



Resettlement Country: Netherlands

Last updated: January 2023

1. Resettlement Policy and Programme Description

1.1 Programme Year/Cycle:

National multi-annual resettlement policy framework (national quota, hereafter: NQ)

Start date: 01-Jan-20 End Date: 31-Dec-23

1.2 Resettlement Policy and Programme

Since 1977 the Netherlands has a policy on resettlement. In 1984 the government introduced an annual resettlement quota. Initially this was a quota of 250 and as of 1987 an annual national quota (NQ) of 500 resettled refugees was established.

In 1999 the government introduced a national multi-annual resettlement policy framework to create more flexibility in the implementation of resettlement.

As of 2005, integration related considerations (currently: resettlement profile) are taken into account in the assessment with regard to resettlement as a durable solution.

As of 2006 refugees are offered a Pre-Departure Orientation course (CO) by COA.

Since July 2011 direct placement into the municipality serves as the guiding principle for refugees resettled within the multi-annual resettlement policy framework.

Furthermore, as of 2018, following developments such as the resettlement efforts in the framework of the EU-Turkiye Statement of 18 March 2016 the Netherlands introduced a -conditional - resettlement effort related to (EU) migration cooperation with third countries (besides the national quota). This effort is established for the duration of each EU resettlement program.

Note that all resettlement to the Netherlands takes place upon referral by UNHCR (prerequisite).

The Netherlands reserves the right to assess all aspects of resettlement, including the determination of refugee status, on the basis of its national policies. A resettlement submission must fit within the national asylum policy (e.g. in general entitlement to international protection, and -if applicable- the country based asylum policy). Furthermore the UNHCR considerations and the COA resettlement profile are taken into account.

Mission destinations are determined on the basis of the UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs, EU priorities, national strategic priorities, and operational considerations (e.g. security situation). Overall the Netherlands aims at a diverse caseload.

The current multi-annual policy framework is established for a four-year period and runs from 2020-2023, with an average annual NQ of 500 refugees. The NQ applies to refugees that arrive in the Netherlands and are individually submitted by UNHCR either in connection with selection missions or on a dossier basis. Arrivals of family members of resettled refugees should also be counted towards the NQ. By Letter to the Parliament of 10 September 2020, in response to the fires in facility Moria on Lesbos (Greece), the government announced to relocate 100 vulnerable persons to the Netherlands, which number should be deducted from the national resettlement

quota. Consequently the multi-annual policy framework 2020-2023 aims to resettle a total of 1.900 refugees.

By Letter to the Parliament of 26 August 2022 on decision-making in the asylum-seekers accommodation crisis, and as part of a package of measures to tackle the reception and housing shortages, the Minister for Migration announced the temporary halt of selections of Syrian refugees in the framework of the EU Turkiye Statement. This measure will apply until the end of 2023, with 1 July 2023 set as the date for review of the total package of temporary measures.

The Netherlands traditionally contributes to EU resettlement programs. The contribution usually coincides with the national resettlement efforts (NQ) and resettlement related to migration cooperation with third countries.

1.3 Ministries and Departments

The Ministry of Justice and Security, Migration Policy Department, is responsible for resettlement policy and arranging for the government's decision with regard to numbers and mission destinations. The Ministry also coordinates the contact between the government of the Netherlands and UNHCR HQ and the contract with IOM. Furthermore, the Ministry convenes the national resettlement consultations, an annual meeting for all national stakeholders involved in resettlement.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) is responsible for the operation of the resettlement selection process and heads the selection missions. IND does this in cooperation with the IND Bureau for Medical Advice (BMA) and the Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA). Furthermore, the IND is responsible for concluding whether a UNHCR referred refugee is accepted for resettlement to the Netherlands.

COA is responsible for establishing individual resettlement profiles, pre-departure cultural orientation (CO) and reception of resettled refugees upon arrival either in Dutch municipalities or in COA reception centers.

The National Police - Unit Aliens Police, Identification and Human Trafficking (AVIM), the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (KMar), and the National Intelligence Services are also involved when it comes to identification and registration, documentation and/or screening.

The resettlement process furthermore involves collaboration with IOM, which provides -amongst others- logistical/travel assistance and (pre-departure) health assessments.

Dutch municipalities provide housing for resettled refugees on a voluntary basis and are responsible for organizing individual guidance (e.g. by the Dutch Refugee Council). Dutch municipalities also implement the integration policy.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is responsible for integration policy.

1.4 Process for Determining the Resettlement Admission Targets

The Minister for Migration establishes the multi-annual resettlement policy framework (letters to Parliament). Mission destinations are decided by the Minister in general on an annual basis.

2. Eligibility for Refugee Status and other forms of International Protection

2.1 National Legislation defining refugee status eligibility

Asylum legislation: EU asylum related legislation, and national legislation (Aliens Act (Vw) 2000, Aliens Decree (Vb) 2000, and Aliens Act Implementation Guidelines (Vc)2000).

Asylum in the Netherlands is granted on the basis of the Vw 2000 and in accordance with the Dutch country-based asylum criteria and country of origin information. Because the country-based criteria and the country of origin information are updated regularly, details cannot be provided in this Country Chapter. With regard to the resettlement process relevant details are included in the PMQ. For further details Resettlement Officers are referred to the UNCHR Office in the Netherlands.

Resettlement criteria can be found in chapter C.1.4.7. of the Vc 2000.

2.2 Additional Information

3. Resettlement Decision-Making

3.1 Resettlement Admissibility and Public Interest Criteria

Resettlement candidates must meet the criteria for eligibility for an asylum status based on the national asylum policy (i.e. international protection, which covers refugee status and subsidiary protection). This assessment also comprises contra-indications such as security concerns (national security, public order) and exclusion (Article 1F of the 1951 Refugee Convention). Furthermore the reasoned referral by UNHCR is taken into account, and the individual resettlement profile is taken into consideration in view of resettlement as a durable solution.

3.2 Requests for Reconsideration

n/a

3.3. Dependency

NL upholds the principle of family unity (core family and dependent family members who are part of the submitted family unit).

4. Legal Status on Arrival and Citizenship

4.1 Legal Status on Arrival

On the basis of the Aliens Act (Vw) 2000 an application for asylum can only be lodged in the Netherlands. Upon arrival in the Netherlands, as a formality, a resettled refugee must fill in an asylum application form and then receives the positive decision granting the asylum status. This is a temporary residence permit, in principle valid for 5 years, after which a permanent residence permit can be requested or Dutch citizenship (after passing the Civic Integration Examination or obtaining a 'proof of integration'-declaration).

Resettled refugees receive the same residence permit as other asylum status holders in the Netherlands. This asylum residence permit comprises both international protection and subsidiary protection.

The grounds for revocation as mentioned in paragraph C2/10 of the Aliens Act Implementation Guidelines (Vc) 2000 are also applicable to refugees who have been resettled to the Netherlands. An exception to this rule is that concerning a resettled refugee the IND does not revoke the

asylum permit or does not reject a request for extension of the period of validity of the asylum permit, when the ground for granting the permit has ceased due to a change in the general situation in the country of origin (paragraph C2/10.4 Vc 2000 in combination with Article 32(1)(c) Aliens Act (Vw) 2000.

4.2 Eligibility for Citizenship

Upon arrival a resettled refugee receives a temporary residence permit. This permit is in principle valid for 5 years, after which extension of the temporary residence permit or a permanent residence permit can be requested or Dutch citizenship (after passing civic integration exams).

5 Processing Priorities

5.2 Processing Priorities

UNHCR referral is a prerequisite for resettlement to the Netherlands. NL aims for a diverse resettlement caseload. UNHCR is encouraged to submit a well-balanced PMQ-based caseload.

6 Special Considerations

6.2 Unaccompanied and Separated Children

An unaccompanied minor (UAM) in the context of resettlement is younger than 18 years old upon arrival in the Netherlands, comes from outside the EU and is not accompanied by an adult responsible for him or her whether by law or by the practice of the Member State concerned.

The IND assesses minority according to Dutch law (Article 1:233 of the civil code).

In general there is a limit to the number of UAMs that can be resettled per mission. Amongst others for reasons of availability of adequate guidance. The possibilities and limits for submitting UAM cases are recorded in the PMQ for each selection mission.

In case UNHCR has referred UAM, before the selection mission the Nidos Foundation will be consulted for input based on the UNHCR files. Nidos is the national guardianship institution for unaccompanied and separated migrant children in the Netherlands. All children in the Netherlands should be under either parental authority or guardianship.

Following selection, COA prepares the refugees for their arrival and life in the Netherlands through cultural orientation trainings. Besides COA maintains contact with municipalities where the refugees will reside. In case of UAM, COA also maintains contact with Nidos under whose guardianship the UAM will be placed upon arrival in the Netherlands. UAM are housed in small living units or host families. The guardian of Nidos (the youth protector) will determine what kind of reception is most suitable for the UAM.

6.3 Minor Marriage

Minor marriage (under 18 years of age) is prohibited by law in the Netherlands. The Netherlands cannot accept submissions of cases of minors who are married. In general cases of adults (or adult couples) who were married as a minor can be referred for resettlement. Resettlement Officers are advised to contact the mission leader.

6.4 Refugees with psychosocial, intellectual, sensory or physical disabilities or a serious medical condition

The Netherlands is open to resettlement of these kinds of medical cases. The policy on resettlement of medical cases is currently under revision. Until further notice, UNHCR can refer such cases after prior collaboration with IND. Each referral is assessed on its merits.

In general there is a limit to the number of these kind of cases that can be resettled per mission. Amongst others for reasons of availability of adequate guidance and/or customized housing. The possibilities and limits for submitting these cases are recorded in the PMQ for each selection mission.

6.5 Large families and single adults

In general there is a limit to the number of persons/family members per case (this also applies to interdependent linked cases). This is because of unavailability of suitable housing. Social housing for large families is scarce in the Netherlands. The possibilities and limits for submitting these cases are recorded in the PMQ for each selection mission.

In general UNHCR is requested to submit a balanced caseload consisting of both (complete) families and single adult cases, and in principle there is no limit to the number of single adults that can be resettled per mission. However, because there is also limited availability of social housing for singles in the Netherlands, limits for submitting these cases are recorded in the PMQ for each selection mission.

6.6 Polygamous Marriage

Polygamy is prohibited by law in the Netherlands. The Netherlands cannot accept resettlement submissions of polygamous family compositions.

6.7 Other

In general the NL cannot accept resettlement submissions of refugees who are married to, or are in a relationship with a person with the nationality of the host country. In principle this does not apply to one (or more) children who are part of the family unit and have obtained the nationality of the host country on the basis of its nationality law (e.g. by birth or registration).

7 Dossier Selection Processing

Cases submitted on a dossier basis do not involve resettlement country selection interviews. Acceptance decisions are based on the documentation submitted by UNHCR. If the programme does not include dossier selection processing indicate "N/A."

7.2 Dossier Selection Policies

Preparation of dossier-based submissions:

A small part of the NQ is reserved for dossier submissions. This concerns mostly:

- asylum cases from countries of asylum that are not visited by selection missions;
- vulnerable refugees such as women and children at risk and emergency (medical) cases or cases in which there are immediate safety concerns;
- cases with a higher profile in the field of human rights and pro-democracy movements.

The number and -if applicable- points of attention are communicated by IND to UNHCR HQ. UNHCR submits dossier cases via the office of UNHCR in the NL to the IND by e-mail.

Selection:

- IND, COA and BMA assess and reach a conclusion on the basis of the dossier. In exceptional cases a remote video interview is conducted.
- IND communicates the outcome with regard to a referral to UNHCR.

Pre-departure:

- For individual/dossier cases, if possible, CO training is provided by COA via SKYPE.

7.3 Additional Information

N/A

8 Interview Selection Processing

Resettlement country interview selection processing means that the resettlement country conducts an interview as part of the selection process. If the programme does not include a resettlement country interview indicate "N/A."

8.2 Interview Selection Policies

Preparation of NQ selection missions:

IND transmits a Pre-Mission Questionnaire (PMQ – numbers, relevant points for consideration) to UNHCR.

UNHCR presents a selection of refugees who are eligible for resettlement upon request of the PMQ. The RRF's should contain personal data, information about documents (if possible copies), family composition, summary RSD, medical information.

On the basis of the selection presented by UNHCR, the IND pre-selects cases in line with national country based asylum policy, contra-indications (exclusion/security concerns), PMQ, and indications by COA with regard to resettlement as a durable solution (resettlement profile). Aim of the pre-selection is to filter out in advance cases that do not meet applicable policy.

Preparation for selection missions in the framework of the EU-Turkiye Statement:

This resettlement is based on the Standard Operation Procedures agreed upon between EU Member States and Turkiye. Turkiye refers cases to UNHCR who then submits the cases to IND through IBM's.

On the basis of this UNHCR submission, the IND pre-selects cases in line with national country based asylum policy, contra-indications (exclusion/security concerns), and indications by COA with regard to resettlement as a durable solution (resettlement profile). Aim of the pre-selection is to filter out in advance cases that do not meet applicable policy.

Selection missions:

During a selection mission a referred refugee is interviewed in a carousel setting with several stops:

- interview with the IND to determine if the refugee qualifies for asylum within the Dutch asylum law and country based asylum policy, exclusion/security concerns, ID, and family composition;
- conversation with COA concerning the resettlement profile (expectation management; assessment of the civic integration capabilities such as capacities/experiences/abilities to (learn to) live in Dutch society, willingness to live in Dutch society, self-reliance or need for care/support in relation to availability of a network). This information is also used as input for the social dossier which is provided to municipalities that will house the refugee;
- consult with physician IND Bureau Medical Advise (BMA) concerning medical condition (with special attention to heart and lung conditions and contagious diseases like active pulmonary tuberculosis), and necessity of fit-to-fly/travel arrangements.

In a daily evaluation IND, COA and BMA deliberate on the referred cases of that day.

At the end of a mission UNHCR is informed of the outcome in a de-briefing.

Note: In practice more cases are submitted than selected: cases might be withdrawn and/or (new/alternative) cases might be submitted during the mission.

8.3 Additional Information

N/A

9 Processing Timeframes

9.1 Policies for receiving emergency and/or urgent submissions

The Netherlands has no special routing for submission of emergency and/or urgent cases. These cases follow the regular procedure as outlined under dossier selection (section 7). The processing time will be as short as possible.

A medical emergency case (immediately life threatening conditions that should be treated within 4 weeks) is forwarded for advise to the BMA. If the UNHCR dossier information is sufficient to make a conclusive assessment, the medical advisor can handle the case within a period of one week. The advice is sent back to the IND, that draws the conclusion based upon the refugee claim and both medical and non-medical arguments.

9.2 Average Processing Times for Emergency Cases

See 9.1

9.3 Average Processing Times for Urgent Cases

See 9.1.

9.4 Average Processing Times for Normal Cases

The decision-to-departure timeframe depends on the resettlement category:

On average the maximum timeframe between decision and departure for NQ resettlement is 6 months. This can be different for cases resettled out of one of the ETM, and/or dossier cases (which cases are part of the NQ).

The timeframe for resettlement in the context of migration cooperation with third countries, notably the EU-Turkiye Statement is on average 3-4 months.

9.5 Additional Information

N/A

10 Pre-departure Arrangements

10.1 Pre-departure Medical Screening

IOM is contracted by the Netherlands to perform pre-departure medical screening.

10.2 Required Pre-departure Treatment

In case pre-departure treatment is required with a view to fitness to travel and/or safe travel, this is part of the agreement between the Netherlands (IND Bureau Medical Advise) and IOM (resettlement contract and health protocol).

10.3 Pre-departure Orientation

COA is responsible for pre-departure cultural orientation (CO).

Refugees are obliged to participate in the CO course that COA provides. Aim is to prepare refugees for their arrival and life in the Netherlands, to manage their expectations, and to inform them of what is expected of them and what kind of behavior contributes to successful integration and participation in Dutch society. It is an interactive program with emphasis on the practice of new behavior and forming a first network which often turns out very useful after arrival in the Netherlands.

Simultaneously, building on the conversation with COA during the selection mission, information is gathered about the refugees (social dossier) and shared with specific stakeholders for the purpose of adequate housing and necessary support for settlement.

COA tailors the CO course, depending on whether upon arrival refugees will be placed directly into the municipality or in a reception center (where they receive further training before they are housed in municipalities), and depending on the caseload and specific situations. Tailoring can take the form of slightly adjusting both content, mode of delivery (in real life and/or remote) and/or duration of the curriculum. In general a CO course consists of 2 trainings (preferably with some intermittence), each with a duration of at least 4 days of actual interaction. Main goals are to initiate Dutch language training, to improve the self-sufficiency of the refugees and to inform

them about arrival procedures. Content of the training is amongst others Dutch language, Dutch society (values), health care, housing, education, employment, social welfare, and -if possible- information about the destined municipality and/or reception. Former resettled refugees are involved as mentors. Personal questions or concerns can be addressed during these meetings.

10.4 Travel Arrangements and Documents

Travel agreements are made between COA and IOM the Netherlands and include (if needed) a Pre Medical Departure Check (PMDC). The ministry of Foreign Affairs (Embassy or Consulate in/for the respective country of first reception) provides for the necessary travel documents (visa, laissez-passer). Travel expenses, the costs of visas and, where necessary, laissez-passers, are covered by the Government of the Netherlands.

11 Reception and Integration

11.1 Overview

COA is in charge of making practical, administrative and logistical arrangements upon arrival. In principle, refugees are welcomed at Schiphol Airport by the COA CO-trainers and mentors (former resettled refugees) with the assistance of an interpreter. Accommodation for the first 48 hours in the Netherlands is (organized by COA) in a hotel near Schiphol. During these arrival procedures COA staff stays with the refugee(s).

At Schiphol or in a police unit nearby Identification and Registration procedures are carried out, registration in the Persons Database, TB screening, and assessment of a possible guardianship of unaccompanied minors (NIDOS) take place. If necessary, the BMA physician provides a medical handover for the general practitioner in the accommodating municipality. Furthermore, upon arrival in the Netherlands, as a of formality, a resettled refugee must fill in an asylum application form (on the basis of the 2000 Aliens Act an application for asylum can only be lodged in the Netherlands). The resettled refugee then immediately receives the positive decision granting the asylum status.

Following these formalities, COA organizes transport to the accommodating municipality. In the municipalities the refugee(s) are welcomed in their new accommodation by volunteers (mainly of Dutch Refugee Council) and representatives of the municipality.

The arrival and reception process for resettled refugees who will be placed in a reception center may vary (e.g. EU-Turkiye Statement resettlement, resettlement out of ETM, NQ resettled refugees for whom direct housing could not be arranged in time). In that case abovementioned formalities are processed in a reception center. Also, refugees can attend (further) CO trainings for living in the Netherlands that are provided by COA in reception centers, until they are transferred to housing in a municipality.

Municipalities are responsible for providing suitable housing for resettled refugees and have a duty to inform them about the education system and offer education to minors who must attend school. Resettled refugees who are placed directly into a municipality upon arrival in the Netherlands receive individual guidance (often by a civil society organization such as Dutch Refugee Council or another organization contracted by the municipality).

Until refugees find employment, they are entitled to social security allowance, and municipalities have a large number of instruments to ensure that people find a place in the labor market.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is responsible for Integration policy.

Implementation is carried out by the municipalities. Since 1 January 2022 there is a new

integration law (Wet Inburgering 2021). Refugees from 18 years of age until the age of retirement are obliged to integrate within 3 years and pass civic integration exams for which they will receive an integration diploma or a certificate (<https://www.inburgeren.nl/en/index.jsp> ; <https://www.inburgeren.nl/en/integration-in-the-netherlands/>).

11.2 Placement

See 11.1

11.3 Reception

See 11.1.

In case of national shortages in reception places it is possible that resettled refugees are accommodated in flexible housing modalities (e.g. interim facilities, temporary homes, temporary placement) and/or emergency reception facilities. COA will address this during the selection mission.

11.4 Orientation

See 11.1

11.5 Support Services

See also 11.1

Several NGO's play an important role in the reception of refugees in the Netherlands. They advise local authorities and institutions as well as recruit and supervise professionals and Dutch volunteers who assist resettled refugees with reception and integration in the Netherlands. The Dutch Refugee Council and the Foundation for Refugee Students are established players. The Dutch Refugee Council, which also provides the Dutch public with information about refugees, receives financial assistance from the Government.

In addition, refugees from various countries have organized their own voluntary associations, which hold meetings, publish magazines and provide advice. These associations, some of which are subsidized by the Government, can intercede with the Dutch authorities on the refugees' behalf.

11.6 Housing

Municipalities are responsible for providing suitable housing for resettled refugees. Social housing will only be offered in one municipality. A (resettled) refugee has no choice of domicile.

11.7 Health

In principle, all refugees undergo a medical examination within two days after arrival in the Netherlands (see above section 11.1). During the follow-up phase at the municipal level or in the reception center refugees are provided with a comprehensive programme of preventive health care which includes health education, an extended immunisation programme and information about mother and child health care.

11.8 Language

Learning Dutch is part of the integration process. In addition, refugees (asylum status holders) need to learn about living and working in the Netherlands. After this, refugees usually take an exam.

The municipality chooses a school for refugees and decides which course they take. The municipality also determines when the integration is complete. This is written in the personal integration and participation plan (PIP) that is established for each refugee.

11.9 Education

Education is compulsory for all children up to the age of 16. These children are enrolled in local schools and start school as soon as possible after arrival. Educational qualifications obtained by the refugees in their country of origin/asylum are assessed in the light of the standards that apply in the Netherlands. Sometimes a refugee will have to take an additional course or gain some practical work experience in order to have his/her qualifications recognized. This applies not only to refugees but to all foreigners who settle in the Netherlands

11.10 Employment

Resettled refugees are allowed to work from the moment they receive the positive decision granting them asylum status. In practice, finding employment is difficult without knowledge of the Dutch language.

11.11 Financial Assistance

Until refugees find employment, they are entitled to social security allowance. Just like Dutch nationals, refugees have to use this monthly allowance to pay for the rent of the house, medical care, third party insurance, clothing, food, gas, electricity, water, etc. The municipalities will arrange for the obligatory health insurance.

11.12 Supporting Specific Needs

11.13 Family reunification

A person who has been granted asylum can apply for family reunification within three months from the date the asylum residence permit is granted. A person who has been granted asylum can generally only be granted family reunification with his/her spouse and his/her (foster)child(ren). The family members must actually belong to the family unit, which family unit already existed abroad. A resettled unaccompanied minor who arrived in the Netherlands before reaching the age of 18 can apply for family reunification with his/her parents. In case of applying family reunification for a spouse, both the person who has been granted asylum and the spouse must be the age of 18 years or older. A person who wants to apply for family reunification must be able to prove the identity of the family members as well as the family ties.

Family reunification with non-marital partners, parents or adult children is also possible, but only if they are dependents of the person who was granted asylum. It is vital to list these family members in the documentation/files submitted to UNHCR. Relationships need to be proven either with documentary evidence, through interviews or DNA-examination (biological children).



In the case of a so far unmentioned and for the IND unknown family member, family reunion might still be possible if all doubts about the identity and family life are taken away and no indication of fraud is involved.

12 References & Resources on resettlement

Dutch: The Aliens Act Implementation Guidelines (Vreemdelingencirculaire 2000):

[wetten.nl - Regeling - Vreemdelingencirculaire 2000 \(C\) - BWBR0012288 \(overheid.nl\)](https://wetten.nl/Regeling-Vreemdelingencirculaire-2000-C-BWBR0012288-overheid.nl)

The policy framework is established on a multiannual basis by letters to parliament: e.g.

[Kamerbrief over Meerjarig beleidskader hervestiging 2020 2023 | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

Addendum on complementary pathways

N/A