

Trabajar en Holanda. Bienvenido!

Representatives of Spanish and Dutch universities and Spanish students get to know each other better

While it is true that over the last few years Spain has suffered from economic crisis, it is also true that Spain has high educational standards in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and ICT. Young Spanish people with a bachelor's or master's degree should not postpone their careers simply because at this particular moment Spanish companies and research institutes cannot offer enough jobs. Especially not when in the Netherlands the demand for students and knowledge workers in these fields is increasing. Bringing supply and demand together, however, requires more than just a rational decision. It involves people making crucial choices about their lives. Therefore the Dutch embassy in Madrid has decided to bring representatives from Spanish and Dutch universities together to discuss this issue with a group of students. Using the rich network of Mr. Henk van Soest, who is the founder and owner of 'Trabajar en Holanda', a three-day event was organized, from Tuesday the 21st of April until the 23th.



Triple helix

Representatives of several Dutch universities of applied sciences and research were welcomed at the Dutch embassy, as well as their Spanish colleagues. Mr. Cornelis van Rij, the Dutch ambassador, opened the meeting by welcoming his guests. He emphasized the fact that cooperation between Spain and the Netherlands should be based on complementarity. He explained the Dutch triple helix approach in which companies, knowledge institutes and government strongly work together and which has proven to be successful in developing all kind of programs on innovation and human capital

development. Mr. Jos van Erp, representative of Holland High Tech and Program Director for Human Capital in the High Tech Systems and Materials sector, explained that shortage of technicians won't show up immediately, but for a long time it will exist as a hidden phenomenon. The same number of people will have to do more tasks, activities are postponed or even cancelled, temporary workers are hired and finally, vacancies remain unfilled. He stated that the significant exodus of baby boomers from the workforce will really start in about four years.



Mr. Cornelis van Rij: "Welcome!"

Some companies will lose 50% of their employees in less than ten years! This is more than an HR challenge. It might turn out to have dramatic effects if no further actions are taken.

Collaboration on an equal basis

Professor Daniel Vargas, Director of the School of Engineering, Universidad Carlos III in Madrid, then took the floor. He presented the Spanish universities' concept of research which involves finding a balance between teaching, research and transferring knowledge to companies.



Prof. Vargas: "Meeting European standards".

Although speaking English at an acceptable level is important, we shouldn't forget that over 500 million people in the world speak Spanish as their mother tongue. The Spanish educational level meets European standards and collaboration between universities, companies and knowledge institutes should be based on mutual respect. Professor Vargas sees possibilities for peer-to-peer collaboration, summer schools and internships with a high level of participation of international companies. Mrs. Marjolein Schooleman is Strategic Policy Advisor of the Management Board of Avans University of Applied Science. She surprised the audience with the fact that over 60,000 foreign students are studying in the Netherlands. 1,500 study program titles are offered in

English. All Dutch research universities are within the THE top 250 ranking, which illustrates the high standards of Dutch education and research as well. Mrs. Schooleman was impressed by the experience she had just that morning; she visited a Spanish company which is specialized in 3D printing of concrete. It won't take long before complete houses can be produced by additive manufacturing! As a representative of the southern province of the Netherlands, Brabant, she finished by giving a rough overview of several universities of applied science and research in that particular region.

Strong networks

Mr. Alberto Almendra is Director of European Programs at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid which is the oldest and largest university of Spain. He revealed that a large network already exists between his university and a wide range of other universities, research institutes and companies, among which are 9 universities and 104 companies in the Netherlands! "We are speaking the same language, not only literally" he stated. To finish this highly interesting meeting, Mrs. Yvonne van Hest, Program Director at Brainport Development, presented future developments of education and labor market in Europe as well as the Brainport Eindhoven Region. This region is not only the smartest region in the world – partly based on the high density of



An interesting program, interested people

patents – but it is also a strong high-tech industrial hotspot in the Netherlands and a strong network of ecosystems. Considering the fact that this region suffered from economic weakness and imbalance only 20 years ago, this is a good example of the successful strategic decisions that have been made, especially with regard to developing the triple helix concept. Mrs. Van Hest concluded that cooperation between Spain and the Netherlands should be based on a multiple helix concept, an idea which was received with a lot of enthusiasm by the audience. The representatives of the University of Applied Sciences HAN (Hogeschool Arnhem Nijmegen) were accompanied by a Spanish student from Valencia, Alejandro Blanco, who shared his experiences of studying in the Netherlands with the audience. He not only found a nice



Alejandro found a place to live as well as love in the Netherlands!

place to study and live, he also found a lovely Dutch girlfriend as well. I wonder where this young couple will decide to live and work in

the future. This interesting meeting was concluded with a networking meeting hosted by the Dutch embassy during which people could continue their discussions in a more informal way. A staff member of the Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein declared: “We will seriously consider the possibility of focusing on Spain. Spanish students are more than welcome in our schools!”



Young people building their future

Finally, it is all about the students

It is important that policy makers and decision makers discuss strategic issues like Spanish and Dutch complementarity. But in the end, it is really all about the students. How do they feel about leaving their home country and loved ones, studying and living abroad, perhaps in the Netherlands? To find an answer to these questions, Mr. Henk van Soest organized two meetings on Wednesday morning at the UNIVERSIDAD Autonoma de Madrid. First there was a round table discussion about the main questions: “What might be your motivation to leave Spain and study abroad?” and “What is the first country that pops up in your mind and why?”

What do they think?

It was interesting to find out that unemployment in Spain does not play an

important role in the considerations of young people. Instead, they say that they want to study abroad to have new experiences in other cultures. They prefer countries where they can improve their level of English. That is why the US and Britain are popular. And of course America's high level of investment in innovation is an important consideration. investments done in the US in innovation. On the other hand,



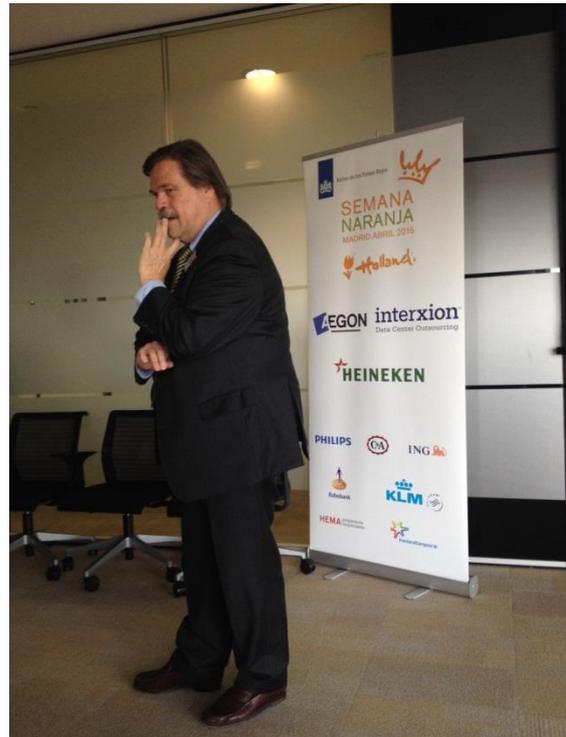
Mrs. Yvonne van Hest, an ambassador for the Brainport Eindhoven Region, asks students questions

countries where English is a widely spoken second language, e.g. the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, are also favorable. The Netherlands didn't turn out to be among the most popular countries, which is evidenced by the fact that very few Spanish students study in the Netherlands. Similarly, very few Dutch students find their way to Spain. We still have got a lot to do!

To be continued

Yvonne van Hest and Jos van Erp presented working, studying and living in the Netherlands more in detail. Mrs. Van Hest focused particularly on the Brainport Eindhoven region. On the third day of the program students discussed their possibilities and options for studying and working in the Netherlands with several relevant decisiontakers involved. Of course, it will be very interesting to hear if some good

connections have been made. To be continued.



Mr. Henk van Soest, the perfect bridge builder between Spain and the Netherlands

Jos van Erp, Human Capital agenda High Tech Systems and Materials

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Special thanks to:



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