

Summary Dutch Baseline Report

This Baseline Report of the Netherlands has examined the legislative and policy measures with regard to the integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs) in the Netherlands. It has shown that the Netherlands has adopted a generic approach to integration. The current integration regime is based on the 2013 Civic Integration Act (*Wet inburgering 2013*) and two generally binding regulations. Apart from a few measures, integration policies are not specifically targeted at BIPs.

The Dutch policy on integration is based on three principles: first, self-reliance is an important aspect of the Dutch integration policy. BIPs are themselves responsible for successfully complete their integration trajectory. Second, the Dutch integration policy is (partly) privatised. The assumption is that BIPs are competent to buy their own language courses that are offered by organisations in the private sector. Third, the Dutch integration trajectory is mandatory to all newcomers. Where BIPs fail to pass the civic integration exam within a 3-year period, this may lead to a fine of a maximum of € 1250 or it may have consequences for their permanent residence permit.

The examined indicators also show that detailed information with regard to various policy areas is often not available. Furthermore, this report briefly addressed several challenges with regard to the integration of BIPs in the Netherlands. It has been submitted that BIPs are responsible for their own integration process. However, studies have shown that BIPs have difficulties to find their way into the complex integration system, as well as experience a great distance to the labour market.

More importantly, the Dutch government has acknowledged that there are shortcomings in the Dutch integration system, which impedes the effective integration of BIPs and other newcomers. To increase the effectiveness, a reform proposal has been submitted which aims to abolish the special loans for financing the language courses and to reinforce the role of the municipalities in the integration process. In addition, a more individual integration plan will be introduced for all newcomers. At the same time, the government intends to increase the required language proficiency level to pass the civic integration exam from A2 to B1. The reform of the integration system is planned to enter into force on January 1st 2022.