



AOW pension for people living outside the Netherlands

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In the Netherlands, people who reach pension age are awarded a basic state pension (AOW pension). People living outside the Netherlands who have lived or worked in the Netherlands at some point can also receive an AOW pension. How this works is explained in this information brochure.

What is AOW pension?

In the Netherlands, there are three kinds of pensions for people who retire:

- statutory pensions for the whole population (AOW pension);
- company pensions for employees;
- private pensions.

The pension paid under the National Old Age Pensions Act (AOW) is a basic pension from the Dutch state. The AOW pension scheme covers everyone who lives in the Netherlands. People outside the Netherlands who have lived or worked in the Netherlands at some point may also qualify for an AOW pension, though at a reduced rate.

Supplementary allowance

If you are married or living with a partner under the AOW pension age, you may be entitled to a supplementary allowance for your partner. The amount of this supplementary allowance will depend on your partner's personal income.

Who is the AOW pension scheme for?

The AOW scheme covers everyone who has lived in the Netherlands at some point. Regardless what nationality you have and whether or not you actually worked or paid social insurance contributions here, your period of residence in the Netherlands entitles you to a partial AOW pension. If you have never lived in the Netherlands, but you have worked and paid wage tax in the Netherlands at some point, you may qualify for an AOW pension too.

There are different pension rates for:

- single persons;
- married persons;
- unmarried persons who are living with someone.

Living with someone

You are considered to be living with someone if you are sharing a household and share the costs, or if you care for each other in some way. This other person could be your partner, but also your friend, house mate, or brother or sister. If you are living with your child, you are treated as a single person under the terms of the AOW pension scheme. For more information, go to www.svb.nl/aow.

Features of the AOW pension scheme

In some ways, the AOW pension scheme is different from pension schemes in other countries. The following is important to bear in mind:

- AOW pensions are based on an insurance scheme which provides 2% of the full pension amount for each year of insurance. This rule applies to everyone, regardless of their profession or the type of work they do. AOW pensions are paid to housewives and paid workers alike.
- Your AOW pension will become payable on the date you reach the AOW pension age. Your AOW pension age depends on your date of birth. You can check your AOW pension age at www.svb.nl/aowleeftijd.
- It is not possible to receive an AOW pension before you reach the AOW pension age.
- If you have only lived in the Netherlands and accrued AOW pension rights for a short time, you cannot cash in your period of AOW insurance in a lump sum payment. If your pension is small, however, you can opt for payment on a quarterly or annual basis instead of a monthly basis, thus saving on bank charges.
- If you continue working after you have started receiving an AOW pension, or you receive other pensions or benefits from the Netherlands or from the country where you live, these sources of income will not affect your AOW pension.
- If you have a partner under the AOW pension age and you turn 65 before 1 January 2015, you may be entitled to a supplementary allowance for your partner. The amount of supplementary allowance depends on the number of years your partner was insured under the AOW scheme, on your partner's income, and on the country where you live. You can only receive a supplementary allowance on top of your AOW pension if you live in a country with which the Netherlands has an agreement on the verification of benefit entitlements. For more information, go to www.svb.nl/aow.
- Your AOW pension will stop when you die. It will not continue to be paid to your survivors. If your partner is under the AOW pension age when you die, he or she may qualify for an Anw survivor benefit. You will find more information about this at www.svb.nl/anw.
- The AOW pension rates are adjusted twice a year, in January and July. Pension payments for May include a holiday allowance.

When can you get an AOW pension?

If you have been insured under the AOW pension scheme, you will get an AOW pension when you reach the AOW pension age.

You have been insured if, at some point during the 50 years before you reach the AOW pension age:

- you lived in the Netherlands , or
- you worked and paid wage tax in the Netherlands, or
- you paid contributions for voluntary AOW insurance.

Pension accrual rate 2% per year

For each year of insurance you accrue 2% of the maximum pension. If your insurance record is complete, you are entitled to $50 \times 2\% = 100\%$ of a full AOW pension. If you have not always lived or worked in the Netherlands, you will lose 2% for each year of non-insurance. If you were born on or after 1 January 1950, you are not entitled to an AOW pension if you have been insured for less than one year.

Only the general rules are given above. Different rules apply for other situations. For more information about the AOW pension scheme, go to www.svb.nl/aow.

Example

Living and working in the Netherlands

Jean Declair (1946) lived in the Netherlands from 1 July 1973 to 1 July 1982. He then moved to Belgium but continued to work in the Netherlands until 1 July 1990. How much AOW pension has he accrued? He is entitled to 34% of a full AOW pension based on 17 years of AOW insurance, because he first lived in the Netherlands for 9 years and then worked in the Netherlands for 8 years.

Living in one country and working in another

The Netherlands has concluded social security agreements with a large number of countries. For instance, for all countries of the European Union (EU), the rules of the EC Regulations apply. These rules determine in what country or countries a person has been insured. The main rule is that you are insured in the country where you work. But what if you work two days a week in one country, and three days in another, or if you are self-employed in one country and employed in another? Or if you have been posted to another country by your employer? For all these situations, there are EC Regulations to establish in which country you are insured. These regulations have been put in place to prevent people from being insured in two countries at the same time, or worse, from not being covered by pension insurance at all. Each EU Member State and each Treaty country will pay its own share of your pension.

You will find a list of all the EU/EEA countries and Treaty countries at the back of this brochure.

Example**Frontier workers: living in the Netherlands and working in Germany**

Ms Meijlink's AOW pension age is 65. She lived in the Netherlands until she turned 62 (in May 2007). She then moved to Germany. For the period up to her 65th birthday, she took out voluntary AOW insurance. From 1 September 1992 to 1 January 2005, Ms Meijlink worked just over the German border. Pursuant to EC Regulations, she was exclusively insured in Germany during that period, even though she was living in the Netherlands. Ms Meijlink is entitled to 76% of the full AOW pension. Her 12-year period of work in Germany resulted in a pension reduction of $12 \times 2\% = 24\%$. She will apply to the German authorities for a German pension for her period of work in that country.

Supplementary allowance for your partner

If you are married or living with someone who is under the AOW pension age, you may be entitled to a supplementary allowance on top of your AOW pension. The rate of the supplementary allowance depends on:

- the number of years your partner was insured under the AOW pension scheme, and
- your partner's income.

You can get a supplementary allowance until your partner reaches the AOW pension age. If your partner has also accrued rights under the AOW pension scheme, he or she will then also start to receive an AOW pension.

The supplementary allowance will be discontinued in 2015

The supplementary allowance will be discontinued as from 2015. From then on, you can only receive a supplementary allowance if:

- you were born before 1 November 1949, and
- you were married or living with a partner before 1 January 2015, and
- you were receiving a partial or full supplementary allowance before 1 January 2015. However, if you were born in November 1949, this would be 'before 1 March 2015'. If you were born in December 1949, this would be 'before 1 April 2015'.

Example**Supplementary allowance**

Jean Declair has received an AOW pension since April 2011. His wife is six years younger than he and has no personal income. Mr Declair is entitled to a supplementary allowance for her, which he will continue to receive after 1 January 2015 because he turned 65 before that date.

Your partner's income

Your partner's income may be taken into account for your supplementary allowance. There are three types of income:

- income which is **disregarded**, for instance interest or dividends, personal assets (savings, home ownership, shares), payments from a private annuity plan;
- income which is **deducted in full** from the supplementary allowance, for instance an incapacity benefit or a pension;
- income which is **deducted in part** from the supplementary allowance, for instance income from employment or self-employment. You will find more information about this at www.svb.nl/aow.

The amount of the supplementary allowance depends on your partner's income. Your supplementary allowance may go up or down as your partner's income increases or decreases.

Example**Income from work**

Ms Declair starts working for a few hours a week. Her earnings are € 300 gross per month. This type of income is taken into account for the supplementary allowance. Before, Mr Declair received € 100 in supplementary allowance. How much supplementary allowance will he get from now on? As Ms Declair's earnings are not deducted in full, only € 59 is deducted from the supplementary allowance. The amount disregarded is € 241 (211.14 plus 1/3 of the remaining € 88.86). The supplementary allowance is reduced from € 100 to € 41 per month.

AOW pension rates

The AOW pension rates are related to the minimum wage in the Netherlands and are usually adjusted twice a year, on 1 January and 1 July.

For each month you are entitled to AOW pension, you accrue **holiday allowance**, which is paid every year in May.

The maximum amounts shown below are given in round figures to give you a general idea. For instance, if you have accrued AOW pension rights for a period of 10 years, you will get 20% of the amount shown. For the precise amounts, please refer to www.svb.nl/aow.

Pension rates	gross amount per month	holiday allowance
Single person	€ 1,034	€ 59
People who are married/living together	€ 710	€ 42
Supplementary allowance	€ 710	€ 42

Other pensions

Apart from your AOW pension, you may also be entitled to other pensions.

- **Company pension**

If you have been employed either in the Netherlands or the country where you live, you may also have built up pension rights on the basis of your employment. In the Netherlands, these additional pensions are paid through a pension fund or pension insurance company. For more information, contact your employer or pension fund. Company pensions are not deducted from the AOW pension.

- **Private old age insurance**

To supplement their company pension, many people opt for a private old age insurance, such as a single premium policy or annuity scheme. Pensions from private old age insurance do not affect the entitlement to AOW pension either.

If you have lost your pension records

If you were employed and you have lost the papers about your pension insurance in the Netherlands, the help desk for unclaimed pensions can help you trace your pension fund on the basis of the details of your former employer. You can send an e-mail to info@stichtingpensioenregister.nl or telephone + 31 20 751 2870.

The help desk supports the pension forecast website www.mijnpensioenoverzicht.nl, where you can log in with your DigiD code and get an overall view of the pension rights you accrued in the Netherlands.

Claiming an AOW pension

If you live in an EU country or a country with which the Netherlands has a social security agreement, you can claim an AOW pension via the social insurance institution where you were last insured. They will forward your claim to the SVB. After that, you will receive the decision by the SVB via the pension institution in your country.

If you do not live in an EU country or treaty country, you can submit your AOW pension claim directly to the SVB. You will find the claim form on our website, www.svb.nl, or you can request it from one of the SVB offices.

If you have any questions

This brochure outlines in what situations you may be entitled to an AOW old age pension. If your situation is not described in this brochure, or if you have any questions, go to www.svb.nl, or call an SVB office. Our case officers will be happy to assist you. You can also send an e-mail via 'Contact'.

You will find the addresses and telephone numbers of the SVB offices on our website under 'Contact'. Select your country of residence and social security scheme to find the SVB office that serves your country of residence.

Other benefits paid by the SVB

Apart from AOW old age pensions, the SVB also pays other social security benefits, such as survivor benefits, child benefits and remigration benefits. If you want to know more about this, go to www.svb.nl.

List of EU member states and treaty countries

EU countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal (including the Azores and Madeira), Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland)

- Member states of the European Economic Area (EEA): Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
 - Switzerland
 - Other treaty countries: Australia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Egypt, Israel (except the Gaza strip, the West Bank of the Jordan River and East Jerusalem), Japan, former Yugoslavia (Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia), Macedonia, Morocco (except the Western Sahara), New Zealand, South Korea, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, United States of America
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Everyone comes into contact with the SVB at some point in their life. Sometimes the occasion is happy, sometimes sad but inevitable. As a child, a parent, or a surviving partner, as a pupil, an employee, or a pensioner, you can rely on the SVB to pay exactly what you are entitled to, quietly and efficiently, throughout your life.