



nuffic

**Annual  
Overview  
2009**



Netherlands organization  
for international cooperation  
in higher education



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## Colophon

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## ■ A new direction for Nuffic

For Nuffic, 2009 was dominated by considering and establishing a new direction. The process began with a customer satisfaction survey in which we gauged our customers' opinions on the services provided by Nuffic. Both international and Dutch students were positive, and staff at higher education institutions described Nuffic as reliable, professional and accessible.

However, some things can still be improved. Examples include Nuffic's role as a leader in the sector and also as a discussion partner for the institutions themselves. Both the positive assessments and critical remarks have been incorporated into our new strategic framework *Link Int!*, whose objectives include the further improvement of customer satisfaction over the next four years. The ISO certification process, started in 2009 and scheduled for completion in 2010, will also contribute to this objective and therefore to the further improvement of working processes at Nuffic.

What else has Nuffic been doing this last year? We have realized a number of efficiency gains and improved the quality of our diploma evaluation services, for example by optimizing databases and streamlining working methods. We also expanded institutional support in 2009 – the MINT self-evaluation instrument is one way that Nuffic is helping institutions to map out their objectives and activities in the field of internationalization.

Nuffic once again noted an increase in European mobility in 2009. The number of Erasmus grant applications to the National Agency for Lifelong Learning grew once again over the last year: 400 more scholarships were

awarded than in the previous year, bringing the total to 4,902. We also adapted our informative materials to cater for and support growth in European mobility, by means such as expanding country-specific information on [www.wilweg.nl](http://www.wilweg.nl) to include information on work placements, in collaboration with COLO and the Netherlands Association of VET Colleges (*MBO Raad*).

Nuffic was granted management of the NICHE programme in late 2008, and in 2009 six programme outlines were signed and public tenders issued for the first four NICHE projects. After an evaluation in 2009, Nuffic, scholarship recipients and institutional staff looked back with great satisfaction on the last three years of the Huygens Scholarship Programme. In 2009, 249 international students were selected from 1,629 applications, and 111 students from Dutch institutions from a total of 300 applications.

Nuffic also organized the first Holland Alumni Conference in 2009, and further expanded the Neso programme to include new Nuffic Nesos in Thailand and Russia. Dutch higher education institutions and government authorities were very satisfied with the role played by the Nesos in the general promotion of Dutch higher education. Nuffic is planning to further improve communication with the institutions and increase its focus on providing information on education in Neso countries.

Lastly, the National UNESCO Committee organized a conference in 2009 on aspects of quality in higher education, whilst also welcoming a new chairman as well as four new members in the autumn.

All of these activities from 2009 are now complete, and we have set sail in a new direction. This new course (set out in the *Link Int!* strategy document) represents Nuffic's efforts towards further consultation and closer collaboration with research universities, universities of applied sciences and the government, starting in 2010. More information on this long-term strategy and the activities mentioned briefly above is provided in this *Annual Overview*. ■

**Sander van den Eijnden, Director-General**

*The Hague, April 2010*

## A good start for NICHE in 2009

In late 2008, Development Cooperation Minister Koenders granted Nuffic the management of the Netherlands Initiative for Development Cooperation in Higher Education (NICHE), a programme initiated to support infrastructure for higher education in developing countries. This type of support has a decades-long history, and the experience gained from previous programmes was incorporated into the setup of NICHE. The programme is also in line with Minister Koenders' new development policy.

In February 2009 the first Nuffic identification teams were sent to South Africa and Tanzania, followed by similar missions to fifteen other NICHE countries later that year. The teams discussed the approach to be taken with the local authorities and Dutch embassies. The discussions concerned the selection of sectors and themes, as well as the institutions for post-secondary education and the associated organizations that were to accommodate future projects. This approach produced Programme Outlines and Sectoral Plans of Implementation for each country, serving as guidelines for NICHE activities over the coming years.

As early as May 2009, Minister Koenders went to South Africa to sign the first Programme Outline, together with the then newly appointed South African Minister for Education. Tanzania, Rwanda, Mozambique, Ghana and Colombia followed later in the year, and public tenders for the first four NICHE projects in Tanzania and South

Africa were issued. Over the course of 2010 and 2011 NICHE activities will commence in all countries that fall under the NICHE programme, whose number increased to 23 in late 2009 due to the addition of Bhutan.

Because NICHE actively pursues consistent donor harmonization, Nuffic has launched a donor platform together with its Norwegian partner, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU). The platform is set for completion in 2010, and includes involvement by the Flemish Interuniversity Council and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Lastly, Nuffic has developed a range of financial instruments for NICHE in collaboration with its Dutch partner PricewaterhouseCoopers, who also carried out the initial Company Capacity Assessments in the participating countries. These assessments are necessary in order to determine whether the partners are able to manage project resources adequately.

Throughout the year, Nuffic was active in providing information on all aspects of NICHE to embassies, government authorities and potential partners. All those involved are enthusiastic about this new programme, and the general belief is that it will genuinely help the 23 countries to further improve their educational and training capacity. ■

## Minister Koenders receives first copy of 'Knowledge on the Move'

In April 2009, Development Cooperation Minister Koenders received the first copy of *Knowledge on the Move*, the book published in the wake of the major 2008 conference on knowledge for development. In it, senior researchers from the Netherlands and developing countries discuss the current state of development-related research, with a focus on challenges involved in setting up international collaboration in research, embedding research in a social context and enhancing research capacity in developing countries. They investigate trends from the perspective of a range of disciplines, and make recommendations to the arenas of politics and research.

Nuffic organized the 'Knowledge on the Move' conference in early 2008 in collaboration with

the science division (WOTRO) of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Institute of Social Studies. Minister Koenders took the opportunity to emphasize the importance of both access to knowledge and support for innovation systems – we are no longer concerned merely with research, but also with the broader concept of knowledge and innovation. During the presentation of the book, the Minister stressed the importance of development research for effective policy that aims to achieve sustainable development. He emphasized that effective cooperation between the Ministry and researchers in the Netherlands and developing countries is crucial, and argued for continued improvement in communications with Dutch researchers. ■



Carin Vijfhuizen, senior programme administrator at Nuffic, during a visit to an NPT-project in Yemen

## NFP and NPT still rate highly in 2009 despite phasing-out

In 2007, the decision was made to terminate the international education programmes created by the Minister for Development Cooperation – the ‘old’ NFP and the NPT – in 2011 and 2012 respectively. Their replacements – the ‘new’ NFP and the NICHE programme – were created in 2008 based on the experience gained from the previous programmes, new policy frameworks and a subsidy tender.

Nuffic submitted an offer and was ultimately selected to carry out programme management, which in 2009 primarily involved the transition between the expiration of the old educational programmes and the launching of new ones.

The old and new NFPs are the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes, each of which has its own policy framework. The NPT is the Netherlands Programme for the Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity, and NICHE stands for the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education. All programmes are funded from the budget for Dutch development cooperation provided by the Minister for Development Cooperation. ■

### NFP programme

Programmes cannot simply be phased out from one day to the next – solid financial and management planning is required, as well as proper coordination with the executing bodies and sponsors. This is because a large number of long-term agreements were made with organizations in partner countries over the preceding period, such as tailored staff-training sessions and programmes as part of the old NFP. Agreements need to be honoured, which is why a total of 41 long-term agreements and 41 custom-made training sessions were still carried out in 2009.

The more regular modalities, such as participation in master’s degree programmes, short courses, refresher courses and PhD programmes, could be launched in 2009 as part of the new NFP. The expiration of the old NFP therefore had less effect on these elements, meaning that the Dutch institutions involved and the stakeholders in developing countries were less inconvenienced by the changes. Adding this all up, € 9 million of programme resources were still spent on the old NFP in 2009.

### NPT programme

Because many of its agreements cover a four-year term, the NPT has a longer phase-out plan which will run until 2012. This longer period will give the parties involved enough time to properly fulfil their commitments; indeed, in 2009, another nine projects were contracted out via a subsidy tender (although these projects are of slightly shorter duration). An additional 147 projects were still running in 2009, with € 44 million going towards NPT over the course of the year.

What is striking is that many of the bodies carrying out projects with an impending expiry date have requested budget-neutral extensions in order to complete the planned activities. It is a fact that many projects experience delays in the initial stages, and it becomes increasingly difficult to grant extensions as time goes on. This demands solid project management on the part of those executing the projects.

Ultimately, all activities under the old NFP must be completed by the end of June 2011, and by the end of June 2012 for the NPT. Nuffic will then wind up the programmes following a short period of substantive reporting on the projects and financial settlement. ■

## Nuffic Annual Conference focuses on development cooperation

At least 400 visitors attended the Nuffic Annual Conference at De Doelen in Rotterdam on 31 March 2009 – double the number of 2008. The programme included two keynote speakers and a host of workshops, allowing everybody to put together their own ‘menu’: from speed-dating with Nuffic Neso Directors and development cooperation to a practical workshop on the evaluation of diplomas.

The main theme of the conference was the role played by higher education in development cooperation, as well as the opportunities in this regard. Minister Koenders has earmarked € 300 million for this purpose for the period until 2014, making his department the Netherlands’ biggest sponsor by far in the field of internationalization. In late 2009, Dutch research universities and universities of applied sciences were involved in 190 projects in developing countries.

Aren’t activities that support developing countries at odds with other forms of internationalization? After all, internationalization is designed to enhance the quality, power and international competitive position of the home organization. Are these two goals diametrically opposed, or can the two forms of international cooperation actually benefit one another? These were the main questions at the conference, which was attended by internationalization professionals from higher education.

The keynote speakers were Martien Molenaar (rector of the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC)) and Doekle Terpstra (President of the Dutch Association of Universities of Applied Sciences). Each discussed the issues from his own perspective: Molenaar clarified the importance of creating cross-border networks for the development of higher education institutions and research, and Terpstra urged greater enthusiasm and commitment in terms of the contribution made by higher education

to development cooperation. He believed that this is still too much the domain of specialists, and also that organizations have yet to embrace development cooperation wholeheartedly. The themes addressed by the keynote speakers were then further discussed during numerous group sessions.

The Nuffic Annual Conference is also intended as a large-scale reunion for those active in internationalization, so there were plenty of opportunities for participants to get together. At the end of the conference the then Nuffic Director of Knowledge & Innovation Jos Walenkamp awarded the Orange Carpet Award to Martin Blok from the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague (see picture). The Orange Carpet Award goes to the institution which does the most to welcome international students. ■



## Jos Walenkamp associate professor of International Cooperation at the Hague University of Applied Sciences

On 1 January 2009, former Nuffic Director of Knowledge & Innovation Jos Walenkamp was appointed Associate Professor (lector) of International Cooperation at the Hague University of Applied Sciences. The position is for three days per



week, and it is because of this appointment that he gave up his position as Nuffic director on the last day of 2009. However, Walenkamp will continue to work at Nuffic part-time.

The International Cooperation lectorate was initiated by the Hague University of Applied Sciences and Nuffic, and focuses on how universities of applied sciences in The Hague and elsewhere in the Netherlands can contribute to international development cooperation. It also examines the international competencies of teaching staff and how spending time abroad can contribute to students'

development. The lectorate also looks at the structure of practical higher education in three developing countries, and at how it fits in with the needs and demands of the labour market.

Walenkamp gave his inaugural lecture in the main hall of the Hague University of Applied Sciences, demonstrating how and why higher professional education should contribute to solving problems related to development. President of the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences Doekle Terpstra then presented a reflection on Walenkamp's lecture. ■

## Mobility and internationalization

## Internationalization monitor 2008: slight increase in the internationalization of Dutch education

In the summer of 2009, in collaboration with the Centre for Innovation in Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education (CINOP) and the European Platform, Nuffic published the *Internationalization Monitor of Education in the Netherlands 2008*, based on estimates and counts in 2008. The expectation was that the trends observed in 2008 would continue into 2009. As far as could be determined at the end of 2009, the crisis had not yet had any noticeable effect on international student mobility.

### International students in the Netherlands

The percentage of international students in Dutch government-funded education increased slightly in 2008 to around 7.5%, with Germany, China and Belgium as the main countries of origin. It is estimated that in 2008 around 76,000 international students from at least 59 different countries were studying in the Netherlands. Of these, 51,000 were taking a full study programme, nearly 48,250 of which were in government-funded higher education.

Approximately 7,000 students came to the Netherlands from European countries under an Erasmus grant or via another EU programme. Over 2,300 students had received grants from the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes, funded by Dutch development cooperation. Over 350 students had received a scholarship from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and 50 students were given financial support from the United Nations or other international sponsors.

### Dutch students abroad

After several years of stagnation/decline, the number of Dutch Erasmus grant recipients started increasing again in 2008, reaching a figure of nearly 6,000. However, the most recent figures on the total number of Dutch students abroad are from 2006, when 43,750 students were studying in other countries. Of these, 14,150 took part in full study programmes (only 2,900 in non-European countries; Dutch students still prefer to go to the United Kingdom and Belgium). The remainder were happy with a short-term stay, often at a partner organization of an institution in the Netherlands.

Since global transferability of student grants was introduced in 2007, the number of Dutch students receiving student grants and completing studies abroad has increased from 4,000 to 6,500, and spread out over a total of 66 different countries.

### Primary education, secondary education and vocational training

International growth is also continuing for primary education, secondary education and vocational training. For example, the number of work placement students studying abroad thanks to the Leonardo da Vinci programme increased by 18% for the second consecutive year. The number of senior secondary vocational students who went to Turkey for either study or work experience even rose by 272%. ■

## Scholarships Online simplifies application process

Since 1 November 2007, the application process for a Huygens scholarship has been completely digital thanks to the Scholarships Online (SOL) internet application.

There are also plans to implement SOL for the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes in 2010. In addition to greatly simplifying the application process for NFP

scholarships, SOL also provides other stakeholders such as the Dutch institutions and embassies with constant access to the status of all applications. Communication

## Huygens Scholarship Programme awards 360 scholarships



The presentation ceremony for the Huygens Scholarship Programme 2008 was held at Madurodam on 28 March 2009. At that time, the international grant recipients receiving their certificates had already begun their studies in the Netherlands.

Minister for Education, Culture and Science Ronald Plasterk opened the gathering with a speech in which he emphasized the importance of gaining study experience abroad, and of learning to interact with a variety of cultures. Chairperson of the evaluation committee Winnie Sorgdrager then spoke about her role in the Huygens Programme,

and about everything that the Netherlands has to offer in the broadest sense. The musical interludes were provided by grant recipient Catalin Milea – a jazz musician who performed both solo and with his band The New Sound Equazion Quartet, made up of grant recipients and alumni.

After the presentation the students were given the opportunity to visit Madurodam. Almost everybody took up the offer, with lots of avid networking taking place in the mix. In fact, this type of networking was the objective of the Huygens Talent Circle, established in 2008 by nine Huygens alumni. Although many students did not know about the Huygens Talent Circle, they showed enthusiasm for the networking opportunities and were also keen to meet fellow students from their home countries.

In 2009, 249 students were selected from 1,629 applications based on their excellent CVs, letters of nomination from the receiving institution, references and personal cover letters. Depending on the

budgets, scholarship amounts can reach up to tens of thousands of euros. The recipients came from all corners of the globe: Bangladesh, Canada, China, the United States, Romania, Vietnam, South Africa, Finland and everywhere in between. Grant recipients will remain in the Netherlands for a maximum of two years.

On 11 June, at the Spaansche Hof in The Hague, the Huygens Scholarship Programme presentation ceremony was held for the group of Dutch nominees set to study abroad. In 2009, 111 students were selected from a total of 300 applications. Winnie Sorgdrager gave a speech at this ceremony as well, in which she emphasized the value of the attention bestowed on outstanding students in modern society, which she believes contrasts sharply with the near-enough-is-good-enough attitude from previous years. After its success among the international grant recipients, members of the Huygens Talent Circle also appeared at this event in order to present the association to the Dutch grant recipients. ■

## Various Scholarship in Programmes 2009

Contracted by third parties, Nuffic manages numerous scholarship programmes that support study abroad in an enormous variety of contexts. See below for an overview of the scholarship programmes in 2009:

- Under a Memorandum of Understanding, the Netherlands and China each make scholarships available to citizens of the other country. As part of this programme, 25 Chinese students visited the Netherlands, with an equal number of Dutch students travelling to China.
- The Libertas Support Fund (*Libertas Noodfonds*) is a special programme for politically active students whose political views make it difficult for them to study in their own country. Sixteen new applications were submitted for the 2009–2010 academic year. Eight of these were accepted, as were 34 follow-up applications from scholarship students already in the Netherlands. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science earmarked funds for 30 students from Zimbabwe, a target that was reached in 2009.
- In 2009, 251 nominations were made for the VSB Fund, 218 of which were accepted. These are scholarships for longer-term studies abroad, financed by the VSB Fund, which supports projects throughout the Netherlands in a variety of fields including art, culture, science, education and community development.
- The Middle Eastern and North African Scholarship Programme (MENA) was expanded in 2009 to include Algeria and Lebanon. Previously scholarships were only awarded to students from Syria, Iraq, Oman and Morocco. 110 scholarships were awarded in 2009, compared to 66 in 2008.
- Nuffic is acting as European continental partner in the Ford Foundation's International Fellowships Programme, which awards scholarships to disadvantaged candidates who clearly demonstrate leadership qualities. They come from 22 countries, which are designated by the Ford Foundation. Nuffic helps its partner organization locate positions in suitable study programmes. In 2009, 52 placements were realized through Nuffic.

- The Oman Scholarship Programme began in 2009, with seven young students arriving in the Netherlands from Oman to start a Bachelor's degree.
- Nuffic assisted the Dutch embassy in Skopje in the training of the Macedonian civil servants involved in the procedure for the accession of Macedonia to the European Union. The programme was completed in 2009.
- Nuffic administers the Dutch section of the International Atomic Energy Agency Fellowship Programme for the IAEA in Vienna, which resulted in eight study visits and ten training sessions. ■

In collaboration with the Centre for Innovation in Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education (CINOP) and the European Platform, Nuffic held the 'Internationalization works!' conference on 3 November 2009. Together, these three organizations form the National Agency for Lifelong Learning.

The nearly 400 participants came together to exchange knowledge and information in a number of cross-sector workshops. During four well-attended sessions, topics were raised that come up as part of nearly all Europe-based projects, such as use of ICT, languages, internationalization policy and dissemination of results. The following topics specific to higher education were

## Erasmus Programme expanding

Erasmus is the component of the European Lifelong Learning Programme that focuses on higher education. Interest in the Erasmus programme grew once again in 2009, with the number of scholarship applications increasing for the second consecutive year. Whereas 4,501 grants were awarded in the 2006–2007 academic year, by 2008–2009 this number had grown to 4,902, with an additional 2,103 work experience grants being awarded. In 820 cases financial support was given to aid the mobility of teachers and administrative staff, representing nearly a 20% increase compared to the figures from 2007–2008.

Spain is the most popular country for studying abroad, followed by the United Kingdom, Sweden, France and Germany. The top five work-experience countries present a different picture, with the United Kingdom in first place, followed by Spain, Belgium, Germany and France. The average time spent abroad is five months for both academic and work-placement students, and the female grant recipients outnumbered the men.

The European Commission developed the Lifelong Learning Programme in order to promote various kinds of cross-border mobility within the European Union. Activities are organized by the National Agency in each Member State. In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has delegated this task to three organizations: Nuffic, the Centre for Innovation in Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education (CINOP) and the European Platform. In addition, Nuffic acts as the secretariat and contact point for the public authorities, and also manages the Erasmus component of Lifelong Learning in the Netherlands.

Although each of these three organizations runs its own sub-programme, this did nothing to inhibit even closer collaboration in 2009. This involved creating a uniform standard for the promotional material used to draw attention to the grants available for the various sub-programmes, as well as the launching of a joint website. ■

## Participants inspired by 'Internationalization works!' conference

discussed: the mobility of Erasmus staff, cooperation with non-EU countries (Erasmus Mundus and Tempus), ECTS and DS labels, and the future of Erasmus. These topics also proved to attract audiences from other educational sectors on more than one occasion.

During the plenary morning session, three speakers had already emphasized how important it is for people in our globalizing world to be internationally mobile, so that they can later obtain new or better positions in the labour market. These speakers were Renk Roborgh (Director-General of Higher Education at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science), Rob Veersma (Learning & Development manager for Shell)

and H el ene Clark (director of the Lifelong Learning programme at the European Commission's Directorate-General of Education and Culture).

A number of awards were presented during the conference. CINOP and Nuffic presented the MOBI Awards to senior secondary vocational (MBO) and higher education students who had either studied or undertaken a work placement abroad via a Leonardo da Vinci or an Erasmus scholarship. The European Platform issued the eTwinning awards. ■

## Positive evaluation of Huygens Scholarship Programme in 2009

In 2009, Nuffic conducted an evaluation of the first three years of the Huygens Scholarship Programme (2006–2008), a programme administered by Nuffic for the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Nuffic, the grant recipients and staff at the institutions were all very satisfied. The HSP successfully attracts talented international students to the Netherlands, and offers Dutch students the opportunity to continue their studies abroad.

### Huygens Programme

Over the course of 2006–2008, 821 talented international students from 85 countries came to continue their studies in the Netherlands as part of the Huygens Scholarship Programme. Among them were 31 students of Dutch language and literature from 16 countries, and 45 PhD students from Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey.

Sixty per cent of these international students were women, and most were between 23 and 25 years of age. The majority of students came from EU countries, with Asian countries coming second. In terms of individual countries, China, Germany, Romania, Turkey and the United States scored the highest. Most students (80%) took master's programmes at a university.

A satisfaction survey among scholarship applicants revealed that 92% rated the study programme provided by the Dutch host institution between 'good' and 'excellent'. Over 86% were happy with the way in which Nuffic had processed the applications.

### Talent Programme

In 2006–2008, 222 talented students from Dutch institutions travelled abroad via the Talent Programme. An average of 65% of grant recipients were women, and most were between 23 and 25 years of age. Most recipients had obtained a master's degree from a research university. Those with a master's degree from a university

of applied sciences (HBO) formed an even smaller minority than those with an HBO bachelor's degree.

Most grant recipients took part in master's programmes at universities in the United Kingdom (40%) or the United States (43% in 2006, later approx. 25%), the majority either in arts or social sciences. Technical programmes scored particularly low. Not a single grant recipient had abandoned their studies during the grant period.

A survey showed that around 60% of grant recipients returned to the Netherlands after having completed their study programmes, and over two thirds continued on to complete a master's or PhD after the scholarship period. Seventy per cent believed that their Huygens scholarship had contributed significantly to their future prospects. More than 70% were also satisfied with information provided by Nuffic, with the selection procedure and with the payment of the scholarship.

### Cooperation with Dutch higher education institutions

The proper functioning of the HSP relies to a large extent on the cooperation of the institutional contact persons. Those who participated in the customer satisfaction survey expressed general satisfaction regarding the cooperation with the Nuffic HSP team. Visits to contact persons, contact person days and a feedback group keep satisfaction levels high and ensure that Nuffic's activities are in line with the needs and interests of the participating institutions.

The evaluation has led to modifications in how the HSP will be run, two of which will come into force for the PhD students' programme round in 2010.

The maximum time period for scholarships in this programme has been extended from 24 to 48 months, and candidates from China will now also be eligible for scholarships (previously only students from Croatia and Turkey could apply). The remaining changes will not take effect until the 2011 round. ■

## Day of the International Student attracts thousands once again

Invited by Nuffic, 2,300 international students attended the Day of the International Student (DIS) on 7 November at the World Forum in The Hague. Nuffic organizes the DIS every year to celebrate the fact that international students in the Netherlands made the choice to study here and not elsewhere. The day includes both fun and educational events, and offers visitors an informal introduction to Dutch culture.

Following a welcome speech by Sander van den Eijnden (Director-General of Nuffic), the students were addressed by State Secretary for Justice Nebahat Albayrak and Mayor of The Hague Jozias van Aartsen. The DIS is not only a day full of workshops, lounging and dancing – it is also a meeting point for students who are from the same country but study at different institutions in the Netherlands, resulting in a day full of avid networking. Holland Alumni associations from various countries had set up stands and were already busy recruiting members. A short time before the DIS (and not entirely coincidentally), an international conference on Holland Alumni was held in order to strengthen the Dutch alumni network. The alumni stands at the DIS attracted a lot of interest.

The Netherlands generally leaves its international graduates with fond memories: in terms of quality of education, research and the living environment, international students familiar with higher education in the Netherlands (e.g. via the Internet) consistently place it in the top ten. Sixty percent say that they would recommend studying in the Netherlands to friends and colleagues. However, they do believe that it deserves more publicity. Dutch research universities and universities of applied sciences currently already offer more than 1,450 English-language subjects and programmes for internationals. During the last academic year, 76,000 international students studied in the Netherlands out of a total of well over half a million. ■



## MINT – Mapping Internationalization

Since September 2009, higher education institutions all over the world have been able to use their own computers to access MINT. MINT is short for 'Mapping Internationalization' and is a self-evaluation instrument designed for research universities and universities of applied sciences.

The predecessor of the English-language MINT was the Dutch-language INKT (*Internationalisering in Kaart*).

Using MINT, institutions, faculties or representatives of degree programmes are able to map out their activities and objectives

regarding internationalization, including the associated quality control cycle, facilities and indicators. MINT also allows participants to compare their own results and activities to those of other institutions. For more information, please visit [www.nuffic.nl/mint](http://www.nuffic.nl/mint). ■

## Conference on quality assurance for cross-border study programmes

The conference held on 2 and 3 July 2009 in the Hague, organized by the National UNESCO Commission, showed that partnerships between universities and international university networks are good instruments for obtaining a clearer perspective on the quality of cross-border programmes. It also demonstrated that students can make an important contribution to quality control and to the transparency of this type of education.

The main focus of the conference was on how to increase the priority of quality control in cross-border study programmes. As universities are offering more and more programmes abroad and increasing numbers of students complete part of their course in another country, transparency in higher education is becoming more important. However, it is also difficult to produce a

clear overview of all of the study programmes available worldwide. It is for this reason that UNESCO (in collaboration with the OECD) launched the *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education* in 2005.

The National UNESCO Committee believes that these guidelines are still not being sufficiently applied. The aim of the conference was to look at how to get universities, students and teaching staff more involved in the process. Other major topics included cosmopolitanism and social responsibility – two issues that also contribute to the quality of education in institutions. The results of the conference were presented during the UNESCO-sponsored World Conference on Higher Education held in Paris in early July. ■

Transparency  
and information

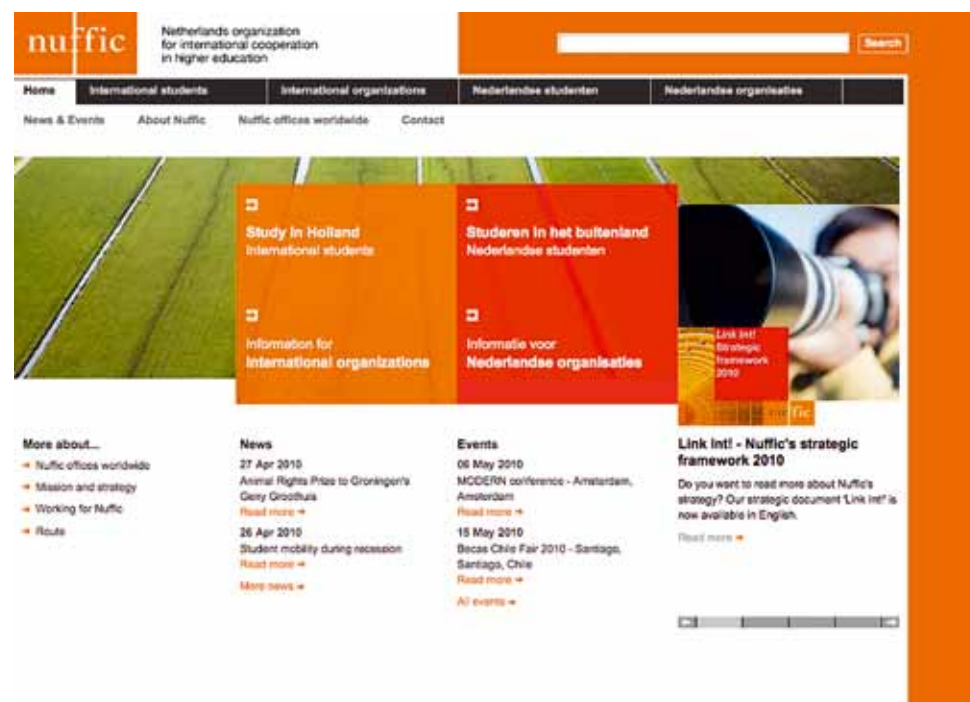
## Visitor numbers to Nuffic website well exceed one and a half million

The Nuffic website drew 1.6 million visitors in 2009. These visitors viewed upwards of 7 million pages in total. Half of the visitors landed on the site via a website that links to Nuffic. A quarter arrived at our website via Google and the remainder typed in a Nuffic web address.

The Netherlands generated the most visitors to the website, with their numbers rising by 15% relative to 2008. The biggest climbers in the top 10 countries where our visitors originate were India (+40%), Indonesia (+38%) and Vietnam (+35%). These are all countries with Nuffic Neso offices. The Nuffic Neso Desk India opened in the summer of 2009.

The worst performers were the United States (-37%), Germany (-30%) and the United Kingdom (-29%). This is striking, given that most international students in the Netherlands by far are from Germany.

The International students page was the most visited, with more than 500,000 page views. Relative to 2008, this represents a rise of more than 20%. Other popular pages were the homepage (370,000 page views), the Search International Study Programmes page (193,000 page views) and International organizations (144,000 page views). ■



## International projects for improving recognition

In 2009, Nuffic worked on six international projects on improving recognition in the Netherlands and Europe. Competencies in Education and Recognition (CoRe2) is a two-year project of the European Commission which aims to draw up practical and clear instructions on describing the education results of higher education programmes. These play an important role in recognition if written consistently and transparently. Nuffic produced the first version of a manual for drawing up meaningful Degree Profiles.

Nuffic scored three successes at the annual selection of NARIC projects. As per usual, Nuffic was responsible for the annual online course for new employees of the NARIC network. Nuffic also conducted research into the international recognition of EVC (Recognition of Acquired Competences) certificates. In principle, the NARICs appear open to the recognition of qualifications

that have been obtained, either wholly or partially, on the basis of EVC. Finally, Nuffic participated in a project headed by UK NARIC to improve the National Action Plans (NAP) on Recognition. These NAPs were launched by the Bologna Process and their aim is to promote student mobility.

Implementing efficient procedures for professional accreditation in new EU countries has been a Nuffic specialism for quite some time. Nuffic applied this expertise for two short missions to Bulgaria and Macedonia. EU member state Bulgaria needed assistance in examining the procedures that it had implemented on joining the EU. Macedonia, a candidate EU member, is still at the beginning of the process of amending its national legislation to bring it in line with the European Directive (2005/36/EC) on the recognition of professional qualifications. ■

## Cospa Day draws 110 work placement supervisors

Nuffic organized the annual Cospa Day held in Utrecht on Thursday 26 March. The theme of this year's edition was the quality of international work placement. Cospa is the network of staff at higher education institutions who supervise international internships. The members primarily need opportunities to share experiences and best practices, factual information about visas and insurances, and a list of good quality and less good quality work placement mediation bureaus.

Marius Bremmer of the Hanze University Groningen and Miloslav Smrkovsky of the University of Groningen shared their best practices with the members of the Cospa network. In the afternoon, Nuffic's Knowledge & Innovation Directorate gave a symposium centred around 'the quality of international work placement'. A total of 110 work placement supervisors attended the Cospa Day. ■

## Euraxess the Netherlands expands service

Together with SenterNovem/EGL and AcademicTransfer, Nuffic has been developing ERA-MORE (European Research Area-Mobile Researchers) since 2004. The European Commission has decided to rebrand a number of services of the European Research Area (ERA), such as ERA-MORE, ERA-LINK and the European Charter for Researchers, under the new name Euraxess. Euraxess offers foreign researchers (and the Dutch host institutions that receive them) support in practical matters relating to their stay in the Netherlands. This includes, for example, support with immigration procedures, social security, tax matters and the provision of job vacancy lists.

The national Euraxess promotional campaign was launched in early 2009, along with the website

[www.euraxess.nl](http://www.euraxess.nl). In the second half of the year, Euraxess expanded its services to assist personnel departments requiring good advice on issues associated with hiring foreign knowledge workers. These issues relate to existing regulations governing matters such as insurance, work permits and residence permits. This service is provided free of charge.

With its expanded service, Euraxess aims to make the procedures for receiving foreign knowledge workers run more smoothly and efficiently for company personnel departments, higher education institutions and research institutes alike. To make use of this service, since 2009 personnel department employees have been able to access the new Support Staff section of the website: [www.euraxess.nl/support-staff](http://www.euraxess.nl/support-staff).

Euraxess has websites in all European countries which are linked to each other in a network. This network also includes the central website in Brussels. A database with vacancies for knowledge workers in all of Europe is part of the information offered via the website. The Euraxess websites also contain a great deal of information on the regulations governing migration to and from European countries. A telephone line is available to those who cannot find the information they require on the website. ■



## Nuffic improves efficiency and quality of credential evaluation

In 2009 Nuffic processed 10% more credential evaluation requests than in the previous year. The number of recommendations rose to 11,000. The clients – institutions, companies, individual applicants – expect to receive high-quality recommendations following a reasonable waiting time. Thus far the maximum turn-around time is four weeks. This year we were able to issue 80% of the recommendations within this period. However, clients would prefer to receive their recommendations even sooner. In the year under

review, a number of efficiency and quality-improvement measures were taken. For example, we expanded the flexibility of our work procedures to better deal with peak loads. Ensuring both efficiency and quality assurance in credential evaluation requires a strong focus on providing easily accessible databases from which employees can retrieve similar past cases in a matter of seconds. Nuffic therefore spent a good deal of time optimizing its databases: that investment should eventually pay off. ■

## Mobstacles helpdesk advises and stimulates professionalism

Nuffic's Mobstacles helpdesk handles issues at the interface of the Netherlands' aliens legislation and the admission of foreign students to the country. The advice provided by the helpdesk employees shifts more and more toward the promotion of professionalism. This was because of ever improving and more expedient cooperation between the various agencies involved in granting residence permits for purposes of study.

For example, the helpdesk organized two introductory courses on immigration procedures for foreign students, in which 24 internationalization workers from across the country participated. The helpdesk also sent out 13 digital editions of the Mobstacles Study Programme Newsletter and answered 497 questions from professionals working in the field. And, in conjunction with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND), the helpdesk has also been responsible for the publication of 11 editions of the digital newsletter 'IND/Nuffic News' since May 2009. The newsletter is one of the fruits of intensified cooperation between Nuffic and the IND. Previously, both the Mobstacles helpdesk and the IND would, independently of each other, inform higher education institutions of legislative and regulatory changes.

### Modern Migration Policy

In September 2009, the Minister for Justice and the

State Secretary for Justice submitted a proposal to amend the 2000 Aliens Act. With the legislation proposal, the 'Modern Migration Policy', the Netherlands hopes to become more attractive for migrants for whom there is an economic and cultural need, such as students and knowledge migrants, and restrictive for others. The Mobstacles helpdesk provided comments on sections in the legislation dealing with scientific research and higher education. In doing so, it greatly benefited from input from the network of affiliated organizations and higher education institutions. This in itself resulted in intensified cooperation with the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (*HBO-raad*) and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

In anticipation of the actual legislative amendments, experiments were conducted with new procedures to examine whether these are in fact simpler and more efficient. A number of higher education institutions took part in a pilot where both the entry visa and the residence permit for foreign students could be applied for while the student was still resident abroad. Shortly upon arrival in the Netherlands, the international students were able to pick up their credit-card-sized residence permits from the higher education institution. ■



## More information about work placement abroad

In the autumn of 2009, Colo, the Netherlands Association for Secondary Vocational Education and Training (*MBO Raad*) and Nuffic joined forces and worked hard on expanding a number of websites that provide information about work placement abroad. This project was commissioned by the National Europass Centre Nederland (NEC NL).


As part of this project, for example, the country information on [www.wilweg.nl](http://www.wilweg.nl) was expanded. Specific work placement information was added for fifteen EU countries. Furthermore, work placement and study programme information was added for Bulgaria,

Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. The websites [www.stagemarkt.nl](http://www.stagemarkt.nl) and [www.workplacement.nl](http://www.workplacement.nl) for senior secondary vocational education (MBO) was also supplemented with specific information about work placement.

Europass is an initiative of the European Commission which aims to provide migrants with a means of sharing reliable information about their study programmes and experiences in a recognizable and structured manner. Nuffic has been part of the Dutch Europass consortium since its inception. ■

## International Recognition Meeting Day

Nuffic organized the annual International Recognition Meeting Day held in Utrecht on Tuesday 15 December 2009. The event was attended by more than 100 employees of Dutch research universities and universities of applied sciences who are either directly or indirectly involved in the admission of foreign students. The participants were offered a wide-ranging programme in which the theme of 'accreditation' featured prominently. Attention was also devoted to the issue of grade conversion, and Nuffic re-opened the topical issue of authenticity. New authenticity models were presented. The day's visitors evaluated the meeting as highly informative, and also appreciated the opportunity to meet colleagues from all over the country. ■





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**erasmus** bijvoorbeeld met een Erasmusbeurs

## New initiative by Erasmus Mundus: ASEMUNDUS

Erasmus Mundus is a European Commission programme aimed at stimulating quality in European higher education, promoting it across the world and encouraging cooperation with countries outside the EU. Nuffic provides information about the Erasmus Mundus programme in the Netherlands, and supports Dutch institutions with partners in other EU member states in the submission of grant requests. A good example of this are the sixteen PhD programmes available at universities in various countries set up via the Erasmus Mundus programme. Six Dutch universities are involved in those programmes and for one of the programmes the affiliated Dutch institution is the base of operations. Candidates for these PhD programmes may be eligible for an Erasmus Mundus grant.

A new component introduced to Erasmus Mundus in 2009 is ASEMUNDUS. This is a three-year initiative by nine member states that participate in Erasmus Mundus with the aim of improving and better targeting information for higher education institutions regarding the possibilities of the programme in Asia. ASEMUNDUS focuses on the Asian member states of the ASEM, the Asia-Europe Meeting, and European-Asian contact seminars will be organized as part of ASEMUNDUS. It is also the intention to develop an Asian network of Erasmus Mundus ambassadors. Nuffic and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) are spearheading ASEMUNDUS. Other participants are the agencies that provide recommendations on Erasmus Mundus in Belgium, Cyprus, Poland, Austria, Estonia, Latvia and Hungary. ■

## Promotion and Neso-programme



## Digitization of the Study in Holland promotional campaign

The internet is the place where international students search for information on study options abroad. The Study in Holland promotional campaign acknowledged this in 2009 by deploying a variety of digital tools. For example, the website [www.studyinholland.nl](http://www.studyinholland.nl) has been provided with a special opening page that leads students quickly to the most relevant information. The Study in Holland house style has also been enhanced on the website.

And other channels, too, are being used to promote Dutch higher education. The Study in Holland channel on YouTube was expanded in 2009 to include the Study in Holland film which has since been viewed 50,000

times. Students can also view short films from higher education institutions and from the Nuffic Neso offices or video diaries by other international students.

In addition, the Study in Holland page on Facebook was launched in September for all students studying or wishing to study in the Netherlands. So far around 10,000 international students have shared their experiences using this page. While printed materials such as posters, brochures and flyers remain an important part of Nuffic's promotional campaigns, the organization will further increase its focus on online promotion in 2010. ■



## Nuffic Neso Russia and Thailand opened

In 2009, Nuffic opened Netherlands Education Support Offices (Nuffic Nesos) in Russia and Thailand. They are part of an international network of offices that promotes Dutch higher education abroad and stimulates cooperation between institutions in an international context. There are also Nuffic Neso offices in Brazil, China, Indonesia, Mexico, Vietnam and South Korea while there are Nuffic Neso Desks in India and Taiwan.



### Russia

UNESCO estimates that each year 200 Dutch students leave for Russia to study. Dutch research universities and universities of applied sciences, for their part, welcome 500 Russian students each year. There are scores of joint ventures between Dutch and Russian higher education institutions. To stimulate cooperation and student mobility, Nuffic's Director of Communication Hanneke Teekens opened a Nuffic Neso in Moscow on 13 February 2009. The Netherlands ambassador Jan-Paul Dirkse was one of the speakers at the opening ceremony. International Policy Director Anke Buiteveld attended on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Sijbolt Noorda, Chairman of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) represented the Dutch research universities. Representatives from both Dutch and Russian higher education got together to intensify their

mutual cooperation and exchanges. Russian students and alumni got a taste of the range of study programmes on offer in the Netherlands and were able to participate in MBA master classes with themes such as 'management in times of economic crisis'.

### Thailand

On 6 March 2009, Sander van den Eijnden, Nuffic's Director-General, opened the Nuffic Neso office in Bangkok. The Netherlands and Thailand wish to strengthen their relations in the area of higher education. Around 300 Thai students are currently studying in the Netherlands, most of whom are doing an English-taught master's programme. They decided to pursue their studies in the Netherlands because of the superior price-value ratio compared to the major destination countries for Thai students – Australia and the United States.

Research conducted by Nuffic shows that the number of Thai students in the Netherlands could potentially grow strongly. For this to be achieved, Dutch higher education needs to be promoted more vigorously in Thailand, with a particular focus on the range of study programmes taught in English. In 2009, Nuffic Neso Thailand worked hard on organizing the EHEF (see next page) in Bangkok and Thai delegations travelled to the Netherlands to reinforce institutional cooperation between the two countries in the area of higher education. ■



## European education fair in Bangkok draws more than 31,000 visitors

Nuffic organized the European Higher Education Fair (EHEF) Bangkok 2009 held on 31 October and 1 November, which attracted large numbers of visitors – 31,194 to be precise. Visitors could choose from 62 stands, of which 43 represented education institutions from 19 European countries. National representative bodies and representatives of the European Commission occupied the other stands.

This EHEF concluded the EU-Asia Higher Education Platform (EAHEP) project. The EHEF, for which Nuffic was responsible for organizing, was preceded by a well-attended symposium on Thai-European education and research cooperation, at which 150 professionals working in higher education discussed the introductions given by 25 speakers. ■

## Holland Alumni Conference 2009

In the autumn of 2009, Nuffic organized the Holland Alumni Conference. Two hundred alumni from more than 65 countries attended this unique event in The Hague to strengthen ties with their Alma Mater and with alumni in their own professional fields. By organizing this conference, Nuffic contributed to the exchange of knowledge in specific fields and as well as to the formation of alumni networks based on country of origin, academic field, scholarship programme or Dutch higher education institution visited.

The first day of the conference saw the launch of the virtual Holland Alumni network at [www.hollandalumni.nl](http://www.hollandalumni.nl), which offers Holland Alumni, the alumni associations and Dutch higher education institutions an online platform where they can meet and exchange information and experiences.

The Holland Alumni Conference builds upon earlier efforts of the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes aimed at supporting Netherlands Alumni Associations. Both the conference and the Holland Alumni network are important instruments for Nuffic to approach the various categories of alumni in an integrated manner. ■

## Focus year puts Brazil in the spotlight

Nuffic declared 2009 as the Brazil Focus Year. Brazil, along with Russia, India and China, is one of the so-called BRIC countries. These countries are characterized by their rapidly growing economies and the extreme dynamism with which they are modernizing. The fast pace of development in Brazil offers opportunities for Dutch higher education, and Brazil is also becoming a more interesting prospect for Dutch students. More and more universities are offering English-taught modules, although the level of international education is not yet anything like in the Netherlands.

The Brazil Focus Year was officially opened at the 2009 Nuffic Annual Conference, which hosted a workshop on the opportunities for higher education in Brazil. In June Nuffic organized the Brazil Seminar held in Utrecht, in collaboration with the Service Centre for International



Cultural Activities (SICA) and the Economic Information Service (EVD). The theme was 'Joining forces and seizing opportunities: chances for Dutch higher education in Brazil seen from a broader perspective'. Around 25 participants actively took part in the seminar, which examined the country's economic and cultural sector and opportunities for Dutch higher education institutions.

Nuffic's Director of Communication Hanneke Teekens explained how the Nuffic Neso office in Brazil experienced its first year of operations. Jorn Konijn, senior policy officer of SICA, presented a cultural mapping of Brazil, looking at 11 cultural and artistic disciplines. EVD Brazil country coordinator Mijke Vriens focused on 'Brazil from an economic perspective'. Finally, Thomas Merz highlighted the cooperation between the Fontys University of Applied Sciences

and Feevale, a centre for higher education in Novo Hamburgo in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul.

To conclude the Brazil Focus Year, Nuffic sent a management-level higher education mission to Brazil from 22 February through to 1 March 2010 headed by Director-General Sander van den Eijnden. The mission was an opportunity for a number of Dutch higher education institutions and the umbrella organizations VSNU (the Association of Universities in the Netherlands) and HBO-raad (Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences) to become more deeply acquainted with the Brazilian higher education system. They also explored further opportunities for cooperation. The mission put the Netherlands on the map as a country that offers world-class education and research. ■

## Holland Alumni networks set up in Neso countries

The Holland Alumni Associations of the Nuffic Nesos are part of the worldwide Holland Alumni network (HAN), an initiative of Nuffic which aims to establish and facilitate an international network of Holland Alumni, future alumni and relevant organizations. A further aim is to engage alumni for promotion work on behalf of Dutch higher education. In the past two years, the Nuffic Nesos have been successful in using the HAN project to devote additional attention to Holland Alumni activities.

Activities conducted by the established Holland Alumni networks in Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Taipei and Thailand received an impulse, while new Holland Alumni networks were set up in other countries with a Nuffic Neso office. For example, the Holland Alumni network Korea was launched in Seoul on 11 November 2009 – the first anniversary of Nuffic Neso Korea. Ambassador Hans Heibroek gave a speech while Jo Ritzen, Chairman of the Board of Governors of Maastricht University, gave a short guest lecture. Korean jazz musicians who had studied in the Netherlands provided the musical entertainment.

A Holland Alumni network was also established in Mexico. Sixty enthusiastic alumni attended the opening ceremony. The launch of the related website [www.hanmexico.org](http://www.hanmexico.org) drew many new visitors to the Holland Alumni network Mexico in the first months alone. Nuffic Neso Brazil also launched an alumni website ([www.hanbrazil.org](http://www.hanbrazil.org)) and organized two events for alumni in Brasilia and São Paulo in the run-up to the launch. Nuffic Neso Russia staged a number of alumni



activities such as a football match between alumni, students and the Dutch business community. An MBA master class for Holland Alumni in Russia was also organized.

On Queen's Day 2009, the Holland Alumni activities in India were launched in Chennai. More than 150 invited guests, including professionals from the education sector, CEOs of Dutch and Indian companies and foreign diplomats attended this event. The website of the Holland Alumni network India ([www.hanindia.org](http://www.hanindia.org)) went online in December. Among the 200 guests present at the launch were Dr Swaminathan (Wageningen University alumnus) and staff from the Netherlands embassy and the Netherlands consulate. The event was covered by a number of Indian newspapers and radio stations. ■

## Government and higher education satisfied with Nuffic Nesos

The Minister for Education, Culture and Science is very satisfied with the Neso programme, as was apparent from his Neso Programme policy response that he sent to the Dutch Lower House in October 2009. The Minister based his opinion in part on the results of internal and external evaluations. The general impression gained from the evaluations is that the Neso programme is a useful and suitable instrument for the generic promotion of Dutch higher education overseas.

The Minister observed that Nuffic has established a robust infrastructure for the Neso offices and that the Neso programme is firmly embedded in the

international activities of the Dutch institutions in the ten target countries. However, there is room for improvement with respect to the communication between Nuffic and the Nuffic Neso offices on the one hand and the Dutch higher education institutions on the other. Also, more in-depth information on the education market in the target countries could be provided.

As a suitable budget is required to secure continuity in the international promotion of Dutch higher education, the minister will provide an additional two million euros annually so that the Nuffic Neso network can be supported optimally. These additional funds will boost the budget from 3.8 million to 5.8 million euros. ■



## Nuffic Neso Indonesia is awarded management of StuNed IV

Nuffic Neso Indonesia is to continue managing the Dutch-Indonesian grant programme StuNed. On 8 December 2009, Netherlands ambassador Van Dam and Nuffic Neso Director Marrik Bellen signed the management contract for the fourth cycle – from 2010 to 2014. The Netherlands will fund the programme

to the tune of 30 million euros. In the past ten years, more than 2,000 Indonesians have received a StuNed grant. The programme is aimed at young professionals who wish to deepen their expertise in areas that are important for capacity building in Indonesia. ■

## Study in Holland film wins *Gouden Reiger 2009*

Nuffic's Study in Holland promotional film received a *Gouden Reiger* Award during the annual 'Keying into the Brain' festival for audiovisual and interactive communication projects held in December 2009. Prizes were awarded to 11 of the 100 audiovisual and interactive communication projects submitted, which included films and websites. The multidisciplinary jury – consisting of 14 professionals from the communication and multimedia

sectors – was surprised by the high quality of all entries they assessed.

Nuffic's prize-winning film offers higher education institutions an interactive tool for promoting Study in Holland abroad. The film was awarded the prize in the Film and Video category. 'An innovative and creative film, in which international students become acquainted with the Netherlands and that playfully deals with the cliché images of

the Netherlands,' were the words of jury chairman Leo Schepman. International students, too, seem to appreciate the film: it has since been viewed more than 50,000 times on Study in Holland's channel on YouTube: [www.youtube.com/studyinholland](http://www.youtube.com/studyinholland). ■



## Nuffic's new multi-year strategy: Link Int!

What can our target groups expect from Nuffic in the years ahead? What are our ambitions? Where can we improve? And for whom? In the summer of 2009, Nuffic adopted a new strategic framework: *Link Int!*

In drawing up the strategy, we listened to the people and organizations around us. We held discussions with relations that we may not deal with everyday but whom we look to as a source of inspiration, such as the Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy (AWT), the Innovation Platform, *Nederland Kennisland*, the Social and Economic Council (SER), the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW), the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Cordaid, the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) and the Social and Cultural Planning Agency.

We also held discussions with our existing partners. During two working dinners, we discussed and tested ideas with representatives from institutions and government bodies as well as experts and took stock of what their requirements were. In early 2009, we commissioned customer research company TNS NIPO to conduct a customer satisfaction survey among students and institutions. The results of this survey and a degree of self-reflection have helped us to recalibrate our ambitions for the years ahead.

### Positioning and ambition

In the years ahead, Nuffic will explicitly present itself as *the* Dutch organization that supports internationalization and international cooperation in higher education. In doing so, we will adopt a critical but pro-active and service-oriented attitude. Working on the basis of differentiation, we will work for the entire Dutch higher education system.

Our professionalism must be clear from the products and services we provide. Continued digitization, ISO certification, customer satisfaction and an organization

with space for innovation and new ideas are all to enhance our product and service offering. In our cooperation with higher education institutions, we want our products and services to be better geared to their preferences and requirements.

Not only do we want to improve the way we approach existing relations, we also want to better serve new target groups such as teachers and researchers. We will also strengthen our cooperation with complementary and similar organizations both in the Netherlands and abroad. The expertise and knowledge of the internationalization of Dutch higher education is something we wish to expand, improve access to and better gear to the needs of our clients.

*Link Int!* represents Nuffic's efforts to promote continued debate and discussion with research universities, universities of applied sciences and the government. You can download the complete text of our multi-year strategy at [www.nuffic.nl/strategy](http://www.nuffic.nl/strategy). ■



## Results of Nuffic's customer satisfaction survey

Nuffic commissioned a customer satisfaction survey in early 2009. While the results were not disappointing, some of our relations did have comments. These criticisms have since been incorporated into internal improvement efforts. Nuffic uses the results to improve the quality of its services. In general, customers feel that Nuffic performs its tasks well and is customer focused. Our customers highly appreciate Nuffic's work and say that the organization predominantly evokes positive responses.

International students were the most enthusiastic about Nuffic. For them 'clarity' is key: they want to know where they stand. Their satisfaction is primarily determined by everything associated with grant applications and information services. Nuffic handles both of these well, in their opinion, and should continue doing so.

Dutch students were also positive (Nuffic offers help, is important and useful). However, they did have some criticisms. They are not happy with the organization's ability to help them explore opportunities,

with the support offered during their stay abroad, with the speed of the organization's email responses and with the grant application procedures.

Like the students, staff at higher education institutions have a positive image of Nuffic and regard it as a reliable, professional and accessible organization. Nonetheless, they are far more critical than the students. Areas for improvement in their eyes include the degree to which Nuffic pioneers new developments and is able to act as a discussion partner. ■

## ISO certification process makes headway

The entire Nuffic organization worked steadily on ISO certification throughout 2009. The Capacity Building & Scholarships Directorate and the International Recognition Department were already ISO certified. The rest of the organization is due to follow in April 2010.

ISO certification is a tool in the development, implementation and ongoing improvement of an effective quality management system. The ISO standard conveys the requirements for the safeguarding and

improvement of processes that are important for raising customer satisfaction. ISO certification is consequently something clients ask for.

Nuffic has drawn up, among other things, a quality handbook which it uses to describe its work processes. Certified is the organization that audits Nuffic and awards the certificate, provided the applicable criteria for the standard have been met. The company specializes in ISO certification for knowledge-intensive enterprises and organizations. ■

## Greetje van den Bergh appointed chairperson of National UNESCO Commission



Minister Plasterk appointed Greetje van den Bergh (1947) as the new chairperson of the National UNESCO Commission for a period of four years effective 1 July 2009. Van den Bergh

Minister Plasterk also appointed four new members to the National UNESCO Commission in the autumn of 2009 and, in doing so, helped the Commission regain its balanced composition. The combined expertise of the various members covers all of UNESCO's spheres of activity. The new members are:

- Rietje van Dam-Mieras, who brings specific expertise in the fields of sustainable development, education-related innovation and education in relation to global development;
- Yvonne Donders, who specializes in the fields of cultural, economic and social human rights and cultural diversity;
- Ben Knapen, who has specific expertise and wide experience in the field of communication and information;
- Erik-Jan Zürcher, who brings his unique expertise in the area of protecting cultural heritage. ■

succeeds Lieteke van Vucht Tijssen. Nuffic hosts the secretariat of the National UNESCO Commission.

Greetje van den Bergh is an independent consultant and (acting) administrator. She has wide management and political experience, owing in part to the positions she previously held as secretary-general of the *Taalunie* (the Dutch language union), head of the Higher Education Inspectorate, vice-chairperson of the Board of the University of Amsterdam and as founding intendant/director of the Flemish-Dutch House for Europe in Brussels (*Huis de Buren*).

## Marleen Barth and Leendert Klaassen on Board of Trustees

Two new members joined Nuffic's Board of Trustees in 2009: Marleen Barth and Leendert Klaassen.

Marleen Barth is chairperson of *GGZ Nederland* (the sector association representing mental health institutions in the Netherlands). Leendert Klaassen is a board member of the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO).

The other members of the Board of Trustees are Trude Maas-de Brouwer (chairperson), Jan Veldhuis (vice chairperson), Jan Bout, Dirk Elsen and Hein Knaapen. ■



## Nuffic packs its bags in temporary move

For the more than 200 employees of Nuffic in The Hague, the last weeks of 2009 were dominated by a relocation. As the interior of the Nuffic building is to be thoroughly renovated in the first half of 2010, the entire organization has taken up temporary residence in the building next door, 'de Kortenaer'.

Since 1993 Nuffic has had its offices in a national monument that was originally built to house the board of management of the Dutch telephone company. Once the renovation work is complete, Nuffic will be able to make more efficient use of the available space. The refurbishment will also return the building to something closer to its original state.

Thanks to good planning and the help of colleagues, the actual removal between Christmas and New Year went smoothly. In the second half of 2010, Nuffic expects to return to renovated offices that are better suited to today's working practices. ■



## The people of Nuffic

As at 31 December 2009, Nuffic in The Hague employed 216 people: 140 women and 76 men. Of these 216 people, 121 worked in excess of 32 hours a week. At the end of 2009, 43 people worked at the Nuffic Neso offices. These people are hired in accordance with the employment conditions that are prevalent in the country concerned.

The age distribution is fairly balanced. In 2009, 91 employees had been employed for longer than seven years.

### Age distribution

Total	<25 years	25–44 years	45–60 years	>60 years
216	3	129	70	14

### Employment contracts and vacancies

In 2009, 28 employment contracts were concluded with the possibility of a permanent contract.

Nuffic uses temporary workers primary to fill temporary vacancies, such as those created due to maternity leave. In addition, the Scholarship Programmes Department, especially, experiences peak periods each year for which temporary staff are hired. 40 such temporary workers were engaged in 2009.

A total of 39 people were hired to fill vacancies. These vacancies concerned 25 successions, 7 new positions, 4 temporary positions, 2 maternity leave replacements and 1 intern. Internal candidates applied for 8 of the vacancies. An internal candidate was eventually hired for three of 3 vacancies.

### Contract types

	2009	2008	2007
Fixed term contract	42	37	65
Permanent contract	175	162	131
Temporary employees	40	39	68

## Personal development

Nuffic attaches great importance to the training and development of its people and achieves this in a variety of ways, such as through career counselling, coaching, internal work placement or individual training courses. Each year collective training plans are drawn up laying out the range of training courses available to different groups of people. In 2009 this resulted in the following:

- development of management skills and learning capacity through peer supervision by department heads;
- development of coaching skills and learning capacity through peer supervision by team coordinators;
- work-related training courses for ancillary functions;
- a training budget amounting to 3.1% of the total wage bill.

## Absenteeism due to illness

The level of absenteeism due to illness does not only say something about staff productivity, it is also an important indicator of staff satisfaction and involvement. Our aim was to keep absenteeism due to illness at 3% in 2009. With an actual absenteeism percentage for 2009 of 2.7, we were once again successful in achieving our objective. The management continues to work hard on reducing absenteeism due to illness and adopts a pro-active attitude in counselling and supervising staff who are ill.

### Absenteeism due to illness

	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Absenteeism due to illness (in %)	2.7	2.6	3.0	3.2	4.2

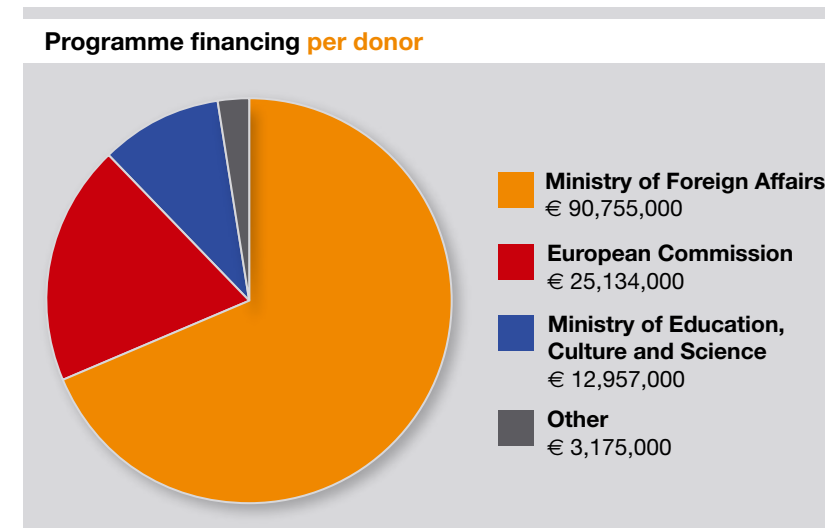
The impact of the H1N1 influenza virus remained extremely limited for both Nuffic headquarters in The Hague and the Nuffic Neso offices around the world. The epidemic had no influence on our operations.

## Programme operations

Nuffic is primarily specialized in the management of international academic mobility programmes and institutional cooperation programmes. Nuffic's most important contract partners are the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands. The European Commission is another important partner.

The total programme resources budget in 2009 was € 132,021,000. See the chart below for a breakdown of the programme financing per donor.

Nuffic's total operating expenses in 2009 are estimated at € 24,254,000. ■





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- Head Office Nuffic
- Netherlands Education Support Office (Neso)
- NIHA – Netherlands Institute for Higher Education Ankara
- NIASD – Netherlands Institute for Academic Studies Damascus
- NIMAR – Netherlands Institute Morocco (carry out generic Study in Holland promotion activities in cooperation with Nuffic)

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