

## Summary

### New Spanish migrants in the Netherlands

The steep rise in the Spanish unemployment rate has prompted more and more Spaniards to migrate to the Netherlands since the onset of the economic crisis. There were approximately 40,000 Spaniards registered as living in the Netherlands in 2015, compared with 28,000 in early 1996. However, little is known about recent Spanish migrants to the Netherlands. Do they come for work or to study? What are their experiences during the first post-migration phase? Do they find their place on the Dutch labour market? And what about their social situation: do they rapidly establish contacts with native Dutch citizens, for example? In this report we describe the characteristics of recent Spanish migrants to the Netherlands and track the progress of their integration. The report addresses two key questions: 1. What is the position of Spanish migrants in Dutch society shortly after their migration? 2. How does the position of Spanish migrants in the Netherlands develop in the first post-migration years?

Just over 1,300 Spaniards who were entered in the Dutch population registers between mid-2012 and the end of 2013 took part in this study. They completed a survey within 18 months of registering in the Municipal Personal Records Database (BRP); those who were still living in the Netherlands 18 months later, and who were willing to take part again, completed a second survey. This report thus describes the situation for *registered* recent migrants from Spain; it does not discuss the position of unregistered migrants.

#### Young, unmarried and well-educated urban migrants

Recent Spanish migrants tend to be very well educated: no fewer than 78% held a higher education degree or postgraduate qualification on their migration to the Netherlands. They are mostly unmarried, have no children and predominantly come from urban settings in the Madrid, Catalonia and Andalusia regions of Spain. They are also young: 84% of recent migrants from Spain are below the age of 35. The majority came to the Netherlands for work or study. If they have a partner, that partner is relatively often not Spanish (40% of cases).

#### Majority in professional or technical occupations, working (at least) full-time in temporary jobs

A high proportion of Spanish migrants (41%) were unemployed in Spain. Their arrival in the Netherlands enables them to improve their position in this regard: far fewer (17%) are unemployed shortly after migration. For the most part, Spanish migrants obtain work in the Netherlands through official channels. This contrasts with migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, for example, who much more often find work by word of mouth. 65% of Spanish migrants working in the Netherlands are employed in professional or technical jobs (e.g. as researchers, teachers, engineers, nurses or IT specialists). Over 50% work

between 36 and 40 hours per week; 20% work more than 40 hours per week. The share of (working) Spaniards with permanent employment contracts is low (29%), as is the proportion in self-employment (6%). By way of comparison, the proportion of working Dutch natives with permanent contracts stood at 74% in 2013, and the share of self-employed workers was 16%. A large majority (66%) are satisfied with the income they receive from their work in the Netherlands; 20% are dissatisfied with their income.

### Most expect stay to be temporary

Of the total number of recent migrants from Spain, 17% expect to continue living in the Netherlands. Almost 60% expect to leave the Netherlands again: 40% to go back to Spain and 20% to move on to another country. In line with the low proportion who expect to remain in the Netherlands, few recent migrants from Spain have a good command of the Dutch language: around 15% can understand or read Dutch, while fewer than 10% can speak and write Dutch well. By contrast, Spanish migrants have an excellent command of English, with almost 90% stating that they have a good or very good command of the language.

### Limited attachment to the Netherlands

Unsurprisingly given the limited period for which they expect to remain in the Netherlands, recent migrants from Spain follow more Spanish than Dutch media, and in particular retain an interest in Spanish politics: over 70% are very or somewhat interested in Spanish politics, while just over 40% have an interest in Dutch politics. Questions focusing on identification also indicate that their identification with Spain (and Europe) is stronger than their identification with the Netherlands. At the same time there are many social contacts with Dutch natives: over 50% of recent Spanish migrants have contact with both fellow Spaniards and native Dutch citizens at least weekly.

### Satisfied with life in the Netherlands, but a minority feel at home

The vast majority of Spanish migrants (81%) are satisfied with their lives in the Netherlands, and most feel that their life situation in the Netherlands is comparable with (49%) or better than (35%) that in Spain. Despite this high satisfaction level, only one in three feel at home in the Netherlands such a relatively short time after migrating. A majority of Spanish migrants say they are satisfied with the way they are received in the host country: 70% describe the Netherlands as hospitable to people from their country, and the proportion who frequently or very frequently experience discrimination against their group is relatively low, at 7%.

### Migrants are a secular and progressive group; not a cross-section of the Spanish population

Almost half of recent migrants from Spain say they do not adhere to any religion. That is a much higher percentage than in the population in Spain, over 90% of whom describe themselves as Catholic. Recent migrants from Spain hold progressive attitudes on gender

roles, homosexuality and divorce. Here again, they differ from the general Spanish population. These differences tally with the finding that these migrants tend to be young and well educated.

### Spaniards without work and with a Spanish partner most likely to emigrate from the Netherlands

In April 2015, 18 months after the first survey, the administrative records held by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) showed that a quarter of the Spanish migrants who took part in the first study had left the Netherlands again. Those who have found a job in the Netherlands and moved in with a partner are less likely to leave. Those with a Spanish partner, by contrast, are substantially more likely to leave. It is unknown whether those who leave return to Spain or migrate to a third country.

### Spaniards improve their labour market position and language skills after a longer stay

The study also investigated what changes occur after a longer period in the Netherlands (up to three years after migration) among those respondents who were still living in the Netherlands three years after the initial study. The proportion of Spanish migrants in work was found to have increased, as had their command of the Dutch language. The changes in the areas of language and the labour market are greater than the sociocultural changes. Where changes do occur on the sociocultural front, they tend to reflect an increased focus on Spain and a somewhat weaker attachment to the Netherlands. This appears to be connected to the fact that many Spanish migrants expect to remain in the Netherlands temporarily (three years after migration, only 25% of this group wish to continue living in the Netherlands).

### Conclusion

The majority of recent Spanish migrants to the Netherlands who took part in the study and who are entered in the population register match the profile of highly skilled migrants: they are mobile, very highly educated, speak English well, are working in senior positions or studying in Dutch higher education and are not particularly interested in settling in the Netherlands. This is apparent among other things from their desire to remain only temporarily, and also from their limited attachment to the Netherlands, which does not increase with their length of stay. We also observe – as with the first wave of Spanish migrants in the 1960s and 70s – a high level of Spanish emigration from the Netherlands.