



Cahier 2024-16

# Moving forward with policy?

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Redactie

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**Cahier**

De reeks Cahier omvat de rapporten van onderzoek dat door en in opdracht van het Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Datacentrum is verricht. Opname in de reeks betekent niet dat de inhoud van de rapporten het standpunt van de Minister van Justitie en Veiligheid weergeeft.

# Summary, conclusions and policy recommendations

## Moving forward with policy?

### **What does the reception, civic integration and dispersal policy mean for developments in the position and living situation of status holders?**

Jaco Dagevos (EUR/SCP), Mieke Maliepaard (WODC) and Djamila Schans (WODC)

### **Introduction: trends in living conditions and policy factors**

In the Longitudinal Cohort Study of Status Holders (LOCS project, see box S.1), we follow status holders who received a residence permit in the Netherlands in the period 2014-2016. In this report, we examine how the position of these status holders has developed in recent years and which factors influence this. We are particularly interested in policy factors. During the first years in the Netherlands, status holders find themselves in what is called a *policy-dense environment* (Otmani, 2023): from the moment of arrival in the Netherlands, asylum seekers (and later status holders) have to deal with various forms of policy. Most come into contact with the reception policy (which affects not only the procedure of obtaining a permit, but also the length of stay in reception and relocations between different reception centres). After residence permits are granted, status holders are housed in a municipality (based on to the so-called dispersal policy<sup>1</sup>). Status holders are also required to integrate (the civic integration policy). Through these forms of policy, the Dutch government has a major impact on their lives in the first period in the Netherlands, that lasts often three or more years.

We know from previous research that the reception policy has consequences for status holders and the position they acquire in society – more frequent relocations between reception centres and low participation opportunities during the reception period, for instance, have adverse consequences for their mental health. Dutch and international research suggests that, at least in the short term, the dispersal policy is related to differences in labour market opportunities. The civic integration policy<sup>2</sup> aims to give status holders a good start, focusing in particular on improving Dutch language skills and opportunities on the Dutch labour market.

This study investigated the (intended and unintended) consequences of these forms of policy for the *development* of the position and living situation of status holders. Since we focus on the group of status holders who have been in the Netherlands for around seven years, we can also make statements on whether policy effects continue or decline over time.

### Box S.1 LOCS project

This study is part of the Longitudinal Cohort Study of Status Holders (LOCS). The LOCS aims to describe and explain the position and living situation of status holders. We use three waves of the survey research New Status Holders in the Netherlands (*Nieuwe Statushouders in Nederland* – NSN survey), conducted in 2017, 2019 and 2022 among the same group of Syrian status holders. This is the group that was granted a residence permit between 1 January 2014 and 1 July 2016 as well as their children and partners who came to the Netherlands as dependants or as family reunification migrants. We also analysed register data that is monthly updated and administered by Statistics Netherlands (CBS). The register contains data about all asylum migrants who have been registered in Netherlands as asylum migrants since 2014. We combined the register and survey data to be able to track the position of asylum seekers and status holders over time.

The LOCS project is being carried out at the request of the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) and Justice and Security (JenV). The WODC Research and Data Centre, Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) and Statistics Netherlands (CBS) are collaborating on the LOCS project.

We investigated several indicators of the position and living situation of status holders. Table S.1 lists these indicators and shows which forms of policy were examined in the respective chapters.

**Table S.1 Overview of topics, the connections with forms of policy and contributions of participating organisations**

Subject	Reception policy	Dispersal policy	Civic integration policy
Language acquisition	X		X
Social assistance	X		X
Labour market participation			X
Mental health	X		
Perceived exclusion	X		
Impact of dispersal policy on labour market participation		X	
Impact of dispersal policy on social contacts		X	

Below we summarise the most important findings for each chapter. On this basis, we draw a number of more overarching conclusions and formulate policy recommendations.

## Summary of key findings

### *Chapter 2: Developments in the language acquisition of Syrian Dutch individuals*

We investigated the relationship between reception and civic integration policies and the development of Dutch language proficiency. For both policy factors, we were interested in the short- and longer-term effects.

Previous research has shown that completion of civic integration courses and aspects of reception affect Dutch language acquisition (Bakker et al., 2023; Damen et al., 2021), but it is not clear to what extent the effects of these factors persist or level off over time. By using longitudinal data with three time points (2017, 2019 and 2022), we examine for these policy factors whether there is a change in effect over time, and if so, what this change entails.

#### **Strongest increase during the first years of residence**

First, the findings show that the strongest improvement in language level occurs in the first years of residence in the Netherlands, after which it levels off. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that initial rapid improvements in language level will level off over time (Hartshorne et al., 2018). Our findings suggest that the strongest improvement coincides with following civic integration courses: the largest increase in language level occurs among individuals who are still in the process of civic integration. It indicates the importance of participating in language education. After completion of civic integration, Dutch language acquisition stagnates.

#### **Completing civic integration is important**

Furthermore, the findings point to the importance of completing civic integration. People who have passed the civic integration exam are better at Dutch than those who are still in the process. In contrast, individuals who were granted an exemption<sup>3</sup> have a lower language level and lag behind in their language development.

#### **Longer stays in reception centres and more frequent relocations are unfavourable for language acquisition**

Our results are in line with findings from previous research (e.g. Damen et al., 2022): a longer length of stay in reception centres and more relocations between reception centres are both related to lower language levels. The results suggest that these negative effects decline over time, implying that individuals largely succeed in overcoming the relative deficit in language proficiency. However, it is important to note that overcoming this deficit is a process that takes years.

#### **An active reception period contributes to higher language levels**

An active reception period has a positive effect on the language level. This includes participating in activities in the reception centre (e.g. taking language lessons) and performing (volunteer) work during the reception period. We find no indication that the effect of early participation wears off over time: it results in a permanently higher language level. Since the opportunities for participation in activities are (partly) dependent on the reception centre, these results confirm the importance of expanding the opportunities for participation during the reception period. However, we cannot exclude that the effect can also be partly explained by differences between individuals, and not by policy measures or reception centres. It is conceivable that individuals who were motivated to participate in more activities during the reception period continued to engage in more activities after the asylum seekers' centre period.

### *Chapter 3: The effects of reception and civic integration policies on the outflow from social assistance to work*

We examined the extent to which the length of stay in COA locations, the number of relocations during the reception period and the completion of civic integration are related to the speed at which status holders move on from social assistance to work.

#### **Duration of reception and relocations delay outflow from social assistance**

The results show that a longer duration of the reception period delays outflow from social assistance among men. The negative consequences from a longer stay in COA reception centres decreases with time for male status holders, possibly indicating a fading-out effect. For women, relocating more often during the reception period is related to a slower outflow from social assistance. For men, relocating more often especially shortly after leaving COA reception is associated with slower outflow, but its influence decreases with time, in line with a fading-out effect.

#### **Completing civic integration increases the likelihood of outflow to work**

Status holders who have completed their civic integration courses leave social assistance more quickly than status holders who are still in the process of obtaining a civic integration diploma or have been exempted from it. However, we do see that the differences in outflow between status holders who have integrated and those who have not, or have not yet, integrated decrease with time. Status holders who have completed integration courses at B1- or B2-level are shorter on social assistance compared to status holders who have completed a minimum required level (A2). An exception to this are men who integrate at B2 level. They do not leave social assistance faster than men with an A2 diploma during the first months after being housed. After that, their chances of outflow increase.

### *Chapter 4: The impact of (un)successful civic integration on labour market position*

#### **Completing civic integration increases chances of getting a (permanent) job**

Status holders who have successfully completed civic integration are more likely to find work and to have a permanent job. This effect is large, long-lasting and applies to both men and women. Male workers with an integration diploma work on average more hours than male workers who are still in the process of obtaining a civic integration diploma or have not passed the exam. For women, no change in working hours occurs when they obtain an integration diploma. Furthermore, male workers with an integration diploma experience a larger increase in hourly wages than male workers who have not passed the civic integration exams, although the difference is small. For female workers, the hourly wage does not change after obtaining a civic integration diploma.

#### **Exemption from integration leads to a less favourable position, but more working hours**

The cohort of status holders that we are studying was integrated under the Civic Integration Act 2013 (Wi2013). This Act was replaced by a new law in 2022. Under the Wi2013, there was a possibility of exemption from the civic integration obligation. Some status holders who were granted an exemption did pass the Dutch Labour Market Orientation (ONA) exam component. Those status holders who have been exempted from the obligation to integrate have about the same chance of finding work and maintain the same employment relationship as status holders who are still in the process of completing the civic integration programme. In that respect, they perform

worse than status holders who have passed their civic integration exam. However, status holders start working more hours after an exemption. This seems to indicate that the civic integration programme competes with time that would otherwise be spent on paid work. Among status holders who have been exempted from the civic integration obligation, there is hardly any difference between those who did or did not complete the ONA exam component.

### **Civic integration has positive long-term effects on labour market participation**

Passing the civic integration exam also has a positive effect on the probability of being employed three years later. By that time, the effect even slightly increases. Moreover, over time, employment relationships shift from flexible work and self-employment to temporary and permanent jobs. We also see that the impact of civic integration increases when it comes to hourly wages, although the effects are small. For male employees, we observe a positive increase in working hours, especially during the first two years, after which this increase levels off. After two years, many male employees work full-time.

### *Chapter 5: The development of mental health of Syrian Dutch individuals*

The prevalence of mental health issues among Syrian-Dutch individuals is increasing over time in the Netherlands. In addition, it is higher than the prevalence rate in the whole Dutch population. Previous research also shows that some aspects of mental health do not automatically improve after fleeing a war zone. This research shows that the following factors are all significantly negatively associated with mental health over time: the number of years in the Netherlands, being female, a higher education level, being a family reunification migrant, living alone, the number of negative experiences during the journey and the number of relocations between different asylum seekers' centres. However, many effects are small. The only effect that remains clinically relevant is the number of negative experiences while fleeing from their country of origin. Furthermore, the influence of risk factors and personality characteristics does not seem to decrease or increase over time. The impact of the total number of negative experiences while fleeing from their country of origin affecting mental health, such as extortion, robbery, violence, abuse, shipwreck, and kidnapping, remains strong also in the long term after arriving in the Netherlands.

### *Chapter 6: Perceived exclusion: how do Syrian status holders feel about the social climate towards migrants in the Netherlands?*

Apart from investigating developments in the position and living situation of status holders, we also looked at how they assess the social climate in the Netherlands regarding migrants. The social climate is measured by asking status holders whether they believe that people with a migration background have many opportunities in the Netherlands, whether their rights are respected, and whether people with a migration background are often discriminated against.

### *Judgements on reception are especially important*

We find no support for the hypothesis that a lengthy procedure, frequent relocations, and limited activities contribute to the experienced exclusion. These relatively objective measures of the reception period are also not systematically related to views on the social climate in the Netherlands regarding individuals with a migration background. This is a positive finding. However, the findings indicate that participating



in more activities during the reception period is associated with experiencing less exclusion. We also found that this effect wears off over time.

The views on the reception period are important for the degree of perceived exclusion. Those status holders, who are satisfied with their reception period, are more positive about the social climate for migrants than those who are dissatisfied about their reception period. Status holders who are less satisfied about their reception period, experience also more exclusion.

The opinion of Syrian status holders about the reception period is important for institutional trust (Maliapaard et al., 2021). It has been shown that is not so much objective factors, such as length of stay in reception and number of relocations, that matter, but mainly experiences of reception. A favourable judgement of treatment and a strong degree of perceived procedural justice by public authorities contribute to positive views about society and politics.

### **Longer in the Netherlands, more educated and employed: more perceived exclusion**

The results show that Syrian status holders experience more exclusion the longer they reside in the Netherlands. We also see this among those with higher education and those who work. It is plausible that people who have been in the Netherlands longer become more aware of the social debate on migrants and that they personally and people around them are more likely to face exclusion. These mechanisms have also been discussed in research on the integration paradox: more participation is accompanied by experiences of exclusion, and newcomers with longer periods of residence and higher education become more aware of the – unfavourable – social climate towards migrants (Geurts, 2022; Van Doorn et al., 2012).

We also see parallels with research on institutional trust among Syrian status holders (Nooitgedagt, 2023). Institutional trust among Syrian status holders is very high, but it decreases the longer they live in the Netherlands. We also see this among other groups with a refugee background (Dagevos & Vermeulen, 2024). The high level of trust in politics is sometimes attributed to the reference point hypothesis (Röder & Mühlau, 2012): when people assess Dutch politics, they make a comparison with the country of origin, and this comparison tends to favour the Netherlands. For many refugees, precisely the political situation in the country of origin is a reason to flee. As the length of stay increases, the comparative point shifts more towards the Netherlands. It is conceivable that a similar mechanism occurs when assessing perceived exclusion. Upon arrival in the Netherlands, the contrast with the country of origin is great, which may influence the judgement about the possibilities and opportunities in this country. This judgement tends to erode the longer one lives in the Netherlands, participates more, and experiences that groups are not treated and assessed in the same way in this country.

### *Chapter 7: Unequal job opportunities as a result of the dispersal policy*

After asylum seekers are granted status (a residence permit), they are assigned housing by a municipality. Through the Dutch dispersal policy, status holders are distributed evenly and largely randomly across the country, in proportion to the population of each municipality. This random distribution constitutes a quasi-experiment and makes it possible to make causal statements about the influence of the placement region on the job opportunities of status holders.

### **Dispersal policy has a long-term impact on job opportunities**

The analyses show that the place of living influences job opportunities. The analyses also provide insight into *when* and for *how long* the placement region has an influence. Shortly after being housed, the influence of the placement region is small, because there are still few people active on the labour market, especially among women. This finding is in line with recent research (Dagevos & Miltenburg, 2020). As more status holders enter the labour market, we begin to see differences emerge between the placement regions. The influence of the placement region then increases up to about three years after being housed (amplifying effect). After that, the influence slowly decreases again. It is therefore important to monitor these changes over time: the complete picture only becomes clear when we look at how the influence develops over time.

### **Initial disadvantages are essential, but they decrease over time**

The results present a mixed picture of the influence of the placement region on labour market participation. On the one hand, it is positive that the differences between status holders in different placement regions seem to decrease over time. On the other hand, the decrease is so slow that we see an influence of the placement region on labour participation almost throughout the entire seven-year observation period. Status holders placed in regions with higher unemployment have significantly less chance of finding a job for years, resulting in the loss of thousands of euros in (work) income and pension accrual.

Moreover, there are subgroups within which we do not yet see declining influence over time. For instance, among older status holders, the influence of the placement region appears to continue to increase over time. This is a group that already participates less in the labour market and is therefore increasingly affected by the placement region. Furthermore, men seem to be more strongly influenced by the placement region than women. This may be due to differences in their labour market participation. Within families of status holders, men are often the first to look for a job and women's labour market participation is lower (De Gruijter & Razenberg, 2019). The lower labour market activity of women may have a mitigating effect on the influence of the placement region for them. For women who are not actively looking for a job, for example, job opportunities in the placement region also matter less.

### *Chapter 8: The influence of the placement municipality on social contacts of Syrian status holders*

The dispersal policy may not only affect the labour market position, but may also affect social contacts. Informal social contacts with members of the host society are important for status holders. This is because they contribute to learning the Dutch language and promote a sense of acceptance and feeling at home (Glorius et al., 2020; Vervoort & Dagevos, 2008). These contacts also appear to be associated with lower levels of perceived discrimination. In addition, previous research shows that maintaining contacts with people from one's country of origin is valuable for refugees. These contacts not only help in finding work but also provide other practical support in navigating life in the Netherlands, especially during the initial period of their stay (Larsen, 2013).

### **The ethnic composition of social contacts is related to the ethnic composition of the place of residence**

The place of residence provides meeting opportunities for status holders to build social contacts. The place of residence also influences with whom status holders come into contact. The results show that Syrian status holders who are housed in municipalities with a higher proportion of Dutch individuals without a migration background have more contact with this group. Syrian status holders are more likely to have contact with other Syrians if they are housed in municipalities with a higher proportion of residents of Syrian origin. The presence of other migrant communities in the municipality does not seem to affect contact with these groups.

There is no evidence of accumulation or diminishing effects. The influences of the placement municipality do not change as time since being housed progresses. Also, the degree of urbanisation of the placement municipality does not appear to have a clear influence on the ethnic composition of Syrian status holders' social contacts.

### **Conclusions and policy recommendations**

In this study, we examined to what extent various public policy factors influence the developments in the position of (Syrian) status holders, with particular attention to the reception, civic integration, and dispersal policy. This focus aligns with recent research (Damen, 2022; Damen et al. 2023a; Huijnk et al., 2021). However, our distinctive contribution is that we examined developments in the position of status holders for a longer period because of the available longitudinal survey and register data. We draw a number of conclusions.

#### *Reception policy is important for language acquisition and outflow from social assistance*

Reception policy affects language acquisition, outflow from social assistance and, albeit modestly, mental health. A long duration of reception and a large number of relocations during the reception period give status holders a poor start. However, these factors are not important for the degree of perceived exclusion. Perceptions of the social climate do relate to opinions about the stay in reception centres and treatment by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND).

The effects of the reception policy in terms of language acquisition and outflow from social assistance are dying out as time passes. However, this does not mean that adjustments to the reception policy are not necessary. The results of the reception policy can be improved so that all status holders get a better start in their participation. Important here is shortening the duration of reception and limiting the number of relocations during the reception period. Providing opportunities to engage in activities during reception (including work, language facilities) also contribute to the participation of status holders in the first years of their stay in the Netherlands. It is important to note that the cohort (holders of a status granted from 2014 to mid-2016) we are examining has spent a relatively short time in reception. In comparison, the length of stay of asylum seekers who have come to the Netherlands in recent years is considerably longer. Additionally, the circumstances – due in part to the establishment of (temporary) emergency reception locations – have not improved. As a result, the aforementioned effects of the reception policy on current status holders are expected to be rather greater than for the cohort we studied.

### *Reception policy: from an asylum to a participation model*

We are currently still far from what is called the participation model of reception (De Bakker et al., 2023). In that model, the reception policy is not only intended to complete the asylum procedure, but also aims to prepare asylum seekers earlier and better for their participation in the Netherlands. The constant search for reception places stands in the way of the entry into force of this model. That search is largely due to reception locations closing and municipalities being reluctant to open new locations. The participation model implies a short procedure, few relocations and ample opportunities for learning the language and voluntary or paid work, preferably in small-scale reception facilities in or near the municipality where asylum seekers will live after status is granted. This provides municipalities with the opportunity to engage early with their new residents and initiate the integration process.

Abolishing the 24-week requirement<sup>4</sup> gives asylum seekers better opportunities to work, and this actually results in an increase in labour participation. For asylum seekers, this has not yet removed all the barriers to entering the labour market. For instance, they are only allowed to start working six months after the submission of an asylum application and a work permit is still required. Additionally, registration in the Key Register of Persons (BRP) often takes a significant amount of time, and individuals cannot work without that registration. Removing these barriers could further contribute to the realisation of a participation model. Such a participation model first and foremost requires a change in thinking about reception policy; it is a first step in the participation policy of future status holders.

### *The role of institutions: the importance of good treatment and procedural justice*

If people are treated in a good and respectful way and people feel that procedures are applied fairly, this has an impact on how they view society and – other research shows – on their trust in Dutch institutions and politics. The duration of reception or the number of relocations have little influence on this.

### *Civic integration is relevant: ensure an effective Wi2021*

The findings of this study point to the great importance of civic integration: it increases the chances of employment, steady work and higher hourly wages. Moreover, the effects last for a long time. These findings relate to the Civic Integration Act 2013. The findings underline the importance of a good civic integration system. Newcomers reap the benefits in several areas. The current civic integration act (Wi2021) is expected to be a clear improvement in relation to the previous one. Status holders and family migrants receive better guidance and the marketization of the integration courses has been restricted. Whether the Wi2021 will actually lead to better results is still unclear because it is too early. Given the importance of civic integration for language acquisition and participation opportunities, it is crucial that the Wi2021 be successful. Various studies indicate that the initial phase of implementing the Wi2021 has been accompanied by significant challenges (Damen et al., 2023b; RadarAdvies, 2024). According to the legislator, the Wi2021 is a learning and adaptive system. This means that interim adjustments can be made to improve the Act and make it more effective. In practice, this is happening in abundance. It is important that, partly on the basis of sound evaluation research, the implementation and effectiveness of the Act are brought to the highest possible level.

### *It's a positive development that there are fewer options for exemptions in Wi2021*

This study shows that individuals who were exempted under the Wi2013 achieve a significantly less favourable position in the labour market compared to those who passed the civic integration exams. It is therefore a good thing that in the Wi2021 the possibility of exemptions has been restricted.

The Wi2021 aims for as many participants as possible to integrate at B1 level. This study shows that status holders who integrate at a higher level are more likely to leave social assistance faster. This could be a promising indicator of favourable outcomes for the new civic integration act. We do have a caveat here. It is conceivable that in Wi2013 a selective group opted for a B1 or B2 level. We have to wait and see if, and if so to what extent, this is also the case in the Wi2021, and whether we will see similar outflows from social assistance from participants who have integrated at B1 level.

### *Language acquisition stagnates after first years of residence*

The study shows that the biggest language gains are made during the period when status holders are in the process of civic integration. After that, the improvement in language skills levels off. This suggests that it is important for status holders to continue language education even after civic integration. Apparently, their social and work environments offer few opportunities to practise and continue learning the language. In this regard, employers could be encouraged to invest in improving the Dutch language skills of their employees. There are funding opportunities for establishing learning and practical training places. These could be expanded. Furthermore, consideration could be given to setting up a broader infrastructure for language education for migrants. Not only newly integrated status holders could benefit from this, but also labour migrants and knowledge migrants.

### *Mental health: continued care is needed for status holders who have been in the Netherlands for a longer period*

This study shows that precarious experiences during flight have long-term effects on the mental health of status holders. As the length of stay in the Netherlands increases, mental health tends to worsen rather than improve. It is therefore important to pay attention to this not only in the first years of stay, but also afterwards. After all, status holders who have been in the Netherlands for a longer period are also at high risk of mental health issues. Institutions and professionals who regularly interact with status holders, such as municipalities, language schools, general practitioners, and employers, should be aware of this and trained to recognise the signs. It is necessary for mental health care services (GGZ) to have expertise in providing care specifically tailored to status holders.

### *Reflecting on adjustments to the dispersal policy*

This study shows that where you come to live has implications for labour market and social participation. In a recent qualitative study, status holders already shared their concerns about the arbitrariness of placement, the potentially significant impact of the placement region, and the powerlessness of not being able to choose a region themselves (Van der Meer et al., 2024). The current study supports their concerns with quantitative analyses; the placement region has a lasting impact on their

employment opportunities and influences the composition of their social networks. Status holders benefit from placement in regions with more favourable labour market conditions in the form of lower unemployment rates.

However, targeted placement of status holders in favourable regions poses a dilemma because moving away from proportional distribution also has disadvantages. Targeted placement in certain regions may create additional pressure on the housing market in those regions. Additionally, it can undermine public support in those regions for housing status holders. It may also lead to longer waiting times for the housing of status holders. An option that does not compromise equitable distribution is providing additional support for status holders in unfavourable placement regions to access the labour market. This could be done, for instance, by offering them more guidance in their job search. In this way, an attempt can be made to reduce some of the inequality between status holders in different placement regions. Consideration could be given to putting extra effort into guiding older status holders; they already have a lower labour participation rate and are also influenced by the placement region for a longer period of time. Through the project *Kansrijke Koppeling* (or 'promising matchmaking'), efforts are being made to consider the extent to which the labour market of the placement region aligns with the skills, work experience, and education of the status holder. However, it remains to be seen to what extent the influence of the placement region will diminish as a result. The proportional distribution is not abandoned in the case of the promising matchmaking, so status holders will still be placed in regions with higher unemployment.

For some time, there has been discussion about the dispersal policy and consideration of whether matching between individuals and regions could be done more finely tuned with the help, for example, of artificial intelligence methods. It remains important to find the right balance between a proportional distribution of status holders across the country and the fairest possible placement. There are no simple solutions to this, but it is certain that the current dispersal policy has unintended consequences for inequality in labour and social participation.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with the Dispersal Act (*Spreidingswet*). This Act covers the distribution of asylum seeker reception centres across municipalities.
- <sup>2</sup> As the study focuses on status holders who were granted a refugee status between 2014 and 2016, the findings on civic integration relate to the previous act. Nevertheless, the research findings have significance for the new Civic Integration Act 2021 (*Wet inburgering 2021*). We discuss these in the policy recommendations section.
- <sup>3</sup> Under the Civic Integration Act 2013 (Wi2013), an exemption was granted for various reasons. The vast majority received an exemption because they failed to



pass the civic integration exam, but had demonstrably made sufficient effort. Exemptions were also granted for medical or psychological reasons or because a person could prove to be sufficiently integrated. Under the Wi2013, about a quarter of the persons obliged to integrate were exempted.

- <sup>4</sup> This requirement meant that asylum seekers were allowed to work a maximum of 24 weeks per year. Following a Council of State ruling on 29 November 2023, this requirement was dropped; asylum seekers are now allowed to work all year.

Het Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Datacentrum (WODC), Kennisinstituut voor de rechtsstaat, is een onafhankelijk kennisinstituut dat valt onder het ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. Het WODC draagt bij aan behoud en verbetering van de rechtsstaat via het (laten) uitvoeren van kwalitatief hoog wetenschappelijk onderzoek. En door het aanbieden van gevraagde en ongevraagde kennis, verbeterpunten en (waar mogelijk) denkrichtingen.

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