

Ageing at work in the Netherlands

Aerneth seminar: **The impact of ageing on aviation** (23 November 2006)

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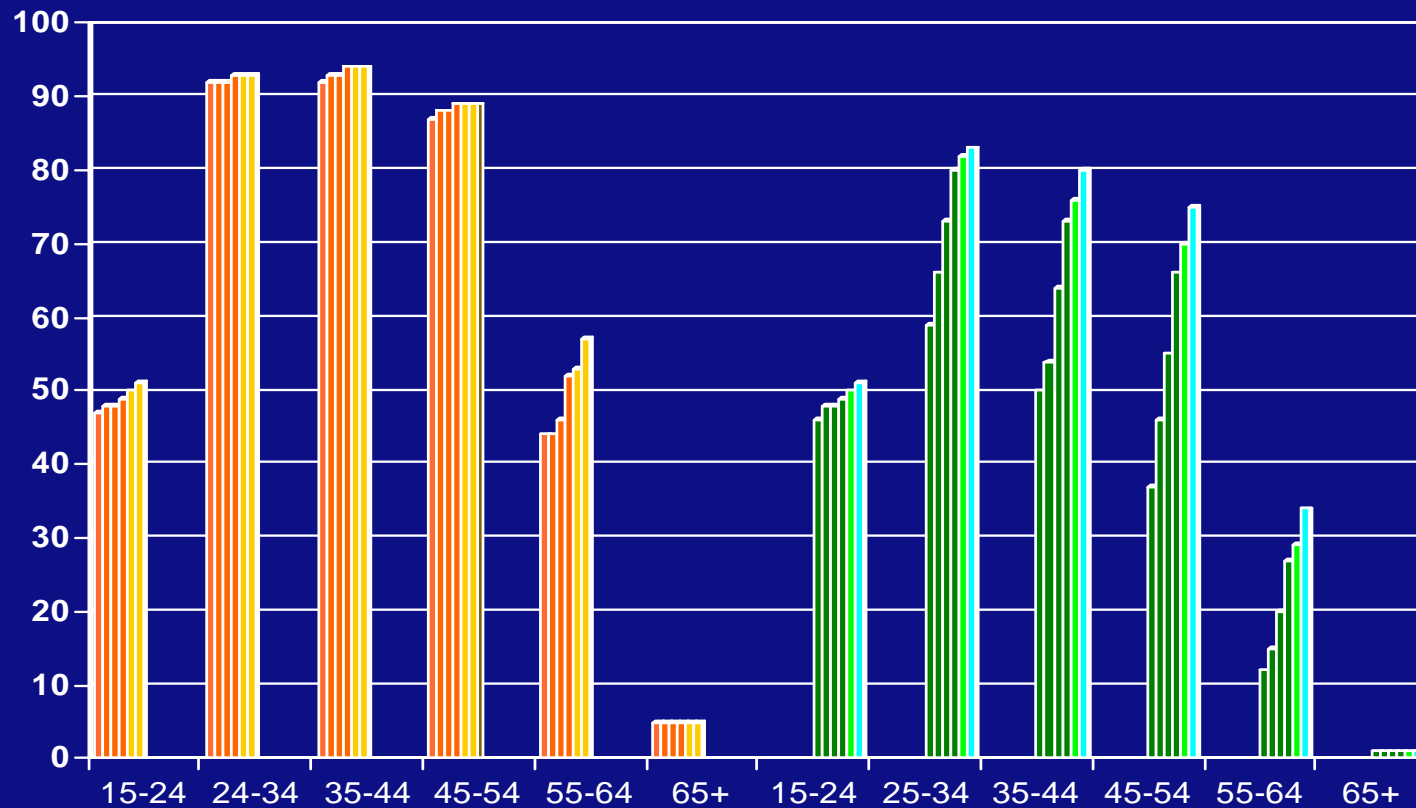
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Facts & Figures the Netherlands

- Number of older workers increased between 1993 and 2003 from 345.000 to 709.000 (source: OESO)/ 858.000 (october 2006; source CBS)
- Retirement age rose from 59,5 yrs to 62,2 yrs (source: OESO)
- Labour participation older workers (55-64 yrs; source CBS):
 - 24% in 1993
 - 38% in 2003
 - 42% in 2006 (october)
- Lisboa goal NL: 40% in 2007 and 45% in 2010
- In the Netherlands labour participation of older workers has risen more quickly than in other EU-countries

Developments in labour participation 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2007, 2011 among men and women



Facts & Figures EU

- Average EU labour participation older workers (55-64 yrs) is 41%

(source: European Commission)

- Belgium: 30,0%
- Italy: 30,5%
- France: 37,3%
- Germany: 41,8%
- **Netherlands: 45,2%**
- UK: 56,2%
- Sweden: 69,1% (*highest in the EU*)

- Lisboa goal EU: 45% in 2007 and 50% in 2010

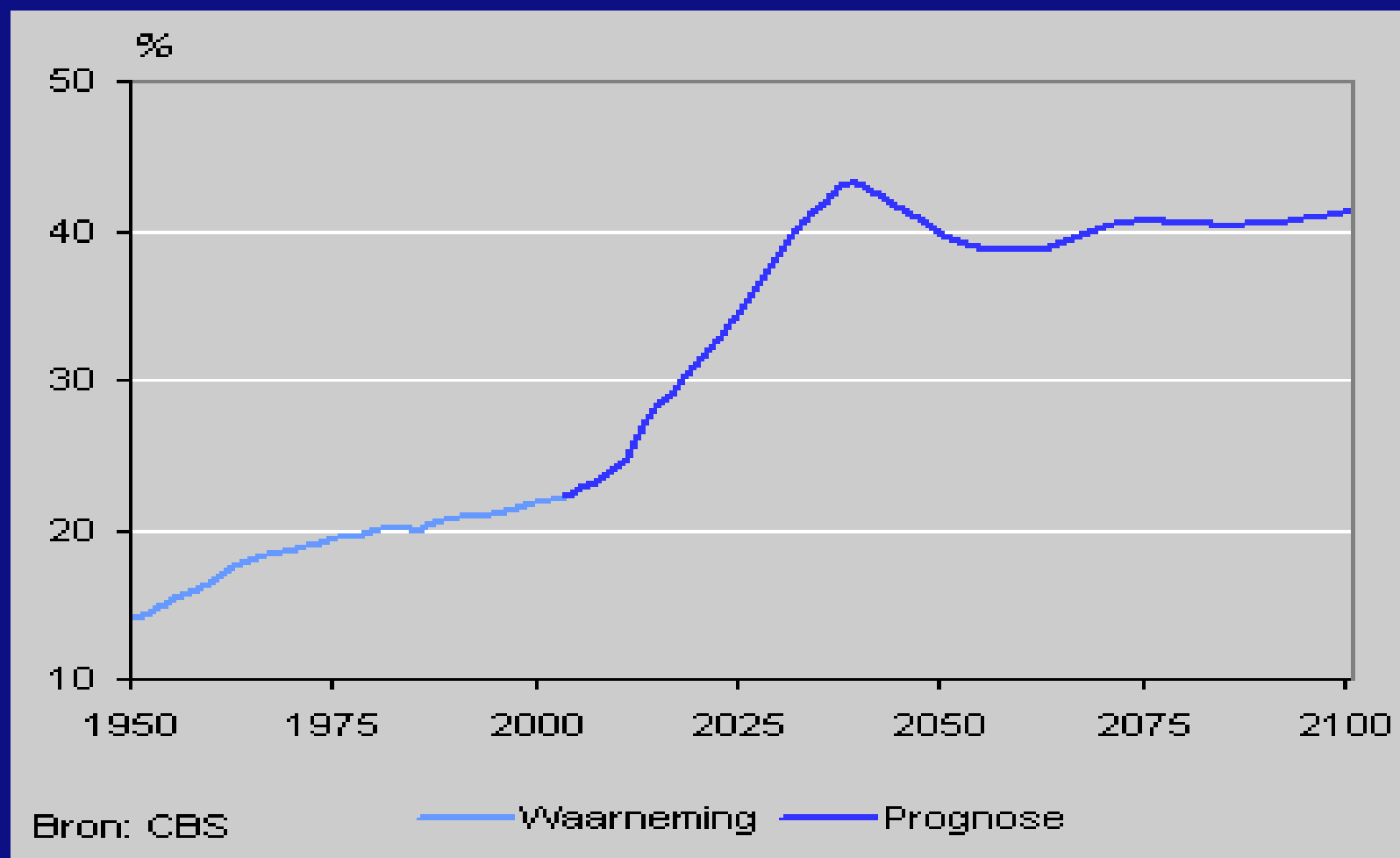
Forecast the Netherlands

(source Eurostat 2005)

- Labour population (18-64 yrs) will decline from 8,3 mio in 2005 to 7 mio in 2040
- Number of people of 65+ yrs will increase from 2 mio in 2005 to 4 mio in 2040
- In 2005: 22 elderly (65+) for each 100 workers (18-64 yrs)
- In 2040: 44 elderly (65+) for each 100 workers (18-64 yrs)

Grey pressure in the Netherlands

number of persons of 65 years and older on 100 working persons



Policies on Age by the Dutch government

- Reintroduction obligation to apply for jobs >57,5 yrs
- Abolition WAO-premium employers for employees >55 yrs
- Introduction law against age discrimination in 2004
- Abolition tax advantages VUT and pre-pensions in 2005
- Grant scheme of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
 - Four years programme: 2004 - 2007
 - 21 Million Euro's for age management projects at the workplace
 - maximum of € 40.000 per project

Perceptions of employees

(NIDI: Henkens & Van Solinge, 2003)

- People start thinking about retirement from the age of 50 years
- 80% of the workers want to retire before the age of 65 years
- Retirement is perceived as a private subject. Only a few employees discuss this topic with their manager.
- Older workers wish to cut down tasks and responsibilities gradually
- Before actually retiring employees presort (*they already get into the “retirement lane on the highway of work”*)
- If management would ask, many employees would consider to work longer
- Few people want to work after the age of 65 years

Perceptions of managers

(Boerlijst & Van der Heijden, 1993 and 1998):

Manager's preferences:

- 38,5 years as average age in the department
- Significantly more employees younger than 40 years, less employees between 40 and 55 years

Why these outcomes? Assumptions:

- Older workers are working less efficiently and creatively
- Older workers are rigid; their knowledge is obsolete
- Younger workers are more swift and react more adequately
- Younger workers are not afraid of innovation

Negative stereotypes older workers:

- Assumed reluctance to (technological) developments
- Lack of motivation to follow training, work longer and accept new assignments
- Assumed lower productivity

Images of older workers

1. Older workers are less healthy (both physical and mental) than younger workers
2. Physical limitations hinder older workers in their jobs
3. Older workers have more spells of absenteeism
4. Longer job tenures lead to longer spells of absenteeism
5. Older workers are less productive than younger workers
6. People of 50 years and older have more difficulties in learning new things (knowledge and competences)
7. Older workers are less flexibel and less open to change

Facts on employability of older workers (1)

1. Growing older leads to more physical complaints (hearing/vision, less fitness, less power (strength), more chronic diseases) and increases the risks for longtime absenteeism and disability .
2. Decrease of cognitive abilities (memory and concentration) is little. Mental health is increasing! Older people do not learn less, but learn in a different way!
3. Older workers often compensate physical limitations by using tools and smarter work strategies
4. Not all workers age in a same pace (functional age is more important than calendar age); great individual differences exist!
5. Physical health is not only influenced by age, but also by lifestyle (for example exercise) en work factors (work demands and job tenure).
6. In most jobs physical decrease does not or hardly influence performance.

Facts on employability of older workers (2)

7. Many jobs can easily be adapted to the decrease of physical abilities of older workers
8. In general ageing has a negative effect on the productivity of workers. The negative effect of ageing is often compensated by positive effect of experience (smarter work strategies). This is often counterbalanced by higher wages.
9. In (very) heavy physical demanding jobs older workers perform less as a result of a decrease of physical capacities at a rising functional age.
10. In these jobs often health risks come together, like a low quality of work (less variety in work and less decision latitude), low educated workers, long-term job careers (starting at a young age) and often an unhealthy lifestyle.

Conclusies ageing

- Weak and strong points of ageing people are changing
- Often weak points are taken into account (and lead to less activities) but strong points are not used enough
- Good HR policies can prevent a decrease in individual performance when workers get older

Interventions to combat myths and use facts

(TNO: Nauta, Cremer & De Bruijn, 2004)

<i>Level</i>	Societal	Organizational	Individual
Combating stereotypes	Public campaigns showing healthy older employees	Discussions about views on older colleagues	Combating self-stereotyping
	Government as a role model	Using role models of employable colleagues	Reflecting on (future) needs
Adjusting work	Implementing life-course arrangements	Regular job rotation	Choosing work to fit abilities
	Age neutral collective arrangements	Design4All: design workplaces accessible for everyone	Body posture, exercise at work, adjust own workplace
Increasing employability	Public campaigns addressing life styles	Age-sensitive HRM	Investing in own employability
	Financial incentives to keep employees working at age	Integrated Health Management	Living a healthy lifestyle