



Ministry of Social Affairs and
Employment

This brochure can be found in various languages at
www.newinthenetherlands.nl

New in the Netherlands

European labour migrants

About this brochure

If you come from the European Union, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland, or Switzerland and want to work and live in the Netherlands, then this brochure is for you. When it comes to working, nationals of Croatia, which joined the EU on 1 July 2013, are still subject to different rules. See the text under the heading Working in the Netherlands.

Welcome to the Netherlands. This brochure gives a brief description of all necessary actions you must take after your arrival. From registering with the municipality, 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. Unfortunately, this information is not always available in your native language, but often in English. If you dial a telephone number mentioned in this brochure, you can usually not talk to someone who speaks your native language. In most cases, however, you can speak English. 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 as a resident of the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, you need a Citizen Service Number (Burgerservicenummer or BSN) in order to work. You also need this number if you buy or rent a house, enrol your children in a school or visit a general practitioner or hospital. You are given this number if you register in the Personal Records Database of the municipality. The registration with the municipality is free of charge.

You can register as a resident or non-resident. If you register as a resident of the Netherlands, you will have various obligations and rights: the obligation to pay municipal tax, and the rights to receive rent benefit, to register with a housing association and to enrol your children in a school, for example.

Are you staying for less than 4 months?

If you are staying in the Netherlands for less than four months, you can register as a non-resident. You can do so with one of the 18 municipalities that have a special desk for this purpose. If your partner and children are going to live in the Netherlands, they can also register. Bring a valid passport or identity card with you to the town hall when you register. This also applies to your partner and children when they register. More information about the registration as a non-resident can be found on the website www.government.nl/issues/foreign-nationals-working-in-the-netherlands/residence-permits-and-the-registration-of-foreign-workers.

Are you staying for more than 4 months?

If you want to stay in the Netherlands for more than 4 months, you must register as a resident with the municipality where you live. You must do so within 5 days after your first day in the Netherlands. If you are already registered as a non-resident and still stay in the Netherlands for more than 4 months, you should notify the municipality where you are living at that time as soon as possible. You can register at the town hall. If your partner or children live here, they must also register and come 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 showing that you live in with him or her. Also bring a copy of his or her identity document with you.

Will you be moving?

If you are registered as a resident and you move back to your country of origin, you must notify your municipality. This is not

necessary if you are registered as a non-resident. In both cases, you will keep the Dutch Citizen Service Number for any future use. If you move to a different municipality in the Netherlands, you must register with the new municipality. If you move within the municipality, you must also notify the municipality.

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. Some employers have group healthcare insurance for all their employees, which you can join. Ask your employer. In that case, you have to make sure that you have a policy schedule and policy conditions in your possession. If you only come to work here and are staying for less than 4 months, you need not register as a resident with the municipality where you are residing. In that case, the healthcare insurer will ask for a statement from your employer.

More information about rights and obligations with respect to healthcare insurance can be found at: www.zorgverzekeringlijn.nl. See also the information about what happens if you do not take out healthcare insurance: www.cvz.nl/verzekering/onverzekerden. If your income is not too high, part of the costs of your healthcare insurance may often be reimbursed to you. This is called 'care benefit'. More information can be found at: www.toeslagen.nl.

Lawful residence in the Netherlands

Are you a citizen of a country that belongs to the European Union (EU) or of Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland or Switzerland? In that case you do not need a residence permit to live or work in the Netherlands. Your passport (or ID card) from that country then serves as proof that you are residing legally in the Netherlands and are permitted to work here. An exception applies to persons of Croatian nationality. Citizens of Croatia may not work here without a work permit. See also the section under 'Working in the Netherlands' in this regard. Croats may apply for a residence document as proof of lawful residence. This is not obligatory however.

Are you a citizen of a country not mentioned above? In that case you must always apply to the IND for a residence document in order to live and work in the Netherlands, even if you are married to a Dutch citizen or a citizen of another EU country. For further information go to: www.ind.nl

Working in the Netherlands

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

Employees from the European Union, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland can come to the Netherlands to work without a residence permit. Their employer does not require a work permit. Nationals of Croatia are only allowed to work with a work permit.

Preparation for your arrival in the Netherlands

Are you planning to go to the Netherlands to work and live? EURES is a European organisation that can help you with this. EURES provides information about the Dutch labour market, vacancies, placing a curriculum vitae, living and working conditions, contact with EURES advisors and (transitional measures) with respect to the free movement of persons within Europe. See www.ec.europa.eu/eures. On the website www.werk.nl/eures, you can find more information about looking for a job, the labour market, applying for a job, support by the Netherlands Employees Insurance Agency (Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemers Verzekering or UWV) and about housing.

Being employed

Citizen service number

If you want to work in the Netherlands, you will need a citizen service number. You will be given a citizen service number when you register with the municipality. If you are not yet registered with a municipality, you should proceed to do so.

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.



Working through a temporary employment agency

If you are going to work in the Netherlands through a temporary employment agency, then the temporary employment agency must be registered in the Commercial Register of the Chamber of Commerce. This is something you can check. You can also check whether your temporary employment agency is certified (approved) by the Dutch Labour Standards Association (Stichting Normering Arbeid, SNA). In that case, you will have more certainty that you are working through a reliable temporary employment agency. More information can be found at www.kamervankoophandel.nl and www.normeringarbeid.nl.

A temporary employment agency may be a member of a trade organisation. This organisation checks their members for compliance with the collective agreement and sets quality criteria to be met by their members. More information about this can be found at www.abu.nl and www.via-eu.com. If, as a temporary worker, you are paid less than the wage under the collective agreement, you should contact the SNCU (Foundation for Compliance with Collective Agreement for Temporary Workers, www.sncu.nl / 0180-642530).

Wage

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 amount of the wage, the holiday allowance and the usual working week can also be found in the CAO. If you want to know whether your company falls under a CAO, you can ask your employer or contact a trade union. If there is no CAO, your employer must at least pay you the statutory minimum wage and the statutory minimum holiday allowance. Your employer may not pay you any less.

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.government.nl/issues/minimum-wage or www.inspectieszw.nl.

If, as an employee or temporary worker, you are paid less than the minimum wage, you should contact the Inspectorate SZW, (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, 0800-7008). 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

Your working hours have been laid down in your CAO and in the Working Hours Act (Arbeidstijdenwet). Your CAO will state the number of hours constituting a full-time working week (usually 36, 38 or 40 hours). If you work more hours, you will work overtime. A different remuneration applies to overtime. On average, your employer may not have you work more than 48 hours per week. Occasionally working overtime is allowed. You may work no more than 12 hours per shift and no more than 60 hours per week, never more. You have the right to one or more short breaks in between.

If you work at night, you may not work more than 40 hours per week on average. More information can be found at:

www.inspectieszw.nl. If you have to work too many hours, you should report this to the Inspectorate SZW; telephone number: 0800-5151.

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. Working at building sites, in the horticulture sector and working with chemicals and hazardous substances (such as asbestos) involve specific risks. For that reason there are special rules to protect your health and safety.

More information can be found at www.inspectieszw.nl. If you believe that you have to perform work that is unsafe, you should report this to the Inspectorate SZW; telephone number: 0800-5151.

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 (telephone number: 0800-5151) or anonymously to Report Crime Anonymously (Meld Misdaad Anoniem) (telephone number: 0800-7000). Victims can turn to the FairWork Foundation (telephone number 020-7600809) for 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) or the National Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the Netherlands (www.cnv.nl).

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, 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. See www.toeslagen.nl for this. 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? And do you stay in the Netherlands? 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. More information about unemployment benefit can be found at www.uuw.nl and www.uuw.nl/internationaal.

If you are ill, your employer will continue to pay your wage. The first 2 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 2 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 without a permanent contract with the temporary employment agency), 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.uuw.nl and www.uuw.nl/internationaal.

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 under the heading 'Termination of lawful residence in the Netherlands'.

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. More information can be found at: www.kamervanakoophandel.nl.

Tax and Customs Administration

If you start working in the Netherlands as a self-employed person, you can 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, 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 all persons aged 14 and older are obliged to carry a valid identity document with them. This could be a passport or identity card. Never give your passport or identity document to your employer or temporary employment agency for safekeeping.

Accommodation

If you work in the Netherlands, but your employer does not accommodate you, you can buy or rent a house yourself. You can rent a house from a private landlord or from a housing association.

In order to rent a house from a housing association, you must first register with a housing association. And your net income must be lower than € 34,678 per year. However, many housing associations have long waiting lists. You can also rent a house from a private landlord, for example via a firm of estate agents.

If you found a house, you must register with the municipality as a resident of this municipality. See 'Register as a resident of the Netherlands'. This section also contains information about what to do if you move house.

If your rent is high and your income is low, you may sometimes be compensated for your rental costs. In that case, however, you must be registered with the municipality where you live. More information about reimbursements can be found at: www.toeslagen.nl. Any questions about the amount of your rent and your rights as a tenant, among other things, can be asked to the rent assessment committee (www.huurcommissie.nl).

If you live in a camp site, holiday park or special hotel or boarding house for labour migrants, special rules will apply. These rules may differ for each municipality. Information about these rules can be obtained from the municipality.

Municipal charges

If you arrange for your accommodation yourself, you pay levies (for example sewerage and waste collection levies) and taxes (for example property tax and water board tax) in your municipality. If you are accommodated by your employer, you should discuss with him who pays the taxes. 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.

Learning Dutch

You will need to learn Dutch. This is important to being able to talk about your safety at work and to talk to public authorities, your children's school and your neighbours. This will also give you more opportunities to find different jobs.

You can learn Dutch on your own or by taking a course in a class. A volunteer can help you to learn and to practise.

There are various individual study sets that you can buy. They include books, DVDs, CDs and online lessons. Examples include 'Zelf starten met Nederlands' (€ 75.50, price in August 2014) supported in Polish, Romanian and Bulgarian. Or 'Naar Nederland' (€ 111.08, price in August 2014) supported in Portuguese, Spanish, French and English. See www.zelfstarten-metnederlands.nl or www.naarnederland.nl or check the (online) bookshop. www.oefenen.nl is a website where you can learn basic Dutch free of charge. Support is provided in various languages.

Are you looking for a classroom-based language course? Ask your local authority about the options. Some local authorities offer courses themselves. You can look for a course at www.taalzoeker.nl. You could also ask your employer about the options for taking a language course.

Are you looking for someone to help you to learn Dutch? You may be able to find a language volunteer at www.hetbegintmettaal.nl or www.taalzoeker.nl.

If you arrived in the Netherlands after 31 December 2012, you will be able to borrow money from the government to learn Dutch. This is arranged under favourable conditions. You will however have to take a course with an approved training institute. See www.inburgeren.nl.

Your car

Are you taking your car to the Netherlands, and have you registered as a resident of the Netherlands? If so you will have to pay motor vehicle tax (motorrijtuigenbelasting, MRB) and possibly also a single payment for private motor vehicle and motorcycle tax (belasting van personenauto's en motorrijwiel, BPM). You can do this by applying to the National Vehicle and Driving Licence Registration Authority (RDW, www.rdw.nl) for a Dutch number plate. Once you have had your car registered with

a Dutch number plate you will automatically receive a notification from the Tax and Customs Administration. Are you not having your car registered with a Dutch number plate? In that case your car will keep its current number plate and you will have to use a tax return form to file for MRB and BPM. These forms are available at www.belastingdienst.nl. There are also situations in which you are exempted from tax. You can be exempted if you work for a foreign company or under certain circumstances if you live abroad and are staying only temporarily in the Netherlands to work. You will however need to apply for this exemption. Do you have any other questions? See www.belastingdienst.nl or call the BelastingTelefoon Auto: 0800 - 0749, available from Monday to Friday from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Children

School and compulsory education

All children and young persons in the Netherlands have the right to education. Our country has compulsory education and a basic qualification requirement. This means that young persons between the age of 5 and 18 are obliged to go to school and obtain a diploma (basic qualification). More information can be found at www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/leerplicht.

Childcare and extra attention to language lessons

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). Children stay here under the supervision of adults. Childcare helps parents to combine work and bringing up children. In order to give your child a good start at primary school, playgroups and childcare institutions offer programmes with extra attention to Dutch language. You can contact your municipality for more information. If your children attend a registered form of childcare, you may be entitled to childcare allowance. This is a contribution towards the costs of childcare. More information can be found at: www.government.nl/issues/child-benefit-schemes/childcare-benefit and www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/kinderopvang.

Early childhood clinic

The early childhood clinic is part of youth healthcare. The doctors and nurses who work there closely monitor the health and development of children up to the age of 4. The early childhood



clinic is free of charge. If your child is born and registered with the municipality, you will automatically be sent an invitation from the early childhood clinic. You can then make an appointment. A paediatric nurse will often pay a home visit first. She will then make the appointment. More information can be obtained from your municipality or the Municipal Health Service (GGD). The address of your GGD can be found at: www.ggd.nl.

School doctor and school nurse

They perform youth healthcare services for children up to the age of 19. This is free of charge. Your child will be invited to an appointment with the youth healthcare professionals via school. Sometimes, consulting hours are also held at school.

National Vaccination Programme

The implementation of the National Vaccination Programme is part of youth healthcare. The National Vaccination Programme protects all children in the Netherlands against twelve serious infectious diseases. These diseases used to be important causes of death in children. Due to vaccination, these infectious diseases hardly or no longer occur in the Netherlands. Participation in the National Vaccination Programme is not compulsory. Most parents, however, opt for this: 95% of parents have their child vaccinated. The vaccinations are given free of charge. Children can be vaccinated until the age of 19.

You will be sent an invitation for this. More information can be found at: www.rivm.nl/Onderwerpen/R/Rijksvaccinatieprogramma

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, upbringing and education. A CJG offers tailored advice, support and assistance. More information can be found at www.cjg.nl.

Healthcare

Medical or social care

If a person is in need of medical or social care, he or she can turn to so-called 'primary care'. Primary care is all care that is immediately accessible to patients, for example general practitioners, dentists and physiotherapists. This care is not free of charge, but the costs are sometimes fully or partly reimbursed by the healthcare insurer. For other types of care, you must first be referred by a primary care provider, who will usually be the general practitioner. Social work can help you with all kinds of questions about housing, welfare, care and education. You can contact your municipality for more information.

In case of serious injuries caused by an accident, or a sudden, serious disease, you can always visit a hospital's Accident & Emergency department. Always bring your healthcare insurance card and your identity document with you. The national emergency number for situations requiring emergency assistance from the police, fire brigade or ambulance service is 112.

Your healthcare insurance and your general practitioner

If you live in the Netherlands, you must take out healthcare insurance. See also under the heading 'Take out healthcare insurance'. Healthcare insurance has a compulsory excess of € 360 (price in 2014). Youth healthcare insurer will collect this amount. It is advisable to register with a general practitioner. You do not pay any excess for general practitioner care. If you register with a general practitioner, you will know for sure that there is a physician available for you. For serious and acute symptoms, medical assistance is also available at night or during the weekend. Call your general practitioner for this. He or she will give you the number of the replacement 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. If you do not register with a general practitioner, but go directly to a hospital, it could be that you are referred to a general practitioner first. If the hospital provides the care, but the care could also have been provided by a general practitioner, you will have to pay the excess. You will then have to pay much more.

Termination of the lawful residence in the Netherlands

If you have insufficient means of support or 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.

See also www.ind.nl.

More information and assistance

Unequal treatment or discrimination

The Constitution of the Netherlands sets out fundamental rights. These rights apply to all persons in the Netherlands. Article 1 of the Constitution states that "All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race or sex or on any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted." This applies to work, among other things. Anyone who works part-time or has a temporary contract may not be treated differently from anyone who works full-time or has a permanent contract. If you feel that you are treated unequally or feel discriminated, you can lodge a complaint to the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights. This is free of charge. You can call 030-8883888 or send an e-mail to info@mensenrechten.nl. In case of unequal treatment or discrimination, you can also go to the police or to the antidiscrimination facility (antidiscriminatievoorziening or ADV) within your municipality.

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.

On-line and telephone information

Migrada, an interest group for Labour Migrants from the EU, has set up an on-line and telephone system where you can be provided with relevant information in your own language. You can find any topics discussed in this brochure on an information website and listen to them by telephone 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: +31 (0)85-4010440. The website is: www.migrada.nl.

Municipality

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

Other information

More information can be found at:
www.government.nl and www.rijksoverheid.nl.

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