

The Dutch Experience of Carrying Out the Bologna Process

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This paper attempts to put into perspective the Bologna process in the context of the Netherlands. It shares some experiences made by some Dutch universities in the past five years. The paper maintains the view that the Bologna process has so far contributed little to the convergence of European higher education systems, but has supported important national reforms in the Netherlands.

Keywords: Academic Education, Academic Networks, Bologna Process, Professional Education.

1 Introduction

The Bologna Declaration is a term referring to the agreement signed by the education ministers of 29 European countries in 1999 with the purpose of co-ordinating European higher education in order to provide more compatibility and harmony. Its ultimate objective is to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. Since 1999, 11 more countries have joined this agreement. To put the Bologna Declaration into effect, a process has been devised to help individual countries fit the Bologna Declaration directives into their cultural, social, and educational context. This process can be seen as the actions and initiatives each country makes to implement the Bologna Declaration. From a long-term perspective, the major results expected from this process include: (i) the implementation of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, (ii) the Europe-wide adoption and acceptance of a two-tiered degree system, (iii) the establishment of a credit system, (iv) the establishment of quality assurance systems, and (v) the adoption of common rules that allow mobility of students and teachers. This process makes sure that the Bologna Declaration goes well beyond a political statement and takes the form of a binding commitment to an action programme [7]. Generally, members of the Bologna process are committed to having started the implementation of the two-tiered system by 2005. In terms of the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, the countries who signed the Bologna Declaration are encouraged to ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Allied to this, countries are committed to ensuring that every student graduating should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge, in a widely spoken European language. The Bologna process rests on four essential assumptions [7]: (i) the differences of national structures and systems should be preserved, while seeking similar outcomes, (ii) university regulatory and funding context is still national, (iii) common European rather than national ideas should design education policy for the future, (iv) while HE should be an exclusive matter of each country, politicians will continue to adopt common policies and programmes to make sure the HE marker keeps its competitive edge. Next, the Bologna process suggests a network approach to achieving alignment which means that

different actors interact to achieve a shared goal. For example, in the process of designing, evaluating, and selecting higher education policies, the actors would be each country's government, the various universities, and the European Commission. To be able to flexibly respond to the process of globalization, it is in these actors' best interest to cooperate in policy networks [7]. This paper looks into how this network approach works in the Netherlands and reviews some of the changes that the Bologna process triggered in the Dutch HE sector. Specific experiences of some Dutch universities offering programmes in Computer Science and IT-related fields are shared as well.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: In Section 2 we provide a summary of what the Netherlands did in support of the Bologna process. Section 3 shares some specific experiences done by Dutch education institutions. Section 4 concludes the paper.

2 The Dutch Context of Change

The HE system in the Netherlands is defined as a binary system made up by a university sector and non-university sector. The first one comprises 14 universities and traditionally offers academic education (so-called *wetenschappelijk onderwijs*). The second sector comprises 60 universities of professional education [15], or the so-called *hogescholen* in Dutch, that traditionally offer high education and skill development regarding certain profes-

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sions (so-called *hoger beroeponderwijs*). The primary source of funding for both sectors is the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences [8, p. 166].

The 1993 HE and Research Act abolished all previous reform laws affecting HE system. The Act greatly increased the autonomy of institutions to define the content of study programmes and educational objectives in response of changing needs of the society. It also introduced a system of credits to define the length of a given programme, that is, one credit (*or studiepunt in Dutch*) represents 40 hours of study. Most undergraduate programmes include 168 credits which requires four years of full-time study. In addition, the 1993 legislation also launched the concept of internal quality control to be exercised by the institutions themselves, by external experts and—on behalf of the government—by the so-called Inspectorate for Higher Education. In 2002, to align its actions with the Bologna Declaration, the government approved amendments to the HE Research Act which (i) made it legally possible for institutions of higher education to issue the new bachelor and master degrees, (ii) introduced a new law on accreditation; and (iii) introduced the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

3 The Change: Steps, Results, and Key Change Agents

Since November 2003, the Netherlands has implemented a number of steps that led to achieving a better alignment with the Bologna Declaration. Specific results include:

- Signing (but not ratifying) the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications.

- Establishing the Center for International Recognition and Certification, under the Netherlands Organization for Cooperation in International Higher Education (NUFFIC) to serve as the Dutch ENIC-NARIC.

- Promoting the use of the diploma supplement. Because it is not currently obligatory in the Netherlands, a ministry report from April 2003 shows that the Association of Universities in the Netherlands and the Association of Universities of Professional Education, together with student organizations and the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education are working together to increase the awareness of the benefits that a diploma supplement brings to graduates and to establish it as a preferred choice.

- Complying with the Berlin declaration recommendation that all institutions of higher education adopt the diploma supplement by Jan. 1, 2005 (according to the Association of Universities in the Netherlands).

- Implementing the new two-tiered bachelor/master degree structure since the academic year of 2002/2003.

- Setting up a Credit Transfer process.

- Founding the Netherlands Accreditation Council to perform Quality Assurance services.

In what follows we will pay more attention to a subset of these results, namely on the specific Dutch experiences with the adoption of the two-tiered bachelor/master (BAMA) degree structure [3], the Credit Transfer process, and the system for quality assurance in the Netherlands.

3.1 The Two-tiered Degree Structure and The Underlying Teaching Method

Prior to the Bologna Declaration, the first major degree in the Netherlands was an integrated degree known as the *Doctoraal*. Academic programmes leading to the *doctoraal*, for example the Computer Science programmes, were not divided into undergraduate and graduate cycles. Computer Science study programmes lasted four to five years at the end of which the *doctoraal* degree was awarded.

The first year of every programme was referred to as the *propedeuse*, which provided students with introductory courses fundamental to the discipline in question.

After the *propedeuse*, a required component of every *doctoraal* programme is training in research methodology and the completion of a thesis. Graduates of *doctoraal* programmes are permitted by law to use a particular title, depending on the discipline. Many European countries recognized this qualification as one comparable to a master's degree. Generally, according to the traditional Dutch HE system, holders of *doctoraal* degrees used the academic title *Doctorandus (drs.)* unless their field is engineering or agriculture, in which case the title is *Ingenieur (ir.)*, or law in which case the title is *Meester (mr.)*.

The HE legislation in 2002 replaced this traditional structure of Dutch degrees and permitted university graduates to adopt the title of bachelor and master in addition to the traditional diploma titles of *doctorandus (drs.)*, *ingenieur (ir.)* or *meester (mr.)*. As a result to the new legislation, universities restructured most of their traditional integrated (*doctoraal*) programmes to conform to the new two-tiered system. It should be noted, however, that, at some locations, the old long, one-degree-only programmes still exist in parallel with the new two-tiered programmes in the fields of medicine and dentistry.

Furthermore, in the sector of universities of professional education, or the so-called *hogescholen*, professional and technical programmes were also subjected to major restructuring to fit the bachelor-master format. In 2003, *hogescholen* became eligible to seek accreditation and official recognition for their master's programmes. At the time of writing this paper, new master's programmes are being promoted especially in the areas of fine arts, architecture, and health care. One aspect though, which makes an important difference between Dutch universities and *hogescholen*, is that the master's degree programmes at the *hogescholen* are not financed by the government, but rather through tuition fees.

The new two-tiered degree structure can be summarized as follows:

- Tier One: It refers to academic bachelor's degrees, mainly offered by universities. It lasts a minimum of three years (180 ECTS credits). It also includes higher professional bachelor's degrees, mainly offered by *hogescholen*, and it lasts for a minimum of four years (240 ECTS credits).

- Tier Two: It refers to academic master's degrees and requires a minimum of one year of full-time study (60 ECTS

credits), totaling a combined credit load of 240 ECTS credits. This may cause recognition problems within the European Higher Education Area, which generally requires a combined minimum credit load of 300 ECTS credits for master's degrees. In the fields of engineering, agricultural disciplines, life sciences and natural sciences, two years are required (120 ECTS credits). In the field of medicine, a restructuring decision has not yet been made. Master's in higher professional education require a minimum of one year (60 ECTS credits). Access to academic master's programmes in the Netherlands is based on entrance requirements determined by individual institutions. In general, students are admitted to master's programmes on the basis of their having completed a relevant bachelor's programme.

An example of Tier One is the Computer Science bachelor's programme at the University of Twente. It is divided into compulsory topics (135 credits), an elective part (15 credits), a minor (20 credits), and an assignment (10 credits). Next, the University of Twente MSc programme in Business Information Technology is an interdisciplinary two-year programme jointly offered by the Department of Computer Science (Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science) and the Department of Technology & Management. This programme is an academic and technical programme. It is made up of two central themes: (i) design and application of information systems, and (ii) business process optimization. Core elements of the Master's programme are the research and the development of a variety of essential aspects pertinent to these two themes as well as related methodology and modeling approaches. The programme targets students with a Bachelor's degree in Business Information Technology, Information Management, Computer Science, or Industrial Engineering and Management. The structure of the programme includes the following: The first year of the programme will depend on the student's specific background. Its objective is to prepare the student to become specialized in a preferred area of his/her choice which is one out of eight basic subjects. In the second year of this master's programme, the student will further extend his/her knowledge and skills within the chosen specialization. During half of the second year, the student works on his/her Master's thesis, within or outside the faculty. The Bologna process also provides opportunities to complete a master's project abroad.

Once Tier One and Tier Two are successfully completed, a master's degree confers eligibility for the pursuit of a doctorate through a process known as the *promotie*. This entails four years of full-time research under the supervision of a promoter, who must be a full professor at a university. To earn the title of *Doctor*, a student must write and successfully defend a dissertation. This process retained its traditional characteristics in terms of key activities, milestones and results, and, hence, has not been changed in the light of the Bologna Declaration.

In the cultural context of the Netherlands, both Tier One and Tier Two rest on the foundation of a teaching method

widely used at the Dutch educational institutions. Egalitarian attitude and respect for each individual's opinions and convictions are well known as national virtues that give strength to the fabric of Holland's diverse and plural society. The teaching style can be described as student-centered which means providing students with the attention and freedom they need to develop their own opinions and creativity in applying their newly acquired knowledge. The Netherlands has received international acclaim for its groundbreaking Problem-Based Learning system, which trains students to analyze and solve practical problems independently through emphasis on self-study and self-discipline. A large portion of all study programmes is dedicated to writing papers, working in a team to analyze and solve specific problems, acquiring practical work experience through internships, running case study research projects, and conducting experiments in laboratories.

Students from other countries soon notice that at a Dutch institution for higher education everyone is expected to do a lot of talking. Under a teacher's supervision, a small team of students analyzes a certain problem. They get together to discuss it as a group, usually on the basis of a paper about one aspect of the problem in question. Teachers stimulate students to take a critical view, and everyone is expected to play an active part. On examinations, students must demonstrate not only that they know the material, but also that they have built well-founded opinions on the subject.

Moreover, the Netherlands is one of the few countries in Europe with strong international orientation of the academics [6][10]. The academic profession is positioned in the Netherlands as the mediator between growing systems of experts and the individualization of courses offered to students. Mediation can be seen at both national and international level. In Dutch academic life, the role of international exchange and relationships play an essential role. For example, in contrast to other countries (e.g. Germany and France), Dutch university professors share a view called "internationalize or perish" [6]. They are aware of the "internationalization through import" but do not take it for granted, as English or US professors do.

3.2 Credit Transfer Aspects

The 2002 amendments to the Dutch HE and Research Act introduced an ECTS-compatible system [1] of 60 credits per year which replaced the old system of 42 credits. Course duration now is expressed in ECTS terms to accommodate the new credit structure. Dutch universities found ECTS useful because of the following benefits brought to students: (i) ECTS makes programmes easy to read and compare for both Dutch and foreign students, (ii) ECTS facilitates mobility and academic recognition. Dutch universities also recognized the opportunity that ECTS opened up with respect to organizing, revising, and aligning their BA/MA programmes. Universities use ECTS across a variety of programmes and modes of delivery and this is how European higher education is made more attractive for students from other continents.

It should be noted though that the Netherlands is one of those countries where the aim of attracting more foreign students is explicitly stated as national policy [14, p. 437]. This can be seen as an indication of the short-term economic rationale: attracting foreign (fee-paying) students in order to generate income for the HE institutions, both universities and *hoogscholen*. The long-term goal in economic terms is that the graduates can represent the Netherlands in future international business and trade relationships. Another long-term objective is that foreign students could make up for the shortage of students in certain fields, especially Computer Science and IT-related fields. These economic rationales can be traced back to the general trend of internationalization in educational policy [7].

The workload is measured in credits (*studiepunten* in Dutch, or units of study), which includes both (i) contact hours and (ii) hours spent studying and preparing assignments. Workload refers to the time an average learner might need to complete the required learning scheme. Student workload in ECTS includes, for example, the time spent in attending lectures, seminars, independent study, preparation for, and taking of, examinations. The meaning of credits is twofold: First, credits are allocated to all educational components of a BA/MA programme (such as modules, courses, placements, assignments) and reflect the quantity of work each component requires in relation to the total quantity of work necessary to complete a full year of study in the programme in question. Second, credit is also a way of quantifying the outcomes of learning. Learning outcomes are sets of competences, expressing what the student will know, understand or be able to do after completion of a process of learning, short or long. Credits in ECTS can only be obtained after completion of the work required and appropriate assessment of the learning outcomes achieved. Thus, credits are awarded only when a student passes the assessment of the work. The allocation of ECTS credits is based on the official length of Tier One or Tier Two. For example, as indicated earlier, the total workload necessary to obtain a Tier One degree lasting officially three years is expressed as 180 credits.

Prior to 2002, one credit in the Netherlands meant one week of full-time study (40 hours). Programmes offered by both universities and universities of professional education

Grade	Description
10	Outstanding
9	Very good
8	Good
7	Very Satisfactory
6	Satisfactory (minimum pass)
5	Fail
4	Unsatisfactory
3	Very Unsatisfactory
2	Poor
1	Very Poor

Table 1: The Dutch Grading System.

lasting four years required completion of a total of 168 credits, or 42 credits per year. Thus, the academic year was 42 weeks long. The 2002 legislation states the workload is measured in ECTS credits, meaning that 1 credit now represents 28 hours of full-time study and 60 credits represent one academic year. The traditional Dutch grading system, though, has been retained and it still rests on a scale from 1, meaning very poor, to 10, meaning outstanding. The lowest passing grade is 6; 9's are seldom given and 10's are extremely rare. The Dutch grading system is presented in Table 1.

Dutch universities found that ECTS grades are very useful in addressing grades presentation requirements of those students who need their credits be transferred between countries. Examples of such cases are students who completed a bachelor's programme in the Netherlands and would like to continue with a master's programme in another European country or in North America, or students who spent a semester in another European university and would like to have their grades accounted for in a Dutch university. In contrast to the traditional Dutch grading system, the ECTS grading scale ranks the students on a statistical basis. Therefore, statistical data on student performance is a key prerequisite for applying the ECTS grading system. Grades are assigned among students with a *pass grade* as follows:

- **A** meaning the top 10%
- **B** meaning the next 25%
- **C** meaning the next 30%
- **D** meaning the next 25%
- **E** meaning the lowest 10%

A distinction is made between the grades FX and F that are used for unsuccessful students. FX means: "fail - some more work required to pass" and F means: "fail - considerable further work required". The inclusion of failure rates in the Transcript of Records, though, is optional.

A HE system-wide ECTS grade equivalency has not been offered, although a number of universities are offering equivalencies. For example, Table 2 reports on how the University of Maastricht compares their grades to ECTS grades, and Table 3 demonstrates how the Technical University of Delft establishes equivalency between grades [2].

3.3 Quality Assurance

Maintaining a guaranteed standard of higher education in the Netherlands is achieved through a national system of legal regulation and quality control. Legislation pertaining to education is a key responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Prior to 2002, the Association of Universities in the Netherlands and the Netherlands Association of Universities of Professional Education were accountable for running the quality assurance system. This system has been recently converted into a system of accreditation whose *raison d'être* is to guarantee a high standard of quality of programmes offered in HE. Beginning in 2002, the responsibilities for accreditation are allocated to the Netherlands Accreditation Organization (NAO). According to the Dutch HE Act, BAMA degree programmes of-

Maastricht Grade	ECTS Grade	Explanation	UR Equivalent
8,5-10	A	Excellent	A
7,5-8,4	B	Very Good	A-
7,0-7,4	C	Good	B
6,5-6,9	D	Satisfactory	B-
5,5-6,4	E	Sufficient	C
1,0-5,4	F/FX	Insufficient	F

Table 2: The Grades from The Maastricht University Mapped onto The ECTS Grades

ferred by both universities and universities of professional education will be evaluated according to established criteria. Programmes that meet those criteria will be accredited, i.e. recognized for a period of six years. Only accredited programmes will be eligible for government funding and students receive financial aid and will graduate with a recognized degree only when taking, or after completing, an accredited degree programme. Accredited programmes are listed in the Central Register of Higher Education Study Programmes (CROHO) and the information will of course be available to the public. The NAO plans to review all study programmes by the end of 2006. Before the end of the year, all programmes that are registered in CROHO will be recognized by law. According to legislation regarding accreditation, institutions are required to mention, on the degree certificate, the date that the degree programme in question was granted accreditation. Some universities and *hoogscholen* have chosen to provide this information in the Diploma Supplement instead. Because accreditation is an ongoing process, it will be important that people who review Dutch degrees make sure that a programme was accredited at the time the degree was awarded. Once accredited, the validity of the accreditation of that particular degree is, of course, permanent.

4 Impacts of The Bologna Process on National Changes in The Netherlands HE

Empirical reports on the effects of the Bologna process on academic life in the Netherlands [4][7][9][12][13][15] indicate that the Bologna process has so far contributed little to the convergence of European higher education systems, but has supported important national reforms, such as those in the Netherlands. This conclusion is the key result of an international comparative study of the Bologna process conducted at the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) of the University of Twente, the Netherlands [15]. Analyzing the changes of degree structures and concomitant adaptations of the higher education systems of Germany, the Netherlands, and France between 1998 and 2004, with England as a reference country, the study shows how the national starting points, interests, perceptions and competencies of actors differ and explains the nature and degree of change. A central conclusion of this study is that the introduction of the two-tiered BAMA degree structure is used by the participating countries for long-term reforms of their HE systems as a whole. In the Netherlands, international trends serve as important arguments for national reforms. These are however often based on misunderstandings. For example, accreditation was introduced as an

DUT Grade	ECTS Grade	Explanation	UR Equivalent
10/9	A	A	Excellent/Very good
8	B	A-	Good
7	C	B+	More than Satisfactory
6.5	D	B	Satisfactory
6	E	C	Sufficient
5 or lower	FX-F	F	Fail

Table 3: The Grades from the Delft University of Technology Mapped onto The ECTS Grades

"Anglo-Saxon" system, although it plays hardly any role in English higher education. A lot of significance is attached to defining degree titles such as "BA" or "MSc" in national debates, although there are no common definitions internationally [13]. To make sure that all actors are enough involved in the reform-making processes, the international dialogue needs to be intensified at all levels if the Bologna process is to lead to the convergence of HE landscapes in Europe. In the Netherlands, not much can be done without making a serious effort to understand its neighbouring countries [15]. Concretely, this means: It is not sufficient if it is always just the same handful of people participating in the European "Bologna meetings", the international exchange on higher education reform needs to be broadened. The ministers responsible for higher education in the Bologna signatory countries should re-establish a closer dialogue, beyond just the official bi-annual conferences. The art of good higher education policy itself could become an issue of exchange, as the way higher education policy is implemented varies enormously between countries.

While the Dutch higher education system is not among the systems known for undertaking the most ambitious reforms in international comparison, it, clearly, is the one with the fastest implementation. For example, in the Netherlands, the gap between university and *hogeschool* degrees remains wider than in Germany and the university Bachelor is not designed to qualify for the labour market, as it is in Germany. But consensus among stakeholders on the reforms is high, easing swift implementation.

5 Challenges for The Future

The process of converging national HE policies in Europe is a recent phenomenon [7][12][15]. However, its impact on the knowledge economy that each European country would like to build is significant. Despite the Bologna process laying out the foundation for individual countries to work together on an HE project in order to meet the future globalization requirements, each country is experiencing local culture-specific challenges. Among the challenges in the Netherlands for the future, as indicated in empirical reports [7][15], are to further improve the possibilities for *hogeschool* graduates to enter university Master's programmes and to allow for a better integration of the Masters and the doctoral phase, for example through graduate schools. The Dutch approach to resolving the division of HE institutions in universities and *hogeschoolen* was to leave this division unchanged, but to open the boundaries in two clearly circumscribed aspects:

a) *hogescholen* were allowed to offer Masters degrees under Dutch law as well, even though—as opposed to Masters degrees from universities—they were generally not publicly funded; and

b) a unified accreditation system was introduced for both universities and *hogescholen*, albeit with separate frameworks for 'academic' and 'higher professional' degrees. Both institution types could submit both types of programmes to accreditation, but the criteria made it difficult

for *hogescholen* to get 'academic' degrees accredited in practice.

In addition to this, a variety of measures were introduced and thus contributed to convergence of the two institution types. Examples for such measures are the creation of centres of competence and of lecturer positions at *hogescholen* and the development of closer co-operations between universities and *hogescholen*. This convergence process however was found to be a bumpy road [15]. Some issues that remained open for continued discussion beyond autumn 2004 refer to the following: (i) Dutch *hogescholen* continued to argue that the decision not to allow them to grant degree titles with the accretions "of Science" led to confusion abroad as these were, according to them, internationally used to signal the field of study rather than the 'academic' orientation of studies. They also pointed out that universities had always offered professional degrees in many areas. Moreover, employers were anxious to safeguard the state of the negotiations reached by autumn 2004; (ii) it was still unclear if the entry requirements for legal professions in the public service would be adjusted to allow for student mobility between the *hogeschool* and the university sectors, or if the entire education up to the Masters degree had to be of the academic type.

In terms of degree structure, by autumn 2004, the Dutch HE system had completed the full transition to a two-cycle degree structure. 90% of degree programmes were of the new type [16]. To achieve this, the traditional four-year *hogeschool* certificate was re-named as a Bachelor degree, leaving length and content unchanged, but formally rendering *hogescholen* 'degree granting' institutions. They were now also allowed to offer Master's degrees under Dutch law. The respective degrees were "Bachelor/Master of", followed by the denomination of the disciplinary field or professional area, which institutions were free to choose. Yet another concept that received much attention, but had not crystallised yet in terms of regulations and practice, was the 'top Masters'; the idea of highly-demanding and internationally attractive, selective graduate programmes. In the case of the Netherlands, the fairly high adaptations brought about in most dimensions can also be explained by a combination of the four factors (i) the national ministry's relatively strong capabilities to steer national policy formulation, (ii) a widespread readiness to accept international role models, (iii) a relatively low persistence of formal constraints—as exemplified by the relative ease of adapting the National HE Act and (iv) the low importance of professional entry regulations—provide very favorable conditions for policy change. Because national problem pressure is small, the predominant preferences for change derived from the national context are weaker too. Also, informal constraints—notably the quite deeply established gap between universities and *hogescholen* as well as attachment to egalitarian values in education—show a certain degree of persistence that cannot be 'negotiated away' by the ministry. The latter two factors—low national problem pressure and persistence of informal constraints—slightly reduce the degree of pos-

sible change, but the overall degree of policy change is nevertheless quite high. The constellation also allows for a high degree of congruence between policy formulation along the seven dimensions and implementation policy. Compared with Germany and France, the Dutch situation is much less conflict-ridden and polarized, as pressure for change and capability for change coincide to a much higher degree than in the other two countries. Overall, in conjunction, the four explanatory factors capture the Dutch policy change well [15] although the high overall degree of policy change remains somewhat surprising given the low national problem pressure. We should note that the process of policy development is different in both HE sectors with respect to involvement and content [7]. One of the reasons for this difference is the strong international orientation of the universities. While the universities consult and imitate the educational systems of their international partners, the *hogescholen* focus more on national legislation [14, p. 4). Since this national legislation has only just been developed completely, the policy development within *hogescholen* continues slowly.

6 Conclusions

This paper provided insights into some aspects and resulting changes of the Bologna process in the Netherlands. We shared experiences that confirm the following observations: Dutch universities' increased awareness of opportunities to build academic networks and their willingness to coordinate joint programmes and cooperate with partners at both national and international level does not imply that the Netherlands would like to achieve an increased level of homogenization of its HE system with respect to the other European countries' HE systems. As earlier published research results indicated, the advantage of a uniform European education system is not really recognized by the actors in Dutch academic networks [7]. The Dutch experience shows that universities are achieving alignment with the Bologna Declaration directions by focusing most on what is considered to be an effective and inexpensive way to revise the Dutch higher education system. An example of this is the implementation of the BAMA policy.

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