Information provision - Netherlands

Overview

Content updated and validated on: 20/05/2025

Relevant EU legislation

The Netherlands is bound by EU legislation and has transposed relevant provisions through the Aliens Law 2000 | Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Vw 2000, (23 November 2000)

National legislation

The Netherlands is bound by EU legislation and has transposed relevant provisions through the Aliens Law 2000 | Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Vw 2000, (23 November 2000)

Competent authority and other stakeholders

Area/stage of the asylum procedure	Competent authority
Reception	Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers, COA)
Registration of application	Immigration and Naturalisation Service	Immigratie- en Naturalisatie Dienst (INS | IND)
Lodging of application	Immigration and Naturalisation Service	Immigratie- en Naturalisatie Dienst (INS | IND)
Dublin procedure	Immigration and Naturalisation Service	Immigratie- en Naturalisatie Dienst (INS | IND)
Assessment of application	Immigration and Naturalisation Service	Immigratie- en Naturalisatie Dienst (INS | IND)

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Area/stage of the asylum procedure	Competent authority
Communication of first instance decision	Immigration and Naturalisation Service | Immigratie- en Naturalisatie Dienst (INS | IND)
Content of protection	Immigration and Naturalisation Service | Immigratie- en Naturalisatie Dienst (INS | IND)
Appeal procedure	Council of State and Courts
Communication of second instance decision	Council of State
Resettlement	Immigration and Naturalisation Service | Immigratie- en Naturalisatie Dienst (INS | IND), UNHCR

Provision of information in the asylum procedure

Access to procedure

The provision of information to third-country nationals on the asylum process is regulated under Part C1/2 of the Aliens Act Implementation Guidelines (Vreemdelingencirculaire 2000 (C)) and managed primarily by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). Information on the asylum procedure is typically not provided extensively before the application process begins. Instead, on the day of registration, applicants are informed about the processes, including lodging, identification, screening and making an application. Information is provided directly by the IND, with support available from the Dutch Council for Refugees (non-governmental organisation).

After the initial registration, applicants receive detailed information during the application phase, particularly after the third day. At this stage, the IND distributes brochures that cover the Dublin procedure, procedure for applicants from safe countries or those with international protection in another EU Member State, and the general asylum procedure.

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Information is shared through a combination of written material, oral explanations and digital resources. The IND primarily provides oral explanations during the interview, and the Dutch Council for Refugees offers additional guidance. The IND and Dutch Council for Refugees also maintain websites that provide accessible information about registration and asylum processes. The website content is available in Dutch and English, while brochures and leaflets from the Dutch Council for Refugees are available in Albanian, Arabic, Azerbaijani, Badini, Dari, English, Farsi, French, Georgian, Kurmandji, Mandarin, Pashtu, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Somali, Sorani, Spanish, Tigrinya, Turkish, and Urdu.

Third-country nationals in detention are informed about their right to apply for international protection, usually upon arrival at the detention facility. The information is delivered orally and in writing by the IND or a lawyer.

For more information:

- Apply for asylum in the Netherlands | IND
- Voorlichtingsfolders over de Asielprocedure en de Gezinsherenigingsprocedure (available via the Dutch Council for Refugees).

Dublin procedure

The provision of information on the application of the Dublin III Regulation is structured into two distinct parts.

All applicants are provided Leaflet A at the time of registration. This leaflet is issued by the organisation where the application is initially lodged, for example the Royal Dutch Marechaussee or the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). Leaflet A contains detailed information on the asylum authority, the National Supervisory Authority, the Eurodac controller and representative, the local UNHCR office, legal aid providers, refugee-support organisations and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). This leaflet is complemented with specific national information.

Applicants who enter the Dublin procedure receive Leaflet B during the personal interview, which explains the aim of the interview. Leaflet B is provided exclusively by the IND. Questions from applicants are addressed during the interview. Leaflet B does not include additional national information, but other resources provided by the Dutch Refugee Council incorporate details about the

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Dutch asylum process and answer frequently asked questions (e.g. reception arrangements). The Dutch Refugee Council supplements this information with additional material and guidance.

After the decision on the Dublin procedure is made, the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V) takes over and provides written information on the transfer process.

Both leaflets are provided in hard copy and are available online:

- Dutch Refugee Council website
- IND website

The leaflets are available in Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, English, Farsi, French, Pashtu, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Somali, Tigrinya and Urdu. Additionally, DT&V provides information in languages commonly spoken by applicants, including Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, English, Farsi, French, Kurdish, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Turkish, and Dutch.

There are versions of Leaflets A and B which are tailored for unaccompanied minors.

Before the first interview with the IND, applicants are informed of their right to legal assistance. If a Dublin decision is issued, it is provided in writing, outlining the applicant's right to appeal the decision and explaining how to access legal remedies. Following the decision, DT&V sends an invitation for a return interview and provides an additional information leaflet about the Dublin transfer.

For more information:

- Asylum procedures in the Netherlands | IND (Available in Dutch and English)
- The asylum procedure | MyCOA (Basic information on the Dublin procedure in English, Arabic, French, Farsi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya and Turkish)
- RefugeeHelp - Dublin procedure in Nederland (Available in English, Arabic, Turkish, Farsi, French, Dari, Somali and Tigrinya)
- Leaflet Dublin procedure - Dutch Refugee Council 2023 (English)
- Dublin-claim | Return process | RDS (Leaflet on return possibilities after a transfer decision, available in Dutch).

First instance determination

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A separate admissibility interview is not conducted. Instead, the determination of admissibility occurs within the standard asylum procedure. At the conclusion of the application interview, typically on the third day of the application phase, applicants are provided with a brochure detailing the subsequent steps in the asylum process, including the personal interview. This brochure introduces applicants to the purpose, importance and structure of the personal interview, offering them a foundational understanding of what to expect.

Following the application phase, applicants receive more guidance through an individual appointment with a volunteer from the Dutch Council for Refugees. During this session, they are given additional information on the asylum procedure, including their rights, obligations and what to expect during the personal interview. Before the interview, applicants meet with their assigned lawyer for an in-depth preparation session.

The provision of information on the interview is shared among several actors. The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) and the Dutch Council for Refugees deliver general information on the interview process, emphasising its purpose, procedural specifics, confidentiality, the role of interpreters, and the rights and obligations of the applicant. Lawyers take on a more tailored role, offering personalised preparation for the interview and addressing case-specific concerns.

Information is provided through brochures, leaflets and websites, while individualised support is delivered in one-on-one sessions with lawyers or representatives of the Dutch Council for Refugees. Applicants are informed of the date and location of their personal interview well in advance, typically by written invitation 3-5 weeks before the scheduled date.

At the conclusion of the personal interview, the case officer provides an explanation of the subsequent steps in the process. This includes guidance on how applicants can submit additional evidence and the deadlines for doing so. Applicants are encouraged to ask questions to clarify any uncertainties. The following day, applicants meet with their lawyer again, offering an opportunity to review the case and seek more clarification if needed.

When a decision is reached, the method of communication depends on the outcome. If a protection status is granted, beneficiaries are given a brochure that outlines their rights and obligations in their native language. Additional support and clarification can be sought through their lawyer or the Dutch Council for Refugees.

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For a negative decision, applicants are informed of their right to lodge an appeal and the associated timelines. This information is included in the final decision documentation, which is sent both to the applicant and their lawyer. Applicants also receive details about the return process, including the option for assisted voluntary return and reintegration. The Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V) contact applicants to discuss next steps.

Legal assistance and representation

Applicants are not explicitly informed about their right to consult a legal adviser or other counsellor at their own expense at all stages of the procedure. Instead, all applicants are automatically assigned a lawyer to assist them throughout the asylum process.

In some cases, applicants may have already contacted a lawyer independently before being assigned a lawyer; however, no formal information is provided by the authorities on this option. When a lawyer is assigned to an applicant, typically before the personal interview, the lawyer explains their role. They clarify that their purpose is to provide legal counselling and representation during the asylum procedure and any subsequent appeal procedures.

Resettlement and humanitarian admissions

During the identification phase, UNHCR notifies individuals about their possible nomination for resettlement and provides them with detailed information on the procedure, their rights and obligations. This includes guidance on the documentation required for the process, such as identity papers, and advice on bringing any essential medication. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) offers additional information on travel arrangements, accommodation and financial support during this phase.

In the selection phase, the IND provides practical information on the interview process, such as the schedule and expectations for the day. After the selection interviews, UNHCR informs individuals whether they have been selected for resettlement. During this phase, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) provides an overview of what to expect after arriving in the Netherlands, including information on procedures that follow their selection.

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During the pre-departure phase, the Dutch Diplomatic Representation and COA provide resettled persons with information on obtaining the necessary travel documents. They guide them through the preparation process, ensuring that all essential documentation is in place for a smooth transition.

The travel phase is coordinated by the IOM or Refugee Support Foundation (RSF). Upon arrival in the Netherlands, COA provides immediate guidance during the first 48 hours, including assistance with practical matters such as registration and identification procedures.

During the orientation programme, individuals are introduced to essential aspects of life in the Netherlands through classes that cover mainly Dutch culture, language classes and essential life skills essential for living in the Netherlands. COA is responsible for delivering these classes, which are typically provided both before departure and upon arrival.

Content of protection

Beneficiaries of protection receive a brochure on their rights and obligations with the final decision on their application. The brochure outlines the procedure to obtain a residence permit, the necessity of informing the IND about significant changes and their entitlements, including housing and basic needs. A few days later, beneficiaries meet with a case officer from the reception agency to discuss the next steps. Additional information is available on the IND's website, and more clarification can be requested from the Dutch Council for Refugees or case officers.

After arriving at the reception centre, asylum seekers and protection status holders have support interviews with their case manager. These interviews cover future planning and integration opportunities, including volunteer work, on-the-job training programmes, and integration and participation initiatives. For example, beneficiaries may explore options like lessons in Dutch as a Second Language (NT2), Knowledge of Dutch Society and introMAP, which are all part of the Preparation for Civic Integration Programme.

COA provides beneficiaries with information on employment opportunities through case managers. The case managers help connect beneficiaries to volunteer jobs and training opportunities in local organisations, such as sports clubs and care institutions. Information on employment is also accessible through the MyCOA website, which contains resources in multiple languages about

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participation activities. The Foundation for Student Refugees (UAF) offers specific advice, counselling and financial support for refugee students and professionals seeking to integrate into the Dutch labour market.

Education information is provided through one-on-one meetings with a designated COA contact person for children and parents in reception centres. They coordinate activities and provide guidance on educational opportunities for children. The "Guide for Minis", "Guide for Kids" and "Guide for Teens" inform families about living in asylum centres and accessing education. These materials are complemented by a comic book, "I'm Just Trying to Live", which provides advice and information for children aged 10 to 23 in multiple languages. Adults older than 18 years can request individual consultations to receive tailored advice about accessing education in their specific situation. More information is available on a specific section of the MyCOA website.

COA informs asylum seekers about the Dutch healthcare system upon arrival through group sessions and individual conversations. Topics include differences between Dutch healthcare and their home country, emergency protocols and accessing medical services at reception centres. The MyCOA website provides additional resources, including information about local health services, in ten different languages. New arrivals are offered a medical intake (not compulsory) and a tuberculosis (TB) check if they are from a country with an increased TB risk. Public healthcare responsibilities, including vaccinations and hygiene checks, are managed by the Municipal Health Service (GGD GHOR). The BAMBOO programme helps asylum seekers build resilience and address psychological or stress-related symptoms.

Beneficiaries receive a brochure detailing the process for obtaining a residence permit along with the final decision. This brochure explains the steps, required actions and approximate timelines. Case officers and COA staff provide additional support to ensure beneficiaries understand and complete the process.

Provision of information in reception

Reception conditions

Upon arrival at the COA reception centre, asylum seekers are welcomed and provided with initial practical information, including an introduction to their rooms. Leaflets detailing healthcare (medical intake and tuberculosis testing), the

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COA Complaints Procedure and house rules are distributed.

Practical details about the reception centre include information on relief assistance (meals or money, hygiene products), COA information desk opening hours and services, emergency procedures, house rules, nearby shops and the healthcare organisation at the centre.

Within the first days, asylum seekers participate in an interview with COA staff, during which they are informed about their rights and obligations at the reception centre. This Rights and Obligations interview covers:

- Compliance with Dutch law (e.g. prohibition of discrimination);
- Adherence to COA house rules and staff instructions;
- Reporting obligations and COA registration;
- Contributions to reception (e.g. participation in COA programmes);
- Cooperation with healthcare procedures, including TB testing;
- Privacy and personal data protection;
- Legal support through the Dutch Council for Refugees;
- Obligations related to the asylum process.

The interview concludes with the signing of the Rights and Obligations document, confirming that the asylum seeker understands the information and has sufficient language skills to comprehend the document.

Information is delivered through handouts, PowerPoint presentations, videos on house rules and rights and the "Welcome to the COA!" information folder. These materials are available in ten languages: English, Arabic, French, Dutch, Farsi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya and Turkish. For less-literate asylum seekers, QR codes in a 'Welcome Envelope' link to instructional videos on MyCOA.

In-depth group sessions are organised within 45 days of arrival, covering three themes: healthcare, safety and living at the COA centre. MyCOA website also serves as a comprehensive platform for information on reception, rights, obligations, healthcare, employment, asylum procedures and integration, available in the same ten languages.

For applicants with specific needs, such as unaccompanied minors, COA staff are trained to assess vulnerabilities and provide tailored information. Vulnerability focal points among COA staff ensure applicants with special needs receive adequate support. Furthermore, MyCOA provides hyperlinks to external partner organisations for additional assistance.

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Upon arrival, asylum seekers are informed about healthcare organisations in the Netherlands, including the compulsory medical intake and TB testing for high-risk countries. COA provides group sessions on healthcare, and asylum seekers are directed to the GZA Health Centre for Asylum Seekers. GGD GHOR, the Municipal Health Service, manages public healthcare, including pediatric care, infectious disease prevention and mental health support.

Asylum seekers receive information about their employment rights through COA group sessions and via MyCOA. Information includes the process for applying for work, legal restrictions and opportunities for participation in the labour market and volunteer work.

Asylum seekers, particularly children, are provided with information on education in the Netherlands through a combination of group sessions, one-on-one meetings with COA staff and resources like the "Guide for Minis", "Guide for Kids" and "Guide for Teens". Unaccompanied minors receive individual support to facilitate their access to education. The MyCOA platform also provides information on educational opportunities for adult asylum seekers.

For more information on healthcare, legal assistance and education, please refer to the relevant sections on MyCOA.

In detention

Third-country nationals in detention are informed at three separate stages about the reasons for their detention and the procedure to challenge the detention order: during the interview prior to the detention, in the written decision for detention and through an informative brochure.

During an interview conducted before detention, the detainee is informed about the reasons for the detention and how they can challenge the detention order. The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) provides the detainee with a written decision outlining the reasons for detention and the legal procedures for challenging the order. A brochure, written in a language that the individual understands, is provided to the detainee, summarising the reasons for detention and the options available for contesting the detention.

These three forms of information are provided by relevant detention authorities, such as the Aliens Police, Identification and Human Trafficking Department (AVIM), Seaport Police, Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (KMar) or the

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Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V). The IND is responsible for providing the written decision.

Detainees are informed about the house rules and their rights and obligations before entering the facility. This information is communicated in a language they understand. After entering the facility, the house rules are also available in the library in seven different languages.

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