

Interview with Michel Daenen about International Almere published in local newspaper “Almere Deze Week”, 4th of April 2018

Expats feel at home in Almere

by Robert Mienstra

ALMERE – Almere is home to no less than 4,000 expats. “Our association calls them internationals,” says Michel Daenen, chair of the International Almere association. “Expats are temporary residents in the Netherlands, who have been sent from abroad by international companies to work here. This group lives mainly in Amsterdam South and on the canals of central Amsterdam. But there are also many internationals who come to the Netherlands for other reasons.



*Michel Daenen of International Almere
(Photo: Almere Deze Week)*

Often they are highly educated knowledge workers, who come to the Netherlands with their partner or whole family, to work and live here. You can see this group growing in Amsterdam, but also in Almere. “The Facebook group, International Almere, already has more than 1,200 active members and continues to grow”, says Daenen. Almere is attractive for this group. “Important reasons for this are the green character of the city, its location close to Amsterdam, Almere’s great

public transport system, the space, affordable housing and also, certainly, the city center. Many internationals describe the center as something very special.

Practical questions

Life for an international in Almere is not without its challenges. “An international who settles in Almere immediately faces the question, ‘how do I build a life here?’ All kinds of practical questions arise. ‘Where can I find information?’ ‘What about a family doctor – and a dentist?’ ‘How do I find friends?’ ‘How do I learn the language?’”, says Daenen. “And, very importantly, ‘what about education in Almere?’”

International School

For expats in particular, the presence of an international school, such as the International School in Almere Poort, is of great importance. Daenen is convinced of this. “A school like this is a very important argument for foreign companies to establish themselves in Almere. Expats who live here temporarily want their children to go to an English-language school.”

Activities

The International Almere association serves its target group in Almere via numerous activities. “We have the Dutch language café. Where we practice speaking Dutch. The Dutch are quickly inclined to speak to foreigners in English. That doesn’t help if you want to learn the language. At the café only Dutch is spoken. That’s

