

Country: Netherlands

Committee: UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)

Agenda Item: Practicing Freedom of Religion with a Special Emphasis on Forciable Imposition of Religion on Young Children

The Netherlands is a West European country with a population of about 17 million. It is generally accepted that the Netherlands has a cosmopolitan nature. The population of the Netherlands is made up of many people from different cultures and beliefs, many speaking different languages. More than half of Dutch people are not religious. In 2022, 20 percent of the Dutch population belonged to the Catholic Church, 14 percent were Protestant, 5 percent Muslim and 5 percent belonged to another religious group. As a result of this diversity of religion, there can be private religious education providers such as Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim schools. In the sixteenth century, the Netherlands declared its independence from Spain. Since 1814, the Netherlands has been a constitutional monarchy. Willem-Alexander is the current King of the Netherlands. The Netherlands has the EU's fifth-largest economy. The sources of the economy in the Netherlands are oil and natural gas, engineering products, agriculture, electronic equipment, and machinery. Since 1945, The Netherlands has become a member of the United Nations and many other international organizations.

According to Article 18 of the Human Rights; Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change religion or belief, to manifest religion or belief in practice, worship, and observance. However, the principle of freedom of religion cannot be applied in the same way in every country. Many people are oppressed and discriminated against because of their religion. Sometimes, especially the freedom of children to manifest and choose the religion of their own free will is taken away by society, school, state, or most of them by the child's own family. About one-third of the world's nations, accounting for almost 70 percent of the global population, lack religious freedom, according to a new survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Among all regions, Middle East-North Africa has the highest government and social restrictions on religion. Also; under the guise of religion, marriage or circumcision of girls at a young age is abuse and unacceptable.

The Netherlands believes that the belief to be taught in religion class should be optional, except for schools that provide special religious education. At least one psychologist should be appointed to counsel psychologically damaged children in each school, and these appointments should be followed with precision in line with an inter-state agreement. As it is known, since parents have an indisputable influence on their children's religion, psychological support alone will not be sufficient for children under religious pressure. Families of children who receive psychological support about religious oppression should also benefit from the same support. Also, religion is not a way to describe a person. For this reason, an update should be made to remove the expression of religion from the identity cards of citizens.