

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017



1 Introduction

2016 was the year of consolidating and strengthening NUT operations. The annual NUT meetings (Theme Afternoon for Managers, Teachers' Day, Conference) continue to be successful and always attract many participants. The new website and newsletter provide information for interested readers within and outside the NUT organisations. The NUT members also contact each other on an informal basis for advice, expertise sharing and collaboration. In addition, two new members have joined: the Defence Language Centre (TCD) of the Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA) and the StudySuccessCentre of Saxion University of Applied Sciences.

Over the past year the NUT network has worked hard on two dossiers from the Netherlands: the new Assessment of Employment Relationships (Deregulation) legislation (DBA) and the alleged quality issues of integration programmes. In relation to the new DBA Act, an information session was held during the last NUT Conference in Maastricht, opinions were explored on the need for a model contract, so that interested members could then be linked with one another, and the specific situation of language centres was raised as a lobbying point with the VSNU (Association of Universities in the Netherlands) and with legal officers within the member organisations. In the area of civic integration, the NUT took the initiative to become involved in relevant discussions and meetings, and thus to highlight the expertise and quality assurance of those universities providing "Dutch as a Second Language" (NT2). Both of these campaigns show that the NUT, as a sector association, plays an overarching role and has an influence on policy.

This is the report of the NUT's 2016-2017 working year. The members of the Board hope you enjoy this review of the past year.

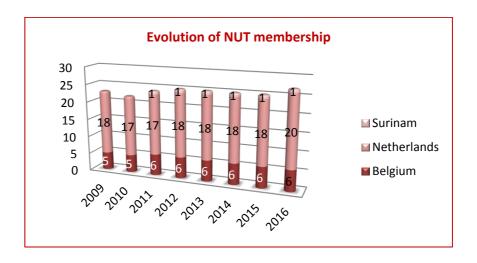


2 Key figures

24+2+1

In the 2016-2017 working year, the NUT welcomed two new members: the language centres of the Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA) and the Saxion University of Applied Sciences. There are now 26 members in total: 6 Belgian and 20 Dutch, of which 6 are universities of applied sciences. The NUT also has 1 associate member in Surinam.

For the complete and most recent list of members, see www.nut-talen.eu/leden.



3 2016-2017: what the NUT did

3.1 March 2016: Conference - Maastricht

On 3 and 4 March 2016 the NUT Conference was held in Maastricht, organised by the Maastricht University Language Centre. No fewer than 80 managers and coordinators made their way to Maastricht, with the aim of networking, discussing discipline-related developments and projects in theme groups, and learning about "best practices" from one another in the workshops.





The unifying theme this year was "The Language Centre in 2020". In this context, on the Friday afternoon, colleagues actively participated in nine substantive workshops, with contributions ranging from the role of ICT in language teaching to developments in the area of language policy, intercultural competences, and how all these aspects can be assessed in a foreign language. This part was organised differently this year than in the past: the various workshop contributions were assessed in advance by a programme committee, to ensure that the target group's expectations were optimally fulfilled. The presentations are available online on the NUT website.

In addition to the presentations there was, as always, a successful informal start on the Thursday, with guided tours of Maastricht University's historic buildings, for some participants a look at the oldest books in the University Library, and – as might be expected in Maastricht – an excellent dinner in one of the local restaurants.

3.2 November 2016: Theme Afternoon for Managers - Wageningen

On 17 November 2016 the Theme Afternoon for Managers took place at the modern campus of Wageningen University & Research. Sylvia van der Weerden welcomed 15 of the 26 members for an inspiring afternoon on the theme of "Change Management". Jaap van 't Hek, a specialist in organisational issues, defined the afternoon's theme: after starting out from a few conceptual

frameworks, he set the managers to work on concrete cases. One of the wise lessons to emerge from the afternoon was: "In theory there is no difference between theory and practice; in practice there is." (Yogi Berra). The Theme Afternoon ended with informal drinks, over which the participants continued to chat about change management cases in the various universities.



3.3 January 2017: Teachers' Day - Groningen

The NUT Teachers' Day 2017 took place on 13 January 2017, with a record number of registrations: 95 teachers participated in the Day, which was organised by the Hanze Language Centre.

The Day began with a panel discussion, which replaced the keynote speaker, who had to cancel because of illness. The panel improvised well and there was very active participation from the room. Questions were asked about scientific evidence that students learn better with a flipped classroom, and also about improving student motivation. Both questions were answered in the affirmative, through the actual substance of the response as well as the enthusiasm of the presenters: yes, there is scientific substantiation and yes, student motivation is improving.

The Day offered nine interactive workshops. As with the NUT Conference, a programme committee was formed (for the first time) to select the workshops for the Teachers' Day. An overview of the workshops can be found on the NUT website.

The overall rating of the NUT Teachers' Day was high (more than 8/10) and the arrangements also scored well. Many of the participants described it as a relaxed, enjoyable day with good speakers on very interesting topics.



3.4 CercleS and ELC

In **September 2016** Anje Dijk attended the annual meeting of the Board of CercleS (European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education - www.cercles.org), together with the chairs of the national organisations (the co-ordinating committee), in the context of the CercleS Conference in Calabria.



The most important agenda items at this meeting were:

- a new (cheaper) contract in 2016-17 with the publisher de Gruyter for the *Language Learning in Higher Education* (LLHE) journal. A tender procedure will take place for the contract after 2017.
- election of new CercleS Board members and a change of direction for CercleS: more focus on external representation, an improved networking function, more input from and collaboration with the members, and more exchange of information and experiences.

In January 2017 Anje Dijk, on behalf of the NUT, attended the Meeting of Managers of Language Centres in Wulkow, in eastern Germany. This meeting is organised every year by the Viadrina Language Centre in Frankfurt an der Oder and is open to language centre managers. This year there were 28 participants from 10 countries. The programme covered the following topics:

- Open access centre (*Thomas Vogel* Viadrina University, Frankfurt Oder)
- Virtual learning space (Libor Stepanek Masaryk University, Brno)
- Virtual working space (*Heid Rontu* Aalto University, Helsinki)
- Future-proof learning spaces (Neil McLean London School of Economics)
- Searching our identity (*Anje Dijk* University of Groningen Language Centre)
- Working conditions for language centre teachers (*Heid Rontu*)
- Language and politics (Bärble Kühn Bremen University)
- Role of CercleS (Liliana Dorna Poznan University, President of CercleS)
 - CercleS is a platform but the association needs contributions from all national associations and from all members.
 - It is important that results of projects are not left on shelves but are taken further;
 CercleS can play a role in this.
 - o Information on national associations should be much more visible.
 - Exchange of ideas, plans and projects between members is necessary. Be proud of what you have and share it!
 - A special page for members / managers only will also be developed, so that they can place information that is confidential or still under construction.
 - A lot of work is still needed to sort out what was done by the former Board.
 - We CAN have a public voice but we all need to work on that together.
 - Question for national associations: What can CercleS give you: knowledge, expertise, sharing, networking, summer schools, recognizing exams?
 - o In March-April we will receive information for the next meeting of the co-ordinating committee in Helsinki, and also a draft program of the conference.
 - Space for national associations on the website.
 - CercleS and ELC will co-operate closely together.
 - o It will take some time before CercleS has redefined itself but it is an important aim.
- Training in the use of the CEFR manual some challenges (Christina Perez Valencia)
- Refugees (Bärble Kuhn Bremen University)
- Self-management (Sabine Schaffner Zurich University)



In December 2016 Estelle Meima, on behalf of the University of Groningen, attended the annual meeting of the European Language Council (ELC - www.celelc.org), an independent association whose aim is to improve knowledge of the languages and cultures in the EU. The Board of the NUT, which is a member of the ELC, asked Estelle to also represent the NUT at the meeting.

3.5 External representation

During the year covered by this report, the Board aimed to strengthen the network with various organisations: with the Dutch Language Union (Taalunie); in the Netherlands with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), and the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (VH); and in Belgium with the Flemish Higher Education Council (VLOR).

Christine Engelen maintained the contacts with the Flemish partners in the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR), VLOR and the Erasmus Programme (EPOS) Flanders, and with the Taalunie. She participated in two debates with a broad audience at the Liaison Agency Flanders-Europe (Vleva) Brussels and at the Drongo Festival in Utrecht; and in an expert meeting of EPOS Flanders, the Taalunie and EP-Nuffic. The themes covered were multilingualism and intercomprehension / lingua receptiva (LaRa; in Dutch: "luistertaal"). The organisers' ultimate goal is to produce a vision paper on multilingualism in education, which will be used as the basis for formulating and implementing a substantiated multilingualism language policy.

In the autumn of 2016, Anje Dijk and Sylvia van der Weerden spoke with Jürgen Rienks and Jaco van der Veen of the VSNU. The themes discussed were language policy, refugee issues, the increase in international intake, and Anglicisation of education. The last point in particular is currently a hot item. The VSNU said it is important that external groups (including politicians) can clearly recognise that every university has a policy (and what it is) in the area of language. The VSNU would like to be kept informed of our activities and would greatly appreciate an annual meeting.

There has also been contact on several occasions during the past year with the Ministry of OCW in the context of the "NUT project of the year", and the NUT has been able to present itself well with substantive projects.

3.6 Changing legislation in the Netherlands

2016 was an eventful year for language centres in the Netherlands, with many changes in the legal area for the flexible stratum of staff, and especially for freelancers. The Declaration of Income Tax Status (VAR) was replaced by the Assessment of Employment Relationship (Deregulation) Act (DBA; "model contracts"). Many centres were faced with uncertainty about whether they could actually continue to work with freelancers. By sharing questions with one another, exchanging information (e.g. a special meeting in Maastricht) and setting up joint actions, the NUT collectively ensured that our language centres could achieve the best option within their own organisation.

3.7 Integration in the Netherlands

The NUT made contact with the Education Executive Agency (DUO), which provides loans for people following civic integration programmes, to investigate whether some of the procedures can be tightened. The NUT as an organisation also had contact in 2016 with the "Blik-op-Werk" workplace quality label and with DUO about questions that we received from various language centres in the Netherlands.



The Dutch civic integration policy was subjected to criticism during 2016. The NUT explicitly shared ideas about the developments in the Netherlands relating to integration: a questionnaire produced by Huub Floor, a journalist with the Dutch public service broadcaster KRO-NCRV, was widely distributed among the members; Marc Gebuis, on behalf of the NUT, attended a meeting about civic integration in The Hague, which was also attended by the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), the Four Major Cities (G4) and the Foundation for Refugee Students (UAF), among others; and Anje Dijk and Berna de Boer, on behalf of the NUT, provided Huub Floor with relevant information about highly educated integrators for his radio programme on 19 February 2017.

4 Theme groups

The NUT Board and the theme group chairs hold a meeting annually in December, to which the organiser of the NUT Conference is also invited. During the meeting on 20 December 2016, the theme group chairs outlined what had happened in their theme group over the past year. Ideas were also exchanged for the preparation and organisation of the Conference in Utrecht.

4.1 Academic Language Skills theme group



Theme group chairs Marijke Kranenburg (VU Language Centre, VU University Amsterdam) and Estelle Meima (Language Centre, University of Groningen)



Since the last annual NUT Conference in Maastricht, we have created a LinkedIn group and set up a Dropbox for the group. There has been some communication among members, inviting others to participate in activities or inquiring about testing or policies at specific institutions. At the next Conference, we will create specific goals that the group or subgroups will work towards. By asking all members to prepare a 2-minute pitch on one specific issue occupying them at their language centre, we hope to spark some interesting discussions and get to know each other better. We will also arrange an additional meeting with the whole group or interested parties in September / October to evaluate whether we are meeting our goals and to discuss other interesting points that emerged in the first six

months. We also hope to stimulate even more interaction within the group by starting a Facebook page, allowing members to like, share and comment on events, activities, articles or other interesting items. We look forward to a fruitful and interactive year as a group.

4.2 Intercultural Communication theme group



Theme group chair Vincent Merk (CLIC, Eindhoven University of Technology)

This theme group was started in March 2015 in Leuven, and is therefore still very new. As yet, far from all the universities are represented in it, but hopefully this will improve as the group becomes more widely known.

The column on IC aspects in the NUT newsletter is raising awareness of the theme to some extent within the NUT community, and a number of



activities have also taken place during the past year. At **Maastricht University** there are positive developments in the IC area. In the last year, the MU Language Centre has gained expertise with giving intercultural communication training courses within the University and for external parties. Trainers of MU followed the "Winter School on Intercultural Competence" at the **University of Groningen** to be trained as future teachers of IC.

At Eindhoven University of Technology, IC is increasingly included in professional skills training courses for both students and staff members. For instance, it is now embedded in the regular technical education in the bachelor's phase, or even more in the master's phase, or special workshops are held separately from courses in the Graduate School. An interesting development is the course on "Intercultural Communication, Cooperation & Integration", which is compulsory for master's students in the Faculty of Electrical Engineering. This course is not about resistance in ohms, but rather about people and integration. The concept of "Flipping the classroom" is also increasingly used in this type of skills education.

During the past year, the University Language Centre at **Ghent University** gave the Dutch Language Union (Taalunie) Summer Course in Dutch (language, culture and professions) for international students a thorough facelift. One of the innovations was an additional objective relating to the acquisition of intercultural skills. To address this issue, the course included a variety of learning opportunities:

- In line with the "flip the classroom" principle, students first watched a web lecture on intercultural business communication. This provided them with the theoretical background, on the basis of a number of actual cases.
- During the first week of the course, the students followed a workshop on intercultural communication. This workshop looked at cultural differences and how they can be expressed in communication. Interactive exercises were used to promote discussion of such topics as prejudices, ethnocentrism and multiculturalism as a means of making participants aware of interpretation mechanisms, and to instruct them on how to handle these mechanisms positively.
- The course included a two-day internship for the students in a company or organisation, where they joined in with the day-to-day work. The internship allowed them to translate their newly acquired skills into practice.
- Being in a group of 120 students of different nationalities also gives participants an opportunity to work informally and indirectly on interculturalism.

In the formal evaluation, students reported that they had indeed built up intercultural skills as a result of this course.

During the past year, the TCP Language Centre at the **University of Twente** has continued to keep intercultural communication and its importance within the internationalisation process on the agenda, and to create awareness at policy level. The persistent misconception that the intake of more international staff and students will automatically bring about the gradual development of an equal and compassionate international community is difficult to refute. There were two pleasing highpoints. The first was the organisation and delivery of a full afternoon IC workshop for "language buddies" for refugees, who engage in voluntary work in and around Enschede. This workshop again demonstrated the importance of IC training and exchange. The second highpoint took place on Friday 27 January 2017 during the Network for Academic Communication Skills (NACV) Expert Meeting, organised this year by the TCP Language Centre on behalf of the NACV Board. A series of "Go Global" workshops was offered, focusing attention on IC and internationalisation at home, and thus emphasising IC as a relevant 21st-century academic communication skill.



From the **University of Leuven** comes the news that they completed the pilot project on "The effectiveness of affectivity in the language class" and then also submitted a project proposal. They are waiting for approval.

VU University Amsterdam-Dutch as a Second Language (VU-NT2) provides an "Intercultural Competencies" workshop for its NT2 teacher training programme. They also give this workshop in-company for NT2 teacher teams at educational institutions throughout the Netherlands. Finally, there are plans to assess the intercultural competencies of its own teaching team (by means of several training sessions).

On 26 and 27 January 2017 the Expert Meeting of the Network for Academic Communication Skills (NACV) was organised by our colleagues at the University of Twente, on the theme of "Academic Communication Skills - Educating the global citizen of tomorrow". The idea was that the NUT's IC theme group would give a presentation or panel session there, but we were unable to set up a group. However, two teachers from CLIC (Eindhoven University of Technology) attended the meeting.

There are plans to organise a **study day** this autumn at the **University of Leuven**, centred on IC expert Edwin Hoffman. These plans will be further elaborated at the Members' Meeting in March in Utrecht.

4.3 Modern Foreign Languages theme group



Theme group chair Kasper Maes (Radboud in'to Languages, Radboud University Nijmegen)

In 2016 the annual meeting in Maastricht was very well attended. In total, thirteen participants from ten different language centres were present. A new element was introduced at this meeting: the show&tell. In this session, no fewer than eight colleagues presented good examples and current projects from their language centre. After each of the short 10-minute

presentations, there was time for questions and discussion. This provided much food for thought, and all the participants found it very useful. This element is therefore certain to be included again in the 2017 annual meeting.

During the annual study afternoon for MFL teachers in June (this year in Nijmegen) we worked on the theme of "Learning a language outside the lessons and promoting learner autonomy with digital tools". Several MFL colleagues showed examples of tools, including online tools, and how they use them in lessons. All the participants again this year emphasised the low-threshold yet professional design of the study afternoon, the exchange of experiences and the good atmosphere.

A number of items are on the MFL agenda for the coming year, including:

- bringing currently unrepresented language centres (around four) into the group;
- drawing the attention of language centres to the fact that English is also part of the MFL theme group (since there is not a separate NUT theme group for English) and that coordinators / teachers of English can therefore also become members of the group;
- actively investigating whether there are possibilities to also collaborate more closely within the pluriform group of MFL teachers, for example in projects;
- using our LinkedIn group "NUT Modern Foreign Languages" even more as an exchange platform, and further expanding the group to include MFL teachers (+ English);
- in June, again organising a study afternoon specifically for MFL teachers (+ English).



4.4 Dutch as a Second Language (NT2) theme group



Theme group chair Berna de Boer (Language Centre, University of Groningen)

The NT2 theme group held its annual meeting in March 2016, attended by fifteen participants. As a number of new members were present, a comprehensive introductory round took place, in which each institution was able to briefly present the teaching materials that it uses, its intake procedures, assessments and use of online teaching. Other topics covered

were the delegation in Platform NT2, the organisation and content of the new one-day study day of the Professional Association for Teachers of Dutch as a Second Language (BVNT2), and teaching of refugees: how does their presence affect the content and organisation of the teaching?

In addition to allowing members to exchange experiences, the NT2 theme group serves as a point of contact for other organisations. For instance, there was discussion with the Education Executive Agency (DUO) and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), and two members gave a presentation at a work conference on Refugees in Higher Education organised by the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU).

Although the group in principle only meets once a year, it is actually a club whose members have known each other for a long time and can contact each other whenever they need information from another institution.

The theme of refugees will certainly be on the agenda again for the new year. To ensure that the theme group members participate actively, they will also be asked about what they are proud of – or what should be improved – within their own language centre.

4.5 Translation theme group



Theme group chair Bert Keurentjes (Radboud in'to Languages, Radboud University Nijmegen)

Again last year, in addition to the NUT Conference, the Translation theme group met in person on a second occasion: before (and during) the annual University Translation and Terminology Day. This Day is traditionally also organised by a member of the NUT Translations theme group, and was held this year in Antwerp. On Friday 25 November around 30 participants

attended talks on topics ranging from translation and roll-out of terminology systems, to the collaboration between EU-DG Translation and translation study programmes in Flanders.

During the theme group meeting, the morning focused mainly on the Erasmus+ application for a multilingual databank of educational terminology and an interuniversity style guide by the European Translation Focus Group (TFG). In particular, Julia Harvey (University of Groningen) and departing member Nigel Hillen (VU Language Centre), on behalf of the theme group, have been closely involved with this application, which unfortunately was again rejected in its present form. The plan now is to first set up a smaller-scale pilot project, only for Dutch and English. Julia will again take the lead in this project, but will naturally also count on the theme group's cooperation, which was already promised during the meeting.

The theme group meeting during the coming NUT Conference will also focus mainly on this project. Other topics of discussion will include the organisation of next autumn's Translation and Terminology Day and the results of a research study on customer satisfaction instruments by Samantha Brunt, a theme group member from Antwerp. Finally, because of possible



developments in this area in the institutes of several members, attention will be paid to the tendering (compulsory or otherwise) of translation work.

5 Internal communication

5.1 NUT newsletter and website

The NUT newsletter is issued 5 times a year: in February, April, June, October and December.

Since we launched the new newsletter in 2015, anyone is able to subscribe. However, we still mail the newsletter to all NUT managers, so that they can then forward it to all their staff.

The newsletters covered all the NUT activities, and many language centres also used the newsletter to share their own activities and achievements.

In 2016 three new sections were introduced:

- Language news
- Language centre in focus
- What students write



These sections and all other news items are also always placed on the website: www.nut-talen.eu/over-taal/blog. In addition, the website will be further supplemented with more (factual) information from the NUT language centres: as soon as all the centres have supplied their information, the website will be modified.

In 2016 the website attracted nearly 9,000 visitors (over 25,000 page views); this is around 35% more than in 2015.

5.2 NUT project of the year

The members of the NUT are active and dynamic organisations. Excellent things are happening within every language centre. To enable us to learn from one another and to know more about one another, the "NUT project of the year" award was launched in 2016. This election procedure is as follows:

- Each NUT member can nominate one project for the election. The projects can be about substantive profiling, the business operations and/or the internal or external communication of the centre (e.g. a course, publication, test, curriculum, communication resource, HR policy, language policy, event, grant or evaluation system).
- Only the staff of a language centre with NUT membership are invited to vote.
- After the vote among the NUT members, an expert jury chooses the ultimate winner from the top three. The expert jury consists of five external stakeholders (Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science [OCW], Belgian Ministry of Education, Association of Universities in the Netherlands [VSNU], Dutch Language Union [Taalunie], the Language Sector Association [Taalsector], EP-Nuffic, EPOS etc.). Selection criteria include



originality, uniqueness, added value, applicability, sustainability, innovation, interdisciplinary value, efficiency and PR value.

- The three most popular projects are presented and the winner is announced at the annual NUT Conference.

For this first edition, nine language centres have nominated a project. All the information about this new NUT initiative can be found at www.nut-talen.eu/activiteiten/nut-project-van-het-jaar.

5.3 Archive for NUT managers

Again in 2016-2017, Dropbox was still the central archive for NUT documents and other interesting documents. The different folders in Dropbox are:

- Benchmarking
- Administrative documents
- CercleS
- Fact sheet
- Membership list
- NUT Conference
- NUT Teachers' Day
- NUT Theme Afternoons for Managers
- Useful information
- Templates and NUT logo *new folder in 2016*
- Statutory documents
- Freelancers discussion *new folder in 2016*



6 Facts and figures

6.1 Finances

From the financial standpoint, 2016 was a good year for the NUT. The financial influx proceeded largely according to budget, with a total of 24 paying members. There were also a few windfalls: the organisation of the Teachers' Day in Rotterdam yielded a surplus, the Board's travel expenses turned out to be lower, and also the expenditure on marketing & communication was lower than budgeted. On the other hand, the costs of secretarial assistance were higher than expected (caused by more hours worked and a salary increase). All in all, a positive balance of € 665 remains. After this year, the reserves amount to € 11,560. The budget for 2017 was established during the Managers' Meeting in Wageningen, when it was decided that the contribution for 2017 would be raised to € 450, so that all our ambitions can be achieved in the long term.

6.2 Board members

In 2016 Sylvia van der Weerden joined the Board of the NUT, bringing the composition of the Board to the following four members:

-	Anje Dijk (University of Groningen)	chair
-	Christine Engelen (University of Antwerp)	member
-	Marc Gebuis (Utrecht University)	treasurer
-	Sylvia van der Weerden (Wageningen University & Research)	member



Anje Dijk and Christine Engelen will stand down in March 2017. The other members will remain on the Board for this next working year (March 2017 – March 2018). New Board members will be appointed during the Managers' Meeting in March 2017.

The Board will again ask Rolf Nys to assist with the administrative tasks and the internal communication in 2017-2018.











Anje Dijk

Christine Engelen

Sylvia van der Weerden

Marc Gebuis

7 Looking ahead

Collaboration

Several aspects of our work call for collaboration, exchange and coordination among the members.

Finally, the NUT as a sector association will actively engage in efforts for assisting highly educated non-Dutch speakers, particularly refugees.

2017 NEW YEAR AHEAD

Contacts

The initiatives of the NUT as a sector association have shown that contacts with stakeholders and collaboration can result in new opportunities. Again in the association's upcoming year, the Board will continue to seek contact with relevant partners; we will try to ensure that the existing contacts lead to concrete collaboration.

CercleS

The annual meeting of the chairs of national associations will take place in September 2017, this time in Helsinki. The purpose of this meeting is to set the direction, together with the CercleS Board, and to share ideas about the CercleS Conference in 2018, which will be held in Poznan.

March 2017

The NUT Board

Anje Dijk Christine Engelen Marc Gebuis Sylvia van der Weerden

With thanks to Rolf Nys