

EURASHE reaction to the Higher Education budget cuts proposed by the Dutch Minister for Education

The newly appointed Dutch Minister for Education Eppo Bruins [recently announced an upcoming wave of budget cuts to Higher Education institutions](#) (HEIs), limiting the “excessive internationalisation” that has characterised the country until now.

First introduced in May, the [Balanced Internationalisation bill](#) would **put a cap on the number of incoming international students** and increase the prevalence of Dutch as a teaching language, with the aim of striking a balance for the sake of the Dutch Higher Education system.

Many Dutch HEIs have already voiced their concerns with respect to the bill, including the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (Vereniging Hogescholen). EURASHE fully agrees and supports these concerns, which are reflected by our Dutch member institutions as well. We believe that a **one-size-fits-all approach is not the way forward** and that **budget cuts may not only hinder the development of higher education**, particularly applied education, **but also have detrimental effects on the interconnected nature of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**.

While managing the influx of international students is reasonable, imposing restrictions without considering the unique context of each institution could be counterproductive. “The cuts might lead to the Netherlands becoming less attractive to top scientific talent from abroad and also the Netherlands becoming less successful in attracting European research subsidies,” [said Simone Hackett](#), lecturer and researcher at The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

[As noted by Vereniging Hogescholen](#), **international students in the Netherlands constitute only 8% of the total student population** in applied higher education, a number that has remained stable over the years. The proposed measures could disproportionately impact applied HEIs by restricting their ability to offer English-taught programmes and thus attract international talent.

“The new cabinet’s policy will lead to “an impoverishment of science, less room for research, [...] more pressure on researchers to apply for funding, [...] negative consequences for SMEs in non-urban regions, and less knowledge about social issues,” [said MPs from GroenLinks-PvdA](#), the Dutch Green-Labour Party alliance.

Applied HEIs play a critical role in regional development through education, practice-oriented research, and innovation. They are pivotal in providing well-trained professionals who meet the local labour market’s needs, [as evidenced by the high employment and retention rates of graduates](#) who often remain in the region where they studied. Any budget cuts that undermine the capacity of these institutions to function effectively will not only affect the regional economy, but also weaken the overall EHEA, which thrives on collaboration and mutual support among member states.

EURASHE advocates for tailored solutions that consider the unique circumstances of each higher education institution. **We urge policymakers to recognise the diversity within the sector and to engage in dialogue with stakeholders to develop measures that support, rather than hinder, the development of higher education.** Budget cuts and restrictive legislation risk not only impeding the progress of individual institutions, but also jeopardising the broader goals of the EHEA, which include promoting mobility, fostering innovation, and enhancing the quality of education across Europe. **We will continue to work with our members and network in Brussels to develop strategies that ensure the long-term viability and prosperity of HEIs across Europe, always aiming for a more inclusive, interconnected, and prosperous EHEA.**

Read more:

[Shock as new Dutch government slashes higher education funding](#)

[Dutch research funding cuts will 'reverse years of progress'](#)

[New government's austerity plans detrimental to Dutch higher education and research](#)

[Position paper by Vereniging Hogescholen](#)