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**International Migration Statistics in the Netherlands**

**The possibilities for the implementation of the revised UN recommendations on Migration  
Statistics for the Netherlands**

Submitted by Statistics Netherlands<sup>1)</sup>

*Introduction*

Population Statistics in the Netherlands are based on the computerised municipal population registers. This decentralised registration system, known as the 'Gemeentelijke Basisadministratie' (GBA) was introduced on 1 October 1994. At the individual level, data is stored on every inhabitant. When a person undergoes a demographic event, such as birth, death, marriage or migration, Statistics Netherlands is informed by means of an electronic message (Prins, 2000).

The criterion for registration as an immigrant in the Netherlands is a four months time criterion. To be more precise: every person intending to stay in the Netherlands for at least two thirds of the forthcoming six months, should notify the local population register immediately after the arrival in the Netherlands. In this paper, for the sake of simplicity, this time criterion will be referred to as the 'four months' criterion for registration. The four months time criterion for registration as an immigrant in the Netherlands matches the three months time criterion in the UN-definition of short-term migrants quite well. A distinction between long-term and short-term migrants could eventually be made 'ex post', on the basis of actual duration of stay. However, this data is not available at the moment.

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1) Prepared by Arno Sprangers

*Emigrants* have to be de-registered when they leave the Netherlands with the intention to stay abroad for at least 8 months in the forthcoming twelve months. As a consequence, people having the intention to stay abroad for a period of more than three months, but no longer than 8 months, are not considered to be emigrants in the Netherlands and need not be de-registered. Therefore, only part of the short-term emigrants (according to the UN recommendations) could eventually be distinguished as such (ex post).

The population registers do not distinguish between reasons for migration, such as asylum, labour or family reunification. For this purpose, additional information on migration motives from the Central Registration of non-Dutch nationals has to be used (Nicolaas and Sprangers, 2001). This data from the Ministry of Justice has been linked at the municipal population register data at the individual level. This data offers better opportunities to comply with the new set of UN Recommendations.

In general, Statistics Netherlands makes distinctions by nationality, country of birth and the parents' country of birth. These variables offer opportunities to distinguish first and second generation persons with a foreign background.

The scheme in the annex refers to non-nationals only. For Dutch citizens, no distinction can be made by migration purpose.

At the moment, no data on outflows of non-Dutch nationals by reason for emigration is available. In the near future, information will become available on non-Dutch emigrants by reason of *previous* migration to the Netherlands.

### *References*

Nicolaas, Han, and Arno Sprangers, 2001, Migration motives of non-Dutch immigrants in the Netherlands (Paper for the UN/ECE Work Session on Migration Statistics).

Prins, C.J.M., 2000, Dutch population statistics based on population register data. *Maandstatistiek van de bevolking* (48)2, pp 9-15. Voorburg/Heerlen: Statistics Netherlands.

annex

INFLOWS NON-NATIONALS  
MIGRATION

	Short-term migration 1)	Long-term-migration 1)	Totla
(9),(10) Entry for education and training	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good
(11) Entry linked to employment	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good
(12) Entry of civil servants	<i>not separately identified</i>	<i>not separately identified</i>	<i>not separately identified</i>
(13) Entry with free establishment	<i>not separately identified</i>	<i>not separately identified</i>	<i>not separately identified</i>
(14) Entry for settlement	<i>not separately identified</i>	<i>not separately identified</i>	<i>not separately identified</i>
(15) Entry linked to family reunification or family formation	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good
(16) (17) Asylum seekers and refugees			
Asylum seekers	Source: <i>Ministry of Justice</i>	Source: <i>Ministry of Justice</i>	Source: <i>Ministry of Justice</i>
Asylum migrants	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good	Source: <i>Municipal population registers/Ministry of Justice</i> Criterion for registration as an immigrant: <i>&gt;=4 months</i> Quality: good

1) This data could be produced; not available at the moment.