

“There are absolutely no barriers”

What it's like to work at a Dutch company in The Netherlands as a foreigner

Would you be up for it? Moving to another country, and building up a new life without speaking the local language? At GP Groot, we have a few people working with us who were brave enough to take the leap. Colleague Richárd Szilágyi shares his story and tells us what's it like to work at a Dutch company as a foreigner.

“I moved to The Netherlands three years ago, together with my girlfriend. It was just right after covid, and we were living in Hungary”, says Richárd as he begins his story. “However, I was actually more living on a ship, since I was working on a cruise ship. I was away from home for weeks, working 400 hours a month. We decided to move to The Netherlands because my girlfriend has family here. One day I was scrolling through my Facebook timeline and somehow I saw a post from somebody, saying GP Groot were hiring. And although I wasn't really looking for a new job, I decided to go for it.”



Success story

Richárd started his job at GP Groot as a blaster and paint sprayer through an employment agency, but for two years now he's working with us on a permanent contract. Richárd continues: “The fact that I didn't have previous experience in this industry wasn't a problem at all for the company. I was willing to work and learn, and that's what counted. My team

leader is a great guy and I get a lot of help with basically everything: from teaching me how to drive a forklift and how to spray paint, till learning the Dutch language. I'm quite an ambitious person so I figured out a lot of things myself as well, like how to do taxes in The Netherlands! But the company helped me whenever I had any questions. Thanks to this job and the support they gave me, me and my girlfriend were able to buy our own house after two years. I'm aware that sounds like quite a success story!”

So how does it feel to work at a Dutch company, with so many Dutch colleagues, when you're not a native speaker? “Honestly, I don't feel like an outsider at all. In fact, there's quite a few other colleagues from different nationalities; Rumanian, Polish and another colleague is Hungarian as well. I feel there's an equal balance between the amount of foreigners and my Dutch colleagues. We speak English with each other and I have a good relationship with everyone, including the Dutch colleagues. I became really good friends with some of them, and we meet up in the weekends as well. It's a great place to work”, says Richárd.

Cultural differences

“Since I have only worked at cruise ships after I finished my studies in my 20’s, I don’t have much material for comparison. But I do know the work culture in The Netherlands is very friendly. As Holland is more organized, the work hours are as well; I like the fact you have fixed breaks during the day and that you can have a proper weekend. In comparison to my previous work on a cruise ship where I worked long and irregular working hours, I can appreciate the Dutch structure, haha! And yes, of course the culture is different; the Dutch are friendly, but sometimes it can be hard to connect. If you don’t speak the same language, it's simply not the same.”

Richárd shares his tips for anyone else who is working as a non-native in The Netherlands, or might consider doing it: “If the company is willing to help you, there are absolutely no barriers to go for it. And if you really want to stay in a country, I advise you to commit to a company, rather than working through an employment agency. Show them you’re willing to work and eager to learn. If you want something, speak up and go for it!”