

### Degree of complexity

There's something admirable about the intellect of a French person. Their complexity has raised the most prestigious Western intellectuals, like Montesquieu, Descartes, Voltaire, Montaigne, and Victor Hugo, who helped to structure Europe and France as it is today. However, their wisdom and self-sufficiency devalues one certain quality where the Dutch flourish in: oversea curiosity. As the ancestors of the Dutch East India Company, the Dutch travels the continents with ease, is international oriented and engages himself in talking with other nationalities. These qualities are similarly linked to the Dutch government, having a stronger and stronger position in the European Union. Devoted to make deals for its own interest, we may forget about discussing endlessly were the French seems to be professionals in.

A story that has stucked, was about digging a hole in France, which needed a preparation time of two or three days, with smoking pauses and lunch breaks of two hours, whereas a Dutch team will have ended the deal after lunch already, without difficulty. As seen in this example, *les Français* are susceptible to intensity simple problems, and turning it into complex situation. In my experience, even an international stamp for a letter can be a tough assignment to them.

Where can we thank this difference in complexity between the two cultures to? Most certainly, a difference on an education level. The French school system is built around negativity, and it is no surprise that France ranks among the lowest on optimism, according to a report conducted by Ipsos. Mooking seems a way of showing off your intelligence and discussing is a hard earned right they deserve. Seemingly, the high importance of education and the roots of criticism are deeply grounded in France. Polls have even shown that the French are more pessimistic about their country's future than people in Afghanistan and Iraq. The image of this self-sufficient intellectual state will drop increasingly if they would engage themself more in other languages. As a result, they might become more communicative to other cultures and increase a more positive outlook. Personally, I strongly admire the French language, a sophisticated, refined and rich language. Nevertheless, their lack of engagement in another language than French, is in my opinion a shame. It appears that only 39% of the French population speaks fully English, whereas 90% of the Dutch respondents are particularly likely to speak English as their second foreign language. By several reports as the World Happiness Report in 2019, the French population had the lowest score on self-esteem, and admit that they don't feel confident enough to speak English. This language barrier makes it more difficult to communicate with a French person and can make him appear selfish, cold or distant. I can see this in a French university too, where presenting yourself and debating in groups, is rarely done. Eventually we can trust their high level of knowledge, but this overshadows their lower level of (language) skills. Their ignorance towards learning languages isn't the explanation of their complexity, but engaging more into them can at least smoothen their communication with other countries. And frankly, the Netherlands can be slightly embarrassed about its own small circle of intellectuals and philosophers.