

Subject: Formal objection to proposal to extend naturalisation period from five to ten years — request for explicit exclusion of current residents

Dear Sir / Madam,

I respectfully object to the proposal to extend the naturalisation requirement from five (5) to ten (10) years of lawful residence. While I acknowledge the government's authority and intention to strengthen ties with the Netherlands, this proposal is unfair to the many international residents who have already built their lives here under the existing five-year rule.

Unfair impact on current residents

The proposal lacks a transitional clause for those already lawfully residing in the Netherlands. These residents entered, integrated, worked, paid taxes, studied, and raised families in good faith on the basis of the five-year rule. Changing the rules mid-way undermines trust in government, creates unnecessary hardship, and disregards legal certainty.

Legal principles

- *Legitimate expectation (vertrouwensbeginsel)*: residents should be able to rely on the law in force when they made life-changing decisions.
- *Non-retroactivity*: new rules should apply prospectively, not penalise current residents.
- *Proportionality*: extending to ten years without excluding current residents is an excessive burden on those who have already invested in integration.

Comparative practice

In other democratic jurisdictions, similar reforms were always accompanied by transitional or grandfathering provisions. Denying this safeguard in the Netherlands would be inconsistent with principles of fairness and international best practice.

Requested amendment

The law should state clearly:

“All persons who are already lawfully residing in the Netherlands at the date of entry into force of this Act shall remain subject to the naturalisation conditions that applied prior to this amendment, and may naturalise after five years of continuous lawful residence.”

Conclusion

This amendment would protect legal certainty, fairness, and public trust, while keeping the Netherlands attractive to international residents who have shown long-term commitment. We completely oblige by the government's authority, but this law must be treated with fairness for those already residing here and who have placed their trust in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Respectfully,

Resident in the Netherlands since 2022