

# WHAT DOES THE NEW INTEGRATION LAW BRING?

An inquiry into the consequences for public order and security in The Netherlands



## THE NEWSIGHTS

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law

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Come into  
effect as  
from

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# THE NEW INTEGRATION LAW

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The Netherlands enacted a new integration law to overcome problems in the integration of refugees and immigrants. The end goal is to integrate newcomers as soon as possible like the last two major changes in the last 15 years. However, the theory does not always fit the real-life conditions of refugees (guests) and the citizens (hosts). Every incomplete or failed legislative attempt without the participation of all parties and misinterpreting the cultural differences fueled the security and safety problems among society,

The unstoppable influx of newcomers, especially refugees causes an inland security crisis and new challenges to public order derived from insufficient application and integration procedures, leading to increasing politicization and securitization of migration and asylum issues. The increasing numbers have made many problems visible. Although the percentage of immigrants who experience problems with integration is relatively low, it can still lead to vulnerabilities regarding public and social order. For these reasons, the new law aims to enable newcomers to the Netherlands to be a part of Dutch society and join the labor market as soon as possible. However, it is necessary to seriously consider the implementation of the new law and the results it will yield.

## Important Changes in Dutch Integration Law

### New Language Level B-1

The language level required to pass the current integration exam is A2. With the new law, the level of the exam will be raised to B1. Moreover, status holders will have to supplement their language education with (voluntary) study or internships.

*With the new law, municipalities are at the forefront of purchasing the language courses instead of newcomers and thus also the quality of the integration processes.*

[www.consultancy.nl/nieuws/amp/35172/wet-inburgering-biedt-kansen-en-uitdagingen-voor-gemeenten](http://www.consultancy.nl/nieuws/amp/35172/wet-inburgering-biedt-kansen-en-uitdagingen-voor-gemeenten)

### Facilitating Educational Opportunities

Those younger than 28 years old will be offered convenience if they want to take a course in vocational or university education. During this period, young people will take intensive language lessons and also pursue topics such as mathematic, English, and learning skills. Career counselling services will also be provided to these people.

## Z-route

If they do not pass the integration exam or learn Dutch enough, they will be obliged to participate in the civic integration program and will follow an intensive route, the Z-route, which is tailored to suit their personal needs. They will follow a path focused on self-confidence and participation in Dutch society, and aimed at gain oral and written skills in the Dutch language.

In addition to language courses, all status holders will get to know the local labor market more actively. In that way, they will get more exposure to Dutch core values such as equality and freedom of expression.

## Special Tasks to the Municipalities

With the new law, the primary responsibility will lie with the municipalities. They will be more close to the newcomers from the offset, so as to control, supervise, and oversight their integration process. The fact that the municipalities are more active in the process makes it easier for them to understand status holders better.



According to the new law, those who are judged to not make enough effort to integrate will face more frequent and faster fines than they would in the current system. In addition, municipalities will have to contact those refugees with a legal residence permit during their stay in an Asylum Centre (AZC). It is hoped that starting the integration in AZCs will also shorten the integration process.

## Why was the old system replaced?

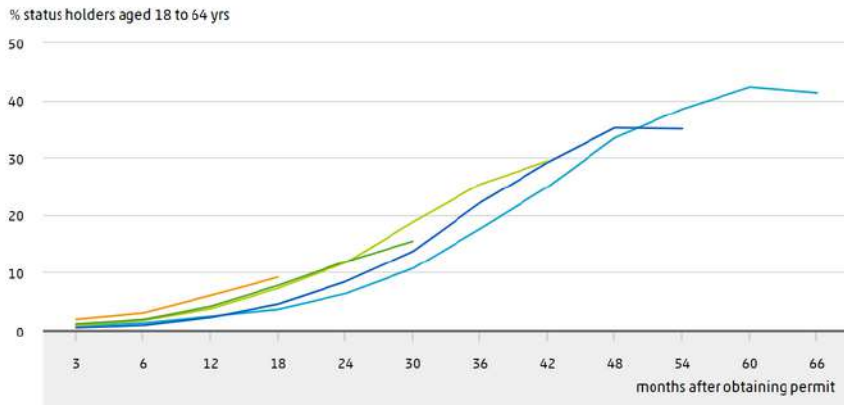
According to the state authorities, the former integration system is unsatisfactory and there are problems with its implementation. The CBS data shows that only about half of newcomers who came to the Netherlands after 2014 were in a registered job by 2020 (CBS, *Asiel en Integratie*, 2020). This data shows that status holders' entry process into the labor market is not progressing quickly enough. Also, in the current system, support for language education was limited to a lower (A2) level.

In the former system, there were also irregularities in the use of the loans from DUO for language learning. Moreover, considering that the average time to start working is 5 years or more, the new law plans to reduce this period.

DUO will no longer finance language courses by offering loans. Thus, language lessons will be covered and supervised by the municipalities.

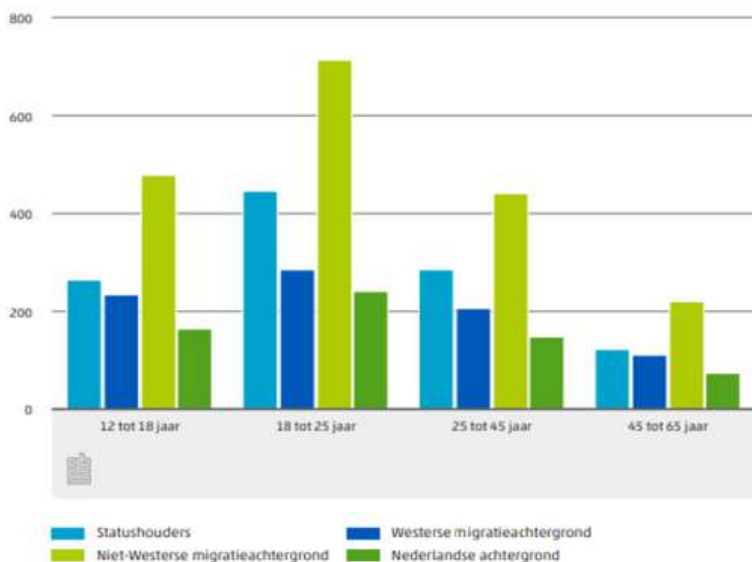


**Status holders in work**



*Of the status holders who obtained an asylum residence permit in 2014, 43 percent had a job by mid-2020. Although their labor participation has risen in recent years, this came to a standstill during the coronavirus crisis.*

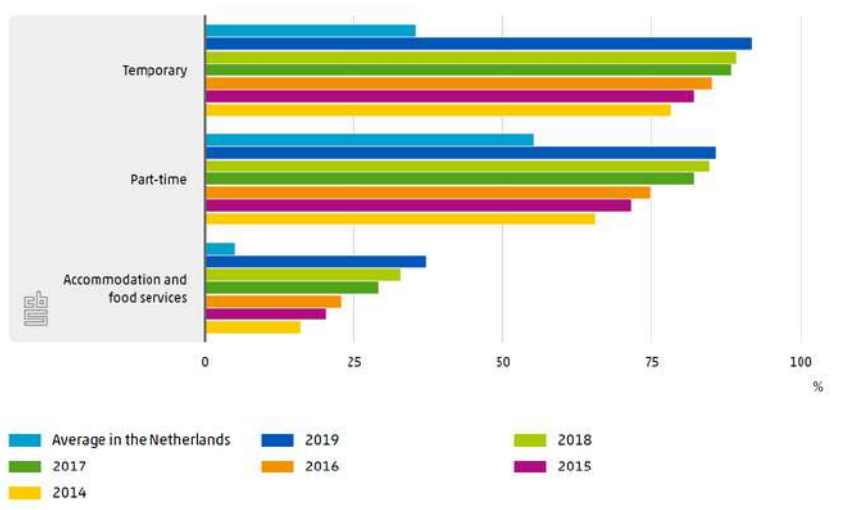
**Number of suspects among status holders who received an asylum residence permit in 2017 per 10,000 men in 2019 by age**



Registered suspects rates in the Netherlands are decreasing year by year. This also applies to suspected status holders rates. In this respect, the importance of the integration process is beyond doubt. As a matter of fact, the following points play an important role in decreasing crime rates:

- Civic Integration
- Language Development
- Education
- Employment

**Job characteristics of status holders, per year of permit**



<https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2021/09/sharp-drop-in-traditional-crime>

## First Steps and Possible Outcomes

With the new law, municipalities will establish closer relations with refugees, and thereby doing better in controlling and overseeing their language acquisition & employment process.

The state expects that this law will produce better results than the former one. However, like every legal change, things may turn out differently in practice.

Human beings are not machines working with programmed chips. Status holders often encounter different religious and cultural environments in their new country. Moreover, the majority of status holders are people who have experienced serious physical and psychological traumas.

Therefore, the new law should aim at supporting their participation in social life with empathy. Although refugees may not have negative perceptions of safety in their new lives, their families and friends are still facing serious problems in their home countries. This situation prevents them from easily pulling out of the past and, for this reason, all these legal changes need to be handled in a human way.



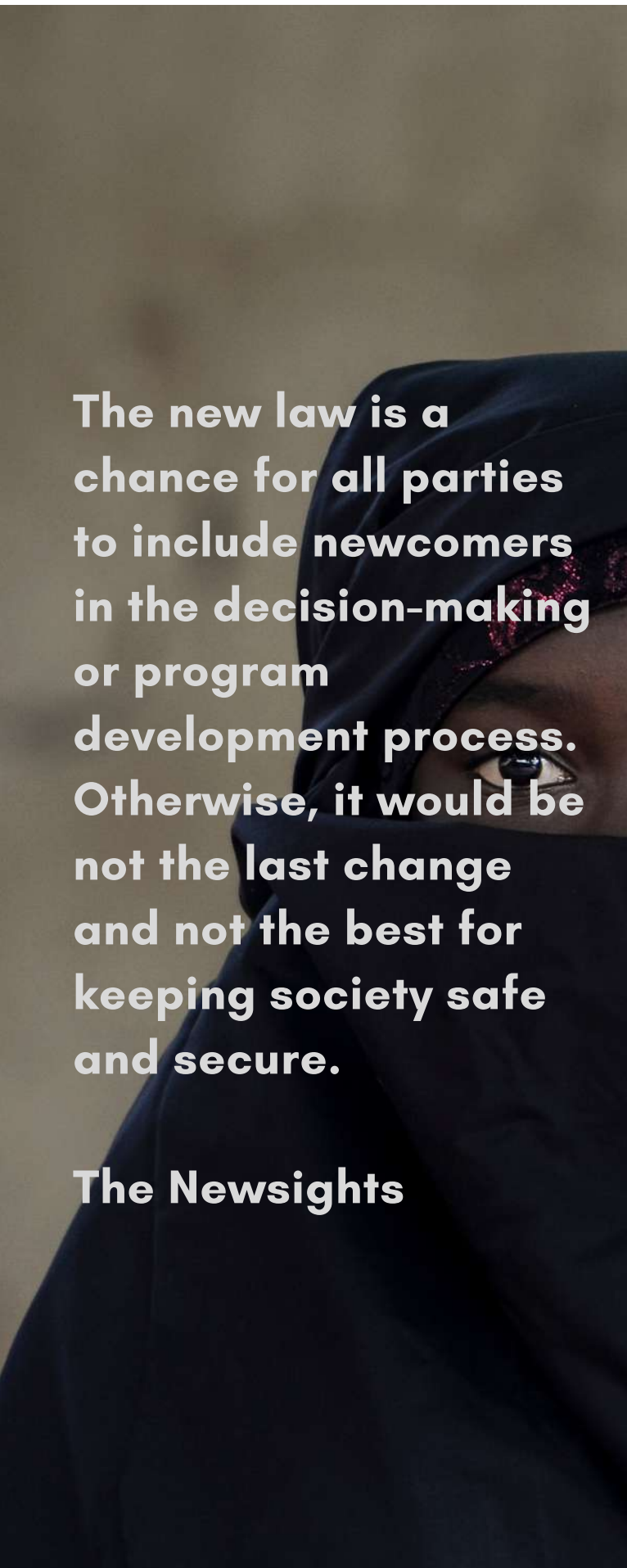
*We all think it is important to give newcomers a good start in the Netherlands so that they can participate as quickly as possible.*

**Minister Wouter Koolmees**

Socio-cultural factors, motivations, individual abilities, and physical and mental traumas must be taken into account while designing the new integration process. This can be achieved through training both new staff and junior municipal integration officers on how to handle cases in a sophisticated manner. Newsights believes that an improved integration process creates more safe and secure communities.

**The Newsights**

## Our Insight



**The new law is a chance for all parties to include newcomers in the decision-making or program development process. Otherwise, it would be not the last change and not the best for keeping society safe and secure.**

**The Newsights**

The Newsights conducted a field study in three different regions regarding the handling process of the new law. As a result of the interviews with different parties, the initial findings are not very encouraging for the near future:

- Very limited participation of newcomers in the program development process of the new integration law.
- Limited government subsidies for Municipalities to develop new opportunities.

In addition to that, the Verwey-Jonker Institute organized three pilot projects with status holders that fall under the current Civic Integration Act. The findings show that measurement instruments in the broad intake are not always sufficiently culturally sensitive, and customer managers have to balance their role between building trust and pointing out obligations.

The integration will continue to be a topic of discussion in the Netherlands, as well as in all of Europe. We consider that the new concept will have more positive effects on public order and social peace. When the authorities try to speed up the integration process for all newcomers, then they mean to bring about quick inclusion and adaptation to society. However, to achieve success in the mid-term a multicultural and systemic approach is needed. Otherwise, the words of legislation may change, but the problems stay the same





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