

Integration in the Netherlands

'largely successful'

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By our news staff

The heated Dutch debate about ethnic minorities and their integration could leave the impression that immigration in the Netherlands has been a complete failure. But a government report released this week says some progress has been made in the past ten years.

- Feature - [Immigrant tensions remain five years after Van Gogh killing](#)

According to integration minister Eberhard Van der Laan "integration has been largely successful," although he added that "for many it has not".

On Tuesday Van der Laan (Labour) sent an annual report with integration statistics and a letter with the government's vision on the subject to parliament. In his letter Van der Laan offered no specific

new measures or policy changes. Instead it was meant to show the government's current thinking about integration, Van der Laan said.

Summarising this vision, Van der Laan said: "All citizens are equal but it is reasonable to expect immigrants to make an extra effort to gain their place in Dutch society... They owe it to themselves, their children and society to learn the language, go to school and find a job."

Several statistics in the annual report point to improved integration of young Turks and Moroccans in the job market and education. The number of Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch youngsters going on to higher education has doubled over the past ten years to 40 percent.

During the same period the number of Turkish and Moroccan Dutch in the job market went up 10 percent to 55 percent. The number of unemployed has almost halved from more than 20 percent to 11 percent.

Home ownership too is up among Turkish and Moroccans Dutch: 14 percent of Moroccans now own their own home, and 26 percent of Turkish. Among native Dutch home ownership is 60 percent.

On the downside, youngsters from a non-Western background are still twice as likely to be unemployed as native Dutch. Youngsters from the Antilles and Morocco are still overrepresented in the crime statistics.

The report also noted that segregation is increasing in schools and neighbourhoods, and that a large number of native Dutch people feel unsafe because of the presence of non-Western immigrants.

The anti-Islam Party for Freedom (PVV) was quick to dismiss the report. "Once more the cabinet is lost in political correctness, denying the islamisation of our society," said PVV member of parliament Sietse Fritsma.