



P. 3 News & P. 5 Opinion

SEVERE TIES OR NOT?

A policy document
explains how to come
to a judgment

P. 6-7

Academic work turned
into a TV show
"How many people can
say that?"

P. 4

"Before competitions, I
was so stressed I couldn't
sleep or eat"

P. 3

Studying in a 'healthy'
space, does that lead to
higher grades?

Illustration: Shutterstock



editorial

“You’re not God”

When I first became editor-in-chief, I had a coach to support and advise me. The first year in a new role is always challenging. I was trying to do everything right, didn’t want to make any mistakes, and would beat myself up if I slipped up. Some nights, I’d lie awake worrying about substandard articles, poorly printed photos, and – most of all – offhand remarks that I later realised could have been taken the wrong way. “I shouldn’t have made that mistake”, I’d tell my coach. She heard me out but was quick to set me straight: “You’re not God – you’re human, and humans make mistakes.” Making mistakes isn’t the end of the world, she said, as long as you learn from them and are willing to admit when you’re wrong.

That phrase, “You’re not God”, still comes up regularly in our editorial meetings. After all, it happens almost every week that something doesn’t go quite according to plan. Nothing catastrophic, but minor and less minor slip-ups that need addressing. Like the first paragraph of an article being printed twice due a copy-paste mishap. Or last week’s outdated photo – I’d chosen it myself – of the French politician Marine Le Pen standing at a lectern marked “*Front National*” instead of “*Rassemblement National*”, the name her far-right party has used since 1 June 2018.

And then there’s the classic Dutch “*als/dan*” error, which recently slipped into an article about fascism. Both the author and the editor on duty (myself) have roots in Limburg, and – as we at *Observant* know from experience – people from the south of the Netherlands often struggle with the difference between “*als*” (“*as*”) and “*dan*” (“*than*”). I used to keep a Post-it on my screen as a reminder: “*als*” expresses equality (“*as big as*”), “*dan*” expresses inequality (“*bigger than*”). But the note disappeared when my screen was replaced, and even if it were still there, I’d forget to check it in a rush.

The other day, we left another common language error – the dreaded “*dt*” error – in the headline of our newsletter’s lead article. Our weekly newsletter doesn’t usually get many replies, but this time, readers were quick to write in. Two minutes after the newsletter went out on Wednesday afternoon at 5 p.m., the first email came in. And they kept coming, even on Thursday. “Did you see...?” “Can you fix this?” We appreciate your attentiveness, but once the newsletter has been sent out, there’s nothing we can do – just like with the printed paper. We were annoyed with ourselves, but the phrase “You’re not God” came up again – this time to console the colleague who, in the rush to meet the deadline, had swapped a “t” for a “d”.

Riki Janssen

Every week, the editor-in-chief writes about what has been happening at the *Observant* office



series everything you want to know about sex



Collage: Simone Golob

“If you’re depressed, it’s important to keep connecting with others”

Depression can profoundly impact your life, but how does it affect your relationship and sex drive? And if you’ve lost your libido, is there anything you can do about it, or is it simply a hormonal issue? UM sexologist Marieke Dewitte shares her insights.

Depression disrupts the balance of certain hormones, such as serotonin, dopamine and cortisol, often called “happy and stress hormones”. “This leads to changes in mood, energy and motivation”, explains Dewitte. “You’ll feel listless, down, and find less pleasure in things, like sex, which can result in a lower sex drive.”

Decreased sexual desire is also a well-known side effect of antidepressants. “It affects around 85 per cent of people taking SSRI’s, the most common medication for depression.” On top of this, people with depression often have a negative self-image. “You’ll feel less sexy, and therefore less interested in initiating sex or responding to your partner’s initiative.” So, is it hopeless? Should you wait until you’ve recovered from your depression before even thinking about sex again? Not necessarily, says Dewitte. “People who feel depressed often retreat into themselves, pulling away from their partner, friends and family.” Still, connecting with others can help you feel better. “Positive experiences can help combat sadness and boost your self-image. That’s why it’s important to keep engaging in activities with others, no matter how small. Do something you used to enjoy. Try to avoid falling into a cycle of isolation – the less you interact with others, the harder it becomes to reconnect. Mindfulness and meditation can help with the stress this might cause.”

As for your relationship with your partner, Dewitte points out that there are many more ways of being intimate together than

penetration or touching each other’s genitals. “You can experience skin-to-skin contact and physical closeness by spooning, or holding hands. And of course, you can always consider switching to a different medication to see if it’ll help reduce side effects.” What about those hormones, though? Aren’t they the root of the issue? “I like to say that hormones

are like walking sticks – they provide support, but you’re the one doing the walking. Hormones facilitate the sexual response, but are not all determining. Your sexual system still works, even if activating it requires more effort. You might be less attuned to sexual stimuli or get aroused slower. If you’re aware of this, you can start being more open and alert to them. You’ll need more direct and longer stimulation than before, so try to figure out what works for you.”

Cleo Freriks

Marieke Dewitte is a clinical psychologist and sexologist at Maastricht University. In this weekly series, she answers questions about sex from students. If you have a question, you can submit it anonymously, scan the code



A researcher compared tutorial groups in old and renovated SBE buildings

Good air quality does not lead to higher grades



Students at the well-ventilated building at Tapijnkazerne Photo: Joey Roberts

Pupils who are taught in well-ventilated, comfortable classrooms perform better, research has shown. Does the same apply to students? No, PhD candidate Stefan Flagner discovered. Whether first years at the School of Business and Economics are taught in the building at Tongersestraat 53 or the renovated, well-ventilated building at Tapijnkazerne 11, their final grades are the same.

Flagner – who hopes to obtain his doctoral degree on 19 March – randomly divided over 1200 first-year SBE students into two groups, each attending two classes for two periods in different buildings: one mostly in Tongersestraat, the other in Tapijn. He measured the air quality and temperature in the classrooms, asked students and tutors for their experiences, and compared the final grades of the subjects.

Time

What are the results? The air quality in Tapijn 11 (which opened in 2020) is better, thanks to its modern ventilation system and set-up, students and tutors feel more comfortable there, and think they perform better there than on Tongersestraat. However, that last isn't the case, although earlier research done in primary schools would suggest otherwise. Why is that? A question of time, Flagner suspects: students have a total of eight hours of classes a week, pupils spend much longer in their classrooms. It isn't actually all that surprising to him. "It would be a lot more concerning if those eight hours a week would already have a negative effect." With a smile: "Imagine the complaints from students with classes on Tongersestraat if they were to discover that the building had an influence on their grades..."

Speaking of complaints, what about the ethi-

cal side of this research? After all, the first years were subjected to it without their prior knowledge. Flagner and his team were given the green light by the city centre ethics committee. "The students would have had to take part in these tutorial groups either way," he says. "And there was no intervention, such as actively altering the air quality of a space."

Money

Was the renovation of Tapijn worth the money? That question from the Executive Board was part of the reason for this research. "It depends what you are hoping to improve," says Flagner. "If your goal is higher grades, then it might be better to improve the air quality of the study places, where students spend more time. If your goal is their wellbeing, then it would appear to be worth it."

Peter Doorakkers

Committee to determine which partner institutions have clean hands

Which of its partner institutions worldwide will Maastricht University decide to sever ties with due to their involvement in human rights violations or other international crimes? There's no list yet, but a policy document outlines the decision-making process. The University Council discussed the matter on Wednesday, after this issue of Observant went to print.

The introduction of a Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) framework at Maastricht University has been anticipated since last spring. The current Israel-Hamas war and subsequent

protests, including those on UM premises, prompted the Executive Board to develop a policy instrument. Its purpose is to provide a sound basis for assessing whether partner institutions – not just in the Middle East but across the globe – have clean hands. To coordinate this process, an overarching body will be established: the UM Sensitive Partnerships Committee. The committee will include the chairs of three subcommittees, each dedicated to one of three assessment domains: human rights, knowledge security, and fossil/sensitive industries.

But what will determine whether a partner

institution is blacklisted? UM adheres to the International Criminal Court's definitions of international crimes: aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. If there is sufficient evidence indicating that a government is guilty of such crimes, UM will evaluate its partner institutions (institutions that have signed contracts with the Executive Board or a Faculty Board) in that country. For individual collaborations, such as joint publications, smaller projects or guest lectures, UM expects staff members to evaluate the associ-

Continued on page 8



Lost in Translation



The other day, I was scrolling through TikTok – for longer than I'd like to admit. Amidst a seemingly endless influx of news report excerpts, featuring the rapidly growing Palisades Fire and the charred ruins of countless homes, I simply couldn't put down my phone.

It was only when I decided to skim through the respective comment sections, that my ceaseless scrolling came to an end. Below a particularly heart-breaking interview with a family who had lost their home, I came across a statement that stopped me dead in my tracks. "It's giving trauma." Alongside the 'zany face' emoji.

After reading the comment three more times, I finally put down my phone. My immediate thought: how could a comment be so utterly insensitive?

My following thought: when did we completely deviate from traditional linguistic norms?

This wasn't the first time I'd encountered so-called 'TikTok slang'. I can recall numerous instances where I was confronted with internet lingo that left me feeling confused, to say the least. Full disclosure, I wouldn't say I'm against slang altogether. At the end of the day, I suppose the evolution of language is only natural, with slang serving expressive and creative purposes. However, I fear that my generation has taken this expression one step too far.

"It's giving trauma", for instance, casually refers to a serious issue, trivialising its psychological weight. And this isn't the only time I witnessed serious issues being reduced to trendy buzzwords. Depression, amongst other mental disorders, has been marked as the latest trend.

I also can't help but shake the thought that our overreliance on slang is eroding our formal communication skills. 'Ohio' has been coined the newest synonym for weird. 'Core' is the latest suffix, used to mark anything as an aesthetic (cottagecore, academiacore). The list goes on. And then there's the slang that I simply don't understand. I have never, and probably never will accept the word 'skibidi'. It's absolute nonsense, in every sense of the word.

In the end, maybe I'm so attached to words because I'm a writer. Or maybe, I'm just growing up, experiencing exactly what my parents must have felt hearing my slang back in the day.



Robin van Wasen, student at UCM

series sing, fight, cry, pray, laugh, work and admire

Anissa Ahmidan

(Brussels, Belgium, 2006)

/ first-year student of Brain Science

/Lives in Maastricht

/Relationship status: single



Photo: Joey Roberts

“ I can't wait to become a mother ”

I'm very close to my siblings. Actually, I'm an only child. My parents would've liked to have more children, but my mother was already 39 when she had me, and that was it. I would've loved to have siblings, especially as most of our family lives far away. My father is from Morocco, and my mother is from Scotland. They moved to Brussels to study and work and never left.

You can cheer me up by... distracting me, cracking jokes and, when I'm ready to talk about it, lending me an ear. I've never been afraid to talk about my feelings. I think being open helps not only you but also those around you. If you bottle up your sadness, you'll only sink deeper into it.

Dream trip? I would really love to go to Costa Rica someday. The flora and fauna there are so diverse; it seems beautiful and very interesting to see the forests, beaches, waterfalls, and animals. I used to always answer Thailand to this question, but I actually made that trip two years ago. It was amazing.

What's the hardest decision you've ever made? Quitting swimming. I started young and joined a competitive team when I was twelve. We trained five to six times per week and also participated in competitions. Our coach was awful – very mean and even a bit racist. I was the only girl of colour on the team. The pressure to perform was intense; if you missed training or didn't swim a good time,

you got penalty points. If you had too many penalty points, you'd be kicked out of the team. They also weighed us in front of everyone. I was taller and therefore heavier than my teammates, but the coach was always telling me to lose weight. Before competitions, I was so stressed I couldn't sleep or eat. Even so, it was hard to quit. I'd made such close friends there, and it had been such a big part of my life. I worried I'd feel lost without it. But at some point, I started to hate swimming, which I'd always loved so much, and that's what made the decision for me. It was the right choice. Last year, I went swimming again for the first time while training for a triathlon. I'm thinking about joining a swim club. I miss going to the pool.

What's your guilty pleasure? Right now, the biscuits at the Mensa – I eat two a day. I also love bad TV, as in, objectively poorly written and acted series or films and reality shows. It's relaxing because you can just switch off your mind.

What fascinates you about the human brain? So much! There's so much going on in there. Some aspects, like personality, are unique to individuals, while other things, like task execution, work the same for everyone. I'm particularly interested in the emotional side of the brain and in diseases like Alzheimer's and dementia that don't just affect cognitive functioning but also change a patient's personality and impact the people around them.

I can't wait to have children. Absolutely. Becoming a mother has been my biggest dream since I was young. My first jobs were babysitting and teaching swimming to young children. Maybe it's because I'm an only child...? Children are just so innocent, fun and cute, such a positive force. I always used to imagine I'd get married at 21 and have my first child at 22. That timeline has shifted a bit; I want to finish my studies first. I'd love to have a big family. My cousin has seven children – amazing! For financial reasons, I'll probably have to settle for three. Or four.

Favourite food? A burger with fries. Even when it's bad, it's good – especially with truffle mayonnaise. I'm obsessed with truffles. If I see something on the menu with truffles, I order it. Sushi is a close second. At home, my dad does the cooking, and my mom does the baking. When I moved out, my mom made me a little recipe book. I enjoy trying things out, but I mostly like cooking when I have the time for it. During the week, I make quick one-pot meals. Nothing fancy, just decent.

What news makes you angry? What news doesn't? Lately, it's been the US elections, but also the rise of far-right politicians in Europe and all the news from Israel. I've always been strongly pro-Palestinian. Sometimes it feels like the world is moving backwards instead of forwards, even though we have access to more information than ever before. Then again, maybe that's exactly the problem – misinformation is just as readily available.

What's your greatest weakness? Overthinking things, especially in social situations. If a friend seems a bit short with me, I'll replay and analyse the entire conversation in my head. When I catch myself doing this, I try to stop. It's uncomfortable and can even create problems if you start seeing things that aren't there. Thankfully, I'm getting better at doing it less often.

Cleo Freriks

Weekly personal interview with a student or employee

Criticism of new Human Rights Due Diligence Framework

University Council, protect academic freedom

The academic freedom of individual researchers is at risk due to the new Human Rights Due Diligence Framework, says **Ewout Meijer**, associate professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience. He argues for “the explicit exemption of ERC and Horizon2020 projects, and objective criteria that determine whether a country or partner has violated human rights”.



Illustration: Shutterstock

Last Wednesday, after this issue of *Observant* went to print, the long-awaited Human Rights Due Diligence Framework was discussed at the open meeting of the Executive Board. The framework seeks to specify what international collaboration would or would not be acceptable. In short, each country is first examined to determine whether human rights have been violated. If so, then a committee of experts will determine whether the partner in that country was involved in said violation. If that is also the case, then the advice will be negative.

Promise

In the summer of 2024, the rectors of all the Dutch universities promised in *Trouw* that academic freedom would be leading when considering any partnerships. Little of that is reflected in the current document. Consider the following accompanying memo: ‘The UM Global Engagement Policy 2024-2030, adopted by the Executive Board on 22 April 2024, has announced that UM will develop a Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) Framework that can be used to assess whether there are indications that our institutional strategic partnerships are involved in serious human rights violations or international crimes.’ This terminology has been very carefully selected. There is a distinction in the discussion of academic freedom between those institutional strategic partnerships on the one hand, and individual activities on the other. The partnerships would be assessed according to the framework. That wasn’t the case for individual activities, which would be protected under academic freedom, as was promised at the time. However, it now appears that individual

activities most definitely will be assessed. How remains unclear. At first glance, it seems these activities are only subject to a voluntary self-assessment, but further on in the document, it says that individual researchers must open a dialogue with the committee, and the committee is then permitted to assess the project using the entire procedure.

Bar should be high

And what does this assessment involve? How exactly will potential violation of human rights be determined, or possible involvement? Considering the severity of the accusation, one must assume that the bar is high. Objective, verifiable criteria such as a final conviction in an international court, for example. But according to the list of sources, the committee is allowed to base its decision on a host of other sources, such as academic publications and reports from NGOs such as the International Red Cross. And it is explicitly called a non-exhaustive list of sources, so nobody knows where it ends. When evaluating whether a partner has violated human rights, the involvement of the army plays an important part. For example, is there military personnel present on campus? If that is the case, then this would indicate at least indirect involvement. By equating presence with involvement, the framework ignores the right to self-defence. Illustrative here is the recent judgement which said the Dutch government is allowed to provide military resources to Israel, as long as it has sufficiently verified that they will only be used for self-defence

“How exactly will potential violation of human rights be determined, or possible involvement?”

and not in a way that could result in the violation of international humanitarian law. In other words, direct involvement as the standard. The framework doesn’t make that distinction. In doing so, it denies the possibility of the right to self-defence, and that is a political opinion that is inappropriate for a university.

Stretching

Stretching the inclusion criteria and using flexible criteria to determine whether a country or partner has violated human rights gives the committee a disproportionate degree of freedom. And the consequences of that freedom can be seen at Tilburg. The Executive Board there is now having to deal with the report from a committee that chose to ignore academic freedom and simply advised cutting all ties with Israeli universities. The framework still needs to be approved by the University Council. I sincerely hope that they will take academic freedom seriously. That they send the Executive Board back to the drawing board and ask for objective criteria, clear direct ties, and the explicit exemption of certain individual activities, including ERCs and Horizon2020. No shortcuts. So we don’t risk the university taking on a political position, or the Red Cross determining where you can do an internship, or a colleague from a different faculty deciding whether you can or can’t work on your European project.

*Ewout Meijer, associate professor
Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience*

Television series
based on cold case
project at Maastricht
University

"HAVE ALL POSSIBILITIES BEEN CHECKED OFF ON THIS MURDER CASE?"



What happens when a TV producer meets a legal psychologist from Maastricht? The series *Onopgelost* (Unsolved), which premiered last month on the streaming service Videoland. For years, legal psychologist Robert Horselenberg led the cold cases project as part of a Master's programme at the Faculty of Law. Smiling: "How many people can say their academic work has been turned into a television programme?"

TEXT: WENDY DEGENS
PHOTO'S: JASPER SUYK/VIDEOLAND

It all started with the podcast *De moord op Patrick* (Patrick's Murder) in 2018, with a prominent role for Horselenberg, associate professor and project leader for cold cases, an elective module for the Master's in Forensics, Criminology and Administration of Justice for years.

Patrick van der Bolt was found dead in his flat in Heerlen over 20 years ago; he had been murdered and his killer has never been found. Horselenberg's students got stuck into the unsolved case, the podcast reveals; a television producer listening was fascinated and contacted the researcher. Over the course of several Zoom sessions, he explained the ins and outs of the student project to the producer.

The elective module was initially called *Reasonable Doubt*, in which cases with dubious verdicts were analysed, under additional supervision by legal psychologist Peter van Koppen. Later, it was renamed *cold cases*: unsolved cases of murder, manslaughter or disappearance. They are submitted every year by the Limburg police, together with the Public Prosecution Service.

WOUND

Onopgelost premiered just in time for Christmas. True crime is a genre that always does well with viewers, but this isn't true crime, emphasises director Thomas Korthals Altes in a phone call with *Observant*. "They're all fake stories, we deliberately chose to avoid any similarities with existing cases. Although, no doubt some elements may be recognisable."

Each week, five students led by an alcoholic Criminology professor, played by Georgina Verbaan, solve an old case: a student who disappeared after a date in a bar, a body at a gay meeting place, a prostitute, murdered and dumped in a caravan in winter storage. Cold cases are tough, says Korthals Altes, "it's a massive open wound for the families". Who can forget the images of Tanja Groen's parents? In the summer of 1993, the young student disappeared without a trace while on her way back to her student housing after an introduction party at Maastricht student association Circumflex. Her body has never been found.

Horselenberg remains silent when asked if he has ever examined that particular case. One of the most important requirements set by the police is that the investigations never become public. There's a reason students have to sign a non-disclosure agreement. The case is examined in only one 'project room', and nothing is allowed to be removed or saved to a personal laptop or phone.

QUIZ

Early scenes of the professor, played by actress Georgina Verbaan, inviting dozens of students in a lecture room, showing them all the same case and then testing them 24 hours later to split them into good or bad candidates – that's not at all how it works in real life, says Horselenberg. "Although we do select students at Maastricht, too. You want as many different students as possible in a group. Someone to take charge, but also someone who keeps an overview, someone with a Bachelor's in Psychology, or a background in criminology or law." The students on the TV show are also not shy about interviewing witnesses or suspects. Even breaking into houses or open-

ing personal laptops is permitted. “That absolutely does not happen here. That could frustrate the police investigation, should they choose to reopen the case.”

TUNNEL VISION

The aim of the UM project is not to put anyone behind bars. “We’re an educational institution. We teach students to analyse complex cases. There are three important things to remember: What is the question I’m trying to answer, who do I have to ask that question, and how do I have to interpret the answer so that I avoid being drawn into ‘the tunnel?’” Police investigations – particularly complex ones – can lead to tunnel vision. Too much emphasis is placed on one particular scenario. Putting all your eggs in one basket is risky, explains Horselenberg. That’s why students are taught to keep an open mind. “Have all possibilities been checked off on this case?” The group is given six months to present a final report. Discovery, the process of finding all the facts, takes up the most time: what is the cause of death, how were witnesses found and evaluated, who is the victim, what relationships are important, when was each phone call made? “We often find that a lot of information is missing, for example, not interviewing important witnesses.” Eventually, they work in pairs to explore different scenarios (“sometimes up to eight or ten”), which they then have to defend towards each other and which allows for renewed doubts to be explored.

TEA LIGHTS

Horselenberg has often visited the scenes of crime with his students, so that they “can form an even better picture in their minds”. And if they don’t have the facts, there is sometimes room for experimenting. “For example, we once spent ages lighting lots of different brands of tea light to see how long it would take them to burn out. It was an important element in a murder case.”

Director Korthals Altes would have loved to have a chance to be part of Horselenberg’s ‘classes’. “It’s fascinating, looking everything up and making sure it’s right.” He is well aware that solving a case in a matter of days, as is the case on the show, is unrealistic. “But in reality, a case can sometimes be so incredibly detailed and complicated that it’s impossible to copy it exactly on television.”

RED-HANDED

According to the Cold Cases Foundation, there are currently about 1700 cases in the Netherlands. Horselenberg: “I think about thirty or forty are added each year.” Almost half of all serious crimes are solved by catching the perpetrator red-handed, in 20 per cent of cases, the police finds them in the next two days, and in 10 per cent, it takes them a year. The remaining 20 per cent are never solved.” If after six months of blood, sweat and tears – “it’s a very intense course” – the Maastricht Master’s students manage to find something that could ‘reopen’ the case, and even offer advice on what important next steps could be, the ball is in the police’s court, explains Horselenberg. Have any of the ‘project cases’ ultimately led to convictions? “A logical question” – which confidentiality forbids him from answering.



Campaign image of *Onopgelost* with actress Georgina Verbaan in the front

news

Case 'Israel' one of the first to be evaluated

Continued from page 3

ated risks themselves and seek advice from the new committee if needed.

A partner institution will not be held responsible for international crimes or serious violations of human rights committed by its government if the institution is not involved in those violations. However, the Executive Board notes that an institution *can* be held responsible for the extent to which it contributes to such violations itself – for example, if there is evidence that academic knowledge or technology is being used for military purposes. Key sources for assessment will include judgments by international, regional or national courts of justice, UN applicable sources, reports by NGOs like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, academic publications, and embassy information.

And what happens if the verdict is that an institution does not have clean hands? Can a collaboration simply be terminated? If it is governed by Dutch law, UM can seek to have the contract annulled by a Dutch court. If not, the outcome depends on the partner institution's willingness to cooperate. The Executive Board has already decided that all new institutional partnership contracts will include a human rights clause.

'Israel' will be one of the first three cases to be evaluated in 2025, which will serve as a pilot year. Several other universities in the Netherlands have already reached their own decisions



In May 2024 pro-Palestinian students set up an encampment out of protest in the garden of FASoS Photo: Observant

about collaborations with partners in Israel. In early December, an advisory committee at Tilburg University decided that students and staff should no longer be sent to the country. According to their university magazine *Univ-*

ers, the committee found there is a significant risk "that Israeli partner institutions are involved in the war in Gaza. It also concluded that these institutions do not sufficiently distance themselves from human rights

violations or fail to explicitly condemn them, partly because of an apparent lack of academic freedom [in Israel]."

Wendy Degens

VVD, NSC, and BBB want to retain international students

The government must create a plan of action for the 'retention' of international students in the Netherlands, according to the Dutch House of Representatives. Tuesday, three coalition parties also voted in favour of a motion to that effect.

The previous government fell due to disagreements over migration, and some parties were particularly critical of study migration. The current coalition, with the PVV as the largest party, still wants to limit the number of international students. However, there seems to be a shift. Declining regions and large companies have criticized the fight against interna-

tionalization, and a proposed budget cut has been softened through discussions with some opposition parties: a revised policy for specific regions will be introduced.

A motion by Volt, which passed Tuesday, also points in this direction. The House of Representatives has asked the government to "create a plan of action for the retention of international students and talent in the Netherlands." This motion received broad support, partly due to backing from VVD, NSC, and BBB. Minister of Social Affairs Eddy van Hijum (NSC) gave the motion the green light in the debate. "This is about the retention of international students," he said. And thus, not about

their arrival, he seemed to suggest. His party leader, Pieter Omtzigt, said last December in a House debate on 'demographic developments' that 20 thousand basic grants are given to students from EU countries. "If you let them all go abroad again, in our view you are not spending public money wisely."

The motions in this debate were only submitted last week, and a vote took place on Tuesday. The Volt motion states that the Netherlands is not a leader in "attracting and retaining knowledge migrants." The government should therefore consider how to attract talent, as outlined in the reasoning, for example, by 'encouraging' international students.

This part of the motion apparently didn't deter VVD, NSC, and BBB. They were able to support the request for a plan for the 'retention' of international talent.

In addition to the PVV, the Socialist Party also voted against the motion. Party leader Jimmy Dijk introduced his own motion, stating that "the business models of labour, knowledge, and study migration lead to exploitation here, as well as knowledge loss and social disruption for the countries of origin." However, his motion did not receive support from any other party.

HOP

↙ THE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTIES, SERVICE CENTRES AND STUDENT ORGANISATIONS CAN BE FOUND ON WWW.OBSERVANTONLINE.NL

Agenda
academic
ceremonies

Aula Minderbroedersberg 4-6



SCAN THE CODE



Maastricht University

Vacatures

Werken voor de meest internationale universiteit van Nederland? Scan de QR-code voor ons actuele vacature overzicht*.

Voor meer informatie over werken bij de Universiteit Maastricht, ga naar <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/nl/werken-bij-de-um>

*Medewerkers van UM kunnen een volledig overzicht van interne- en externe vacatures vinden door in te loggen op SuccessFactors via Umployee.



www.maastrichtuniversity.nl