

University of Groningen

## REFORM! TUNING the Modernisation Process of Higher Education in Europe.

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## **PROPOSITIONS BELONGING TO**

ROBERT WAGENAAR

### **REFORM!**

#### **TUNING the Modernisation Process of Higher Education in Europe**

##### **A Blueprint for Student-Centred Learning**

1. The systematic downplaying by Ministers of Education of the European Commission with regard to the modernisation process of higher education is an early example of European Union bashing.
2. The Bologna Process has stagnated since at least a decade because Ministers and their civil servants have failed to acknowledge that implementation of its aims and objectives requires a governing model of aligned multi-layered responsibilities, presupposing full involvement of higher education institutions and their staffs and students in the reform process.
3. It is not up to the signatories of the Bologna Process to instruct higher education institutions and their staffs which learning paradigm to apply. Their moral obligation is rather to hold these institutions accountable for preparing knowledgeable and skilled graduates who are able to contribute significantly to the economic, social and cultural welfare of their societies.
4. A bottom-up approach in the development of ECTS has been a key factor for its acceptance and success.
5. ECTS has developed into the world's leading credit system, because it derives from the assumption that learning must be founded on the combination of degree programme feasibility - expressed in terms of student workload - and level - expressed in terms of degree programme learning outcomes.

6. By aligning the concepts of generic and subject specific competences and the learning outcomes approach Tuning has contributed significantly to the current high-level discourse about the modernisation of higher education structures and programmes.
7. Preparing students for their contribution to society, in conjunction with the joy of learning and developing oneself, should be conditional for every higher education degree programme.
8. The global expansion of the Tuning initiative shows the worldwide need among academics to reform their higher education degree programmes. It confirms that higher education operates in an international environment.
9. The modernisation of higher education and its degree programmes is highly frustrated by the fact that the vast majority of teaching staff in Europe (and beyond) has not received appropriate teacher training. This implies that in higher education too many teachers are driving cars without a driver's license.
10. By merging the concepts and philosophies of the two overarching European qualifications frameworks, Tuning has resolved the issue of defining levels within cycles.
11. To be reliable, quality assurance at programme level requires the reference of well-articulated frameworks of descriptors, resulting from an internationally established format and agreement of academic experts.
12. The role of responsible politicians is to manifest independent thinking, critical reflection and leadership, not to mirror their potential voters and tell them what they want to hear.
13. Punctuality of trains in the Netherlands would increase considerably if the Japanese lay-out of platforms at high speed railway stations were adopted. This would also enhance safety.
14. Liveability and attractiveness of city centres is highly determined by preserving and restoring architectural heritage. This justifies constructing copies of historical buildings damaged by war and conflict.