

DUTCH FIRST IN DUTCH EDUCATION

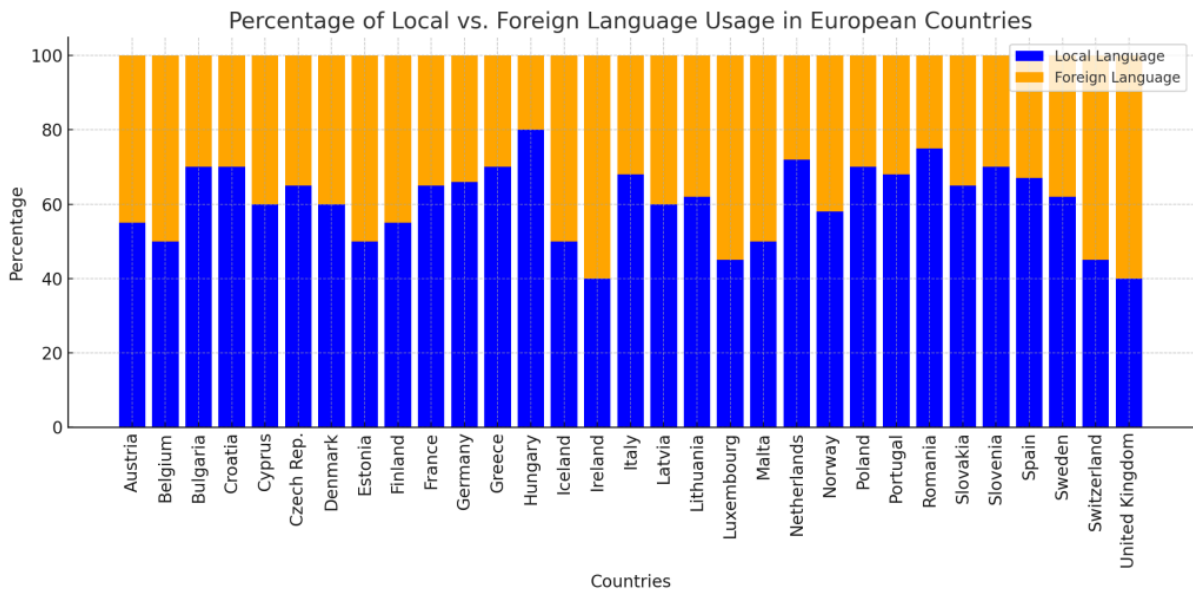
In a European context marked by growing concerns about national identity and immigration management, several countries on the continent are adopting more restrictive policies towards foreigners. This trend is evident in the tightening of border controls and, notably, in changes to educational policies that prioritize national languages. The Netherlands, traditionally an open and multicultural nation, is joining this movement with a decision that has sparked intense debate: reducing the availability of university programs taught in English in favor of Dutch.

According to a recent report by Fragomen, several European countries, including Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Italy, Norway, Slovenia, and Sweden, have extended internal border controls until mid-2025. Germany has gone even further, prolonging these measures until September of the same year. These actions, justified by some as necessary for security, indicate a growing unease regarding the free movement of people within the Schengen area and, by extension, the arrival of non-EU foreigners.

The tightening of borders is not only physical. In the political and social spheres, there is an increasingly critical discourse towards immigration and cultural diversity. In this climate, the decision of Dutch universities to "curb internationalization," as indicated by an article from The PIE News, takes on special significance.

Dutch universities have agreed to limit the number of English-taught degrees and reduce the admission of international students. The stated goal is twofold: to prioritize the Dutch language in higher education and to alleviate pressure on student housing. Additionally, institutions are pushing for the legal option to impose enrollment caps on English-language programs.

This measure, according to the universities, aims to strengthen the command of Dutch among students and faculty, ensuring that all major bachelor's degrees are offered in Dutch. They argue that curbing internationalization will safeguard the quality of education and protect the international standing of Dutch science.



However, criticism has not been long in coming. Experts warn that these policies could limit opportunities to build international relationships for business and science, as well as reduce chances for Dutch students to study abroad. In an increasingly globalized world, restricting access to international education could have long-term negative consequences for the competitiveness and international projection of the Netherlands.

The situation in the Netherlands reflects a broader debate in Europe. While some advocate the need to protect national identities and control immigration, others warn about the risks of building walls—physical, linguistic, and cultural—in a continent that has historically benefited from openness and exchange. Europe's future, in an increasingly interconnected world, will depend on the ability to find a balance between security and identity, and openness and diversity.

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