

# WOX



## Is Nijmegen ready for internationals?



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Hasret Aydemir  
verzekeringsarts  
in opleiding

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ILLUSTRATON COVER: JEROEN MURRÉ

# EDITORIAL

## MIXING

"I feel our house could just as well be located in Australia or in China," says Danish student Klaus Asbjørn Madsen on page 31 of this Vox. "It simply has nothing to do with the Netherlands." The Spatial Planning student is disappointed in Nijmegen. He ended up in a mentor group and a house filled only with international students, without a single Dutch student in sight. And he'd taken so much trouble to learn the language – by watching Zondag met Lubach every Sunday back in Denmark – to make it easier to mix. Madsen's experience is not unusual. Internationals students are keen to meet the Dutch. One in seven first-year students on Campus is now non-Dutch. Why is it that internationals still feel isolated in Nijmegen?

This question raises another one: Are the Campus and city ready for so many students (and researchers) from other corners of the world? This is the theme of this Vox edition. Figures show that the vast majority of foreigners are quick to leave Nijmegen once they graduate. Professor of Physics Alexey Kimel from Saint-Petersburg (page 16) plans to stay for now. His opinion of Nijmegen is overwhelmingly positive: "Radboud University is the best place to work." But he also admits that he still does his shopping in Russia – via the Internet.

Annemarie Haverkamp  
Editor-in-Chief Vox



## STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS REMAIN STAUNCHLY DUTCH

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## ABOVE PAR

### AKKU STUDENT UNION



PHOTO: TOM HESSELS

Recent and less recent history shows that Nijmegen students are not so easy to mobilise. This did not prevent about 150 students from gathering on 24 September for the official launch of the WOinActie week on the Erasmusplein. Such enthusiasm was largely due to members of the AKKU student union, who distributed flyers, created banners, and gave away little red squares – action buttons – to Radboud University students and employees.

“Education is not for the elite,” President Mirande van de Burgt shouted into the microphone. “We have to call the Minister to order.” Her words were met with loud applause.

## DULY NOTED

**“It’s rash to boast about it like that, as if it will solve the Alzheimer’s problem.”**

**Marcel Olde Rikkert**, Professor of Geriatrics, responded on 17 September in Nieuwsuur to statements by Charlotte Teunissen. The AMC Professor had said that a blood test would be available within a year that would make it easy to diagnose Alzheimer’s. “Nonsense,” says Olde Rikkert. And: “A slip of the tongue by a young professor.”

# IN THE NEWS

DAY-TO-DAY  
NEWS:  
[VOXWEB.NL/](http://VOXWEB.NL/)  
INTERNATIONAL

**New addition to the team** On 11 September, NEC presented its new player at the Radboud Sports Centre: Mike Trésor Ndayishimiye. NEC chose the Campus as a location to emphasise its link with Radboud University. Although NEC introduced the Belgian top athlete as a unique asset for the team, there were few spectators. Even the delegation from student football association FC Kunde had to admit they’d never heard of Ndayishimiye before. Perhaps presenting him at 8.30 a.m. wasn’t the best timing to attract a big crowd.



PHOTO: ROBIN JACOBI

International students meet at this academic year’s first Meet and Eat on 5 September. The meeting took place at the Student Chaplaincy and attracted over 50 international students.



Football club NEC presents their new player

**Lecture times** Pressing the snooze button in the morning is no longer an option. Early morning lectures at Radboud University now start at 8.30 a.m. instead of 8.45 a.m. The reason: the need to spread the morning rush hour. "There's still no space on the bus," noted one student. The change in lecture times will take some getting used to for students who still live at home. "5.30 a.m. is very early to get up." HAN students got luckier: their lectures now start fifteen minutes later, at 9 a.m.

**BSA** Minister Van Engelshoven wants universities to lower their BSA requirement to maximum 40 study credits. This has provoked quite an outcry: "A Pyrrhic victory for students," wrote Radboud Sociologist Niels Spierings in an opinion article, as the measure will only increase study pressure later in the programme. Wilma de Koning, Vice President of Radboud University, admitted in a column that she was 'surprised, baffled and irritated' by the sudden measure.

**Smartphone ban** As the debate on a smoke-free Campus continues to rage, during his opening speech of the academic year Rector Han van Krieken declared his intention to combat the smartphone. Stress, addiction and concentration problems prompted him to promote a mobile-free Campus. Students don't seem keen to leave their digital friend at home: "Students are adults who must take responsibility for their own study behaviour," a student told Vox.

**Bright(safe)space** Is Big Brightspace watching you? Blackboard's replacement apparently includes a not entirely transparent function that makes data about students' study behaviour accessible to their lecturers. Very convenient, argued Brightspace project leader Erik Reinders, as it makes it possible to offer students customised guidance. But worrying, thought students Niek Steenhuis and Bas van der Zandt, because the system violates student privacy. The function has now been switched off.

**Open Access** Radboud University researchers are enthusiastic: as of 1 January 2020, all publications arising from funds issued by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) must be published in open access journals. "A lot of laboratories in emerging countries that have smaller budgets can now easily access the latest research results, without having to pay any subscription fees," commented a delighted Theo Rasing, Professor in Experimental Physics.

**Bats** Residents of the SSH& complex Sterrenbosch have been advised to shut their windows at night. Those who don't, run the risk of waking up in the morning to find a bat in their room. According to complex manager Gerie Verhoeven, these nocturnal visitors are not unusual, but he found the five bats a student recently discovered in her room a bit extreme.



# MORE AND M COME FR



# MORE STUDENTS FROM ABROAD

Radboud University is more international than ever. One in seven first-year students comes from outside the Netherlands. These students can choose from thirteen English-taught Bachelor's programmes. A great development, of course. But isn't it getting to be a bit much?

**Text:** Annemarie Haverkamp en Martine Zuidweg  
**Illustration:** JeRoen Murré

**J**ust walk around Campus for a while, and listen. You'll hear people speaking English, German, Spanish, sometimes French. Ten years ago this would have been unheard of. In 2016, internationalisation on Campus took a leap forward with six new English-taught Bachelor's programmes. This had immediate consequences for the number of international students in Nijmegen: suddenly one in five new students came from abroad. A year earlier, it was one in ten. This year the University expects to welcome 853 international Bachelor's students and 596 exchange students.

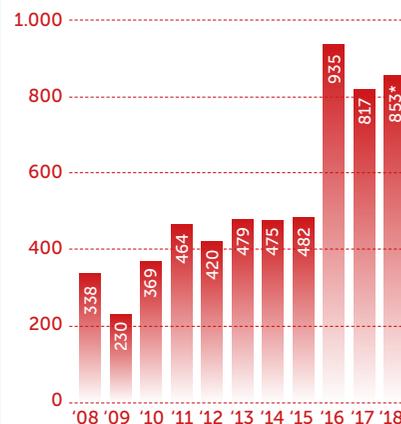
The number of English-taught Bachelor's programmes has also increased, from 6 to 13. And this number is expected to continue to grow. By 2020, the Science Faculty, a pioneer in this field, wants to teach all its programmes in English. The growing number of English-taught Bachelor's programmes, in particular Psychology programmes, has attracted a lot of Germans to the City on the Waal.

Not everyone is equally enthusiastic about the inflow of international students. In May, the Dutch universities (united under the umbrella of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU)) agreed to take steps to

## THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT: THE NUMBERS

### NUMBER OF NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

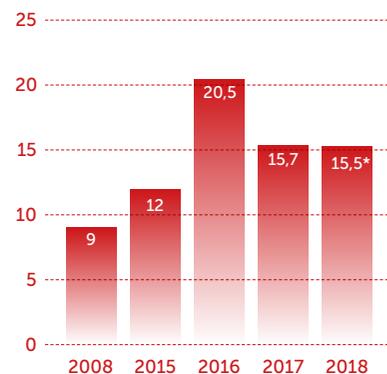
Reference date 1 October



This does not include the large group of exchange students. In the academic year 2016-2017 Radboud University welcomed 954 new exchange students.

### PERCENTAGE OF NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Reference date 1 October



The 2016 peak was due to the enormous boost in enrolments at the Psychology department. This figure dropped with the introduction of the numerus fixus.

\*final figures for 2018 to be announced

restrict the unbridled increase in student numbers. In particular, they intend to focus on reducing the number of international students, who represent two thirds of the increase. The reason: the government budget for higher education hasn't increased to meet the growing student numbers for years now, which means there is less and less money available per student. Ultimately, this is a threat to teaching quality.

The VSNU forwarded their agreement to the Minister of Education, Ingrid van Engelshoven, who responded by sending her own vision on internationalisation to the House of Representatives. In this document, the Minister encourages internationalisation, but states that she is also aware of the problems. She expresses her concern about the level of English proficiency in higher education, the accessibility of certain programmes, and universities being tempted to offer English-taught tracks in an attempt to earn quick cash from international students.

**Numerus fixus**

Two years ago, the Nijmegen Psychology department was shocked to discover that their brand-new English-taught programme had attracted hundreds of international students. It responded by quickly introducing a numerus

fixus for the following year. Van Engelshoven is considering the possibility of introducing a selection process for international students. In her New Year's speech, Rector Magnificus of the University of Amsterdam Karen Maex challenged the Minister to formulate 'instruments'. She said what the universities didn't want were lecture halls with 80% of the students coming from Germany and China. Selection

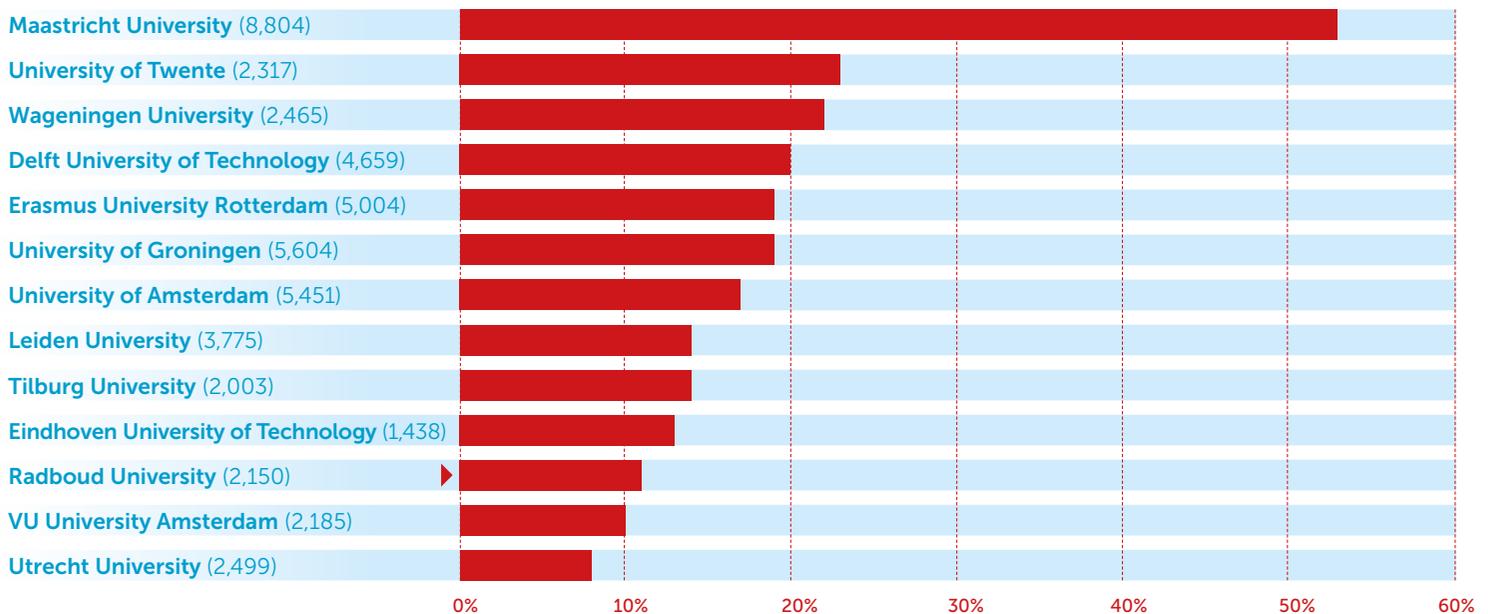
## ANGLICISATION

An English-taught track must have added value, says Minister of Education Van Engelshoven, otherwise it's better for study programmes not to offer it.

Shortly before the Minister expressed her opinion on the matter (in June), the Universities of Twente and Maastricht were taken to court by the Beter Onderwijs Nederland association (Better Education in the Netherlands, BON). The institutions were charged with 'causing excessive damage' by unnecessarily offering English-taught programmes. The association claimed that by doing so, the universities failed to promote their students' Dutch proficiency, which was illegal, according to BON. However, the judge ruled that a ban on English-taught programmes was unnecessary, and universities were more than capable of deciding such matters for themselves.

## THE MINISTER IS CONSIDERING INTRODUCING A SELECTION PROCESS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

PERCENTAGE (OF ENTIRE STUDENT POPULATION) OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FOR EACH UNIVERSITY IN THE 2017-2018 ACADEMIC YEAR (student numbers in brackets)



## Is Nijmegen ready?

**Loes Wolters (19), Student of Classical Languages and Cultures and resident at Vossenveld (with more than 40% international students)**

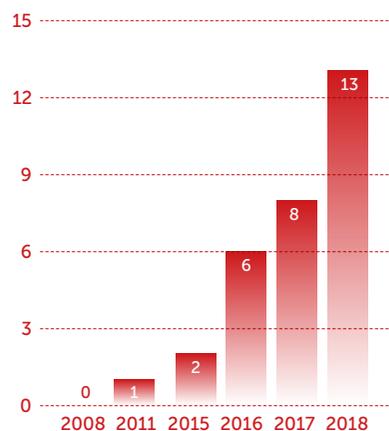
"There's a lot of English spoken at Vossenveld, where I live. We have a lot of Germans, of course, but also Chinese and Japanese students. I don't see it as a problem at all. I'm good at languages, and I like to hear people speak English, or German or French. It's a good opportunity for me to practise my language skills, ha ha!

There are more and more international students. Housing is becoming a problem. For Dutch students too. International students are given priority, which Dutch students sometimes complain about.

Until recently, there were two German students on our corridor. Now there's one. We do lots of things together, like cooking and going out, and they usually join in. But my friends from other corridors tell me international students who live there tend to be more isolated. Especially in corridors where most of the students are Dutch. I assume this has to do with the language barrier. Not all foreign students are fluent in English. Asian students, for instance, experience quite a culture shock, I think, when they come here. Maybe this makes you tend to retreat into your own group. These are people you know, they make you feel safe. I think it would be good if people mingled more. But it's not something you can impose, as SSH& or as a university."



NUMBER OF ENGLISH-TAUGHT BACHELOR'S PROGRAMMES



ENGLISH-TAUGHT BACHELOR'S PROGRAMMES AT RADOUD UNIVERSITY

- American Studies
- Arts and Culture Studies
- Artificial Intelligence
- Biology
- Business Administration
- Chemistry
- Computing Science
- Economics and Business Economics
- English Language and Culture
- International Business Communication
- Molecular Life Science
- Psychology
- Philosophy, Politics and Society

on the basis of nationality is not an option, as this would amount to discrimination. In Nijmegen, there are now three English programmes with a numerus fixus: Psychology, Artificial Intelligence and Biology.

The problems caused by a large influx of foreign students are not limited to the Netherlands. In Denmark, the Minister of Education recently announced that steps would be taken to reduce the influx. The reason: too many students 'take advantage' of free Danish education, only to return to their country of origin after graduation. We're lining the pockets of the labour market in other EU countries, said the Danish Minister in a press conference. The Danes now want to check which international graduates leave soon after completing their English or Danish study programme, or are unable to find work. They then plan to introduce a 'labour market fixus' for these study programmes.

In the Netherlands, international students tend to stick around after graduating, as apparent from new figures by the educational organisation Nuffic. One year after graduation, 60% of internationals still live in the Netherlands. Five years later, 20% of them still do. Compare this with Denmark, where two years after graduation there are only 30% of internationals left. However, the same Nuffic figures also show that internationals are quick to leave Nijmegen. Nijmegen internationals may remain in the Netherlands after graduation, but they quickly relocate to the Randstad region or to a technology hub like Eindhoven (See also: page 21)

### Tents

In September, students occupied the University of Groningen Academy Building. They demanded that the Board of the University devise a solution (preferably for free) for international students forced to sleep in tents, and speak up against the current grant system. The University had previously sent its staff a letter, asking them to welcome an international student into their home.

The Nijmegen organisation SSH& is also struggling to keep up with demand. The student housing agency found accommodation for eight hundred new international students in 'short-stay' accommodation: rooms for one year. If students want to stay longer, they have to find regular accommodation for themselves.

The International Office found accommodation for the remaining 200 students on the private rental market. "To do so we partnered up with private parties, such as Dornick BV, owned by real estate agent Ton Hendriks, Guesthouse Nijmegen and Bungalow Park De Zeven Heuvelen," said Head of the International Office Wessel Meijer.

Nijmegen doesn't have such pressing accommodation problems as Groningen. "In Nijmegen, the number of international students isn't growing by leaps and bounds like it is in Groningen, Wageningen, Delft and Amsterdam," says Meijer. "This makes it easier to respond to the demand."

But is Nijmegen ready for so many international students? Vox decided to find out. ★

Is Nijmegen ready for so many internationals? Not quite, as apparent from a walk through the city with two Spaniards, a German, and a French student.

Text: Martine Zuidweg / Photo's: Erik van 't Hullenaar



# THE QUEST FOR THE

**T**ake two young men from Barcelona and put them down in the cosmetics department of the Nijmegen HEMA store. They're looking for sausage, having heard that this was a local delicacy. "Sorry, we don't sell meat here," says the cosmetics lady in a motherly tone, "for that you really have to go to the supermarket." The two Spaniards look at each other. "You don't sell any food here at all?" asks Ferran Sebastian, with his grey hoodie the more talkative of the two. In response the store clerk directs them to the food department at the back of the HEMA. Once there, Sebastian and his friend, Sergi Prat, ask another employee, who sends them back to the smoked sausage counter at the front entrance.

A young sales assistant with a brown pony tail listens to their order with a smile on her face. Like a true tour guide, she explains to her clients that smoked sausage is not a Nijmegen speciality, but a HEMA speciality, which can be bought all over the country. "What's in it?" asks Sebastian. Oh. The sales assistant briefly stares at her

customers with big eyes. Then she resolutely cuts the sausage in two and shows the cross-section to the Spaniards. "Look," she says triumphantly, "That's what's in it." And: "Want to try a piece?"

## Town Hall

Is Nijmegen ready for so many internationals? Vox decided to find out by taking four international students on a walk through the centre of Nijmegen. The students were given tasks to complete: Borrow a book by Hella Haasse from the city library. Or: apply for a citizen service number (BSN) at the Town Hall. Choose a movie playing at LUX and go and see it together. Or, as we've seen: Buy a smoked sausage at the HEMA. The first thing we immediately noticed: all the people approached by our guinea pigs speak remarkably good English. From the young HEMA sales assistant to the middle-aged librarian. Prat: "People's English is much worse in Barcelona. When I first walked through the city, I was really surprised by how good it is here."



# THE HEMA SAUSAGE



## 'WANT TO TRY A PIECE?'

And yet, it would be going too far to say that Nijmegen is ready to welcome a multitude of international visitors. Many facilities are not really accessible to foreigners, as apparent from a walk through the city centre with the four students. For example, information signs are usually only written in Dutch. And this leads to more problems than you might think.

As the German Greta Soest browses through De Mariëburg library in search of a book by Hella Haasse, she happens to run into a library assistant. "A book by Hella Haasse? Yes, of course, just follow me." The book, entitled *Oeroeg*, is quickly found, but what next? The

↖ Ferran Sebastian

'No one came to  
the information  
desk'

## 'WHEN PEOPLE ARE SO FRIENDLY, IT'S NO PROBLEM TO ASK FOR HELP'

librarian is long gone. "I think I need a library card or something," says the student doubtfully. She looks around until she sees an information desk. Confidently, she goes up to it. She's the only customer in sight, so this probably won't take long. It's early still, only 10.30 a.m. She waits 5 minutes. 8 minutes. 10 minutes. All this time, right next to her, an information board states in Dutch: "One of our staff will be here to help you from 11 a.m. onwards."

### Appointment

One door further, at the Stadswinkel of the Municipality of Nijmegen, the entrance is flanked by two large white pillars with the words 'Please register here' in Dutch. Ferran Sebastian walks right past them. But he isn't shy and accosts an employee in the hall. "You have to get a ticket over there," says the man in English as he gestures towards the white pillars. Clearly, he doesn't trust the Spaniard to do this himself, since he walks in front of him and pulls out a ticket for him. Just as well, it turns out, as Sebastian would have had a hard time choosing between the two options in Dutch: "You have an appointment" and "You don't have an appointment".

Then there's the bus timetable. Manon Delestre, Master's student from France, tries to find out when the bus leaves for Central Station. She squints at the information board at the Kelfkenbos bus stop. "What do you think this a and this e after the times mean?" she wonders out loud. "And what's the difference between these two itineraries?" She asks for help from Greta Soest, who already understands a bit of Dutch. Together they peer at the timetable crowned by the words 'alternative timetable'. "Hmm. What does that mean?" Delestre asks the German student. "Out of order, maybe?" the latter answers.

A little later Soest finds the answer. "It probably has something to do with Christmas or something." Delestre looks relieved. Now a bus ticket. "That's all right. I'll just buy one from the bus driver." Unfortunately, without an OV chip card, she won't get far.

### Menu

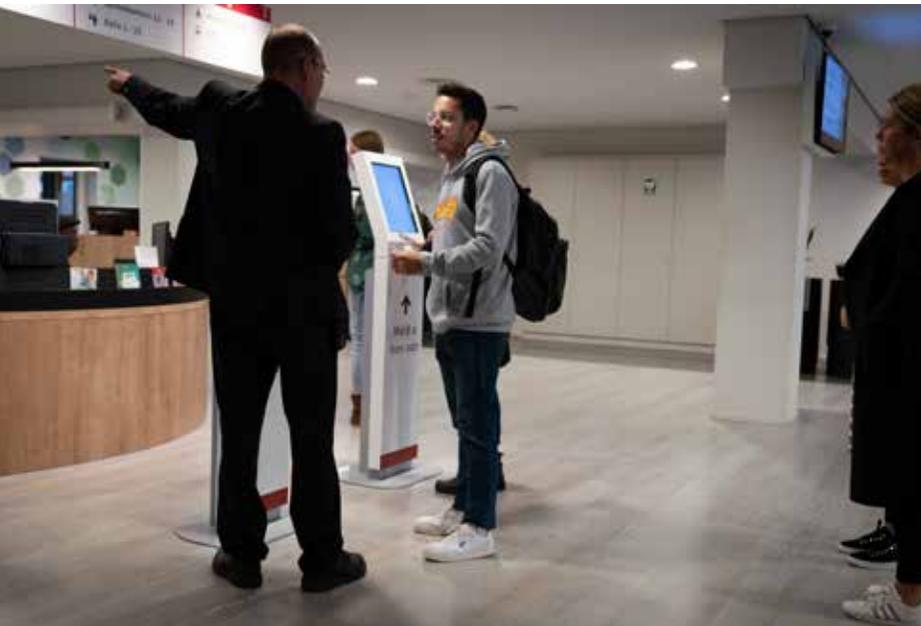
Yes, it can be hard sometimes, if you don't speak Dutch, says Sebastian later as he and the other three students sit



'What does it  
mean: afwijkende  
dienstregeling?'

down for a chat at the café of the LUX cultural centre. "We like to go to café Faber on the Houtstraat, but they don't have any menus in English. That makes it twice as hard: first someone has to translate the options for you, and then you still have to choose something." Soest chimes in that it would be great if restaurants and cafés had a few menus in English. "One or two would be enough. We can just pass them around."

The four students agree that Nijmegen inhabitants make up for a lot of the problems they encounter. "People here are incredibly kind. So helpful. As soon as they see you looking lost, they come and help," says Delestre. The others nod. Sebastian: "I was with a friend at the AH XL. We were at the cash counter and had lots of shopping in our trolley. It turned out we couldn't use our VISA card to pay. There we were, emptying all our pockets. We got out



Getting a ticket at the Stadswinkel



Choosing a film at the LUX film centre

all the coins we had. As I looked behind me, I saw quite a queue had formed. I had expected to see angry faces, but people were just smiling in a friendly way, looking at us as if to say: 'Take your time!'

All this to say that the four international students don't mind so much not understanding all the information signs. "With such open and friendly people, it's no trouble to ask for help," says Soest.

Still, the afternoon ends with a bit of a disappointment. It turns out the film they all want to see this weekend, *Incredibles II*, is screened on Sunday, but only in Dutch. The four peer at the Dutch LUX brochure with film titles and times. Sebastian has an idea: "Of course, we could always skip the lecture and go see the English version on Monday morning." \*

## Is Nijmegen ready?

**Hubert Bruls,  
Mayor of Nijmegen**

"In Nijmegen, we have a lot more German visitors than international students. Yet this doesn't mean we've translated all the information signs into German, and nor will we translate them into English. Most Nijmegen inhabitants speak good English and are more than willing to help. In 1989, I spent some time in Italy. Well, I can tell you that the English there was a lot worse. But adjustment is what it's all about when you spend time abroad.

Of course, we are talking to Radboud University, Radboud university medical center and HAN University for Applied Sciences about internationalisation. One of the challenges is accommodation. Ideally, we'd like international students to find a room while they're still in their home country. But in order to meet the existing demand, it makes sense to put internationals together. At the same time, they prefer to mingle with the Dutch, and this presents a dilemma. Is there a limit to the increasing number of international students? This is certainly a question we need to ask. As a city, Nijmegen can't continue to meet the growing demand with its existing accommodation. Students will have to move outside the city, even though they don't want to. We are proud of the fact that so many international students want to come to Nijmegen, but it's also our responsibility to maintain a balance and protect the quality of life in the city."

# NEW LIFE ACROSS THE BORDER

Making contact with neighbours is easier than in Belgium. Nijmegen is a great place to raise children. The beautiful autumn days last longer here than in Saint Petersburg. Three couples talk about the advantages of living and working in Nijmegen – and about what they miss.

Text: Ken Lambeets / Photo's: Bert Beelen

## Dries Raeymaekers and Anneleen Arnout exchanged **Antwerp** for Nijmegen

**In April 2017 Dries Raeymaekers and Anneleen Arnout, both lecturers in History, relocated from Antwerp to Nijmegen. "We love the ferries here."**

Dries Raeymaekers has been commuting between Belgium and Nijmegen since 2012. He used to rent a room in the City on the Waal, and spent three or four nights a week here. When Anneleen Arnout completed her PhD and also found a job at Radboud University, the couple moved to Bottendaal.

**Do you like living in Nijmegen?**

She: "In Nijmegen you can really see the seasons unfold. In spring, there are flowers everywhere, and in the autumn it's a glorious display of colours. In the winter, it gets dark early and it feels more like we are living in a small city, because there isn't so much to do."

He: "We sometimes miss the bustle of the big city. In Antwerp, there are trams and people live closely packed together. On the other hand, there is more nature here. My lungs are much happier since we moved (he laughs)."

She: "We like to go for a walk in Kronenburger Park,

on the Veluwe, in the Ooijpolder or on the island in the Waal. In the summer we cycle a lot. We love the ferries here, and we've discovered a great ice-cream parlour in Gendt."

**Do you notice any cultural differences?**

She: "Yes, lots! The Dutch tend to be more positive and more open. In shops, restaurants, elevators and trains, people talk to each other. We also find it easier to make contact with our neighbours than in Belgium."

He: "Sometimes it gets to be a bit much. In shops we often get comments like: 'A Belgian, how nice!' Of course it's meant well, but

sometimes you don't need to keep on hearing it."

**Do you mostly interact with Dutch people or are you more into the international scene?**

He: "As Belgians, we're not foreign enough to belong with the internationals, but we're not like the Dutch either. Because we speak the same language, people assume we understand everything. In conversations about Dutch TV shows, for example, people don't bother to give us any context, even though we have as much trouble following what's going on as other international colleagues."

**What do you miss most?**

She: "The food! This is something the Dutch have less time and attention for. At the cafeteria, they call a grilled cheese sandwich with mozzarella a sandwich 'deluxe', but it doesn't seem particularly luxurious to us. And I miss Belgian bread."

**Do you plan to stay in Nijmegen?**

She: "Dries has a permanent contract and we like working here, but you never know what life may bring."

He: "We could easily go back to Belgium. Our social life is still largely there, but for now, we're happy here."



## PARTNER GETS HELP IN LOOKING FOR A JOB

Radboud University wants international employees and their partners to feel at home in Nijmegen. This is why the University launched a dual career service two years ago. All Radboud University vacancies in English now mention the fact that an international employee's partner is entitled to help and guidance. New employees are informed about the dual career service in an e-mail and shortly with an app. Willemijn Nijboer: "Everyone is welcome, but so far, we've mostly been approached by academic staff members." Dual career officer Nijboer uses an orientation form to find out about her clients' background, work experience and wishes. Based on this information, she suggests specific solutions. "I don't look for vacancies myself, but I might, for instance, give them a list of international

companies that hire expats. I point clients to training courses, networking events, and the option of having their CV checked. I also tell them they can follow a short Dutch course at Radboud in'to Languages." In its first and second years, the dual career service helped respectively 29 and 32 people from all corners of the world. When advising her clients, Nijboer takes their origins into account. "Americans don't have a problem commuting an hour and a half for a job in Amsterdam, while Belgians and Germans experience this kind of distance as much longer." From the feedback she gets, Nijboer knows that 12 of the 29 clients in the first year have now found a job. "The real figure may be higher," she says. "But what's more important

is that the new employee and his or her family feel welcome, supported, and at home in Nijmegen." After all, not everyone who visits the dual career officer is looking for a job. "I often get questions about children," says Nijboer. "Things like: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the International School in Arnhem?" People who only plan to stay in Nijmegen for six months also appreciate practical tips on language and cycling courses, tax surcharges or child day-care. "I sometimes get asked funny questions," says Nijboer. "Like 'Which dog walking service would you recommend?' Or 'Where can I buy cheesecloth?' It's really fun to find answers to these questions!"

**Nearly fifteen years ago, the Kimels moved from Saint-Petersburg to Nijmegen. "Our older daughter usually answers in Dutch."**

In suburbial Malden, the TV is set to a Russian channel. The Russian national football team is beating the Czech Republic 5-1. This draws a smile from Professor of Experimental Physics Alexey Kimel, who's worked at Radboud University since 2002. Two years later, he was joined by his wife, physician Olga Anisimova, and their oldest daughter. The family

later relocated from Nijmegen to Malden.

**What are the biggest cultural differences?**

He: "In the former Soviet Union, it was perfectly normal to say to the speaker at a conference: 'You're talking complete nonsense!' In the Netherlands, people tend to see it as a personal attack."

**Do you go back a lot?**

She: "We always go back in the summer and at Christmas time, sometimes more often."

He: "I often have to go to Russia for my work, and I usually do my shopping via

the Internet. Actually, I probably spend more time in the centre of Saint-Petersburg or Moscow than in the centre of Nijmegen (he laughs)."

**What about your children?**

She: "Our youngest, who was born here, attends primary school De Komeet in Malden. Our older daughter goes to school in Nijmegen and does athletics. So do I, in the recreational group."

He: "We speak Russian at home. Our oldest daughter usually answers in Dutch. Some things are easier to explain in Russian, others in Dutch."

**What do you miss most?**

She: "The rich cultural life. When we are in Saint-Petersburg, we always go to an exhibition or a show." He: "I'm jealous of my colleagues who can teach in their mother tongue. In Russian, I can say so much more and I understand the students better. Sometimes I wish I could spend more time in Russia, but we had our reasons for coming here."

**Do you plan to go back to Russia one day?**

She: "Our parents are getting older and need our attention. But going back is complicated. There are things I really miss, but we

also had good reasons for coming to the Netherlands." He: "Russia is not an easy country to live in. Everything can flip 180 degrees from one day to the next. So far, I think Radboud University is the best place in the world to work: I have great colleagues from all over the world. And another thing: In Saint Petersburg, the autumn is the most beautiful season, but it only lasts two or three weeks. After that it's one cold, grey, depressing winter. Luckily, autumn lasts longer here (he laughs)."

## The Kimel family left Saint-Petersburg behind





## Christoph Lüthy and Carla Rita Palmerino left **Basel and Rome**

**More than twenty years ago, Philosophers Christoph Lüthy and Carla Rita Palmerino exchanged respectively Basel in Switzerland (via stopovers in England, the US, Italy, and Germany) and Rome in Italy for Nijmegen. "We've watched the city become more attractive over the years."**

Dean Christoph Lüthy and Professor Carla Rita Palmerino met in 1996, at a "conference for fanatics" in Scotland. "Christoph already knew he was coming here," says Carla Rita. "A year later, I also found a job in Nijmegen."

### ***When did you decide to settle here?***

She: "Christoph and I both have a background in philosophy and history of science and Radboud University is the only place in the world with a Centre for the History of Philosophy and Science. Not long after we moved, our first child was born, and Nijmegen turned out to be a good place to raise children."

He: "It also helps that we don't have a common place to go back to, because we come from different countries."

### ***What was your first impression of the city?***

He: "Nijmegen is a very friendly city with the cheerfulness and pragmatism so typical of the Netherlands. We've watched the city grow more attractive with the years. LUX appeared, Plein 1944 underwent a transformation, and for two years now, we have had the Spiegelwaal: a strong symbol of Dutch efficiency."

She: "I missed the background noise of Rome. Christoph sometimes asked me whether I could hear the birds singing, but I was used to filtering out the noise." What language do you speak among yourselves and with your two children?

He: "Italian. We wouldn't get far with Swiss German." She: "It's always been our common language."

He: "I seduced her in Italian (he laughs)."

### ***You've lived in Nijmegen for a long time. Have you become a little bit Dutch in the process?***

He: "May I say something a bit philosophical? I really enjoy putting down roots in a country, learning to function well, and speaking the language, but without experiencing the total identification of being a citizen of this country. This ironic distance I have from daily life, this is something that as an intellectual I would like to have towards my life in general."

She: "I, on the other hand, feel Dutch in many ways. But I do struggle with the fact that I can't vote in parliamentary elections."

### ***After twenty years in the Netherlands, do people sometimes still view you as foreigners?***

He: "Interestingly enough, despite our 'migrant background', we aren't viewed as members of an ethnic minority. Maybe because we come from so-called 'holiday countries'."

She: "My accent immediately betrays my Southern European origins, but the Dutch like foreigners who speak their language well. What I do hear a lot is 'You come from such a beautiful country. What are you doing here?'"

He: "To which we answer that we feel at home here."



# THEY LEAVE THE NEST AFTER THEY GRADUATE

Where do international students go after graduation? Most of them leave Nijmegen, as apparent from new figures. Vox wonders why – and spoke to three international graduates who decided to stay.

**Text:** Mickey Steijaert / **Images:** Roel Venderbosch



**N**ijmegen's not a popular place for international graduates to settle. This is the overwhelming conclusion from statistics on where international students settle after graduation. Many internationals do stay in the Netherlands after graduating from Radboud University. But five years after graduation, the large majority of them no longer live in Nijmegen, but in the Randstad or in technology hubs like Eindhoven.

For the past few years, Nuffic, the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education, has mapped how many international students remain in the Netherlands after graduation. This is becoming more relevant as the number of international students continues to grow. It would be a pity to see all these talented people leave the country as soon as they graduate. The Dutch government couldn't agree more, and last year's coalition agreement included the intention to make efforts to retain international talent in the Netherlands. Nuffic recently published new figures on internationals who graduated in the Netherlands between 2006 and 2013. Nuffic follows students for five years after graduation, which is why more recent cohorts are not included.

The figures clearly show that the international graduates who do stay are not likely to settle in Nijmegen. If we look at the whole country, we see that five years after graduation, 21,000 internationals still live in the Netherlands. Of these, only 475 live in Nijmegen. This is in sharp contrast to other cities, in particular Amsterdam (5130). But also cities like Utrecht (1195) and Eindhoven (880) score much

## FIVE YEARS AFTER GRADUATION THE VAST MAJORITY NO LONGER LIVES IN NIJMEGEN

better when it comes to international graduates. It should be noted, in this context, that Radboud University has relatively few international students to start with. In 2013, the University awarded 525 diplomas to international students, half as many as the University of Amsterdam (1083). However, the number of international students is even lower in Eindhoven. In 2013, 239 internationals graduated from Eindhoven University of Technology. And yet, Eindhoven is now home to 400 more international graduates from the 2006-2013 cohorts. Or take Utrecht University, that in 2013 awarded 539 diplomas to international students, only 14 more than Nijmegen. Yet Utrecht is home to over 700 more international graduates.



### THEY DID DECIDE TO STAY

## 'Back in Brazil it felt as if my mission was not yet complete'

"I'm originally from Brasilia in Brazil. Thanks to Science without Borders, I was given the opportunity to spend one year of my Bachelor's programme abroad. As I'm interested in water management, the Netherlands was a logical choice. I started out in Breda. After returning to Brazil, I felt as if I hadn't yet completed

my mission – there were still so many opportunities for me in the Netherlands. I came back and enrolled in the Master's programme in Water and Environment in Nijmegen. I thought I would return to Brazil after completing my Master's programme, but during a Summer School in Spain, I found myself



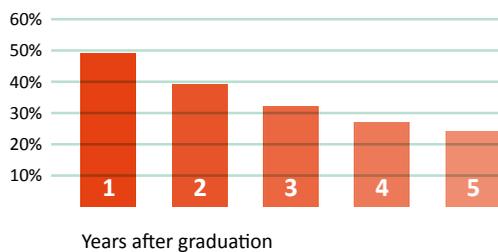
Name: Raquel de Paiva Serôa da Motta  
Age: 26  
From: Brazil  
Studied in Nijmegen:  
Master's in Water and Environment

browsing through vacancies in the Netherlands. I applied for a job, was hired after a few Skype interviews, and came back to Nijmegen. I had already given up my room, so I had to stay with friends for a while. Last year I was hired by a livestock research institute. I study the relationship between cattle populations, water and the environment. For my work I recently went to Ethiopia and Kenya, to study how the growing dairy industry there impacts natural raw

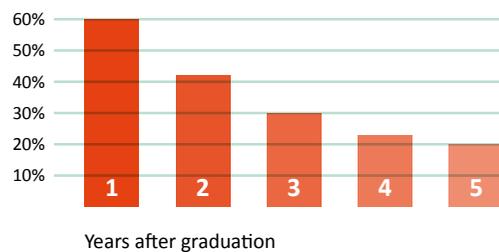
material reserves. By now, I've really come to love the Netherlands, and I can't imagine a life not surrounded by bicycles anymore. I'm sorry that I never learned to speak fluent Dutch, though; it's something I miss, for example when I visit local farmers in the course of my work. And in Brazil, when I spontaneously invite friends for a drink, they do their best to come. Here, everyone is really busy: "That sounds great! How about a week on Wednesday?"



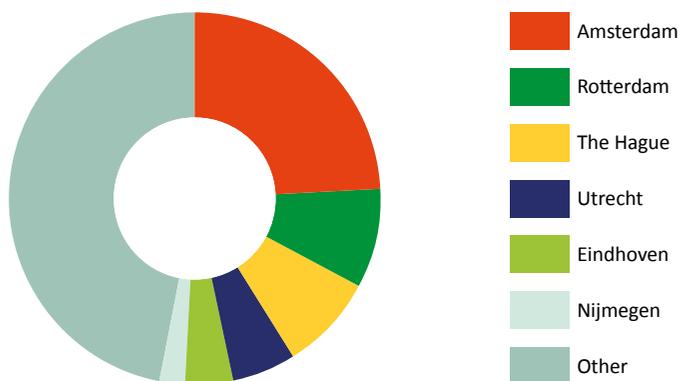
National stay rate



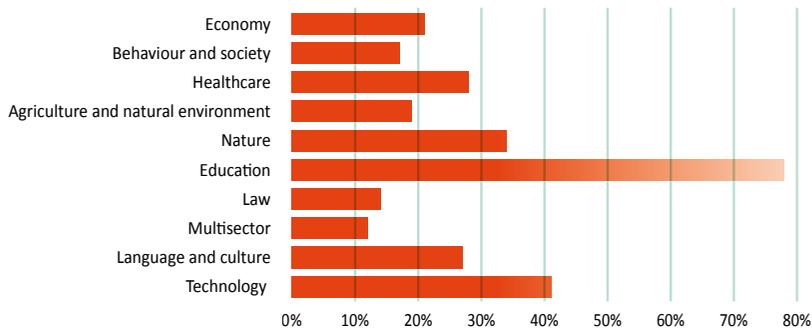
Stay rate RU Nijmegen



Distribution of international graduates across Dutch cities 5 years after graduation



Stay rate after 5 years (per sector)



## 'THE RANDSTAD HAS ALL THE INTERESTING EMPLOYERS: LARGE, INTERNATIONALLY ORIENTED COMPANIES'

Are Nijmegen students simply a lot more likely to return to their home country? Apparently not. A year after graduation, 60% of them still live in the Netherlands. Five years after graduation, this still applies to 20% of them, which is quite a high percentage. There are no figures on where Nijmegen international graduates settle precisely. It looks as if many of those who remain in the Netherlands relocate to other Dutch cities.

Where internationals settle seems to depend on the work climate. For Joris Knobén, Professor of Business Economics in Nijmegen and expert on the relationship

between companies and their environment, these figures confirm what he sees among his own students. "Most people migrate to the Randstad. That's where the interesting employers are: large internationally oriented companies. Recent graduates are unattached and easily relocate to follow opportunities elsewhere. Incidentally, this is not only true of internationals; our Dutch graduates also often relocate to the Randstad."

Nijmegen doesn't have much to offer when it comes to large multinationals, explains Knobén. Internationally operating companies rely on proximity to Schiphol. In addition, important services such as legal and financial consultancy agencies are also primarily concentrated in the Randstad. Knobén: "In the past few years, we see that large companies are spreading, for example along the A2, in Den Bosch and Eindhoven, where companies like ASML and Philips are located, and East, towards Utrecht. But this trend stops at Wageningen."

### The ladder

When it comes to employment, Nijmegen mainly depends on the public sector. "For example hospitals," says Knobén. "But these are places where knowledge of Dutch is a requirement." An exception to this rule is the University, where a PhD student can work in an internationally-oriented environment. But here too, the higher you climb the ladder, the more important language becomes. For a manager or dean, Dutch proficiency is a must.

The figures show a big difference between the various sectors. While 41% of international graduates in technology and science remain in the Netherlands and 34% of mathematics and computer science international graduates, for the humanities and social sciences the figure does not exceed 20%. Maybe the technology sector is less dependent on 'language', says Knobén, which is why international students get hired more easily. "Another explanation has to do with the number of PhD positions. Technical study programmes offer a lot more PhD positions. It may be that internationals in these fields are more likely to be offered a PhD position and stay longer as a result."

Knobén points to figures from Statistics Netherlands (CBS) on the number of internationals who start their own company. Nijmegen heads the list: 10% of our international graduates end up starting their own business. You can interpret this positively: Nijmegen study programmes teach students how to be independent. But a more negative interpretation is also possible. Maybe the labour market in Nijmegen and surroundings has so little to offer internationals that they have no choice but to go independent.

How can we make Nijmegen more appealing to international graduates? The Municipality can stimulate local companies to adjust to non-Dutch speakers, thus increasing the range of jobs for internationals. But according to Knobén, it would be more effective to make sure internationals have a good command of Dutch. "Otherwise they always remain on the company's periphery. The most crucial skill is social Dutch. You want to be able to chat with people at lunchtime; otherwise you quickly end up feeling isolated among your colleagues." \*

### THEY DID DECIDE TO STAY

## 'Many employers don't even invite you for an interview if you don't speak Dutch'

"I was born in Romania, in a small village in Transylvania. I grew up without Internet or colour TV. When my parents moved to Budapest, it was a huge change. I remained curious about other countries, and I finally ended up in Nijmegen. After completing my studies in Nijmegen, I studied for a while in Aarhus and Swansea, and I spent some time in South Korea. I came back to Nijmegen for love: love of the city, the Ooijpolder, and a Brabant girl. I met her via the In Touch with the Dutch project, which links internationals to Dutch pen friends. We now live together in Nijmegen-Oost. I really admire the way things are organised in the



Name: Szilárd Burján  
Age: 27  
From: Hungary  
Studied in Nijmegen:  
Political Science

Netherlands. It's one big beehive, efficient and with a proactive mentality. The only thing I find difficult is the language. Older Dutch people in particular sometimes like to remind you that you don't speak the language. The first months as a

Nijmegen graduate were hard. Many employers don't even invite you for an interview if you don't speak Dutch. Luckily I already had some experience working as a cross-cultural trainer, teaching companies about Hungarian and Romanian culture. Now I work as a freelancer and teach training courses on other cultures, for example at the Radboud university medical center. I plan to stay in Nijmegen for now, but my dream is to return to my home country one day. I own some land in Romania, which I inherited from my grandparents. There are farms on the land, which I would like to turn into holiday homes, to invite Western tourists to get to know Transylvania."

Is  
Nijmegen  
ready?

**Wessel Meijer, Head of the International Office:**

"The basic facilities on Campus are certainly ready for them. Sign-posting, websites, exam regulations – in short the most important information for international students – are all bilingual. All lecturers and staff members have had the opportunity to improve their language and intercultural skills. And the Orientation Week is more and more attuned to the needs of international students. SSH& were unable to find accommodation for two hundred of the one thousand international students in need of housing. We've found them rooms via the private rental market: via Dornick BV, owned by real estate agent Ton Hendriks, Guesthouse Nijmegen and Bungalow Park de Zeven Heuvelen. Although it's a bit of a challenge every year, so far we've always managed to accommodate all our international students. I often hear from our international students that the public facilities in the city are in Dutch and not in English. In cities like Rotterdam and Amsterdam, where people are used to tourists, these things are better adapted to an international audience. But I also often hear that Nijmegen people are very friendly and helpful. Perhaps more than average as compared with the Randstad region. An area that does require attention are the adjustment problems and homesickness experienced by international students. This requires a lot of effort on the part of our student counsellors and psychologists, who sometimes risk having more work than they can handle. Luckily, we have plans to improve this situation."

**INTERNATIONAL MOSTLY GERMANS**

CBS figures on the origins of Nijmegen citizens born outside the Netherlands reveal where Nijmegen internationals come from. Once you eliminate countries with a history of labour migration and refugees, Germany heads the list by a wide margin: 2504 Nijmegen residents have German roots. Half of the German Nijmegen citizens are aged 15-30, which points to many German Radboud University and HAN University of Applied Sciences students.

Germany is followed by China (673), the UK (560), Poland (460) and Italy (451). In total, Nijmegen is home to 24,000 residents born outside the Netherlands, which accounts for nearly 14% of the city's total population. One in seven Nijmegen residents has foreign roots, although this figure of course includes many refugees and immigrant workers.



**THEY DID DECIDE TO STAY**

'But now I do call Nijmegen my home'

"When I came to Nijmegen ten years ago for an exchange programme, it was as if I'd moved from busy Riga to a small village. But I loved it; the people were super friendly. I was supposed to stay for six months, but my lovely German flatmate changed all that. We're now married and live in Nijmegen. After the exchange programme, I enrolled in the Master's programme in Business Administration in Nijmegen. This Master's programme turned out to be much harder than expected: for the first time in my life, I failed some exams. Luckily after working for a while as a student assistant at the International Office, I was offered a job in the University's



Name: Maria Kinast  
Age: 32  
From: Latvia  
Studied in Nijmegen:  
Business Administration

marketing department. Although I've lived in Nijmegen for eight years now, a trip to Riga still feels like going home. It's where my family lives, and I really miss them. The first three to four years, I was

going back and forth between the two cities. 'I'm currently living in Nijmegen, but I actually come from Riga' I would say, much to my husband's frustration. But now I call Nijmegen my home. I like how direct the Dutch are. The thing that really took some getting used to was the food. How can you have only bread for lunch? Luckily, they serve soup everywhere on Campus. I also don't understand how such a rich country can have such a poorly organised health-care system. The GP barely takes ten minutes to look at a patient. Whenever I get a cold, I have to repress the urge to get on the first flight to Riga."





# THE ADDED VALUE OF A JAPANESE RESEARCHER

Internationalisation is hardly a new thing when it comes to science. Researchers fly across the globe and support each other with their knowledge. Physicist Theo Rasing even thanks his Spinoza Prize to the input of a Japanese colleague.

Text: Stan van Pelt / Photo: Getty Images

**P**rofessor of Experimental Physics Theo Rasing looks amused. “Is Nijmegen ready for internationals? Well, for as long as I’ve been here, I’ve worked with international students and researchers. And I’ve worked here for thirty years!” For Nijmegen researchers like Rasing, internationalisation is not something to question but to take for granted, especially in science and medicine. Researchers in these fields publish in English-language journals, fly across the globe to attend conferences, and engage in partnerships that reach from Australia to the US. In many departments, the working language is English.

Many Nijmegen discoveries are the direct result of this internationalisation, explains Rasing. It’s actually very simple, he says. “Internationalisation leads to a brain gain. You benefit from the knowledge people acquire elsewhere.” Think of the Professors of Russian origin Mikhail Katsnelson and Andre Geim, who gained world fame with their Nobel-winning research on graphene. “It’s fantastic that they’re affiliated with our University.” But people from other countries, such as Ukraine, India and – closer to home – Italy, also walk the corridors of Rasing’s Institute for Molecules and Materials.

What’s more, the physicist owes his own greatest claim to fame – optical switches – to

the arrival of a foreign researcher. An optical switch is a method for saving ones and zeros on hard disks using laser, rather than electricity as is commonly done now. In future, this will allow computers to be thousands of times faster and more energy-efficient – a much needed development in a world full of data-slurping companies like Google and Facebook. In 2008, Rasing was awarded a Spinoza Prize for this work.

He would never have won this prize without a Japanese researcher who arrived in Nijmegen fifteen years ago, remembers Rasing. The Nijmegen team was good at laser research, but not at creating the right materials for this kind of optical switch to function. In Japan, however, they knew about something called magneto-optical materials. “All I had to do was say to this postdoc: I need a material with these particular properties, and he instantly knew which materials to combine, and in what proportions.” The postdoc in question is now a professor, says Rasing – and they still work together.

Besides knowledge, researchers from abroad also bring a lot of intrinsic motivation, in Rasing’s experience, which makes them a good example for their Dutch lab colleagues. “In their own country, they’ve often had to compete with many others for the grant that allowed them to come here.” The Dutch have it easy in this respect.

### Cultural clashes

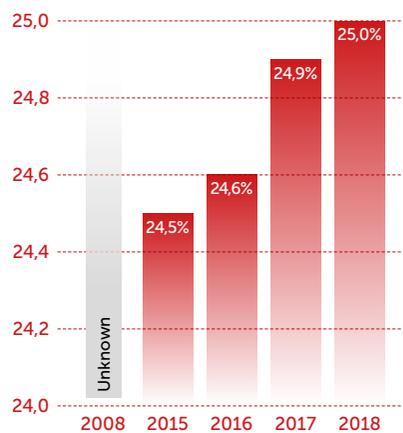
But internationalisation also brings challenges in its wake. For example, international researchers often need time to get used to the Dutch academic culture. Rasing: “The Japanese and the Chinese, for instance, are still coming from a system – how shall I put it? – like the one we had here thirty years ago. A stricter regime. Very hierarchical.” They’re used to following the Professor’s instructions, while Dutch junior researchers are used to much more autonomy in their work.

Peter Hagoort, Director of the Donders Centre for Cognitive Neuroimaging and the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (MPI), recognises these cultural differences. His institutes are also home to a big melting pot of nationalities – at the Donders Institute they even have a big world map on the wall with at least one hundred drawing pins, one for each nationality that ever worked at the Institute. “The Dutch can be pretty blunt,” the Professor admits, and this shows in the jokes they make.

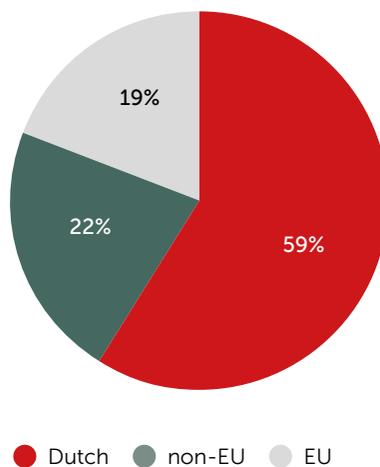
## ‘THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR WAS ALREADY HERE IN 1961’

PERCENTAGE OF INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC STAFF

Reference date 1 October



PERCENTAGE OF PHD STUDENTS



● Dutch ● non-EU ● EU

It’s something you have to be careful with when you work with people who are more sensitive to hierarchy, like Germans for example. Hagoort ran into this himself when he came back as a Director to MPI, where he once started his career as a student assistant. While he used to be able to joke about a person spending most of their time lazing about, now these kinds of remarks were suddenly taken very seriously. He laughs: “My jokes suddenly had completely different implications. And all the while I was the same person, or so I thought.”

Hagoort doesn’t think the mix of nationalities ever leads to real cultural clashes. On the contrary. “Working together on the same topics actually helps people gain a broader perspective on differences between nationalities. Research offers a common framework. This is very valuable in our current political climate.”

### Brain waves

Partially thanks to the influx of internationals the Donders Institute is now a leading pioneer in certain domains, says Hagoort. For example in measuring and analysing brainwaves using magnetoencephalography (MEG), an advanced alternative for the well-known EEG. “The MEG world was almost dead when Donders started working on this topic. Now it’s a booming field of research.” The discoveries made at the brain institute by the German Pascal Fries and the Danish Ole Jensen certainly contributed to this success, explains Hagoort. Jensen, for example, demonstrated that the slower alpha brain waves play an important role in attention processes. Fries in turn showed how brain waves contribute to communication between different brain areas.

Now both Fries and Jensen lead their own institutes in Germany and England. It’s not such a bad thing that researchers like this leave for other countries, says Hagoort. “They are kind of ambassadors for our Institute. It helps us to become known on the international scene.”

To keep attracting international experts, the government, in particular the provincial government, needs to invest more money, says Hagoort. “Limburg is investing millions in the Maastricht Brain Imaging Centre. Why don’t we do the same?”

It’s clear that Nijmegen has more than enough experience with internationalisation, says Theo Rasing pragmatically. “Dymanus, the first physics professor here at the Science Faculty, came from Poland. And that was back in 1961!” \*



# WE FOUND A PIECE OF HOME

Sometimes you don't need to go back home to get a taste of your own culture. An Italian, a Spaniard and a German share how they found a piece of home at the Donders cafeteria, a Spanish lunchroom and the Aldi.

Text: Marlieke van Schalkwijk / Photo's: Duncan de Fey

**Cristina Lia Fernandez Regueiro (26)  
is a PhD student in Chemistry**

"I come from Abegondo, a small village near Santiago de Compostella, in the Galicia region. The people working at the Fingerz lunchroom also come from there. When I discovered this – my neighbour is Spanish too and she told me about it – I got on my bike right away. It was before opening time, but they let me in anyway. We have an expression in our region, *morriña*, which means being homesick for Galicia. It's what the people here and I have in common. We talk about our home region and about the things we miss, like the sea and the way of life.

Personally, what I miss most is life outdoors: in bars and cafés. Every day after lectures or work I would go to a café to have coffee with friends and talk for hours. It's not something the Dutch do.

I usually come here in the afternoon and it's enough for me to just order a *café cortado* to feel at home again. Lots of coffee and a little bit of milk. I don't like milk, unlike a lot of Dutch people. My colleagues always drink milk at lunchtime; I really had to get used to it.

I may decide to stay on in the Netherlands once I've completed my PhD. I could look for a job in chemistry, or maybe even in communications. There are no jobs back home. I'm learning Dutch. No, let's not speak Dutch now!"



**CRISTINA LIA FERNANDEZ  
REGUEIRO: 'ONE CAFÉ CORTADO,  
AND I FEEL AT HOME AGAIN'**

## DAMIAN NOGA: 'VITALGEBÄCK FROM ALDI IS A DELICACY'



**Damian Noga (22) is a Bachelor's student in Psychology**

"Even when I lived in Australia, I shopped at Aldi. That's where I do all my shopping. *Vitalgebäck*, a kind of oatmeal cookie, is something I buy as standard: it's a real delicacy! And the beer of course, although I drink less than the average German. I came to the Netherlands eighteen months ago for my studies, and I like it here. Dutch people are relaxed, and they seem happier than the Germans. They're also less formal. Because everyone speaks English here, I felt at ease right away. And with the many Germans on Campus, there's always a piece of 'home' nearby. At weekends, my best friend and I sometimes go to the Aldi in Kranenburg. The bread here doesn't taste of anything: much too soft! And I still don't get the whole *hagelslag* thing: are you really supposed to eat it for breakfast? I love vegetarian *kapsalon*, though, and all the fried snacks. These are typically Dutch: every village has at least one snack bar. For the rest, it's not that different from home. I've shopped at Aldi for 20 years, and I continue to do so here. It's German and cheap: the perfect combination!"



**GIACOMO TARTARO:**  
**'IT'S THE ONLY PLACE YOU CAN GET REAL ITALIAN ESPRESSO'**

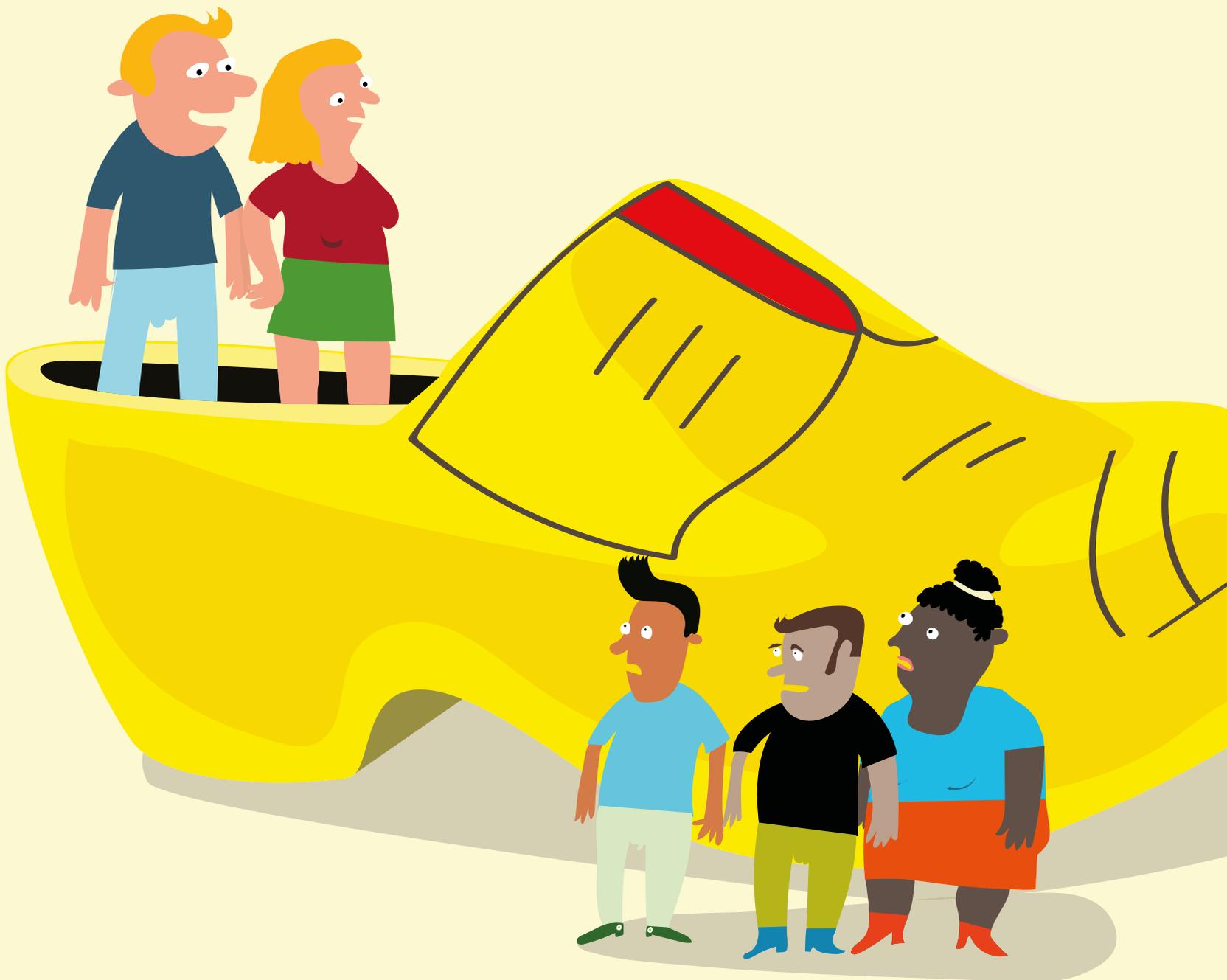
**Giacomo Tartaro (27) is a research assistant at the Donders Institute**

"In Italy, eating is a social activity. We don't hurry, we have two hot meals a day, and we calmly remain seated until everyone has finished eating. Grabbing a sandwich on the go is simply not done. Even after a long working day, I still take the time to cook a fresh meal. Usually pasta. The Italians in my building spend a lot of time together. And when they hear I'm cooking,

they usually join me. I plan to stay in the Netherlands; I feel at home here. But a good salami or a creamy burrata? I haven't been able to find these here. It means that I savour these things all the more when I'm in Italy. The Dutch are sociable; they're always up for a chat. And they work really hard. But cooking is not their forte. The only thing I've learnt here is pretty much

anything can be deep-fried. Still, I wouldn't dare serve such a fat-drenched meal to my family. I was born and raised in Milan, and this is my third year in Nijmegen. Every day I have my lunch here in the Donders Institute cafeteria. I usually order a pizza calzone with tiramisu for dessert. And an espresso, because Donders is the only place where you can get real Italian espresso. Just look at this calzone: It's delicious. A steaming piece of home. Grazie!"

# LONGING FOR DUTCH FRIENDS



Many internationals would like to get to know Dutch students. But this turns out to be easier said than done. It doesn't help that Orientation Week and student accommodation are often separate. 'Our house could just as well be located in Australia or in China.'

Text: Lara Maassen / Illustration: emdé

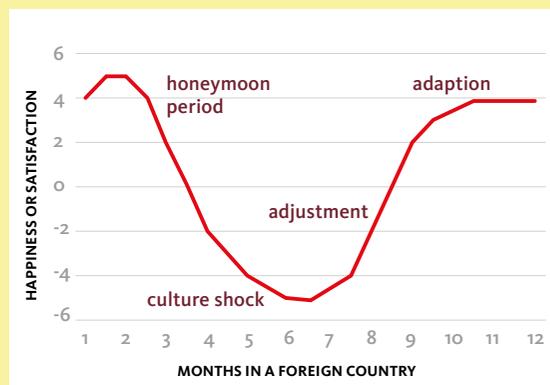
**T**he Danish Master's student in Spatial Planning Klaus Asbjørn Madsen was rather disappointed during the Orientation Week last August. Back in Denmark, he'd done his utmost to prepare. Over the course of eight months he taught himself Dutch. "Every week I watched Zondag met Lubach from Denmark. In this way I taught myself the language, but also all kinds of quaint little news items about the Netherlands – like that story about the 'banga lists'. Then I came here, and I was suddenly surrounded by only international students in my Orientation Week group. I was really disappointed."

Madsen did meet his fellow students later, at an Introduction Day for his Master's programme. But here too, it turned out that most of the Dutch students had not been invited. "The event was only open to students from other cities, so most of the group was still missing." It's a pity, he thinks, to once again have missed out on the opportunity to meet more than half the Dutch students on his programme.

The Japanese Sayaka Suzuki, who is following the new Pre-Master's programme in Tourism and Culture, has spent time in Nijmegen before, as part of an exchange programme. She came back for the city and the high-quality education. But she still doesn't have any Dutch friends. She also finds it a pity that international Erasmus and Master's students are kept separate from Dutch students during Orientation Week. "This makes it really difficult to meet Dutch students," says Suzuki. "Which is a pity, since Orientation Week is the best time for it. A few months later, groups have already formed and it's more difficult to make contact."

Second-year Master's student in Medical Biology Wan-Yuh Shih came to Nijmegen last year from Taiwan to follow the interdisciplinary Master's programme that appealed to her so much. She too is having trouble making Dutch friends. "A lot of Dutch students know each other from their Bachelor's programme and they talk Dutch to each other during breaks. I don't want to bother them by interrupting, so I spend all my breaks

## CULTURE SHOCK CURVE



The *culture shock curve*, developed in 1955 by a Norwegian sociologist, shows the phases a person goes through when spending a longer period abroad. It is explained to mentors during the preparation for the Orientation Week for international students.

The curve works as follows: in the beginning the newcomer is enthusiastic about the new adventure (honeymoon period). After some time, he or she runs into cultural differences (culture shock). This can give rise to emotions such as homesickness or resistance to the foreign culture. Step by step, through interaction with the other culture, the newcomer slowly comes to understand his or her new environment (adjustment) and then starts to feel at home in it (adaption).

## 'I'VE ASKED MY FLAT- MATES TO TALK TO ME IN DUTCH AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE'



listening without understanding a word of what they're saying."

### **Intimidating**

Many international students dream of mingling with Dutch students. But how do you go about it? Suzuki has an idea. Language is an obstacle, but she also suffers from the cultural gap. "The Dutch are far more direct than people in Japan. I sometimes find this intimidating."

It helps to look for places where you can work or do sports with Dutch people, Shih noticed. At the end of the academic year she did an internship at the Donders Institute, which gave her the opportunity for some small-scale networking. "The people there are so kind and they really show that they're interested," she says. "Even the secretary asked me how I was doing. Now I've become more daring – and I find it easier to start a conversation with the Dutch students in the lecture hall."

This afternoon, Klaus Asbjørn Madsen is headed to the Introduction Day at a badminton club. "It helps that I've lived in other countries before. I'm used to adjusting. And, of course, it helps that I speak the language."

Another obstacle is separate accommodation. Most international students spend their first year in an SSH& room, in a house or corridor filled only with internationals. "That can be fun, but it does not promote integration," says Shih. Flatmates are usually the people who can help you find your way around, says Ruby Yu Rung Yeng, also from Taiwan. She is following the Erasmus Programme Planet Europe. "Your flatmates teach you things about the city, but they can also help if a neighbour doesn't speak English, or tell you where to buy a new OV chip card."

Madsen shares a house with students from England, Spain, Italy and Germany. "It's great fun, but it's got nothing much to do with the Netherlands. I feel our house could just as well be located in Australia or in China. This may sound dramatic, but I sometimes have the feeling that the University is isolating us from the other students on purpose." As part of his Bachelor's programme, he spent six months in Germany. There, every apartment had room for one or two international students. The inhabitants of the apartment could express their preferences: for example, if someone was learning French, they could say they wanted a student from France. "In that way, the fact that international students only stayed a while could be turned into a real advantage."

Portuguese Dyon Pacheco, second-year student in Business Administration, couldn't agree more. After a year in SSH& accommodation, he now rents a room in a house with Dutch students. "I immediately asked my housemates to help me by speaking Dutch to me as much as possible. This is really helping me to learn the language and it makes for a nicer atmosphere. Dutch students tend



Is  
Nijmegen  
ready?

**Lotte Jensen, Professor of  
Dutch Cultural and Literary  
History**

"No, because I think a lot of issues haven't yet been properly thought through. For example, you have to give some conscious thought to what you think would be the ideal ratio. What do we want, ultimately? 20% international students? 50%? These are things we've got to think about, to avoid imposing internationalisation at the expense of Dutch language and facilities. I don't think it's a good idea to run the entire Orientation Week in English. Or to have all signposting and communication on Campus only in English. It's also important to make Dutch students and employees feel at home. At Leiden University, the library thought its Dutch name was too difficult for international students, so they renamed it the Leiden University Library, ... for short. That's right. As if international students wouldn't have been able to find the library otherwise. I think that's taking things too far.

I recently heard a university lecturer explain that although she's lived in the Netherlands for ten years, she still doesn't speak any Dutch. There's no need for it, because everyone speaks English to her anyway. I think this is precisely where we're not helping our international students and employees. After all, their life doesn't stop at the University.

It seems as if internationalisation is something out of our control. Like the accommodation problems they're having in Groningen. But of course that's not true. These are things you can anticipate. If you find yourself unable to keep up with the developments, you need to slow things down."

to spend their weekend at their parents' place, but during the week we often do things together."

**Lots of money**

Besides Orientation Week and accommodation, the main barrier is language, say the students. For example, they noticed that Dutch students are quite hesitant to speak English. International students in turn don't get a chance to learn Dutch, because they are only here for a short time. In her first year, Shih was so busy with her Master's programme that she had no time for language lessons. The lessons were also very expensive, she says. "Many universities offer courses like this for free, but here they often cost hundreds of euros. I think this is strange. Especially as a non-EU student I already pay such high tuition fees – this kind of additional costs really form an obstacle."

The Taiwanese student of Spatial Planning Ruby Yu Rung Jeng did manage to pull it off. She has actually made a couple of Dutch friends. Taking part in the Four Days Marches Nijmegen last summer certainly helped. With a few fellow students she trained for weeks, met all sorts of people while walking, and got to know the landscape around Nijmegen really well. And then there she was, at the finish line, with a bouquet of gladioli in her arms, and a couple of brand-new girlfriends. \*

**MORE MINGLING  
NEXT YEAR**

Vincent Buitenhuis, Director of SSH&, says accommodation is still separate out of necessity. "We're doing our best to find solutions, but the fact is that international students often look for furnished accommodation. Dutch students, on the other hand, don't want that, especially if it costs them extra. In addition, international students can only live in SSH& accommodation for one year, otherwise we don't have enough rooms for them. But Dutch students tend to stay longer, and they don't want new students constantly moving in and out." The fact that Orientation Week mentor groups are also still separate for exchange students and Master's students (although not for Bachelor's students), is also a necessary evil, says Head of the International Office Wessel Meijer. The reason is that international students are required to complete different components, such as 'How does the Dutch educational system work?' and 'How do you open a bank account?'. "Logistically, it's impossible for them to attend Orientation Week together with the Dutch students." Meijer hopes to have resolved these logistics problems by next year. The International Office is also setting its sights on a free Dutch course for international students.



Nijmegen study associations are welcoming more and more international students. But the student associations are remaining aloof. 'They did switch to English, but forgot about it within two sentences.'

Text: Mathijs Noij / Photo's: Juliette Breuseker

# STUDY ASSOCIATIONS MAY BE SWITCHING TO ENGLISH ...

**T**he German Anna Bleeck will go down in history as the first international board member of V.C.M.W Sigma. The Molecular Life Sciences student has been an active member of the study association since her first year – she was one of the first student cohorts to be taught in English. That was two years ago, and she's seen the association undergo some major changes since then.

Of the approximately 550 members, 150 or so are now non-Dutch. The fact that Bleeck is the association's Internal Relations Officer this year is proof that Sigma is quickly becoming international. Admittedly, Bleeck does have a small advantage over other international students: her grand-mother is Dutch. "I come from Aachen, just across the border, near Maastricht. We used to spend our holidays in Zeeland." But she doesn't speak Dutch, so the working language of the new board is English.

Still, Sigma still has a long way to go. Bleeck notices that many international students hesitate to become actively involved in the association. "The Dutch directness scares some people off." But language and culture are not the only barriers. Bleeck knows that international students in her circle are afraid to incur study delay. Active membership of an association is not an option for them.

"That's why it's important to explain to international students what a study association actually is," says Bleeck. "Many people think

Anna Bleeck



**'THE DUTCH  
DIRECTNESS  
SCARES SOME  
STUDENTS OFF'**

we're just a club where people get drunk." She laughs: "Of course, we do that too, but we do so much more besides. It's about making friends and getting to know other students."

## Language policy

Vox's short survey among the study associations of English-taught Bachelor's programmes shows that Sigma is not the only association with fewer active international members. At the Psychology association SPiN, Secretary Heleen van Renesse explains that international students focus more on their studies. According to Jurian van der Waal from Synergy (Business Administration), cultural differences prevent many internationals from taking the first step. But, as he says, internationals who are members appreciate it all the more, and keep coming back.

In their communication with members, associations are slowly switching to English. SPiN, the association that has the most international members (approximately 850) has a bilingual language policy: their website is bilingual (even though the English website is less detailed), as are their social media and newsletters. The association's General Assembly will also 'probably' switch to English as of this year.

BeeVee (Biology), Babylon (Communication and Information Studies) and Synergy have similar policies. BeeVee only has a bilingual newsletter for the parents – communication

with members usually takes place only in English. Babylon uses both Dutch and English on social media, but as of this year their magazine is in English. Synergy does 'almost everything' in English, with the occasional Dutch translation. Only the General Assembly is still in Dutch. Sigma and CognAC (Artificial Intelligence)

opted for a different strategy: they switched completely to English. It's no coincidence that these associations represent programmes without a Dutch-taught equivalent: their students are used to communicating in English.

The biggest challenge, even for an English-speaking association like Sigma, is not only to communicate with students in English, but also

to help them feel at ease during social gatherings. Sigma board member Anna Bleeck thinks things are certainly moving in the right direction. "In the first year, international students kind of form their own separate little group. At get-togethers, people used to speak primarily Dutch. Now you hear English more and more often."

## ... BUT STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS REMAIN FIRMLY DUTCH

**W**hile study associations are increasingly opening their doors to international students, the big student associations in Nijmegen remain strongholds of the Dutch language. Ovum Novum has no international members, Carolus Magnus only one at the moment. At Phocas, you can count internationals on the fingers of both hands.

The University would like the big student associations to open up to international students. The associations themselves are under no pressure. The Presidents of Carol Magnus, Ovum Novum and Phocas all three indicate that international students are welcome. But if they don't speak Dutch, they'll have a hard time integrating in the traditional Dutch-language environment of a student association. The associations feel no pressure to become more international, in part because few international students are interested in becoming members.

The German Marie Wolter (Life Sciences, HAN) and the Turkish Alara Er (International Business Communication) are exceptions. Last year, they both decided to join the Phocas rowing association. During Orientation Week, they left their e-mail address with the association, and have remained active members to this day.

To walk into Phocas without speaking a word of Dutch the two students did have to overcome quite a barrier. "We felt welcome, but were definitely the odd ones out," says Wolter. "All the other students spoke Dutch among themselves. If we were there, they did switch to English, but forgot about it within two sentences."



Alara Er and Marie Wolter row at Phocas

Wolter and Er were lucky to meet a small group of members with whom they got along very well. "They were happy to spend time with internationals like us," says Er. Together, they formed a team.

Being members of Phocas gives Wolter and Er a double advantage: they get to practise their favourite sport, and it helps them integrate in Dutch student life. "In the beginning, we mainly came for the rowing," says Wolter. "Now we also often take part in social activities. I never miss a party."

Wolter and Er don't believe in creating separate teams with only international students – a potential solution to help internationals feel more at ease. "It would only further isolate the

international team from the larger group."

Er and Wolter are not particularly surprised that Ovum Novum and Carolus Magnus struggle to attract international students. "These associations are mainly about having a good time," says Er. "Even more than at Phocas, this means you have to understand the culture. The jokes, the language, the drinking culture. At Phocas, at least, you always have the sport."

And yet, Phocas too has its traditions, which may be difficult for foreign students to understand. According to Er and Wolter, this makes it 'unthinkable' for either of them to become board members. "We'll always be outsiders in a way." \*



# OR YOU CAN JUST STAY IN KRANENBURG

Cheaper, quieter, lower parking fees. These are three reasons German students from Radboud University choose to rent a room in Kranenburg. 'If you like peace and order, you're in the right place.'

**Text:** Ken Lambeets / **Photography:** Marjolein van Diejen

**J**ust another Friday night in Kranenburg. At Bäckerei Derks an elderly couple take a bite of an appetising plum tart, the bus to Nijmegen makes its way through the Grosse Strasse, decorated with umbrellas. At restaurant El Toro, which serves Balkan specialties, waiters prepare for what they hope will be a busy night.

On the neighbouring market square, where a fountain shaped like a bull's head sprays water, we are waiting for Miriam Panning. The German Psychology student was originally planning to study in her home country. She

only found out she was coming to Nijmegen in August. All student rooms in the city were already taken. From a fellow student she heard there was always space in Kranenburg. She now rents a room for 275 euro a month.

#### **Bäckerei**

Panning has just come back from a visit to her parents in Munster, and parks her car on the Kranenburg market square. "More or less three quarters of the students here have a car," she says. "It's not necessary, but it does make life easier."



## MAYOR OF KRANENBURG

“Many students who study in Nijmegen or Kleef rent rooms in Kranenburg,” says Mayor of Kranenburg Günter Steins. “We don’t know precisely how many students live here: when people register with the municipality we don’t ask them whether they are students. As a municipality, we don’t organise any special activities for students, but all students are more than welcome!”

The bus ride to Nijmegen takes one and a half hours. And cycling 15 kilometres to the University – one way that is – is a bit far. Via WhatsApp students with a car can indicate when they plan to drive to Campus, and arrange to meet car-poolers on the carpark opposite Bäckerei Derks, or in front of the bridal boutique on the other side of the Grosse Strasse – where most students live.

According to Panning, the German students in Kranenburg are all alike. “As a rule, the more introverted students end up in Kranenburg. If you enjoy peace and order, you’re in the right place. The cafés are for older people – students are rarely seen there. Attending a party in Nijmegen means a long ride there, and you have to arrange to spend the night with friends.”

### Foodies

No matter how cosy and friendly, Kranenburg’s small scale also has disadvantages. Student jobs are scarce. “When a new shop opens here, there are a hundred students immediately begging for a job,” says Panning. The local GP has a waiting list and his closest colleague lives more than ten kilometres away, in Kleef. “Not very convenient if you have a high fever.”

Foodies have little to sink their teeth into in Kranenburg. With the exception of El Toro, El Paso and Schnell-restaurant Peters, the village offers few gastronomical venues. The only falafel bar didn’t survive very long. Most students cook for themselves. “Sometimes we order pizza or a kebab,” says Miriam. “It’s cheap, but not particularly tasty. And because of Kranenburg’s isolated position, it doesn’t make sense to order take-away.”

No wonder many students eventually give up on Kranenburg and move to Nijmegen. Occasionally,

someone makes the opposite move. “Last week a friend of mine moved to Kranenburg: she didn’t feel at home in Nijmegen because it’s so busy and costs a lot to park. This is something German students often complain about.”

### Landlord

In 2006, the Dutch made up 20% of the Kranenburg population, a figure that has probably increased since then. One of Panning’s neighbours is also from the Netherlands. Panning understands their choice. “In Kranenburg they can afford houses they could never build 500 metres away.” And yet, according to the Psychology student, Kranenburg feels like its German. “Just look at the traffic signs and the products on the shelves. I speak German at the bakery, and with my landlord. You couldn’t do that in Nijmegen.”

The busiest place in Kranenburg? Undoubtedly the shopping centre. Even on Friday afternoons, the carparks for Penny, Aldi and Rewe are half full, mainly with cars with Dutch number plates. This sometimes leads to frustration among German students. “Products on sale are often immediately sold out. The Dutch come here to do their bulk shopping, from thirty pheasants to forty litres of olive oil.” She does all her shopping on Thursday or Friday mornings – the earlier, the better. “If you go later, the shelves are half-empty, and there’s only rotten fruit left.”

Panning is not planning to move to Nijmegen yet. “Nijmegen is a great city, but not if you have a car. And I don’t speak Dutch. For me, it’s much easier to live in Kranenburg. The houses and groceries are cheaper here, it’s cleaner, and people are less closely packed together. But you should never say never: if I find a good job in Nijmegen, I’ll certainly consider it.” ★

‘THE DUTCH COME HERE TO DO THEIR **BULK SHOPPING**, FROM THIRTY PHEASANTS TO FORTY LITRES OF OLIVE OIL’

# SPEAKING ENGLISH IN COUNCIL MEETINGS IS ONE STEP TOO FAR

International employees and students find it difficult to understand the Works Council and Student Council. Not so surprising, since most discussions and policy documents are in Dutch.

**Text:** Mathijs Noij and Pim ten Broeke / **Photo's:** Getty Images

**Y**ou could almost call it the University's mantra: Everyone should feel welcome on the Nijmegen Campus. The new internationalisation vision document reads like a utopia: "In 2025, we will form an inclusive Radboud community where all members feel included, irrespective of their nationality and background." The participational bodies are referred to as organs that "take everyone's needs into account."

At the moment, the reality is somewhat different. A striking example of this is the decision by American Kristina Hodelin-ter Wal to resign from the Works Council in December 2017. "I felt there was little I could contribute as member of the Joint Assembly. There was too much of a language barrier." Hodelin-ter Wal resigned as representative of the PhD Organisation Nijmegen (PON) after three months on the Council.

This motivated the PON fraction to work towards an official language policy in central Joint Assemblies, which bring together the University Student Council, the Works

WHAT DO  
THE STUDENTS  
THINK?

Never before has an international student been member of the University Student Council. Student party AKKUraatd wants accessible student participation and calls for a translation centre that can translate all policy documents into English. To guarantee the quality of the discussions, AKKUraatd is willing to have meetings held in Dutch. International students in all participational bodies should be offered free Dutch language courses. ASAP, the other student party, is also in favour of English documents and language courses for all international members of participational bodies, but is still deliberating the issue of the working language in meetings.



Council and the Executive Board. In early October, their proposal will be discussed by the Executive Board. PON pleads for bilingualism: employees and students should be able to choose whether to express themselves in Dutch or in English.

In their proposal the fraction writes that a 'hostile attitude' towards international representatives in participational bodies led to Hodelin-ter Wal resigning from the Works Council. The PhD student herself says she simply didn't feel welcome. "I noticed that people weren't happy with the fact that I spoke English."

So should Dutch participational body members switch to English, a language they are less proficient in? No, say the PON PhD students. The three-member fraction pleads for a fully bilingual Joint Assembly, one in which every speaker can choose between English and Dutch. This requires a direct translation service, which Student Council and Works Council members can access through earphones.

The idea is not new: an interpreter did attend Joint Assembly meetings, typing along with the discussion. Hodelin-ter Wal could read along on a screen, but this didn't work, she says. "I couldn't follow the conversation. It makes sense, when you think about it: debates are really fast, and a translator is only human." Simone Lederer, member of the PON fraction, confirms that details were lost in translation. "Not to mention that there was no way you could join the discussion."

Another PON argument for bilingual participational bodies is the fact that policy documents are usually published in Dutch on Radboudnet, in some cases with

'I NOTICED THAT PEOPLE  
WEREN'T HAPPY WITH THE  
FACT THAT I SPOKE ENGLISH'



COLUMN

## Lucy's law

**Lucienne van der Geld** is a lecturer of notarial law and director of Network Notarissen.

### Cooped up

Universities can make a lot of money from international students. Which is why some of them make it their policy to attract as many international students as possible. Some study programmes are already suffering from the huge influx of international students, and are responding by introducing a numerus fixus. Then there's the accommodation issue. As it happens, many Dutch students prefer to live at home with their parents, and commute back and forth with their Eastpak backpacks (or Herschel, for the better-off students). This may still be an option for German students from Kleve studying in Nijmegen. But most of the other international students really do need a proper roof over their heads.

The accommodation situation in Groningen at the start of this academic year is not really what you would call 'proper'. International students are having to make do cooped up in containers and tents. Sleeping in a 'dormitory' in a tent? For €12.50 a night. For the better-off international student Groningen offers a houseboat. *Quanta costa?* €42.50 a night, including meals. University of Groningen employees were even called upon to welcome an international student into their home. In my lectures, there's not an international student in sight, so I don't know much about them, but I sincerely hope we can offer them better accommodation than a tent. And yet something in me finds it a pity that I live in Nijmegen and didn't get called upon to do my duty. How fun would it be to have a German student stay for a while?! If I did, I would probably not have missed Helene Fischer's concert in the Gelredome. And Mr. Law would have a flatmate to drink German beers with. It so happens I also like German rap (Peter Fox) and German dance music (Robin Schulz), just in case our guest turns out to like more alternative music. But enough daydreaming. First, I need to satisfy my curiosity: Do we have any international students in Nijmegen, and what is our University's earnings model? I'm bound to find the answers to all these questions in this Vox edition ;).

## 'THE VOICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYEE GOES UNHEARD'

a short summary in English. If you don't speak Dutch, you can't learn about the University's policy. PON believes that this is a 'basic right': every student and employee should be able to learn about how the University functions. And that means every document should be available in Dutch and in English.

### Huge job

President of the Works Council Bernadette Smelik doesn't agree with the image sketched by PON of a hostile attitude towards Hodelin-ter Wal. "On the contrary, I remember everyone was very willing to help her." Smelik suspects this is not just due to the language barrier, but to a cultural clash. "Last year we also had an international employee on the Works Council. That worked really well."

However, Smelik is also aware of the fact that there is broad support for an official language policy in the Joint Assembly. "The PON's document forms good input for the discussion." According to Smelik, the plea for full bilingualism is "what you would, of course, want ideally. The question is how to achieve it."

Smelik doubts whether it's a good idea to translate all of the Assembly's paper work. She refers to Dutch legislation: universities are obliged to write all their regulations in Dutch. Translations must be certified or include a disclaimer that the Dutch text is leading.

And is it worth the investment to translate all documents into English? Translating policy documents is



### PARTICIPATIONAL BODIES ELSEWHERE IN THE NETHERLANDS

The debate on language policy in participational bodies is also raging elsewhere. A number of Dutch universities, including Wageningen, have decided to hold all meetings in English. Other institutions have opted for bilingual participation bodies, like the University of Groningen, where members of participational bodies can choose in which language they wish to express themselves. Their words are translated and projected on a screen. Radboud University, together with other institutions like Erasmus University Rotterdam, belongs to the third and largest group of institutions that haven't yet decided which direction to follow.

**'CENTRAL PARTICIPATIONAL BODIES MUST TAKE THE LEAD'**

According to the German Samuel Hofmann, member of the Faculty Student Council of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the poor involvement of international students in participational bodies is a classic chicken-and-egg story. "Policy documents, summaries and communications from the Executive Board, the Faculty and study programmes are by and large in Dutch. This creates a high threshold for international students who want to join the debate. When I sat on the Programme Committee for

Psychology last year, I consciously decided to learn Dutch. This meant that the discussions could be held in Dutch. This year, the committee has two international members who don't speak any Dutch. I'm curious about their experiences. It's time for the University to take the next step. The faculties are waiting for a decision from above." Bas van der Zandt, who sat on the Faculty Student Council of the Faculty of Science, emphasises Hofmann's argument. "Nearly all policy documents at the Faculty of Science are in Dutch. Since the members of participational bodies and the Board are mostly Dutch, meetings and documents are also in



Dutch. As a result, international students on the programme committees have to ask their Dutch colleagues to explain the documents to them. Once central participational bodies take the lead, it will be easier for faculties to make the shift to internationalisation."

already a huge job, as they tend to run into dozens of pages. Smelik: "Should the University bear these costs, while there is also such a strong need for more lecturers and student psychologists, for example?"

She also predicts higher work pressure. The participational bodies work with hard deadlines. "If a translation is needed quickly, a participational body member or administrative employee will have to take it on, on top of all their other work."

**No choice**

Nevertheless, PON believes the need to be very real. Fraction member Katrin Sutter: "Radboud University is focused on internationalisation, but the participational bodies lag behind. The Joint Assembly is not yet representative of the Campus. The voice of international employees can't be heard."

According to the resigning Kristina Hodelin-ter Wal, a lot of work is needed to make the Joint Assembly truly accessible to non-Dutch members. As PON argues in its proposal, the Joint Assembly is ruled by Dutch culture – international employees and students should think twice before joining the University's highest participational body.

The PON fraction is aware that bilingualism is expensive. But if the University really wants everyone to be represented, it has no choice, say the fraction members.

Pending the Joint Assembly in early October, the Executive Board refrained from commenting on the language policy issue. "Ideally, central participational bodies should adequately reflect the Campus," says spokesman Martijn Gerritsen. "In the coming period we will discuss how we can make this happen." \*

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# POINT TAKEN!

## University Student Council

### The Council is back!

It's time for a new University Student Council once again! This year the Council will again consist of six umbrella members (from CSN, CODC, BOS, ISON, SOFv and NSSR), four members from the AKKURaatd party, and four members from the ASAP party. We very much look forward to building an even better university this year. We are active in various workgroups, committees and focus groups to ensure the students' voice is heard all the way up to the higher echelons of the University administration.

The recent well-being survey revealed that one quarter of students feel 'empty' and experience stress. As USC, it is our mission to improve student well-being. Performance pressure comes from all sides. Unsurprisingly, one can't always successfully juggle high grades, an impressive CV and a bustling social life. It's time for us to create a healthier climate at the University, where there is also scope for personal development (for example in the form of culture/sports). A bit of stress is good, but a stressful climate is something that we must prevent and remedy.

Sustainability remains high on our priority list. We plan to continue the initiatives of former USC members like the sustainability covenant, to help student associations become more aware of their ecological footprint. We will also advocate a cleaner environment and the protection of our green campus.

The University has an exemplary role to play here, and even though Radboud University is taking steps in the right direction, we can always do better! Particularly now that Nijmegen has been officially named green capital of Europe. Education is the most tangible topic on the participational bodies' agenda. Issues we need to address include educational innovation, ICT in education, but also budget cuts and the high pressure on lecturers. This year the University is drafting plans to invest the funds obtained from the new study loan system in education. As USC, we are involved in the decision-making, and our goal is to improve the quality of education.

The Executive Board will also formulate a new strategic plan this year. This plan will define the University's policy goals for the coming years and is therefore crucial for everyone (especially students). We want to make sure that the strategic plan doesn't include any measures that may have negative consequences for students. We will also decide which crucial points of focus we want included in the plan.

Internationalisation, digitalisation, the new Student Charter, Orientation Week, student participation, renovations and lots of other topics are also on our agenda for this year. If you're interested in what we do, keep an eye on the USC social media! And if you have any questions or remarks, e-mail us at [USR@ru.nl](mailto:USR@ru.nl) or drop by and see us in our room in TvA 1.

## Works Council

### Reduce Work Pressure Action Plan

The 'Reduce Work Pressure 2018-2020' action plan is on the agenda for the University Joint Assembly of October 2018. You may be thinking: "It's about time something was done about that!". If so, you'd be absolutely right. The Works Council thinks so too.

As early as November 2003, the Works Council put the 'Work Pressure' initiative memorandum on the agenda. The report of this meeting is not online, but personally we remember the Executive Board of the time was not particularly enthusiastic. As a peace offering they agreed to compare differences in teaching load between faculties and share their findings with the Works Council. Eighteen months later, in April 2005, progress was discussed. A report of this meeting is available. It reveals that resistance had not much diminished. According to then member of the Executive Board Peters, the Executive Board was unable to collect the data. In addition, the data changed from year to year. In short, the Works Council was made to understand that it was very difficult to get a clear overview of work pressure.

That was fifteen years ago. And still, many colleagues find that the weekend is the only time when they can finally get down and work on that research paper. Work pressure did not diminish. But what we do have now is an action plan, formulated in consultation with the Executive Board, the participational bodies, the trade unions and a number of committed colleagues. The action plan aims to reduce work pressure in the short term by eliminating a lot of 'white noise' from teaching. The guiding principles are: less bureaucracy, a simpler organisation, continuity in staff deployment, and refraining from any unnecessary innovations. Faculties are asked to take concrete actions to implement the plan. Hopefully, work pressure will soon improve. And no doubt some people will continue to claim that it's a tricky problem. That's no reason to sit back and do nothing, though. One much needed step has now been taken to reduce work pressure. For this, we'd like to thank the 2003 Works Council members (Paul Wels, Lettie Lubsen and Marius Kaptein) who committed to the theme, and persevered in their efforts.



ILLUSTRATION: MARC KOLLE

# OPINION

Have an opinion? E-mail it to [redactie@vox.ru.nl](mailto:redactie@vox.ru.nl)  
The editors reserve the right to shorten your submission.

## Internationalisation? Help pay for it!

The growing number of students from all corners of the world costs a lot of money. Who's paying for it? Professor **Marc van Oostendorp** has an idea: increase tuition fees for English-taught programmes.

The internationalisation of the University is a luxury. All those students from little Spanish villages, German cities and Indian metropolises have only made our Campus livelier. Who can deny it? It's nice to have people around who view the world from a different perspective; it's refreshing to hear completely different opinions voiced in lecture halls; and the quality of coffee has clearly improved. Nijmegen is in danger of turning into a world city.

The only question is: Who's paying for all this luxury? Who's making sure all these people have a roof over their heads? And can enjoy a *cortado*? Who's footing the bill for their lecturers and their little pleasures? The answer is not: the foreign students themselves. Or barely: tuition fees in the Netherlands are extremely low and, together with the wide range of English-taught programmes on offer, this is one of the main reasons people choose to study in the Netherlands.

But that means these costs are charged double to Dutch people who have nothing to do with our lively Campus. They pay once the taxes that make it possible for all those students from Spain, Germany and India to study here. And then again later, since an explosion in student numbers does not translate to more government funding, the children of these tax-payers also get lower-quality education, which – aside from all the fun and good cheer –



means less value for their money. Plus, if things on Campus go on as they do now, the Dutch language runs the risk of being taken over by English. Of course, we can be proud of being such a hospitable nation and living in a country that attracts so many people from all over the world and offering them a cheap high-quality education. But when the system threatens to burst at the seams, you need a solution. And it seems reasonable to ask foreign students or their parents to contribute to this solution.

Morally and legally, you can't ask foreigners to pay more, especially not if they come from EU countries. But here's an idea: Why not dramatically increase tuition fees for English-taught programmes, so as to actually cover the costs of the study programme, while continuing to offer much cheaper, almost free of charge, Dutch-taught programmes.

Dutch people who absolutely insist on hearing lectures in English will also have to pay more, while foreigners who are willing to learn Dutch (which is lots of fun!) can continue to study almost for free. With the incoming funds we can improve both English and Dutch-taught programmes, and create a Campus that is still lively and colourful, and where everyone enjoys and contributes to the luxury.

**Marc van Oostendorp is Professor of Dutch and Academic Communication**



Is  
Nijmegen  
ready?

**Henny Sackers, Chairman of the Four Days Marches and Professor of Law**

"During the Four Days Marches, absolutely! And I'd like to say Radboud University and the city of Nijmegen are also ready for them the rest of the year. We teach in English, we organise accommodation for international students, but that's not enough. International students and employees also have to feel welcome. And that's not always the case.

This year we had 84 nationalities walking the Four Days Marches, and this leads to an incredible sense of solidarity among all the walkers. Why? I call it magic. Everyone is willing to give it their all for a week, to really be open. Maybe because it's only one week.

We make sure all the information is available in English. We expect our staff and volunteers to speak English, and we take this into account when recruiting. We had our first foreign participants in 1928, and the Four Days Marches have grown more international ever since. It's something that grows. As Executive Board, you can't just say 'in five years' time we'll have students from 84 nationalities.' It's something that happens step by step. You have to make sure people feel at home, by showing hospitality, tolerance and understanding. This is what the Four Days Marches must do for its walkers and the University for its students."

Roxy's recently became the first Nijmegen location to reverberate to the sounds of The Eagles and Grease. The karaoke bar in the Platenmakersstraat is also a big hit with international students.

Text: Thijs van Beusekom / Photography: Tom Hessels

# The whole world sings karaoke

**'From a phone booth in Vegas, Jessie calls at five am to tell me how she's tired of all of them.'**

With a blissful expression and his eyes fixed on the screen, a bearded young man sings along to Joshua Kadison's 'Jessie'. In his left hand, he holds a microphone, in his right, a glass of beer that he sips from during instrumental intermezzos. His audience sits on long benches along the wall. The barman is a Scot. Karaoke bar Roxy's, which opened its doors last June, is a big hit with international students. The reason? Maybe being so far away from home makes them less easily embarrassed. The fact is that most of the customers are internationals.

**'We could go to Mexico, you, the cat and me. We'll drink tequila and look for seashells.'**

At a high table sit four international students. "Karaoke was very popular during Orientation Week," says Marlene Hellweg (21, Arts and Culture Studies) from Germany. But this is her first time at Roxy's, she explains. "In Munster we often played Sing Star, but no karaoke. That

wasn't something cool kids did, ha ha."

**'But tell me all about our little trailer by the sea. Jessie, you can always sell any dream to me.'**

How different from Selena Soemakno's (19, Arts and Culture Studies) experience in Jakarta, Indonesia. At her parents' home, the karaoke machine stood in the living room. "These days, it's mostly older people using those machines. The younger generation switched to YouTube, they don't need a machine anymore." Mauricio Bustamante (23, Business Administration) laughs. At home in Costa Rica he often went to the karaoke bar to sing his favourite song: the Eagles' evergreen *Hotel California*. "Spanish songs were very much in demand there. There are also Spanish versions of *Hotel California*, but I prefer to sing it in English."

**'She asks me how the cat's been. I say, Moses, he's just fine, but he used to think about you all the time.'**

As the others sip their drinks, Karla Kiefer (20, Arts and Culture Studies) listens with a big

smile on her face. She's not quite sure, but she seems to remember her mother being a big karaoke fan. She wants to call her home in Harare, Zimbabwe, to find out. While Kiefer makes her call, Hellweg talks about huge sing-along sessions on a square in Munster. "I guess that's also a form of karaoke." Soemakno responds enthusiastically: "In Indonesia, people often organise karaoke sessions outdoors, usually in small villages. They only play local songs, much too loud, so the surrounding villages can enjoy the music too."

## Karaoke in Zimbabwe

**'Jessie, paint your pictures 'bout how it's gonna be. By now I should know better, your dreams are never free.'**

"Hello? Mum, is it you?" Kiefer finally manages to reach her mother. "How are you? Good! Listen, a bit of an odd question, but did you use to be a karaoke fan?" She waits for the answer and burst into loud laughter. After hanging up, she explains that her mother used to go to the karaoke bar every week, mainly to watch other people sing. When she'd had a bit too much to





drink, she sometimes grabbed the microphone herself. "Karaoke is really big in Zimbabwe!"

*'I love you in the sunshine, lay you down in the warm white sand.'*

Although the musical tastes of the four internationals vary from Punk to R&B and tragic ballads, they all have one common denominator: ABBA! So when finally it's the international crowd's turn to take the podium, *Mamma Mia* is the obvious choice. Some sing along louder than others, but the general effect is pretty good. Bustamante is in any case coming back in two weeks' time: he and his mentor group have agreed to meet at Roxy's. Maybe he can perform his beloved *Hotel California* again. 'Jessie, you can always sell any dream to me. Oh, Jessie, you can always sell any dream to me.' \*

## TIPS

Of course you can scour all the broadsheets and websites for information or subscribe to some spam-like newsletter to find out what's happening in Nijmegen in the field of arts & culture the next few weeks. But it may be easier to just trust Vox.

### GO OUT

**THIJS VAN BEUSEKOM** (25) IS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *NIJMEGEN CULTUURSTAD* AND WRITES FOR VOX

### JIWA JIWE

**6 October, Merleyn**

An exotic party in Merleyn to keep the autumn rain at bay just a little longer. Jiwa Jiwe promises Afrobeats, tropical bass, kuduro, kwaito and more exotic tracks, brought to you by Qoqonut, Chamos and Tsandr b2b Coco.

11 p.m. € 5, free entrance 11.30 p.m.

### SHINDIG LIVE!



**13 October, Brebl**

Who doesn't dream of an entire night of live music with the genres Rhythm and Blues, Rockabilly and Surf and Garage? Powersolo, Thee Andrews Surfers, Slick Nick & The Casino Special and MFC Chicken will blow you off your feet.

9 p.m. € 20.

### SINGLES PARTY

**9 November, Doornroosje**

With the first edition of the Nijmegen Singles Party selling out so fast, a second edition was not long in the making. Choose from thousands CD singles of your favourite music or guilty pleasure, and let the DJ do the rest!

11 p.m. € 13.

**LISTEN**

**TED VAN AANHOLT** (22) IS A MASTER STUDENT IN PHILOSOPHY, CRITIC FOR 3VOOR12 GELDERLAND AND CONCERT PHOTOGRAPHER

**ADY SULEIMAN****Wednesday 10 October, Merleyn**

Light upbeat R&B with a hint of reggae that immediately brings to mind Jason Mraz. Which probably means the British-Tanzanian singer will quickly move on from small venues. So make sure you don't miss this unique opportunity! 9 p.m. € 13.

**MARTIN KOHLSTEDT****Saturday 13 October, LUX**

This German neo-classical pianist's music drifts somewhere between the styles of Nils Frahm, Joep Beving and Simeon ten Holt. Music to make you dream, forget everything, and become one with the sound. 8.30 p.m. € 16.50.

**READ**

**JORDI LAMMERS** (21) IS A STUDENT OF DUTCH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE AND FORMER RADBOD UNIVERSITY CAMPUS POET

**BUITEN ZINNEN****6 October, De Mariënborg Library**

Literature is not only about books – that's the idea behind 'Buiten Zinnen' (Beyond Sentences and Out of Control), the literary

evening for young people. During the course of this evening, authors like Aafke Romeijn and Thomas Heerma van Voss will show how books can be translated to the Internet, to other languages and to the podium. Literature can be so much more than you think. 7 p.m. € 10.

**ONBEDERF'LIJK VERS****17 October, various locations**

If you love Nijmegen and Poetry, 'Onbederf'lijk Vers' (Irretrievably Fresh) is just the festival for you. At six different locations throughout the city, a famous poet performs together with two talented poets. This offers you the opportunity to explore Nijmegen bars and enjoy poetry. 8 p.m. Free entrance.

**WATCH**

**AIMÉE VAN ZUTPHEN** (20) IS TREASURER OF CULTURE ON CAMPUS AND PRESIDENT OF THE FILM COMMITTEE. SHE STUDIES GEOGRAPHY, SPATIAL PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT.

**CHILDREN OF ALEPPO****Thursday 31 October, Theaterzaal C**

In a personal monologue, Golden Calf-winner George Elias Tobal tells the story of these peaceful freedom fighters and shines a light on the Syrian revolution from the inside out, with a great amount of absurdity and disbelief, but also just the right touch of humour. 8 p.m. Online € 4.50, on the door € 5.

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VOXCAMPUS@VOX.RU.NL

**STUDENT CHAPLAINCY**

[www.ru.nl/studentchaplaincy](http://www.ru.nl/studentchaplaincy)

**11 OCTOBER**, 8 p.m.: How blue are you allowed to be? How did people in the past look at feelings of gloom, and what questions does this raise for our modern perspective? Come join the debate. There is free soup to be had beforehand. Location: Student Chaplaincy.

**5 NOVEMBER**, 7 p.m.: Commemoration of deceased Radboud University members. Every year we commemorate Radboud University's deceased. The Student Chaplaincy lights a candle for them. Visitors are invited to do the same. Location: Student Chaplaincy.

**STAFF ASSOCIATION**

[www.ru.nl/pv/english](http://www.ru.nl/pv/english)

**3 OCTOBER**, 1 p.m.: Anniversary of Radboud Seniors. Join us and take a look back on 35 years of Radboud Seniors and enjoy a concert by the Radboud Seniors Choir, a performance by Wim Daniëls, a sportive intermezzo and a dinner buffet. Location: Hotel Erica, Berg en Dal.

**6 OCTOBER**, 1 p.m.: Anniversary of the Staff Association. Enjoy a varied programme with classical and modern music and a retrospect of 50 years of Radboud Staff Association history. Location: Theaterzaal C.

**Radboud Reflects**

[www.ru.nl/radboudreflects](http://www.ru.nl/radboudreflects)

**10 OCTOBER**, 7.30 p.m.: Unhealthy Food. Lecture by health scientist Jaap Seidell. He argues that not only citizens, but also the government and the food industry have to take responsibility to make the Netherlands healthier. Location: Lecture Hall Complex.

**16 OCTOBER**, 7.30 p.m.: How to Change Climate Change? Lectures by ecologist and Honorary Doctor Stephen W. Pacala and climate researcher Heleen de Coninck. How should we deal with climate change, and what is the role of scientists? Location: Theaterzaal C.

**17 OCTOBER**, 7.30 p.m.: From Bacteria to Bach; Extending Darwin's Vision. Lecture by American cognition philosopher and Honorary Doctor Daniel Dennett. He believes our mind is no more mysterious than other natural phenomena. Location: De Vereeniging.

**24 OCTOBER**, 7.30 p.m.: Just Let Us Be Unhappy. Lecture by psychiatrist Dirk de Wachter. He believes we should stop being so obsessed with happiness. Location: Nijmegen City Theatre.

**31 OCTOBER**, 7.30 p.m.: Discrimination. How does it work? Philosophical workshop with theologian Matthijs den Dulk. Consciously or unconsciously, we all make a distinction between people.

**CULTURE ON CAMPUS**[www.ru.nl/cultuuroopdecampus](http://www.ru.nl/cultuuroopdecampus)

**2 OCTOBER**, 8 p.m.: Indielectualiteit. Listen to music by bands like Moondaze, Towtruck and Cymbaline. Location: Culture Café.

**10 OCTOBER**, 7.30 p.m.: Anne+. In the context of International Coming Out day, a preview of Anne+, a series that follows the love life of a lesbian twenty-year old. Location: Theaterzaal C.

**11 OCTOBER**, 7.30 p.m.: Screening of Call Me By Your Name. In the context of International Coming Out Day, one more chance to enjoy this highly acclaimed film about two boys in one hot Italian summer. Location: Theaterzaal C.

**22 OCTOBER**, 7.30 p.m.: What do you know about Halloween? Form a team of maximum five people and compete for a fun prize. Location: Culture Café.

**24 OCTOBER**, 3.30 p.m.: InScience preview. This year, InScience is devoted to artificial intelligence. Join us for a preview of the films to be screened. Location: Theaterzaal C.



DIGITAL IMAGING: JEROEN MURRÉ

**InScience festival preview on artificial intelligence**

Sometimes this can be very useful, but when does it become a problem? Come and join the debate. Location: Studio LUX.

**14 NOVEMBER**, 7.30 p.m.: Ancient Philosophy and the Gods. Lecture by philosopher Frederik Bakker and classicist Vincent Hunink. Classical antiquity would be nothing without its gods. Find out about the philosophical traditions of that time and what they can teach us today. Location: Lecture Hall Complex.

**23 NOVEMBER**, 7.30 p.m.: Triumph of Fear. The Geopolitics of TV Series. Lecture by French political science expert Dominique Moisi. What do TV series like Game of Thrones, Homeland and House of Cards tell us about today's world? Location: Lecture Hall Complex.

**27 NOVEMBER**, 7.30 p.m.: China and the New Silk Route. Lectures by philosopher Haroon Sheikh and sinologist Jue Wang. China is drawing nearer. Are we on the eve of a Chinese era? Sheikh and Wang offer their vision of tomorrow's world. Location: Lecture Hall Complex.

**28 NOVEMBER**, 8 p.m.: Human or Animal? Debate with theologian Frank Bosman and philosopher Cees Leijenhorst. Are humans and animals fundamentally different? Cees Leijenhorst thinks not. Frank Bosman disagrees – he believes humans are superior. Join the debate on the consequences this has for animal rights. Location: Radboud University.

# POEM

**LEV AVITAN**  
IS THE OFFICIAL  
CAMPUS POET THIS  
ACADEMIC YEAR. EACH  
MONTH HE WRITES A  
POEM (IN DUTCH)  
FOR VOX.

financieringsmodel v.d. universiteit

ik moet de taal leren  
want anders krijg ik geen kamer  
ik moet studiepunten scoren  
want anders kan ik niet slagen

ik moet studeren, anders  
heeft mijn verblijf hier geen waarde  
dus ik moet vragen kunnen stellen  
maar honderdvijftig zijn er te veel  
om aan te nemen, dus ik stress  
voor het falen

ik moet kalmeren en rustig leren  
maar dat is lastig in overvolle zalen  
ik moet werken omdat ik naast collegegeld  
ook nog een hostel heb te betalen

want de universiteit neemt maar aan  
zonder te kijken naar plaatsn.

## COLOPHON

Vox is the independent magazine of the Radboud University.

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