





# Academic career paths in The Netherlands - Issues in the current political debate

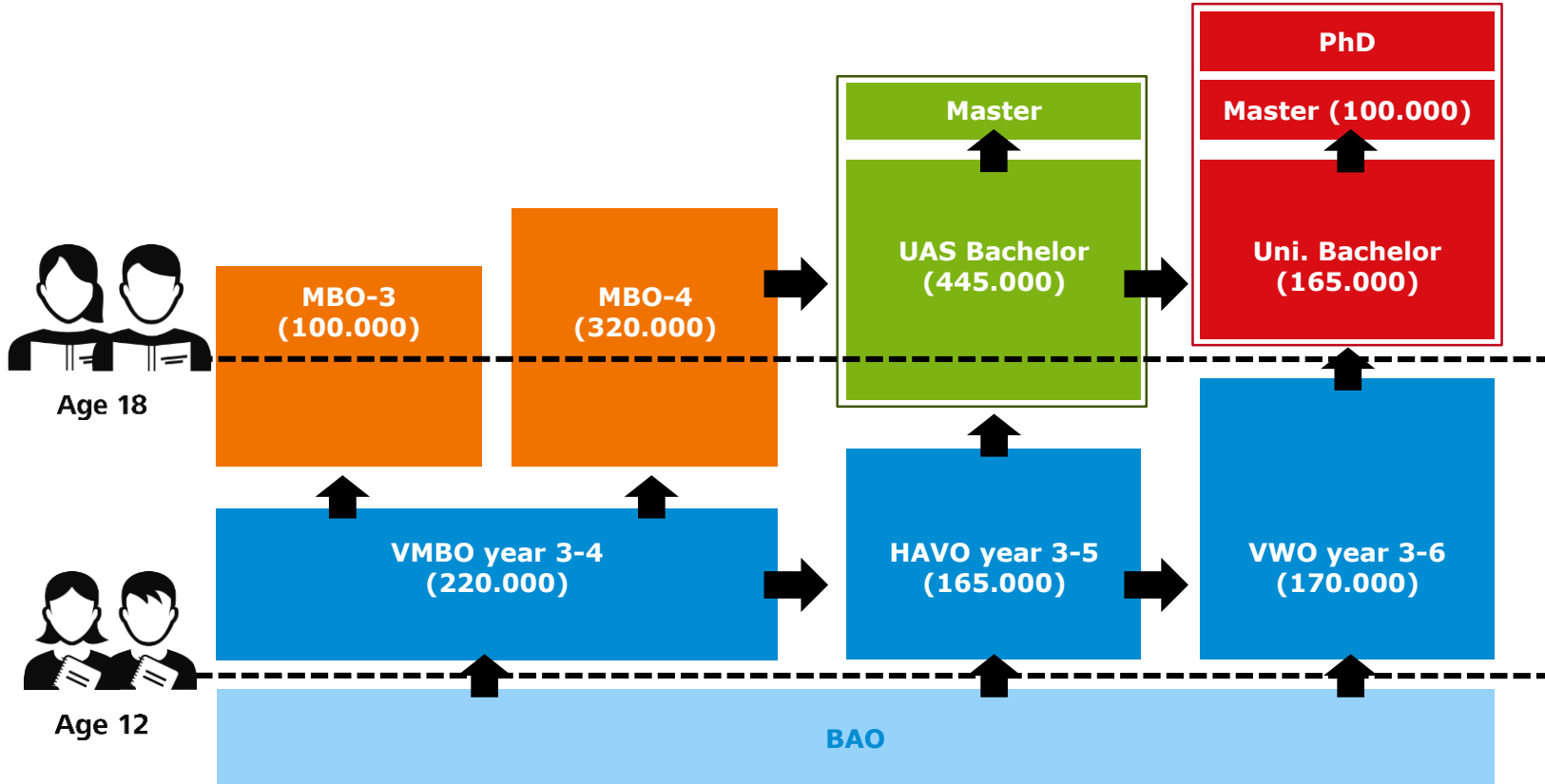
Jurgen Rienks, Director International Relations VSNU

Rektorite Nõukogu / Universities Estonia. Tartu 15 december 2017.

## Some background facts



# The Dutch system of higher education

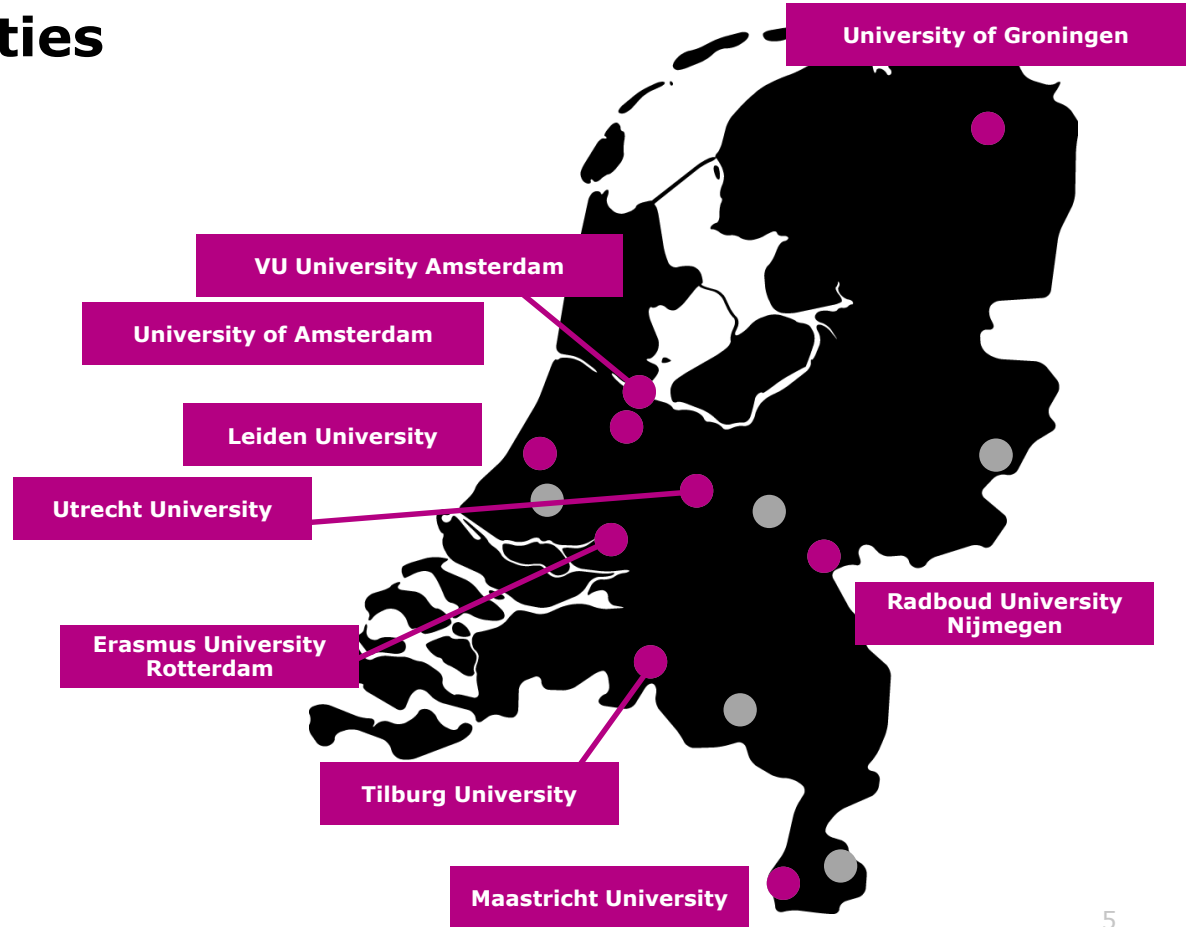




# The Dutch universities



Comprehensive

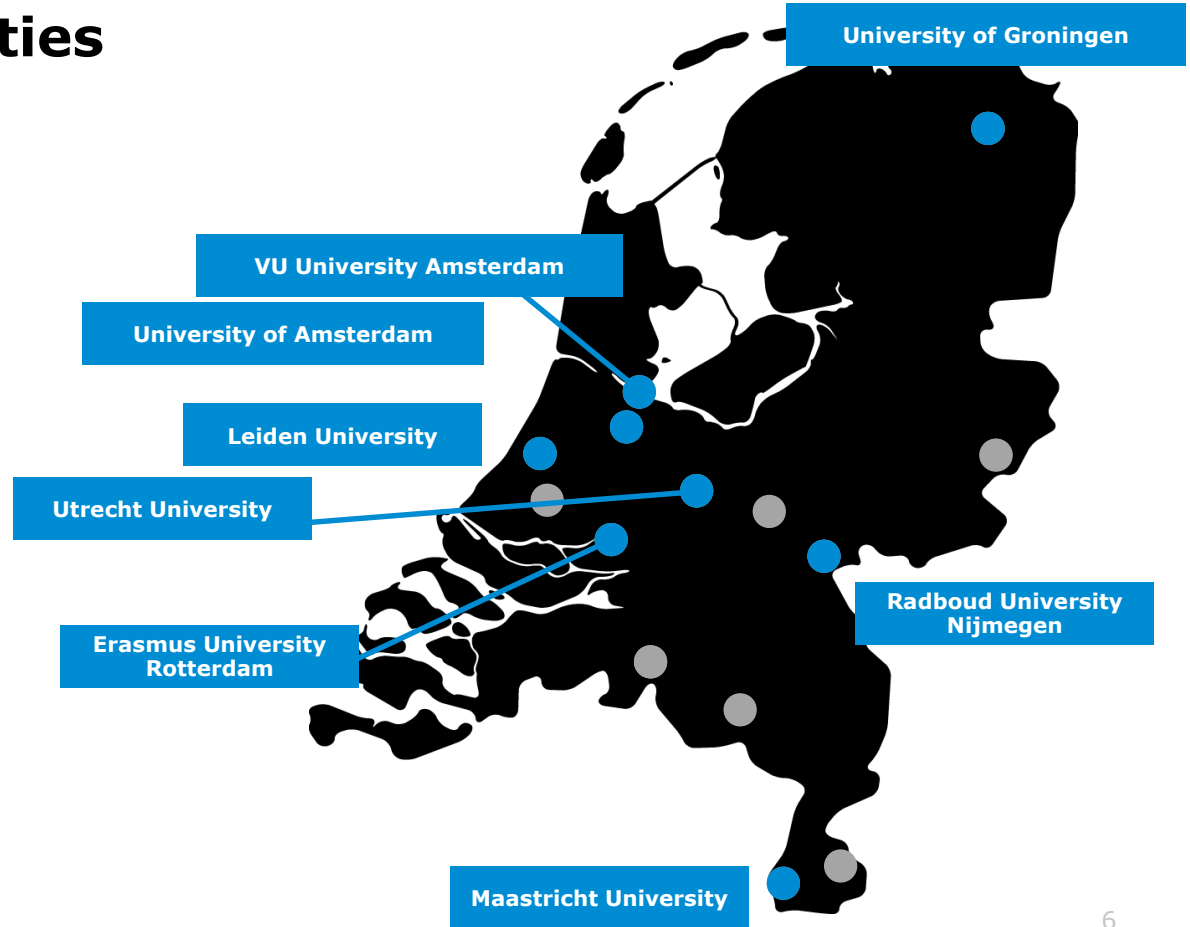




# The Dutch universities



Comprehensive  
Medical, liaison  
with umc





# The Dutch universities



Comprehensive



Medical, liaison  
with umc



Technology



Distance education



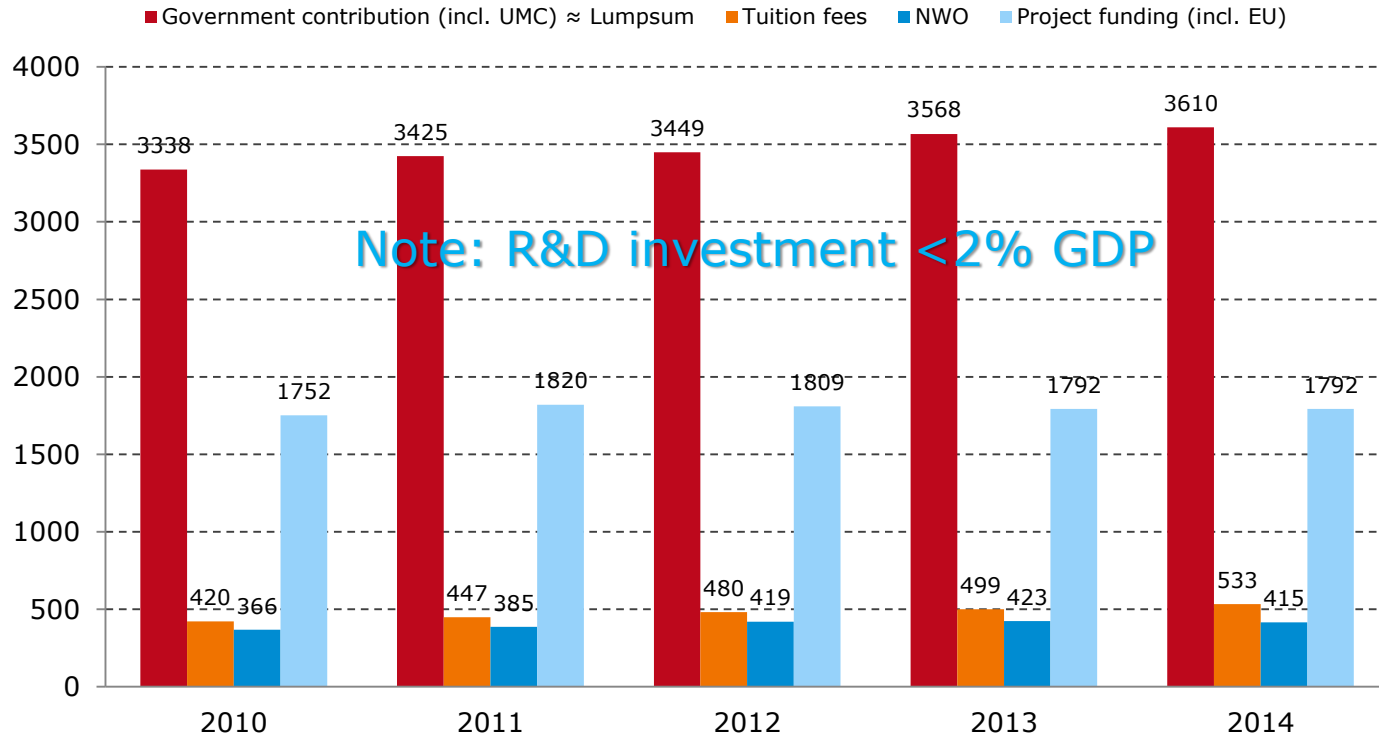


# World class achievements of Dutch universities

	<b>ARWU World Top 500 (2017)</b>	<b>THES World Top 800 (2017)</b>	<b>QS World Top 900 (2017)</b>	<b>CWTS Leiden Top 750 (2017)</b>
Utrecht University	47	68	109	61
University of Groningen	59	83	113	100-200
Erasmus University Rotterdam	73	72	147	75
Leiden University	88	67	109	90
Radboud University Nijmegen	101-150	122	204	88
University of Amsterdam	101-150	59	58	64
Wageningen University	101-150	64	119	84
VU University Amsterdam	101-10	165	218	93
Delft University of Technology	151-200	63	54	66
Eindhoven University of Technology	301-400	141	104	100-200
Maastricht University	201-300	103	200	100-200
University of Twente	301-400	179	179	100-200
Tilburg University	*	195	357	200-300
Open University	*	*	*	*



# Income universities 2010 - 2014



Source: Financial statements 14 universities (x € mln.)

## **Academic staff building a career**

- PhD's**
- Postdocs**
- Tenure trackers**



# Composition of academic staff in fte

(31/12/2016)

	Dutch	European	Non-European	Total
Full professor	2.181	397	65	2.642
Associate professor/ Senior lecturer	1.726	404	113	2.242
Assistant professor/ Lecturer	3.200	1.187	465	4.852
Teacher	2.259	282	119	2.660
Researcher	1.753	1.182	855	3.790
Other research staff	135	123	147	405
PhD candidate	4.281	2.205	1.753	8.240
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.534</b>	<b>5.779</b>	<b>3.517</b>	<b>24.831</b>

Source: VSNU, WOPI2016; Excluding medical staff.



## Characteristics of the Dutch PhD system

- **Research masters** prepare students for a PhD track.
- All universities have **graduate schools** responsible for:
  - supervision,
  - quality assurance,
  - transferable skills courses, etc.
- **National research schools** offer topical courses, summer schools, conferences, etc.

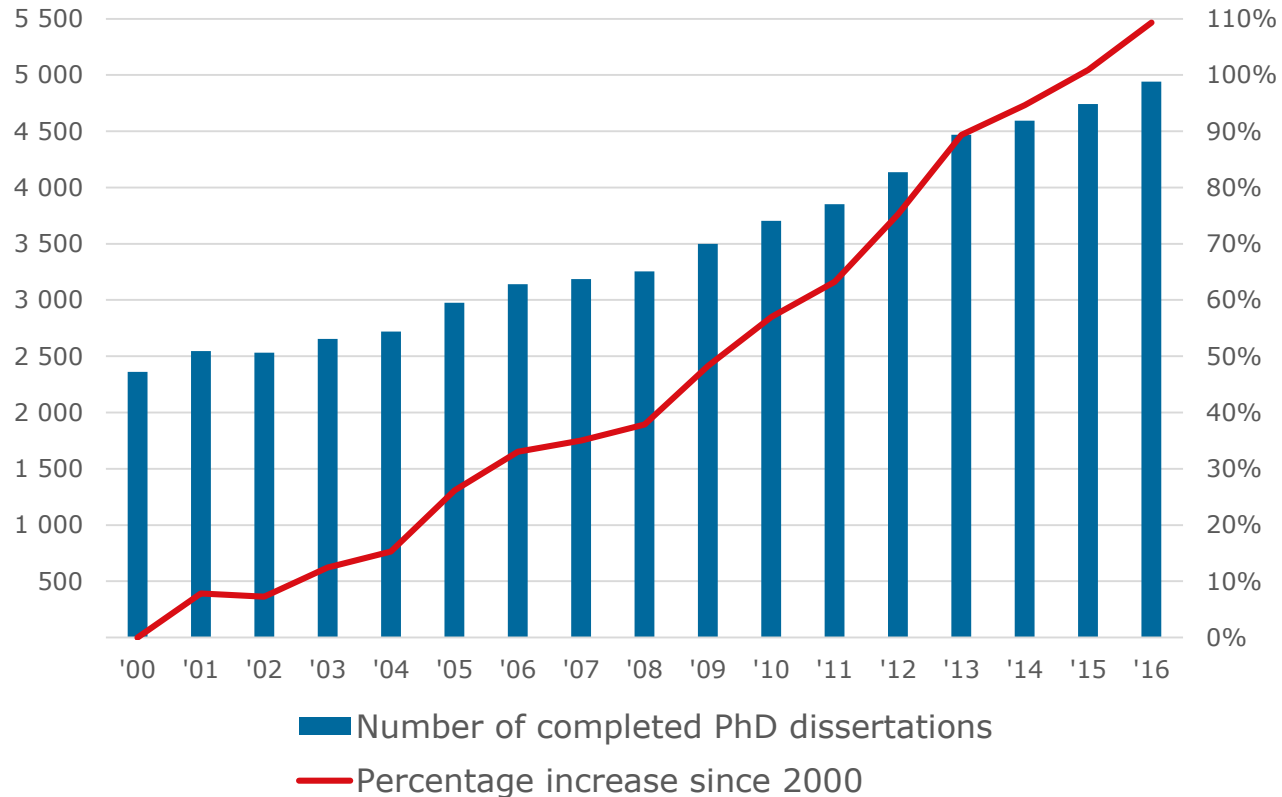


## The strength of the Dutch PhD system

- Current PhD system was introduced in **1986**
  - To increase number of PhD students;
  - to decrease time to completion.
- PhD candidate is trained to become an **independent researcher**.
- At the start of the PhD a **training and supervision plan** is drawn up.
- Regular **research evaluations** have greatly improved research quality since **1985**.



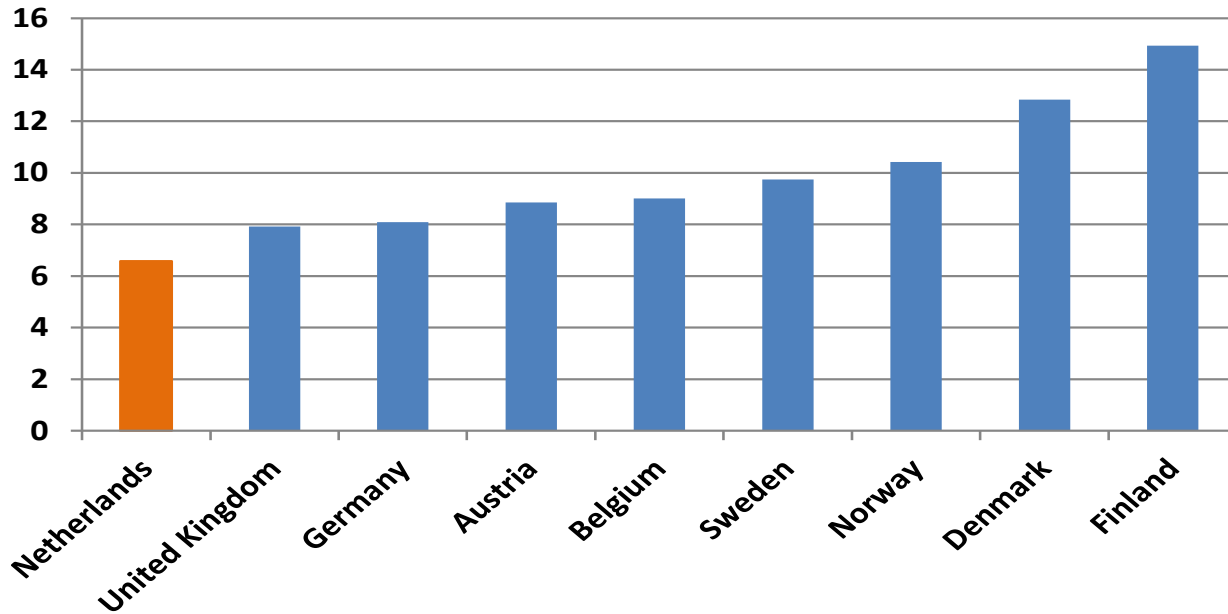
# Number of PhD dissertations has doubled since 2000



Source: VSNU, KUOZ/onderzoeksinzet & output



## Relatively low numbers of PhD-holders in the working population (per 1000)



- 70% of Dutch PhD candidates leave academia after their PhD.



## **PhD's careers: inside or outside academia?**

Awareness raising by different means:

- Giving incentives for Phd's to strengthen their network;
- University facilities (mobility center, training & development graduate school);
- Career café's (to discover the possibilities in universities of applied sciences);
- Seminars / meetings focusing on career opportunities;
- PhD Network Netherlands (Professional Phd Program);
- Industrial Doctorates pilot.

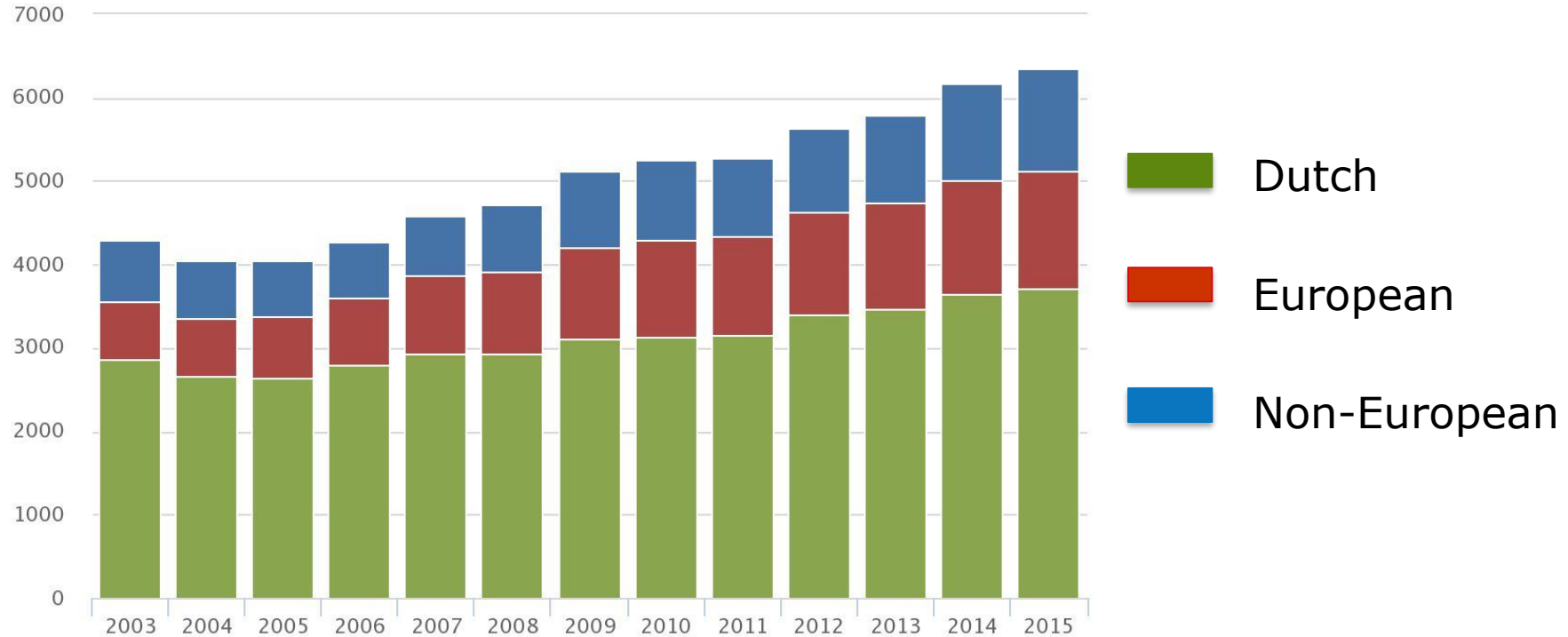


## Doctoral education in Graduate Schools

- Targeted doctoral education on
  - Transferable skills  
(e.g. writing and presentation skills);
  - Research skills  
(e.g. research design and project management).
- Education is organized in Graduate Schools at either University- or Faculty-level.
- Advanced courses in specific discipline are given at (interuniversity) Research Schools.



# Postdoctoral researchers





## Postdoctoral researchers

**Postdocs**, a group under serious pressure

- to obtain funding as an independent researcher, and
- to spend a significant period abroad, possibly followed by ...

**Tenure tracks:** up or out

- Long period of uncertainty on future prospects;
- Assessment on: output, citations and fundraising.



# Composition of academic staff in fte

(31/12/2016)

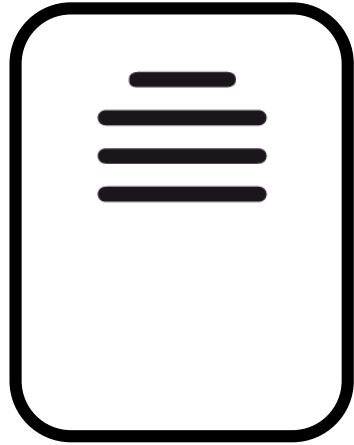
	Dutch	European	Non-European	Total	Temp %
Full professor	2.181	397	65	2.642	6
Associate professor/ Senior lecturer	1.726	404	113	2.242	4
Assistant professor/ Lecturer	3.200	1.187	465	4.852	31
Teacher	2.259	282	119	2.660	75
Researcher	1.753	1.182	855	3.790	
Other research staff	135	123	147	405	
PhD candidate	4.281	2.205	1.753	8.240	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.534</b>	<b>5.779</b>	<b>3.517</b>	<b>24.831</b>	

Source: VSNU, WOPI2016; Excluding medical staff.

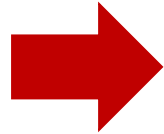
# Research Assessment - Standard Evaluation Protocol



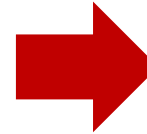
# Basic principles of research assessments



**Self assessment  
research unit**



**Peer review  
committee**



**Evaluation  
report**



*Every 6 years*



## Goals of research evaluation

- **Improvement**
  - the assessment includes recommendations for the future.
- **Accountability:**
  - boards, government and society at large wish to track the impact of (their) research policy.
- **Ranking and reward:**
  - the assessment can produce a ranking of the evaluated units.



## Three additional aspects

- The assessment committee reflects on three further aspects of the research unit:



**Education of  
PhD candidates**



**Diversity**



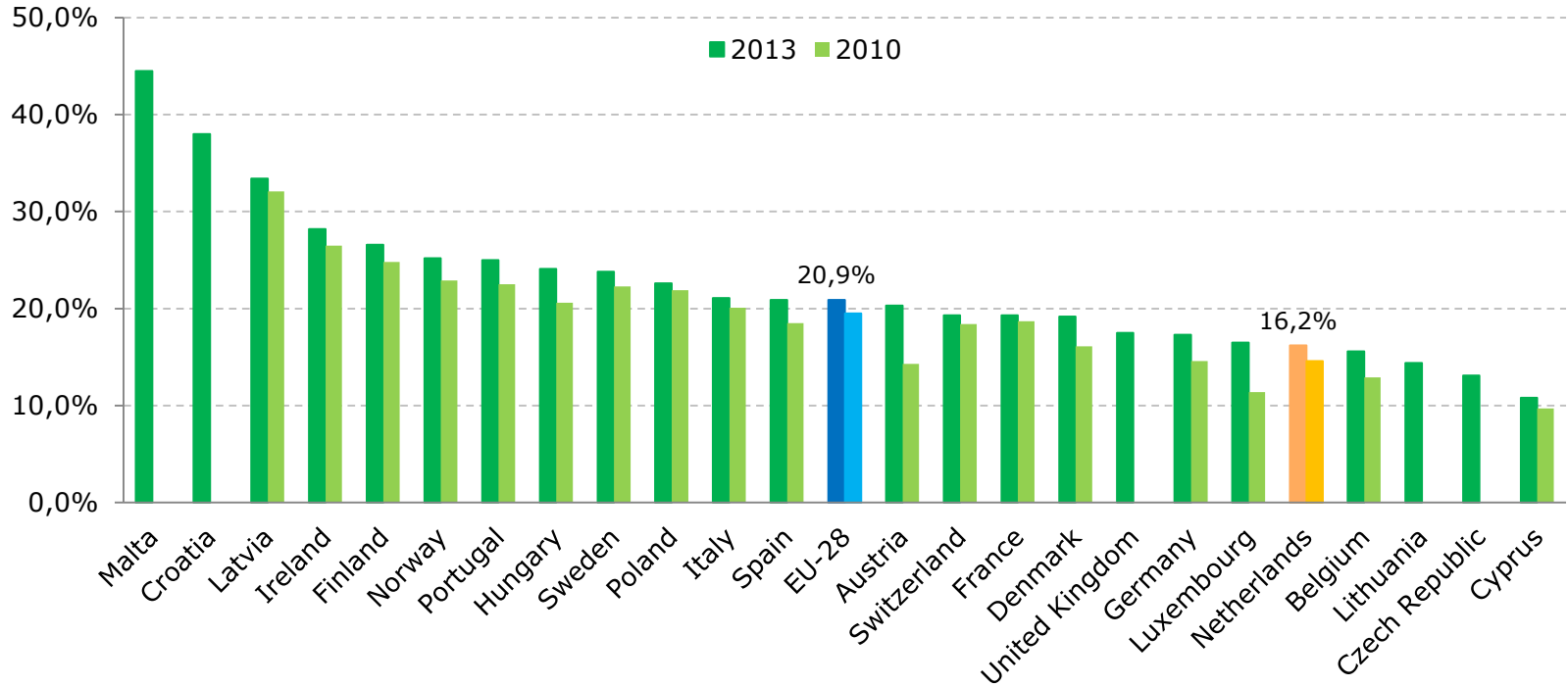
**Research  
integrity**

# **GENDER**

## **- and other issues of diversity**



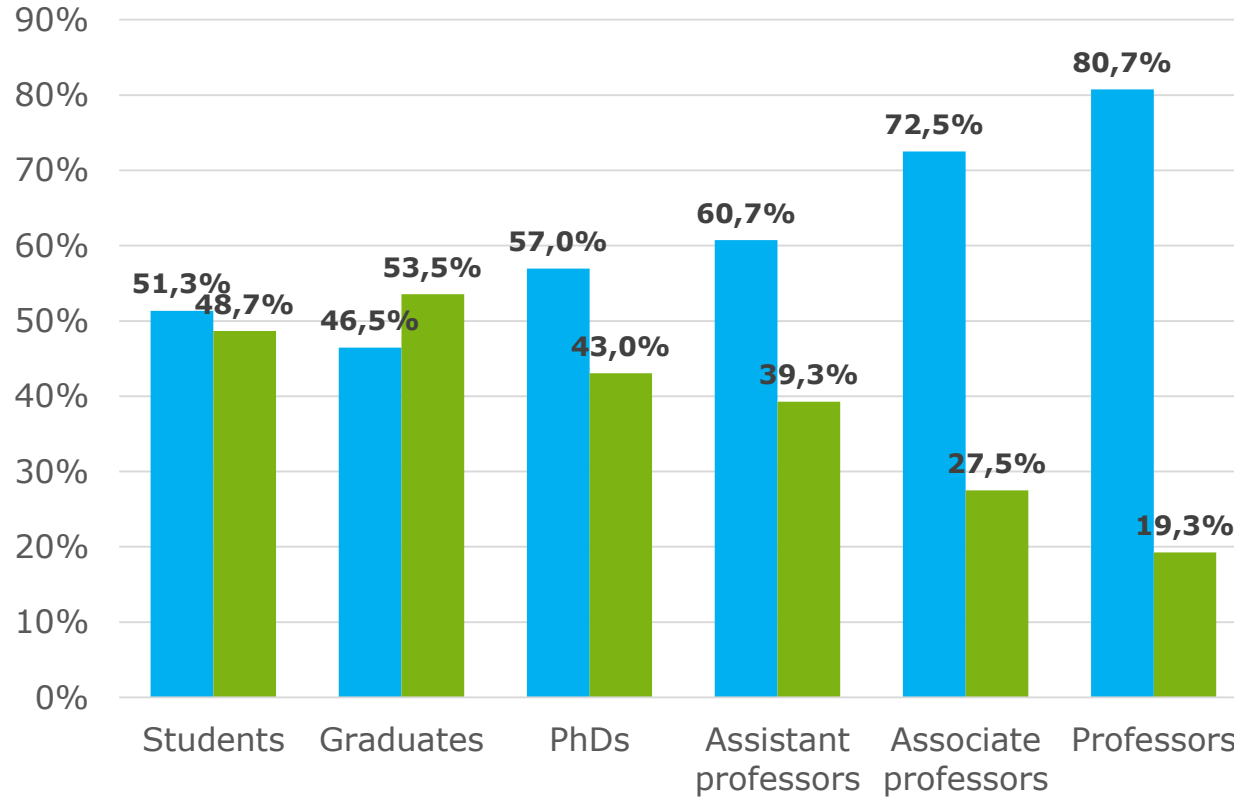
# Percentage of female professors in European countries



Source: She Figures (2015)



# Gender (im)balance

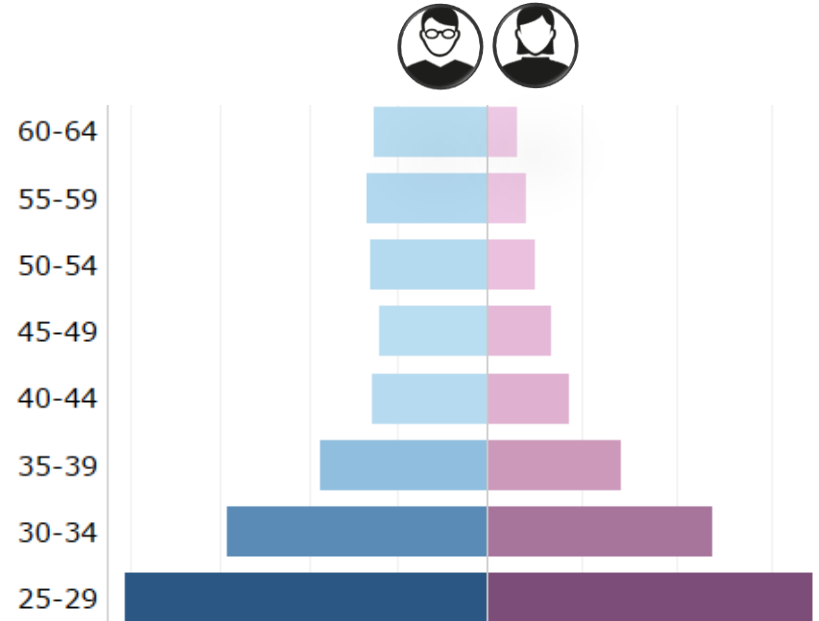
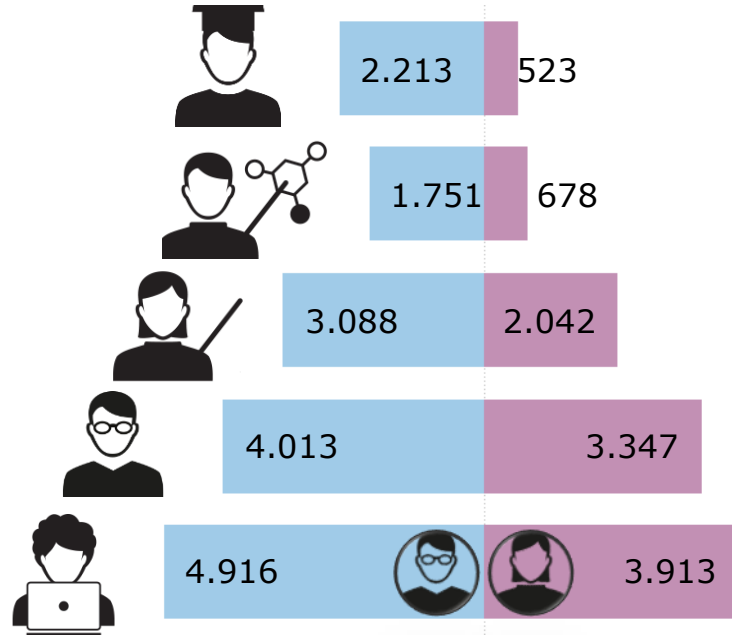


■ Male ■ Female

Source: VSNU, 1cHO2016 & WOPI2016. Excl. medical staff 27 /students



# Staffnumbers distributed by position and by age m/f





## Westerdijk Talent Scheme

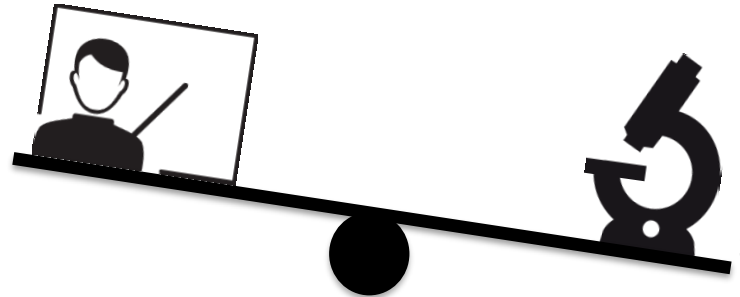
- In 1917 Johanna Westerdijk was appointed as (first female) professor in the Netherlands.
- The Westerdijk Talent Scheme (2017) aims to
  - increase the number of female professors;
  - contribute to a greater diversity at top of Dutch academia.
- Universities can apply for grants if female researchers are appointed as a professor.
- Budget 5 million euros for 100 appointments.

# Some conclusions - and food for thought



## Questions raised by current careersystem

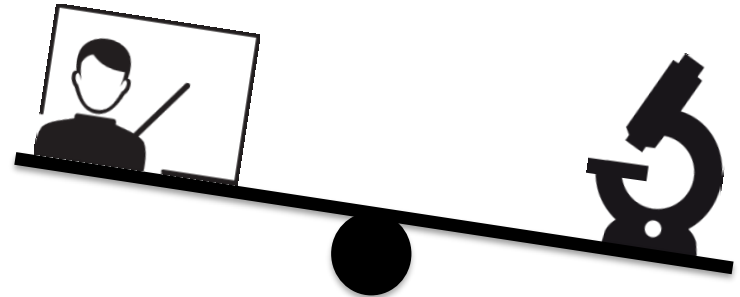
- Are PhD candidates to be treated as employees or students?
- Are young researchers better prepared for a career inside or outside of Academia?
- Are temporary contracts a blessing or a curse? For both the system and the researcher?
- Is society / gender well represented in academia?





## Research (im)balance

- High work load and low success rates in competitive funding (e.g. national and Horizon 2020)
- Strong interaction between research and education at Dutch universities
  - However: research is valued most
  - Focus on output, citations and fundraising
  - Need for new balance in appreciation of teaching, research and impact
- Open Science / Open Access





## Food for thought

- What degrees of freedom do we still have to give shape to our national research system?
  - To what extent have our research systems become European or global?
  - Is the ERA (European Research Area) a reality?
  - Flexicurity: drive towards temporary or permanent contracts?



**Thank you for your kind attention.  
- any questions?**