

Say NO to your digital identity!

The government is preparing the introduction of a “digital identity.” In 2026 or at the latest 2027, every Dutch citizen will be offered a “digital wallet” (ID Wallet) by the government, in which this “digital identity” can be stored. This is a result of a European law that came into force in 2024: the eIDAS 2.0 Regulation.

Many people think that digital identity is something like DigiD. That is not the case. The digital identity and the “ID wallet” are of a completely different order than a simple digital identification tool.

In an explanation of the eIDAS 2.0 Regulation, the EU defines digital identity as “the digital representation of a natural or legal person.” This “representation” consists of a collection of “attributes.” “Attributes” are data of or about a person. This does not only include name, date of birth, place of birth, and similar details. It can include all possible data. The EU itself gives examples of attributes such as “diplomas, bank balance and medical data.” Other government documents mention examples such as: benefits a person receives, subscriptions to public transport or cultural institutions, a person’s travel history, purchasing habits, genetic data, possessions, tax data, and contractual relationships with (semi-)government institutions and companies. In short, everything known about a person can be included as an “attribute” in the “ID wallet.”

This creates what could be described as a digital version of a person. Your ID wallet can therefore be seen as a digital double of yourself that you carry with you.

The EU and the Dutch government want all citizens to have such a digital double. This double would then be used for all contacts and interactions with government institutions and companies.

Authorities assume that this will bring major efficiency benefits. Various administrative, bureaucratic, and commercial activities could then be carried out extremely quickly and without human intervention.

They do not discuss the disadvantages and risks. It is not difficult to see that the digitalization of citizens offers unprecedented possibilities for control, pressure, and coercion. EU legislation promises that citizens will retain full control over their own data, but the fact that so much data is stored in one place inherently creates major privacy risks. The EU also assures that the ID wallet will remain voluntary, but if citizens experience significant disadvantages in practice from not having such a wallet, real freedom of choice may quickly disappear.

Another, more fundamental danger of a universal digital identity is that we as human beings may increasingly be reduced to numbers in a database. Humanity and the human scale, already under pressure, risk disappearing entirely from our society. The digital identity could thus become a stepping stone toward a totalitarian state, in which long-standing freedoms and human rights—the foundation of our civilization—become subordinate to an all-encompassing digital, AI-driven control system.

What can we do about this? To begin with, everyone can decide not to participate in the ID wallet that will soon become available. The more people refuse, the harder it will be for the government to digitize and control citizens. Ask yourself whether you really want a digital clone of yourself, and what the implications are. If you do not want it, make sure it does not happen.

In addition, extra legal protection must be introduced against the dangers posed by digital identity. Our current (constitutional) rights are valuable, but they originate from the pre-digital era. Additional legislation is needed to form a barrier against the gradual erosion of our rights due to the introduction of digital identity.

With this goal, we have drawn up a declaration in which we have formulated a new fundamental right: the right to remain free from a digital identity. This right should apply vis-à-vis the government—that is, all government bodies—but also vis-à-vis all other institutions, both commercial and non-commercial, without exception. We call on everyone to sign this declaration and urge our representatives to take steps to incorporate this fundamental right into law.

Declaration of the right to remain free from digital identity

- 1. Everyone—both natural and legal persons—has the inalienable right to access all government services, public facilities, and private services, in the broadest possible sense, without any obligation to have or use a digital identity.**
- 2. Any form of disadvantaging individuals who do not possess a digital identity or who cannot or do not wish to use one shall be considered discrimination and is prohibited.**
- 3. “Disadvantaging” also includes charging costs, imposing fines, or taking other measures that disadvantage or place those who do not use a digital identity in a less favorable position compared to those who do.**
- 4. Everyone has the inalienable right to identify themselves without using a digital identity in all situations where identification is required, without exception, both in relation to the government and in social and economic interactions. This right applies equally when using the internet and public spaces.**
- 5. The government and all other relevant institutions are obliged to ensure that at all times, where necessary, an appropriate and non-discriminatory alternative to digital identity is available. This applies to, among other things but not limited to, filing taxes, registering with municipalities, applying for passports/identity cards/driver’s licenses, healthcare, and education.**
- 6. Employers, including the government, are prohibited from imposing any obligation on employees or job applicants to have or use a digital identity.**
- 7. Work must remain accessible to everyone without a digital identity. No work permit may include obligations in the form of a digital identity.**
- 8. Everyone has an inalienable right to a bank account and to use financial systems necessary to make payments and meet financial obligations, without a digital identity being required, and without unfavorable conditions compared to account holders with a digital identity. Banking services, including mortgage agreements, must not be conditional upon the use of a digital identity.**