

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. I was born in Australia to a Dutch mother, who spent a large part of her life with her mother (my Oma) raising me from birth. I was raised more Dutch than Australian, which distanced me from my fellow Australians. I was more likely to criticise and speak out, follow my own ambitions, and eat typical Dutch cuisine that raised the eyebrows and turned the noses of Australians. I still feel like a fish out of water today, in these respects.

However, after living in Germany in the early 2000s and after I studied German and European Studies at the University of Western Australia, I realised mentally I am more Dutch than Australian, and this will never change. I can read and understand some Dutch, but I am fluent in German due to the large amount of study and time I put into it. I am comfortable socialising with other Europeans and feel at home among the Dutch and Germans when I am in Europe. Having been naturalised as a Dutch citizen in 2012 was a key moment in my life, because I finally received the official recognition I felt I deserved, that has helped me come to terms with my complex national identity.

I still live in Australia because of work opportunities and my immediate family, but I am contemplating retirement in The Netherlands or Germany once I reach that age bracket. I already have enough financial means to support my own self-funded retirement, so I would not be a burden on the government. If the Dutch government suddenly decides to strip my Dutch nationality officially, it will not take away my Dutch identity, but it will once again distance me from the country I inherited most of my national identity, and make it difficult for me to identify with my cultural origins having been rejected by my own country.

Conferring me with Dutch citizenship and then stripping it years later for only having been living abroad: how is that a crime or a punishment worthy of losing one's citizenship? This makes no sense. I urge the Dutch government to value its citizens living abroad. We are proud to be Dutch and fly the flag for our unique nation. Please do not go down the path of abolishing the citizenship status of your own citizens, just because we live abroad. That is a crime in itself.

Hartelijk dank.