

Chapter 1. Migration insights: Flows, stock and nationalities

For centuries Amsterdam has been a city of immigrants. It currently hosts 180 different nationalities and 51.7% of its population has a migration background¹ (OECD Questionnaire, Amsterdam, 2017). First-generation migrants who live in Amsterdam represent 29.3% of the city's population.

The history of migration in Amsterdam can be broken down into different phases. In the 1960s Amsterdam attracted predominantly migrants from the former Dutch colonies, particularly Suriname and Indonesia, as well as guest workers from the Mediterranean countries, notably Morocco and Turkey (de Graauw and Vermeulen, 2016). Today these groups make up 48.6% of the total migrant population (both first- and second-generation). In the 1980s, new arrivals came from ex-Yugoslavian countries, followed by new EU-accession countries in the 2000s. These phases of migration were accompanied by different conceptual frameworks and policies for integration.

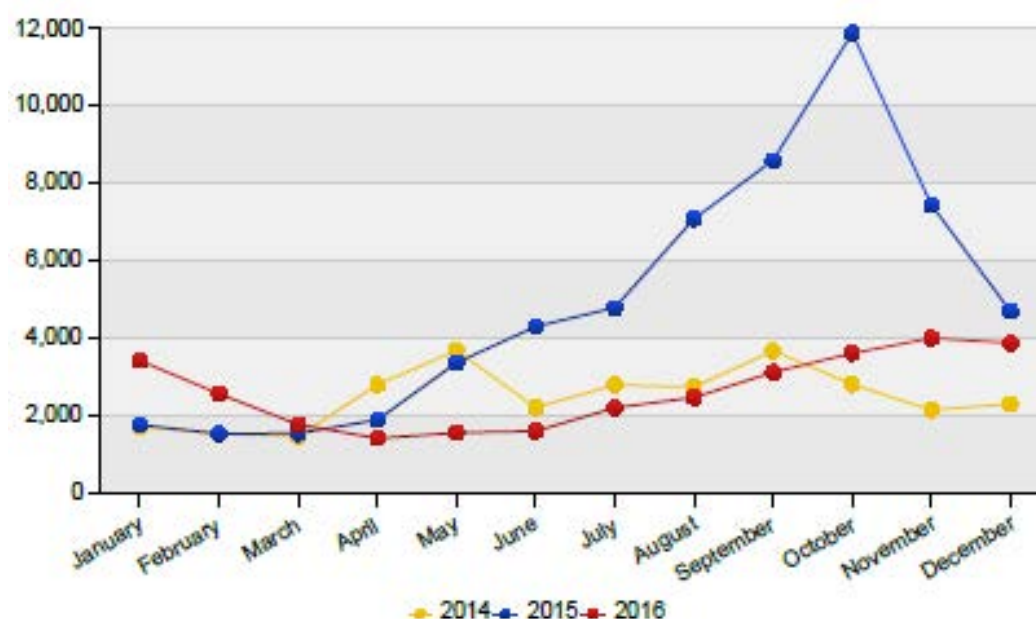
Free movement within the EU and the European Free Trade Association resulted in a rise of migrant inflows in the Netherlands, from 19 000 in 2003 to 65 000 in 2013. In 2013, only 9% of the total permanent migration inflow was composed of non-EU nationals, which corresponded to 0.04% of the population in the Netherlands (OECD, 2017a) while in 2015 half (81 000 EU citizens moved to the Netherlands in 2015) of new immigrants to the Netherlands were EU citizens (OECD, 2017a). Over the past few decades the Netherlands has also attracted a large international student population, supported by the offer of university degrees taught in English (OECD, 2016a). The Netherlands granted 15 200 residence permits to international students in 2015, representing 9% of the student population in the country (OECD, 2017a). About 20% of the students who graduate in Amsterdam remain there afterwards (Amsterdam Municipality). Amsterdam is further developing specific integration policies addressing EU migrants, including the growing population of “EU mobile citizens” who work for international businesses and are based in the city for shorter periods of time.

Like in many other European cities, the number of refugees and asylum seekers to Amsterdam increased by 38% in 2015 compared to previous years. In 2016, the city housed approximately 3 412 refugees and asylum seekers, mostly from the Syrian Arab Republic, Ethiopia and Eritrea. They represent 0.8% of the total migrant population in Amsterdam. In 2015, the Netherlands received 43 000 asylum seekers (EUROSTAT, 2016a) the equivalent of 3% of the applications received in the EU28. Asylum applications to the Netherlands were 44 000 in 2000 (CBS, 2001)². In addition, 800 refugees benefitted from the resettlement programme in 2014 (UNHCR, n.d.). In 2015, 3 900 unaccompanied minors filed asylum requests in the Netherlands, which is four times the number of requests received in 2014 (OECD, 2017a).

Around 4.7% of all refugees recognised in the Netherlands are allocated to Amsterdam; in 2016, Amsterdam was the first municipality in terms of absolute number of asylum seekers hosted in reception centres, while also being the most populated municipality in the Netherlands (data from the municipality of Amsterdam). The city anticipated the

arrival of more refugees for 2016 and prepared adequate solutions for the temporary accommodation for these newcomers (see “Secure access to adequate housing (Objective 10)” in Chapter 6). Although fewer refugees arrived in Amsterdam than expected in 2016, these structures have been established and the city is prepared in the event of a future increase in arrivals.

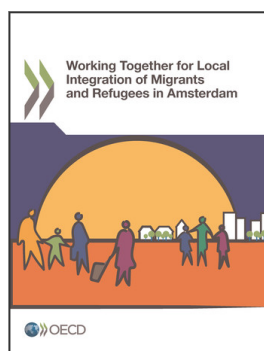
Figure 1.1. Total asylum applications in the Netherlands



Source: Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice.

Notes

1. This percentage includes second-generation migrants, born in the Netherlands from at least one foreign-born parent.
2. See www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2002/04/slightly-more-asylumseekers-in-eu-strong-fall-in-the-netherlands.



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