



Press release

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More people in their fifties and fewer in their twenties

According to the latest preliminary figures by Statistics Netherlands there were 2.1 million people over fifty in the Netherlands on 1 January, almost 600 thousand more than a decade ago. The number of people in their twenties on the other hand fell to 2.0 million in 2002, over half a million less than ten years ago. The town of Urk has the highest percentage of people under 20, namely over 40%. Rozendaal (Gld.) has most people over 65, namely 25%.

Substantial increase in number of people in their fifties

On 1 January the Netherlands had 16.1 million inhabitants, almost a million more than ten years ago. During this period there was a substantial increase in the number of people over 50, from 1.5 to 2.1 million. Currently one inhabitant in eight is over fifty. The strong increase is due to the baby boom right after the Second World War. The largest groups are 54 and 55-year-olds born in 1946 and 1947.

Dwindling numbers of people in their twenties

In sharp contrast with the situation of the population over 50 is the decrease of the number of people in their twenties. Their number fell from 2.6 million ten years ago to 2.0 million earlier this year. The drop is due to the drop in the number of births during the 1970s. In the second half of the 1970s the annual birth rate was about 175 thousand against almost 250 thousand babies in the 1960s.

The drop in the number of 20-year-olds means a stagnation in the influx of young employees in the labour force.

Young and old municipalities

There are great regional differences in the distribution of young and old residents. Flevoland is the youngest province in the Netherlands as far as the number of inhabitants under 20. Urk is the youngest municipality with 43% of its inhabitants under 20. Only 6% is over 65. Other municipalities with many young people are Staphorst and Zeewolde. Groningen, with its major

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university, is characterised by the high number of people in their twenties, over 25%. The other university towns such as Wageningen, Utrecht and Leiden also have relatively many people in their twenties. On the other hand, the municipalities of Rozendaal (Gld.), Bennebroek and Laren have relatively many inhabitants over 65, nearly a quarter. The national average is 14%.

Less than 500 municipalities

The number of municipalities in the Netherlands is falling rapidly. On 1 January 2002 municipal changes resulted in a decrease of 8 bringing the total number of municipalities to 496. Ten years ago there were 647 municipalities. The number of small municipalities is dwindling. Currently there are only 13 with less than 5 thousand inhabitants, compared to 71 a decade ago. Schiermonnikoog with just over a thousand inhabitants is the smallest municipality followed by Vlieland and Rozendaal (Gld.).

Big cities

Amsterdam is the largest municipality with 734 thousand inhabitants. Almere is the fastest growing municipality. The number of inhabitants increased from 74 thousand ten years ago to the current 159 thousand. One in five people in the Netherlands lives in one of the ten largest towns. The percentage hardly changed in recent years.

Table 1. Dutch population by age on 1 January

	1992	2002
	x 1 000	
0- 9 years	1 858	2 001
10-19 years	1 904	1 937
20-29 years	2 572	2 041
30-39 years	2 427	2 643
40-49 years	2 186	2 415
50-59 years	1 540	2 110
60-69 years	1 306	1 402
70-79 years	892	1 019
80-89 years	389	460
Over 90	55	72
Netherlands	15 129	16 100

Source: Statistics Netherlands

Table 2. Top ten young and old municipalities, 1 January 2002

	Largest % 0-19- year-olds		Largest % people over 65
Urk	43.1	Rozendaal	24.5
Staphorst	34.9	Bennebroek	23.9
Zeewolde	34.7	Laren	23.8
Nieuw-Lekkerland	33.1	Haren	22.5
Zwartewaterland	32.9	Sluis-Aardenburg	22.3
Houten	32.5	Doorn	21.9
Graafstroom	32.5	Renkum	21.9
Barneveld	32.1	Gorssel	21.4
Kesteren	31.5	Rijswijk	21.1
Renswoude	31.2	Heemstede	20.9
Netherlands	24.5	Netherlands	13.7

Source: Statistics Netherlands**Table 3. Top ten large and small municipalities, 1 January 2002**

	Inhabitants largest municipalities		Inhabitants smallest municipalities
	x 1 000		x 1 000
Amsterdam	734.3	Schiermonnikoog	1.0
Rotterdam	598.6	Vlieland	1.2
's-Gravenhage	458.6	Rozendaal	1.5
Utrecht	260.5	Thorn	2.6
Eindhoven	204.6	Ameland	3.6
Tilburg	197.3	Heerjansdam	3.6
Groningen	175.5	Valkenburg (ZH)	3.8
Breda	163.3	Renswoude	4.1
Almere	159.0	Kessel	4.2
Apeldoorn	154.8	Hummelo en Keppel	4.5

Source: Statistics Netherlands