Integration policy of in The Netherlands

VUB Brussels

The implementation of the EU Action Plan on Integration. Feedback from the Member States, Regional and Local Authorities

22 March 2017
The Netherlands: a multi-cultural, diverse society at different levels
Diverse political landscape

Parliamentary elections 15 March 2017:

• Integration is a big political issue, especially in media: refugees, role of islam, safety/terrorist attacks, national identity
  -> many different opinions on integration

• End of Rutte-II government (2012-2017, Conserv. Liberals + Social Democrats), no big party (Conserv. Liberals 22 percent)
  -> new government will include at least 4 parties

• Rise of populist parties: Party of Freedom (Geert Wilders) (2nd party up to 13 percent), but excluded by almost all other parties
• Loss of Social Democrats (down to 6 percent)
Diverse population

Total population The Netherlands: 17 million of which 3.6 million (21.7 percent) have a migrant background.

Total western migrants: 1.6 million
Total non-western migrants: 2 million
Diverse population: tradition of immigration

Immigration to The Netherlands after WWII:

- Migration from former colonies of The Netherlands in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (Indonesia, Surinam, Dutch Antillen)

- Labour migration (first South Europe, later Turkey and Morocco) in the 1960s and 1970s


- Since enlargement European Union (2004 and 2007): intra-EU migration from Central and Eastern Europe, especially from Poland
Current migration to The Netherlands

In 2015:
43,000 asylum seekers

In 2016:
18,000 asylum seekers, mostly Syrians (2,160), Albanians (1,660) and Eritrians (1,500)

in Central Reception Locations: ca. 26,000 refugees (January 2017)
Challenges

To create faster and more effective integration and participation of permit holders through education and employment
Focus points for policy

• Improve and shore up current policy and system (prepare for high influx)
• Support initiatives in society
• Co-create concrete improvements together with stakeholders,
• e.g. via the Taskforce
Policy parameters

- Provide municipalities with extra budget for housing, integration, participation, education, healthcare and social security.
- At the same time maintain the budget already needed to support other (regular) groups, like the unemployed, disabled etc.
- Work first– ‘to stay is to participate’
- Own responsibility of permit holders is key, but a broad range of supportive measures
Taskforce Work and Integration Refugees

Taskforce consists of all professional organisations in NL involved in integration and participation of refugees/permit holders:

employers, employees, refugee-organisations, local governments, administrative authorities and involved ministries
Screening & Matching innovations

- Matching competences to work, demand on the labour market and final housing location
- Intake as starting point for education and participation while still living at the reception locations
- Matching of language-courses, education, housing and participation from first day of receiving permit
Integration Innovations

- Advance and broaden courses for Orientation on the Labour market (ONA)
- More hours for language courses at Reception Locations and access for asylum seekers with a good chance of getting a permit
Integration Innovations

- Implement the Statement of Participation
- Intensify Social Counseling
Volunteer Work innovation

Through volunteer work promote the participation of asylum seekers and refugees. This leads to a faster and more effective integration of asylum seekers who get a permit and must participate in Dutch society.
Knowledge innovation

- Improve the knowledge about permit holders (employees, volunteers, local governments etc)
- Large Longitudinal Study on cohort 2015-2016
- Creating a Knowledge-portal (Social and Economic Council)
  • Fact and figures, FAQ
  • Stages from arrival to full integration, laws and regulation
  • Best practices
  • Workshops and Seminars
  • Periodical briefing on best practices and bottlenecks (bottom-up) for all professionals (members of taskforce)
Implementation integration

General policy framework at national level
(principles: self reliance of newcomer, mainstream policies, participation, internalization of “Dutch” values)

Implementation at local level:
-> Municipalities, including:
  • Housing
  • Education
  • Social benefits

-> NGO’s and private parties, including:
  • Language training
  • Labour market/volunteer work
Promising practices at local level

• Amsterdam:
  Big coalition of NGO’s for newcomers towards reception locations

• Utrecht:
  Regional approach with other municipalities

• Leiden:
  Combination of civic integration, social counseling and re-integration (unemployed)
What will the future bring?

• New government after parliamentary elections
  -> What will be the policy towards newcomers?

• Elections in France and Germany
  -> Effects on The Netherlands and EU cooperation?
Thank you for your attention!
Questions?