



Prof. dr. Robert Wagenaar

The end of the traditional university?

Rethinking the higher educational model: research and workplace focused

Inaugural Lecture

18 February 2022

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On acceptance of the post of endowed professor of
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**‘Members of the Board of the
University, Ladies and Gentlemen...’**

This lecture poses the question: *The end of the traditional university? Rethinking the higher educational model: research and workplace focused*. I will discuss important developments in the higher education model in Europe and in a global context, with special attention to the situation in the Netherlands.¹

Innovation, creativity and the ability to make change, set an agenda, supported by critical and analytical thinking, curiosity, perseverance and, more recently, entrepreneurship are currently expected to be key personal qualities in both higher education research and education. These attributes have been labelled 'generic competences' or 'transferable skills'. Twenty years ago, not only this vocabulary was unfamiliar, but also the relevance of these personal qualities was not recognised by the higher education sector.

Firm international cooperation, both in research and education, is of recent date.

In the early 1990s cooperation was still limited to contact by telephone, regular mail, fax, and attendance of international conferences. Although the first personal or desktop computer was introduced by IBM in 1981 and the first Macintosh computer by Apple three years later, the Windows Operating

¹ I am grateful to Richard Puyt for his highly relevant comments and suggestions regarding a draft version of the text

System was developed only in the 1990s, the use of Internet and the World Wide Web spread globally from the mid-1990s. Still in 1999 one of the leading Dutch Newspapers, *NRC Handelsblad*, observed that internet was handy to use but not indispensable, complicated and rather expensive.² As we know now so well, information technology revolutionized both research and (higher) education.

But there was more. In the same period, western industrialised countries were shaken up by the displacement of a large part of heavy industry and consumer electronics to East Asia, in particular Japan, South Korea, and China. The car industry as an important indicator of economic prosperity obtained severe competition. In Europe, only Germany seems to have been able to seriously withstand this development.³ In the first half of the 1990s the western world experienced economic recession, for a series of reasons, from which Europe would recover only around the turn of the century. The unemployment rate in most European countries ran up vastly during those years, to numbers comparable to the 2008/9 financial

2 Titia Ketelaar, Uit het Archief. Voor het eerst op de elektronische snelweg, in: *NRC Handelsblad*, 25 januari 2022, Achterpagina.

3 As a major success factor can be identified here the unique dual higher educational system as offered by the Fachhochschule, based on close cooperation between these universities of applied sciences and industry.

crisis; youth unemployment exploding.⁴ Related to these developments was the introduction of the highly constructivist concept of neo-liberalism, introduced in the 1980s in the USA and the UK, by the governments of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher respectively, but expanding in the 1990s. It got a growing grip on economic and management processes globally, including continental Europe. At the same time, the Soviet Union disintegrated. A combination of developments required a re-set of the European integration process, which would result in the Maastricht Treaty of 1993.⁵

The 12 governments of the countries constituting the European Union at the time invited the European Commission to come up with an adequate response to what was perceived as a very worrisome situation. This resulted in several strategic papers, that also involved the role of higher education. In 1997 the European Commission published its *Communication Towards a Europe of Knowledge*, which built on several Green and White policy papers published from 1991. It relates employment and employability with knowledge policies. Its main message:

4 G. Saint-Paul, Why are European Countries Diverging in their Unemployment Experience?, in: *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Volume 18, No. 4 (Fall), 2004, 49–68; EUROSTAT data: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics

5 Treaty of Maastricht on European Union: Treaty on the European Union (92/C191/01), in: *Official Journal of the European Union* 29.7.92. Retrieved from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11992M/TXT>

‘Economic competitiveness, employment and the personal fulfilment of the citizens of Europe is no longer mainly based on the production of physical goods, nor will it be in the future. Real wealth creation will henceforth be linked to the production and dissemination of knowledge and will depend first and foremost on our efforts in the field of research, education and training and on our capacity to promote innovation. This is why we must fashion a veritable “Europe of knowledge.”’⁶

This ‘knowledge-based society’ requires innovation, research, education and training policies which drive society as ‘one of the four fundamental pillars of the Union’s internal policies’. It should be reached by ‘an open and dynamic European educational area’ which should gradually be constructed on the basis of three dimensions: (1) development of knowledge in a Life-long Learning context, (2) enhancement of citizenship related to mutual understanding of the cultural diversities of Europe as well as the principles of solidarity and (3) acquisition of the most useful set of competences required for employability and taking into account the evaluation of job profiles.⁷

The message implied a call for the reform of curricula, which should reflect not only state-of-the-art knowledge, but also

6 *Communication from the European Commission: Towards a Europe of Knowledge*, Brussels, 1997, 1: Retrieved from: <http://aei.pitt.edu/5546/1/5546.pdf>

7 *Ibidem*.

high-level skills and wider competences, in order to sustain prosperity and welfare. A challenging assignment for all stakeholders involved, ranging from governments, employers, and higher education providers and participants.

In this context, it was no coincidence that the French government, in conjunction with the German, Italian and UK ones, initiated a sort of blue print for reform, the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998. Rather interesting is that, although the French have a weak record in reforming its own educational sector, the country is brilliant in catching the spirit of times and setting an agenda. The title of the Sorbonne Declaration is a clear reflection of this: “Joint declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system.”⁸ Its signing was accompanied by a large conference attended by thousands of academics, policy makers and politicians, entitled: *Towards a European University*. The initiators of both the conference and the Declaration made good use of the thinking

8 *Sorbonne Joint Declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European Higher Education system*, Paris 25 May 1998. Retrieved from: https://media.ehea.info/file/1998_Sorbonne/61/2/1998_Sorbonne_Declaration_English_552612.pdf

of and work established by the European Commission, without giving it too much credit, or involving it in the first place.⁹

A recent example of this off-guard approach, related to the same topic, is the speech of Emmanuel Macron at the Sorbonne, twenty years later, in September 2017, entitled *Initiatives for Europe*, in which he proposes his ‘European Universities initiative’. He suggests to establish at least twenty consortia of four to six renowned universities from a minimum of three EU member states. These consortia of integrated universities should be ‘drivers of educational innovation and the quest for excellence’, offering ‘real European semesters and real European diplomas’.¹⁰ The speech triggered the establishment of the European Commission *European Universities initiative*, in which also the University of Groningen is involved as a mem-

9 Jane Marshall, FRANCE: Sorbonne Declaration – Precursor to Bologna, in: *University World News*. Issue 19 No. 9, March 2008. Retrieved from: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20080306110346v62g>. See also Jürgen Schriewer, “Rationalized Myths” in European Higher Education. The construction and diffusion of the Bologna Model, in: *European Education*, Vol. 41, No. 2, Summer 2009, 34; and Pauline Ravinet, The Sorbonne meeting and declaration: Actors, shared vision and Europeanisation, in: *The Bologna Process and the Shaping of the Future Knowledge Societies: Conference Report from the Third Conference on Knowledge and Politics*, the University of Bergen, May 18 - 20th 2005, 187-204.

10 E. Macron, Sorbonne speech of Emmanuel Macron, 26 septembre 2017, in: *Quest France*: <http://international.blogs.ouest-france.fr/archive/2017/09/29/macron-sorbonne-verbatim-europe-18583.html>

ber of the Consortium ENLIGHT.¹¹ Having comparable aims although presented differently, the two Declarations and the *European Universities Initiative* resulted in excitement and momentum for initiating reform and more intensive cooperation.

Both the Sorbonne and its follow-up the Bologna Declaration, which developed into a process to establish a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have been well researched by scholars from all parts of the world, covering its strengths and weaknesses as well as its opportunities and its risks in terms of its ambitions and governance structure.¹² However, probably not fully recognised and acknowledged, is the fact that the reforms in Europe are of global significance. Less due to the process itself, and its aim to strengthen the position of European higher education in the world, but because these reforms have

11 European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European strategy for universities. COM (2022) 16 final. Strasbourg, 18.1.2022.

12 It is remarkable that most analytical overviews of the process have been written by non-European scholars, in particular from the us: Clifford Adelman, *Bologna Club: What U.S. Higher Education Can Learn from a Decade of European Reconstruction*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy, May 2008; Clifford Adelman, *The Bologna Process for U.S. eyes: Re-learning higher education in the age of convergence*. Washington DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy, April 2009; Paul L. Gaston, *The Challenge of Bologna. What United States Higher Education Has to Learn From Europe, and Why It Matters That We Learn It*. Sterling: Stylus Publishing, 2010; Laurel S. Terry, The Bologna Process and Its Impact in Europe: It's So Much More than Degree Changes, in: *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*. Vol 41, 2008, 107-228. In particular EU-based scholars have concentrated on governance structures.

impact on four fundamental different educational philosophies and traditions, originating from Europe, which are deeply rooted in national educational policies globally, that is the Humboldtian model, focusing on *Bildung*; the Anglo-Saxon model, emphasizing personal development; the Napoleonic model, based on the acquisition of knowledge; and the Soviet model, applying uniformity and bureaucratic rules and regulations.¹³ The first three, conceptually developed in the 19th century, constituted the higher education design and implementation model reaching from Japan to Chili and from Australia to Canada, as a direct effect of European expansion and imperialism.

The Humboldtian academic model - after Wilhelm von Humboldt's foundation of the University of Berlin in 1809 and based on the liberal ideas of Friedrich Schleiermacher - is characterised by the entrenched rights of professors and students to freedom of study and teaching, which provides through independent research the guiding principle of the student's university programme with the objective to serve the 'truth'. The last is a reference to Karl Jaspers thinking more than a cen-

13 A. Kuraev, Soviet Higher Education: An Alternative Construct to the Western University Paradigm, in: *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education Research*. Vol. 71, No.2, February 2016, 181-193.

ture later.¹⁴ A feature of the model is that it defines strong boundaries separating vocational education and university education.¹⁵

The Anglo-Saxon model, based on Henry Newman's *The idea of a University*, published in 1852, has a strong emphasis on the personal development of the student¹⁶; while the Napoleonic model is characterised by a heavily centralised and elitist approach with a strong emphasis on knowledge acquisition and reproduction, lacking critical reflection and independent thinking^{17,18}. One of its features is the distinction of the highly competitive Grand Ecole and regular university.

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- 14 Suzanne Kirkbright, Jaspers' Early Scientific Approach In The Light Of Alexander von Humboldt's "Cosmos", in: *Existence. An International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics and the Arts*. Volume 2, Nos 1-2, Fall 2007, pp. 51-57. Originally published in: E. Salamun-Hybasek, K. Salamun and H. Stelzer, eds., *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Karl Jaspers Gesellschaft, Jahrgang 20*. Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2007. Retrieved from: <https://www.existenz.us/volumes/Vol.2Kirkbright.pdf>
 - 15 C. Sam and P. Van der Sijde, Understanding the Concept of the Entrepreneurial University from the Perspective of Higher Education Models, in: *Higher Education*. Vol. 68, No. 6, 2014, 1-18.
 - 16 John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*. s.l., 1852. See for the full text: <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/idea/>
 - 17 Michael Dobbins and Christoph Knill, Higher education governance in France, Germany, and Italy: Change and variation in the impact of transnational soft governance, in: *Policy and Society*. Vol. 36, No. 1, 2017, 68. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14494035.2017.1278868?needAccess=true>
 - 18 Jean-Marie Boisson, Why Most French Universities Wear a Number? Some Reflections on the Recent (Hi)story of French Universities System, in: *Journal of the European Higher Education Area*, No. 1, 2012, 90-94.

The Soviet model, which is still clearly visible in the countries which made up the former Soviet Union, differentiates from the other models both in form and function, due to the administrative structure, uniformity, top-down administration and one-man management and its purpose. In pedagogical terms, comparable to the Napoleonic model, it implies staff-centred and inflexible programmes, focused on knowledge acquisition, not designed to respond effectively to current developments in society and the workplace.¹⁹

Experience obtained and research implemented since 1990 shows that this variety of models is still very manifest and impacts scope and speed of modernisation by hindering change.²⁰

When debating the modernization of higher education, the emancipation process of higher education institutions should also be considered as a significant factor. In 1988 388 renowned universities in Europe signed the *Magna Charta Universitatum* at the 900th celebration of the oldest university in Europe, the University of Bologna. The universities claimed autonomy and required freedom in research and teaching, to be ensured by both governments and universities. The concept

19 A. Kuraev, Soviet Higher Education: An Alternative Construct to the Western University Paradigm.

20 Andre Perusso and Robert Wagenaar, The state of work-based learning development in EU higher education: learnings from the WEXHE project, in: *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 47, No.7, 2022, 1423-1439, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2021.1904233

“freedom” signified moral and intellectual autonomy of all political authority and economic power.²¹ In the Bologna Declaration tribute is paid to the *Magna Charta Universitatum*.²² It is not referred to in the Sorbonne Declaration.

Autonomy and freedom are accompanied by responsibility. Therefore, governance of reform in higher education requires serious attention. Due to its aims – making reforms range from system changes (involving amendments to legislation) to revising curricula - theoretical models came into play, being of course an abstract of reality. Initially the debate at European level focused on the understanding of the conceptional differences between ‘convergence’, ‘harmonisation’ and ‘unification’.²³ Regarding the governance model, the choice was made for the so-called Open Method of Coordination. In effect this was a choice for a top-down approach, according to what one can call the *rake model*; a central holder with a set of teeth which are connected at the top only. In governance terms: common aims

21 *Magna Charta Universitatum*, Bologna 18 September 1988. Retrieved from: <https://www.magna-charta.org/magna-charta/en/magna-charta-universitatum/mcu-1988>

22 Bologna Declaration 1999 - European Ministers for Higher Education, *Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education*. Bologna 19 June 1999. Retrieved from: <http://www.ehea.info/cid100210/ministerial-conference-bologna-1999.html>

23 Robert Wagenaar, *Reform! TUNING the Modernisation Process of Higher Education in Europe. A Blueprint for Student-Centred Learning*. Groningen: International Tuning Academy, 2019, 25-32.

are agreed, but the implementation process is left to the individual countries.²⁴

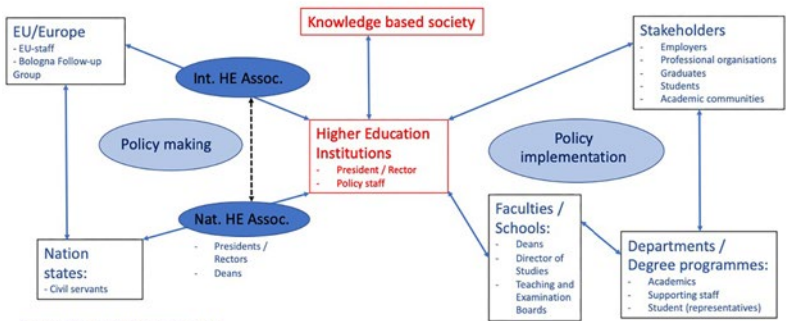
Given the topic, one might have expected that the multi-level governance model would have been chosen. This theoretical concept was developed in the 1990s as well, as a means to understand decision making processes as a result of the Maastricht Treaty.²⁵ It would have done justice to the many actors in the project as the image below shows us.²⁶ The choice made has had implications for its level of success.

24 A. Gornitzka, *The Open Method of Coordination as practice – A watershed in European Education policy?* Working paper No. 16 ARENA, Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo, December 2006; A.L. Veiga and Alberto Amaral, *The Open Method of Coordination and the implementation of the Bologna Process*, in: *Tertiary Education and Management* . Vol.12, No. 4, July 2006, 283-295.

25 Treaty of Maastricht on European Union: Treaty on the European Union (92/C191/01). Retrieved from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/treaty-of-maastricht-on-european-union.html>.

26 Robert Wagenaar, *Quality efforts at the discipline level: Bologna's Tuning process*, in: Ellen Hazelkorn, Alexander C. McCormick, Andrew Gibson and Hamish Coates, Eds., *Research Handbook on Quality, Performance and Accountability in Higher Education*. Cheltenham, UK, Northhamptons, USA: Edward Edgar Publishing, 2018, 279.

Actors in the Reform Process of Higher Education



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Image 1: Tuning actors’ model: roles and responsibilities in the Higher Education reform process

In this context, it is important to stress that the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations were initiated to use international leverage for national system change. The basic aim of the reform process was to make European higher education highly competitive in a global context and more tailored to meet societal needs. This should be established by introducing a common degree structure based on cycles by embracing the leading world model of bachelors and masters.²⁷ In addition, out of this shared architecture, a common credit system, a common quality assurance system and common outcomes of the learning process should be defined.²⁸

27 Confederation of European Union Rectors’ Conferences and the Association of European Universities (CRE), *Project Report Trends in Learning Structures in Higher Education 7 June 1999*. Prepared by Guy Haug and Jette Kirstein.
 28 Robert Wagenaar, *Reform! TUNING the Modernisation Process of Higher Education in Europe*, 223.

To make a long story short, in 2005 the foundation for the intended system reforms was finished. The Bologna signatory countries endorsed the *Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area*, which was based on the so-called Dublin descriptors for Higher Education making a distinction between three cycles, the bachelor, the master and the doctorate.²⁹ It included the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System in its framework. Furthermore, the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance* were endorsed.³⁰ The *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region* agreed in 1997 made the infrastructure complete.³¹ In addition, the European Commission had started the development of the *European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF)* to include the vocational education and training sector in a model encom-

29 Joint Quality Initiative, *Shared 'Dublin' descriptors for Short Cycle, First Cycle, Second Cycle and Third Cycle Awards. A report from a Joint Quality Initiative informal group*, 18 October 2004. Archive International Tuning Academy. See also: Marlies Leegwater, *Joint Quality Initiative: The Origin of the Dublin Descriptors*. The European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education. The Hague, June 2015.

30 Bergen Communiqué 2005 - The European Higher Education Area - Achieving the Goals. Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 19-20 May 2005.

31 The Convention has been ratified by all 47 member states of the Council of Europe based in Strasbourg except Greece and Monaco. Retrieved from: Council of Europe, *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region* (ETS No. 165): <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=165>. Retrieved from: See for the text of the convention: UNESCO, *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region*. Full text: <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/convention-recognition-qualifications-concerning-higher-education-european-region>.

passing all types of learning. This EU instrument was established in 2008.³²

While the infrastructure was being developed, countries already started implementing the structure of cycles, based on agreed definitions of what a bachelor and what a master should represent in terms of ECTS credits and in terms of agreed levels of learning phrased as descriptors. Although alignment was sought between certain limits, allowing for some flexibility, this convergence process has only partly been successful hindered by national conventions and cultures. The discussions regarding the length of the Master resulted in patchwork.³³

The Netherlands contributed to this inconsistency by introducing 60 and 120 ECTS credit programmes for master programmes in the social sciences and the humanities. In effect, it disadvantaged these educational domains, not only in a national but most of all in an international context. However, introducing two-year masters for all disciplines was thought too costly for the state treasury. Proposals to economize, by introducing a selection process to limit access to around 70% of

32 European Commission, *European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning*. Luxembourg, 2008. Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/terms_en.htm

33 *The Bologna Process Conference on Master-level Degrees Helsinki*, Finland March 14 - 15, 2003. Conclusions and Recommendations of the Conference: http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/Master_degrees_Helsinki_2003/09/4/030314-15Helsinki_Results_576094.pdf

students awarded a bachelor degree, did not obtain the support of Dutch parliament.³⁴

A proposal by Robert Wagenaar, made to the vsnu, the national organisation of Dutch Universities, to adopt the UK model of one full year – 12 months instead of the Dutch 9 months academic year – and 75-90 ECTS programmes for these domains, was turned down. This created a recognition issue, because the Dutch one-year master was not perceived comparable to the ones awarded in other countries. Therefore, it would block students obtaining access to a PhD programme in the vast majority of countries in the world. A solution was proposed by the Committee Cohen, established by the vsnu, the Dutch Rectors Conference for research universities. The committee suggested to discriminate between academic sectors and to introduce the concept of highly selective research masters covering two academic years for academic domains with a one-year master, a unique model in global context.³⁵ Its advice was in outline accepted and implemented by the national authorities.

34 See for a historical overview of the establishment of so-called research masters: NVAO, *Research Master Review 2007. De verkenning van een nieuw domein*. Den Haag, december 2007. Retrieved from: <http://docplayer.nl/6044252-Research-master-review-2007-de-verkenning-van-eeen-nieuw-domein.html>

35 Commissie Cohen, Brief cursusduur masteropleidingen, incl. advies, aan voorzitter vsnu, 30 oktober 2001. Archive International Tuning Academy Groningen. See also: Inspectie van het Onderwijs, *Masterjaren tellen. BaMa-onderzoek naar de duur van de Nederlandse wetenschappelijke masteropleidingen*. Den Haag, 2008. Retrieved from: <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-31288-24-b1.pdf>

Besides the length of the master, another (potential) problem was created – inspired by the models operated in some other European countries - by introducing the 120 ECTS Associated degree covering the first two years of the four-year bachelor degree programmes of the Universities of Applied Sciences. Initially meant as an experiment, as of 1 January 2018 the Associated Degrees have been included as a ‘stand-alone’ degree in Dutch legislation. Over the years the targeted students to enrol in these programmes became the ones with a secondary vocational education and training (VET) degree. When developing the National Qualifications Framework for LLL, it was decided to equalling three types of secondary educational programmes – five and six years general education and six year VET programmes - with different profiles and learning outcomes by positioning these as level 4 in the Dutch National Qualifications Framework and the EQF for LLL. As a result, it created a three-headed monster in three types of Associated Degrees: incomprehensible and incomparable in international contexts, and therefore conflicting the Bologna Process philosophy. Those being an intermediate degree within the bachelor – the initial idea -, those requiring a bridging programme to continue bachelor studies and ‘stand-alone’ programmes. The last type being perceived in many other countries as ‘higher VET’.

Was the Netherlands out of step with the rest of the world regarding both the master and the variety in offering access to

higher education programmes, it gradually outperformed the fast majority of Bologna countries in introducing the agreed reforms, in particular in moving from an expert driven educational model to a student-centred / outcome based one. This change of paradigm was promoted by the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe project, co-financed by the European Commission, from 2001.³⁶ In Europe ‘student-centred learning’ was formally taken onboard in the Bologna Process in 2009 as its leading concept.³⁷ However, as has been outlined in the *Bologna Process Evaluation report* published in 2010 as well as the four *Bologna Process Implementation Reports* since, the implementation of reform throughout Europe has been rather uneven – one can even claim partly disappointing - in terms of meeting the main objectives agreed between the ministers of education, including the change of paradigm.³⁸

As said, contrary to most other countries, the Netherlands has performed rather well. There was and is the strong commitment of the Ministry of Education and the stakeholders in the

36 Julia González and Robert Wagenaar, eds., *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. Final Report Phase One*. Bilbao and Groningen, 2003.

37 Leuven / Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009. ‘The Bologna Process 2020 – The European Higher Education Area in the new decade’. Communiqué of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009.

38 Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (European Commission), *The Bologna Process Independent Assessment, The first decade of working on the European Higher Education Area. Volume 1 Detailed assessment report*. Prepared by CHEPS; University of Bath; INCHER-Kassel; ECOTEC; IHF; Nuffic. Brussels, January 2010.

higher education sector to make the reform process a success. But there are two additional key factors. Firstly, the Netherlands has been one of the first countries in the world that established a student workload-based credit system (1988-89).³⁹ Secondly, it introduced a qualification system for higher education staff of research universities, the Basic and Senior Qualifications for Higher Education.⁴⁰ In the universities of applied sciences, a separate certification system for Basic and Senior Qualifications has been developed for assessments, didactics and teaching.⁴¹ Significant, because staff training and development is presently perceived as the Achilles heel of higher education reform.

These 'certification' initiatives, are intriguing, because the Netherlands, in strong contrast to other countries, lacks degree programmes in 'Higher Education Studies' or degree programmes in 'Comparative and International Education'. In comparison, in the United Kingdom 54 universities offer a Master in Higher Education Studies. In just a few lines the Uni-

39 M.J.F. Hulshof et al, *Studielastbepaling in Nederland en omliggende landen*. Nijmegen: iowo instituut voor onderwijskundige dienstverlening, april 2000, 1, 5, 21-23.

40 Universiteiten van Nederland, Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs (bko): <https://www.universiteitenvannederland.nl/bko.html>. For Universities of Applied Sciences: Basiskwalificatie Didactische Bekwaamheid (bdb): Werken bij Hogescholen website: <https://www.werkenbijhogescholen.nl/functies/onderwijsgevend/hoeword-ik-docent/>

41 ZESTOR. Arbeidsmarkt en opleidingsfonds hbo, Inventarisatie trajecten Basiskwalificatie Didactische Bekwaamheid (bdb): <https://zestor.nl/inventarisatie-trajecten-basiskwalificatie-didactische-bekwaamheid-bdb>

versity of Oxford outlines its importance: “The msc Education ... is aimed at future academic, policy, and practitioner leaders in higher education, and provides a critical introduction to research, theory, and policy in this complex field, taking into account a range of national, international and global perspectives”.⁴² In and outside Europe, Higher Education Studies are a normality.

Initiated by its Quality Assurance Agency, the UK developed – in parallel with the Tuning initiative – which will be highlighted later –, *Subject Benchmark Statements* papers, first for Bachelor Honours programmes and at a later stage also for Master Programmes. These are updated regularly.⁴³ In addition, it developed a complete infrastructure to inform and train academic staff. In this context it established a *Higher Education Academy UK*. Furthermore, it has the *Society for Research into Higher Education*, according to its website “a UK-based international learned society concerned to advance understanding of higher education, especially through the insights, perspectives and knowledge offered by systematic research and scholarship”.⁴⁴ And then there are also the *Higher Education Community* (HECOM), applying the motto “Giving the people in

42 University of Oxford, msc in Higher Education (Higher Education): <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/msc-education-higher-education>

43 See Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) website: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements#>

44 *Society for Research into Higher Education* (SHRE): <https://srhe.ac.uk>

higher education, the platform to connect with one another” and the *Higher Education Institute* and *GuildHE*.⁴⁵

In the Netherlands there is not too much to showcase that matches this infrastructure. In August 2007 the vsNU by its then president Dr. Sybolt Noorda took the initiative to debate the establishment of a Dutch Higher Education Academy, in order to improve the quality of bachelor education and increase the number of students who graduated.⁴⁶ It failed in getting sufficient support from the field. However, to its credit, the country holds a number of renown higher education research and expertise centres. The *Center for Higher Education Policy Studies* (CHEPS) based at the University of Twente focusses in particular on higher education policy from an international perspective.⁴⁷ Furthermore, there is the *Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market* (ROA) at the University of Maastricht.⁴⁸ The Netherlands also has a number of highly respected higher education leaders and academics, but unfortunately, most are either formally retired or close to retirement. Furthermore, there are other renowned Dutch experts working in this field,

45 *Higher Education Community* (HECOM) website: <https://www.hecom.co.uk/>; *Higher Education Policy Institute* (HEPI) website: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/>; *GuildHE* website: <https://guildhe.ac.uk>

46 Beter Onderwijs Nederland website: De universitaire lat mag best wat hoger liggen, 29 augustus 2007: <https://www.beteronderwijsnederland.nl/blogs/2007/08/de-universitaire-lat-mag-best-wat-hoger-liggen/>

47 *Center for Higher Education Policy Studies* (CHEPS) website: <https://www.utwente.nl/en/bms/cheps/>

48 *Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market* (ROA) website: <https://roa.nl>

but a number are employed by foreign universities. Apart from the centres mentioned, there are some initiatives initiated by research universities and universities of applied sciences (as a result of its system of lectorates).⁴⁹ But these are not robust and the overall research capacity in higher education studies is rather limited in comparison to other countries.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, these initiatives have resulted over time in a number of studies on a wide range of topics relevant for (Dutch) higher education.

However, there is also the *International Tuning Academy*, based in Groningen. While the research centres and most of the academics mentioned have focused on analysing developments, Tuning has acted as a change agent, not only for the Netherlands and Europe but according to its current mission globally. During the last two decades Tuning not only developed the leading model for reforming higher education degree programmes to make these of high quality and relevant for society, it has also developed qualifications reference frameworks for educational sectors and subject areas in many world regions, starting with Europe. The European ones are called *Tuning Guidelines and Reference Point for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes*. They are intended, to position a disci-

49 Vereniging Hogescholen, Lectoren en onderzoekscultuur: <https://www.vereniginghogescholen.nl/themas/lectoren>

50 A variety of research funds and research themes are managed by Regieorgaan SIA-RAAK: <https://regieorgaan-sia.nl/over-regieorgaan-sia/>

plinary field in academia as well as in society and to show its relevance towards the outside world.⁵¹

The latest innovation is the qualifications reference model based on a merger of the *Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area* and the *EQF for LLL*. It is the most sophisticated international model available in the world today. It offers internationally prepared progressing level descriptors identifying - in general terms - the learning to achieve.⁵²

It is supported by much more detailed Assessment Reference Frameworks which offer a menu what can be taught, learned and assessed. These frameworks have been published for five subject areas, and for another six these are presently developed. They are meant to be diagnostic. At present, a feasibility study is implemented to find out whether international comparative assessment is possible on the basis a multi-dimensional model of state-of-the-art assessment methods, to assess learning in a fair way, considering mission and profile of individual higher education programmes. Not only in a class room, but also in an online mode. The outcomes of the study are expected to be published in 2023.

51 International Tuning Academy website: <http://www.tuningacademy.org>

52 Measuring and Comparing Achievements of Learning Outcomes in Higher Education (CALOHEE) website: <https://www.calohee.eu>

Their aim is to define what a subject area - content wise - represents in international context. It also positions a disciplinary field in society to show its relevance towards the outside world.

Based on a bottom-up approach, it is the perfect example of academics taking responsibility. Overtime the European Commission invested more than 5 million euros in Tuning projects related to Europe, all coordinated or co-coordinated by the University of Groningen. Its work resulted in more than 300 reports and many academic papers, which not only cover Europe but also other world regions.

The Tuning initiative has global impact. To offer two examples. The Russian third generation plus standards for higher education are based on the work of Tuning. The Lumina Foundation⁵³ used the work of Tuning to develop its *Degree Qualifications Profile*, for the USA.⁵⁴ Also, in Africa, Latin America and Central and South-East Asia Tuning projects have made a difference.⁵⁵

53 Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all: <https://www.luminafoundation.org>

54 Lumina Foundation, *The Degree Qualifications Profile. A learning-centered framework for what college graduates should know and be able to do to earn the associate, bachelor's or master's degree*. Authors: Cliff Adelman, Peter Ewell, Paul Gaston, Carol Geary Schneider. Indianapolis, October 2014. Retrieved from: <https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/dqp.pdf>

55 International Tuning Academy website: <http://www.tuningacademy.org>

Let me take you to a more recent research project coordinated by the Academy: *Entrepreneurship and Work Experience in Higher Education*, in short WEXHE.⁵⁶ In this project the skills gap was studied between university learning and societal needs. The outcomes confirmed what also the Tuning surveys has shown us. Employers need a highly knowledgeable, but also skilled labour force. This implies owing the set of personal qualities as outlined at the start of this lecture. On the basis of its research, WEXHE prepared 12 detailed instruction packages, plus explanatory papers. These cover three types of work-based learning approaches: work placements (internships), traineeships and entrepreneurships, both at bachelor and master level. The packages are based on the Tuning-CALOHEE model. A comprehensive scholarly paper, entitled ‘The State of Work-based Learning Development in EU Higher Education: Learning from the WEXHE Project’, which was published in the top journal *Studies in Higher Education* online in March 2021 and in print in 2022, covers the insights developed as a result of the study.⁵⁷

The take away of this one-million-euro project is a double one:

56 *Entrepreneurship and Work Experience in Higher Education* (WEXHE) Project website: <https://wexhe.eu>

57 Andre Perusso and Robert Wagenaar, The state of work-based learning development in EU higher education: learnings from the WEXHE project, in: *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 47, No.7, 2022, 1423-1439, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2021.1904233.

1. There is an obvious match between the level of implementation of work-based learning in higher education and the four educational models, Anglo-Saxon etc.
2. Work-based learning shows to be an effective way to support the highest level of the mastering of learning and showing authority in real life situations.

Tuning, initially a set of large-scale international research projects, coordinated by the Universities of Deusto and Groningen, has evaluated in the International Tuning Academy, which was established formally one decade ago. It finds its origin in the development of the European Credit Transfer System, since 1989, in which staff of the Groningen University also played a leading role. I refer here to my *A History of ECTS, 1989-2019. Developing a World Standard for Credit Transfer and Accumulation in Higher Education*.⁵⁸ It was Tuning, with support of the European University Association (EUA), that developed the current system on request of the European Commission in the period 2001-2004. At present, it can be claimed that Tuning is the most comprehensive and most influential initiative in the higher education sector to reform degree programmes around the world, with a leading role of staff of the University of Groningen from the very start. It is no-coincidence that in January

⁵⁸ Robert Wagenaar, *A History of ECTS, 1989-2019. Developing a World Standard for Credit Transfer and Accumulation in Higher Education*. Groningen: International Tuning Academy, 2019.

2003 the *New York Times*, devoted two full colour pages in its famous weekend edition to the Tuning initiative and the University of Groningen in the context of the Bologna Process.⁵⁹ A fine piece of free publicity.

Today Tuning serves as a global platform for reflection and debate and actual reform. Over time it has concluded that reform models outlined on paper are insufficient to make a difference. Therefore, at present its many initiatives are always accompanied by staff development. Tuning research has showed that still in the vast majority of countries academics have not been trained as higher education teachers and instructors, in practice driving without a license (as said The Netherlands is one of the exceptions), flying a plane with the experience of a passenger. Also, in the context of the Bologna Process it has been concluded - which was confirmed in the Ministerial Communiqués of Paris (2018) and Rome (2020) - that this is a major obstacle to make change. The Rome Communiqué, has also stressed again that the alignment between the different governance levels of policy making and implementation has to be improved.⁶⁰ However, a convincing and feasible model how to establish this is not offered. In

59 Alan Riding, "The New E.U. A Revolution is shaking up European universities. How else to overthrow the us?", in; *The New York Times*, 12 January 2003.

60 Rome Ministerial Communiqué 19 November 2020: http://www.ehea.info/Upload/Rome_Ministerial_Communique.pdf

another words, actual change is hindered by lack of pedagogical training and a failing governing model.

Making reforms a reality, means change. For change, change agents are of crucial importance. At the European Commission level these have been among others Hywel Ceri Jones, Domenico Lenarduzzi, Angelika Verli, David Coyne, Adam Tyson and in particular Peter van der Hijden. I had the pleasure to meet them all and to work closely with most of them. For the Netherlands Marlies Leegwater, representative for the Netherlands in the Bologna Follow-up Group - the governing body of the Process - from its start until 2012, has been instrumental. Not only because she aligned the main stakeholders in our country, but also initiated the Joint Quality Initiative that resulted in the Dublin Descriptors, which today is the backbone of quality assurance and the model on which all degree programmes are based.

Although, change agents are a crucial element, it is simply not sufficient. Probably the most important factors are trust and confidence and real commitment among all stakeholders in the process, but of those stakeholders in particular higher education staff and students, to make change a reality. These were already indicated as crucial when developing ECTS in its pilot phase from 1989-1995 and this has not changed since.

What then are these conditions for establishing change? Change thought a necessity to allow universities to continue playing its central role in the knowledge-based society and global competition. Change implies real commitment of all involved, in particular academics, but also requires trust and confidence and an appropriate infrastructure. What do theoretical concepts tell? Most relevant for my topic is that of the concept of ‘Theory of Change’, developed from the 2nd half of the 1990s, which is now widely used by governmental sectors, NGOs, companies and institutions to promote social and political change. Theory of Change is defined as ‘a particular approach for making underlying assumption in a change project explicit, and using the desired outcomes of the project as a mechanism to guide project planning, implementation, and evaluation’.⁶¹ It distinguishes desired and actual sequence of outcomes: shorter-term, midterm and longer-term ones. The model allows for measuring effectiveness regarding the changes aimed for, both in process and methods, but also for evidencing next steps. Before starting a process of change, one should be aware of the feasibility of the aims defined in relation to the starting conditions and also to assure oneself that the different steps and final product can be evaluated. This implies that solid, concrete, observable and measurable indicators should be in place, which allow for convincing stakeholders

61 D.J. Reinhold and T.C. Andrews, Change theory and theory of change: what's the difference anyway?, in: *International Journal of STEM Education*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2020.

that the initiative has been implemented according to required standards and has been successful. Success is much more than just knowing ‘what works’, because experience in higher education settings show that blindly copying or scaling will hardly ever work, because contexts differ.⁶²

The Bologna Process claims to realize systemic change. In 2018 a conceptual model was published, which allows for comprehensive insight in the different dimensions of ‘system change’. A distinction is made between (1) structural change, involving policies, practices and resource flows, (2) semi-explicit factors, that is relationships and conditions and power dynamics, and finally (3) transformative change (or implicit factors, phrased as mental models. It highlights the importance of the quality of connections and communications among actors as well as the distribution of decision-making power, authority and the role of formal and informal influence among individuals and formal entities.⁶³ It highlights the importance of the quality of connections and communications among actors as well as the distribution of decision-making power, authority and the role of formal and informal influence among individuals and formal entities.

62 P. Brest, The Power of Theories of Change, in: *Stanford Social Innovation Review, Spring 2010*; D.H.Taplin and H. Clark, *Theory of Change Basics: A Primer on Theory of Change (PDF)*. New York: Actknowledge, March 2012; Center for Theory and Change website: <https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/toc-background/>

63 J. Kania, M. Kramer and P.Denge, *The Waters of Systems Change*, FSG, June 2018. Retrieved from: https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change

The model is in full alignment with the *Tuning governance model: Bologna Process in Higher Education*, which was also published in 2018. Tuning distinguishes the system dimension, and the structure and content dimensions.⁶⁴ Central in the Tuning model are overarching initiatives and (inter) national organisations, and international university networks.

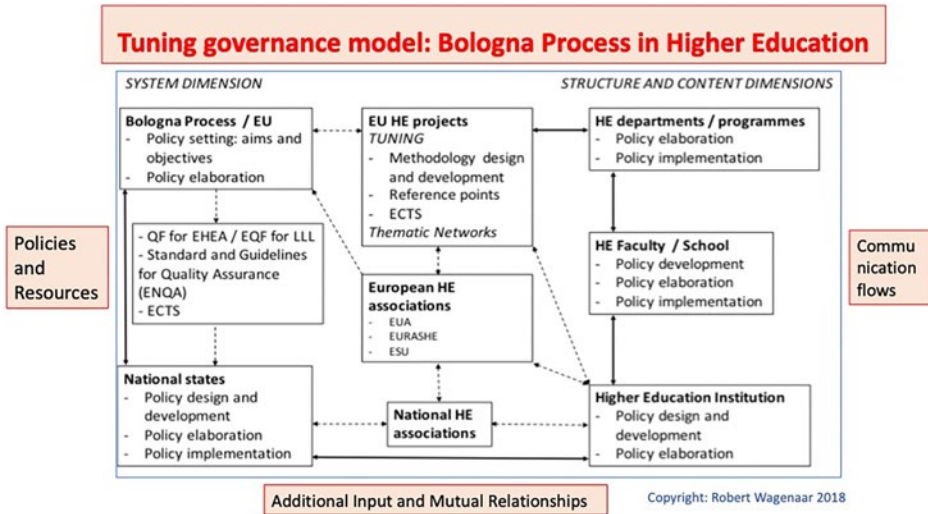


Image 2: Tuning governance model: Bologna Reform Process in Higher Education

These initiatives and organisations represent the semi-explicit and implicit factors. In other words: the informal power

64 Robert Wagenaar, *Quality efforts at the discipline level: Bologna's Tuning process*, in: Ellen Hazelkorn, Alexander C. McCormick, Andrew Gibson and Hamish Coates, Eds., *Research Handbook on Quality, Performance and Accountability in Higher Education*. Cheltenham, UK, Northampton, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018, 275-289.

required for realising change. These theoretical models show that objectives, process and actor behaviour are fully interrelated regarding the effectiveness of the governance model.

As has been explained, change is closely related to governance. New forms, initiated in the 1990s, that is ‘new governance’ and ‘new public management’ clearly associated to neoliberalism, became predominant in particular in Anglo-Saxon countries but also the Netherlands.⁶⁵ Both at the level of government and the civil service, including the ways a university is managed. It implied the introduction of marketization and stimulating competition.

In this context a distinction can be made between the concepts of the ‘traditional university’ and the ‘modern 21st century university’, applying five main indicators: (1) autonomy, (2) management and participation, (3) organization and hierarchy, (4) financing and global orientation, (5) demand orientation. The ‘traditional university’ has limited institutional autonomy and high individual autonomy of the individual academic, while in the modern university high institutional autonomy and restricted autonomy of researchers exist due to institutional goals set by the leadership. Regarding management and participation, the traditional university is on the one hand

⁶⁵ Bram Mellink and Merijn Oudenampsen, *Neoliberalisme. Een Nederlandse Geschiedenis*. Amsterdam: Boom, 2022.

bureaucratic but also requires democratic involvement in decision making processes, while the modern university is said to be more decisive due to its professional and strong management, business related tools and restricted participation of members. It also implies input versus output orientation and focus on research versus responses to 'customer needs. An established feature of new governance and new public management - also visible in the modern university model - is lack of institutional memory and, related, making systematic use of external advisors. In short: in the modern university the business principle 'profit-over-people' is leading and research and education are no longer perceived as the primary processes. As an effect academic freedom is challenged, which calls for a response.

This challenge can be addressed by *re-balancing responsibilities* of the establishment of the European Higher Education Area as the perceived outcome of the Bologna Process. In this context, Tuning has developed a new governance model for initiating change and the implementation of Bologna Reform agenda by all major stakeholders involved. Linking not only international, national governing levels with Higher Education management and academic staff, but also involving peer learning at (trans)

national level and by transnational subject groups of disciplinary experts. This model is reflected in the following image:⁶⁶

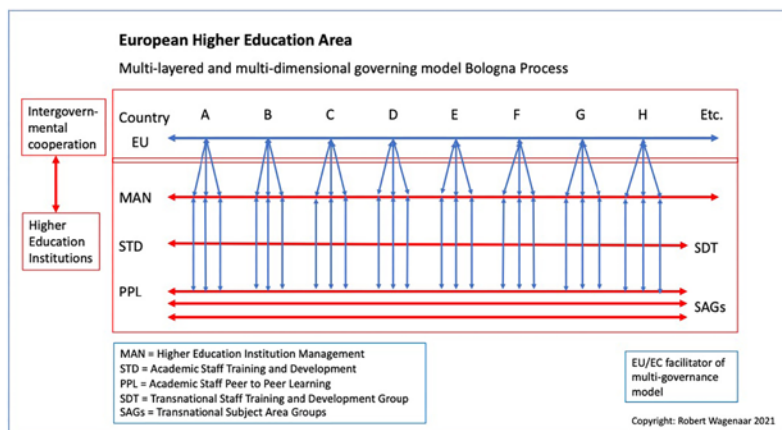


Image 3: Multi-layered and multi-dimensional reform model for the European Higher Education Area

Applying this model should result in not only democratising reform, but also trigger renewed interest and real commitment among higher education institutions and their staffs and students to tailor degree programmes to the needs of learners and society.

66 The image is also included in the publication: Robert Wagenaar, *The Myth of Power: Governing Reform in the Bologna Process of Higher Education*, in: Manja Klemenčič, ed., *From actors to reforms in European (higher) education. Festschrift for Pavel Zgaga*. Higher Education Dynamics Series. Series Editors: Peter Maassen and Johan Muller. Cham: Springer-Nature, 2022, 45-63.

In hindsight, the 1990s and in particular its second half as well as the first years of the present century can be perceived as a pivot point for articulating the need for change but also for offering ways forward. Being now a quarter of a century later not only the impact can be imaged, but also it seems the right moment to set a new agenda. My assumption is that the 2020s will be the next pivot point which will fundamentally change the character and function of the higher education institution.

The fourth industrial revolution (Artificial Intelligence) means further digitalisation, which will have considerable impact on research but also on learning, teaching and assessment.

Research has indicated that more attention should be offered to the development of high-level skills and competences. In 2018 the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) concluded in a report that due to the 2008/9 financial crisis, many jobs have been lost for ever, and have been replaced by jobs which require highly knowledgeable and highly skilled people.⁶⁷ WEXHE has showed that work-based learning is and should be an important integral part of every degree programme. Furthermore, for twenty years, higher education institutions have been asked to take lifelong learning and the regular upscaling of their graduates seriously. So far,

⁶⁷ OECD, *OECD Employment Outlook 2018*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2018.

they have not. In addition, there are the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the role higher education institutions are expected to take up. UNESCO has developed its *Education for Sustainable Development for 2030* roadmap and toolbox.⁶⁸ The OECD expects that higher education institutions will become obsolete as educational providers if they not better cater their degree programmes to societal needs and find an adequate response to new online providers of higher education.⁶⁹

This refers in particular to the global debate taking place about micro-credentials: topics of specialized learning to upgrade knowledge, skills and wider competences. This is high on the agenda at EU level, but also on the agenda of the Bologna Process. The European Commission has published its report on the topic in December 2021 and now it is up to the national authorities and the higher education institutions to take up the

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- 68 UNESCO Education for sustainable development: a roadmap. Paris, 2020: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374802>
UNESCO Education for sustainable development for 2030 toolbox: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development/toolbox>
- 69 Dirk van Damme (OECD/EDU), The Changing Higher Education Landscape and the Role for Quality Assurance. PPT presentation at EQAF Conference, Vienna, 15-17 November 2018.

challenge.⁷⁰ This will imply enhancing flexibility of educational programmes to further integrate this relative new phenomenon. It should result in better alignment between higher education and society, including the world of work.

Future development will also put pressure on more intensive cooperation between higher education institutions in the context of the *European Universities Initiative*. Although, the evaluation of this advanced cooperation is still implemented, it is already known that Consortia have great difficulties to meet the promises made in their applications. The key challenge is to main stream cooperation by integrating existing degree programmes and activities instead of starting additional ones.

This sets an agenda for the upcoming decade which has relevance for all higher education institutions globally. Regarding Dutch higher education my message is threefold:

70 European Commission, *A European approach to micro-credentials. Output of the micro-credentials higher education consultation group: final report*. December 2020. Brussels, February 2021; The report was followed up by its Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability, adopted on 26 June 2022. Retrieved from: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/st-9237-2022-init/en/pdf>; see also the Explanatory Memorandum: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:10b78e47-59aa-11ec-91ac-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/doc_1&format=PDF. Focusing on the recognition of micro-credentials is the policy paper: NUFFIC, *The Rise and Recognition of Micro-Credentials, Stacking Modules and the Future of the Qualification*, developed under the STACQ project, The Hague, March 2022. Retrieved from: <https://ecahe.eu/the-rise-and-recognition-of-micro-credentials/>

1. simplify and uniform,
2. invest and
3. reform.

Simplify and uniform the existing model of higher education. Considering that universities have a key role to play in Lifelong Learning, which can be called the ‘40-year curriculum of learning’, restructure present studies by including a window in all bachelor and master studies. These windows should allow for research and societal orientation, designed as separate tracks. Embrace the idea of work-based learning. Involve potential researchers in research teams and those opting for the societal track should include work placements and electives, to be called micro-credentials. Make these micro-credentials also available at both bachelor and master levels for graduates to update their learning. By combining regular students and returning learners a strong relation is built with the world of work. This allows not only for preparing students best for the workplace but also for a societal role. Such a model should be organized in close consultation with national government and employers’ organizations.

In addition, **uniform and simplify** the degree structure by redressing the design defect made with the implementation of the BA-MA structure from 2002. Firstly, by finding an unequivocal response to the access level towards higher education, the

EQF level 4 issue. And secondly, by undoing the distinction between a 60 ECTS societal master and a 120 ECTS research master for the academic domains of the humanities and the social sciences. It is remarkable that the implementation of this double master model, which is clearly at odds with European and global ones, has not been revisited, evaluated and/or researched in the 17 years that it is in existence.

Although evaluation and research are lacking and real costs/benefits have not been calculated in much detail, it is obvious that the present structure is inefficient and rather expensive, both for the students and society at large. Regarding the master programmes, many classes are simply too small in terms of student numbers to be cost effective. In international comparison, Dutch students take far too long to finish their studies. The pressure to meet the required level (regarding the societal MA) and/or high expectations (regarding the research MA as a result of peer pressure) has resulted in prolonged study periods of up to an average of one academic year or more.⁷¹ As a direct outcome, students finishing a 60 ECTS programmes might meet international standards but they are not awarded the ECTS credit points matching their time investments. The only sensible and fair solution is to integrate the two types in one 120

⁷¹ Information about the success rate of master programme is rare and not up to date. For older data: Adsalvas, Meeste Masterstudenten zijn te langzaam, 21 april 2015: <https://www.advalvas.vu.nl/nieuws/meeste-masterstudenten-zijn-te-langzaam>; See also: Inspectie voor het Onderwijs, *Diploma Behaald*, 2017.

ECTS programme, having two tracks and allow for combined quality review and assessment procedures.

The effectiveness and success of the model can be evidenced by a number of Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree programmes, perceived worldwide as programmes of excellence. A good example in this respect is the MA *Society, Politics and Culture in a Global Context: Euroculture*, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2023.⁷² The programme is based on this double track, a societal and a research one, differentiating the programme only in the second Master year. It has nearly no dropouts and its students are studying on schedule, 85% finishing in two academic years, the others shortly after with only some exceptions due to personal circumstances, despite an intensive mobility schedule of studying in two to three universities. Its concept guarantees an optimum connection to societal needs, both in terms of employability and citizenship, that is civic, social and cultural engagement. It also prepares good researchers; some 17% of the graduates continue their studies with a PhD/doctorate programme in a wide variety of universities and countries. Students are awarded - in comparison to other MA programmes - high grades for their final thesis.

72 Euroculture Consortium Website: <https://www.euroculturemaster.eu/network-2/eu-partner-universities/groningen-nl>. See also: Wagenaar, Robert, Euroculture: A Response to an Identified Need, in: J. de Jong, M. Neuman, S. Neuman-Stanivukovic, M.C. van der Waal, *European Studies and Europe: Twenty Years of Euroculture*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 2020, pp. 143-161. (peer reviewed) DOI: 10.17875/gup2019-1225

The programme obtained accreditation in May 2020 on the basis of the European Approach for Quality Assurance for Joint Programmes validated in the context of the Bologna Process.⁷³

My second recommendation is **invest** in research and higher education quality by establishing a fully interdisciplinary and interfaculty Master programme, followed up by a PhD programme for Higher Education Studies modelled on the hundreds of programmes already existing worldwide. This should result in graduates who are experts in the field, finding employment as researchers –strengthening the needed research capacity– and as policy officers. Such programmes will also result in informed higher education leaders. The expression ‘research driven education’ will get real meaning, instead of being ‘topic driven’.

My third and last recommendation is **reform** the current governing model of the ‘modern university’, because it is not fit-for-purpose to the new challenges outlined. These will require full commitment and involvement from the academics. Their position should be strengthened by putting people-be-

73 Elze Wiertz, *Euroculture Alumni Research Report* (Commissioned research), Groningen, 2019, 23. Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) - The Netherland, *International Joint Master Degree Programme Euroculture: Society, Politics and Culture in a Global Context. Panel Report 21-1-2020*. Retrieved from: https://publicaties.nvaio.net/5eda3f038e009_008618%20rapport%20RUG%20wo-ma%20Europese%20Studies%20-%20Euroculture%20Society%20Politics%20and%20Culture.pdf

fore-profit. Focus should be more on 'content' not mainly on processes and procedures. Limit bureaucracy, also in quality assurance, by building on trust and confidence, by acknowledging fully that the university is an organization of professionals, who deserve respect. Align academics in national and international contexts to stimulate open discussions about developments in their fields of studies. The *European Universities Initiative* might be an excellent vehicle in this context. Apply in this context the *Multi-layered and multi-dimensional model for the European Higher Education Area* as developed by Tuning to initiate and implement change, as showed above.

The title of this inaugural lecture *Towards the end of the traditional university* is intentionally followed up by a question mark. In its subtitle, *Rethinking the higher educational model: research and workplace focused* it makes the connection between research and societal needs, preparing students and graduates in the best possible way to guarantee personal success and prosperity, but also –implicitly– contribute to a robust democratic society and successful welfare state. In a world in which change is taking place at tremendous speed, academia and the workplace are indispensable partners as mutual sources of continuous inspiration. Respecting academic freedom as a basic principle, combining forces seems the way forward if higher education institutions want to have a bright future in the long run.

Ten slotte. Ik ben het College van Bestuur zeer erkentelijk dat het de instelling van deze leerstoel heeft gefaciliteerd via het Groninger Universiteitsfonds. Behalve een blijk van persoonlijke erkenning is de leerstoel bedoeld als een bevestiging van de betekenis en het belang van de *International Tuning Academy* voor het hoger onderwijsveld in het algemeen en de Groningse Universiteit in het bijzonder.

Met de *International Tuning Academy* heeft de Universiteit Groningen een uniek expertisecentrum in huis, inclusief een eigen tijdschrift van eminent wetenschappelijke statuur, op het gebied van de stelselmatige innovatie van hoger onderwijs op basis van gedegen onderzoek, wereldwijde reflectie door en tussen academici en andere directbetrokkenen, inclusief studenten, waarbij ingespeeld wordt op zowel wetenschappelijke als maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen. Alle reden om trots te zijn en dit kostbare bezit te koesteren. Men kan niet op elk gebied een wereldspeler zijn, maar met betrekking tot de problematiek die Tuning heeft geagendeerd, wordt Groningen als zodanig gepercipieerd.

Ik heb gezegd.

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Robert Wagenaar is a Professor of History and Politics of Higher Education and Director of the International Tuning Academy at the University of Groningen (NL).

The Academy is an education and research centre with focus on the reform of higher education programmes. It runs a bi-annual SCOPUS, ERIC, Web of Science indexed *Tuning Journal for Higher Education*. Since 2005 he is the President of a Consortium of 12 universities that offer the successful two-years Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree *Society, Politics and Culture in Global Context: Euroculture*. His research interest is in higher education innovation and policy making.

