

While many human rights arguments could be made, I will focus on concrete legal principles and practical concerns tied directly to the Dutch legal and social context. This approach keeps the discussion accessible, relevant, and grounded in Dutch traditions of fairness, legal certainty, and proportionality. It also ensures that arguments are evaluated within the Dutch legal framework rather than relying only on abstract moral claims.

1. Respect for acquired rights

The proposed extension of the naturalization timeline should not apply retroactively to those already on the path to citizenship. Under the principle of acquired rights and the doctrine of legitimate expectations, individuals who began their journey under the five-year rule have a right to rely on that framework. Dutch administrative law has long recognized that retroactive changes which undermine expectations are unjust and erode trust in the system. If the government moves the goalposts midway, it signals that commitment and compliance bring no certainty. This is particularly harmful to those who have already invested years of their lives in the Netherlands—raising families, studying, advancing careers, and contributing to society. Applying the new rule only to future arrivals, would respect fairness, preserve stability, and protect confidence in Dutch law.

2. The position of highly skilled migrants

Highly skilled migrants play an essential role in the Dutch economy, its innovation landscape, and the broader social fabric. Immigration policies were designed precisely to attract such talent, and delaying their access to Dutch nationality runs against that rationale. These professionals are often integrated from the start: they work in key industries, pay taxes, and engage with local communities. For them, nationality is not a distant aspiration but a recognition of reality. Extending the waiting period risks discouraging this group and undermining the Netherlands' position in global competition for talent. In an international context where countries compete to attract highly skilled workers, a restrictive approach makes the Netherlands less appealing. Excluding this group from the extended requirement would preserve the original policy objective, support long-term economic growth, and strengthen social cohesion.