



Ministry of Social Affairs and  
Employment



# *New in the Netherlands*

## About this brochure

If you come from the European Union and want to work and live in the Netherlands and you do not come from Bulgaria or Romania, then this brochure gives a brief description of all necessary actions you must take after your arrival. From registering with the municipality where you live, your rights and obligations as an employee or self-employed person, to the rules and customs on living in the Netherlands.

We have tried to give as much information in the brochure as possible. If you want more information about a certain topic, you can find this via the Internet site referred to. In case of an emergency, you can also contact your country's embassy in the Netherlands.

# What you have to arrange right away

After your arrival in the Netherlands, you will have to arrange a number of important matters.

## Register with the municipality

If you intend to stay in the Netherlands for more than four months, you have to register with the municipality where you are going to live. You will have to do this within five days after your first day in the Netherlands. Have you already been in the Netherlands for four months? In that case, you should register as soon as possible. You can register at the town hall. If your partner or children come to live here, they must also register and come with you to the town hall for this.

Bring the following documents with you to the town hall:

- For each person to be registered: a valid passport or identity card.
- A tenancy or sales contract of your house in the Netherlands.  
Do you live in with someone? In that case, you should have this person draw up and sign a statement. Also bring a copy of his or her identity document with you.
- All birth certificates of you and your children and any marriage certificates (also of any previous marriages), translated by a sworn translator into one of the modern languages (you can also provide these at a later date).

The registration with the municipality is free of charge. After your registration, you will receive your citizen service number (burgerservicenummer or BSN). You will need this number in order to arrange all kinds of matters. For example, in the hospital, at school, with your employer or with benefits agencies.

If you leave the Netherlands again, you will have to deregister with your municipality. If you move to another municipality, you will have to inform the new municipality of your new address.

## Take out healthcare insurance

If you live or work in the Netherlands, you are obliged by law to take out Dutch healthcare insurance yourself. The insurance company will pay for part of the costs of the general practitioner, medicines and the hospital. If you already have healthcare insurance in your country of origin, you also have to take out healthcare insurance in the Netherlands. You take out a healthcare insurance policy with a healthcare insurer. The insured basic package is the same for each insurer, but the premium may differ per healthcare insurer. In addition, you may consider taking out supplementary insurance. You pay the premium yourself. You can include children up to the age of 18 under your policy free of charge. You can also ask your employer if he

has group healthcare insurance that you can join. In that case, you have to make sure that you have the policy in your possession.

More information about healthcare insurers can be found at: [www.kiesbeter.nl](http://www.kiesbeter.nl) or <http://english.minvws.nl/en/folders/z/2008/compulsory-health-insurance-if-you-work-in-the-netherlands.asp>.

If your joint income is not too high, you may qualify for a contribution towards the costs of your healthcare insurance. The amount of the care benefit depends on your income level. More information can be found at: [www.toeslagen.nl](http://www.toeslagen.nl) or call the Tax Information Line (0800-0543).

## Register with the IND

You have to register with the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst or IND) if you intend to stay in the Netherlands for more than three months. For this, you can call the IND via telephone number 0900-1234561 on working days from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. You state that you are calling for the appointments line. You will then be given an appointment with an IND desk in your region where you can register. If you have been in the Netherlands for three months, you should make an appointment with the IND as soon as possible.

Once you have made an appointment, a letter will be sent to your home. This letter will state the documents that you have to bring with you to the appointment. During the appointment, the IND will check whether you meet all conditions.

The registration with the IND is free of charge. After your registration, a sticker will be put in your passport. You do not receive a residence permit. More information about the registration can be found at: [www.ind.nl](http://www.ind.nl).

## Termination of the lawful residence in the Netherlands

Should you become an unreasonable burden on the social assistance system, your lawful residence may be terminated in accordance with European regulations and you will have to leave the Netherlands.

If you are guilty of criminal offences, the lawful residence in the Netherlands may be terminated and you may be declared an undesirable alien. This means that you will have to leave the Netherlands and may be prosecuted if you are found in the territory of the Netherlands.



# Working in the Netherlands

Here, you can find important information about your rights and obligations as an employee or self-employed person.

## In salaried employment

### *Citizen service number/tax and social insurance number*

If you want to work in the Netherlands, you will need a citizen service number or tax and social insurance number. You will receive a citizen service number if you register with the municipality. If you are not yet registered with a municipality, you should still do this. If you intend to stay in the Netherlands for less than 4 months, you can apply for a tax and social insurance number with the Tax and Customs Administration. More information can be found at: [www.burgerservicenummer.nl](http://www.burgerservicenummer.nl) and [www.belastingdienst.nl](http://www.belastingdienst.nl).

### *Compulsory identification*

If you start working, your employer will ask you to show a valid identity document. Your employer must keep a copy of your identity document. You must always be able to identify yourself at your work.

### *Employment conditions*

If you are employed by a Dutch company, you receive wage from your employer. Your employer also pays tax and contributions on your behalf. The employer withholds them from your gross wage and then pays them to the tax authorities. As a result, your net wage will be lower than your gross wage. Your employer must demonstrate this in a payslip.

Most companies fall under a collective agreement (CAO). A CAO consists of agreements on employment conditions between employers and trade unions, which apply to all employers and employees in a certain sector, therefore also for you as a foreign employee. The CAO also states the amount of the wage and the customary work week. Do you want to know if your company falls under a CAO? In that case, visit [www.caoweb.nl](http://www.caoweb.nl), ask your employer about this or contact a trade union.

In the Netherlands, a minimum wage and minimum holiday allowance apply. Your employer may not pay you less than this amount. A lower minimum wage applies to employees under the age of 23 than to employees above the age of 23. More information can be found at [www.rijksoverheid.nl/minimumloon](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/minimumloon) or [www.inspectieszw.nl](http://www.inspectieszw.nl).

If you are paid less than the minimum wage, you should contact the Inspectorate SZW ([www.inspectieszw.nl](http://www.inspectieszw.nl) / 0800-5151). If, as a temporary employee, you are paid less than the wage stated in the CAO, you should contact the Foundation for Compliance with the Collective Agreement

for Temporary Employees (Stichting Naleving CAO voor Uitzendkrachten or SNCU) ([www.sncu.nl](http://www.sncu.nl) / 0180-642530). If you are employed directly by your employer and you are paid less than the wage stated in the CAO, you should contact a trade union.

### *Working hours*

On average, your employer may not have you work more than 45 hours per week. On average, you may not work more than 10 hours per day. Occasionally working overtime is allowed. If you work at night, you may not work more than 40 hours per week on average. You have the right to one or more short breaks in between. More information can be found at: [www.inspectieszw.nl](http://www.inspectieszw.nl). If you have to work too many hours, you should report this to the Inspectorate SZW.

### *Safe workplace*

Your employer must ensure a safe and healthy working environment. In dangerous situations, your employer must provide means for personal protection. For example, special clothing, a helmet or safety glasses. He may not charge you for this. More information can be found at [www.inspectieszw.nl](http://www.inspectieszw.nl). If you believe that you have to perform work that is unsafe, you should report this to the Inspectorate SZW.

### *Tax return*

In the Netherlands, you have to pay tax on your income. If you are employed, your employer will deduct an amount for this from your wage. In some cases, this could result in your paying too much tax on a yearly basis. In that case, you can file a tax return. In that case, you will, each year, have to inform the Tax and Customs Administration of your earnings over the past year by 1 April. If you have paid too much tax, you will receive a refund. For more information, visit [www.belastingdienst.nl](http://www.belastingdienst.nl), call the Tax Information Line (0800-0543) or call the Tax information Line Non-resident Tax issues (+31 (0)55-5385385).

Make sure that any benefits from the Tax and Customs Administration are paid into your own bank account. If you leave the Netherlands, you should discontinue any benefits you applied for in time.

### *Unemployment, illness or incapacity for work*

If you stop working in the Netherlands, you will probably return to your country of origin. Do you work in salaried employment or as a temporary employee and do you become unemployed through no fault of your own? In that case, you may be entitled to an unemployment benefit. For



this, you must, in any case, have worked for at least 26 weeks during the past 36 weeks. A person receiving a benefit is obliged to look for another job.

If you are ill, your employer will continue to pay your wage. The first two days may be unpaid. During your illness, you will, in any case, receive 70 percent of your wage. This is, however, bound by a maximum daily wage. After two years of illness, it will be assessed whether you are entitled to an invalidity benefit under the Work and Income (Capacity for Work) Act (Wet werk en inkomen naar arbeidsvermogen or WIA).

If you become ill and have no employer (for example if you are a temporary employee), you may receive 'sick pay' under the Sickness Benefits Act (Ziektewet). More information about the Sickness Benefits Act and the WIA can be found at [www.uvw.nl](http://www.uvw.nl).

If, for example, you want to qualify for social security benefits in the Netherlands (for example if you apply for a social assistance benefit), it is advisable to ask the IND if this has any consequences for your right of residence. More information can be found at: [www.ind.nl](http://www.ind.nl).

### **Exploitation**

Unfortunately, it happens in the Netherlands that labour migrants are exploited by employers. So please pay attention to any documents you sign! Exploitation may exist if you recognise one or more of the following features; serious underpayment, severe or unsafe working conditions, deception, intimidation, a restriction of liberty and independence by the employer. In that case, it is extra

important that you report this to the Inspectorate SZW or anonymously to Report Crime Anonymously (Meld Misdaad Anoniem) (0800-7000). Victims can turn to the FairWork Foundation (020-7600809) for assistance.

### **Working as a self-employed person**

#### *The Chamber of Commerce*

If you start your own business, you should register with the Chamber of Commerce. This is usually done by appointment. You should register between one week before and one week after the start of your business. A charge is made for the registration. More information can be found at: [www.kamervanakoophandel.nl](http://www.kamervanakoophandel.nl).

#### *Tax and Customs Administration*

If you start working in the Netherlands as a self-employed person, you should apply for a Declaration of Independent Contractor Status (Verklaring Arbeidsrelatie or VAR) with the Dutch Tax and Customs Administration. With this declaration, the Tax and Customs Administration informs you of its assessment of your situation. In some cases, the Tax and Customs Administration will still regard you as an employee. In that case, your customers have to pay taxes and national insurance contributions for you.

If you work as a self-employed person, you have to pay taxes and national insurance contributions yourself. In that case, you will, each year, have to inform the Tax and Customs Administration of your earnings over the past year by 1 April. For more information, visit [www.belastingdienst.nl](http://www.belastingdienst.nl), call the Tax Information Line (0800-0543) or call the Tax information Line Non-resident Tax issues (+31 (0)55-5385385).

# Living in the Netherlands

Here, you can find important information about your rights and obligations regarding living in the Netherlands.

## Identity document

In the Netherlands, you have to be able to prove your identity. That is why you are obliged to carry a valid identity document with you. This could be your passport or an identity card. Never give your passport or identity document to your employer or temporary employment agency for safekeeping.

## Accommodation

If you come to live in the Netherlands but your employer does not accommodate you, you will have to arrange for accommodation yourself. Rented accommodation is let, among others, by housing associations. You have to register there in order to qualify for a house. You also have to be registered in the municipal personal records database (GBA). Information can be obtained from the municipality. You can also rent a house from a private landlord. Holiday homes are intended for recreation; it is not allowed to live in a recreation park as a labour migrant. Under the Housing Allocation Act (Huisvestingswet), municipal authorities may prescribe rules pertaining to housing allocation and letting of rooms in houses. The municipality can provide you with more information about this.

Do you rent a house and do you spend a lot of money on rent in proportion to your income? In that case, you may receive a rent allowance, provided that you are registered in the GBA. For more information: [www.toeslagen.nl](http://www.toeslagen.nl) or call the Tax Information Line (0800-0543). You can also contact the rent assessment committee if you have any questions about the level of your rent ([www.huurcommissie.nl](http://www.huurcommissie.nl)).

## Municipal charges

In the municipality where you live, you pay levies (for example sewerage and waste collection levies) and taxes (for example property tax). If you arrange for your accommodation yourself, you also have to pay water board tax. The amount of these levies and taxes differs per municipality. You can contact your municipality for more information.

## Waste

All municipalities have rules on collecting household waste, bulky waste, pruning waste, domestic appliances or chemical waste. The municipality can provide you with information on the rules.

## Language course

It is necessary that you learn Dutch as soon as possible, for example in order to communicate on work safety, with government agencies and with the school of your children. You can contact your municipality for more information about the available courses. Also ask your employer about the possibilities of following a language course.

Especially for people who want to work and live in the Netherlands, there are a multimedia self-study packages Civic Integration. The packages offer learning of the Dutch language at a basic level, so you can better find your way at the labour market and in the Dutch society. The package 'Zelf starten met Nederlands' (isbn 978946058089) costs about € 75,- and is available in English, Polish, Romanian and Bulgarian. More information can be found at: [www.zelfstartenmetnederlands.nl](http://www.zelfstartenmetnederlands.nl). The package 'Naar Nederland' (costs about € 110,-) and is among others available in Portuguese, Spanish, French and English. Both packages are available at (internet)bookshops and through [www.ntz.nl](http://www.ntz.nl).

## Your car

Do you bring your car with you to the Netherlands? If you have your principal residence in the Netherlands, you have to register your car with the Government Road Transport Agency (Rijksdienst voor het Wegverkeer or RDW). You will then also be obliged to pay Dutch road tax. If you are staying in the Netherlands temporarily and the Netherlands is not your principal residence, you do not have to register your car in the Netherlands. For more information about your specific situation, you can contact the RDW ([www.rdw.nl/nl/particulier/internationalvisitor](http://www.rdw.nl/nl/particulier/internationalvisitor) / 0900-0739). The RDW can also provide you with information on import taxes, applying for a driving licence and exchanging your driving licence for a Dutch driving licence. You can also contact your municipality for more information about driving licences.

## Children

### *School and compulsory education*

All children in the Netherlands between the age of 5 and 18 are obliged to go to school and obtain a diploma (unless they have already obtained a senior secondary vocational education (level 2), senior general secondary education or pre-university education diploma). It is not allowed to keep children away from school outside the school holidays.



### *Childcare*

In the Netherlands, it is possible to make use of childcare (age 0-4), playgroups (age 2-4) and out-of-school care (age 4-12). Childcare helps parents to combine work and care. Many childcare facilities and playgroups pay extra attention to children with a delay in the Dutch language. You can contact your municipality for more information. If your children go to childcare, you may be entitled to childcare allowance. This is a contribution towards the costs of childcare. More information can be found at: [www.toeslagen.nl](http://www.toeslagen.nl).

### *Vaccination*

In the Netherlands, children up to the age of 12 are vaccinated against twelve different dangerous infectious diseases, including hepatitis, tetanus and polio. You are not obliged to have your child vaccinated. The vaccinations are given free of charge at the early childhood clinic or the Municipal Health Service (GGD). More information can be found at: [www.ggd.nl](http://www.ggd.nl).

### *Early childhood clinic and parenting support*

In the Netherlands, most municipalities have a Youth and Family Centre (Centrum voor Jeugd en Gezin or CJG). Here, parents and young persons can ask all their questions about

health, growing up and bringing up. A CJG offers tailored advice, support and assistance. More information can be found at [www.cjg.nl](http://www.cjg.nl).

### *General practitioner*

If you live in the Netherlands, it is advisable to register with a general practitioner. If you register with a general practitioner, you will know for sure that there is a physician available for you. In that case, you can usually also visit a GP out-of-hours surgery in the evening, at night and at the weekend. Moreover, your medical file will be updated if you are registered with a general practitioner. You will need a referral from the general practitioner for specialist care, if you want the costs of this care to be reimbursed by your healthcare insurer.

### *General Social Services and primary care facilities*

If a person is in need of care (medical or social care), he or she can rely on primary care and general social services. Primary care services provide the care if you are ill; the general practitioner is the first point of contact. Social services can assist you with all kinds of questions on housing, welfare, care and education. You can contact your municipality for more information.

# More information and assistance

## Trade union

As an employee, you can choose to become a member of a trade union. A trade union represents your interests with respect to your employer. Moreover, you can contact it for information about your CAO, help with filling in your tax form and for legal support should you have any problems. For more information, you can contact a trade union, for example the Dutch Trade Union Confederation ([www.fnv.nl](http://www.fnv.nl)) or the National Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the Netherlands ([www.cnv.nl](http://www.cnv.nl)).

## Embassy/consular information

You can also contact your country's embassy for additional information about living and working in the Netherlands. In the unlikely event that you run into problems, for example because of an accident, or come into contact with the police, it is advisable to contact your embassy. The embassy can also help you with specific information about concurrence of regulations in the Netherlands and that in your own country.

## Telephone information

Migrada, an interest group for labour migrants, has set up a telephone information system for labour migrants. If you call this number, you can listen to all topics discussed in this brochure in your own language. Moreover, you can also choose to be put through to other organisations, such as trade unions, information centres, but also government agencies such as the Inspectorate SZW or the Tax and Customs Administration. The telephone number is: 085-4010440.

## Municipality

You can contact your municipality for additional information about municipal services such as collecting waste and parking regulations.

More information can be found at: [www.rijksoverheid.nl](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl).

This brochure can be found in several languages at: [www.newinthenetherlands.nl](http://www.newinthenetherlands.nl).

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