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**INTEGRATION OF BENEFICIARIES
OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION
IN THE NETHERLANDS:
RESULTS FROM THE NATIONAL
INTEGRATION EVALUATION
MECHANISM (NIEM)**



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Dear Sir/Madam,

You hold in your hands a National Report on the implementation of various areas of integration policy towards beneficiaries of international protection in the Netherlands.

The report is the result of the evaluation of integration policies in the European Union (EU) Member States, implemented as part of the project “The National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM)”.

NIEM is a six-year long transnational project which aims to prepare key actors in the integration field in 16 EU Member States to better face the current challenges and improve the integration outcomes of BIPs. Representatives of academic centres, non-governmental organizations and think-tanks were invited to participate in the project.

The main aim of the project is to provide evidence concerning the gaps in integration standards, identify promising practices and shortcomings in different Member States, as well as evaluating the effects of legislative and policy changes which may provide a basis for further developing an efficient integration policy. Within the research part of the project, a tool is developed to monitor and comprehensively evaluate the integration of beneficiaries of international protection and to identify good practices and obstacles in integration, as well as to assess the impact of legislative and policy changes. NIEM will establish a mechanism for a biennial, comprehensive assessment of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection.

This report is the result of the second of three planned evaluation rounds, which consist of more than 150 indicators aimed at reviewing the existing situation. The subsequent evaluations will be carried out periodically every two years. After each round respective national reports will be issued, as well as a common European report comparing the examined dimensions of integration policies of all the participating Member States in the NIEM project.

The report is addressed to representatives of public administration, academic and research centres, think-tanks, non-governmental organisations and for all of these dealing with migration and integration issues. We do hope that the report will meet with interest and will be a good basis in creating policies and deepening knowledge about the integration of beneficiaries of international protection.

1. Introduction

The National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM) presents evidence with regard to the legislation and policies that are implemented at the national level for the benefit of beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs). The study which is based on indicators¹ supports stakeholders to identify gaps and challenges in the refugee integration policies at the national level. This report is the follow-up of the baseline report on the integration policies for BIPs in the Netherlands, which was based on 2017 data.

The first part of the report describes the key developments in the field of integration policies for BIPs in the Netherlands between 2017 and April 2019. The second part of this report examines how the Dutch integration policies relate to the other selected countries in this project. More specifically, this report will examine the scores for the Netherlands and Sweden for 2019. The other countries that are included in the NIEM's Evaluation 1 are Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Spain.

1.1. NIEM Methodology

The analysis of refugee integration frameworks covers a variety of legal and policy indicators, administrative implementation, policy coordination efforts, financial investments and integration outcomes. 120 indicators have been assessed and scored in Evaluation 1. The normative framework from which indicators are derived includes EU legal standards,² EU policy standards,³ and international legal standards.⁴ The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU, adopted in 2004, addressed integration as a “dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.”⁵ An important legal standard is enshrined in Article 34 of the Qualification Directive 2011/95/EU, which stipulates that Member States must ensure access to integration programmes in order to facilitate the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into society.

¹ All indicators are listed in the Appendix.

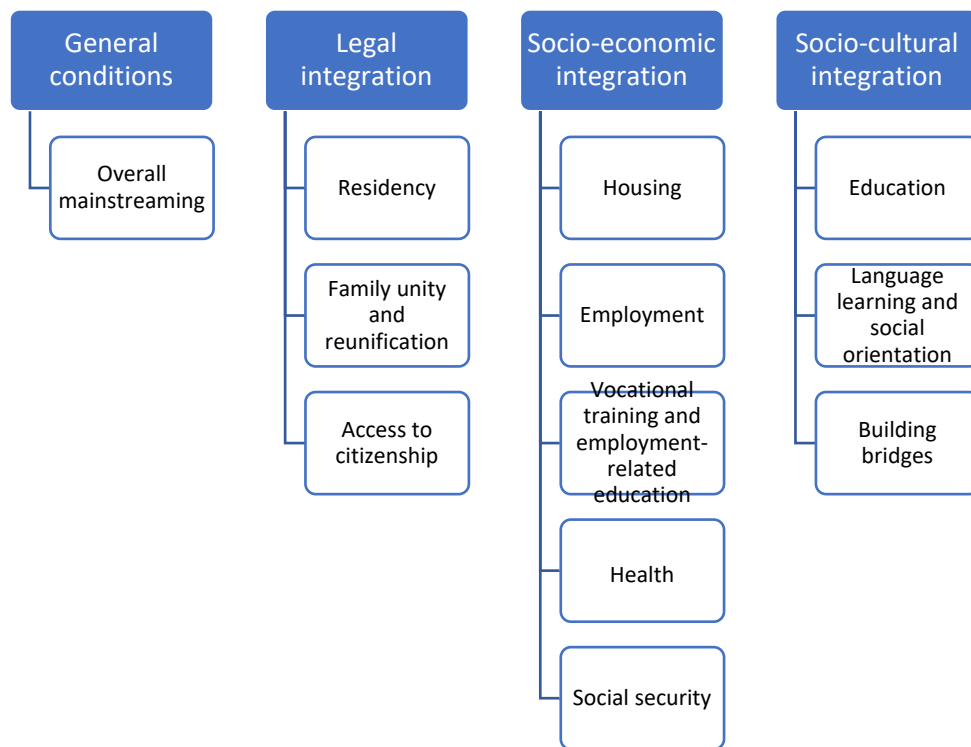
² Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Qualification Directive 2011/95/EU, Reception Conditions Directive 2013/33/EU and the Family Reunification Directive 2003/86/EC.

³ Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy, Commission Communication on guidance for application of the Family Reunification Directive.

⁴ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, The European Convention on Human Rights, The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Nationality.

⁵ The Council of the European Union, 14615/04 (Presse 321), Justice and Home Affairs, Brussels, 19 November 2004: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/82745.pdf.

The research covers 12 dimensions:



All project partners filled out a standardized NIEM questionnaire with a scoring system. Each indicator is formulated as a specific question in relation to a different aspect of refugee integration. Points are assigned to each policy option, with 100 points awarded to the most favourable and 0 to the least favourable options. The NIEM questionnaire differentiates between the various sub- groups of beneficiaries of international protection:

- Recognised refugees
- Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection
- Resettled refugees
- Persons under temporary protection
- Persons under humanitarian protection

As a consequence of data gaps in the various participating countries in this research and because it is highly challenging to provide a meaningful comparison across countries for all the indicators, NIEM's Evaluation 1 is only focused on the legal, policy and collaboration frameworks:

Setting the Legal Framework

- Legal standards which a country needs to comply with
- Types and duration of residence permits
- Conditions for obtaining long-term residence, family reunification, and citizenship
- Access to rights, services, benefits, and entitlements across different policy areas/ dimensions

Building the Policy Framework

- Policies, rules and arrangements that a country needs to put in place to support the integration of BIPs in all relevant policy areas
- Availability, scope, and duration of targeted provisions and services
- Provisions for special needs groups and needs-based criteria for the allocation of goods and services
- Administrative barriers
- Fees for long-term residence, family reunification, and citizenship
- Awareness-raising/information for stakeholders and beneficiaries

Implementation and Collaboration

- Efforts towards developing, coordinating and implementing an all-of-government and all-of-society response
- The existence and implementation of an overall refugee integration policy/strategy
- Mainstreaming across all relevant policy fields
- Multi-level and multi-sectoral coordination with local and regional authorities, social partners, and civil society
- Acknowledgment of integration as a two-way process and support for an active role on the part of the receiving society
- Encouragement of the participation of BIPs in society and integration policy making

2. Key legal and policy developments 2017-2019

In this report the most relevant legal and policy measures adopted between 2017 and 2019 in relation to refugee integration in the Netherlands are presented. Subsequently, this report provides an overview of the Dutch integration policies compared to the other participating countries. First, an overview is provided of the number of asylum applications and the granted residence permits in the Netherlands. This is followed by an overview of the recent policy developments, as well as some additional information on the proposed new civic integration legislation in the Netherlands.

2.1. The number of asylum applications in the Netherlands

The number of first asylum applications decreased from approximately 43095 in 2015 to approximately 19370 in 2016. Following a further decrease in 2017 to 16145, in 2018 these numbers increased again in 2018 and 2019 to 20510 respectively 22540.

Table 1. Number of asylum applications

	Number of first-time asylum applications	Subsequent asylum applications	Total number of asylum applications
2017	16145	2120	18265
2018	20510	3565	24075
2019	22540	2725	25265

Source: Statistics Netherlands - CBS⁶

Syrians have been the largest group that have applied for asylum, followed by Eritreans. Another trend shows that the Netherlands has received more asylum seekers arriving from 'safe countries of origin', such as Morocco and Algeria. Moreover, since 2018 there has been also an increase of Turkish asylum seekers.⁷

Table 2. Total residence permits asylum

	2017	2018	2019
Total residence permits asylum	25815	12445	11890
Refugee status/ Subsidiary status	10565	5335	6940
Humanitarian reasons	15250	7110	4950

Source: Statistics Netherlands - CBS

⁶ <https://opendata.cbs.nl/statline/#/CBS/nl/dataset/83102ned/table?fromstatweb>

⁷ CBS, "Cohortonderzoek asielzoekers en statushouders – Asiel en integratie 2020", The Hague, 2020, p. 18.

In 2015, 33000 persons received an asylum residence permit.⁸ Following an increase in 2016 of 37000, the numbers of persons granted a protection status dropped from 29000 to 17000 in 2017 and 2018.⁹

2.2. Policy developments

During 2017-2019 several policy measures and initiatives have been adopted. A few of them will be highlighted in this section:

- Since 1 October 2017, social counselling of BIPs has become part of the Civic Integration Act. Asylum permit holders and their family members can receive social counselling from the municipality where they live. This means in practice, assistance and guidance in their integration and participation in society.¹⁰
- Since 1 October 2017, the participation statement has become mandatory for newcomers who take part in the civic integration trajectory. Newcomers get acquainted with values such as freedom, equality solidarity and participation. The trajectory is concluded with the signing of the participation statement. The newcomer declares that he has taken note of the values and rules of the Dutch society, and that he respects them and is willing to make an active contribution.¹¹
- In 2018 guidelines were initiated for municipalities to promote the health and well-being of children of BIPs. The guidelines provide practical points in order to identify and to prevent health issues. It also emphasizes the important role of municipalities in this context.¹²
- In 2019 the Dutch government announced that activities concerning the integration of BIPs are continued at the reception centres. The programme 'Preparation for civic integration' allows BIPs who stay at a reception centre to continue to receive Dutch language courses, individual counselling, information about the Dutch society and orientation to the Dutch labour market.¹³
- Given the strong indications of fraud by language schools, the Dutch government decided in 2019 to implement a stricter admission procedure for language schools providing civic integration courses to newcomers.¹⁴
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⁸ Family members of BIPs are included in the number of persons granted a residence permit.

⁹ CBS, "Cohortonderzoek asielzoekers en statushouders – Asiel en integratie 2020", The Hague, 2020, p. 31.

¹⁰ <https://duo.nl/zakelijk/inburgering-ketenpartners/participatieverklaring/maatschappelijke-begeleiding.jsp>

¹¹ <https://duo.nl/zakelijk/inburgering-ketenpartners/participatieverklaring/over-de-participatieverklaring.jsp>

¹² De Haan A. *et al*, "Handreiking – Bevorderen gezondheid en welzijn van kinderen van statushouders – Wat kunt u als gemeente doen?", Pharos, January 2018. See further EMN Netherlands, "2018 Annual Review – Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands", April 2019, pp. 37-49.

¹³ EMN Netherlands, "Annual Report 2019 – Migration and Asylum in the Netherlands", May 2020, p. 39.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

2.3. New civic integration legislation

The integration system for newcomers has been the centre of debate for many years in the Netherlands. The current system introduced in 2013 which was much focused on self-reliance, suffers from many challenges and which impedes the effective integration of BIPs and other newcomers. Hence, the Dutch government announced to reform the current system. The municipalities will have a stronger role in the new civic integration system. The new legislation on the integration of BIPs and other newcomers is expected to enter into force in 2022.

The new adopted legislation inter alia aims to abolish the special loans for financing the language courses and to reinforce the role of the municipalities in the integration process. Furthermore, a more individual integration plan will be introduced for all newcomers, which means a personal plan for each individual newcomer to learn the language in combination with work or study. 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 consequence for failing to comply with the integration requirements remains that the newcomer may not be entitled to a residence permit for an indefinite period or for naturalization.¹⁵ Moreover, the Dutch government aims to reintroduce mandatory civic integration exams to Turkish newcomers when the new legislation on integration enters into force.¹⁶

¹⁵ Koolmees W., “Hoofdlijnen veranderopgave inburgering”, Kamerbrief, 2 July 2018.

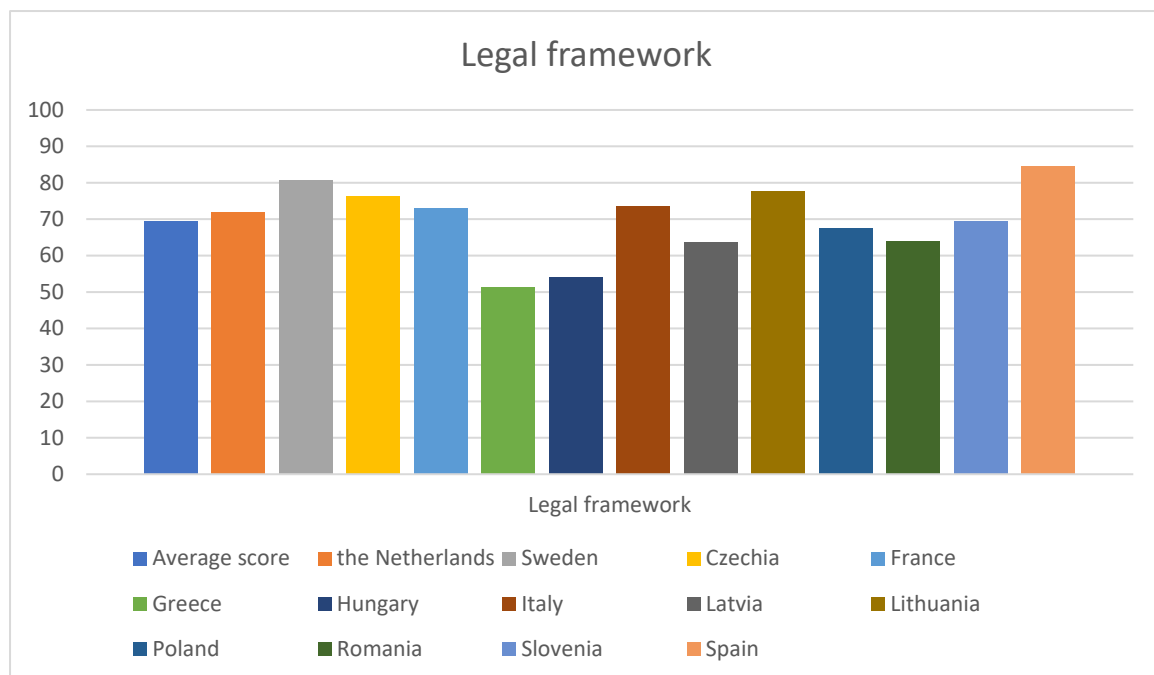
¹⁶ Koolmees W., “Motie van de leden Paternotte en Heerma inburgering voor Turkse nieuwkomers”, Kamerbrief, 4 February 2020.

3. The Dutch integration framework compared to other countries

3.1. Three general charts

In this section, three charts are shown to indicate the general performance of the Netherlands vis-à-vis the other countries. These three charts cover the overall scores of each country in the legal framework, the policy framework, as well as the implementation and collaboration. It should be taken into account that the overall score of each country is calculated based on the average of the individual scores for recognized refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

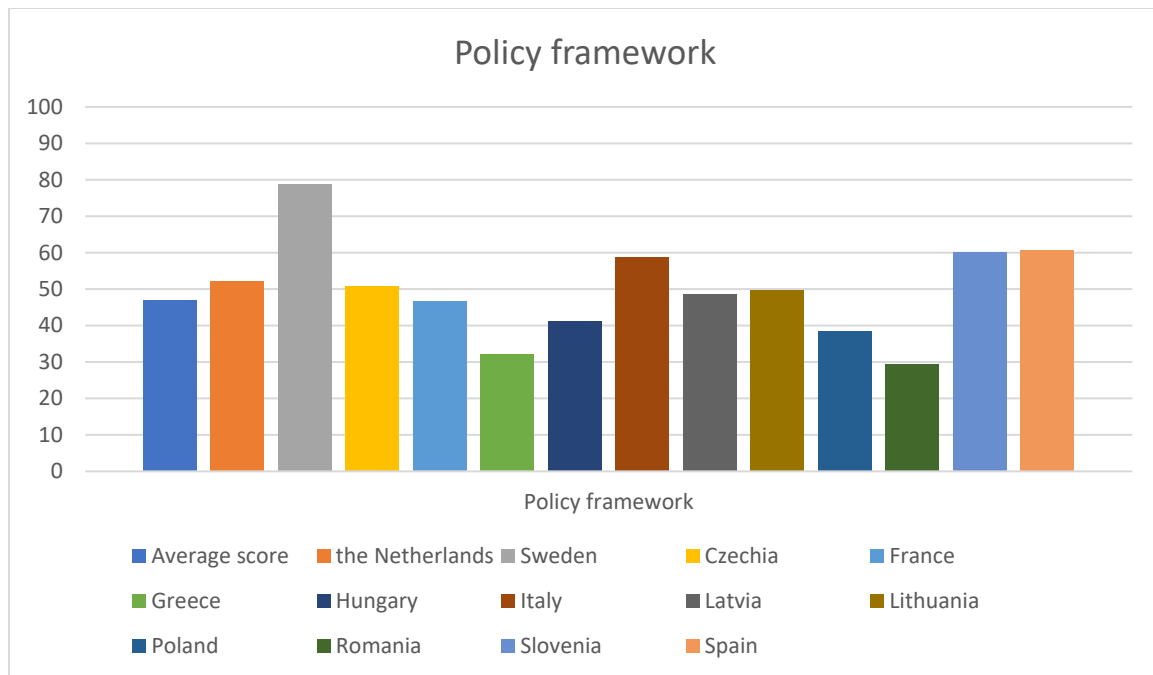
3.1.1. Legal framework



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

Looking at the overall score of the Netherlands, it becomes clear that the Netherlands is only performing slightly better than the average score. Furthermore, the Netherlands is ranked seventh compared to the other twelve countries. Spain has the best overall score, followed by Sweden and Lithuania.

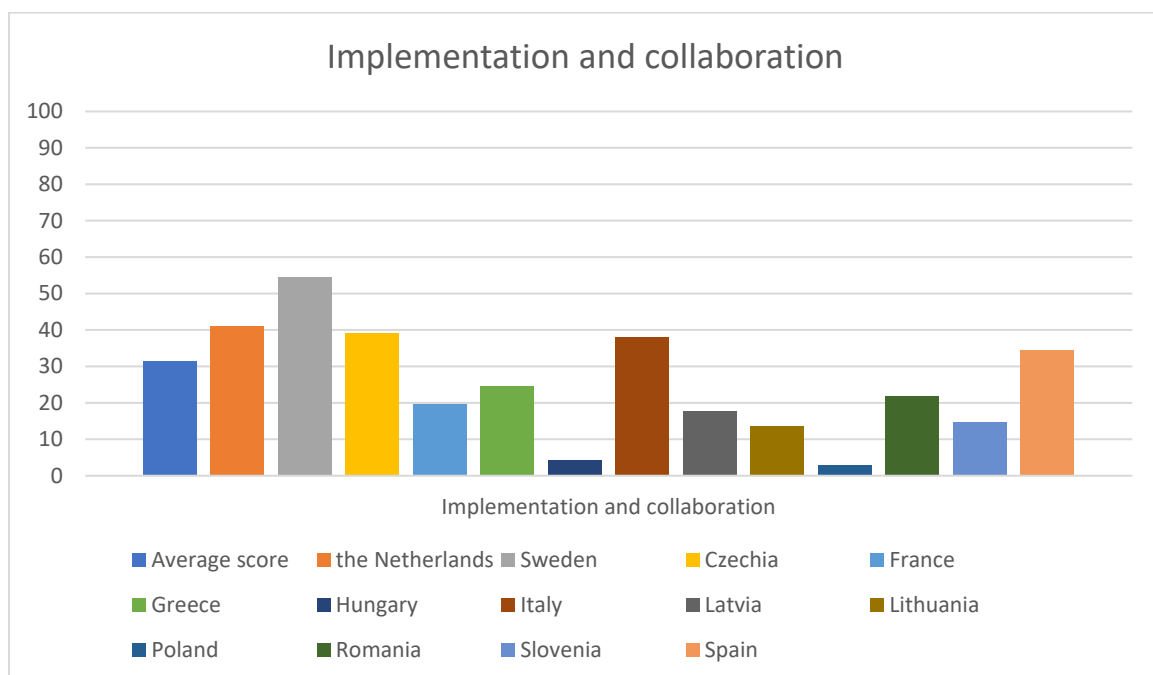
3.1.2. Policy framework



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

Concerning the policy framework, Sweden has the highest score, followed by Spain and Slovenia. The Netherlands is again performing slightly better than the average score, but this time ranks fifth out of thirteen countries.

3.1.3. Implementation and collaboration



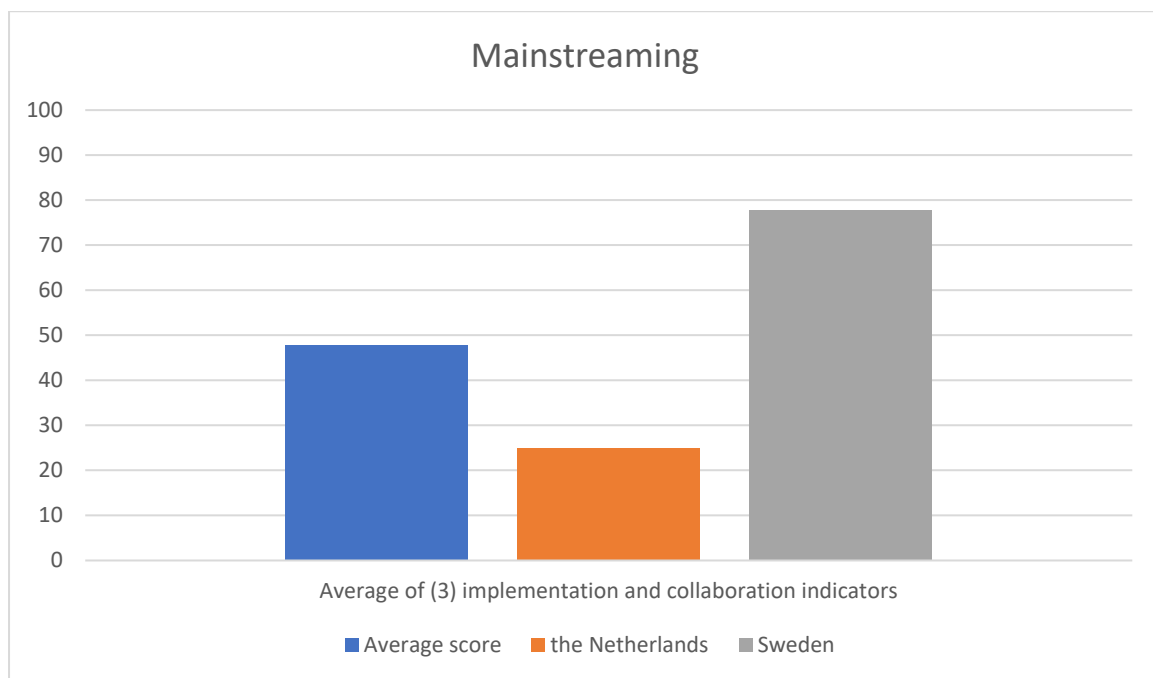
Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

As regards implementation and collaboration, the Netherlands scores ten points better than the average, ranking second in comparison to the countries. A noticeable element is that Sweden outperforms the other countries by more than ten points.

3.2. Dimensions

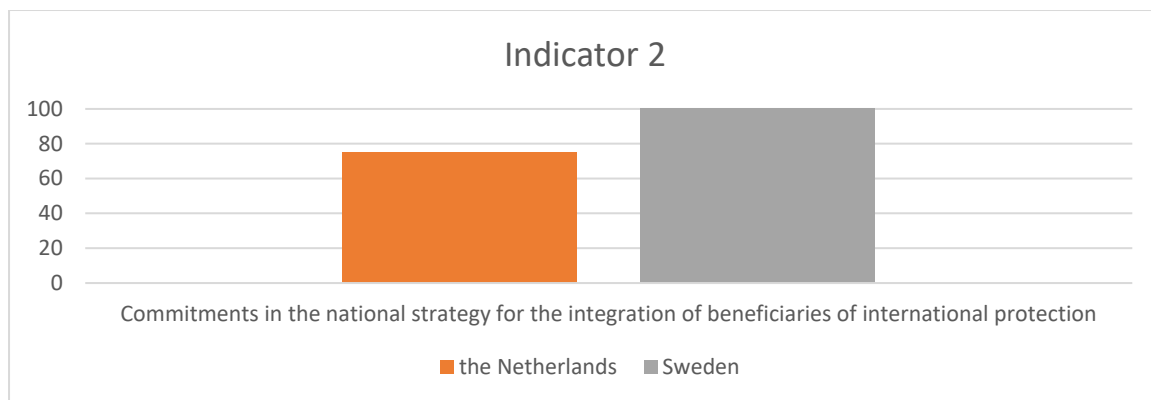
In the following section, a comparison is made between the Netherlands and Sweden as regards their scores in the various dimensions. The comparison is based on the data from the rescored baseline reports. The scores of both countries are then compared to the average score of all countries, indicating whether they are underperforming or scoring better than average. Per dimension, several indicators are singled out in order to be able to make a more detailed comparison between the Netherlands, Sweden, and the average scores of all countries.

3.2.1. Mainstreaming



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

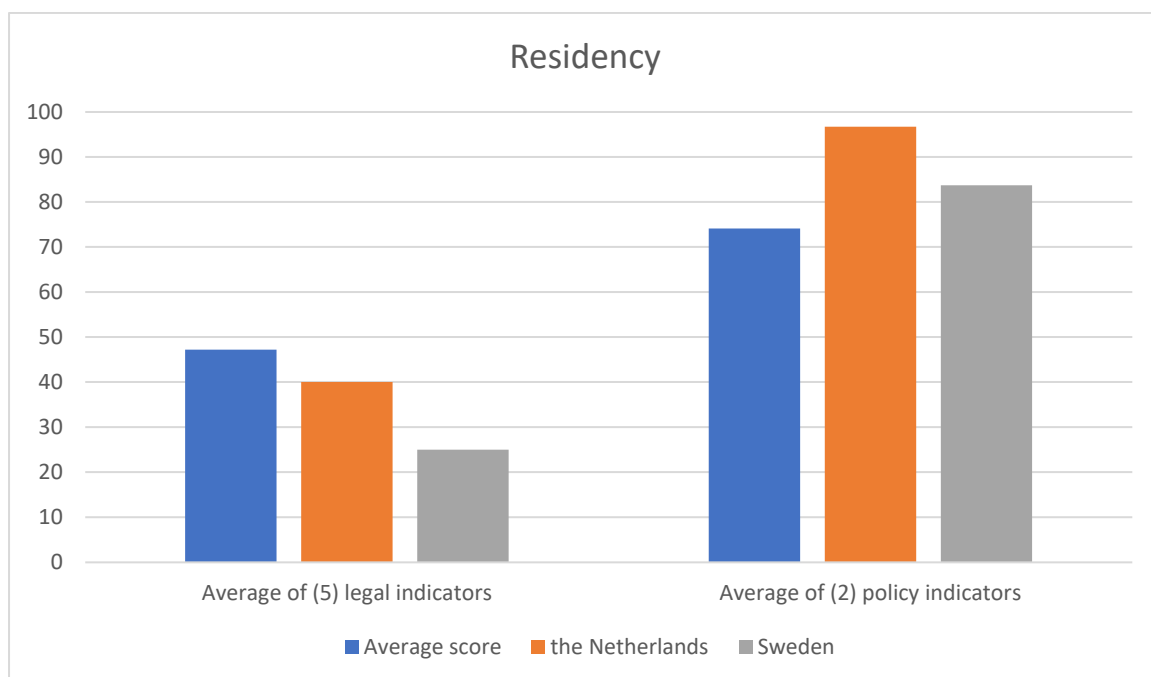
As regards the Mainstreaming dimension, the Netherlands scores poorly, far below the average.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

Indicator 2 concerns “Commitments in the national strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection”. The national integration strategy is diffuse. This means that different ministries as well as local authorities are involved. The competent ministries are involved in their areas of competence, while local authorities play a more important role in implementation.

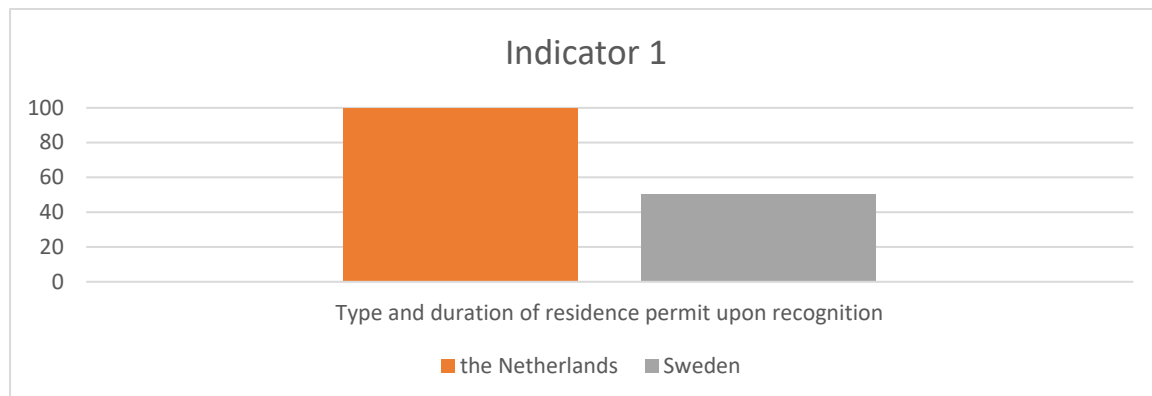
3.2.2. Residency



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

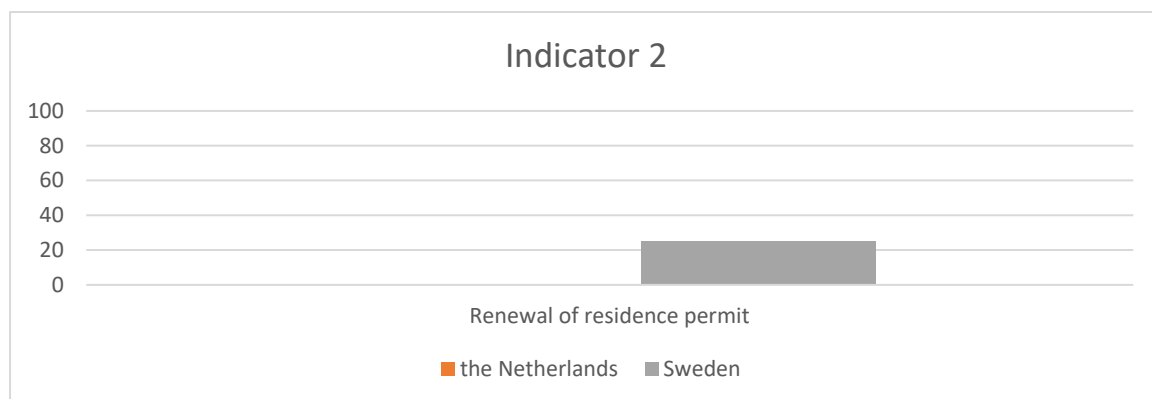
As regards the Residency dimension, the legal indicators on the one hand show that both the Netherlands and Sweden are below the average. The Netherlands scores higher than Sweden. On the other hand, both countries are performing better than the average as far as the policy indicators are concerned. Again, several indicators are singled out. These indicators are the

first, second and sixth. These are the indicators where differences exist between the scores of both countries.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

The first indicator on the “Type and duration of the residence permit upon recognition” shows that the Netherlands scored the maximum of points. This can be explained by the fact that the Netherlands grants a residence permit that is valid for at least five years to all recognized refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.¹⁷ This means that the Netherlands does not make a distinction on the status of the person concerned. Sweden, on the contrary, distinguishes between the different statuses, with residence permits being valid for less than three years, at least three years and at least five years.¹⁸



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

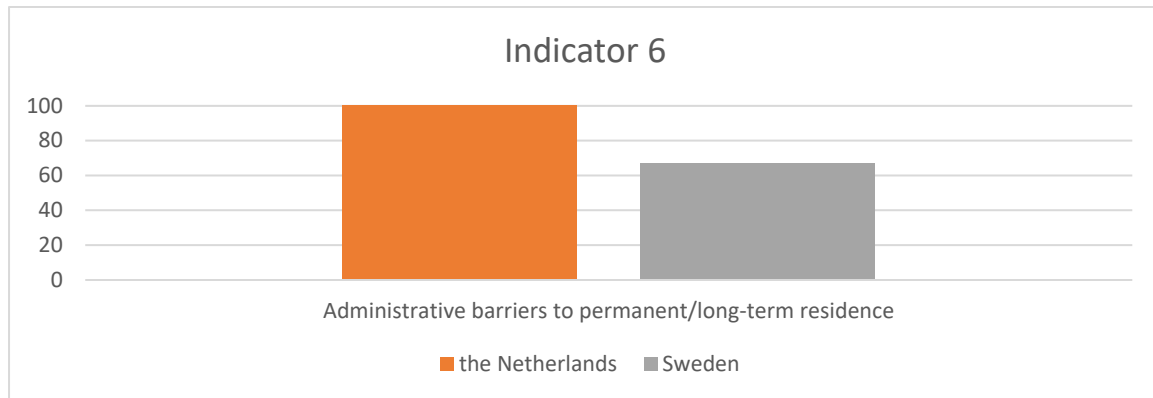
The second indicator concerns the “Renewal of the residence permit”. The Netherlands did not score any points, while Sweden only scored few points. The Netherlands does not automatically renew the residence permits, as the permit is only renewed upon application and if additional requirements are met.¹⁹ Sweden takes the same approach, with only one difference: recognized

¹⁷ Article 29 Dutch Aliens Act.

¹⁸ Chapter 5 Swedish Aliens Act (2005:716), and Sections 4 and 5 Act (2016:752) on temporary restrictions on the possibility of obtaining a residence permit in Sweden.

¹⁹ Article 21 Dutch Aliens Act.

refugees do not need to apply for a renewal of their residence permit because their permit is renewed automatically.²⁰



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

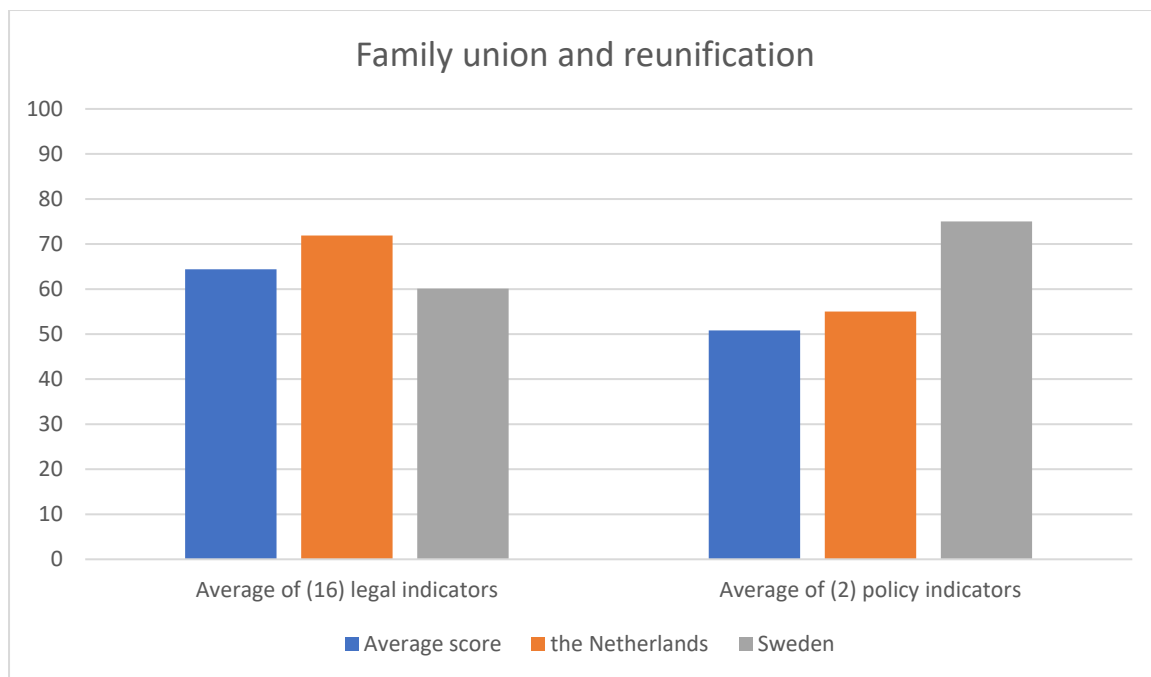
The sixth indicator on “Administrative barriers to permanent/long-term residence” shows that the Netherlands again scores maximum points, while Sweden also scores high points. None of the administrative barriers applies in the Netherlands.²¹ In Sweden, only one of the administrative barriers applies; the waiting time is still long.²²

3.2.3. Family union and reunification

²⁰ See: <https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/When-you-have-received-a-decision-on-your-asylum-application/If-you-are-allowed-to-stay/Residence-permits-for-those-granted-refugee-status.html>.

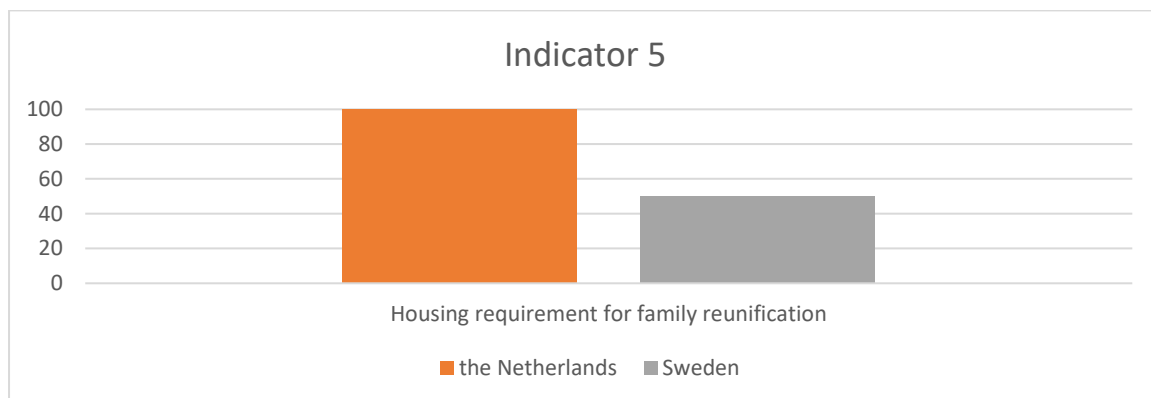
²¹ Article 21 Dutch Aliens Act.

²² See: <https://www.migrationsverket.se/>.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

As far as the legal indicators of the “Family union and reunification” dimension are concerned, the Netherlands performs slightly better than the average, while Sweden performs slightly worse. However, Sweden outperforms the Netherlands by 20 points in the policy indicators. Both countries score above average. Given the large amount of indicators involved in this dimension, we shall only focus on the indicators where the differences between the Netherlands and Sweden are the biggest. This is the case for indicators 5, 10, 13 and 20.

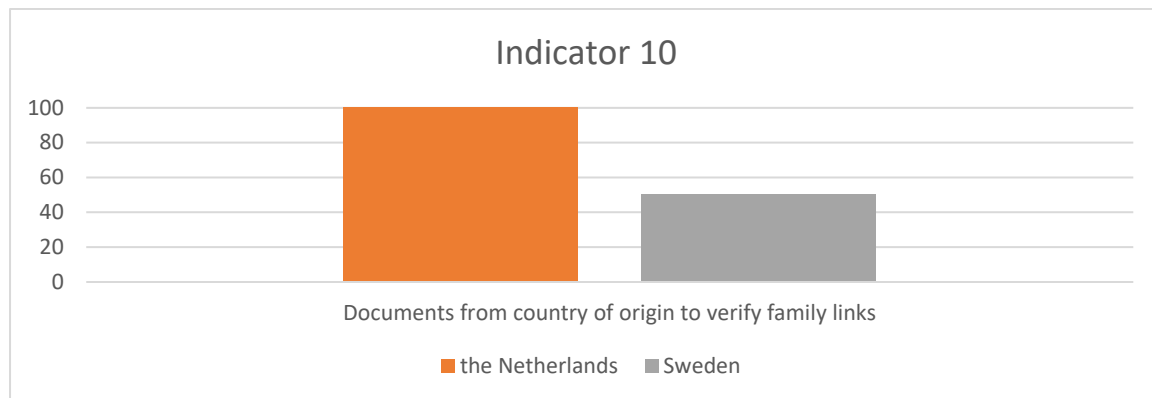


Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

As regards the “housing requirement for family reunification”, the Netherlands scores maximum points because there are no housing requirements for all third country nationals.²³ Sweden, on the other hand, distinguishes between refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection. Recognized refugees do not need to fulfil any housing requirements,

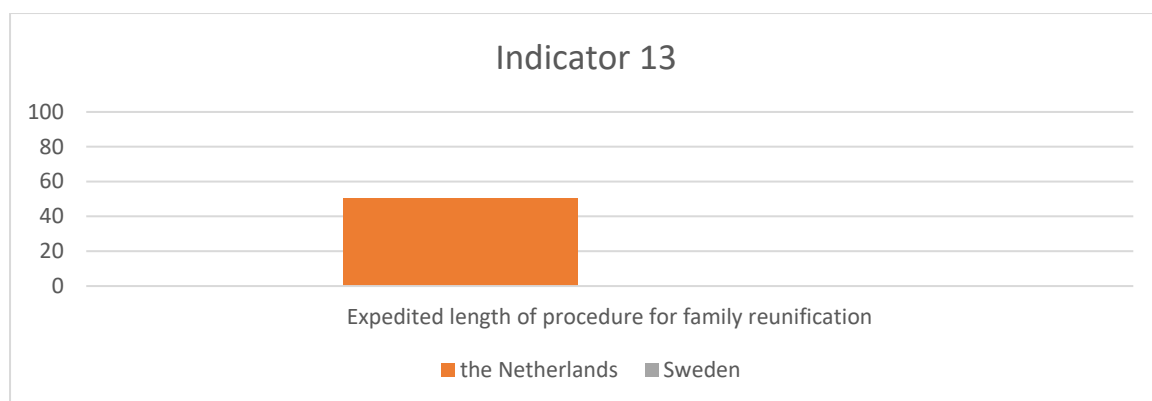
²³ Article 29 Dutch Aliens Act.

while other beneficiaries of international protection must meet the same housing requirements as ordinary third country nationals.²⁴



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

With regard to indicator 10 “Documents from country of origin to verify family links”, the Netherlands provides exemptions from the obligation to provide documents in certain defined circumstances, as well as alternative methods when these documents are not available. When insufficient or unreliable documents are available in the determination of family ties for the purpose of family reunification, DNA-testing or identifying interviews are used.²⁵ Sweden, however, only provides for the possibility to have DNA-analysis in case there is insufficient evidence.²⁶ This is why the Netherlands scores better than Sweden in this particular indicator.



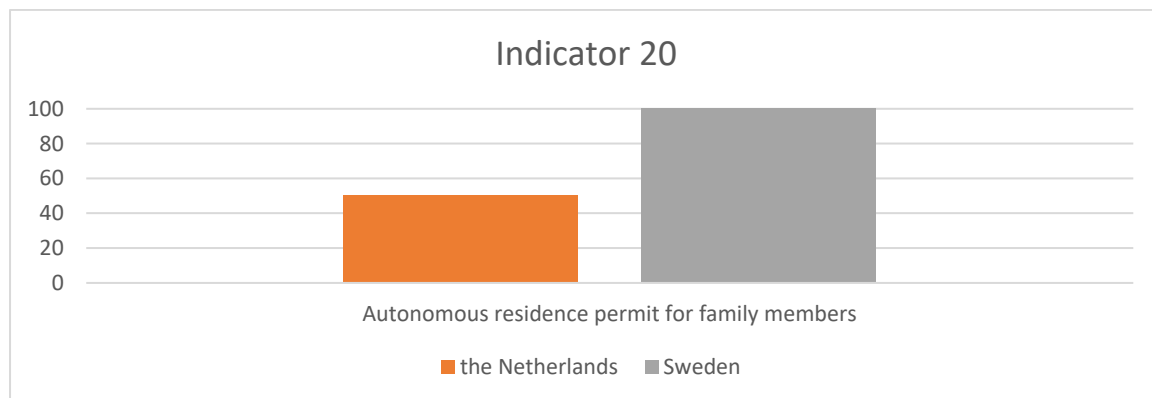
Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

²⁴ Swedish Aliens Act (2005:716), and Section 9 Act (2016:752) on temporary restrictions on the possibility of obtaining a residence permit in Sweden.

²⁵ IND Werkinstructie 2016/7.

²⁶ Section 15 of Chapter 13 Swedish Aliens Act (2005:716).

Indicator 13 investigates whether there is a legal limit to the length of the family reunification procedure. In the Netherlands, the law regarding the length of the family reunification procedure stipulates that authorities have to decide on the application for family reunification within 90 days, which can be extended with another 90 days.²⁷ In Sweden, there are no general requirements in administrative law on length of procedures that would be applicable to family reunification.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

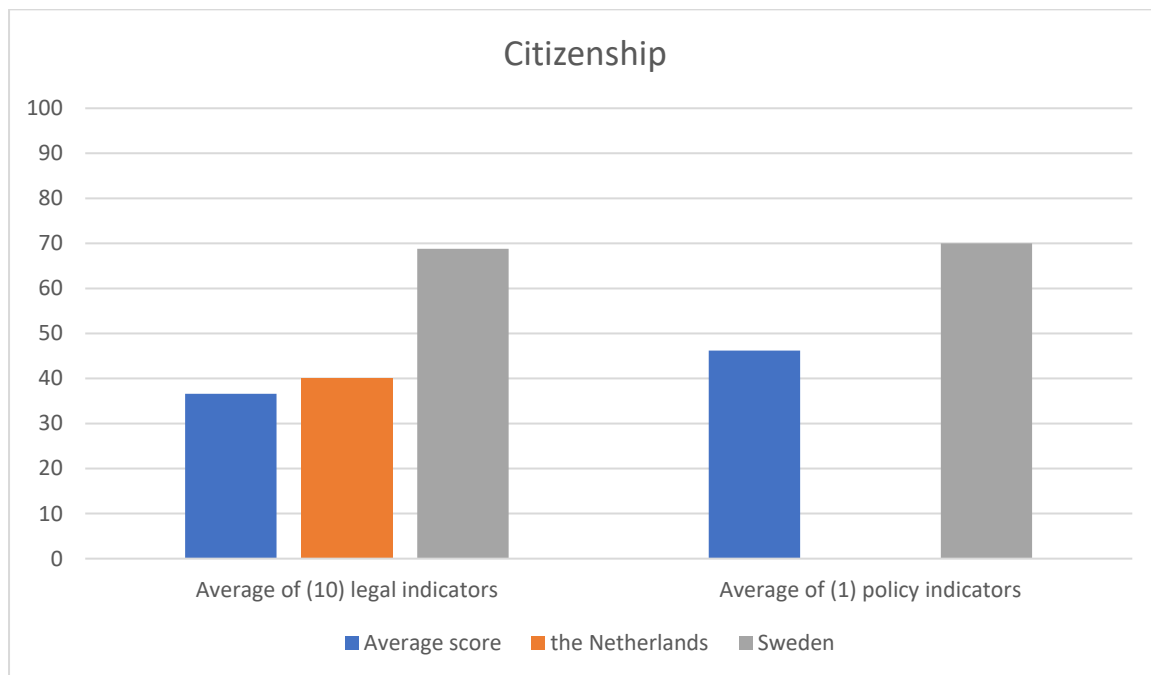
Indicator 20 on the “Autonomous residence permit for family members” shows that family members must have five years of legal residence in the Netherlands before they can apply for a residence permit that is autonomous of their sponsor.²⁸ In Sweden, family members receive an autonomous residence permit when they obtain the same status as their sponsor, which means they can receive the autonomous residence permit from day one. However, permits specifically issued for the purposes of family reunification are not autonomous.²⁹

²⁷ Article 2u Dutch Aliens Act.

²⁸ See: <https://ind.nl/Paginas/Wijzigen-verblijfsdoel-verblijfsvergunning.aspx>.

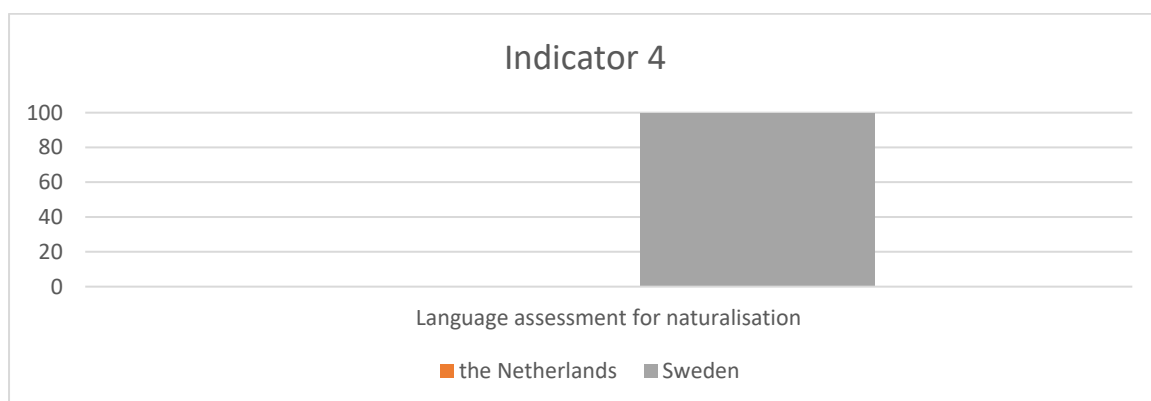
²⁹ Section 3 of Chapter 5 Swedish Aliens Act (2005:716).

3.2.4. Citizenship



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

As regards the legal indicators of the “Citizenship” dimension, Sweden outperforms the Netherlands by almost 30 points. However, the policy indicators are not representative as they consist of only one indicator, for which the Netherlands did not score any points, thus distorting the overall picture in the Netherlands. Again, a selection is made between the various indicators, thereby focusing on the indicators where the differences between the two countries are the biggest. This is the case for indicators 4, 9 and 10.

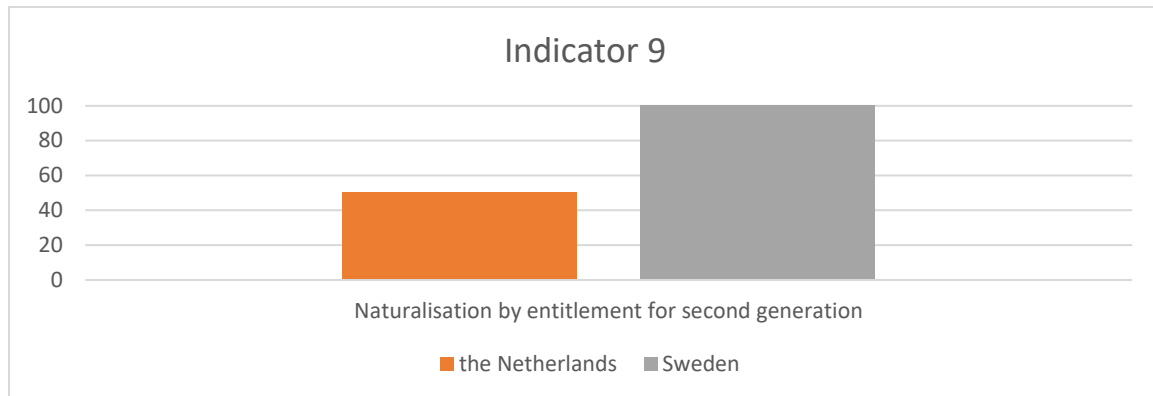


Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

In the Netherlands, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and recognized refugees have to fulfil the same language assessment criteria as other applicants for naturalisation.³⁰ On the contrary,

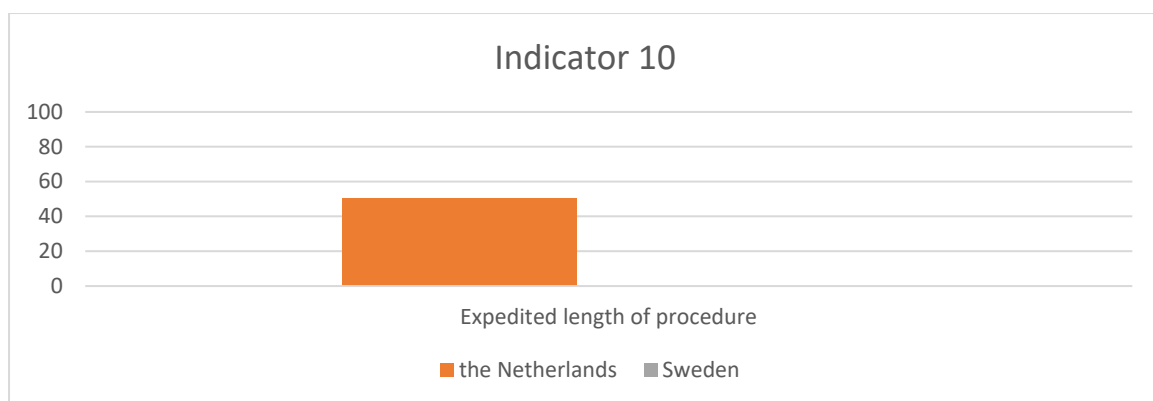
³⁰ Article 8(1)(d) Netherlands Nationality Act.

in Sweden, they do not have to fulfil such assessment criteria.³¹ This explains why the Netherlands did not score any points, while Sweden scored the maximum.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

Regarding the second generation's entitlement to the nationality of the host state, the practices prevalent in the two countries are relatively similar, yet they scored differently. In the Netherlands, the second generation, born in the Netherlands, has an option right to the Dutch nationality.³² This means they have the right to acquire the Dutch nationality by confirmation of a declaration. In Sweden, children under the age of 18 can receive the Swedish nationality after three years of residence without having to fulfil any requirements and simply with a notification.³³



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

The length of the naturalisation procedure is, in the Netherlands, fixed by law. The competent authorities in principle have to decide on the application within one year, but can extend this

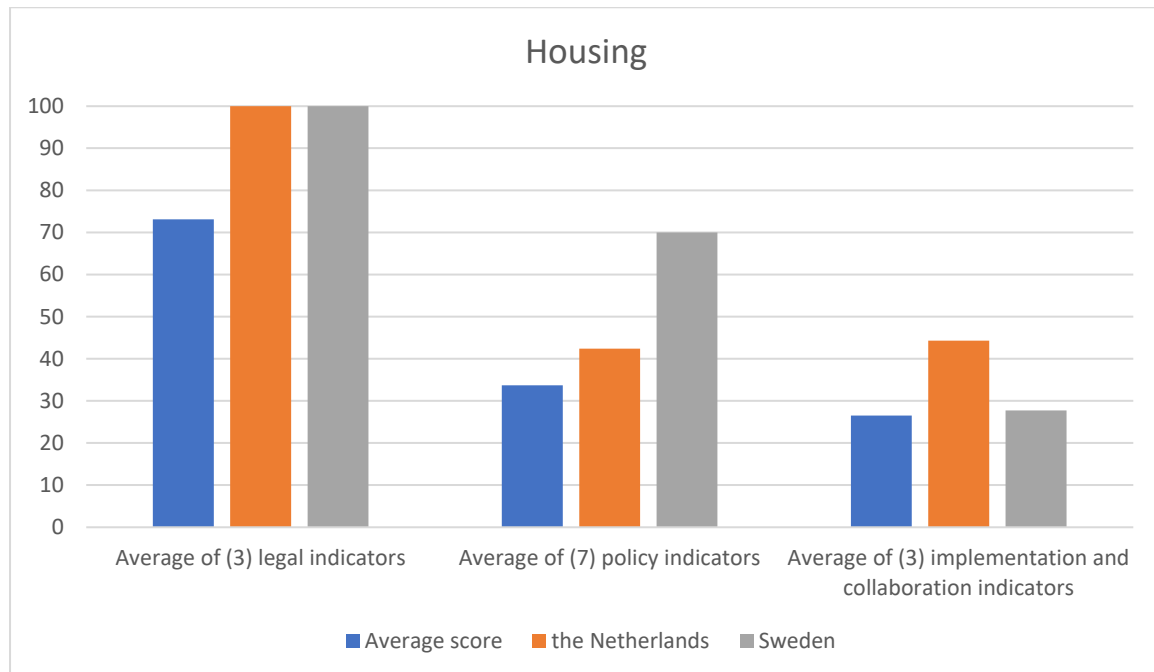
³¹ Section 11 Act (2001:82) on Swedish citizenship

³² Article 6(1)(a) Netherlands Nationality Act.

³³ Section 7 Act (2001:82) on Swedish citizenship

time limit twice with six months.³⁴ In Sweden, there is no fixed time limit. (However, the average duration for an application to be processed is 230 days.)³⁵

3.2.5. Housing

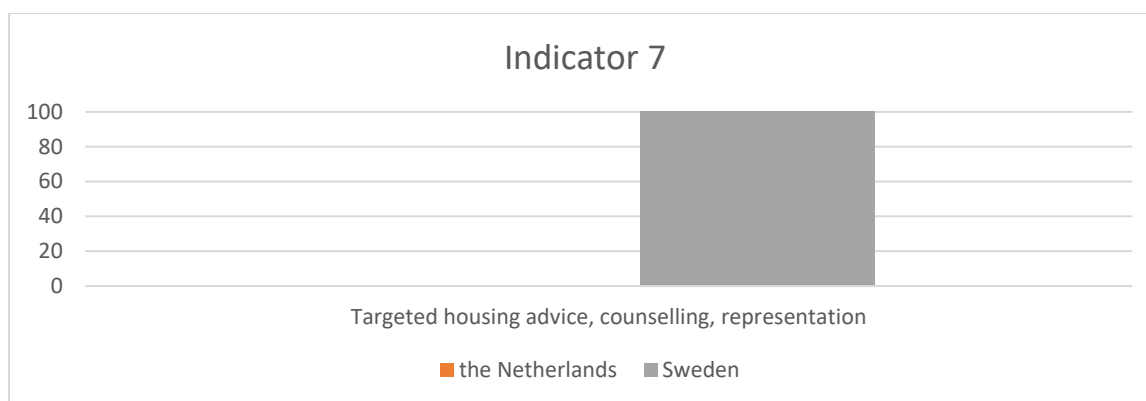


Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

The Netherlands and Sweden both score better than average in all of the housing indicators, even scoring the maximum of points for the legal indicators. As regards the policy indicators, Sweden outperforms the Netherlands by almost 30 points, whilst only barely scoring better than average for the implementation and collaboration indicators, where the Netherlands manages to do so. Next, four housing indicators are singled out. With more than twenty individual indicators, the choice has been made to look deeper into indicators 7, 8, 11 and 13. These are the indicators where the biggest differences exist between both countries.

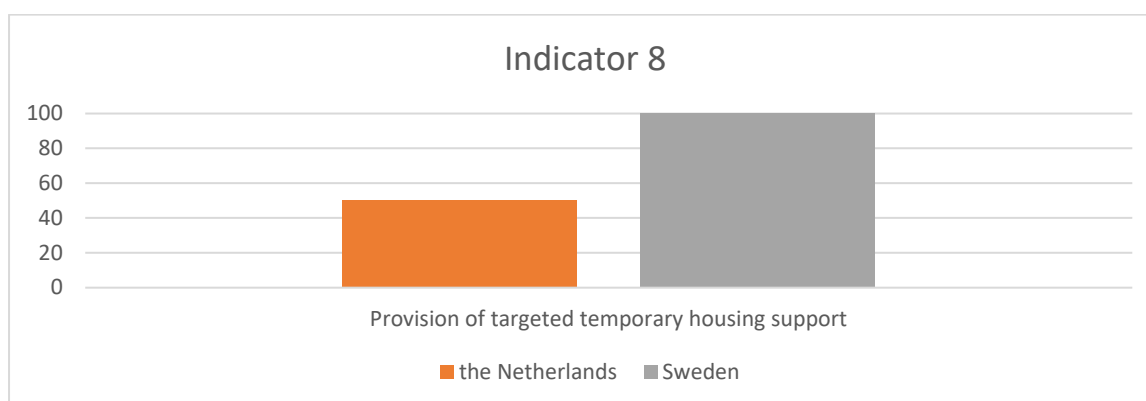
³⁴ Article 9(4) Netherlands Nationality Act.

³⁵ Act (2001:82) on Swedish citizenship.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

The question whether targeted housing advice, counselling and representation by housing experts is available for BIPs, must be answered negatively for the Netherlands. However, COA³⁶ informs BIPs in reception centres what their housing rights are.³⁷ The picture is totally different in Sweden, where a handbook is issued, which provides information on housing and legal issues related to housing.³⁸



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

Concerning the “Provision of targeted temporary housing support”, the Netherlands provides targeted yet temporary housing support if they meet certain conditions or waiting periods. For example, BIPs under the age of 23 are only entitled to rental subsidies if the monthly rent is below €403,06, but the average monthly rent in social housing is €470,00 per month.³⁹ In Sweden, beneficiaries who are living alone are entitled to targeted in-cash housing support, while

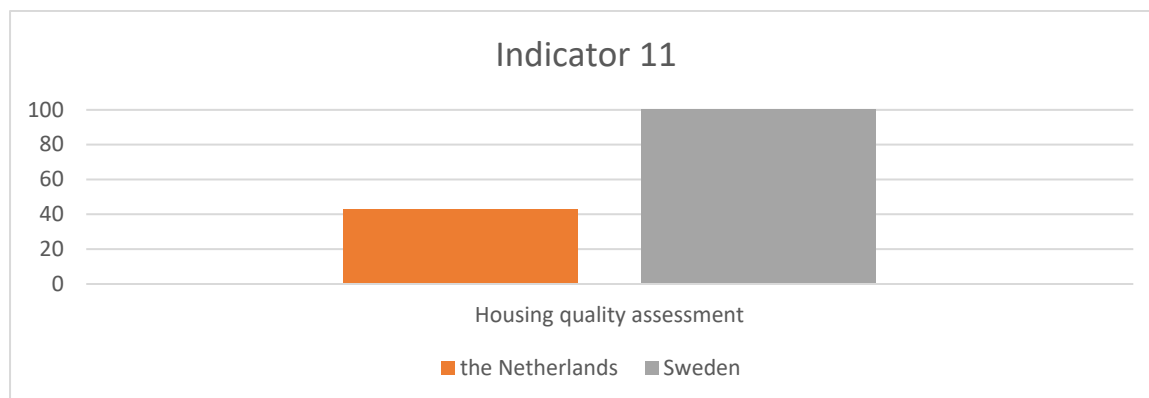
³⁶ See: <https://www.coa.nl/en>.

³⁷ See: <https://www.coa.nl/en/housing-status-holders>.

³⁸ See: <https://www.informationsverige.se/sv/jag-arbetar-med-malgruppen/samhallsorientering/boken-om-sverige/>.

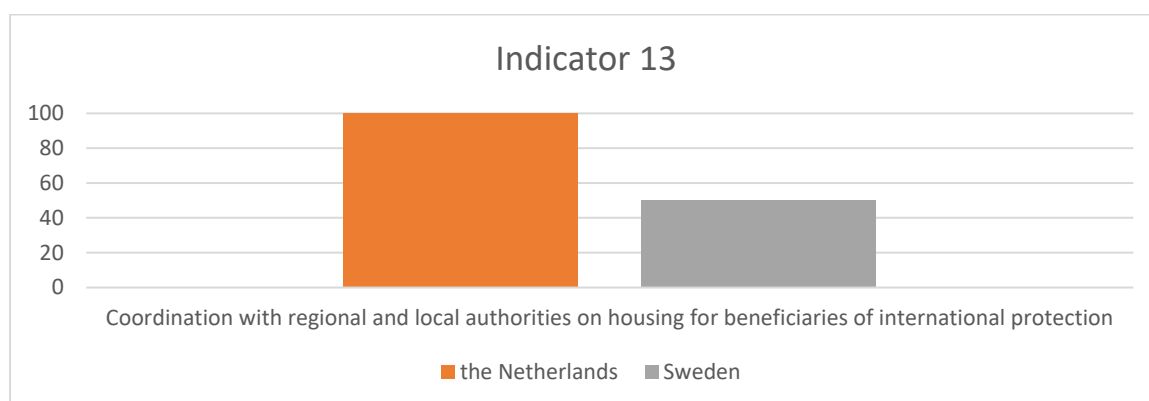
³⁹ Klaver J. *et al*, “De integratie van statushouders op lokaal niveau: belemmeringen en oplossingen”, Regioplan, December 2015, p. 12. These figures date back to 2015.

beneficiaries with children or beneficiaries younger than 29 without children are entitled to the same in-cash housing benefits as all third country nationals.⁴⁰



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

When allocating in-kind housing assistance, the COA takes into account work, study, direct family, or medical circumstances (but not the BIPs personal preferences). However, employment opportunities are only taken into account in case the BIP has already found a job in a particular municipality. Municipalities must find ‘sustainable’ housing for BIPs, which means they should not become homeless if their temporary accommodation contract expires. Thus, not all factors are taken into account in the Netherlands.⁴¹ In Sweden, factors such as the municipality's labour market conditions, population size, total reception of new arrivals and unaccompanied children and the extent of asylum seekers staying in the municipality are all taken into account.⁴²



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

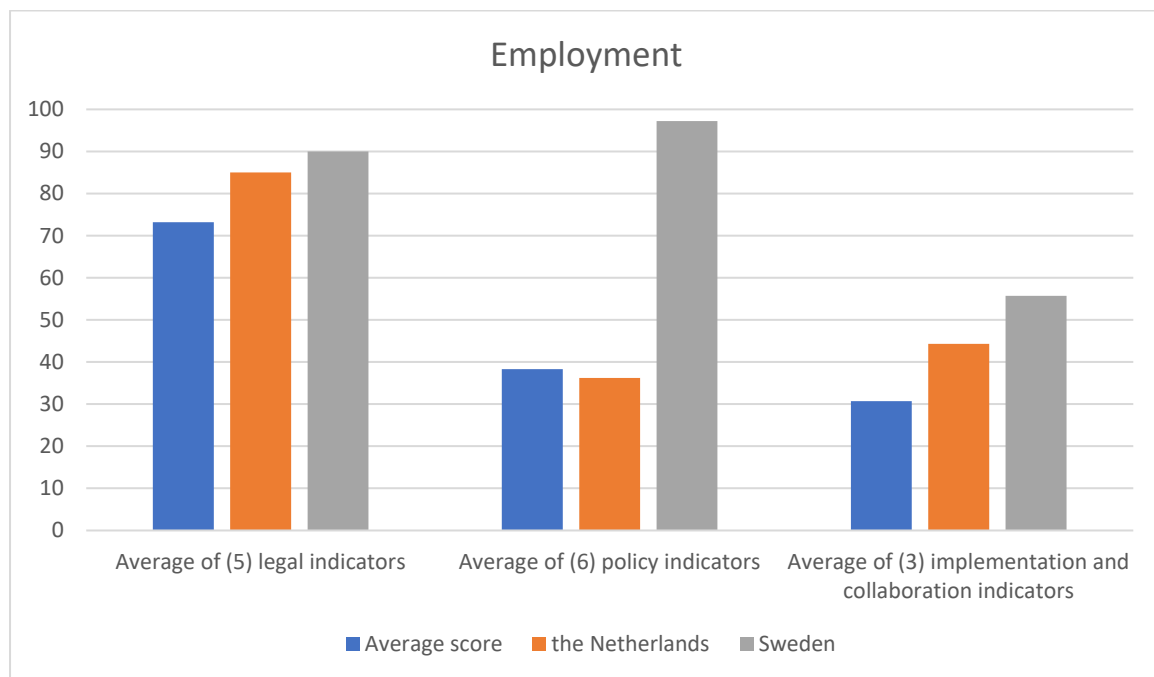
⁴⁰ Act (2016:38) on the reception of certain newly arrived immigrants for residence, and Act (2010:197) on establishment initiatives for certain newly arrived immigrants.

⁴¹ See: <https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/feiten-cijfers/procedures-wetten-beleid/huisvesting#>.

⁴² Section 7 Act (2016:38) on the reception of certain newly arrived immigrants for residence.

In the Netherlands, the national government coordinates with regional and local authorities to support BIPs, as well as to provide means to adequately address their housing needs. The government provides financial means to municipalities according to the number of BIPs they take in. However, these funds are not per se meant for housing, but for integration and participation in general.⁴³

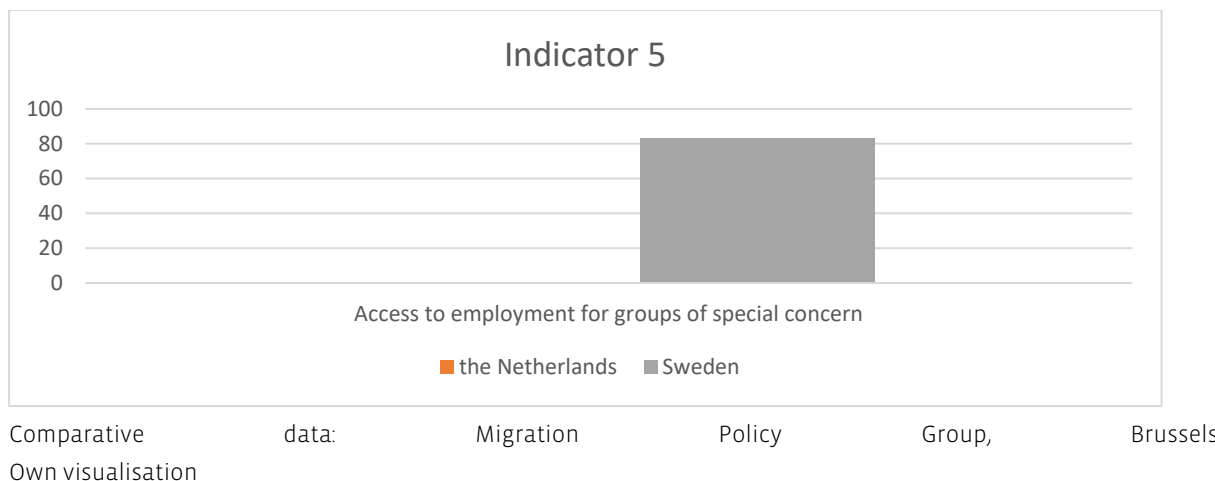
3.2.6. Employment



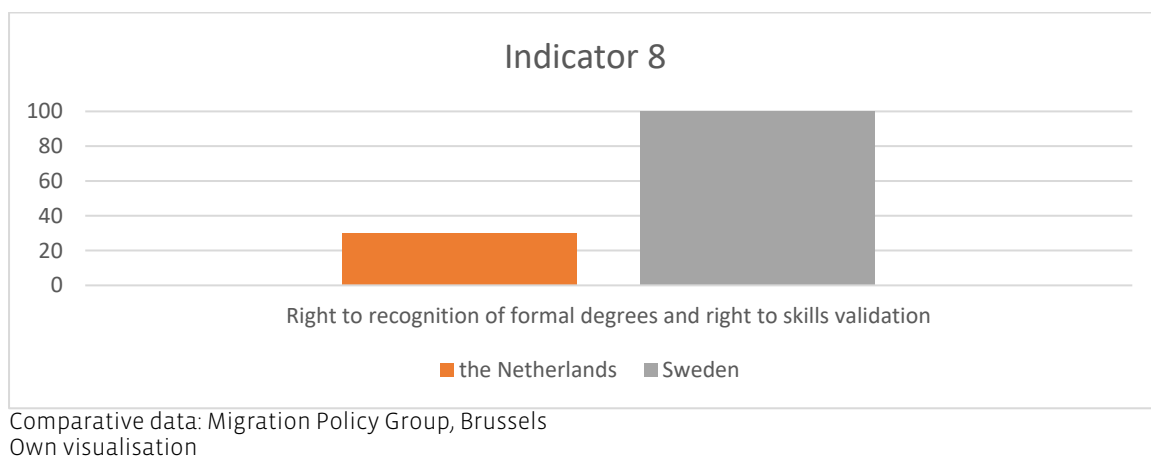
Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

Sweden comes out on top in all of the indicators, almost scoring the maximum in the policy indicators, whilst the Netherlands fails to score above average. In the legal indicators and the implementation and collaboration indicators, both countries perform better than average. Let us now take a look at three employment indicators. Again, the choice has been made to look into some of the indicators where the differences between the two countries are the biggest. Therefore, indicators 5, 8 and 11 are singled out.

⁴³ See: <https://vng.nl/persberichten/kabinet-en-gemeenten-maken-afspraken-over-participatie-vergunninghouders>.



Indicator 5 questions whether groups of special concern receiving international protection are targeted by employment policies, such as identification as a vulnerable group that is eligible for mainstream employment services, as well as targeted employment support especially adapted for this specific group. The Netherlands does not operate with target group policies, which explains why the Netherlands did not score any points. In Sweden, however, legislation provides for introduction programs for beneficiaries of international protection.⁴⁴

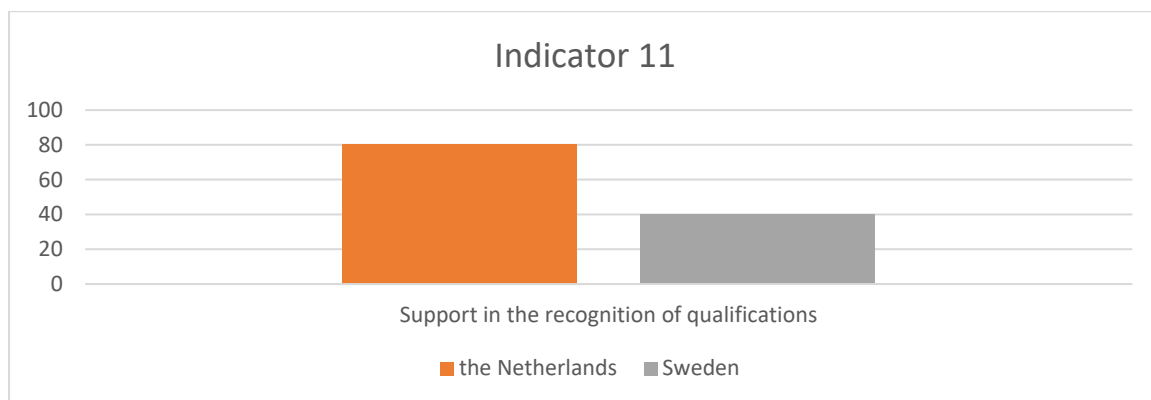


In the Netherlands, recognition of qualifications is offered for free as part of the civic integration programme.⁴⁵ However, this is only available for BIPs. Asylum seekers and others can apply but have to pay themselves. The recognition of skills is not facilitated. In Sweden, a system of recognition of qualifications and skills validation exists and is widely practiced, but is not established by law nor phrased as a right for the BIP.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Section 7 Act (2010:197) on establishment initiatives for certain newly arrived immigrants.

⁴⁵ See: <https://www.idw.nl/nl/inburgering.html>.

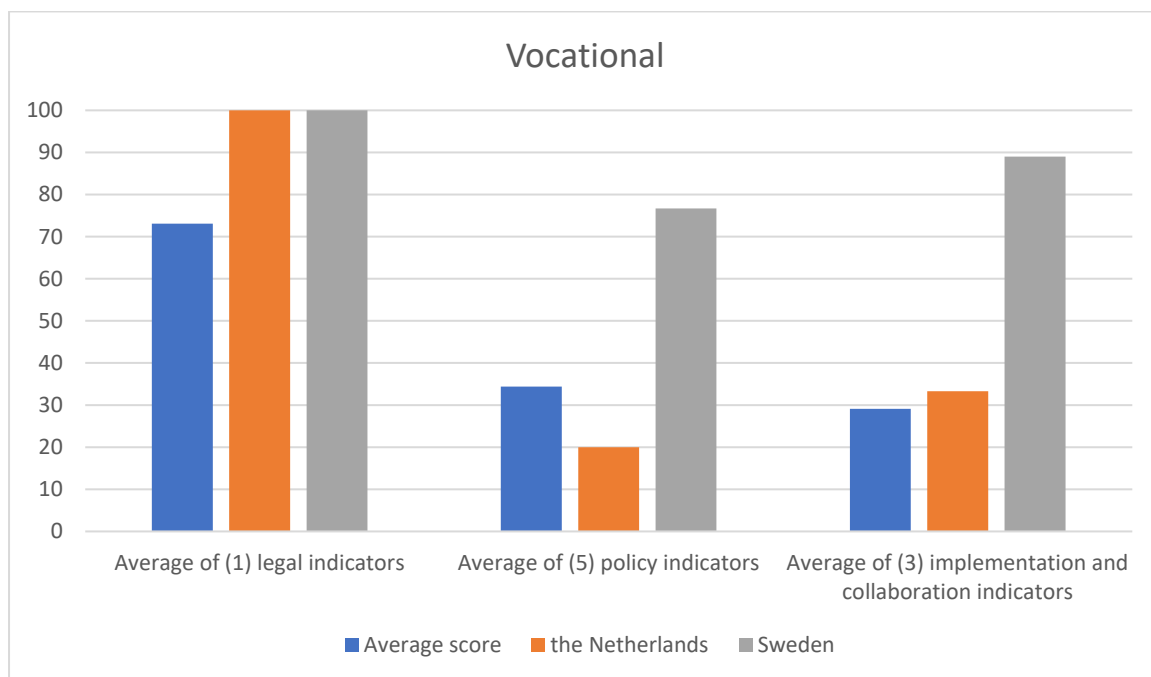
⁴⁶ See: <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/recognition-of-foreign-qualifications/>.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

Concerning the “Support in the recognition of qualifications”, the Netherlands provides more support than Sweden. Indeed, all newcomers who are obliged to participate in civic integration programme are entitled to a free credentials evaluation, financed by the government. Translation costs are also included in the procedure. If official documents are not available, recognition can still be granted although a note is made that written evidence for the attained level could not be shown.⁴⁷ This is not the case in Sweden, as only universities, the employment service and liberal professional organisations conduct assessments of skills for diplomas etc.⁴⁸

3.2.7. Vocational

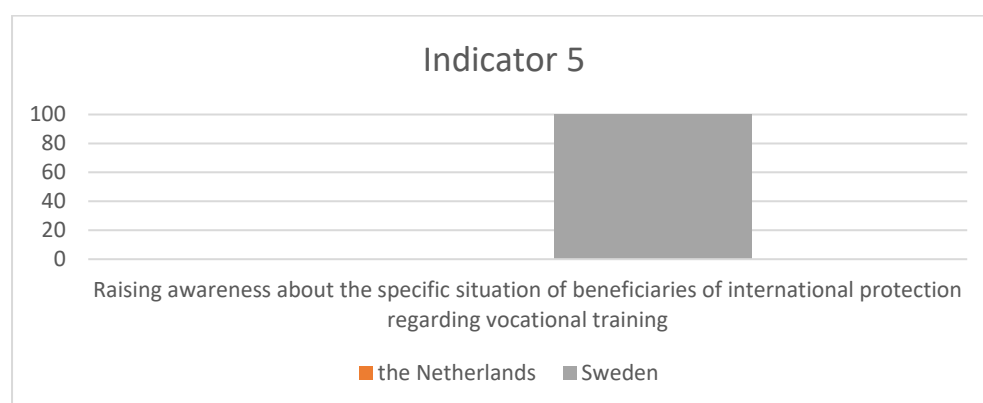


Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

⁴⁷ De Lange T. *et al*, “Van azc naar een baan”, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2017, p. 81.

⁴⁸ See: www.valideringsinfo.se.

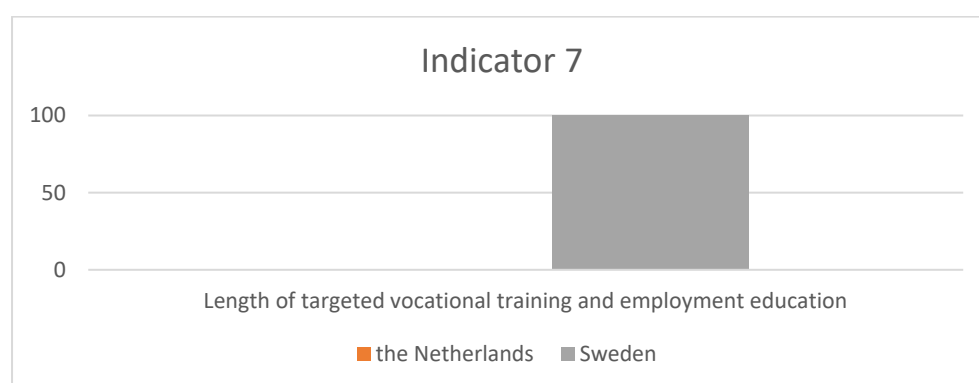
Again, the Netherlands and Sweden both score maximum points for the legal indicators, while Sweden outperforms the Netherlands for the policy indicators, as well as the implementation and collaboration indicators. The Netherlands fails to score above average for the former, but scores slightly better than average for the latter. Looking at the individual vocational indicators, three are singled out: indicators 5, 7 and 9. The difference between the two countries is large and thus it may not come as a surprise that the scores on these indicators are very divergent.



Comparative data:

Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

Indicator 5 questions to what extent awareness is raised about the specific situation of BIPs regarding vocational training. In the Netherlands, no specific measures are taken to raise awareness. In Sweden, however, the situation is very different as education and vocational are very much encouraged during the introduction program.⁴⁹

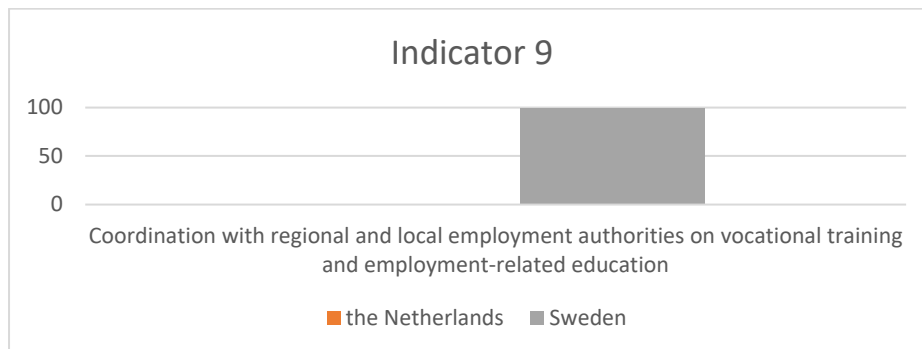


Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

As regards indicator 7 concerning the “Length of the targeted vocational training and employment education”, in the Netherlands BIPs cannot benefit from targeted vocational

⁴⁹ See: <https://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/Om-oss/Om-Arbetsformedlingen/Etablering-av-nyanlanda/Insatser-for-nyanlanda.html>.

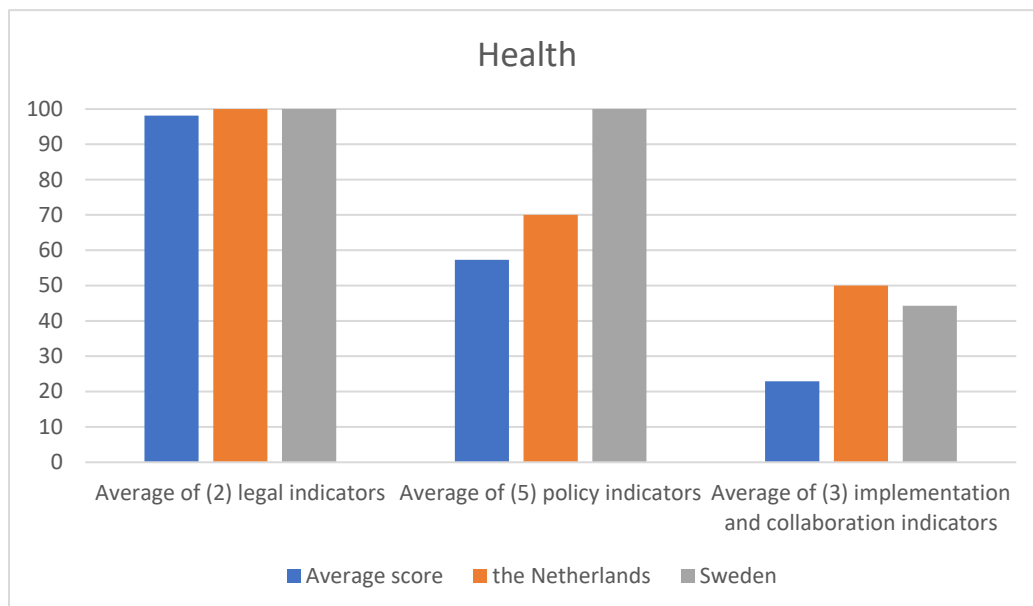
training at all. When it comes to targeted education and vocational training in Sweden, no specific time limits apply, but a special introduction benefit is given to encourage participation.⁵⁰



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

In the Netherlands, the national government does not coordinate with regional or local employment authorities on vocational training and employment-related education of BIPs. On the contrary, in Sweden, the government does coordinate with employment services and individuals are encouraged to enrol in vocational training.⁵¹

3.2.8. Health

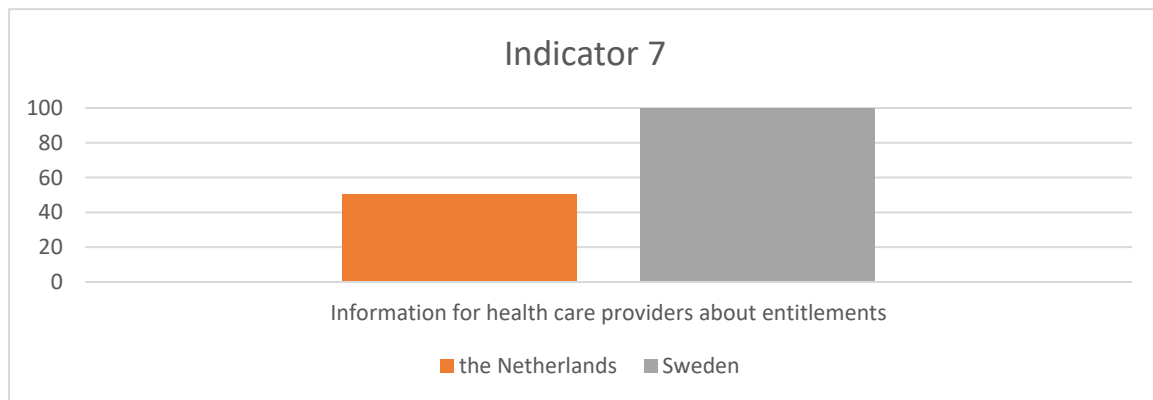


Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

⁵⁰ See: <https://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/Om-oss/Om-Arbetsformedlingen/Etablering-av-nyanlanda/Insatser-for-nyanlanda.html>.

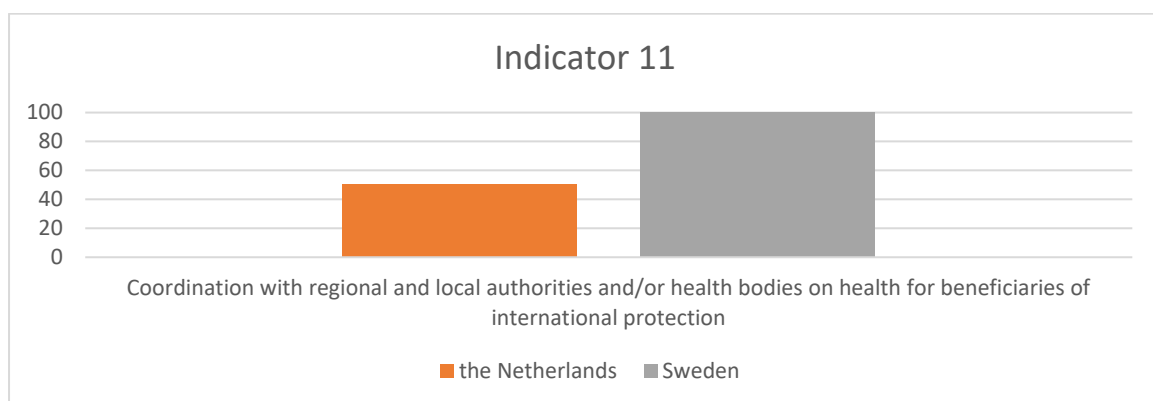
⁵¹ See: <https://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/Om-oss/Om-Arbetsformedlingen/Etablering-av-nyanlanda/Insatser-for-nyanlanda.html>.

The Netherlands and Sweden both score maximum points for the legal indicators, but the average is also very close to the maximum. Sweden also scores maximum points for the policy indicators, which is 30 points more than the Netherlands. As regards the collaboration indicators, the Netherlands scores better than Sweden. Again, the indicators that are most remarkable are analysed more in detail. These are indicators 7 and 11.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

As regards the measures taken to raise awareness for the specific health care needs of BIPs, in the Netherlands, the employees of GCA (i.e. the organisation providing health care to asylum seekers) follow a training course. In addition, a website informs GPs about the health needs of migrants, and health care providers receive information on their entitlements from Pharos^{52, 53}. In Sweden, each region has coordinators who receive regular information on the entitlements of BIPs. However, how they receive information may vary from region to region. Furthermore, the National Board of Health and Welfare reported that the need exists to develop and invest in training of staff.⁵⁴ The difference between the two countries therefore lies in the origin of the information. Whereas this is decentralised in the Netherlands, it is more centralised in Sweden.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

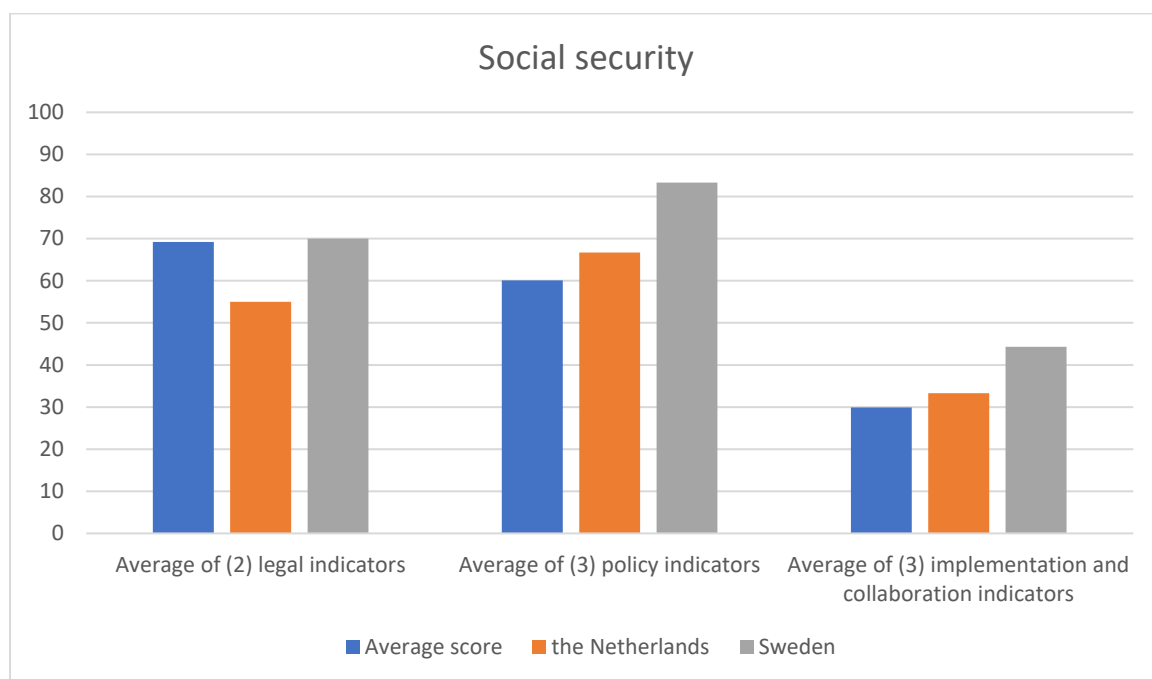
⁵² See: <https://www.pharos.nl/>.

⁵³ See: www.huisarts-migrant.nl.

⁵⁴ See: <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2016-10-13.pdf>.

Indicator 11 concerns the coordination of the national government with regional and local authorities and/or health bodies to support them in dealing with the health needs of BIPs and addressing their health needs. In the Netherlands, the competent ministry funds Pharos, which distributes the information on health needs. Yet Pharos identified that so-called *wijkteams* do not have enough knowledge about the current BIPs groups, while health professionals feel that they need more training to deal with their health needs. In Sweden, the national government provides each county and municipality with financial means, but the costs for health care of beneficiaries of international protection should be covered with the ordinary budget for health care.⁵⁵

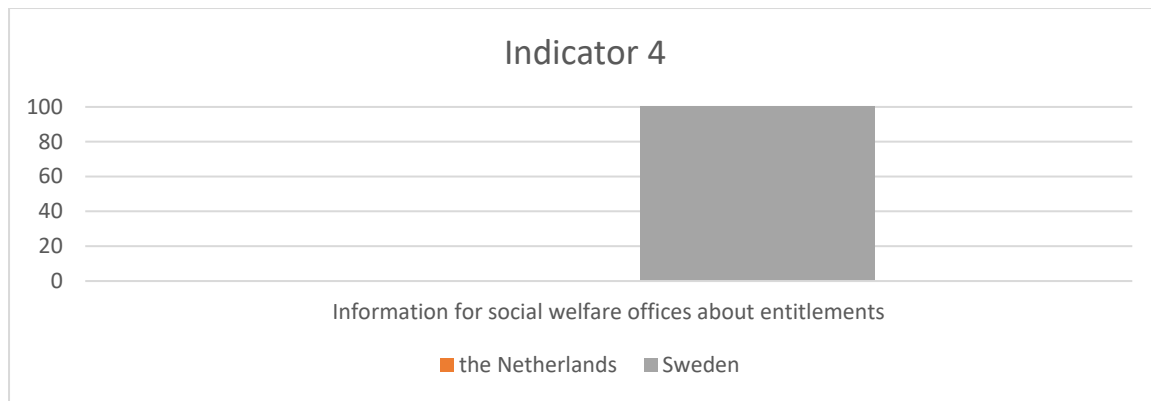
3.2.9. Social security



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

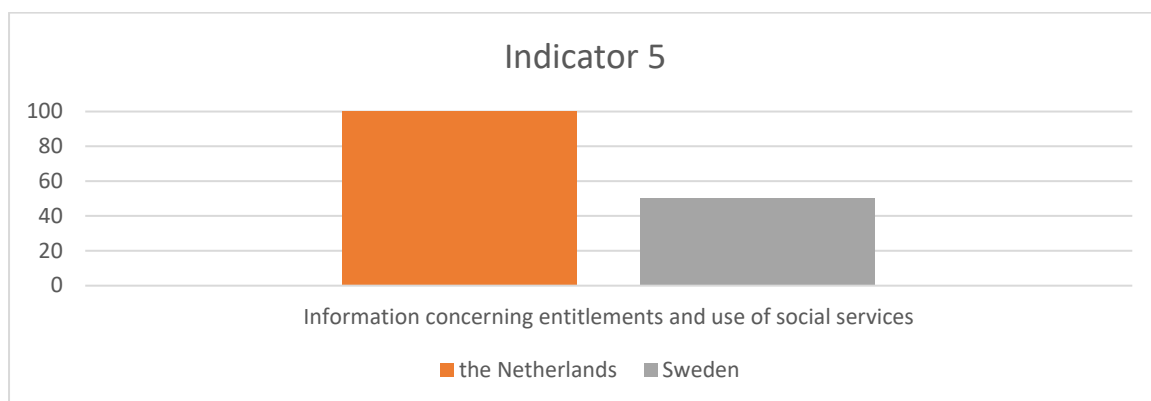
The Netherlands fails to score better than average for the legal indicators, while Sweden only barely manages to do so. Both countries then perform better than average for the policy indicators and the implementation and collaboration indicators, with Sweden each time scoring better than the Netherlands. This time, only two indicators are singled out. This can be explained by the fact that there is only a small margin between the overall score of the two countries for these indicators. The two indicators concerned are indicators 4 and 5, the only two where there is a substantial difference.

⁵⁵ Act (2008:344) on health and medical care for asylum seekers and others.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

In the Netherlands, no structural information is provided in order to raise awareness for the specific entitlements of BIPs. However, there is awareness within the municipalities of the difficulties they face in their (re-)integration into the labour market. In Sweden, on the contrary, the national Social Insurance Agency offers presentation material informing about the entitlements and benefits for BIPs.⁵⁶



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

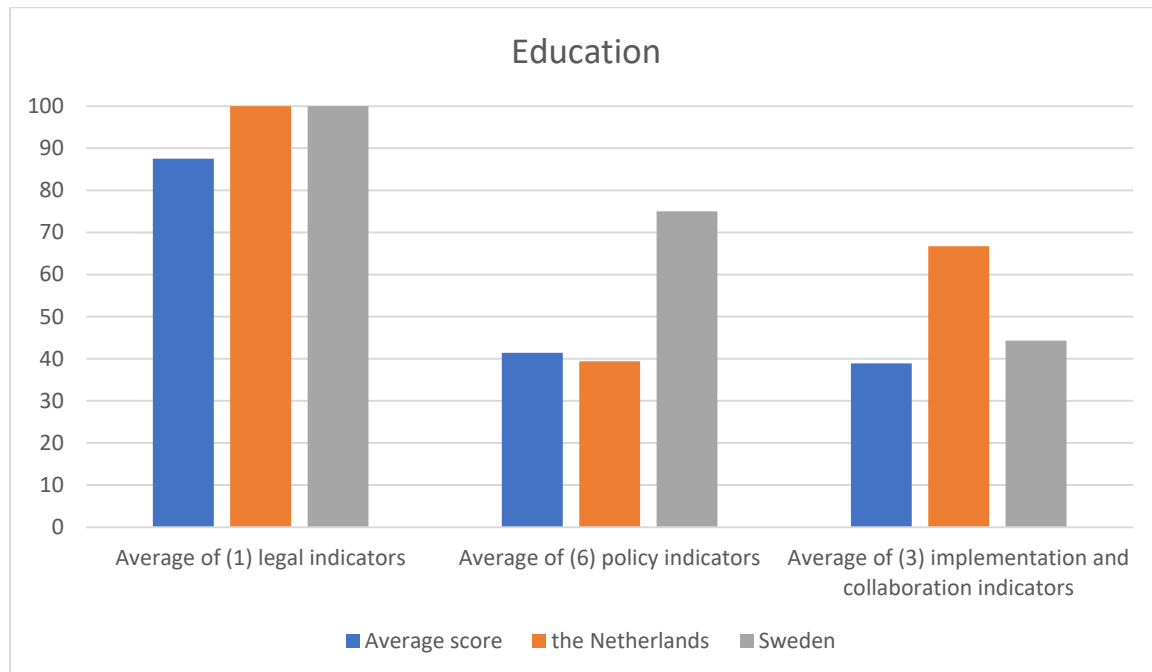
Indicator 5 questions to what extent information is provided to BIPs concerning their entitlements to and use of social services. In the Netherlands, this information is systematically provided during face-to-face intake conversations with the municipality. However, research shows that BIPs are often still not aware of the subsidies available for day-care costs.⁵⁷ In

⁵⁶ See: https://www.forsakringskassan.se/privatpers/flytta-till-arbeta-studera-eller-nyanland-i-sverige/nyanland-i-sverige/lut/p/z1/tVNNc5swEPo1PmItCALohI3XlJSGlKYOBgwC1YNgggZ6n9fkcmlncaeTiY66PPt7tO-XZKSR5LyfGR1LlnH8oadk_QmcyLf9AMwOghDHTzqOnroxaaeb5MfICVpv2cISVxqm1VVUA3RtTVznhwDDcoocA8l5GZZwozec9nLAon2HZfI5YCZWKHv-MBGXEAv2lJLHsWwgKosS5lnkiVNlosC1R6bBkU2vFOJIsqYNowoWK3s-DnnTc5LjWkvd2T3TBseGZ4ic_lvu5ntDDEgXK1oD5wYHPjs-u7mk2tsow29AjCsF8AIDs8Ao_-41rdruL37aprgPay2tzGskDWtwvHOLLrg3Uc6Ne-MlIiBBCStjsv2zEtWH1CiWB67tj1xFLN8Hi-oU5NUYIVCvZ2EUvUgZT98WMACpmla1l1XN7gcVBb_ZXHoBkke_wCSGDlIVHrtV_MX3ZDdyHAiD7wTrSql-D8rxYdrEegbl1x2b8H7ujfe6D64Vr5KSvbz6Sn1VMvNrfZLqfjuPde3rUPP2vHbpggIVZhIME7T96pdF8687H4DzrPdEA!!/?1dmy&urile=wcm%3apath%3a%2Fcontentse_responsive%2Fprivatpers%2Fflytta_till_arbeta_eller_studera_i_sverig e%2Fnyanland-i-sverige%2Fasylsokande_i_sverige

⁵⁷ De Lange T. *et al*, "Van azc naar een baan", Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2017, p. 87.

Sweden, this kind of information is provided through social orientation and other complementary material, such as the handbook about Sweden.⁵⁸

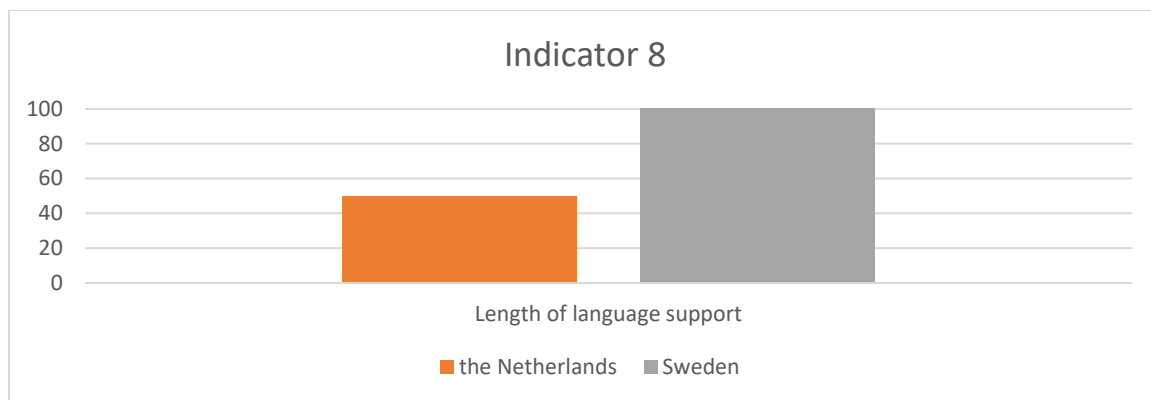
3.2.10. Education



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

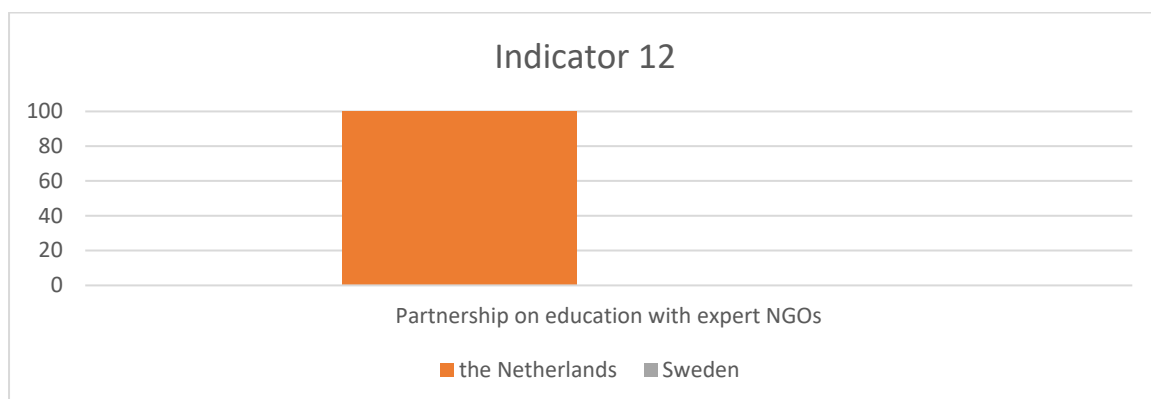
The Netherlands and Sweden again manage to score the maximum of points for the legal indicators. As regards the policy indicators, the Netherlands fails to perform better than average, while Sweden outperforms the Netherlands by almost 40 points. The Netherlands scores significantly better than Sweden and the average for the implementation and collaboration indicators. Two indicators are examined more in detail. These two indicators are, again, the indicators where the difference between the two countries is the biggest. The indicators concerned are indicators 8 and 12.

⁵⁸ See: <https://www.informationsverige.se/sv/jag-arbetar-med-malgruppen/samhallsorientering/boken-om-sverige/>



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

Children of BIPs in the Netherlands benefit from financial support from the government for up to two years. The funding is not only aimed at language learning. In primary education, children first receive language classes before going to regular classes. In secondary education, children of BIPs can attend international *schakelklassen*.⁵⁹ In Sweden, the municipalities offer education and pay for this. All children receive language training as a second language, and since 2015 additional state funds are available for extra language education.⁶⁰



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

In the Netherlands, the government continuously provides means for expert NGOs to help these children to receive adequate education support; e.g. LOWAN⁶¹ assesses the educational level and provides support to primary and secondary schools, UAF⁶² supports students in vocational and higher education, Stichting Tussenspel⁶³ helps students deal with trauma. In

⁵⁹ De Kinderombudsman, “Wachten op je toekomst”, KOM008/2016, 24 February 2016, pp. 23-28.

⁶⁰ See: <https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/kallsidor/bedomningsstod-for-nyanlanda-elever>.

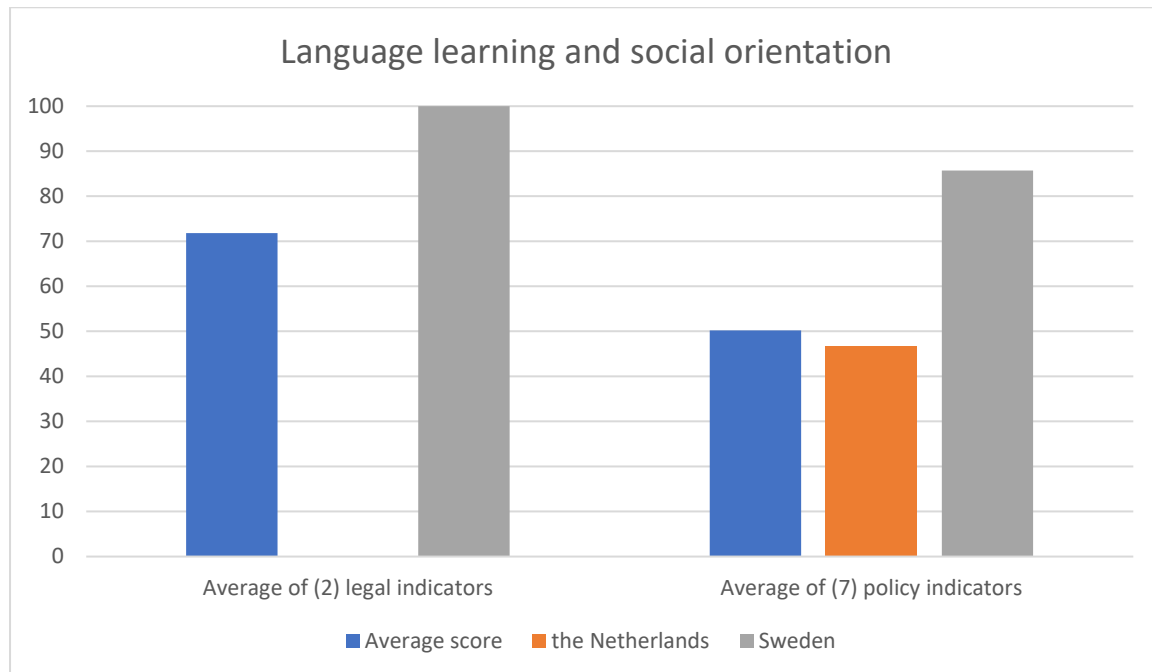
⁶¹ See: <https://www.lowan.nl/>.

⁶² See: <https://www.uaf.nl/>.

⁶³ See: <http://www.tussenspel.nl/pg-23842-7-32814/pagina/home.html>.

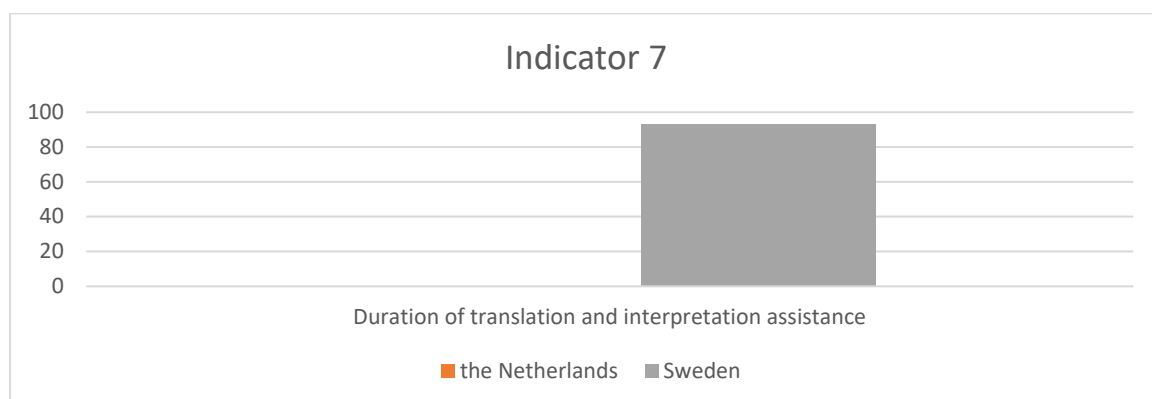
Sweden, NGOs only play a very marginal role, because they are seen as complementary to public services, not as a provider of these services.⁶⁴

3.2.11. Language learning and social orientation



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

The Netherlands fails to score any points in the legal indicators, while Sweden scores the maximum. The Netherlands also fails to score better than average for the policy indicators. Out of the 18 language indicators, two are examined more closely. These are indicators 7 and 13.

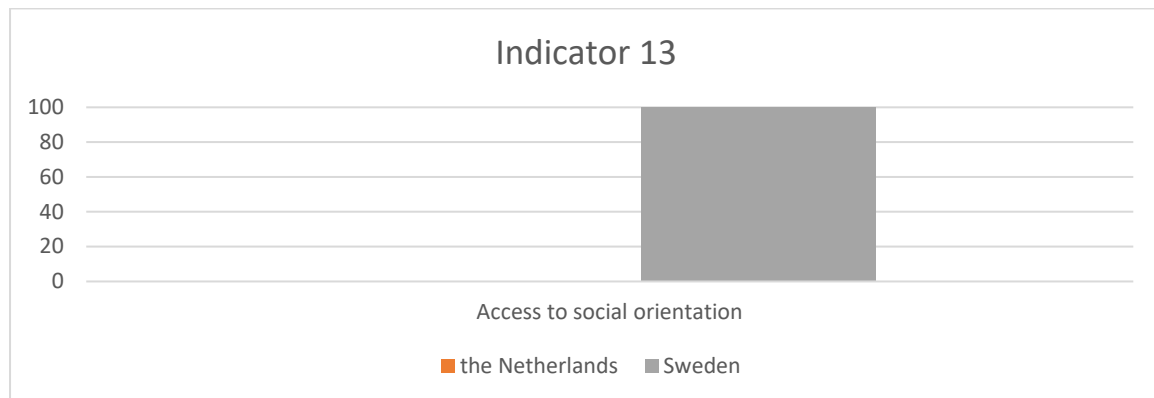


Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

The approaches in the Netherlands and Sweden are two opposites. On the one hand, the Netherlands does not provide translation and interpretation assistance at all. The COA pays for interpretation services of asylum seekers, but after their claim is granted, publicly funded

⁶⁴ See: <https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/inspiration-och-stod-i-arbetet/stod-i-arbetet/undervisninganlanda-elever>.

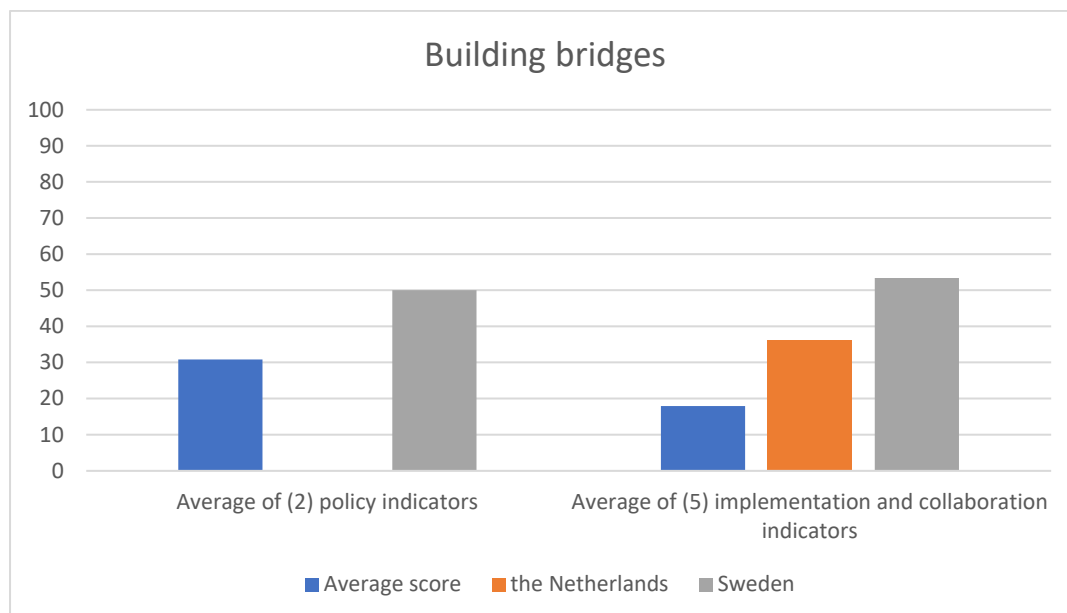
services are not available anymore. On the other hand, access to an interpreter in Sweden is free of charge, it is a right that is based on the principle that every person should be able to make themselves heard and freely express themselves in the encounter with representatives of different authorities.⁶⁵



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

Again, a stark difference in approaches must be noted. In the Netherlands, social orientation is part of the civic integration exam, which means that participation is not free, nor voluntary. In Sweden, social orientation courses are free and no further obligations are attached.⁶⁶

3.2.12. Building bridges

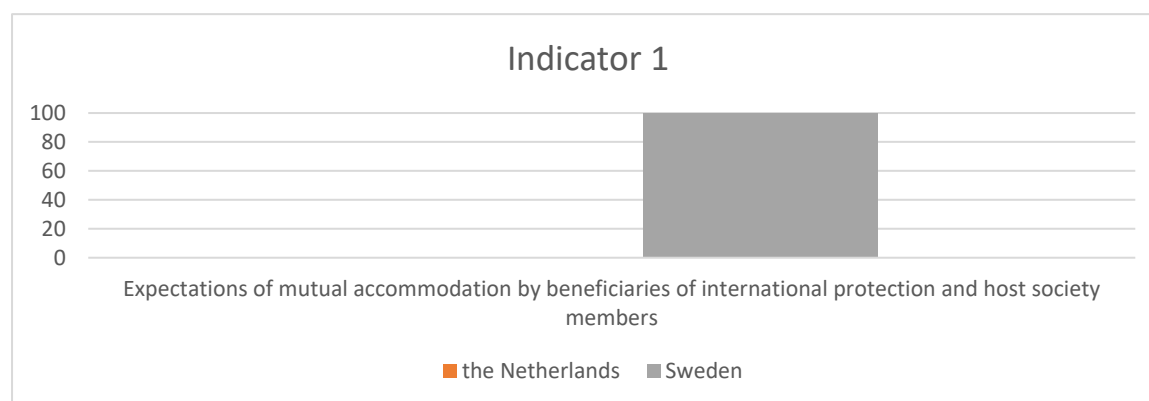


Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

⁶⁵ See: http://www.tolkprojektet.se/Report_English.pdf.

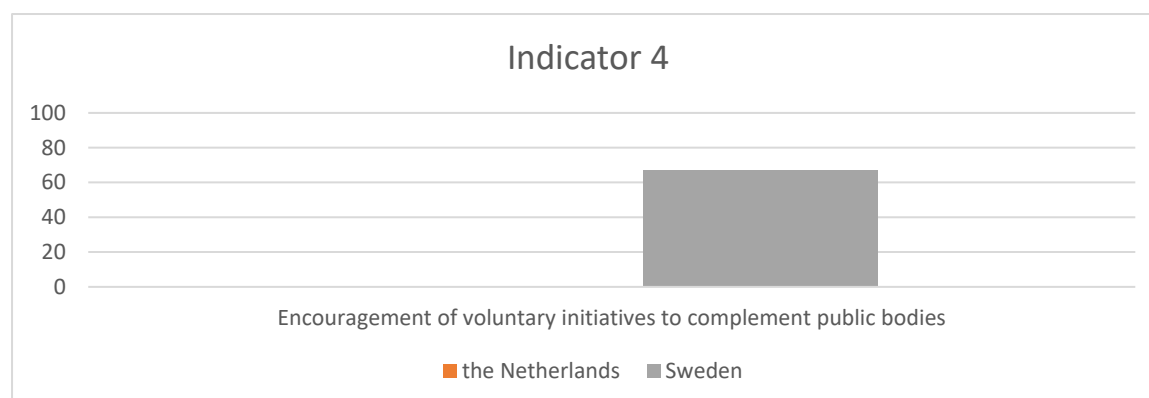
⁶⁶ Section 7 Act (2010:197) on establishment initiatives for certain newly arrived immigrants.

The Netherlands this time fails to score any points for the policy indicators, while scoring better than average, but worse than Sweden for the implementation and collaboration indicators. Given that the Netherlands performs poorly on the overall scores for the building bridges indicators, it may not come as a surprise that Sweden scores better than the Netherlands on the three indicators that are singled out. These are indicators 1, 4 and 7.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

As far as the role of the receiving society is concerned in the Netherlands, it must be noted that the role of the Dutch society is not defined. Integration is the own responsibility of the newcomers. However, in Sweden, the strategy expects the receiving society to be actively involved and to accommodate newcomers.⁶⁷

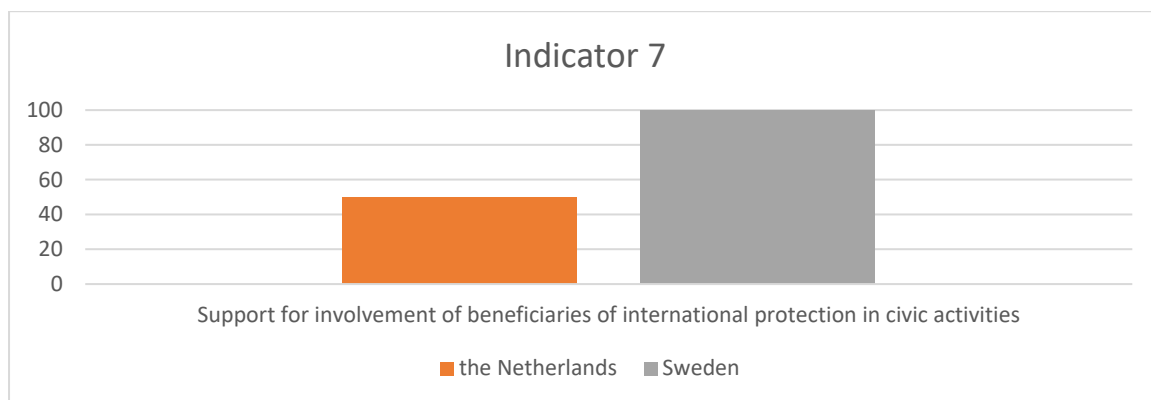


Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

The Dutch government does not support voluntary initiatives to complement public bodies. Rather, the responsibility is attributed to the municipalities, who often outsource this. In Sweden, the involvement of civil society and voluntary initiatives played an important role, but the practice has not been standardised.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ See: <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2009/12/prop-20091055/>.

⁶⁸ See: <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2009/12/prop-20091055/>.



Comparative data: Migration Policy Group, Brussels
Own visualisation

In the Netherlands, the governmental policy aims to encourage BIPs to carry out volunteer work as an introduction into the Dutch society, and as a possible first step towards paid employment. However, organisations first need to receive permission from the UWV⁶⁹ before voluntary work can be carried out.⁷⁰ In Sweden, the different municipalities cooperate differently in giving information on their rights and possibilities to join such activities.⁷¹

⁶⁹ See: <https://www.uwv.nl/particulieren/>.

⁷⁰ De Lange T. *et al*, “Van azc naar een baan”, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2017, pp. 25-31.

⁷¹ See: <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2009/12/prop-20091055/>.

4. Concluding remarks

This National Evaluation Report builds on the National Baseline Report that was published in 2018. This report is based on the results of Evaluation 1 of the NIEM indicators. As its name suggests, the current report evaluates the Dutch integration policy and discusses the policy changes that were implemented in the Netherlands between 2017 and 2019. This is the first of two evaluation reports, a second will be published in 2022 after Evaluation 2 has been completed.

As this report has shown, there have not been many major policy changes in the Netherlands. For the BIPs themselves, the most important developments are the provision of social counselling by their municipality, the introduction of a participation statement to conclude their integration trajectory and the continuation of integration activities in reception centres. This explains why no (positive or negative) changes in terms of scoring on the indicators have been reported for the Dutch integration policy.

Looking at the comparison between the Netherlands and Sweden, it becomes clear that the Netherlands is still lagging behind Sweden on most policy dimensions, as well as on the specific indicators. The examination of these indicators shows that there is a stark contrast between the Dutch and Swedish integration policies. In the Netherlands, on the one hand, the emphasis is put on the own responsibility of the BIPs, while the role played and funding provided by the government has diminished in recent years. In Sweden, on the other hand, most services such as integration courses are funded by the government and are provided free of charge. There, integration is seen as a collective effort of the society, while it is an individual effort of the BIPs in the Netherlands. These divergent approaches (at least partially) account for the difference in the scores of both countries.

However, the Dutch integration policy has been the centre of debate for many years already, ever since its introduction in 2013. This report has exemplified the many challenges that impede the effective integration of BIPs in the Netherlands. With the introduction of a new integration policy, which is expected to enter into force in 2022, the Dutch government intends to reform the current system and improve the integration of BIPs. As such, the municipalities will have a stronger role to play, while the (expensive) loans-system for financing integration classes will be abolished and more attention will be paid to the individual integration trajectory. However, because the new legislation will only enter into force on the 1st of January 2022, it will not be possible to examine its effects in the second National Evaluation Report.

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6. Appendix: NIEM indicators

The following shows the indicators used for scoring for each framework.

Impact of reception on integration	
Conditions for asylum seekers in selected indicators across five dimensions: employment, vocational training and employment-related education, education, health, language learning; social orientation.	
Legal framework	
Residency	Type and duration of residence permit upon recognition
	Renewal of residence permit
	Residency requirement for granting permanent/long-term residence
	Facilitated conditions for permanent/long-term residence
	Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for permanent/long-term residence
Family Reunification	Family unity and legal status of family members
	Definition of family unit for family reunification
	Residency requirement for family reunification
	Economic resource requirement for family reunification
	Housing requirement for family reunification
	Health insurance requirement for family reunification
	Language assessment for family reunification
	Requirement to comply with integration measures for family reunification
	Time limit for facilitated requirements for family reunification
	Documents from country of origin to verify family links
	DNA/age tests to verify family links
	Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for family reunification
	Expedited length of procedure for family reunification
	Status of family members
	Autonomous residence permits for family members
	Access to services for family members
Citizenship	Facilitated residence requirement for naturalization
	Period of residence requirement for naturalization
	Economic resource requirement for naturalization
	Language assessment for naturalization
	'Integration'/citizenship assessment for naturalization
	Criminal record requirement for naturalization

	Documents from country of origin for naturalization
	Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for naturalization
	Naturalization by entitlement for second generation
	Expedited length of procedure
Housing	Free movement and choice of residence within the country
	Access to housing and housing benefits
	Access to property rights
Employment	Access to employment
	Access to self-employment
	Right to same recognition of formal degrees and right to skills validation for BIPs
	Right to same recognition procedures as nationals
	Support in the recognition of foreign diplomas, certificates, and other formal qualifications
Vocational training and education	Access to mainstream vocational training and employment-related education
Health	Procedure to identify special health-related reception needs
	Inclusion in a system of health care coverage
	Extent of health coverage
Social security	Inclusion in a system of social security
	Extent of entitlement to social benefits
Education	Access to education
Language learning and social orientation	Access to publicly funded host language learning
	Access to publicly funded social orientation
Policy framework	
Residency	Administrative barriers to permanent/long-term residence
	Fees and costs for obtaining permanent/long-term residence
Family reunification	Family tracing services
	Fees and costs for family reunification
Citizenship	Fees and costs for naturalization
Housing	Access to housing for vulnerable persons
	Provision of targeted temporary housing support
	Provision of long-term housing support
	Administrative barriers to accessing public housing
	Housing quality assessment when allocating in-kind support

	Targeted housing advice, counselling, representation
	Raising awareness about the specific challenges of BIPs on the housing market
Employment	Job-seeking counselling and positive action
	Access to employment for groups of special concern
	Assessment of professional education and skills
	Administrative barriers to accessing employment
	Raising awareness about the specific situation of BIPs on the labor market
	Targeted support for entrepreneurs
Vocational training and education	Access to vocational training and employment-related education for groups of special concern
	Administrative barriers to accessing vocational training
	Raising awareness about the specific situation of BIPs regarding vocational training
	Accessibility of vocational training and other employment-related education measures
	Length of targeted vocational training and employment education
Health	Access to health care for special needs
	Administrative barriers to obtaining entitlement to health care
	Information for health care providers about entitlements
	Information concerning entitlements and the use of health services
	Availability of free interpretation services
Social security	Administrative barriers to obtaining entitlement to social benefits
	Information for social welfare offices about entitlements
	Information concerning entitlements and the use of social services
Education	Access to education for groups of special concern
	Administrative barriers to education
	Placement in the compulsory school system
	Regularity of orientation and language programs and targeted education measures
	Length of language support
	Raising awareness about the BIP's specific situation regarding education
Language learning and social orientation	Quality of language courses
	Duration of host language learning
	Administrative barriers to host language learning

	Duration of translation and interpretation assistance
	Quality of social orientation courses
	Provision of social orientation for groups of special concern
	Administrative barriers to social orientation
Building bridges	Expectations of mutual accommodation by BIPs and host society members
	Raising awareness of the specific situation of BIPs
Implementation and collaboration	
Mainstreaming	National strategy for the integration of BIPs
	Commitments in the national strategy for the integration of BIPs
	Monitoring and review of policies for the integration of BIPs
Housing	Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into housing policies
	Coordination with regional and local authorities on housing for BIPs
	Partnership on housing with expert NGOs
Employment	Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into employment policies
	Coordination with regional and local authorities on employment for BIPs
	Partnership on employment with expert NGOs or non-profit employment support organizations
Vocational training and education	Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into vocational training and employment-related education policies
	Coordination with regional and local authorities on vocational training for BIPs
	Partnership on vocational training and employment-related education with expert NGOs and non-profit adult education organizations
Health	Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into health care
	Coordination with regional and local authorities and/or health bodies on health care for BIPs
	Partnership on health care with expert NGOs
Social security	Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into the social security system
	Coordination with regional and local authorities and/or welfare bodies on social security for BIPs
	Partnership on poverty relief with expert NGOs
Education	Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of children and youth under international protection into education policies

	Coordination with regional and/or local education authorities and school boards on education for children and youth under international protection
	Partnership on education with expert NGOs
Building bridges	Coordination with regional and local authorities on social cohesion
	Encouragement of voluntary initiatives to complement public policies
	Support for the involvement of BIPs in civic activities
	Involvement in national consultation processes
	Involvement in local consultation processes



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Safe harbour

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