



The Netherlands

“Feeding in” and “Feeding out”, and Integrating Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities

A Study of National Policies

T. Nederland, M.M.J. Stavenuiter, H.
R.A.M. Swinnen
Verwey-Jonker Institute

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Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	5
1 Coherence between NSR and NRP: feeding in and feeding out	6
2 Integration of immigrants (first and second generation) and/or ethnic minorities	14
References	24

Summary

Chapter 1

Coherence between NSR and NRP: feeding in and feeding out

For the Netherlands, it is difficult to assess the feeding in / feeding out issue between the NSR Social Inclusion/Social Protection and the NRP. A number of references to the NSR in the NRP are made, but our analysis reveals that these are not the result of an active “check” of the NRP for its links with social inclusion objectives and approaches. Both the NSR and the NRP are (partial) descriptions of the same Dutch national macro economic and social policies along different European guidelines. The cross referencing between both documents are just proof of the coherence in the national policy strategies.

With regard to the feeding-in analysis, this is clearly to be seen both on the level of governance and on the level of the contents-related challenges. On the level of governance, important social inclusion stakeholders, such as local governments and social partners, were involved in a consultation round for both the NSR and the NRP. However, other important and relevant social inclusion stakeholders, such as social organisations and pressure groups of benefits recipients, have not been consulted or involved in the preparation of the NRP. This seems to confirm that on the governance level there is little reciprocity between NSR and NRP.

In the NRP several policy measures with regard to (youth) unemployment, social assistance, health, and life course saving schemes are mentioned. At several points in the NRP references to the NSR are made, but we have assessed that these references are highly instrumental. The topics where references are made, hardly discuss the social inclusion and social protection challenges from their own perspective because assessment of these do not belong to the NRP. These challenges are discussed as far as they fit into the overall objectives of the NRP, i.e. to increase labour market participation.

The feeding-out analysis covers aspects from the NRP with a positive (or negative) impact on achieving social inclusion objectives. With regard to the feeding-out analysis we have concluded that Dutch government both in NRP and NSR develops general economic and employment policies, expecting their positive influence for all citizens, including the most vulnerable. Tailor-made policies are developed if specific people experience obstacles to fully participate in general programmes. Unfortunately the employment figures for women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and young people do not confirm the effects of general policy. The nett labour participation rate for women in the Netherlands is 55%. It seems unlikely that the national target for nett labour participation rate for women (65% employed in 2010) will be reached. The labour market participation rate of ethnic minorities decreased in recent years (from 49.7% in 2001 to 46.9% in 2005, with a dip of 46.5% in 2004).¹ The labour market participation rate of disabled person (from 42.5 to 39.5%) and of young people (from 46.2% to 44.3%) declined. The participation rate of older workers (55-64) is developing in line with the national target set for 2010 (45%), but it should be noted that the target for the participation rate of older workers is set rather low compared with for exemple the current labour market participation of men aged 55-59 (72%).

The Dutch NRP does not discuss the social inclusion impact of economic growth, since it only mentions the impact on the labour market. Also, the NRP shows no evidence that economic growth is increasing the resources of those on the lowest incomes and/or that it reduces income inequalities. On the

¹ In the Netherlands a discussion is going on whether this has to do with unfavourable economic conditions or with discrimination on the labour market. In a letter to Parliament, dated May 2005 (TK 2004-2005 27223, nr. 66), the State Secretary of Social Affairs and Employment acknowledged the discrimination at work on the labour market.

contrary, our analysis shows that the emphasis on labour market integration, makes those groups without chances for labour market integration almost invisible in both NSR and NRP.

Chapter 2

Integration of immigrants (first and second generation) and/or ethnic minorities

Integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities is part of an important debate across the enlarged European Union and of major concern in Dutch policy since the Netherlands are confronted with the challenge of integrating immigrants and ethnic minorities. Dutch policy on integration concentrates largely on two major objectives: increasing the labour market participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities and enlarging participation in Dutch society in economic, cultural and social respect.

A wide range of integration patterns can be observed, with considerable variation in both structural and socio-cultural integration. For many years the four largest ethnic groups in the Netherlands consisted of Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans (Arubans included), but since the 1990s this trend has changed. The arrival of asylum-seekers, such as (former) Yugoslavians, Iraqis, Afghans, Iranians and Somalis led to groups of 'new' ethnic minorities.

Of all ethnic groups, Turks, Moroccans, Somalis and part of the Antilleans occupy the weakest positions, although also heterogeneity within these groups is substantial, especially among the Moroccan group. The overall picture is most favourable for the Surinamese. They, however, also lag behind the native Dutch population in terms of a higher unemployment rate (with exception of Surinam women who have a higher labour market participation rate than native Dutch women), more poverty and educational disadvantages. Of all refugee groups, Iranians are the highest educated and most modern group. As a consequence, they often mix with native Dutch people and have a relatively good position on the labour market. Also, their children perform well at school. Afghans and Iraqis, on the other hand, occupy a less favourable position on the labour market, partly because of their relatively lower educational level and shorter length of stay. Their social-cultural position, however, is more favourable.

With respect to housing the non-western ethnic minorities are concentrated in the densely populated west of the Netherlands, especially in the four largest cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht). Although it is the objective of the Dutch government to strive for more mixed neighbourhoods, this trend of concentration has strengthened in recent years. The proportion of non-western ethnic minorities in some neighbourhoods and districts has increased more than might be expected on ground of the population growth.

Social services are not equally accessible since people of 65 and older are only entitled to an old age pension if the recipient has lived in the Netherlands for 50 year continuously. For most immigrants of the first generation this is not the case and as a result they can drop below the low-income level. This group is entitled to a supplementary benefit, but the non-use of this benefit is large. The Dutch government is taking measures to solve this problem of non-use, but it takes some years before all people with incomplete old age pension will and can be reached.

The accessibility of older migrants to health services seems to be higher than that of native Dutch elderly people. However, this does not mean that there are no problems in accessing medical care. Figures concerning care provided by GP's show that especially Turkish and Moroccan older people are

less satisfied with their GP than native Dutch elderly. Also language problems are not always solved satisfactorily.

All in all we can conclude that migrants and ethnic minorities in the Netherlands are characterized by diversity. Although there are positive developments, also a lot of specific groups are lagging behind, such as the young, the old and women with a Turkish, Moroccan or Somali background. Improving social inclusion and fighting prejudices and discrimination remain key elements in the policy of enhancing the participation of these groups. On the local level many initiatives are taken that show this acceptance of cultural diversity. What is still missing is the translation of this policy to clear objectives and indicators in the NSR.

Introduction

In this second semester report, we will focus on the feeding in/feeding out analysis (chapter 1) and on the integration of immigrants (first and second generation) and/or ethnic minorities (chapter 2). The second semester report should, according to the guidelines of the EU, only contain new developments since the first semester report and the Assessment of the social inclusion chapter of the National Strategy Report. With regard to the Netherlands all important policies and measures have been described in our two earlier reports (Nederland, Stavenuiter & Swinnen 2006a, 2006b). No new developments are to be expected since the Dutch Cabinet fell in the summer of 2006 and new parliamentary elections are due in November 2006. The only new act not mentioned in our earlier reports is the New Integration Act (Wet Inburgering) that will be operational by January 1st 2007. We will describe this new act in chapter 2 on the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities.

1 Coherence between NSR and NRP: feeding in and feeding out

It is difficult to assess the feeding in / feeding out issue between the Netherlands' NSR Social Inclusion and Social Protection on the one hand and the NRP on the other.² At first sight, one could observe an almost absolute coherence and thus perfect feeding in / feeding out between the two documents, with a number of references to the NSR in the NRP. But then a more closer look reveals that these references are not the result of an active "check" of the NRP for its links with social inclusion objectives and approaches. Finally, both NSR and NRP are (partial) descriptions of the same Dutch national macro economic and social policies along different European guidelines. The same priorities and programmes are mentioned in both NSR and NRP. The cross referencing between both documents are thus a proof of the coherence in the national policy strategies, but not an answer to possible tensions between the demands of social inclusion challenges and those of the economic and employment challenges. More strongly, the NSR social inclusion / social protection is fully dependent on the guiding principles of the NRP. This is all the more evident in the repeated emphasis on the importance of general policies. Only "where necessary, general policy is supplemented by policies designed to address obstacles that may prevent people entering the labour market." (NRP, p. 8). Social inclusion / social protection policies are not designed from its own perspective, i.e. the problems of people in (risk of) poverty or exclusion, but from the perspective of the national economic and employment strategy: "in combination with resurgence of economic growth, the more activating social security system is expected to yield an above-average increase in the participation of underrepresented groups such as women and minorities." (NRP, p. 7).

² In this chapter we give an analysis of the Progress Report 2006 on the National Reform Programme for the Netherlands 2005-2008. In the text we will refer to this as NRP.

This preliminary remark strongly influences our analysis of both feeding in and feeding out issues, in that the remarks will essentially illustrate and underpin this initial statement. It seemed therefore not very useful to use the table provided for by the European Commission. The Dutch government did not fill out this table either.

1.1 Feeding in

Central question in this section is: how are the Dutch social protection and social inclusion priorities translated into economic, social, and employment policy measures?

1.1.1 Stakeholders' involvement/consultation

In the Progress Report 2006 on the National Reform Programme (NRP) for the Netherlands 2005-2008 it is explained that the Dutch government is responsible for the content and formulation of the Progress Report on the NRP.

Regional and local governments are partly responsible for the implementation of the measures relating to the Lisbon agenda. Especially with respect to innovation, spatial planning and policy to assist deprived groups. Regional and local governments were involved in drafting both the Reform Programme and this Progress Report by way of the regular consultation bodies.

The social partners share responsibility for the structural strength of the Dutch economy. While this report was being prepared, the social partners were given the opportunity to react to various drafts, in accordance with agreements made with the Labour Foundation (Stichting van de Arbeid). The contribution of the social partners to achieving the Lisbon objectives is set out in a separate progress report "Contribution of the Dutch social partners to the realisation of National Reform Programme 2005-2008 as part of the Lisbon strategy, update 2005-2006".

The environmental movement also gave its response to draft versions.

Both local governments and social partners are important social inclusion stakeholders and therefore they were also involved in a consultation round with regard to the NSR. Other important and relevant social inclusion stakeholders, such as social organisations and pressure groups of benefits recipients, who have been consulted for the NSR, have not been consulted or involved in the preparation of the NRP. This seems to confirm that there is little reciprocity between NSR and NRP.

1.1.2 Social Inclusion /Social Protection challenges

The social protection and social inclusion process has been made explicit in the introduction of the Progress report on the NRP: "During the Spring European Council in 2005 it was agreed that the National Action Plans on social inclusion, pensions and health care would be streamlined. From 2006, these plans will be merged into a single report, the National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Inclusion in the Netherlands (NSR). The National Reform Programme focuses on the objectives for growth and employment. Given the cohesion of government policy in these areas, the reports will refer to each other where relevant".

The Progress report on the NRP indeed refers to the NSR at several points. Especially in the chapter on employment this is made explicit: "The contents of this chapter and the report on social inclusion,

pensions and health care and long-term care in the National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Inclusion in the Netherlands (NSR) are complementary. Together, they give a complete picture of the reforms in the areas of social and employment policy in the Netherlands. Where appropriate, this chapter refers to the NSR".

On several points in the chapter a reference to the NSR has been made. We will give some examples of this.

Examples of references to the NSR:

- 1) With regard to *health care* (p. 45): "Good and accessible health care is an important precondition for a high labour participation rate in the workforce as a whole, and particularly among older workers. *The reform of the health care system is discussed in chapter 2 of the NRP, and in more detail in chapter 4 of the NSR*".
- 2) With regard to *youth unemployment* (p. 46-47): "Youth Pact: Too many young people drop out of the education system and are consequently at risk of becoming excluded from the labour market and society. The cabinet has implemented additional measures to combat early school leaving which were set out in the memorandum Assault on school drop-outs. (...) Operation Young was launched to counter social exclusion among young people in general. The programme is intended to strengthen the cooperation in the youth chain, for example through Care and Advice Teams with representatives from schools and social services. Another initiative associated with the Youth Pact is the Task Force Youth Unemployment. One of its aims is to create extra jobs for young people. By the summer of 2006, more than 32,000 extra jobs had been created for young people. *Further measures that the cabinet has taken in the context of the Youth Pact are discussed in chapter 2 of the NSR.*"
- 3) With regard to the *Reform of the Unemployment Insurance Act (WW)* (p. 44), the issue of the reintegration of people who are partially fit for work is discussed and it is mentioned that a steering group is set up that aims to ensure that reintegration efforts for this group are geared more closely to existing demand. In a footnote the following reference to the NSR is made: *"The subject of reintegration is also discussed in chapter 2 of the NSR"*.
- 4) With regard to *Early retirement / Pre-pension / Life course savings scheme* (p. 44) it is concluded that it is too early for a clear indication of the take-up of the Life course savings scheme. In a footnote we can read that: *"The policy on pensions and the life-course savings scheme are discussed separately in chapter 3 of the NSR"*.
- 5) With regard to the *Work and Social Assistance Act (WWB)* (p. 46) it is mentioned that: *"The 'inclusion' dimension of the WWB is explained in more detail in chapter 2 of the NSR"*.

We can conclude from these examples that these references to the NSR are highly instrumental. In the chapter on employment in the Progress report, several policy measures with regard to (youth) unemployment, social assistance, health, and life course saving schemes are mentioned. This list of policy measures is not exhaustive and where these measures are mentioned in the NSR, a reference to the NRP is made. The examples also show that they do refer to, but hardly discuss the social inclusion and social protection challenges from their own perspective. Social inclusion and social protection challenges are discussed as far as they fit into the overall objectives of the NRP, i.e. to increase labour market participation.

1.2 Feeding out

The feeding-out analysis covers aspects from the NRP with a positive (or negative) impact on achieving social inclusion objectives.

First of all, we should repeat that Dutch government (in NRP and NSR) insists on developing general economic and employment policies, expecting their positive influence for all citizens, including the most vulnerable. Targeted and tailor-made policies are developed if people experience obstacles to fully participate in general programmes.

Secondly, we would like to make the observation that the NRP describes the (expected) impact of its policies in terms of:

- the evolution of purchasing power;
- labour market participation;
- numbers of beneficiaries of benefits and allowances.

These macro figures should be complemented by information about the effects on the day to day life of people. Important in these are the impacts of “financial incentives” that are mostly limiting the access to, the duration or the level of benefits and allowances in order to stimulate people for accepting paid employment. There is a lack of reporting about the social effects of these measures from the perspective of the most vulnerable people. Such reporting should be included in the NRP progress reports.

Thirdly, several rather crucial or fundamental reforms in social security and social protection in the Netherlands are of relatively recent date, therefore the implementation quality and outcomes are yet unknown. One example is the Life Course Savings Scheme, for which the enthusiasm seems to remain limited. After about one year, of the 6 million employees in the Netherlands 300.000 people are participating in it. The procedures are complicated and the cost for the individual employee is high. People have to save some 12% of their actual income, which makes the scheme, more accessible for medium and higher income groups.

1.2.1 Employment

- The NRP gives some figures about the evolution of labour market participation for specific groups that were mentioned as a priority in the NSR: women, older workers (early exits) and ethnic minorities.
 - a. For older workers the participation rate seems to develop in line with the targets set for 2010 (34.7% in 2001 – 39.7% in 2005 – 45% in 2010).
 - b. For women, it is – as the NRP underlines – not adequate to use European statistics, due to the fact that many Dutch women have very small part time jobs (less than 12 hours/week). According to Dutch statistics it seems not very realistic that the national target for 2010 could be reached (53.2% in 2001 – 54.1% in 2005 – 65% in 2010).
 - c. For ethnic minorities Dutch government recognises that here is a real problem, since the national target for a participation rate of 54% in 2005 was not achieved (46.9% in 2005).

In its Joint Report on Social Inclusion, the European Commission mentions early exits through occupational disability and youth employment as a challenge for the Netherlands. In the field of occupational disability major efforts have been done through financial incentives and better accompaniment for reintegration. These measures surely do not help the most vulnerable among the disabled. In 2004, the UWV, the Dutch body implementing employee insurance

schemes, started a medical re-examination of all existing disability benefit recipients younger than 50, in accordance with far stricter examination rules. Psychological symptoms, for instance, are now assessed more severely. People with the best prospects for work resumption are first on the list. A recent study shows that almost half this group, 30.000 people until now, are confronted with the termination or a cutback of their allowance (Van Deursen 2006a). After eight months of reassessment, 20% of all the reassessed turns out to have found paid employment. Only 5,6% has found a full-time job; all others are working part-time. 18% has found work through a temporary employment agency, while 26% has been contracted for less than half a year (Van Deursen 2006b).

Overall, the labour market participation rate of disabled persons decreased between 2003 and 2005 (42.5 – 39.5).

The same applies for young people (41.9 – 38.3). As to youth unemployment, special attention is given in the NRP to:

- the creation of (40.000) jobs for young people;
- the organisation of practice placements for youngsters;
- reducing early school leaving (the Netherlands occupy the 19th place in the EU as to the education attainment level of young people!).

One could expect that within all these groups low skilled people are among the more vulnerable. Also for this group the participation rate decreased between 2003 and 2005 (46.2% - 44.3%).

A positive development concerns the long term unemployed. The percentage of long term unemployed decreased significantly in 2005, both among young people and adults.

- The NRP gives information about the expected impact of current measures on the evolution of the *unemployment trap* for a few population groups. The expectation for 2007 is that single earners with children will be somewhat less worse off in 2007 when moving from social assistance to a paid job at minimum wage level (- 3,75% instead of – 4% disposable income). For single parents nothing will change in 2007 (- 7,75% disposable income).

1.2.2 Growth

- The Dutch NRP does not discuss the social inclusion impact of economic growth. It mentions the impact on the labour market: “The economic revival is clearly evident in the labour market, with employment increasing and unemployment falling rapidly” (NRP, p. 6). *This could be seen as an implicit reference to social inclusion.*
- *There is* (in the NRP) no evidence that economic growth is increasing the resources of those on the lowest incomes and/or that it reduces income inequalities. Furthermore, it includes having moderate wage increases in the strategy to realise economic recovery.

1.3 Analysis of the integrated guidelines

GL14 To create a more competitive business environment and encourage private initiative through better regulation

Under this guideline, the Dutch NRP mentions number of (simplified) regulations to facilitate and stimulate entrepreneurship and, more concrete, the creation of new businesses. Within this framework, special attention is given to support for people receiving benefits. "Benefit recipients who start a business seem to have just as good a chance of surviving as any other starter and are less likely to become dependent on benefits again than people who entered paid employment. The unemployment benefit regime has been changed in response to these findings. Anyone who wants to set up a business can explore the possibilities for six months while retaining their entitlement to benefits. Income from the enterprise is set off against the benefit." (NRP, p. 32) The NRP also mentions the fact that entrepreneurship is popular among ethnic minorities and women. It refers to the New Entrepreneurship action plan, in which 11 measures are set out to make it easier for new entrepreneurs to start a business.

Explicit reference to social inclusion priorities is not made in relation to GL14. Also corporate social responsibility is not mentioned explicitly.

GL17 Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion

No explicit attention is given to social cohesion under this guideline. But a number of specific targets are set that are relevant for SI/SP. These are the targets discussed under section 1.2.1. Some accompanying measures to reach these targets have an implicit link to the challenges of the NSR social inclusion/social protection. Such measures are e.g. linked to:

- the combination of work and family life aimed at increasing the labour market participation of women (in terms of hours);
- the better integration of ethnic minorities through better mastery of Dutch language, more adequate levels of education and access to relevant social networks;
- the participation of young people (ethnic minorities and native Dutch) in education and the labour market.

GL18 Promoting a lifecycle approach to work

GL19 Ensuring inclusive labour markets

Guidelines 18 and 19 are both mentioned under the same heading within the Dutch NRP (4.2.1 Increasing labour supply, p. 42).

As already stressed in our introduction to this chapter, measures described in the NSR SI/SP are highly consistent with the NRP, since most of the measures of the NSR are also described in the NRP.

Also the challenges identified by the European Commission in the SI/SP process are explicitly part of the NRP. It is difficult to say however to what extent the measures taken are sufficient to

meet these challenges. If we take a look at the suggestions made by the stakeholders during the consultation process for the NSR, then they identify insufficiency as to:

- the level of the social assistance benefit (remark of both municipalities and interest organisations);
- the (exclusive) emphasis on the personal characteristics and responsibilities of people at risk of poverty.

The emphasis, within the NSR (as a “mirror” of the NRP), on labour market integration and its related problems and target populations makes some of the most vulnerable groups – those without chances for labour market integration – almost invisible in both NSR and NRP. As to the “financial incentives” for a more activating social security and social protection system, they create, as general measures, an extra obstacle for these groups in terms of social inclusion. The minimum income freeze of the past years has had its effects on the way in which low-income households can make ends meet. For instance the purchasing power figures of 2006 show, that especially older couples and single people with a low income have great difficulty in compensating for this year's expected 1% inflation. The income of single people increases with 0.25%, and that of elderly couples with 1% (see the web site of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment).

For other – less deprived – groups among (potential) social benefit claimants one could say that there is a good interaction between the social protection system and the labour market.

One specific remark has already been given about the accessibility of the new Life Course Savings Scheme for lower income groups. This point is currently also under discussion in parliament. This new scheme is one example of a measure explicitly related to a better balance of work and private life, but also to the target of increasing the participation rate of older workers. The results in the field of older workers seem promising. As to the reconciliation of work and family life, much attention is given to further development of child care facilities, and new measures are announced to improve the accessibility of child care, particularly for low income groups. Moreover, new initiatives are taken to improve pre-school and after-school care. One will have to wait for the Child Care Act to be evaluated after three years for more definite insight in its value for the conciliation of work and private life.

Within the implementation of the Work and Social Assistance Act (WWB – introduced in 2004) one should situate initiatives to integrate the most vulnerable people into the labour market. The current government, after being particularly reluctant towards subsidised employment, took some measures in the field of wage cost subsidies for specific groups (e.g. to create jobs for young people). Much emphasis is given to individual (re-)integration “contracts” and personal accompaniment. The number of people being unemployed for longer than 6 months (youngsters) or 1 year (adults) without an offer for a “new start” decreased significantly between 2004 and 2005. Most of the implementation of the WWB has to be done by local government (municipalities). These are more active now than one or two years ago in accompanying the people furthest away from the labour market. But municipalities are clearly complaining about the complexity of rules set by national government in the field of re-integration. They complain that they are not able to use all budgets of the so-called “special assistance” (for relief of specific problem situations) because of the too strict and bureaucratic rules. According to them this is the major reason why resources dedicated to reintegration were not fully used in 2004 and 2005 (Galen 2006).

Government announced the introduction of "return-to-work jobs" as from 1 January 2007, in order to bridge the gap between labour participation and social activation. This could be a further step in creating labour market possibilities for people with great distance to the labour market.

Eradicating poverty, according to the Dutch government, should be done by general growth policy and subsequent creation of employment. The percentage of people at risk of poverty is relatively low in the Netherlands, but does not decrease dramatically with increasing economic growth. One factor in this is certainly the policy of Dutch government to use income development measures as an important part of public economic recovery strategies.

Special attention is currently given to the increasing problem of over indebtedness. At the same time, municipalities – having the responsibility to implement the social assistance act – are clearly complaining about the level of the minimum income, making it impossible for people to participate in society. They agree on this with the representatives of people experiencing poverty.

GL21 Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of social partners

- ⇒ *GL 5 To promote greater coherence between macroeconomic, structural and employment policies*
- ⇒ *GL 9 To facilitate the spread and effective use of ICT and build a fully inclusive information society*

Dutch government pays great attention to financial incentives motivating benefit recipients to accept paid work, to tax reforms making work pay and to (tax) reforms motivating older workers to stay in paid work. In line with general policies for keeping wage increases moderate, the relative improvement of the income of lowest income groups, which is shown through the European indicator (% of median income), is not the highest priority of the Dutch government. The NSR makes a critical remark about the use of the % of median income indicator. It states that this relative poverty indicator is not a measure that allows to see the unemployment trap (which means that when unemployed people who receive benefits are deterred from taking a new job because the reduction or removal of benefit if they do will make them worse off) if somebody with a minimum income accepts a job on minimum salary level. More in particular for single parents the income would then diminish with more than 7%. It has already been said that number of stakeholders are rather critical as to the level of the minimum income in order to provide people with "necessary resources to live in accordance with human dignity".

In line with a long tradition, social partners in the Netherlands are accepting the principle of moderate development of wages. As to the flexibility issue, government is preparing several measures to "relax" dismissal law and procedures surrounding the dismissal of employees, and it has submitted a bill for the Simplification of the Working Hours Act. In their *Contribution of the Dutch social partners to the 2005-2008 National Reform Programme in the context of the Lisbon strategy - update 2005/2006* however, social partners do not touch the flexicurity issue as such.

The NRP addresses ICT primarily within the strategies for economic development and growth. As far as it concerns the labour force it is seen within the framework of investment in human capital and education. Within the organisation of government and public services it is a means for improving efficiency and quality of services. There is no explicit link with the NSR social inclusion and social protection. As to the NSR, mention is made of the use of ICT in

experiments to alleviate the administrative burden and improve the quality of service for beneficiaries in need for help about over indebtedness (both in preventive and curative ways).

GLs23-24 Expand and improve investment in human capital, Adapt education and training systems

In line with the emphasis on personal responsibilities and characteristics of all citizens, both the NRP and NSR insist on the role of education and training to support economic and employment policies as well as social inclusion policies. The NRP puts the reduction of early school leaving as its first objective in the chapter about human capital. The Netherlands occupy the 19th place within the EU as to the indicator for education attainment level of young people. Number of initiatives are taken by national and local governments, school leaders and teachers in this field. Low income groups and people at risk of poverty are often the biggest part of the target populations of these initiatives. For government the cornerstone of the policy aimed at reducing early school leaving, is the introduction of an obligation for young people between the ages of 18 and 23 to participate in a work-study programme. This obligation is intended to ensure that young people in this age group are working or studying or engaged in a combination of the two. This obligation is not being imposed at national level. It is up to the municipalities to decide whether or not to introduce it (NRP, p. 52).

The NRP gives some indications of measures to improve the (financial) accessibility of education and training, but there is no clear reference to the improvement of this accessibility for specific target populations, such as people at risk of poverty.

2 Integration of immigrants (first and second generation) and/or ethnic minorities

Our implementation reports on the National Action Plan on social inclusion has confirmed that one of the key priorities is to increase the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities. Integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities is part of an important debate across the enlarged European Union and of major concern in Dutch policy since the Netherlands are confronted with the challenge of integrating immigrants and ethnic minorities. In 2006 the integration policy was again a hot debated issue in the political arena.

In the Netherlands the discussion on immigrants and integration has shifted from putting a great emphasis on the acceptance of cultural diversity towards a tendency to enlarge participation of ethnic groups. Dutch policy concentrates on two major objectives: increasing the labour market participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities and enlarging participation in Dutch society in economic, cultural and social respect. In this chapter we will describe the situation and the main trends of the issue in the Netherlands and discuss the policy administered.

2.1 General background on the situation of immigrants and ethnic minorities

In the Netherlands in 2005 the non-western ethnic minority population consisted of 1.7 million persons, a little more than 10% of the Dutch population.³ Half the population growth in the last three decades can be ascribed to this group. Immigration has dropped sharply in recent years since recent immigrants

³ Non-western migrants are distinguished from Western migrants including people from Europe, Northern America, Australia, Japan en Indonesia (and the former Dutch Indies).

have come to the Netherlands primarily for marriage reasons. The number of asylum-seekers has decreased since 2001. In the long run the proportion of non-western ethnic minorities in the total Dutch population is increasing due to the relatively strong growth of the second generation (SCP 2005).

For many decades the four largest ethnic groups in the Netherlands consisted of Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans (Arubans included). Since the 1990s the arrival of asylum-seekers began to change this. 'New' or refugee groups are: (former) Yugoslavians, Iraqis, Afghans, Iranians and Somalis.

Also the number of so-called marriage immigrants (people entering the Netherlands to marry an immigrant already living here), has been declining. In 2004 41.000 people migrated to the Netherlands for reasons of family formation. In 2005 this number was 30.000. It is expected that this figure will decline further in 2006 to 22.000 people. This decline can be explained by the fact that in 2004, new immigration measures were introduced requiring a higher level of income for and a higher minimum age for the person living in the Netherlands. The number of people migrating to the Netherlands for reasons of family reunification has been declining since 1996 and since 2000 the number of immigrants for family formation has become larger than that of family reunification (SCP/WODC/CBS 2005: 20).

Table 1 Population of the Netherlands of 1 January 2005

	Number of population	Part of total population (per 1000 inhabitants)	Increase since 1 January 1996	
			x 1000	%
Turks	358	22,0	86,4	32
Moroccans	315	19,3	89,6	40
Surinamese	328	20,2	47,7	17
Antilleans	130	8,0	42,9	49
(former) Yugoslavians	76	4,7	19,9	35
Iraqis	44	2,7	32,2	286
Afghans	37	2,3	31,8	646
Iranians	29	1,8	12,0	73
Somalis	22	1,3	1,6	8
Other non-western migrants	431	26,5	176,6	69
Total non-western migrants	1.692	103,9	520,9	45
Native Dutch population	13.180	809,0	184,7	1

Source: CBS

2.1.1 Integration policy

The term 'integration' is used referring to the degree to which members of ethnic minorities become part of the host society. In the Netherlands the New Integration Act (Wet Inburgering) will be operational by January 1st 2007. With this act a general obligation to integrate is introduced for all persons between the age of 16 and 65 who want to and are allowed to stay permanently in the Netherlands. The legal obligation applies to newcomers and established migrants. Those persons who do not possess the Dutch nationality and who have not lived in the Netherlands for at least 8 years during their school age and who do not have certain Dutch, Antillean or Aruba diplomas, certificates or evidence of a certain level of education, are covered by this integration obligation. All persons who are citizens of the EU/EEA and people who are being naturalised are excluded from the general integration obligation.

The integration obligation has been complied with when the integration exam has been passed. People obliged to integrate can themselves buy a course on the market of education and training suppliers. The government facilitates compliance with the integration obligation by means of a credit facility and a (standardised) reimbursement of costs made if the exam has been passed within three years. For some special groups of people with integration obligations, including certain people entitled to benefits and disadvantaged women, there will also be the possibility of an offer by the municipal authorities for an integration process combined with reintegration. Furthermore, for asylum seekers and religious leaders, the municipalities are obliged to offer an integration course.

Municipalities have a duty to enforce this to a significant extent. The most important sanction in the legislative proposal is that a municipality can impose an administrative fine if the exam has not been passed within the prescribed period (3½ years for those who have already passed the external integration exam in their country of origin, or 5 years for the others).

Since March 15th 2006 the Act of Integration Aboard is operational. This act sets as condition for obtaining a regular temporary residence permit, that people must first have a basic knowledge of the Dutch language and Dutch society before they come to the Netherlands.

2.2 Employment

In 2004 48% of non-western ethnic minorities aged between 15 and 65 had paid work for 12 hours or more per week. This figure is lower than the figure of the native Dutch population (67%) (see table 2). The net participation rate is lowest among people from Iraq (28%), Afghanistan (27%) and Somali (26%) and is related to the high unemployment among these groups. In 2004 16% of the non-western ethnic minority population were unemployed, compared to 5% of the native Dutch population (see table 3).

Unemployment among non-western ethnic minorities increased sharply after 2001 (from 9% to 16%) and at a faster rate than among the general population. The weakening economy in the period 2002-2005 is the most likely explanation for this declining labour market position. The SCP has concluded that the improvement in position of non-western ethnic minorities in the period 1995-2001 was caused primarily by the strong economy in this period and that there has not been taking place a structural improvement on the labour market for these groups (SCP 2005).

Table 2 Net Labour market participation 2004 (%)

	Total	Men	Women
Turks	46	59	33
Moroccans	37	45	28
Surinamese	62	67	58
Antilleans	52	57	46
(former) Yugoslavians	49	58	39
Iraqis	28	35	15
Afghans	27	38	10
Iranians	43	52	32
Somalis	26	40	9
Other non-western migrants	43	51	34
Total non-western migrants	48	55	39
Native Dutch population	67	76	56

Source: CBS

Position on the labour market has not only a quantitative aspect, but is also a matter of quality. Many members of ethnic minorities are forced into occupations at the lowest end of the occupational ladder. This is particularly true for Somalis, Afghans and Iraqis. The position of working members of ethnic minorities is not very stable due to the high proportion of flexible employment contracts (affecting 16% of non-western ethnic minorities compared to 6% of the native Dutch population).

On the other hand, there are clearly some positive trends. For example, the representation of ethnic minorities in middle and senior occupations is slowly but steadily increasing, and there is now a sizeable middle class of ethnic minorities.

In a letter to Parliament, dated May 2005 (TK 2004-2005 27223, nr. 66), the State Secretary of Social Affairs and Employment acknowledged the discrimination at work on the labour market. In the letter, he mentions the following facts:

- the position on the labour market of non-western ethnic minorities is clearly worse than that of the majority of Dutch people;
- their participation in the labour market lags far behind;
- their unemployment figure is significantly higher;
- their dependency on the social security system is much greater;
- and the level of their vocational skills is relatively low.

Table 3 Unemployment 2004 (%)

	Total	Men	Women
Turks	14	12	18
Moroccans	22	24	19
Surinamese	12	10	13
Antilleans	16	16	15
(former) Yugoslavians	20	20	21
Iraqis	39	40	31
Afghans	37	34	50
Iranians	25	25	25
Somalis	36	34	44
Other non-western migrants	18	20	16
Total non-western migrants	16	16	15
Native Dutch population	5	4	6

Source: CBS

The State Secretary also acknowledged that negative image building and discrimination are limiting factors for ethnic minorities when trying to enter the labour market. Negative image building concerning the usability and productivity of ethnic candidates often form the basis for the negative outcome of selection procedures for people from non-Dutch origin. Young people from ethnic minorities have more difficulty finding a practice placement than young people of Dutch descent. Discrimination is one of the causes of the inadequate rate in which this group moves on toward better positions, and of their early exit from the labour market. About one third of all interviewed ethnic minorities states to have, at one time, been the subject of discrimination at work.

The State Secretary announced in his letter that the government, the social partners, the non-governmental organisations, and the organisations of ethnic minorities are responsible for fulfilling the

promise to improving the labour market position of ethnic minorities and will be accountable to each other on this issue. To this end, the platform 'Co-operating on integration at work' has been set up. Once a year, there will also be a market, where these organisations can exchange their experiences with providing ethnic minorities with jobs.

A new measure in the NSR to stimulate the job opportunities for semi- or unskilled workers is the setting up of an interdepartmental Project Directorate Learning and Working. In 2006, this Directorate developed a stimulating measure. National government also wants to give priority to the schooling of semi- or unskilled workers within the framework of the ESF programme for 2007-2013. The encouragement of the influx of migrant workers is already materialising through several projects like, among others, the job offensive for refugees, and the counteracting of negative images and discrimination on the labour market. All the same, these projects show that the government is paying some attention to environmental factors, such as discrimination on the labour market. Another new measure aims at the stimulation of employment for migrant women. In 2006, the working group 'Migrant Women and Employment' was installed. In this working group municipalities, labour market and social security institutions, and employers co-operate to help these women to get a paid job.

2.3 Education and training

The slowly emerging rise of a middle class among ethnic minorities reflects their increasing level of education. This is a clear and continuing trend. The participation in senior streams of secondary education is growing, especially among second generation Turks and Moroccans, as is the number of entrants into higher education.

Also in general, the educational disadvantage of ethnic minorities is reducing over the last 15 years. Nevertheless, the educational level of non-western ethnic minorities is still significantly lower than that of the native Dutch population. Turks, Moroccans and Somalis have the lowest educational level; other refugee groups have a much higher level of education. The same holds true for Surinamese and Antilleans. Especially, the first-generation Turkish and Moroccan immigrants have a very low level of education, and in fact many of them have had little or no schooling at all. In addition, many Turkish and Moroccan 'marriage immigrants' and members of the so-called 'in-between generation' (people who came to the Netherlands between the ages of 6 and 18) have a low level of education. One result of this is that on average these groups have a poor command of the Dutch language. A fact which the system of obligatory language examination at embassies abroad for certain categories of persons under the Act of Integration Aboard. The educational level of second generation non-western immigrants is closer to that of the general population (SCP 2005).

2.3.1 Educational careers

The educational careers of the different groups of ethnic minority pupils receiving Dutch education are characterised by diversity. Turkish pupils perform worst, while the Surinamese perform best. Moroccan students are making up lost ground and have now caught up with Antillean students, who recently fell behind as a consequence of the migration of lowly educated Antilleans in recent years. Of the refugee groups, the Somalis are a problematic group, while Iranians do very well in the educational system: they perform equally well as Dutch pupils. The educational disadvantage of all ethnic minority groups relative to non-disadvantaged pupils is significantly greater than that of Dutch disadvantaged pupils (with low educated parents).

Pre-school members of ethnic minorities start primary school at a considerable disadvantage, especially with regard to language. Although they make up lost ground, they are still a long way behind when leaving primary school. In particular schools consisting almost entirely of ethnic minorities are working hard to make up the gap.

Almost half of all native Dutch (and Iranian) young people attend senior general secondary or pre-university schools. The same applies for a quarter of Surinamese and Antillean young people, but for fewer than one in five of Turkish and Moroccan pupils (SCP 2005). Ethnic minority pupils also encounter problems during the course of their secondary education careers: they fail exams more often, or do not even get as far as taking exams because they have already dropped out. The fight against early school leaving has been a major objective of the Dutch NAP for some years now and will remain so in the near future. The percentage of drop-outs declined with 30% in the period 2002-2006 (NAP 2006).

Once pupils of ethnic minority have obtained a school certificate, they pursue their educational careers at the highest level possible. Although still below the level for the native Dutch population, the proportion of Turkish and Moroccan young people going on to higher education has doubled since 1995. The increased participation is higher for women than for men.

2.3.2 Integration programmes

Integration programmes are regarded by the government as an instrument to promote integration. The implementation of the Newcomers Integration Act (win) makes these programmes compulsory for immigrants entering the Netherlands after 1998. Integration programmes focuses on two components: learning the language and integration into Dutch society. Together these components are part of the integration policy to enhance the social participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities.

The proportion of newcomers who are expected to participate in an integration programme on the basis of an assessment and who do actually participate has reached over 90% in recent years. A large majority (two-thirds) of the newcomers who began a programme in 2003 (cohort 2003) completed it in 2004. Of this group four out of ten have a sufficient command of the Dutch language to enable them to play a full and independent part in society (level 2 or higher of the NT2 language course) (SCP/WODC/CBS 2005: 39).

In addition to the programmes for newcomers, in 1999 integration courses were introduced which were intended to improve the disadvantaged position of ethnic minorities who were already living in the Netherlands before the introduction of the Newcomers Integration Act in 1998. Until 2005 16% of the priority target group has followed these courses (Ministry of Justice 2006: 94). Of the participants 75% are women (SCP/WODC/CBS 2005: 34).

2.4 Housing

Non-western ethnic minorities were traditionally concentrated in the densely populated west of the Netherlands, and especially in the four largest cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht). This concentration has increased in recent years, the proportion of non-western ethnic minorities in some neighbourhoods and districts has increased more than might be expected on the basis of the organic population growth. Especially Turks and Moroccans live more often than other non-western ethnic minorities in concentrated areas (see table 4).

The quality of life and safety in neighbourhoods with a high proportion of ethnic minorities is not very favourable. There is more decay and nuisance and less social cohesion in these neighbourhoods than

in (relatively) native Dutch neighbourhoods. Their residents more often fall victim to crime, which moreover takes on more serious forms, and they feel less safe (SCP 2005).

In neighbourhoods with a high concentration of ethnic minorities, non-western ethnic minorities are generally worse off than native Dutch residents, especially as regards their housing. They feel safer on the streets, but less safe in their own homes than native Dutch residents in these neighbourhoods. Social cohesion in these neighbourhoods is however perceived more positively by ethnic minority than by native Dutch residents, especially by Turks and Moroccans. This is possibly related to the fact that these groups have a lot of contact with their own ethnic group in these neighbourhoods (SCP 2005).

It is the objective of the Dutch government to strive for more mixed neighbourhoods. However, the measures taken to fight the concentration are not yet visible in the figures. It is clear that the tendency towards concentration of immigrant groups is a strong one and that can not easily be turned around (TK 2006-2007, 30 810 Jaarnota Integratiebeleid 2006). Also, it is largely a responsibility of local governments. For the near future, it will be interesting to investigate how national and local policy on this issue are intertwined.

Table 4 The distribution of non-western migrants over the country and living in the four largest cities, 2004 (%)

	North	East	South	West	4 largest cities
Turks	2,2	21,3	16,4	60,1	35,5
Moroccans	1,6	9,7	16,6	72,1	47,3
Surinamese	3,3	11,3	6,6	78,8	53,8
Antilleans	5,9	13,9	14,1	66,1	34,2
Other non-Western migrants	7,2	16,9	14,6	61,2	30,7
Total non-Western migrants	4,2	15,2	13,7	66,8	39,5
Total Dutch population	10,4	21,1	21,8	46,6	12,8

Source: CBS

2.5 Social Services

2.5.1 *Incomplete old age pensions*

People of 65 and older in the Netherlands are entitled to an old age pension provided for by the state. A precondition for receiving the pension is that the recipient has lived in the Netherlands for 50 year continuously. It will be clear that most immigrants have lived in the Netherlands for a shorter period of time. As a consequence of this their pensions are cut with a certain percentage depending on how long they have stayed here. People who have no additional occupational pensions (especially women) will drop below the low-income level. These people have a right to a supplementary benefit. However the non-use of this supplementary benefit is large and government is taking measures to combat this non-use.

An effective measure is the linking of data of these elderly people with an incomplete old age pension. In the NSR, government mentions the structural exchange of data between the Social Insurance Bank (SVB; the institution that distributes the old age pension) and the municipalities. Local government can counteract the non-use by asking the SVB for the addresses of the elderly people within their

boundaries. This enables them to try and reduce the non-use by informing this group of elderly people of their entitlement to supplementary benefit. Often, more information is not taken in by this target group, in this case mainly Turkish and Moroccan elderly. Much more effective is the pilot that is being conducted by the SVB in eight municipalities, in which they proceed to immediately pay out the supplementary benefit. They are able to reach their target group by linking their own data with those of the tax authorities, and by gathering data from elderly people potentially entitled to social assistance. This experiment will last two years. In 2008, after a positive evaluation, the pilots might be turned into a structural solution.

2.5.2 Health services

The figures show differences in the take-up of medical provision with 80% of Turkish and 81% of Surinamese older persons (55 and older) taking prescribed medicines compared to 68% of the native Dutch elderly. Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean older persons visit their GP more often than Moluccan and native Dutch older persons; among older Turks, for example, 72% have visited their GP in the last two months, compared with 48% of the Dutch population. Older Surinamese persons visit a medical specialist more often than native Dutch older persons (45% and 37%, respectively, have visited a medical specialist in the last two months). Turkish elderly persons are admitted to hospital more often than the native Dutch elderly (20% versus 15%) (SCP 2004).

The take-up of medical provisions is determined mainly by perceived health and reported chronic disorders. This applies for the use of medicines, visits to the GP, visits to a medical specialist, hospital and physiotherapist. The poorer the perceived health and the greater the number of chronic disorders, the higher the take-up of medical provisions. Yet there are also indications that in some respects take-up of medical provisions is culturally determined. Older persons with a lower degree of social and cultural integration use more prescription medicines, visit the GP more often and visit the dentist less frequently than older persons who are socio-culturally more integrated. The correlation between socio-cultural integration and the take-up of these medical provisions may be related to the perception on health by these persons.

All in all, there are few indications of lower access to health services for older people from ethnic minorities. As a result of a different perception on health, it can even be higher. One exception is the fact that older Turkish and Moroccan persons visit physiotherapists relatively little. It should be noted that the take-up of some provisions (alternative medicine, mental health care) is so low that it is difficult to establish differences in take-up in a statistically reliable manner.

The lack of indications of lower access does not mean that there are no problems in accessing medical care. There are for example indications of problems with respect to visiting the GP, and these may also apply for other medical provisions. Although Turkish and Moroccan older people are satisfied with their GP as such, they are demonstrably less satisfied than the other groups of non-western older persons. Their main problem is that they are unable to arrange appointments at short notice and that they often have difficulty understanding their GP. Many Turkish and Moroccan older people require language assistance (61% of Turks and 53% of Moroccans) when visiting their doctor. This assistance is almost never provided by professionals, but almost always by their partner or children. Language assistance is mainly needed by older Turkish and Moroccan women (SCP 2004).

Older Turks, Antilleans and Moluccans are virtually absent from the population of residential care homes; older Moroccans are completely absent. Only elderly Surinamese live in a residential home roughly as often as native Dutch older persons. The fact that so few older Turks and Moroccans live in residential care is due partly to the fact that they are still relatively young, often live with a partner and

can call on children to provide care. There are however other reasons why these older persons do not wish to go into residential care. The attitude of Turkish and Moroccan older persons to residential care is flatly negative. Also, Turkish, Moroccan and Moluccan older persons set specific conditions for a residential home, which derive from their own cultural background (SCP 2004).

2.6 Target groups

2.6.1 Diversity in the position of ethnic minority women

A high proportion of Moroccan, Somali and especially Turkish women marry young and have children early. They also often have traditional ideas and a very inward focus: they have few contacts with the Dutch population and generally marry someone from their own ethnic group, often a 'marriage immigrant'. They are also in the worst position structurally, which is not only reflected in their own position on the labour market, but also in the school performance of their children. There are however considerable differences within ethnic groups. Among young Turkish and Moroccan women, for example, there is a group with modern ideas, who progress a long way in education and have ambitions on the labour market. On the other hand there is a group of girls who prefer to marry and have children at a young age and who consequently do not complete their education (SCP 2005).

At the other end of the spectrum are Surinamese, Antillean and Iranian women. These groups are modern in their relationship-formation and family-formation patterns, and also in their cultural opinions. Moreover, they have a relatively large number of contacts with the Dutch population and perform better than any other ethnic minority women in education and – albeit Iranian women to a lesser extent – on the labour market. Surinamese women have a paid job more often than native Dutch women (see table 2).

In the Netherlands the target of net labour market participation for women in 2010 is 65%. Since the net labour market participation of women with a Turkish or Moroccan background is still rather low (see table 2), it is not realistic that this group will reach this target in 2010. Specific measures for these groups of women are still necessary. Otherwise they will stay behind in both the short run and the long run. The Dutch government is aware of this and stimulation of (labour market) participation is a strong part of Dutch emancipation policy.

Local governments play an important role in stimulating the (labour market) participation of women from ethnic minorities. So-called local participation teams (P-teams) consisting of women form groups of migrant women are set up to stimulate economic and social participation.

2.7 Information, communication and culture

In their free time a vast majority of the Turks predominantly have contacts with members of their own ethnic group; this is more than any other ethnic minority group studied. Turks feel less 'Dutch' than the other groups. Also, Moroccans and Somalis spend most of their free time with people from their own ethnic groups. The picture is completely different for Iranians, of whom three-quarters have a mixed or predominantly native Dutch circle of friends. (Former) Yugoslavians also often spend their free time with native Dutch people, as do Surinamese and Antilleans (SCP 2005).

Marriages between ethnic and native partners are rare among Turks and Moroccans: around 5% of the marriages in 2001 were mixed; around 90% of marriages were between partners from the same ethnic group, and in roughly two-thirds of cases the partner was a 'marriage immigrant' from the country of

origin. Mixed marriages are much more common among people of Surinamese and Antillean origin (SCP 2005).

Almost all Turks, Moroccans, Afghans and Somalis are followers of Islam. By contrast, Iranians regard themselves strikingly little as being members of any religion. Surinamese and Antilleans also often follow a religion, usually Christianity or Hinduism. Turks and Moroccans have very strong personal ties with their religion and they display great resistance if doubt is cast on their religion by others or if their religion is spoken about in negative terms. Moroccans display more active religious behaviour than Turks and are also more traditional in their views regarding the wearing of a headscarf, following the rules of Islam and spreading Islam in the Netherlands. Women are more orthodox than men, and Moroccan women are more orthodox than Turkish women. Generally, people with a higher educational level, the young and members of the second generation are less religious both in their behaviour and in their religious dedication (SCP 2005).

Both the native Dutch and ethnic minority populations are fairly severe in their views about admitting minority groups, reserving their strongest views for economic refugees. The views of the two groups are also similar as regards integration. Almost all believe that members of ethnic minorities should learn the Dutch language, and many feel that many ethnic minorities are by no means sufficiently integrated. Overall, views on the multicultural society appear to have become more negative.

2.7.1 Local initiative

On the other hand, a number of initiatives are mentioned that are meant to improve social cohesion and to fight against prejudices and discrimination. Also local authorities give much attention to initiatives for dialogue and "shared citizenship". These initiatives show a continuing acceptance of (the reality of) cultural diversity. What is missing here is the translation in clear objectives and indicators. This is certainly the result of the fact that in all its measures, the NSR declares that the first responsibility for change lays always with the individual facing a problem.

2.8 Emigration

The Netherlands are traditionally more an immigration than an emigration country. In the recent period 1995-2001 the balance of migration was not only positive but also rising rapidly. After 2001 this trend has changed. The balance of migration is still positive, but the number of immigrants is only slightly larger than the number of emigrants. Especially, the number of asylum seekers has been decreasing. In the period 1995-2001 a quarter of a million asked asylum in the Netherlands, circa 40.000 per year. In 2002 the number of asylum seekers has decreased to less than 19.000 (SCP 2003). Also the number of marriage immigrants is on the decline

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