

1. Access to justice

- During its earlier UPRs The Kingdom of the Netherlands was called upon by several States as well as the human rights committee to ratify the Optional Protocols to the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, and the third OP to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The government was quick to sign the ICESCR Protocol in 2009. However, to this day, the Protocol has not been ratified yet, while access to ESC rights is important for the interests protected by these rights, such as education, health care and social security. To underline that all human rights are indivisible and interdependent, the government should finally ratify the OP to the ICESCR and sign and ratify the (third) OPs to the CRPD and CRC.
- After a significant delay of five years, the Council of State published it's advice on the ratification of these three important Optional Protocols and the government will react on the advice by the first of November.

Recommendation:

- I. **We urge the Dutch Government to (sign and) ratify the Optional Protocols to the ICESCR, CRPD and CRC without any further delay to benefit access to justice and to bring social, economic and cultural rights to the same level as civil and political rights.**

2. Human rights and children's rights in primary and secondary education

- In times of polarization, human rights education is more essential than ever to create a healthy dialogue. It is striking that Dutch children have considerably less knowledge of human and children's rights than their European peers. In previous UPR sessions, the NJCM urged the government to make human rights education an integral part of the national curriculum in primary and secondary schools.
- In 2021, the NJCM positively received the entry into force of the amendment of the national law on citizenship education, which aims to strengthen amongst others the position of human rights and children's rights in citizenship education in primary and secondary education. However, there are still concerns about the implementation of the amended law as the curriculum has yet to be reformed. This process will only start in the coming months. The recent nation-wide consultation

of schools and other stakeholders (Curriculum.nu), which resulted in so-called “building stones for the new curriculum”, including human rights and children’s rights, seems to have been degraded to ‘input’ by the new government. The NJCM raises its concerns about the consequences thereof and its undermining effect on the quality of human rights and children’s rights education in schools.

Recommendations:

- I. **We to urge the government to ensure that human rights and children’s rights are well represented in the new curriculum for primary and secondary education, as well as vocational education.**
- II. **We urge the government to ensure that civil society actors are involved in the process of creating the new curriculum.**

3. Consultation of and dialogue with civil society

- Consulting civil society actors and other stakeholders in policymaking is of utmost importance for the quality and effectiveness of both policy and legislation. Although these consultations are part of the human rights-based approach that is supported by the Netherlands, civil society organizations are quite often given insufficient time to adequately share their input on draft bills. In some cases, the consultation period is only open for five days, while the consequences of certain laws are significant.
- The government’s stakeholders consultation for the UPR was again lacking space for a fruitful dialogue and can best be described as “checklist-diplomacy”. The NJCM calls upon the government to hold a second consultation before the state review in November.

Recommendations:

- I. **We urge the Dutch government to actively facilitate the involvement of civil society actors and other stakeholders in policy and law-making.**
- II. **We urge the government to allow for sufficient time for consultation and provide for a constructive human rights dialogue.**