

Multiple Nationality, and the Benefits for the Netherlands

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According to the Dutch Government, the starting point of Dutch Nationality Law is that a single nationality should be pursued to the greatest degree possible. In the eyes of the government, this is desirable, because the rights and obligations of a person with more than one nationality are not as readily apparent as those of a person with a single nationality. Additionally, parliamentary documents have shown that the government believes that cutting ties with one's home country by means of renouncing that country's nationality will help them in integrating into Dutch society.

The validity of these claims notwithstanding, there is evidence to suggest that the government's general non-acceptance of multiple nationalities is actually hindering their overall goals of integrating newcomers. There are two key areas:

1. Forced Renunciation Can Hinder Integration

When prospective naturalisands go through the naturalisation process to be granted Dutch nationality, they must in principle sign a declaration stating that they are willing to do everything in their power to renounce their original nationality or nationalities upon acquiring Dutch nationality. If there are no exceptions to this requirement (e.g. *being married to a Dutch national*), naturalisands are required to go through with the renunciation.

New Dutch nationals may be made aware that acquiring another nationality afterwards can constitute grounds for the automatic loss of the newly acquired Dutch nationality. However, there are three main exceptions to this rule, namely:

- a) Being born in the country of that other nationality and having your residence there at the time of the acquisition,
- b) Having lived in that other country for at least 5 years prior to reaching the age of 18, and
- c) Being married to someone who holds that nationality

Therefore, if a newly naturalised Dutch person wishes to reacquire their former nationality, and they meet one of those three criteria (*which many do*), then there is nothing stopping them from doing so while also still holding their Dutch nationality.

However, this arrangement is not necessarily ideal for the Dutch government. If the government wants its newcomers to integrate to the best of their ability, returning to the country of origin for months, if not years in order to resume the original nationality is not ideal, as this can hinder that person's integration into Dutch society. In fact, such a process may actually represent *disintegration* if the person begins to forget their Dutch as well as their cultural training, and begins readapting to their country of origin. If the government included these two exemptions from the start (i.e. *letting naturalisands keep their original nationality if it is from their birth country or is from a country where they lived for 5 years as a minor*), this would allow new Dutch to continue their integration journey with the same legal effects.

Furthermore, for people to whom no exceptions anywhere apply, they may be hindered in seeking Dutch nationality for fear of losing their original nationality. The government has noted that it does not find it desirable to have many long-term immigrants who do not naturalise, but this does not seem to cause them to abandon the single nationality principle.

In other words, the current arrangements of the nationality law leads to unnecessary issues that may ultimately be causing problems with integration at the same time. Allowing dual nationality would alleviate this issue.

2. Single Dutch Nationality Can Cause Issues

Several members of the House of Representatives (*notably PVV member Fritsma, known for starring in EuroTrump*) have expressed concerns regarding the possibility of revoking Dutch nationality from certain groups of people, namely those who are deemed to cause issues for the government due to crime or poor integration. The Netherlands is a signatory to a number of treaties that aim to reduce or eliminate statelessness, and as a result, Dutch nationality cannot in principle be taken away from someone who only has Dutch nationality.

Therefore, in its pursuit of single nationality as a matter of principle, two issues are created, namely:

- a) Acquiring Dutch nationality through naturalisation, which is seen as a key element of the integration process, is not chosen by some people to whom no renunciation exemption exists, and

- b) The renunciation requirement creates new monopatriid Dutch nationals that cannot in general be subjected to certain punitive measures that dual nationals can, such as deportation and/or revocation of the Dutch nationality.

The rights and obligations of nationality work both ways. Multiple nationality offers more freedom and flexibility to individuals, but it also offers the same to the states involved.

Therefore, if the government has civic integration and national security at heart, it may wish to seriously consider unconditional dual nationality, as the vast majority of Europe has accepted.