



Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst  
*Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid*

# How to become a Dutch citizen?

## The procedure in Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba



# Do you want to become a Dutch citizen?

If you want to apply for Dutch nationality, you can contact the **Immigration and Naturalisation Service Caribbean Netherlands (IND)**. You can make an appointment for a preliminary assessment or to submit an application. This is done at the **Citizenship Desk**.

## What are the options?

You can become a Dutch citizen through **naturalisation** or the **option** procedure.

# Naturalisation

This is a way to become a Dutch citizen if you are not yet a Dutch citizen and have lived here for a long time. You must meet certain conditions, including taking an integration course and passing the integration exam. Other conditions are:

- You are of age (i.e. 18 years or older. If you are under the age of 18, you are an adult if you are or have been married).
- You have continuously been living legally in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten for five years or more. Legal means: with a valid residence permit. There are some exceptions to this rule:
  - U bent getrouwd met of bent geregistreerd partner van een Nederlandse man of vrouw. In dat geval kunt u na 3 jaar huwelijk of geregistreerd partnerschap (eventueel in het buitenland) én onafgebroken samenwonend een verzoek om naturalisatie indienen. Als u 3 jaar legaal en onafgebroken samenwoont (beiden ongehuwd) met een Nederlandse man of vrouw, kunt u ook een verzoek om naturalisatie indienen. In het geval van ongehuwd samenwonen moet deze samenwoning in het Koninkrijk hebben plaatsgevonden. In het geval van een huwelijk mag de samenwoning ook in het buitenland zijn geweest.

*Please note! During the processing of your application for naturalisation until the decision on the application, you must continue to live together. It is also worth noting here that you must be willing to renounce your current nationality.*



- You are a former Dutch citizen: you had Dutch nationality and lost it again. In this case, you do not need to have lived in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten for a certain period of time. In some cases, you can use the option procedure.
- You have a permanent residence permit or a residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of stay, e.g. family reunification. If you have a residence permit with a temporary purpose of stay, e.g. for study or medical treatment, you cannot apply for Dutch citizenship.
- You have sufficiently integrated and can speak, read, write, and understand Dutch and Papiamentu (Bonaire) or English (St. Eustatius and Saba). From the 1st of January 2025, your knowledge of both the Dutch language and the Papiamentu language (Bonaire) or the English language (St. Eustatius and Saba) will be tested.
- You must demonstrate your knowledge by taking the naturalisation test. If you have certain diplomas or certificates, you may not need to take the naturalisation test. This also applies to people who cannot take the naturalisation test because of a severe physical or mental disability. For more information on the content of or the exemption or dispensation from the naturalisation test, please contact the Dutch Citizenship Counter of the IND Unit Caribbean Netherlands.
- In the past five years, you have not been convicted of a criminal offence (under Dutch law) for which you have served a prison sentence, performed community service (community service or apprenticeship), or received a high fine or other (additional) punishment

as mentioned in Section 9 of the Criminal Code.

A 'high fine' involves an amount of \$560 or more.

Your application is also rejected if you have received multiple fines of \$280 or more in the last five years, totalling \$840 or more. Also, no criminal case for a criminal offence must be pending against you.

- You are prepared to make the declaration of solidarity during the naturalisation ceremony. By doing so, you state that you are aware that the legislation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is also applicable to you. If you do not take the declaration of solidarity, you cannot become a Dutch citizen.
- You are willing to renounce your current nationality. If you do not renounce your current nationality after becoming a Dutch citizen, the Dutch citizenship can be revoked again.

#### *Loss of current nationality / renunciation*

You may automatically lose your current nationality when you become a Dutch citizen. For a limited number of nationalities, however, you may keep your current nationality (nationalities). You can enquire about this at the IND Unit Caribbean Netherlands. If you do not need to renounce your current nationality, then at the time you submit your application for naturalisation, you must demonstrate that you do not need to renounce.

It is not required to renounce your current nationality in, inter alia, the following cases:

- Through naturalisation into a Dutch citizen, you automatically lose your current nationality.
- The legislation of the country of your current nationality does not allow the loss of your nationality (you can see the regulations governing renunciation for each country at [www.ind.nl](http://www.ind.nl)).
- You are married to or are the registered partner of a Dutch national.
- You are a minor.
- You were born in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten and you are living on Bonaire, St. Eustatius or Saba at the time you submit your application for naturalisation.
- The authorities of the country of your current nationality do not cooperate or do not respond to your application for renunciation of your nationality. You must be able to demonstrate this at the time of submission of your application for naturalisation.
- You would lose certain rights as a result of renunciation of your current nationality, causing you serious financial damage. For example, inheritance law.
- You need to complete (or redeem) your military service before you can renounce your current nationality. You must be able to demonstrate this at the time of submission of your application for naturalisation.



- According to the legislation of the country of your current nationality, you can only renounce your current nationality after you have been naturalised. After your naturalisation has been achieved, you do need to renounce your current nationality.
- You cannot be required to contact the authorities of the State of your current nationality. This only applies to persons with a residence permit based on Asylum and Protection.
- You have a special reason that prevents you from renouncing your current nationality.
- You are a citizen of a state that is not recognised by the Netherlands.
- You are a citizen of a State that is party to the Second Strasbourg Protocol Treaty.
- You have been recognised as a refugee in the Netherlands, Curacao, St. Maarten or Aruba.

Check in advance what the consequences are if you renounce your current nationality and whether there are any costs involved. To do so, contact the authorities of the country of your current nationality.

# Option

**This is an easier and faster way to become a Dutch citizen. However, this is only possible in special situations, e.g. as in the case of former Dutch citizenship or statelessness. The conditions for option are:**

- **You are of age (i.e. 18 years or older).** If you are under the age of 18, you are an adult if you are or have been married) in the Netherlands (Please note! 'The Netherlands' means: European part of the Netherlands and the Public Entities of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba), in Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten, born as a child of immigrants, and you have lived in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten continuously since birth and you hold a valid residence permit.
- **You were born in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten,** you have lived there continuously legally for at least three years and you have no nationality from birth (you are de facto stateless). You must be able to demonstrate that you are stateless. Legal means: with a valid residence permit.
- **You are of age and have lived legally in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten since reaching the age of four.**
- **You are of age, a former Dutch national and have lived in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten for at least one year** on the basis of a permanent residence permit or a residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of stay (see the separate publication for former Dutch citizens).
- **You have been married to a Dutch national** for at least three years and have lived continuously legally in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten for at least 15 years.
- **You are 65 years of age or older** and have lived continuously legally in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten for 15 years.
- **You married a non-Dutch citizen before the 1st of January 1985** and have therefore lost Dutch nationality. Within one year of the dissolution of that marriage, you can regain the Dutch citizenship by option. In this case, the condition of legal residence in the Netherlands is not applicable.
- **You are a former Dutch citizen.** You lost the Dutch citizenship by operation of law. If with that loss, Union citizenship has also been lost and the consequences are disproportionate for you, you can get your Dutch citizenship back with retroactive effect. In this case, you do not have to make the declaration of solidarity at the naturalisation ceremony. Again, the condition of legal residence in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten is not applicable to you.
- **You were born before the 1st of January 1985 to a mother who was a Dutch citizen** at the time of your birth, whilst your father was a non-Dutch citizen, option pursuant to Section 6 Subsection 1i.
- **You were adopted** by court order in the Netherlands, the former Netherlands Antilles or Aruba before the 1st of January 1985 by a woman who was a Dutch citizen on the day the court order took effect. You were a minor on the day of the ruling in first instance, option pursuant to Section 6 Subsection 1j.

- **You were born the child of a person who acquired Dutch citizenship** by option pursuant to Section 6 Subsection 1i or Section 6 Subsection 1j, or died before the acquisition.
- **You were recognised before the age of seven** by a person who acquired Dutch citizenship by option pursuant to Section 6 Subsection 1i or Section 6 Subsection 1j, or died before the acquisition.
- **You are a minor aged seven years or older, but before you came of age, recognised by your biological father** who acquired Dutch citizenship by option pursuant to Section 6 Subsection 1i or Section 6 Subsection 1j, or died before the acquisition.
- **By a judicial determination of paternity, you are the child of a man who acquired Dutch citizenship by option** pursuant to Section 6 Subsection 1i or Section 6 Subsection 1j, or died before the acquisition.
- **You are the child adopted in the Netherlands, in Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten** by court order of a man or a woman who acquired Dutch citizenship by option pursuant to Section 6 Subsection 1i or Section 6 Subsection 1j, or died before the acquisition. You were a minor on the day of the ruling in first instance.
- **Finally, a separate arrangement is in place for children recognised or legalised by a Dutch citizen after the 1st of April 2003** but before the 1st of March 2009. For more information on these options, you can visit the Dutch Citizenship Counter of the IND Unit Caribbean Netherlands by appointment.

For both procedures, the words ‘legal’ and ‘continuous residence’ mean that you have always held a valid residence permit from the time of your admission to the Kingdom (the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten). This means that you always applied for an extension before your residence permit expired. You must also have held a valid residence permit at all times during the option and naturalisation procedure.

During the first appointment, we will check whether you meet the requirements. This is called a preliminary examination. You are also informed what documents you need for your application.





# What do you take with you to your first appointment?

- A valid passport
- A valid residence permit
- Copies of residence permits from 2009 up to and including 2011 (where applicable to you)
- An extensive extract from the Personal Records Database (Civil Affairs)
- A secondary or a senior secondary or higher education diploma. If you have not taken a Dutch language course but the subject Dutch is part of your curriculum, you must demonstrate a satisfactory mark in that subject (6 or higher).



## How do you schedule an appointment?

Do you have all the above documents? Then you can schedule an appointment via [nederlanderschap@rijksdienstcn.com](mailto:nederlanderschap@rijksdienstcn.com)

During the first appointment, you will hear what additional documents you still need. You will then schedule a second appointment when you have all the necessary documents.

## Opening hours Dutch Citizenship Counter

- Thursday between 8 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. (for appointments)
- Thursday between 1p.m. and 3:30 p.m. (for the retrieval of all documents related to your application, e.g. remedial default, order, presentation, extension of the decision-making period or waiver).

## Costs of naturalisation or option

The rates are adjusted every year due to indexations. The current rates can be found in the attached appendix.

## How long does it take?

### Naturalisation

The processing of the application takes up to one year, the decision is made in the Netherlands and signed by the King. This time limit may be extended twice by a maximum of six months. If you need to wait longer than one year, you will receive a letter about this.

### Option

The application for option takes a maximum of 13 weeks. You will be notified in writing within that time limit after making your option statement. If the examination has not been completed after 13 weeks, the deadline may be extended once by up to 13 weeks.

## The ceremony

After a positive decision on your application, you will receive an invitation for the naturalisation ceremony at the Governor of the island where you reside. During this meeting, you will make the Declaration of Solidarity. By doing so, you state that you accept the Dutch legislation. You then receive proof that you have become a Dutch citizen and, if required, you can apply for a Dutch passport at the Civil Affairs Department of the Public Entity.





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