



'Moderate population growth best to preserve general well-being, says the State Committee Demographic Developments 2050'

According to the State Committee Demographic Developments 2050, shaping moderate population growth until 2050 is vital to the level of well-being in the Netherlands. Keeping housing, healthcare and education accessible to all in the Netherlands and to increase quality of life calls for a productive economy. In addition, this requires political decisions regarding the desired scope and different forms of migration.

Richard van Zwol, chairman of the state committee:

"We need to make choices about migration, focusing on a society that is highly productive as well as marked by strong social cohesion. That is necessary to keep education, healthcare, housing and social security accessible to all in the Netherlands in the long run."

Not only the size of the population but also its composition is set to change in the coming decades. Cultural diversity is increasing, and the ageing of the population will peak in the next 10-15 years, resulting in a permanently 'older' society as 2050 nears. In its report 'Moderate growth', the state committee highlights that population ageing may lead to increasing personnel shortages in areas such as healthcare and education. Furthermore, decisions are also needed to provide adequate housing for smaller, often single, households in a permanently 'older' society. The effects of migration and population ageing differ markedly across regions, putting further pressure on access to services. In addition, the differences in well-being between generations, by level of education and between native Dutch and people with a migration background are likely to increase. That has implications for our country's social cohesion.

The state committee therefore advises the shaping of a moderate population growth to 19-20 million people by 2050 to address pressures on the housing market, on access to healthcare and education but also support economic growth. This policy calls for a consistent long-term vision and approach across successive cabinets, with a commitment to maintain a high-productivity economy and ultimately supporting well-being. This aim to moderate growth requires among others national and international political decisions about the desired, long-term bandwidths for labour, family, asylum and student migration.

Moderate growth offers better prospects for the Dutch population in 2050 than a scenario of population decline (below the current 18 million inhabitants) or a high growth scenario to 21-23 million inhabitants.

Van Zwol: *'Focusing now on moderate population growth towards 2050 will help to minimise scarcity of public services and inequality between social groups as much as possible.'*

Preparing for a changing and older population requires taking account of the trade-offs in spatial planning and housing, the economy and public services. Combining the desired economic policy and the future spatial design of the Netherlands, including innovative housing construction, also presents opportunities for climate and energy transitions. The state committee stresses that political decisions are not only necessary, but also realistic and possible. That, in essence, is the answer to the question of the House of Representatives that called for the establishment of this state committee.

Background information state committee:

The State Committee Demographic Developments 2050 was established well over a year ago, per the request by the House of Representatives. The report of the committee (www.staatscommissie2050.nl) discusses demographic scenarios towards 2050 (part I), its effects on spatial planning, economy, and public facilities (part II), and offers political courses of action from the perspective of general well-being and social cohesion (part III). The state committee aims, as requested by the House of Representatives, to publish an additional report about the demographic developments for the Caribbean Netherlands.