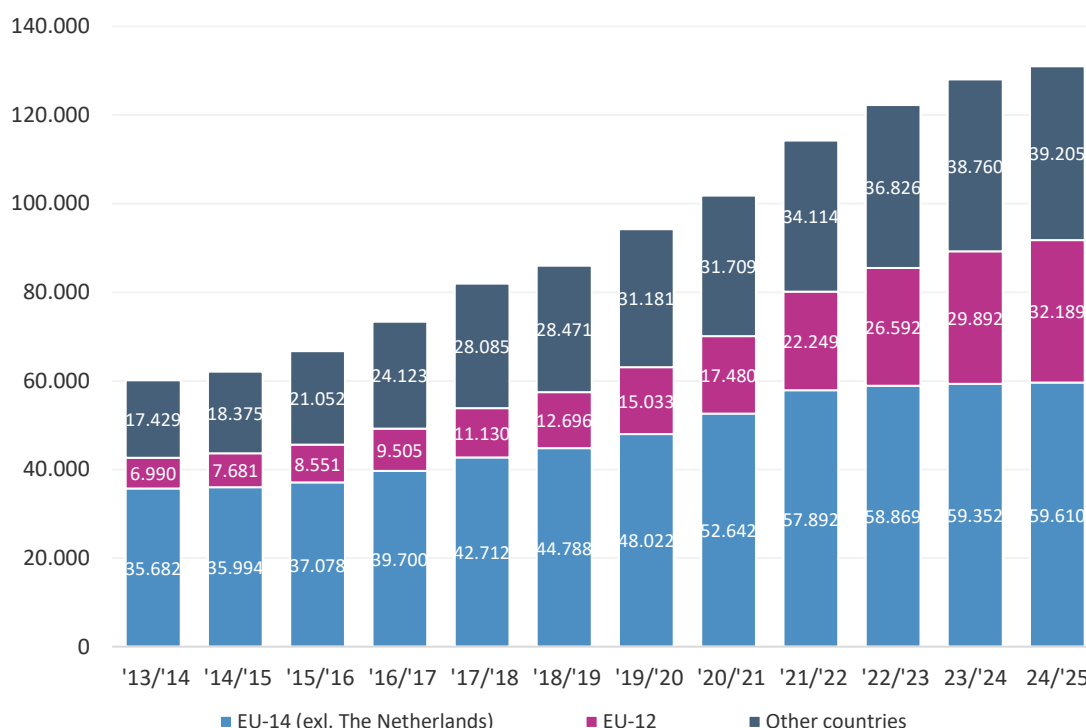
Source: Own calculations based on Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025) and Nuffic (2025)

5.3.4 Foreign students by country of nationality

The vast majority of foreign students originate from other Western-European countries (i.e. EU-14 Member States, see figure 5.3). Having said this, their proportion within the total foreign student population is slowly decreasing. In 2013/14, 59% of all foreign students originated from the EU-14 countries, while in 2024 this percentage was slightly lower in 2024/25 (46%). Conversely, the share of foreign students from the more recent EU Member States (EU-12) increased from 12% in 2014 to 25% in 2024. The proportion of students from other countries remained around 30% during this period.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ EU-15 are all countries that joined the EU before 2004. EU-12 are the countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007.

Figure 5.3 Foreign students by region of origin (EU-14¹, EU12² and other countries), college year 2013/2014 to 2024/2025³



Source 2014/2015–2017/2018: The Education Executive Agency (DUO). Data supplied on request (2018)

Source 2018/2019–2024/2025: Nuffic

¹ EU-14: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

² EU-12: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

German students represented the largest group of foreign students in the Netherlands in 2024/25 (see table 5.2). Most other countries in the top 10 are part of the EU-27. The only non-European country that is high in the ranking is China. Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, little has changed in the order of countries from which students who study in the Netherlands originate.

Table 5.2 Top 10 foreign students by country of origin, college year 2020/2021 to 2024/2025

2022/2023			2023/2024			2024/2025		
Country	Abs.	%	Country	Abs.	%	Country	Abs.	%
Germany	22,775	18.6	Germany	21,362	16.7	Germany	19,997	15.3
Italy	7,633	6.2	Italy	8,227	6.4	Italy	8,610	6.6
Romania	6,717	5.5	Romania	7,420	5.8	Romania	7,915	6.0
China	5,610	4.6	China	6,207	4.8	Spain	6,529	5.0
Spain	5,599	4.6	Spain	6,191	4.8	China	6,127	4.7
Bulgaria	5,112	4.2	Poland	5,582	4.4	Poland	6,005	4.6
Belgium	4,780	3.9	Bulgaria	5,389	4.2	Bulgaria	5,455	4.2
Poland	4,650	3.8	Belgium	4,891	3.8	Belgium	4,989	3.8
France	4,635	3.8	France	4,863	3.8	France	4,938	3.8
Greece	4,406	3.6	Greece	4,514	3.5	Greece	4,691	3.6
Total top 10	71,917	58.8	Total top 10	74,646	58.3	Total top 10	75,256	57.4
Other	50,370	41.2	Other	53,358	41.7	Other	55,748	42.6
Total	122,287	100	Total	128,000	100	Total	131,004	100

Source: Nuffic (2024)

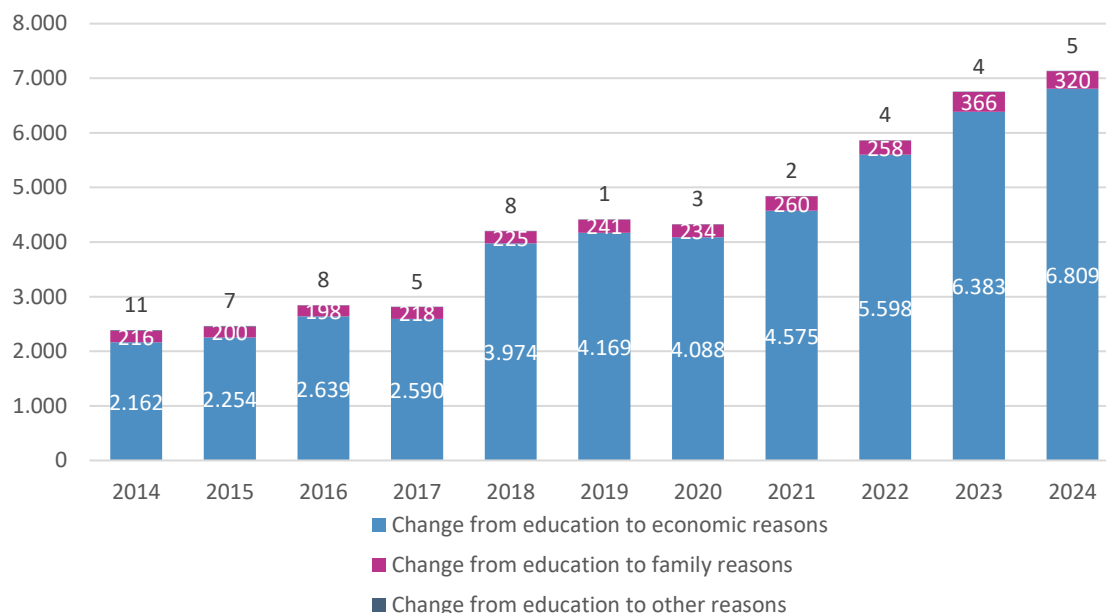
Box 5.1 Ukrainian students

After the Russian invasion in Ukraine, all institutions for higher education reduced the institutional fees for students from Ukraine. These students were paying the lower statutory fee for EU/EEA nationals in 2022-2023, even though Ukraine is not an EU-Member State. More recently, an increasing number of higher education institutions abolished the reduced tuition fee for Ukrainian students. However, this has not yet resulted in a smaller number of Ukrainian students in the Netherlands. Their number increased from 648 in 2020 to 1.673 in 2024 (Nuffic, 2024).

5.3.5 Admissions requests and status changes of foreign students

Foreign students in particular prolonged their stay in the Netherlands for the purpose of work (i.e. economic reasons, see figure 5.4). To a significantly lesser extent, a change of residence status took place in favour of family reasons (e.g. a relationship or marriage with a Dutch person).

Figure 5.4 Change of immigration status permits with 'education' as former reason, 2014-2024



Source: Eurostat (2025)



Participation and integration of immigrants

6

6 Participation and integration of immigrants

This chapter is about the participation and integration of people with a (non-European) migration background in the Netherlands. First of all, the most important policy shifts in the past year are described, with specific attention to civic integration policies, measures to improve the labour market position of people with a migration background, policies on citizenship and measures to combat discrimination. This is followed by a description of the social position of migrants in the Netherlands. We will focus in particular on labour participation, patterns of social assistance dependency, unemployment and the income position of various migrant groups.

6.1 Main findings

- In 2024, foreign residents born outside Europe participated to a lesser degree in the Dutch labour market as compared to persons born in the Netherlands or Europe. In 2024, the difference in participation rates between the two groups was 12 percentage points.
- In 2024, persons born outside Europe were more than twice as likely to be unemployed as persons born in the Netherlands. Unemployment rates are highest among those with a Moroccan or Antillean/Aruban background.
- In 2024, people born outside Europe were between four and seven times as likely to receive social assistance benefits than those born in the Netherlands. However, over the last decade, the use of social assistance slightly decreased among the largest migrant groups.
- Differences in income level between those born in the Netherlands and outside the Netherlands are relatively stable over the years. People born outside Europe reveal the least favourable income levels. However, there has been a considerable increase in the average hourly wage earned by these migrants over the past 15 years.
- Refugees in the Netherlands have a low net labour participation rate and are relatively strongly dependent on social assistance benefits. Of those who received a residence permit in 2014, 45% participated in the labour market in 2024 and almost one in three (31%) was dependent on social assistance benefits in that year.

6.2 Policies on civic integration

On 2 July 2018, the then Minister of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) announced a new civic integration system.¹⁷⁵ The Minister explained that, under the current system, too many newcomers remain dependent on social assistance benefits for too long. This outcome was considered as undesirable and, moreover, associated with an insufficiently effective integration policy. New measures, already referred to in the Coalition Agreement of 10 October 2017, imply a drastic change in civic integration policy, and include the following basic principles:

- Municipalities will purchase the civic integration courses themselves. In so doing, municipalities will be able to monitor the quality of the language courses.
- Every newcomer will receive a personal integration plan. This customised plan will be drafted by the municipality in consultation with the candidate.
- The loan system will be ceased for immigrants with an asylum status. The government will provide municipalities with the needed funding to purchase language courses for immigrants. The loan system stays in place for immigrants who arrive for the purpose family reunification.
- Upon granting of status immigrants are expected to seek employment. Municipalities should encourage employers to create job opportunities for recognised refugees.
- Newcomers who came as asylum seekers to the Netherlands will receive part of social welfare assistance in kind within the first six months.
- Civic integration will be tested at various exam levels. The standard language requirement will be raised from level A2 to level B1.

¹⁷⁵ The generally formulated plan has been further elaborated in the policy document *Hoofddlijnen veranderingopgave inburgering*, of 2 July, 2018. Reference number: 2018-0000117315.

On 15 February 2019, the Dutch government informed the House of Representatives that the new integration law will be introduced on 1 January 2021.¹⁷⁶ The House of Representatives passed the law for a new integration system on 2 July 2020. Ultimately, the new law came into effect on 1 January 2022.

A central element in the new system is the subdivision into three civic integration routes:

- The aim is to reach language level B1 for all candidates. This route consists of different language components, a labour market and participation module (*Module Arbeidsmarkt en Participatie, MAP*) and a test to assess the knowledge of Dutch society (*Kennis Nederlandse Maatschappij, KNM*).¹⁷⁷
- There will be an education route, helpful for obtaining an official diploma in the Netherlands. Although the education route is particularly intended for younger candidates, it is open to all age groups.
- There will be a "Z-route" for illiterate people and people with "limited learning ability". This route is intended for those for whom the above routes are not believed to be realistic.

Newcomers who were obliged to meet the previous civic integration requirements, continue to be covered by the system which was in place between 2013 and 2021. The Parliamentary Letter of 15 February 2019 states, among other things, that money will be released for these newcomers.¹⁷⁸ As newcomers who are still covered by the Civic Integration Act 2013 will not benefit from the new measures, municipalities have received extra resources from the national government. It was agreed in the Administrative Consultation that €20 million will be made available in both 2019 and 2020 for the support and guidance of these newcomers.

Mandatory participation in civic orientation programmes for new Turkish migrants

As of 2011, Turkish newcomers were exempt from mandatory participation in integration programmes as this was considered unfitting with the EU-Turkey Association Agreement. However, jurisprudence following from a European Court of Justice ruling in 2013 demonstrated that obligatory integration can be justified by pressing reasons regarding general interest. On 4 February 2020, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment decided to reinstall the mandatory participation in civic orientation programmes for Turkish newcomers to improve their integration in the Dutch society.¹⁷⁹ The integration obligation has been in force since 1 May 2020 for Turkish newcomers with asylum status and their family members. From 1 January 2022, Turkish family migrants with Turkish nationality who want to settle in the Netherlands must first pass the basic integration exam abroad in Turkey.¹⁸⁰ In addition, as of 1 January 2025, Turkish citizens must submit a civic integration diploma when applying for a permanent residence permit in the Netherlands. This requirement also applies to applications for a long-term EU resident permit.¹⁸¹

Changes made to the Civic Integration Decree (Besluit Inburgering)

In 2020, several changes to the civic integration obligations were announced by the Dutch cabinet.¹⁸² Firstly, in the Civic Integration Decree it has been amended that persons obliged to participate in the civic integration programme as self-employed persons no longer have to take the 'Orientation on the Dutch labour market' exam (ONA). A similar exception was made for students who have successfully completed an mbo-1 programme; they are also exempted from the ONA exam component. Secondly, the grounds to exempt illiterate newcomers from civic integration requirements were eased. Before this change, illiterate migrants participating in integration courses would have needed to complete at least 600 hours of integration courses before they could receive an exemption for passing the integration exam based on their proven effort.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ Parliamentary Letter of 15 February 2019 'Tussenstand veranderingen Inburgering'.

¹⁷⁷ If it turns out that the level of B1 is too ambitious for the candidates, they can fall back to a lower level (A2).

¹⁷⁸ <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-32824-245.html>.

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/02/04/inburgering-turkse-nieuwkomers>.

¹⁸⁰ <https://ind.nl/nl/nieuws/inburgeringsplicht-turkse-nieuwkomers-vanaf-1-januari-2022>.

¹⁸¹ <https://ind.nl/nl/nieuws/turken-hebben-inburgeringsdiploma-nodig-voor-verblijf-onbepaalde-tijd>

¹⁸² Official notice of 16 September 2020 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment to change the current civic integration act on the 1st of October 2020.

¹⁸³ The Minister of Social Affairs and Employment indicated that analphabetic migrants experienced this as a challenge, as only 700 hours of courses were financed by a loan.

After this policy change, migrants can apply for an exemption after 600 hours of any type of course being completed – be that integration or literacy courses.

6.2.1 Participation declaration

In 2015, the Dutch government agreed on the introduction of a so-called participation declaration (*participatieverklaring*) to raise awareness among newly arrived immigrants on both the written and unwritten rules prevailing in Dutch society.¹⁸⁴ The participation declaration must be signed by all newly arrived immigrants in the Netherlands who are obliged to pass a civic integration exam. These are asylum migrants, but also migrants coming to the Netherlands for family formation or family reunification. The participation declaration also obliges the candidates to participate in an introduction on Dutch core values, offered by the municipality.

The introduction of this measure followed a comprehensive pilot phase, in which several policy measures were tested and evaluated. Eventually, the participation declaration became an integral part of the mandatory civic integration exam in the Netherlands. The amendment to the Law on civic integration was adopted by Parliament in July 2017. As of 1 October 2017, the participation declaration became mandatory for all newcomers. This declaration will also be part of the new civic integration law since 2022.

6.2.2 Extension of the pre-civic integration programme

In 2016, several initiatives have been taken to improve the supply of programmes at reception centres. For example, language education has been extended from 81 hours to 121 hours. Other pre-civic integration programme modules, including Knowledge of Dutch Society (*Kennis van de Nederlandse Samenleving*, KNS) and individual coaching, also have been expanded. Moreover, the Orientation in the Dutch Labour Market module (ONA) was added to the pre-civic integration programme in 2016. In addition, it was agreed with COA that official (NT2) language lessons provided at reception centres will be offered not only to beneficiaries of international protection, but also to asylum seekers with a likely positive decision on their asylum application. The latter category includes refugees from Syria and Eritrea. This measure has come into force in 2017.¹⁸⁵

6.2.3 Renewed final attainment levels for the civic integration examination

The final attainment levels of the Knowledge of Dutch Society (*Kennis van de Nederlandse Maatschappij*, KNM) part of the civic integration examination were renewed on 16 May 2024.¹⁸⁶ The new final attainment levels became applicable on 1 July 2025. While the focus used to be on promoting desirable conduct, the new attainment targets focus on two other objectives:

- Developing knowledge and skills that support newcomers in finding their way in Dutch society.
- Learning customary etiquette, standards and values within Dutch society, with an emphasis on the issues of the rule of law and democracy.

6.3 Laws and policies to improve labour market participation of migrants

The municipal labour market policy offers opportunities, in addition to the civic integration measures, to make an offer to newcomers in the context of rapid labour market introduction. Ideally, integration and participation are tackled simultaneously and in conjunction.¹⁸⁷

The combination of language learning and participation through (paid or unpaid) work is a central measure of the Civic Integration Act of 2021.¹⁸⁸ Municipalities face a puzzle they must solve in order to organise participation through work in addition to language learning. After evaluating the implementation of

¹⁸⁴ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, News item 'Participatieverklaring verplicht onderdeel inburgeringsexamen', officially published by the Dutch government on 8 July 2016.

¹⁸⁵ Parliamentary Papers II, 2015-2016, 34334 no. 23. Onderwijs aan vreemdelingen; Brief regering; Taalles aan asielzoekers.

¹⁸⁶ Staatscourant, nr. 15802, 16 May 2024.

¹⁸⁷ Gruijter, M. de e.a. (2021) Monitor gemeentelijk beleid arbeidstoeleiding en inburgering statushouders 2021. Utrecht, KIS/Divosa, table 13.3.

¹⁸⁸ KIS-Monitor 2024. Gemeentelijk beleid arbeidstoeleiding en inburgering statushouders en gezinsmigranten.

the first phase of the Civic Integration Act of 2021, several improvements have been made.¹⁸⁹ Recently, the government has introduced a reimbursement of travel expenses for beneficiaries of international protection who have already started their integration programme in a reception centre in 2024.

Other new policies to improve integration on the labour market are project-based, with several pilots and subsidies:

- At the beginning of 2024, 5 municipalities and regions launched a pilot to offer paid employment immediately to beneficiaries of international protection who settle in their municipality.¹⁹⁰
- The subsidy scheme 'Support for employers who employ beneficiaries of international protection' (*Subsidie Ondersteuning Werkgevers inzet Statushouders; SOWIS*) was published on 1 July 2024.¹⁹¹ This scheme offers financial compensation to employers who provide extra guidance to beneficiaries of international protection in the workplace. The aim of this guidance is to reduce language and cultural differences and promote integration.
- In 2024, a subsidy to the 'It Starts with Language' (*Het Begint met Taal*) foundation was issued, to set up the 'Language Buddies at Work' programme. The aim of this programme is to enable a specially trained employee to provide supervision in the workplace to beneficiaries of international protection and other non-native speakers, so that they learn Dutch and become more familiar with the company's culture.
- Furthermore, a programme named 'Further Integration into the Labour Market' (VIA) has been developed to improve the position in the labour market of Dutch residents with a migration background. Within this programme, several pilot projects are carried out aimed at developing evidence based tools for employers which they can use to develop and implement effective diversity policies. The programme has been renewed with a new agenda for 2025 to 2028.¹⁹²

Box 6.1 Action Agenda for Integration and the Open and Free Society

On 7 February 2025, the Schoof I cabinet announced the 'Action Agenda for Integration and the Open and Free Society'.¹⁹³ On 4 July 2025, an update of the Action Agenda was sent to the parliament, with various announced actions.¹⁹⁴ These actions aim at (1) asylum seekers starting to work; (2) the creation of entry-level jobs; (3) guidance towards work for female status holders; (4) language requirements on social benefits; (5) support for employers; (6) equal opportunities in the labour market; and (7) more newcomers participating in the labour market. The programme will continue until 2030.

6.4 Policies on citizenship

The Dutch Nationality Act was amended in 2021 to provide a basis for testing against the principle of proportionality in the event of automatic loss of Dutch citizenship. This amendment came into effect on 1 April 2022. In addition, the period for automatic loss of Dutch citizenship has been extended from ten to thirteen years.¹⁹⁵

Determination of statelessness

On 31 May 2022, the Dutch House of Representatives passed a bill on the procedure to determine statelessness, followed by the adoption of the bill by the Senate on 6 June 2023. The law entered into effect on 1 October 2023.¹⁹⁶ This law allows someone who is not recognised as a national by any state and who

¹⁸⁹ Kamerbrief Uitvoeringsbrief inburgering, 24 June 2024.

¹⁹⁰ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2024/01/29/gemeenten-starten-proef-om-statushouders-direct-aan-werk-te-helpen>

¹⁹¹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/regelingen/2024/06/01/subsidieregeling-ondersteuning-werkgevers-inzet-status-houders-sowis>

¹⁹² Werkagenda Voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt (VIA). <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2025/03/25/werk-agenda-voor-een-inclusieve-arbeidsmarkt-via>

¹⁹³ Kamerbrief Actieagenda Integratie en de Open en Vrije Samenleving, 7 February 2025

¹⁹⁴ Kamerbrief Voortgang Actieagenda Integratie en de Open en Vrije Samenleving, 4 July 2025.

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/brochures/2017/01/03/nederlandse-nationaliteit-verliezen>.

¹⁹⁶ https://www.eerstekamer.nl/behandeling/20230713/publicatie_inwerkingtreding/document3/f=/vm4pd1cuy1z7.pdf.

‘thereby has an immediate interest and has his domicile or habitual residence in the Netherlands’ to submit an application to the district court of the Hague for a determination of statelessness. Established statelessness gives these people who legally reside in the Netherlands more rights. For example, people who register their statelessness in the Municipal Personal Records Database (BRP) can apply for a travel document. They can also become Dutch citizens through a more flexible scheme. These immigrants can apply for Dutch nationality after three years of legal residence (and at a lower cost).¹⁹⁷

In the Dutch Nationality Act a provision regarding statelessness was also included, allowing stateless children born in the (Kingdom of the) Netherlands but without lawful residence, to obtain the Dutch nationality if they fulfil certain conditions, using a specially designed procedure.¹⁹⁸

Announced changes to citizenship policy

The government programme of 13 September 2024 announced a more restrictive citizenship legislation. The cabinet intended to increase the required level of Dutch to B1 as well as increase the required length of the period of residence in the Netherlands before a person can apply from five to ten years. These proposals have not yet been discussed or adopted in the Dutch Parliament.

6.5 Policies to combat discrimination

In 2021, a National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism (NCDR) was appointed. The NCDR was appointed for a period of three years, with the main task of drawing up a multi-year national programme with clear targets and full attention to signals from society. The first national programme was presented in September 2022, the second national programme was presented in December 2023. In addition, several measures were taken in the area of anti-discrimination, as the Dutch government is committed to strengthening the awareness of effects of discrimination and discriminatory behaviour in governmental organisations. These measures include courses offered to different categories of government employees.

On 14 June 2024, the mandate of the National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism (NCDR) was extended until 1 January 2026 in order to leave a decision on renewal of the period to the new cabinet. In April 2025, the Schoof I cabinet decided to extend the national coordinator until 2029.¹⁹⁹ This extension comes, however, with changes to the role of the NCDR. The role of the coordinator will be limited to providing advice. The coordinator will no longer be expected to develop a national program against discrimination and racism.

6.5.1 National Actions Plans to combat labour market discrimination

There are specific action plans to combat labour market discrimination (*Actieplan Arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie*, introduced in 2014 and updated and continued in 2018-2021 and in 2022-2025).²⁰⁰ The government’s approach consists of generic anti-discrimination measures aimed at all areas of discrimination, supplemented with measures in certain specific areas aimed towards a specific type of discrimination or a specific group. Each year progress reports are published outlining actions undertaken by the government.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/nederlandse-nationaliteit/staatloosheid>.

¹⁹⁸ Staatsblad 2023 229.

¹⁹⁹ Parliamentary Letter of 25 April 2025 *Verlenging Nationaal Coördinator tegen Discriminatie en Racisme*.

²⁰⁰ Ministerie BZK (2018), kabinetsaankpak van discriminatie 26 April 2018, ref. 2018-00000255955.

²⁰¹ Information is based on: Parliamentary Papers II 2019-2020, 30 950, no. 185 Kabinetsaankpak van discriminatie, 15 juni 2020 and the Parliamentary Papers of 8 February 2019. Voortgang kabinetsaankpak van discriminatie.

6.5.2 Specific areas of discrimination in the labour market

In July 2022, the Action Plan Labour Market Discrimination 2022-2025 was submitted to the House of Representatives. In this plan special attention is paid to (lack of) equal pay, discrimination in the recruitment and job seeking sector and pregnancy discrimination.²⁰²

Another intended measure aimed at combatting discrimination in the labour market was the bill officially referred to as the Supervision on equal opportunities in recruitment and selection Act (*Wet toezicht gelijke kansen bij werving en selectie*). This bill was intended to facilitate equal opportunity employment by forcing employers and intermediaries (such as employment agencies) to consider unconscious bias in recruitment and selection procedures. After an amendment was made to the bill, relating to the inclusion of an obligation to report discriminatory requests by organisations to employment agencies, it was sent to the House of Representatives in December 2022. The amended proposal was passed by the House of Representatives on 14 March 2023. The proposed bill was, however, rejected by the Senate on 26 March 2024.²⁰³

In addition, in 2021 a State Commission in 2021 was set up for a period of four years. The commission is tasked with providing continuous insight into discrimination in government and with coming up with concrete proposals for improvement.²⁰⁴ The commission also investigates discrimination and ethnic profiling in and by the government. The work programme of the State Commission was presented to the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on 2 February 2023.²⁰⁵

6.5.3 Preventing discrimination within governmental organisations²⁰⁶

In addition, several measures took place in the area of anti-discrimination, as the Dutch government is committed to strengthening the awareness of effects of discrimination and discriminatory behaviour in governmental organisations. The driver of these developments was the Dutch childcare benefits affair (the so-called *kinderopvangtoeslagaffaire*). This affair concerned false allegations of fraud made by the Tax and Customs Administration while attempting to regulate the distribution of childcare benefits. The procedures used to select and investigate cases in which suspicions arose, led to parents without the Dutch nationality being more likely to be investigated by the Tax and Customs Administration.

On 26 October 2021, the Minister of Interior Affairs and the Minister of Finance reported on the progress made on this topic. In order to strengthen the awareness of effects of discrimination and discriminatory behaviour in governmental organisations, more trainings will be offered on this topic by the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. Moreover, more trainings on diversity and inclusion are offered throughout Dutch governmental organisations. In addition, instruments against discriminatory practices are being developed (e.g. the Code Good Digital Public Administration).²⁰⁷

6.6 Labour market participation of persons with a migration background

The labour market participation of persons born outside Europe is lower than that of persons born in the Netherlands (figure 6.1). Differences in participation between those born in the Netherlands and the rest of Europe are relatively small. For all mentioned groups, there have been no strong fluctuations in participation in recent years.

²⁰² Parliamentary Papers I, 2022-2023, 29544, no. 1119. Actieplan Arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie 2022-2025.

Parliamentary Papers I, 2017-2018, 29544, no. 834. Hoofdpijnen actieplan Arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie 2018-2021.

²⁰³ [Wet toezicht gelijke kansen bij werving en selectie \(35.673\) - Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal](#).

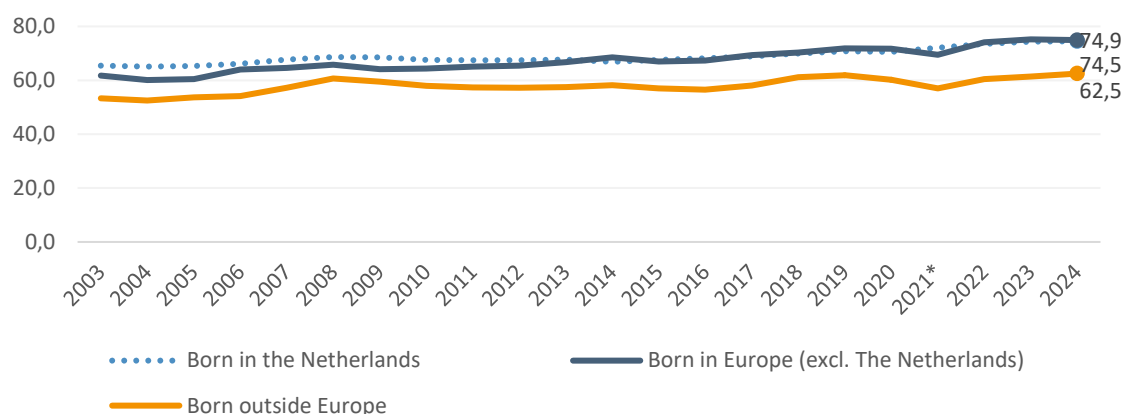
²⁰⁴ The cabinet has announced the State Committee at the request of Parliament, also in response to the report 'Unprecedented injustice' by the parliamentary questioning committee on Childcare Allowance.

²⁰⁵ <https://www.staatscommissietegendiscriminatieenracisme.nl/actueel/nieuws/2023/02/02/publicatie-werkprogramma>.

²⁰⁶ See, in more detail, EMN Annual report 2021. Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands. The Hague, IND, October 2022, p. 40.

²⁰⁷ Parliamentary Papers II, 2021-2022, 26643, no. 765.

Figure 6.1 Development in labour market participation¹ of persons born in the Netherlands or abroad in percentages, 2004-2024



¹ Percentage of net labour market participation of the population between 15-74 years of age.

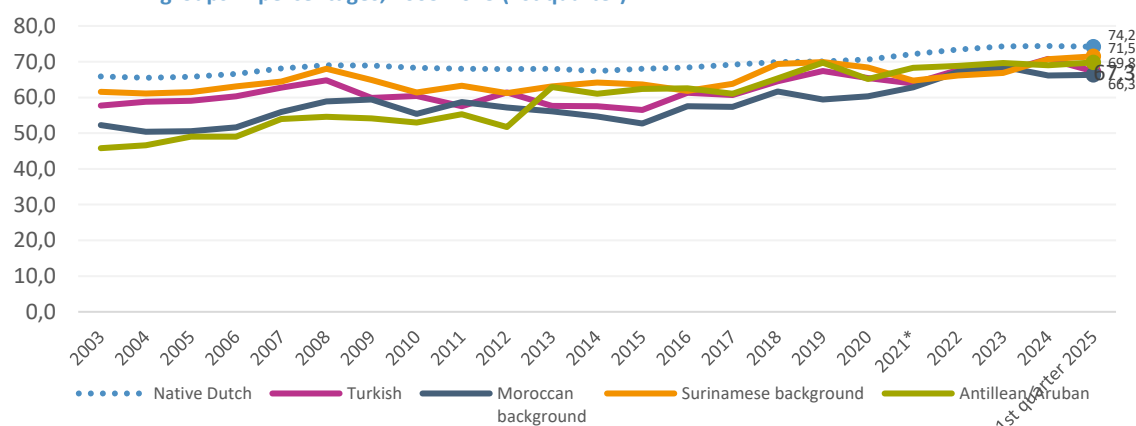
* The figures from 2021 and onwards cannot simply be compared with the percentages of 2003-2020 due to changes in the research design of the EBB. For the years 2013 to 2020, a recalculation was carried out to match the results from 2021 as closely as possible. For the years 2003 to 2012, this recalculation was not carried out.

Source: Statistics Netherlands, *Kernindicatoren 2025*

6.6.1 Trends in participation by country of origin

Differences in labour market participation between the largest groups with a migration background have become less pronounced over the years. Figure 6.2 shows that the labour market participation increased over the years for all groups with a migration background. The labour market participation among people with a Turkish background is slightly higher than among those with a Surinamese, Antillean/Aruban and Moroccan background.

Figure 6.2 Development of labour market participation by country of origin of the four largest migrant groups in percentages, 2003-2025 (1st quarter)



* The figures from 2021 and onwards cannot simply be compared with the percentages of 2003-2020 due to changes in the research design of the EBB. For the years 2013 to 2020, a recalculation was carried out to match the results from 2021 as closely as possible. For the years 2003 to 2012, this recalculation was not carried out.

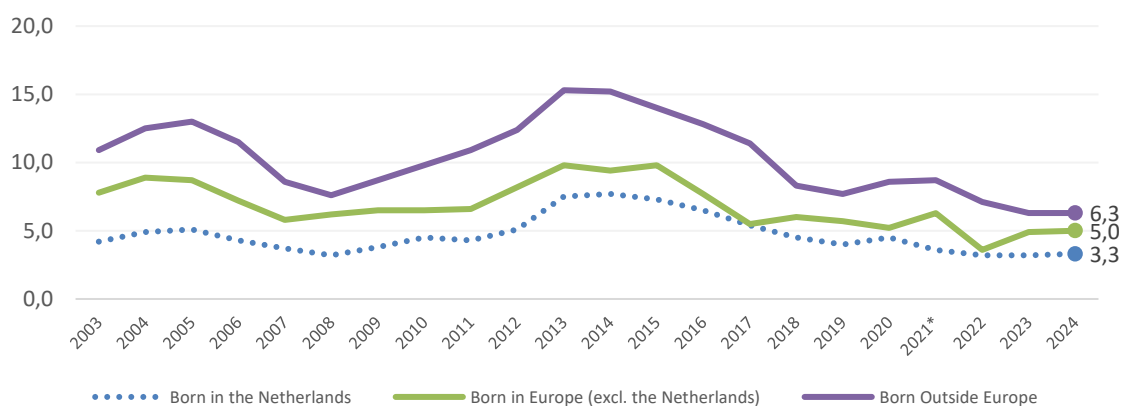
Source: Statistics Netherlands, online statistics (2025)

6.7 Unemployment of persons with a migration background

Viewed over a longer period, it becomes clear that changes in unemployment among persons born outside Europe are strongly related to overall fluctuations in employment (figure 6.3). Both the economic crisis of 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 strongly affected the level of unemployment among

persons born outside Europe. In 2024, persons born outside Europe were almost twice as likely to be unemployed than persons born in the Netherlands.

Figure 6.3 Developments in unemployment rates of persons born in the Netherlands or abroad in percentages, 2004-2024



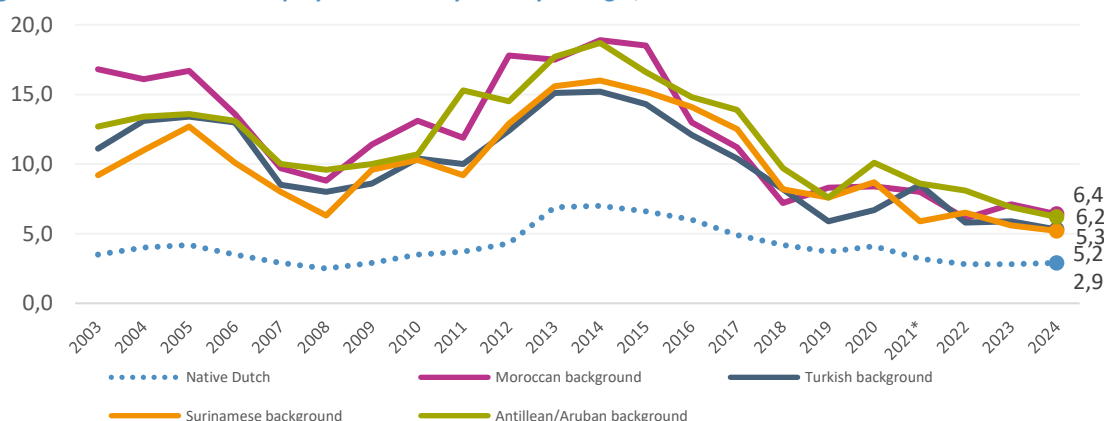
! The figures from 2021 and onwards cannot simply be compared with the percentages of 2003-2020 due to changes in the research design of the EBB. For the years 2013 to 2020, a recalculation was carried out to match the results from 2021 as closely as possible. For the years 2003 to 2012, this recalculation was not carried out.

Source: Statistics Netherlands, *Kernindicatoren 2024*

6.7.1 Trends by country of origin

All four groups with a migration background appear to be vulnerable to situations of stagnating employment growth (figure 6.4). These large fluctuations in unemployment indicate a vulnerable labour market position. In 2024, unemployment rates of people with a migration background are lowest among people with a Turkish and Surinamese background and highest among those with a Moroccan or Antillean/Aruban background.

Figure 6.4 Absolute unemployment rates by country of origin, 2003-2024



The figures from 2021 and onwards cannot simply be compared with the percentages of 2003-2020 due to changes in the research design of the EBB. For the years 2013 to 2020, a recalculation was carried out to match the results from 2021 as closely as possible. For the years 2003 to 2012, this recalculation was not carried out.

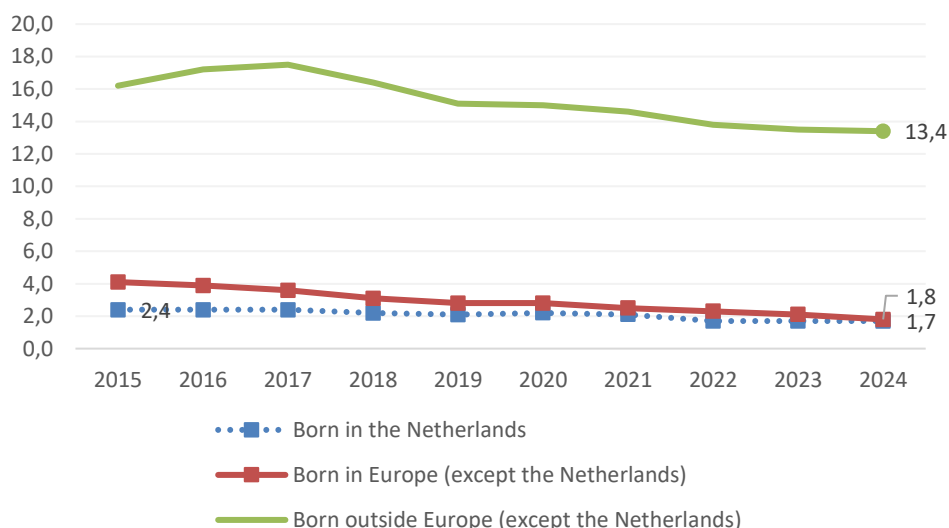
Source: Statistics Netherlands, *Kernindicatoren 2025*

6.8 Social assistance

People born outside Europe are almost eight times as likely to receive social assistance benefits than those born in the Netherlands (figure 6.5). The dependence on social assistance is at a comparably low

level for those born in the Netherlands and the rest of Europe. There have been no major changes in this regard in recent years.

Figure 6.5 Social assistance of persons born in the Netherlands or abroad in percentages, 2015-2024

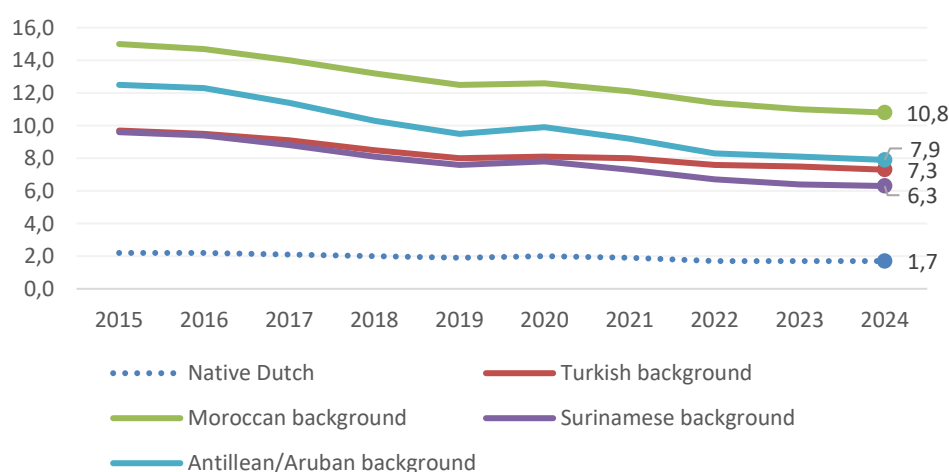


Source: Statistics Netherlands, *Kernindicatoren 2025*

6.8.1 Trends by country of origin

People with a migration background are (roughly) between four and seven times more likely to receive social assistance benefits than people with a native Dutch background (figure 6.6). However, differences in social assistance dependency have narrowed since 2015. In 2024, the use of social assistance among people with a migration background was highest among people with a Moroccan background, with a dependency rate of around 11%, and lowest among people with a Surinamese background, with a dependency rate of about 6%.

Figure 6.6 Social assistance benefits classified by country of origin in percentages, 2015-2024



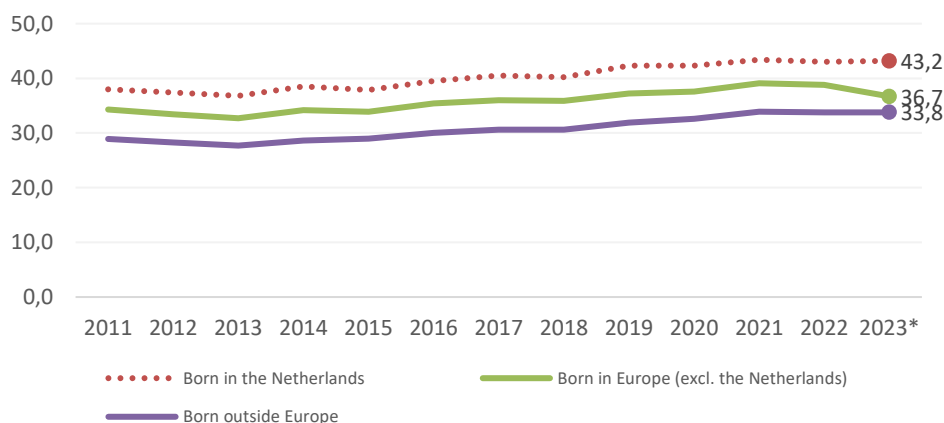
Source: Statistics Netherlands, *Kernindicatoren 2025*

6.9 Income

With respect to average annual income levels of persons of 15 years and older, the financial situation of those born outside the Netherlands is relatively unfavourable (figure 6.7). This is especially true for those born outside Europe. The difference in average annual income of those born in the Netherlands

and those born outside Europe is € 9,000. However, there has also been a significant increase in the average hourly wage among these migrants over the past decade.²⁰⁸

Figure 6.7 Average standardised income (x € 1,000) of persons of 15 years or older born in the Netherlands or abroad in percentages, 2011-2023



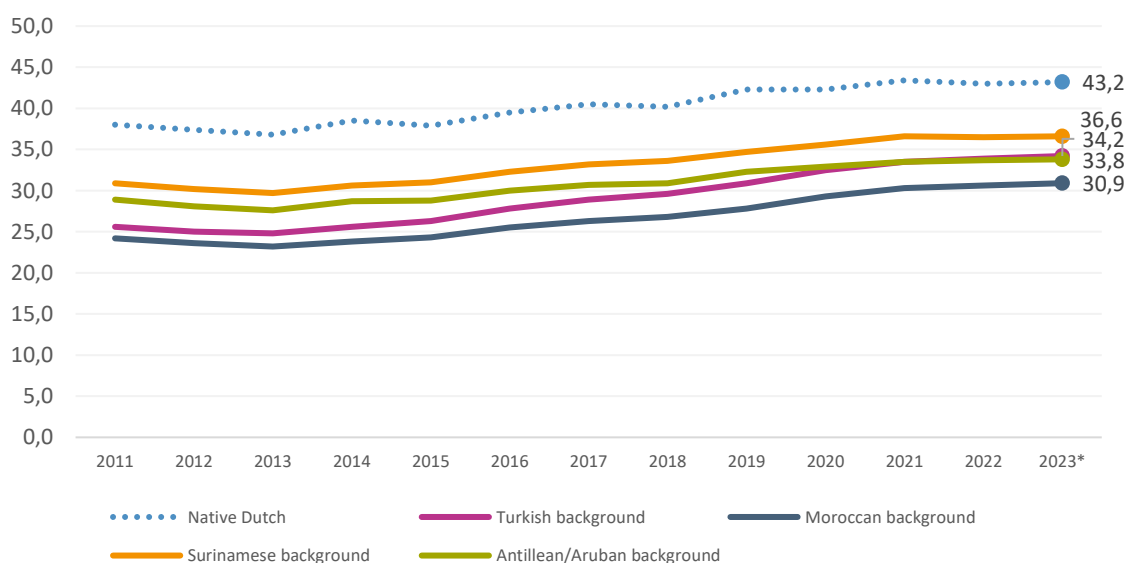
Source: Statistics Netherlands, *Kernindicatoren 2025*

*Data of 2023 are provisional.

6.9.1 Trends by country of origin

Figure 6.8 shows the income trends of persons of 15 years or older by country of origin from 2011 to 2023. Of the presented groups with a migration background, persons with a Surinamese background reveal the most favourable income situation. The income situation is particularly unfavourable for people with a Moroccan background.

Figure 6.8 Income trends of persons of 15 years or older (x € 1,000) by country of origin in percentages, 2011-2023



Source: Statistics Netherlands, *Kernindicatoren 2025*

*Data of 2023 are provisional.

²⁰⁸ See more in detail: Gielen, M. e.a. (2021) *Monitor gelijke kansen en evenredige posities op de arbeidsmarkt, ongeacht migratieachtergrond (eerste editie)*. Utrecht, Significat, Figures 20 and 21.

6.10 The social position of refugees: labour market participation and social assistance

6.10.1 Labour market participation

A cohort analysis by Statistics Netherlands shows that the labour participation of refugees who were granted political asylum in the Netherlands in 2014 is steadily increasing.²⁰⁹ It is shown that during the first years of residence in the Netherlands, net participation rates were very low (in 2015: a little more than 10%), while these rates have increased over the past nine years (in 2024: about 55%), although the COVID-19 crisis had a negative effect on the increase. Most refugees with employment in the Netherlands work part-time (65%) and with a temporary contract (73%).

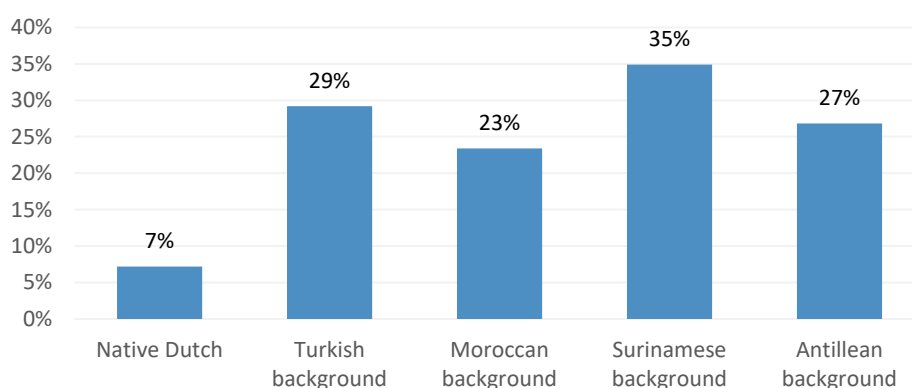
6.10.2 Social assistance

The cohort analysis by Statistics Netherlands (2024) also reveals that the dependency rates on social assistance benefits decrease with the length of stay in the Netherlands. During the first year upon arrival in the Netherlands, the dependence on social assistance was still very high (in 2015: about 90%), while in 2024 approximately 31% of these refugees were receiving social assistance as the main source of income.

6.11 Discrimination

Research indicates that in 2021 more than a tenth (11%) of all residents in the Netherlands sometimes experienced discrimination.²¹⁰ Discrimination on the basis of age, gender and ethnicity were most common. Figure 6.9 shows that in the Netherlands persons with a migration background experienced three to five times as much discrimination as native Dutch people.

Figure 6.9 Experienced discrimination during the past 12 months by country of origin in percentages, 2023



Source: Statistics Netherlands, *Ervaren discriminatie in Nederland* (2024)

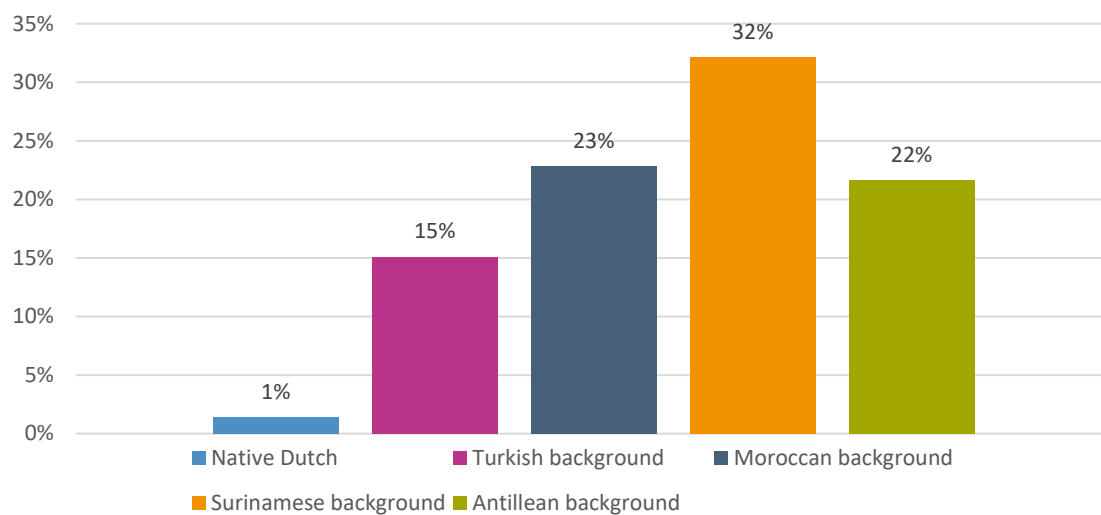
6.11.1 Discrimination because of race or skin colour

As shown in figure 6.10, the percentage of experienced discrimination because of race or skin colour in 2023 was high among those with a migration background who were born in the Netherlands. People with a Surinamese background experienced the highest amount of discrimination, with almost every third person with a Surinamese background experiencing discrimination because of race or skin colour.

²⁰⁹ Statistics Netherlands (2025) *Asiel en integratie 2025. Cohortonderzoek asielzoekers en statushouders*. The Hague, Statistics Netherlands.

²¹⁰ Akkermans, M & R. Kloosterman (2022) *Gediscrimineerd gevoeld?* Den Haag, Statistics Netherlands.

Figure 6.10 Experienced discrimination because of race or skin colour during the past 12 months country of origin



Source: Statistics Netherlands, *Ervaren discriminatie in Nederland* (2024)



Ukrainian refugees

7

7 Ukrainian refugees

In this chapter we discuss some aspects of the arrival of Ukrainian displaced persons in the Netherlands. First, the policy context is discussed. Subsequently, the position of these displaced persons on the labour market is described. Finally, we identify a number of challenges and bottlenecks, as they reach us through politics, the media and some small-scale studies.

7.1 Main findings

- Around 125,000 refugees from Ukraine had been registered in Dutch municipalities by mid 2025. In June 2025, the number of registered Ukrainians was about 390 on a weekly basis.
- As of mid-2024, 12,300 students of Ukrainian nationality were enrolled in primary education institutions and 8,400 Ukrainians participated in secondary education.
- Of the approximately 92,000 Ukrainian refugees between the ages of 15 and 65 who were staying in the Netherlands on 1 November 2024, 59% had paid work as an employee. This amounts to almost 54,500 people.
- By the end of 2024, most working Ukrainian refugees were employed as agency workers (38%), on-call workers (24%) or had other temporary employment contracts (29%).
- At the same time, most working Ukrainian refugees were employed in the business services sector (50%), also including temporary employment agencies. In addition to business services, a large number of Ukrainian refugees also worked in the trade, transport and the hospitality sector (32%).
- Short-term problems are particularly related to insufficient reception capacity for newly arrived Ukrainians.
- Problems that are related to a longer stay of Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands particularly concern insufficient suitable housing, language problems and difficulties in finding work at a higher qualification level.

7.2 Number of refugees and settlement patterns

The number of registrations of persons with Ukrainian nationality is published once a week. Accordingly, around 125,000 refugees from Ukraine had been registered in Dutch municipalities by mid-2025 (see figure 7.1).²¹¹ Although the influx of Ukrainians is still large, the number of Ukrainians arriving in the Netherlands on a weekly basis has declined sharply when compared to the first few months. In the period between mid-March and the beginning of April 2022 the number of newly registered Ukrainians increased by more than 6,000 persons per week. In June 2025, the number of newly registered Ukrainians was about 390 on a weekly basis. In addition, Ukrainian refugees mainly seek refuge in the large cities of the Netherlands. Before the war, Amsterdam and The Hague already had large communities of Ukrainians.

According to a study published by the Clingendael Institute (2022), Ukrainian refugees are not expected to return to their country of origin soon.²¹² According to a study (2024) within the longitudinal WODC research project, at around two thirds of the Ukrainian refugees would like to stay in the Netherlands, at least for the time being.²¹³ Of the 7 million Ukrainians who have fled their country so far, this institute assumes that a total of 210,000 refugees will eventually end up in the Netherlands. A more recently published report on behalf of the European Commission again expressed the expectation that it is unlikely that Ukrainians will return to their country of origin in the short term.²¹⁴

²¹¹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/opvang-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne/cijfers-opvang-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne-in-nederland>.

²¹² Clingendael (2022) Opvang van Oekraïners in Nederland: een kwestie van lange adem. Clingendael Alert. The Hague, Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations, October 2022.

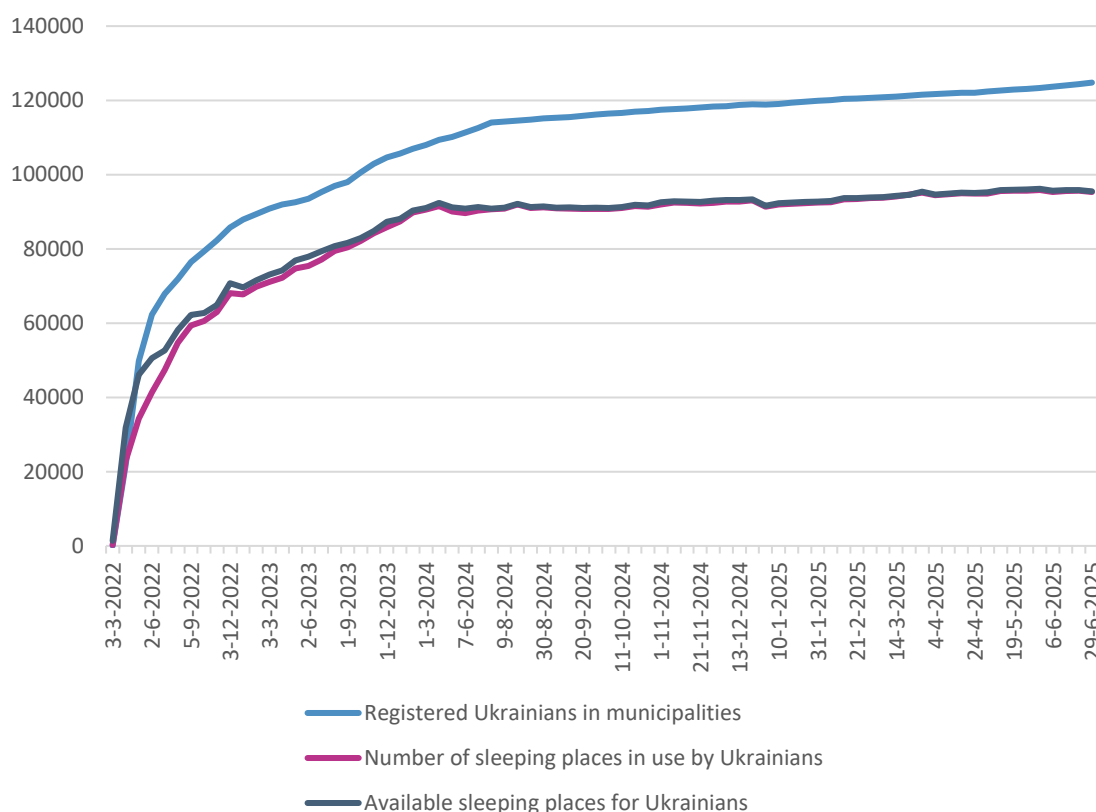
²¹³ [Onderzoeksprogramma Oekraïense vluchtelingen in Nederland. Den Haag, WODC.](https://onderzoeksprogramma-oekraïense-vluchtelingen-in-nederland-den-haag-wodc)

²¹⁴ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2023/07/07/tk-bijlage-l-asscher-integration-of-people-fleeing-ukraine-in-the-eu-final>.

7.3 Number of Ukrainians in the Netherlands prior to the refugee crisis

On 1 January 2022, according to Statistics Netherlands, 21,000 people of Ukrainian origin were officially registered in the Netherlands.²¹⁵ Ukrainians were most often found in the metropolitan areas of Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam. In addition, a large number of people with the Ukrainian nationality lived in student cities such as Eindhoven, Groningen, and Maastricht. On the reference date mentioned, two thirds of the Ukrainian migrants in the Netherlands were women. According to Statistics Netherlands, many of these female migrants have come to the Netherlands within the framework of family formation. Men with the Ukrainian nationality who migrated to the Netherlands mainly came to the Netherlands for work. Of the Ukrainian immigrants who came to the Netherlands in 2017, more than 70% was still residing in this country three years later.²¹⁶

Figure 7.1 Registered Ukrainians, shelters in use and available shelters for Ukrainians (March 2022-June 2025)



Source: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/opvang-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne/cijfers-opvang-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne-in-nederland>

7.4 The legal framework

The Temporary Protection Directive is an exceptional procedure that provides immediate and temporary protection in the event of an imminent mass influx of displaced persons, in particular where there is a risk that the existing asylum system will not be able to cope with this influx.²¹⁷ With the Implementing Decision of 4 March 2022 (EU) 2022/382, the Council of the European Union activated the Temporary

²¹⁵ CBS (17 maart 2022) 21 duizend inwoners met Oekraïense herkomst. CBS, online publication.

²¹⁶ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/opvang-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne/cijfers-opvang-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne-in-nederland>.

²¹⁷ Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for the provision of temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and measures to promote a balance between the efforts of Member States to receive and bear the consequences of the reception of these persons.

Protection Directive for the first time in its existence. In the Netherlands, the Directive was transposed in 2004.²¹⁸

The following target groups fall under the Temporary Protection Directive:

- persons of Ukrainian nationality who stayed in Ukraine on 23 February 2022, or who fled Ukraine after 27 November 2021 because of increased tensions, or who were in the territory of the EU on or after 27 November 2021.
- stateless persons or third-country nationals with a nationality other than Ukrainian, who enjoyed international protection or equivalent national protection in Ukraine on 23 February 2022, or who had a (different) valid Ukrainian residence permit on 23 February 2022.
- family members of the aforementioned persons, i.e., marriage partners or unmarried partners with whom a permanent relationship is maintained, minor unmarried children and other close relatives who lived with the family and who are wholly or largely dependent.

The rights granted to displaced persons from Ukraine in the context of temporary protection correspond to those provided to asylum seekers and relate in particular to reception, living allowances²¹⁹, education and medical assistance. In addition, displaced persons from Ukraine (unlike asylum seekers) are offered immediate access to the Dutch labour market. They do not need a work permit but their employer needs to register with UWV. The options and facilities in the context of participation in education and the labour market are discussed in more detail below.

Prolongation of the Temporary Protection Directive

The Temporary Protection Directive (EU/2001/55) stipulates that EU Member States must grant temporary protection to displaced persons and facilitate their arrival. The aim of the directive is to provide assistance to people who are fleeing without overloading the asylum systems in the EU Member States. The European Council of Ministers, acting on a proposal from the European Commission, determines under what circumstances the Temporary Protection Directive enters into force.²²⁰ After the Temporary Protection Directive was activated on 4 March 2022, EU Member States agreed in the autumn 2023 to extend the Directive until 4 March 2025.²²¹ In June 2024, the EU Commission decided to extend this Directive to 4 March 2026.²²² This extension has now been followed by a further prolongation until 4 March 2027.²²³

Temporary law on the reception of displaced Ukrainians

The Temporary Act on the Reception of Displaced Persons from Ukraine (*Tijdelijke wet opvang ontheemden Oekraïne*, TWOO) entered into force on 27 June 2024.²²⁴ This Act replaces several temporary emergency provisions (Articles 2c and 4) of the Population Transfer Act (*Wet verplaatsing bevolking*, Wvb) by providing a more detailed legal basis for the reception of Ukrainian displaced persons.²²⁵ This includes responsibility for medical care, for continuing the Funding Scheme for the Reception of Displaced Persons from Ukraine and for the processing of personal data. The law places the responsibility for these

²¹⁸ Temporary protection was implemented by law in the Netherlands on 16 December 2004. It is indicated that displaced persons are entitled to all facilities and benefits in kind to which asylum seekers are entitled. Anyone with temporary protection does not have to leave the Netherlands and cannot be deported.

²¹⁹ Refugees receive the living allowance from the municipality where they are registered. Since 1 February 2023 the amount per person depends on the size of the family. An individual adult or unaccompanied minor receives €60,71 per month for food and other personal items as well as €242,48 for food. For larger families the amounts per person are lower. Alternatively, municipalities can also provide food in kind, instead of the financial allowance for food. Refugees who live with a host family receive an extra allowance of €80,91 per month in addition to the living allowance. This living allowance scheme has been adjusted a few times, most recently on 1 October 2023 to adjust for inflation. Refugees who rent or buy their own accommodation instead of using government shelter are not eligible for the allowance. As of late 2023 the government is also exploring possibilities to establish the payment of a financial contribution for their shelter by displaced people from Ukraine, but this has not yet been implemented; see https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/brieven_regering/detail?id=2023Z20490&did=2023D50199.

²²⁰ EMN Netherlands (2025) *Migratie en asiel in Nederland. Jaaroverzicht 2024*. The Hague, July 2025, page. 33.

²²¹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2023/09/28/richtlijn-tijdelijke-bescherming-voor-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne-verlengd-tot-4-maart-2025>.

²²² EUR-Lex - 52024PC0253 - EN - EUR-Lex.

²²³ EUR-Lex - 52025PC0650 - EN - EUR-Lex.

²²⁴ https://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/36394_tijdelijke_wet_opvang.

²²⁵ EMN Netherlands (2025) *Migratie en asiel in Nederland. Jaaroverzicht 2024*. The Hague, July 2025, page. 34-35.

tasks with the municipal executive board of mayor and aldermen. The TWOO does not introduce any additional or different tasks or powers compared to the previous emergency legal framework.

The procedure for registering and enrolling in a municipality

Displaced persons from Ukraine must register with the municipality upon arrival in the Netherlands to be eligible for the rights and benefits under the Temporary Protection Directive. From that moment on, displaced persons are assigned a shelter by the municipality. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) must then assess whether they are indeed eligible for temporary protection under the Temporary Protection Directive. If so, the applicant will receive a residence permit to prove this. Since 17 June 2024, the deadline for the IND to assess whether displaced persons from Ukraine are entitled to temporary protection has been set at four weeks.²²⁶ Previously, there was no specific deadline for the IND to carry out this check. By introducing this deadline, the assessment procedure can be expedited, providing clarity more quickly to both the applicant and the municipality. This measure also prevents the potential improper use of municipal shelters.²²⁷

The position of non-Ukrainians with a temporary residence permit in Ukraine

Initially, and in addition to Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians with a permanent residence permit in Ukraine, the Netherlands also offered protection to a third category: non-Ukrainians with a temporary residence permit in Ukraine. In February 2023, the Dutch government announced that the temporary protection for these non-Ukrainians will end in September 2023.²²⁸ This date had been postponed due to the intervention of the Council of State. However, the Council of State ruled on January 17, 2024, that the termination of temporary protection for this group is in accordance with the Temporary Protection Directive.²²⁹ Following this ruling, the State Secretary for Justice and Security ended temporary protection in the Netherlands for people from non-EU/EFTA countries who hold a temporary residence permit in Ukraine on 4 March 2024. They were given until 2 April 2024 to leave the Netherlands and return to their countries of origin.

However, this decision led to several lawsuits. On 29 March 2024, the Amsterdam District Court therefore asked the European Court of Justice how the Temporary Protection Directive should be interpreted. On 25 April 2024, the then-State Secretary of Justice and Security announced that, pending the ECJ's response, the rights associated with temporary protection would be provisionally retained. On 19 December 2024, the ECJ confirmed that Member States were permitted to terminate temporary protection for people from non-EU/EFTA countries with a temporary residence permit in Ukraine.²³⁰ Following this ruling, the Dutch government decided that, as of 4 September 2025, third-country nationals with a temporary right of residence in Ukraine would no longer be able to exercise the rights associated with temporary protection.²³¹

Access to education

The Temporary Protection Directive enables refugees from Ukraine to receive education in the EU countries to which they have emigrated. This also applies to the Netherlands. All children residing in the Netherlands have the right to education, whereby schools are obliged to facilitate an appropriate offer for these newcomers. As a consequence, Ukrainians can choose from two types of educational facilities: mainstream or specialised education and reception classes. In reception classes, students are offered Dutch as a second language. The Dutch government indicates that the latter category is most suitable for most children and young people from Ukraine.²³² At the end of April 2022, 7,300 Ukrainian children were enrolled in a Dutch school (65% in primary schools and 35% in secondary schools).²³³ As of mid-

²²⁶ <https://ind.nl/nl/nieuws/ander-aanmeldproces-oekraiense-vluchtelingen-verblijfsbewijs-binnen-4-weken-ophalen>.

²²⁷ EMN Netherlands (2025) *Migratie en asiel in Nederland. Jaaroverzicht 2024*. The Hague, July 2025, page. 35.

²²⁸ <https://ind.nl/nl/nieuws/tijdelijke-bescherming-voor-derdelanders-uit-oekraïne-loopt-door-tot-4-september-2023>.

²²⁹ <https://www.raadvanstate.nl/uitspraken/@141202/202305663-1-v2/>.

²³⁰ EMN Netherlands (2025) *Migratie en asiel in Nederland. Jaaroverzicht 2024*. The Hague, July 2025, page. 35-36.

²³¹ <https://ind.nl/nl/nieuws/bevriezingsmaatregel-derdelanders-oekraïne-stopt-op-4-september-2025>.

²³² <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/03/17/tk-brief-oekraïne>.

²³³ <https://www.nu.nl/spanningen-oekraïne/6196310/zeker-7300-oekraiense-kinderen-gaan-naar-school-in-nederland.html>.

2025, 13,200 students of Ukrainian nationality were enrolled in primary education institutions and 8,400 Ukrainians participated in secondary education.²³⁴

In addition, temporary educational facilities for children from Ukraine have been set up at various locations in the country. These facilities (TOV or temporary education provision) were introduced in 2022 shortly after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in order to quickly arrange education for Ukrainian children who came to the Netherlands. The temporary facilities are intended for both Ukrainian primary and secondary school pupils, and are set up in regions where there is insufficient space in the existing schools. Depending on the available capacity and teachers (also teachers from Ukraine), some of the subjects could be given in Ukrainian. Where possible, teachers from Ukraine are also deployed. Some children also take online classes from their Ukrainian schools. The government supported schools and teachers to set up these temporary facilities and to progress the children as soon as possible to mainstream education. The Law whose duration was limited at the time of enactment, ended in 2024 (so-called sunset clause).

With regard to higher education, in the Netherlands there are two kinds of tuition fees:

- statutory fees: for EU/ EEA nationality (for one bachelor and one master programme), and
- institutional fee: for non-EU/ EEA students.

The institutional fee is determined by the higher education institution itself, and more specifically, the institutions are empowered to reduce the institutional tuition fee up to the amount of the statutory fees. Students from the Ukraine, including the internationally displaced people (DPIs) fall under the the rules and costs that apply to students from outside the EU. In previous years, since the academic year 2022-2023, all institutions reduced the institutional fees.²³⁵ However, more recently, the number of higher education institutions with the generic measures concerning the reduced tuition fee for the Ukrainian students is decreased.²³⁶

The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (in Dutch: *Nuffic*) provides refugees, also including displaced persons from Ukraine, with an evaluation of foreign diplomas (as compared to Dutch diplomas) for free.

Access to the labour market

In order to offer displaced persons from Ukraine the opportunity to work in the Netherlands, an exemption from the work permit requirements came into effect on 1 April 2022.²³⁷ This exemption applies to anyone who falls under the Temporary Protection Directive and wishes to accept paid employment. To be able to work, the displaced person does need a citizen service number (BSN). Employers are also obliged to notify UWV two working days in advance. if they wish to employ people within the framework of the Temporary Protection Directive. Failure to comply with this new reporting obligation is subject to a fine under the Aliens Employment Act.

The Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) publishes figures about the scope and nature of reports from employers who employ displaced persons from Ukraine (see figure 7.2). Between March 2022 and June 2025, the total number of reports from employers who offer paid employment to employees from Ukraine was more than 191,956 (of which 33,230 in 2025).²³⁸ In June 2025, most of the reports have been made by temporary employment agencies (52%). This sector mainly offers work as production workers, cleaners and warehouse workers. A great number of reports were also made in agriculture and horticulture (14%), the hospitality industry (7%), the category 'other industry' (4%) and cleaning (3%). It is important to mention that these notifications do not relate to individual displaced people but to the

²³⁴ <https://informatieproducten.duo.rijkscloud.nl/public/nieuwkomers-oukraine/>.

²³⁵ <https://www.uaf.nl/nieuws/universiteiten-nemen-eerste-stap-en-verlagen-collegegeld-voor-gevluchte-studenten-uit-oukraine/>.

²³⁶ <https://www.nationaleonderwijsgids.nl/universiteit/nieuws/66470-robbert-dijkgraaf-vraagt-hoger-onderwijs-om-collegegeld-oukrainers-laag-te-houden.html>.

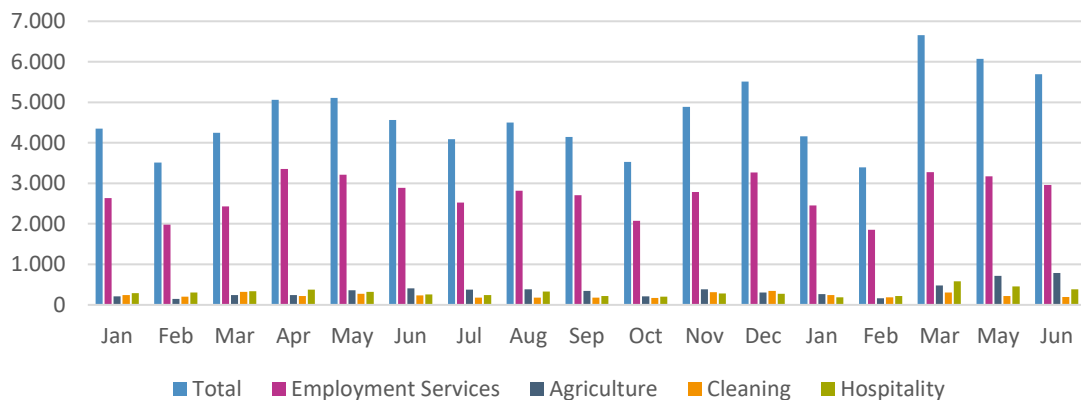
²³⁷ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/03/30/tk-aanpak-opvang-ontheemden-uit-oukraine>. The exemption applies retroactively from 4 March 2022.

²³⁸ <https://www.werk.nl/arbeidsmarktinformatie/dashboards/vluchtelingen-oukraine>.

reports made by employers. This means that multiple reports can correspond to the same person with multiple jobs.

Statistics Netherlands carried out a separate analysis in order to also provide information on the number of employed Ukrainians.²³⁹ This shows that of the approximately 92,000 Ukrainian refugees between the ages of 15 and 65 who were staying in the Netherlands on 1 November 2024, 59% had paid work as an employee. This amounts to nearly 54,500 people. Ukrainian refugees aged 25 to 45 were most often employed (63%), while young people (15 to 25) were least often employed (50%). Men were equally likely to work as women. Most Ukrainian refugees were employed as employment agency workers (38%), on-call workers (24%) or they had other temporary employment contracts (29%). The majority of Ukrainian refugees worked in business services (50%). This sector includes employment agencies. In addition to business services, a relatively large number of Ukrainian refugees worked in the trade, transport and hospitality sector (32%).

Figure 7.2 Registered employment of Ukrainians by employer in the Netherlands in 2024 and 2025



Source: UWV (2025) Online publications on the registration of employed Ukrainians

Public service

Dutch municipalities are responsible for offering necessary support to anyone who can work. However, as Ukrainian people are generally not registered as entitled to social assistance, municipalities are not supposed to use their instruments for this group either. With a proposed amendment to the SUWI Decree as of 1 August 2022, it is, however, possible for Ukrainian persons to have themselves registered as jobseekers.²⁴⁰ As a result, municipalities can use the instruments of the Participation Act, as is also done for others who are not entitled to the social assistance schemes. Additional services can be deployed via Regional Mobility Teams (RMT). Within the RMT, the expertise and services of trade unions, employers' organisations, the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) and municipalities can be used by the Ukrainians.

Working as a self-employed person

The exemption for applying for a work permit is initially limited to performing work as an employee. Under the Temporary Protection Directive, refugees from Ukraine are currently not allowed to work as self-employed persons (zzp'ers) or start a company in the Netherlands without a work permit.²⁴¹ The government itself indicates that this restriction is expected to better protect Ukrainians against abuses such as underpayment. Moreover, supervision and enforcement with regard to self-employment is considered by the Dutch government as rather complex.²⁴² It may be decided at a later date to allow Ukrainians to work as a self-employed person if it is sufficiently certain that these employment constructions do not entail excessive risks for this group.

²³⁹ <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2025/06/bijna-6-op-de-10-oekraiense-vluchtelingen-in-loondienst>

²⁴⁰ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/06/10/tk-verzamelbrief-opvang-oekraïne>.

²⁴¹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/opvang-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne/werk-en-inkomen>.

²⁴² <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/03/30/tk-aanpak-opvang-ontheemden-uit-oekraïne>.

7.5 Entitlements to social support and health care

Under the temporary protection directive, Ukrainians are entitled to living allowances and access to health care in kind. From 1 July 2024, Ukrainian displaced persons aged 18 or older no longer receive a living allowance if they have a job or receive an income in another way, for example through unemployment benefits. The amount of income from work or benefits does not matter in this context.²⁴³ If income is lower than the living allowance, the allowance will be partially paid out.

There is no entitlement to social assistance benefits. However, the Dutch government has decided to legislate that Ukrainian displaced persons will be entitled to childcare allowance (*kinderopvangtoeslag*) and housing allowance (*huurtoeslag*).²⁴⁴ With the option of claiming childcare allowance, it is possible for this group to combine work and care for their children.

As far as medical care is concerned, Ukrainians are currently covered by the Medical Care Scheme for Displaced Persons from Ukraine (RMO). For the longer term, preparations are being made for a possible transition to health insurance. For municipal care and support under the Youth Act, Wmo and Public Health Act (i.e. basic task package JGZ, the National Immunisation Programme and the prenatal home visit), the government has set up an additional cost scheme for displaced persons from Ukraine through the Municipal Fund.²⁴⁵

7.6 Introduction of a personal contribution system

Ukrainian displaced persons with an income and residence in a municipal shelter (GOO) also pay a personal contribution as of 1 July 2024.²⁴⁶ This contribution is paid to the municipality where the Ukrainian displaced person lives. The revenues from this personal contribution go back to the central government. For gas, water and electricity Ukrainian refugees have to pay €105 monthly per person. This applies to anyone with an income who is 18 years or older. If cooking is provided for the Ukrainian displaced person with an income, an additional amount of up to € 252.18 (per 1 January 2025) must be paid.

7.7 Points of attention and inventory of signals

A number of issues and challenges that are directly related to the residence and integration of Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands are explained below in more detail. These issues have been raised in discussions with various organisations and experts and are (partly) also mentioned in the media and reports. There are currently no in-depth or background studies on these topics available.

Unequal treatment of different categories of asylum seekers

The Temporary Protection Directive makes it possible for Ukrainian refugees to go straight to school, to work in paid employment and to travel freely within the Netherlands. Viewed in this way, Ukrainians can make an early start with their integration into Dutch society. For asylum seekers, who do not fall under the Protection Directive, the possibilities for labour market participation in Dutch society are limited as long as they do not have a residence status yet.²⁴⁷ On the other hand, Ukrainians are not part of the mandatory target groups of the civic integration policy. Those Ukrainians who will eventually settle in the Netherlands may therefore encounter major language deficits at a later date. Fortunately, many municipalities currently offer (informal) language courses on a voluntary basis to this group.

²⁴³ <https://www.refugeehelp.nl/nl/ukrainian-refugee/news/100394-leefgeld-stopt-voor-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne-met-een-baan>.

²⁴⁴ Ministry of Finance (15 June, 2022) Aanspraak ontheemden Oekraïners op toeslagen. See: <https://open.overheid.nl/repositoronl-de07032f578066971e1d50f14f08c33b47a74d82/1/pdf/kamerbrief-aanspraak-ontheemde-oekraïners-op-toeslagen.pdf>

²⁴⁵ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2023/07/07/tk-verzamelbrief-opvang-oekraïne>.

²⁴⁶ <https://www.refugeehelp.nl/nl/ukrainian-refugee/news/100394-leefgeld-stopt-voor-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne-met-een-baan>. There has been an increase in the contribution amount as of October 1, 2025.

²⁴⁷ An asylum seeker may work in the Netherlands for 24 weeks over a period of 52 weeks. His asylum application must have been pending for at least 6 months. In addition, a work permit (TWV) is required for these asylum seekers.

Providing sufficient suitable housing

Municipalities are facing a major challenge to receive and accommodate tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees who are now staying in the Netherlands. Eight out of ten municipalities report that the pressure on the official capacity has increased indeed.²⁴⁸ A National Reception Organisation has been set up to help municipalities to further increase the number of reception places if necessary.²⁴⁹ Municipalities also often provide temporary accommodation, partly because accommodation and the funding from the national government is linked to the duration of the temporary protection (until the 4th of March 2025).²⁵⁰ At the end of 2023, the government emphasised the importance of making reception facilities more sustainable where possible. With the help of various national schemes (*Regeling Huisvesting Aandachtsgroepen 2023* and *Stimuleringsregeling Flex- en Transformatiewoningen*) as well as experts, municipalities are supported by the central government in increasing the (social) housing stock more quickly. In September 2025, the caretaker Minister of Housing and Spatial Planning has indicated that preparations are being made to prioritise Ukrainian women and children when it comes to providing shelter.²⁵¹

Problems at school to structurally accommodate Ukrainian children

Dutch primary and secondary education institutions accommodate more than 20.000 Ukrainian children. Almost all of them receive a form of education, either in the special newcomer classes or in the temporary educational facilities. The central Dutch government recommend Ukrainian youngsters to go to special newcomer education as much as possible.²⁵² However, capacity problems at these schools sometimes make it difficult to accommodate large numbers of Ukrainians. Shortages of language teachers also can result in long waiting times to participate in language classes and civic integration courses.

Language and skills to get to work

The first signals about the educational background and available competences of Ukrainian refugees are positive. After all, a great number of these immigrants have found paid employment very quickly (see also figure 7.2). However, it appears that at least some of the Ukrainians who want to work in the Netherlands are confronted with various challenges. Language problems, logistical dilemmas and unresolved traumas, are often mentioned in this field.²⁵³ In addition, many Ukrainians appear to work below their level of education. One of the reasons for this is that the recognition of foreign qualifications is often difficult. The regulations in this area are very strict in the Netherlands.²⁵⁴

Risks of abuse when accepting paid work

Many Ukrainians have found work to the satisfaction of both themselves and the employer. However, Ukrainians are also vulnerable, partly due to insufficient knowledge of both the Dutch language and different relevant regulations. The Ukrainians in the Netherlands Foundation reports the frequent use of zero-hours contracts and indicates that Ukrainian employees themselves often do not know what these contracts entail.²⁵⁵ In order to identify and reduce the risk of abuses – such as underpayment and poor working conditions – the government wants to keep track of the number of Ukrainians who find work. This is why since April 2022, employers in the Netherlands are obliged to notify hiring an Ukrainian employee. Failure to comply with this new reporting obligation is subject to a fine under the Aliens Employment Act. This duty to report does, however, not alter the fact that the government admits that practices of exploitation sometimes occur.²⁵⁶ In 2022, a total of 51 reports were made of Ukrainian victims of

²⁴⁸ <https://nos.nl/artikel/2430275-gemeenten-hebben-handen-vol-aan-opvang-oekraiense-vluchtelingen>

²⁴⁹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/04/26/verzamelbrief-opvang-ontheemden-uit-oekraïne>

²⁵⁰ Advies Migratie (2023) De prijs van tijdelijkheid. Perspectief voor Oekraïense ontheemden in Nederland. The Hague, July, 2023.

²⁵¹ <https://www.trouw.nl/binnenland/mona-keijzer-oppert-dat-zelfredzame-oekrainers-zelf-op-zoek-moeten-naar-woonruimte~b706f836/>.

²⁵² <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/03/17/tk-brief-oekraïne>.

²⁵³ Shaidrova, M., J. Bonnepart & M. Ngo (2022) *Situational Report 18 May 2022*. Study of Stichting Oekrainers in Nederland (Ukrainians in the Netherlands Foundation) commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Security.

²⁵⁴ Advies Migratie (2023) De prijs van tijdelijkheid. Perspectief voor Oekraïense ontheemden in Nederland. The Hague, July, 2023.

²⁵⁵ Shaidrova, M., J. Bonnepart & M. Ngo (2022) *Situational Report 18 May 2022*. Study of Stichting Oekrainers in Nederland (Ukrainians in the Netherlands Foundation) commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Security.

²⁵⁶ <https://debatgemist.tweedekamer.nl/node/28271>.

human trafficking in the Netherlands. These cases are mainly associated with exploitative practices by employment agencies.²⁵⁷

Employment mediation

In practice, finding work is not always easy for Ukrainians. For those looking for work, it has sometimes proven difficult to find a suitable job without useful contacts, professional networks or sufficient knowledge of the language and culture. Bringing together supply and demand, therefore, can be problematic at times. In addition, as we saw earlier, the role of local authorities is limited for this group. Until 1 July 2022, there was no legal basis for municipalities to offer job counselling to this group. Since then, Ukrainians form part of a category for which municipalities can use various labour market instruments.²⁵⁸ In practice, however, these instruments are not always used, as we know from the experiences of other similar groups.²⁵⁹

Young Ukrainians in a vulnerable position²⁶⁰

Unlike refugees granted refugee status, Ukrainians are not entitled to education after their eighteenth birthday and do not receive student finance. As a result, they often opt for unskilled work for low payments. This is due to the status of Ukrainians as temporary war refugees. They are not subject to asylum law regulations, but to a Temporary Protection Directive, which is repeatedly extended. This means that Ukrainians have to pay significantly higher tuition fees at educational institutions than Dutch students or refugees with a granted refugee status. This statutory tuition fee is approximately €2,600. Tuition fees for foreign students are between €8,000 and €15,000 per year. Ukrainians are also not entitled to the civic integration programmes because they only enjoy temporary protection here.

Integration in the long run

For a long time it was thought that the refugees from Ukraine would only stay in the Netherlands for a short time. The possibilities and provisions arising from the Temporary Protection Directive are also in line with this expectation. It is, however, becoming increasingly clear that at least some of the Ukrainians will settle in the Netherlands, especially now that the end of the war in Ukraine is not yet in sight. The question, then, is whether the rapid entry into the labour market, the absence of a mandatory integration policy for this group, and the shortage of suitable and permanent housing will eventually form major obstacles to the successful and sustainable integration and participation of these migrants in this country. Research shows that Ukrainian social hubs can potentially play a positive role for Ukrainian displaced persons in the Netherlands in this. These social hubs are mainly diaspora-led and came into existence after February 24, 2022. They play a constructive role in promoting participation and self-reliance. In doing so, the hubs, through their activities, contribute to preserving cultural identity and maintaining ties with the home country. This in turn preserves the possibility of return.²⁶¹

The Temporary Protection Directive is meant to provide temporary protection and the government of the Netherlands is committed to providing this protection. Whether refugees from Ukraine can remain in the Netherlands after the conflict has ended, depends on whether they are eligible for a residence permit. The government is currently looking into how to accommodate for potential requests for residence after the conflict has ended, to also prevent a possible extra workload for the immigration and naturalisation service (IND) and other involved organisations. On 4 June 2025, the European Commission proposed to extend the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) by one year until 4 March 2027. The European Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs approved the extension proposal on 13 June 2025.²⁶²

²⁵⁷ <https://www.nationaalrapporteur.nl/actueel/nieuws/2023/10/18/jaarcijfers-slachtoffers-en-potentele-daders-van-mensen-handel-in-nederland-bekend>.

²⁵⁸ Staatsblad (24 June 2022, Nr. 256) *Besluit van 22 juni 2022 tot wijziging van het Besluit SUWI in verband met de tijdelijke mogelijkheid van registratie als werkloze werkzoekende, gelet op het Uitvoeringsbesluit van de Raad tot vaststelling van het bestaan van een massale toestroom van ontheemden uit Oekraïne in de zin van artikel 5 van de Richtlijn 2001/55/EG van de Raad van 20 juli 2001, en tot invoering van tijdelijke bescherming naar aanleiding daarvan.*

²⁵⁹ Ukrainians are part of the group of so-called non-benefit recipients (*nuggers*). Evaluation of the Participation Act (Echtelt, P. Van et al., 2020) indicates that municipalities do not always actively offer job counselling to this group.

²⁶⁰ See, in more detail, NCR (15 July 2025) *Jonge Oekrainers tussen wal en schip.: geen onderwijs, geen zicht op toekomst.*

²⁶¹ [Opzet en bijdrage Oekraïense social hubs](#)

²⁶² https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2025/07/04/verlenging-richtlijn-tijdelijke-bescherming-tot-en-met-4-maart-2027-voor-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne-en-raadsaanbevelingen-voor-na-afloop-van-de-rtb?utm_source=chatgpt.com.



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