



How can you regain your Dutch citizenship? Option and naturalisation procedures for former Dutch nationals

1. What is the purpose of this publication?

What to do to regain Dutch citizenship? This question will be answered in the publication you are reading now. This publication is intended for all former Dutch nationals: people who at one time held Dutch citizenship, but have since lost it. This publication will give information about the following:

- How to regain Dutch citizenship;
- Which conditions must be satisfied to acquire Dutch citizenship;
- Which documents are required to regain Dutch citizenship;
- How the procedures works.

Two ways in which you can regain Dutch citizenship

As a former Dutch national, there are two ways in which you can regain Dutch citizenship:

1. By making use of the option procedure, whereby you declare that you wish to acquire Dutch citizenship once again. This option applies in any event to former Dutch nationals who have been legal residents in the Kingdom of the Netherlands for a minimum period of 1 year with a valid residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of residence, such as family reunification. In addition, this option also applies to former Dutch nationals who have lost their Dutch citizenship by operation of law, thereby also lost their Union citizenship, and for whom the loss of Union citizenship was disproportionate. In that case, you do not have to reside in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
2. By submitting an application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen. This procedure is open to all former Dutch nationals.

2. Regaining Dutch citizenship - an overview

If you want to regain Dutch citizenship, please contact the following official bodies (depending on your place of residence):

1. In the European part of the Netherlands (hereinafter: the Netherlands): at the department of Civil Affairs of the municipality where you are registered in the Municipal Personal Records Database.
2. Abroad: at the Dutch Embassy or Consulate in the country (or department) where you live (this does not apply to the option procedure except in two specific cases);
3. In the public bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba: at the office of the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, or Saba (hereinafter: IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands);
4. On Aruba: at the Cabinet of the Governor of Aruba;
5. On Curaçao: at the Cabinet of the Governor of Curaçao;
6. On St. Maarten: at the Cabinet of the Governor of St. Maarten.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of:

- a) The European part of the Netherlands;
- b) The public bodies Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba. These public bodies are also known as the BES-islands and together they form Caribbean Netherlands; and
- c) The islands of Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten. These islands form, along with the BES-islands, the Caribbean part of the Kingdom.

The employees of these agencies will assess together with you if you satisfy the conditions for option or naturalisation. They will also assist you in making the option statement or submitting the application for naturalisation. If you satisfy the conditions for option, the option statement will be confirmed by the Mayor, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Dutch Minister, or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor of Aruba, Curaçao, or St. Maarten, respectively. Upon receipt of your application for naturalisation, the municipality, the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor. will make a recommendation for the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) and send this to the IND in the Netherlands. Please bear in mind that this is just a recommendation. The IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands compiles a naturalisation file and transfers it to the IND in the Netherlands. The IND in the Netherlands takes the final decision on your application for naturalisation.

Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) in the Netherlands

Your application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen will be assessed by the IND in the Netherlands; if necessary, the IND will perform an additional investigation. The IND will determine whether you will be recommended for being granted Dutch citizenship. The decision of the IND may therefore deviate from the recommendation made by your local government agency.

Conditions

First of all, check to make sure that you satisfy the conditions contained in Chapter 3. There you will find the conditions for option and naturalisation.

Documents

If you want to regain Dutch citizenship, you have to submit a number of documents. You will in any event have to demonstrate that you used to hold Dutch citizenship. An old Dutch passport or a declaration of Dutch citizenship are required for this purpose. They may also ask you to submit other documents, such as a passport or a legalised birth certificate. If you have a birth certificate from the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao, St Maarten or Bonaire, St Eustatius or Saba, you do not have to provide an authenticated document.

Transitional arrangement public order

In the previous 5 years prior to your request for naturalisation or option statement you must not

- have served a prison sentence;
- have performed community service;
- have paid or been given a large fine for a crime.

This period of 5 years is called the rehabilitation period.

As of 1 May 2018, the rehabilitation period went from 4 to 5 years. If you submitted or made your naturalisation request or option statement before 1 May 2018, the rehabilitation period of 4 years still applies to you.

Assessment

In the case of the option procedure, the municipality, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands, or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor will handle the application. The Mayor, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Dutch Minister, or the relevant Governor will subsequently decide whether you will regain Dutch citizenship. As stated above, the municipality, Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Cabinet of the Governor compiles a file and sends it, along with the recommendation, to the IND. The IND will assess your application for naturalisation. If your application is granted, a proposal to grant Dutch citizenship will be submitted to His Majesty the King for signature. Ultimately, His Majesty the King will grant Dutch citizenship. When your application has been granted, the Mayor, the head of the diplomatic or consular post, the Lieutenant Governor, or the Governor will invite you for a naturalisation ceremony. During the ceremony, attention will be paid to the significance of Dutch citizenship and your solidarity with Dutch society. You are obliged to attend the naturalisation ceremony and to make the Declaration of Solidarity. You will not acquire Dutch citizenship until you attend the naturalisation ceremony, make a Declaration of Solidarity and receive the notification.

If you do not meet the conditions of the option or naturalisation procedure, you will receive a letter stating why you are not eligible for Dutch citizenship. You will be able to submit an application for review against this decision. How to do that is explained in the letter.

Costs

There are costs associated with both the option and the naturalisation procedure. Please visit www.ind.nl if you would like to know the costs in advance. Your money will not be refunded if your option statement or the application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen has been rejected or if you have withdrawn your application.

Duration

Would you like to make use of the option procedure? Please take account of a period of approximately 3 months after the option statement has been taken delivery of. The naturalisation procedure will take approximately 1 year.

Renouncing your current nationality/nationalities

After you have acquired Dutch citizenship, you have to renounce your current nationality/nationalities. You have to show proof that you have renounced your current nationality/nationalities after you have acquired Dutch citizenship. There are several exceptions to the rule of renouncing your nationality. These exceptions are described in Chapter 5 of this brochure. You also do not have to renounce your nationality if, by acquiring Dutch citizenship, you automatically lose your current nationality according to regulations in your country. However, if you have to actively renounce your nationality, it is recommended you inform yourself of the attendant procedure before applying for Dutch nationality.

Please note! Dutch citizenship may be withdrawn if it becomes known that you have committed fraud to acquire Dutch citizenship. This may occur up to 12 years after you have acquired Dutch citizenship, even if it means that you will become stateless as a result. You may lose Dutch citizenship automatically when you voluntarily join the armed services of a state that is involved in hostilities against the Netherlands or against an alliance of which the Netherlands is a member. Dutch citizenship may also be withdrawn if you have been irrevocably convicted for crimes against the security of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, war crimes, genocide, or crimes against humanity. In those cases, you will, in principle, be unable to regain Dutch citizenship.

Both procedures are outlined in the appendix.

3. Option or naturalisation: the conditions

If you want to regain Dutch citizenship, first check whether you are eligible for option as this is the simplest method. The conditions are set out below. We will subsequently discuss the conditions that apply if you wish to submit an application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen.

Making an option statement

You can make use of the option procedure if you are a former Dutch national and have been a legal resident with a valid residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of residence, such as family reunification, in the Kingdom of the Netherlands for at least 1 year.

Former Dutch citizens who want to make use of the option procedure have to have lived in the Kingdom again for one year. There are exceptions to this rule:

- If you are a woman who has lost Dutch citizenship because you married a non-Dutch citizen before 1 January 1985 and your husband has recently died or you were recently divorced. You have to commence the option procedure within one year after the end of your marriage. More information is available in chapter 6 'Option procedure for divorcees and widows'.
- There is also an exception for former Dutch citizens of Surinam. More information is available in chapter 7 'Option procedure for former Dutch citizens of Surinam'. You can make the option statement at the municipality, the diplomatic or consular post, the IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands, or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor. This depends on where you are registered in the Personal Records Database (See Chapter 4).
- Or you are a former Dutch citizen and you have lost your Dutch citizenship by operation of law. If because of the loss of the Dutch citizenship you have also lost your EU citizenship and the consequences for you are disproportionate, you may be able to regain your Dutch citizenship retroactively.

Application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen

As a former Dutch national, you are entitled to submit an application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen if you satisfy all of the following conditions:

1. You do not reside in the country of which you are a national.
2. You are of age (in other words, 18 years of age or above; if you are under 18 years of age you are deemed to be of age if you are or were married).
3. You reside in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and you have a residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of residence, such as family reunification or re-entry. If you do not reside in the Kingdom, a fictitious test is conducted to establish whether you would be eligible for a residence permit with a non-temporary purpose of stay. That means that it is assessed whether you would meet the conditions that would apply.
4. You are sufficiently integrated and you can speak, read, write, and understand Dutch. You can prove this by passing the naturalisation test (the civic integration examination). If you have particular diplomas or certificates, you may be exempt from the naturalisation test (the civic integration examination). You will have to submit documentary evidence to support this. More information about exemption from the civic integration examination or dispensation due to physical or mental disability is available on www.inburgeren.nl and in the publications about the civic integration examination or the naturalisation test. 'Civic integration' also means that you may not be married to more than one spouse (polygamy).
5. During the last 5 years:
 - a. you have not been convicted of a crime for which you have served a prison sentence. Not even abroad;
 - b. you did not perform community service. Except if you had to do so because you were unable to pay a fine under €810;
 - c. You have not been imposed a large fine or other (additional) punishment as mentioned in article 9 of the Dutch Penal Code. A 'large fine' is a fine of € 810 (\$ 560, Afl. 1000 or Naf. 1000) or more. Your application will also be rejected if in the last 5 years you have received several fines of € 405 (\$ 280, Afl.500 or Naf. 500) each or more, with a total of € 1,215 (\$ 840, Afl.1500 or Naf. 1500) or more. There must also be no outstanding criminal case for a crime against you.

6. You are willing to make a Declaration of Solidarity. This means that you declare that the laws of the Kingdom of the Netherlands also apply to you. You will not be able to acquire Dutch citizenship if you do not make this Declaration of Solidarity.
7. If needed, you are willing to renounce your current nationality/nationalities. If you do not renounce your current nationality/nationalities when you acquire Dutch citizenship, your Dutch citizenship may be withdrawn again.

Residence permit

As a former Dutch national in the Netherlands you must have a residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of residence in order to regain Dutch citizenship. A special residence permit for former Dutch nationals is the residence permit for re-entry. This residence permit is issued only in the European part of the Netherlands. You will be eligible for this residence permit when you were born and raised in the European part of the Netherlands as a Dutch citizen. You were raised in the Netherlands if you completed at least primary school in the Netherlands. You also do not constitute a danger to public order or national security. Depending on your nationality, you have to have a regular provisional residence permit (mvv) before travelling to the Netherlands. You can apply for this residence permit at the Dutch Embassy or Consulate. A number of nationalities and groups do not require a Regular Provisional Residence Permit.

If you were not born and raised in the European part of the Netherlands, you are eligible for the residence permit for re-entry if you satisfy all of the following conditions:

- You do not constitute a danger to public order or national security.
- You are of age.
- You reside in a different country to the one of which you are a national.
- You have special ties to the Netherlands (through education, upbringing, social standing or employment). For instance, you may have completed your primary education, or half of it, in the European part or Caribbean part of the Netherlands or on Aruba, Curaçao, or St. Maarten or you were employed as a civil servant by the Dutch Government.
- You hold (if necessary) a Regular Provisional Residence Permit.

Please note! If you submit an application for naturalisation from outside the Netherlands, you do not require a Regular Provisional Residence Permit. However, if you request a check will be carried out to see if you satisfy the conditions for this Dutch residence permit.

If you do not satisfy the conditions for a residence permit for re-entry, you may be eligible for a different residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of residence, such as family reunification. Please contact the Dutch Embassy or Consulate for further information.

Would you like to know how the naturalisation procedure works? If so, please refer to Chapter 5. Here you will also find details of the cases in which you do not have to renounce your current nationality/nationalities.

4. How does the option procedure work?

What is it?

The option procedure consists of making an option statement in which you state that you desire to regain Dutch citizenship again. You will have to demonstrate that you used to hold Dutch citizenship. This can be done by showing an old Dutch passport or a Declaration of Dutch citizenship. If you satisfy all option conditions, your option statement will be confirmed. The confirmation will be issued to you at a naturalisation ceremony after you have made the Declaration of Solidarity.

Where can you make the option statement?

If you have been a legal resident in the Kingdom of the Netherlands with a valid residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of residence such as family reunification for of 1 year or more, you can make the option statement at the municipality, the IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands, or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor. This depends on where you are registered in the Personal Records Database.

Confirmation or rejection of the option statement

If your option statement is confirmed, you will receive an invitation for a naturalisation ceremony from the municipality, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Lieutenant Governor in the public bodies, or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor of Aruba, Curacao or St. Maarten. During the ceremony, attention will be paid to the significance of Dutch citizenship and your solidarity with Dutch society. You are obliged to attend the naturalisation ceremony and to make the Declaration of Solidarity. You will not acquire Dutch citizenship until you attend the ceremony and make the Declaration of Solidarity there. During the ceremony, you will receive a written confirmation stating that you have acquired Dutch citizenship. If you do not satisfy all conditions, you will receive a letter at home stating why you are not eligible for Dutch citizenship. You have the right to file an application for review of this decision. How to do this is explained in the letter.

Duration

The option procedure takes approximately 3 months

Costs

There are costs associated with the option procedure. Please visit www.ind.nl if you would like to know the costs in advance. Your money will not be refunded if your option statement has been rejected or if you have withdrawn your option statement.

Losing and renouncing your current nationality/nationalities

If you use the option procedure, the legislation of the country of your original nationality, or nationalities, determines whether you lose that nationality, or nationalities.

Please note! The obligation to renounce does apply to one option category. Persons who since the age of 4 years old have been admitted to and have had their main residence in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Article 6(1)(e) of the Netherlands Nationality Act) will have to renounce their nationality/nationalities when acquiring or regaining Dutch citizenship.

5. How does the naturalisation procedure work?

Making inquiries

First check whether you are eligible to regain Dutch citizenship. To this end, read the conditions set out in this publication. A checklist is included at the back of the publication. Also check whether you are required to renounce your current nationality/nationalities once you have acquired Dutch citizenship and what conditions must be satisfied before being able to renounce your nationality/ nationalities. You can also visit www.ind.nl.

Gathering documents

If you are of the opinion that you meet all conditions for naturalisation, you can contact the official body to which you can submit your naturalisation application (the official bodies are listed in Chapter 2). You will be asked to bring several documents. Which ones? That will depend on your personal situation. The documents that may be requested include the following:

- Proof that you were a Dutch citizen (an old Dutch passport or Declaration of Dutch citizenship).
- Valid passport (your own, your partner's, and your children's).
- Original birth certificate (your own, your partner's, and your children's); if you were born outside the Netherlands please inquire in your country of birth).
- Valid residence permit (your own, your partner's, and your children's).
- Naturalisation certificate, civic integration certificate, or a comparable document.

Translation and legalisation of foreign documents

Your foreign documents, such as your birth certificate and marriage certificate, must be readable and it must be possible to establish their authenticity. The following rules therefore apply:

- If the document has been drawn up in a language different from the Dutch, English, German, or French language, you must arrange for the document to be translated, preferably into the Dutch language. If the document is not translated in the Netherlands but abroad, the translation must also be legalised.
- You may be asked to have the document legalised in the country where the document originates from. In that case, it will be checked whether the document was issued by the competent authorities.

The translation and legalisation of documents can take several months, and the related costs will be for your account. For further information about the translation and legalisation of documents please contact the Department of Civil Affairs of your municipality or the Information of the Government of the Netherlands (www.government.nl)

Completing the application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen

The application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen will be completed together with you. If you have minor children, you can also apply for Dutch citizenship for them. In that case, their names and dates of birth must be filled in on the application. Children aged 16 years old and above must personally indicate that they agree with the application. They must personally sign the form in evidence thereof and consequently be present when the application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen is submitted.

Signing a statement of allegiance

Besides completing and signing the application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen, you also have to complete a form, the statement of allegiance, in which you declare to be willing to make a Declaration of Solidarity during the naturalisation ceremony. By making the Declaration of Solidarity, you declare that you know that the laws of the Kingdom of the Netherlands also apply to you. You make the Declaration of Solidarity in person and in Dutch. If you do not make the Declaration of Solidarity, you cannot acquire Dutch citizenship.

Signing a Declaration of Willingness to renounce your original nationality/nationalities

If you have to renounce your current nationality/ nationalities, you have to sign a declaration to that effect. You have to sign the so-called Declaration of Willingness to this effect when you submit your application for naturalisation. In this declaration you declare that you are going to renounce your current nationality/nationalities. Children under the age of 16 may retain their current nationality if one or both of their parent (s) become Dutch, unless the legislation of the country of their current nationality provides otherwise. Children aged 16 or 17 must sign a Declaration of Willingness. If you fall within a special category, you can also declare that you think that you are not required to renounce your nationality/nationalities. The applicable exceptions are listed below. After you have signed the declaration, you will be obliged to renounce your current nationality/ nationalities once you have acquired Dutch citizenship. You will then no longer be able to rely on a special category. It is therefore important that you examine whether you have to and if so; how exactly to renounce your nationality/ nationalities, whether costs are associated with it, and what the consequences are. Before signing the Declaration of Willingness you should contact the authorities of the country of your current nationality/nationalities for this purpose.

Confirm or change your name

It may be necessary to confirm your name. Confirming your name is obligatory if you do not have a surname or first name (but only one name or multiple names in which there is no distinction between the surname and the first name(s)).

In addition, you may ask to have your surname changed. This can only be effected in a limited number of cases and only if this is important to the process of civic integration. For example in the following cases:

- Your name is difficult to pronounce for Dutch citizens.
- You have adopted your husband's name through marriage and you wish to change this name into your maiden name.

Interview with children under 18

Children aged 16 or up may decide for themselves if they want to acquire Dutch citizenship. Children between the ages of 12 and 16 are asked for their opinion on the acquisition of Dutch citizenship. Regardless of a child's age, the opinion of the parent who did not apply for the option or naturalisation procedure is asked. If both the parent who did not apply for naturalisation and the child believe that the child should not acquire Dutch citizenship, the child will not be naturalised. If only the child or one of their parents opposes, the government will decide whether or not the child will acquire Dutch citizenship.

Costs

You must pay the costs of the naturalisation procedure.

You will also have to pay for any minor children included in your application for naturalisation. The amount must be paid when you submit the application for naturalisation. Please visit www.ind.nl if you would like to know the costs in advance. Your money will not be refunded if your application has been rejected.

Assessing your application

Once the employee of the municipality, the Dutch Embassy or Consulate, the IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands, or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor has compiled all the information, he will carry out an investigation. He will establish whether you are who you say you are and whether you have been in contact with the police. Subsequently, the employee of the municipality, the Dutch Embassy or Consulate, or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor will make a recommendation on the basis of all documents about whether or not you may naturalise. Thereafter the employee will send your file to the IND where your application for naturalisation will be assessed. The IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands is not authorized to make a recommendation. So once the employee has compiled a naturalisation file, he will transfer it to the IND in the Netherlands. If the application is granted, a proposal to grant Dutch citizenship will be sent to His Majesty the King. His Majesty the King will sign the proposal and thereby grant you Dutch citizenship.

Response to your application

You can ultimately expect the following two answers to your application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen

1. Your application for naturalisation is granted: you will acquire Dutch citizenship. You will receive an invitation to attend a naturalisation ceremony from the municipality, the Dutch Embassy or Consulate, the Lieutenant Governor, or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor. You will acquire Dutch citizenship once you have received the naturalisation decision after making the Declaration of Solidarity during the naturalisation ceremony.
2. Your application for naturalisation is rejected. You will receive a letter at home (the decision) explaining why you cannot acquire Dutch citizenship. You are entitled to file an application for review against this decision. How to do this is explained in the letter. If you have also requested Dutch citizenship for your children, this may be rejected separately from your own application under certain circumstances.

The ceremony

Acquiring Dutch citizenship is a special event. That is why special meetings are organised during which the significance of Dutch citizenship and your solidarity with Dutch society is highlighted. This naturalisation ceremony is open to everyone who acquires Dutch citizenship by option or naturalisation. You are obliged to attend the ceremony.

You can only acquire Dutch citizenship if you attend the naturalisation ceremony, make the Declaration of Solidarity in person and in Dutch, and are issued with the notification that you will be granted Dutch citizenship. If you fail to attend the naturalisation ceremony, you will be sent a new invitation to attend a subsequent ceremony. You must appear in person at the naturalisation ceremony within 1 year after signing the naturalisation decision, otherwise you will not be granted Dutch citizenship. If 1 year has passed, you will have to restart the naturalisation procedure in order to still acquire Dutch citizenship. You will also be unable to acquire Dutch citizenship if you do not make the Declaration of Solidarity (in Dutch) at the naturalisation ceremony.

Minors who were 16 or 17 years of age at the time when the application for co-naturalisation was submitted are also obliged to attend the ceremony and make the Declaration of Solidarity. Minors of 16 years of age or younger will not be summoned to appear at the naturalisation ceremony, but they are allowed to be present. The minor's parent or legal representative will be summoned to appear and is also obliged to appear. The minor will only acquire Dutch citizenship if his or her parent or legal representative attends the ceremony. Minor applicants/co-applicants for naturalisation who were 16 or 17 years old at the time of submitting the application for naturalisation/co-naturalisation are obliged to attend the naturalisation ceremony and make the Declaration of Solidarity.

Renouncing your current nationality/nationalities

After having acquired Dutch citizenship, you will still have to renounce your current nationality/nationalities. You will be required to provide documents evidencing that you have renounced your current nationality/nationalities. Your Dutch citizenship may be withdrawn if you fail to do so. You do not have to renounce your current nationality/ nationalities if one of the exceptions listed below applies to you. Moreover, the legislation of the country of your current nationality/nationalities determines whether you will be able to renounce the nationality/nationalities. You also do not have to renounce your nationality if, by acquiring Dutch citizenship, you automatically lose your current nationality according to regulations in your country. However, if you have to actively renounce your nationality, it is recommended you inform yourself of the attendant procedure before applying for Dutch citizenship. See also under 'signing a Declaration of Willingness to renounce your original nationality/nationalities'.

Renouncing your nationality/nationalities: the exceptions

You do not have to renounce your current nationality/ nationalities if any of the following conditions applies to you:

- By becoming a Dutch citizen, you automatically lose your current nationality.
- Legislation in your country does not allow loss of your nationality. (Check www.ind.nl which regulations apply to the renunciation per country)
- You are a minor.
- You are married to or are the registered partner of a Dutch citizen.
- You were born in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao, or St. Maarten, and you are a resident there at the time your application is submitted.
- In order to be able to renounce your current nationality/nationalities you must pay a disproportionately large sum of money to the authorities in your country. You must be able to prove this.
- You would lose certain rights by renouncing your nationality/nationalities, on account of which you would suffer serious financial losses. Think, for example, of inheritance law. You must be able to prove this.
- You must perform (or buy off) your military service before you can renounce your current nationality/nationalities. You must be able to prove this.
- According to the law of the country of your current nationality, you can only renounce your current nationality after you have become a naturalised citizen. After your naturalisation, you do have to renounce your current nationality.
- You cannot be expected to contact the authorities of the State of your current nationality.
- You have a special reason why you cannot renounce your current nationality.
- You are a national of a state that is not recognised by the Netherlands.
- You are a national of a State Party to the Second Protocol of the Strasbourg Convention.
- You have been recognised as a refugee in the Netherlands, Curaçao, Sint Maarten or Aruba.
- You live in The Netherlands. You are of age and you were a minor on the starting date of your Ranov residence permit.

Duration of the procedure

Assessment and approval of your application for naturalisation takes approximately 1 year.

6. Option procedure for divorcees and widows

Women who have lost Dutch citizenship due to a marriage, that has been concluded before 1 January 1985, and whose marriage ended by divorce or death of the husband, may regain Dutch citizenship by making an option statement. They have to make an option statement within one year following the end of the marriage. Regaining Dutch citizenship has a retroactive effect to the date of the end of the marriage. It is recommended to inquire at the authorities of the country of which they currently hold nationality whether they, when they opt for Dutch nationality, will lose their current nationality.

E.g.: A Dutch woman married an Italian man in 1960. Through her marriage, she became an Italian citizen and lost Dutch citizenship. Her husband dies on 1 October 2016. She can regain Dutch citizenship if she makes an option statement before 1 October 2017. She will be a Dutch citizen again from the date of her husband's death.

Besides the situation of a dissolved marriage, there may also be a situation in which a woman voluntarily took on her husband's nationality upon marriage or that she took on another nationality together with him (when they applied for and received another nationality at the same time).

7. Option procedure for former Dutch citizens of Surinam

In one particular situation you have the opportunity to regain Dutch citizenship by making an option statement, appealing to the Agreement between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Suriname concerning the Assignment of Nationalities. In this agreement was determined who remained a Dutch citizen and who became a Surinam citizen.

You have to meet the following conditions to regain Dutch nationality:

- You have had Dutch citizenship and personally chose to gain Surinam nationality. You did so within five years after your spouse gained Surinam nationality and under the nationality treaty of 1975.
- You are able to prove this with a copy of your first option. If you cannot find this document, please contact the IND to see whether they have a copy.
- Within three years of the dissolution of your marriage, you have to inform the Dutch government that you want to regain Dutch citizenship.

Please note! If you do not meet all the conditions, you cannot regain Dutch nationality through the Agreement between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Suriname. In that situation the general conditions as described in paragraph 3 'Option or naturalisation: the conditions' apply to you .

Differences with the 'normal' option procedure for former Dutch citizens

- You do not have to have legal residence in the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- The option procedure is free of charge.
- You do not need to attend the naturalisation ceremony to make the declaration of solidarity.
- The Dutch government does not have to confirm that you have regained the Dutch nationality.
- If you regain Dutch citizenship you will lose the Surinam nationality.

How to regain Dutch citizenship

If you reside in the Netherlands, you can send your application to the mayor of your place of residence. If you live on Bonaire, St Eustatius or Saba, you submit your application to the IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands. If you live on Aruba, Curaçao or St Maarten, you can contact the Governor. If you reside outside the Kingdom of the Netherlands, you can contact the Dutch embassy in your country.

If you want to regain Dutch nationality, you must submit the following documentary evidence:

- a copy of your first option;
- proof of dissolution of marriage. If the documentary evidence comes from outside the Kingdom of the Netherlands, you have to have it authenticated first;
- proof of ID.

(See also checklist 3).

8. More information

Do you have further questions? There are a range of options for contacting the IND.

Internet

On www.ind.nl you will find more information about the procedure and conditions for residence permits, visas and how you can become a Dutch citizen. You can also make an appointment online for your visit to an IND desk.

Telephone

The IND is available from Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 17:00 on 088 043 04 30. Standard rates apply for this information number. From abroad, call +31 88 043 04 30. Have the v-number ready (if known).

Please note! If the decision period for your application has not yet expired, your application is still pending. We cannot give you any information about the status of your application.

Social media

The IND is on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube. If you have a general question, you can ask the IND's webcare team. They will answer your questions on working days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Social media channels are public. Therefore, they are not suited to the exchange of personal information. So do not provide any personal or financial details in your messages, such as your personal data or case number. For more information, visit www.ind.nl/socialmedia.

Letter or email

General questions

Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst
Postbus 17
9560 AA Ter Apel

E-mail: please use the e-mail form on www.ind.nl.

Visit

In the Netherlands, you can also go to an IND desk. Find your nearest branch on www.ind.nl. Please keep in mind that you need to make an appointment first.

Complaints

If you want to make a complaint about the way the IND treated you, you can use the complaint form on www.ind.nl.

For complaints you can also call +31 88 043 04 70.

Questions about legalisation

For information about the legalisation of documents (birth certificate, marriage certificate), you can call number 1400 (Central government Information).

When calling from abroad, please call +31 77 465 67 67. Via internet: www.government.nl.

Processing of personal data

The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) processes personal data when it processes your application, notification, or request. This means that if needed the IND will request data from you yourself and other organisations or persons. The IND also uses and stores data and shares them with other organisations. When doing so, the IND strictly adheres to the stipulations of privacy legislation. For instance, the IND must treat data safely and with due care. The law also gives rights. At your request, you are allowed to see which data on you the IND processes. You can also get information on why the IND does so and to whom your data have been passed on. On www.ind.nl you can read how the IND processes your data and which rights you have. You can also read how to use your rights.

No rights can be derived from the contents of the publication. The text of this publication may be used if the source is mentioned.

Checklist 1: Are you eligible?

For the option procedure

As a former Dutch national you can make use of the option procedure if you are a former Dutch national and you have been a legal resident with a valid residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of residence, such as family reunification, in the Kingdom of the Netherlands for at least 1 year. In addition, this option also applies to former Dutch nationals who have lost their Dutch citizenship by operation of law, thereby also lost their Union citizenship, and for whom the loss of Union citizenship was disproportionate. In that case, you do not have to reside in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Please note! You are not allowed to be married to more than one man or woman at the same time. Also, over the past 5 years you have not served a prison sentence, performed a community service order, or paid or imposed a large fine for a crime (under Dutch law). Nor may there be any criminal proceedings pending against you.

For naturalisation

As a former Dutch national you can submit an application for naturalisation if you satisfy any of the following conditions:

- You do not reside in the country of which you are a national.
- You are an adult. This means that you are 18 years old or above. If you are younger than 18 years old, you are deemed an adult if you are or were married.
- If you reside in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and you have a valid residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of residence, such as family reunification or
- re-entry.
- If you do not reside in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, you have to satisfy the conditions for a residence permit for a non-temporary purpose of residence, such as family reunification or re-entry.
- You can speak, read, write and understand the Dutch language and you can demonstrate this with a civic integration certificate or a naturalisation certificate at level A2 or a certificate for a comparable examination.
- You are not married to more than one man or woman at the same time.
- During the last 5 years:
 - you have not been convicted of a crime for which you have served a prison sentence. Not even abroad;
 - you did not perform community service. Except if you had to do so because you were unable to pay a fine under €810;
 - you have not been imposed a large fine or other (additional) punishment as mentioned in article 9 of the Dutch Penal Code. A 'large fine' is a fine of € 810 (\$ 560, Afl. 1000 or Naf. 1000) or more. Your application will also be rejected if in the last 5 years you have received several fines of € 405 (\$ 280, Afl.500 or Naf. 500) each or more, with a total of € 1,215 (\$ 840, Afl.1500 or Naf. 1500) or more. There must also be no outstanding criminal case for a crime against you.
- You are willing to make the Declaration of Solidarity during the naturalisation ceremony.
- You are willing to renounce you current nationality/ nationalities (there are a number of exceptions to this rule).

Checklist 2: Which documents should you bring?

To be completed by the employee of the municipality, Dutch Embassy or Consulate, the IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands, or the Cabinet of the Governors of Aruba, Curaçao, or St. Maarten.

For the purpose of assessing your application, the following documents are required:

- valid passport
 - your own
 - your partner's
 - your children's
- valid residence permit
 - your own
 - your partner's
 - your children's
- original birth certificate (if born abroad)
 - your own
 - your partner's
 - your children's (if included in your application)
- original marriage certificate (if you want to acquire Dutch citizenship by virtue of marriage to a Dutch citizen, and the marriage ceremony took place outside the Netherlands)
- naturalisation certificate, civic integration certificate or a comparable document
- other documents

Moreover, the following documents have to be translated and legalised (please refer to Chapter 6 for more information)

Document	Translation	Legalisation
Your original birth certificate		
Your partner's original birth certificate		
Your children's original birth certificate (if included in your application)		
Original marriage certificate		
Other documents		

Appointment details

You are expected to appear with the above mentioned documents on:

Date

Time

Town

You have an appointment with

Costs of the application

Checklist 3

What to do when you do not have a copy of your first option?

The IND will check for you if there is a copy of your first option. If so, the IND will send this to you. If your option is not in the register of the IND, then there is no proof that you have opted. All options are carefully saved under the responsibility of the minister of Justice and Security.

Send your letter to:

Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst
T.a.v. het Nationaliteitenregister
Postbus 4
9560 AA Ter Apel
Nederland

Please state in your letter:

- Surname;
- Maiden name (if applicable);
- First names;
- Date of birth;
- Place of birth;
- Country of birth;
- Current address;
- Please mention in the subject line that it is about article 7 of the Agreement between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Surinam concerning the Assignment of Nationalities (TOS).

Appendix

Who does what?

Option

	What you do	What the municipality, the Dutch Embassy or Consulate, the IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands, or the Cabinet of the Governor of Aruba, Curaçao, or St Maarten does
1	Gather information	
2	Check whether you fulfil the conditions	
3	Submit the documents to the municipality, the IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands, or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor	
4	Make an option statement and complete any other forms that might be necessary	
5	Pay the costs	
6		Investigate
7		Arrange that the option statement is confirmed or rejected by the Mayor, the head of the diplomatic or consular post, the Dutch Minister, or the Governor, respectively
8		Invite you to attend the naturalisation ceremony. In the public bodies, the Lieutenant Governor will invite you to attend the naturalisation ceremony
9	Attend the naturalisation ceremony and make a Declaration of Solidarity (upon confirmation) or, where applicable, submit an application for review (upon rejection)	
10	Renounce your current nationality/nationalities (if required)	

Naturalisation

	What you do	What the municipality, the Dutch Embassy or Consulate, the IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands, or the Cabinet of the Governor of Aruba, Curaçao, or St Maarten does	What the IND does
1	Gather information		
2	Check whether you fulfil the conditions		
3	Take the civic integration examination (if necessary)		
4	Submit documents to the municipality, the Dutch Embassy or Consulate, the IND-unit Caribbean Netherlands, or the relevant Cabinet of the Governor		
5	Complete the application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen and other forms	Complete forms (together with you)	
6	Pay the costs		
7		Investigate	
8	Supplement the documents (if necessary)		
9		Send your application for naturalisation accompanied by the documents and recommendation/checklist to the IND	
10			Assess your application for naturalisation and the accompanying documents
11			Propose to His Majesty the King that you should be granted Dutch citizenship if your application is granted, or reject your application for naturalisation to become a Dutch citizen
12		Invite you to attend the naturalisation ceremony. In the public bodies, the Lieutenant Governor will invite you to attend the naturalisation ceremony.	

13	Attend the naturalisation ceremony and make the Declaration of Solidarity (if the application has been granted) or, where applicable, submit an application for review (if the application has been rejected)		
14	Renounce your nationality (if required)		