

# Sustainability report 2018





We are proud to present the first sustainability report of KU Leuven. As an international centre of knowledge that is continuously probing and moving the frontiers of human knowledge, KU Leuven is well placed to address the sustainability challenges we meet in education, research as well as in the university's daily management. The concrete results described in this report clearly show how a sustainability mindset has now permeated all segments of our university. They also illustrate the efforts made by so many members of our community and the resulting progress with respect to the management of our campuses, our energy provision, the mobility of our staff, the management of our buildings and food and catering. They also show that sustainability is becoming ever more important in our research and education programs. The diversity in the actions that were initiated over the last years as well as their sheer number are a clear indication of the enthusiasm and resolve with which our university community has embraced its sustainability agenda.

At the same time this is a document that invites us to reflect on important questions. What are the next steps we want to take ? Which objectives do we want to achieve ? Indeed, one thing is clear: there is much more work that needs to be done if we want to achieve the objective of becoming a carbon neutral, sustainable university in a carbon neutral, sustainable society by 2050. In order to address these challenges an organisation such as our university has three guiding principles. The first is that we need to create value for all those involved. An organisation that does not create value for all its stakeholders does not have a *raison d'être*. The second principle is social cohesion or inclusion. Without social cohesion it becomes nearly impossible to create value and the sustainability of the organisation will be undermined. The third guiding principle is good management. Only if we manage ourselves effectively we can be an inclusive rather than an extractive organisation and it is precisely this that will allow us to create value. These core principles are, now and in the future, essential for KU Leuven, both with respect to its academic mission and its daily operations.

By 2050, the way we live and the way we work will be very different from what they are today. Our university is one of the institutions where the technological, economic and cultural innovations will be developed that we will need to meet the big challenges our society will encounter in the next decades. We also train the researchers, teachers and managers of tomorrow. These are the people that will implement these innovations in society thereby shaping the enormous transition that is ahead of us. KU Leuven wants to be an institution that shows the way in this transition. This report is one of the many steps we need to take to do so.



Luc Sels,  
rector



Gerard Govers,  
Vice Rector  
Sustainability



Chantal Van  
Audenhove,  
Vice Rector Diversity  
and Student Policy



Koenraad Debackere,  
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# I. Introduction

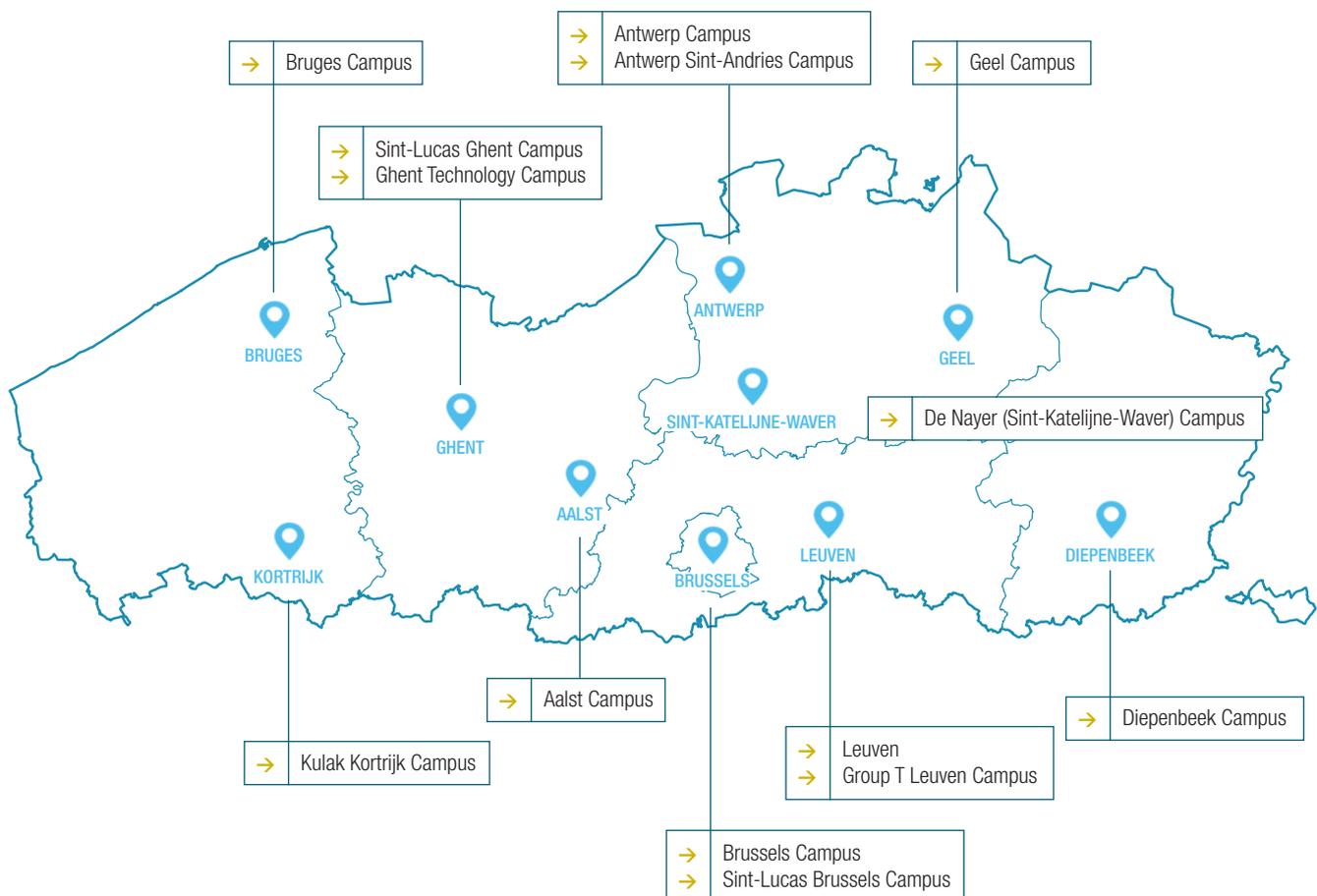
This sustainability report provides an overview of where KU Leuven stands in terms of sustainability. It has been prepared in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). As an educational institution, the most material themes we have are our education and research activities, which contribute to a sustainable society. But the university also aims to create an inclusive community, minimize its ecological footprint, and act as a catalyst for society.

Founded in 1425, KU Leuven is one of the oldest and most renowned universities in Europe. Taking advantage of its central location in the heart of Europe, KU Leuven offers a truly international experience, high-quality education, world-class research, and cutting-edge innovation. Although founded as a Catholic university, in 2011 the university changed its name from the Catholic University of Leuven (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) to KU Leuven. As of 2019, KU Leuven is ranked 48th in the world and 8th in continental Europe by The Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

The university originally consisted of the University Hall and five additional buildings in the city center of Leuven, but has since enjoyed considerable growth. By the end of the 1960s, the university had expanded to more than 500 buildings spread across Leuven.

In 1968, the university split along linguistic lines, at which point the Université Catholique de Louvain was founded (located in Louvain-La-Neuve) to house the programs taught in French. The university then began concentrating the humanities in the city center, with sciences, engineering and technology at Heverlee (just outside the city center to the south) at the Arenberg Campus, and biomedical sciences on a combined campus with the Gasthuisberg hospital (just outside the city center to the west). In 2013, Flemish higher education was reformed and academically-oriented programs at the “university-colleges” were integrated into universities, thereby expanding KU Leuven’s scope. Today, more than 58,000 students<sup>1</sup> study at the KU Leuven’s 15 faculties across 14 campuses.

## 14 CAMPUSES ACROSS FLANDERS



<sup>1</sup> In the academic year 2017-2018 the exact number of students was 58.278 (jaarverslag 2018)



## MISSION STATEMENT

KU Leuven is an autonomous university. It was founded in 1425. It was born of, and has grown within, the Catholic tradition. From its Christian perspective on the world, on a human scale, KU Leuven strives to be a place for open discussion of social, philosophical, and ethical issues, and a critical centre of reflection in and for the Catholic community.

KU Leuven offers its students an academic education based on high-level research, with the aim of preparing them to assume their social responsibilities.

KU Leuven is a research-intensive, internationally-oriented university that conducts both fundamental and applied research. It is strongly inter- and multidisciplinary in focus and strives for international excellence. To this end, KU Leuven works together actively with its research partners at home and abroad.

KU Leuven encourages personal initiative and critical reflection in a culture of idea exchange, cooperation, solidarity, and academic freedom. It pursues a proactive diversity policy for its students and staff.

KU Leuven aims to actively participate in public and cultural debate and in the advancement of a knowledge-based society. It puts its expertise at the service of society, with particular consideration for its most vulnerable members.

From a foundation of social responsibility and scientific expertise, KU Leuven provides high-quality, comprehensive health care, including specialised tertiary care, at its University Hospitals. As such, it strives to achieve optimum accessibility and respect for all patients.

KU Leuven carries out its academic activities at various campuses, research parks, and hospital facilities in close cooperation with the members of the KU Leuven Association, and with its hospital partners.



## KU LEUVEN STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2018, the KU Leuven launched a new strategic plan entitled “On Crossroads, for a Sustainable Society”<sup>2</sup>. The plan comprises five long-term, transversal themes:

1. **Truly International @ KU Leuven:** the transition from a national university with a global reputation to a truly international university.
2. **Future-oriented Education @ KU Leuven:** the choice for a future-oriented teaching model based on activation which is supported by a matching structure of the academic year.
3. **Going Digital @ KU Leuven:** the use of educational technology in a way that facilitates collaborative learning and multi-campus education and that broadens the international reach.
4. **Interdisciplinarity @ KU Leuven:** the establishment of an interdisciplinary dialogue in addition to disciplinary depth, in education, research, and public outreach.
5. **Sustainability @ KU Leuven:** the choice for sustainable management and a commitment to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals in both research and education.

The plan aims to give purpose and direction to the further development of KU Leuven as an ambitious, internationally-oriented, and research-intensive university.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.kuleuven.be/english/about-kuleuven/strategic-plan/index.html>



## SUSTAINABILITY REPORT: SCOPE AND MATERIALITY MATRIX

KU Leuven's first sustainability report provides an overview of where KU Leuven stands in terms of sustainability, what our vision is and to what extent we have succeeded in implementing this vision. It has been prepared in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

As an educational institution, the most material themes we have are our education and research activities, which contribute to a sustainable society. As a holistic university, each faculty and research department applies their unique lens, helping to raise awareness of, discuss, and propose solutions for a wide variety of issues facing society and the environment. In addition to the themes given priority in the academic activities, the university as a whole aims to create an inclusive community, minimize its ecological footprint, and act as a catalyst for society.

The **Education and Research sections** of this report include all the academic activities of the university (all campuses combined). The community section of the report includes demographic information on all students and staff of the KU Leuven (all campuses combined, excl. UZ Leuven). The **Footprint section** of this report focuses on the Leuven Campus and Arenberg Campus. In future reports, this will be extended to other campuses. The activities of the university hospital are not included in this sustainability report.



## II. Governance

1

KU Leuven university is comprised of 3 main groups: Humanities and Social Sciences, Science, Engineering and Technology (SET), and Biomedical Sciences. These groups cluster its fifteen faculties, which provide education, and departments and research groups, which organize research activities. The groups are supported by professional and supportive technical and administrative services with a strong focus on sustainability.

2

With its new strategic plan “On crossroads, for a sustainable society”, KU Leuven plans to align its policy for research and education activities with the Sustainable Development Goals, while striving to become a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral university.

3

The Sustainability Council is KU Leuven’s governance structure dedicated to sustainability, and is assisted by 4 working groups: education, research, management and societal engagement.

4

More than 35 Ecoteams are making their workplace more sustainable via a bottom-up approach.

5

In 2018-2019, the Green Office for KU Leuven, the sustainability lab organized for and by students numbered 60 members split into 10 working groups with 81 activities.

6

KU Leuven is an active member of Leuven 2030, a consortium made up of citizens, companies, research and education institutions and (semi-) public institutions, who share the ambition of making Leuven one of the most livable, climate-friendly, and sustainable cities in Europe.



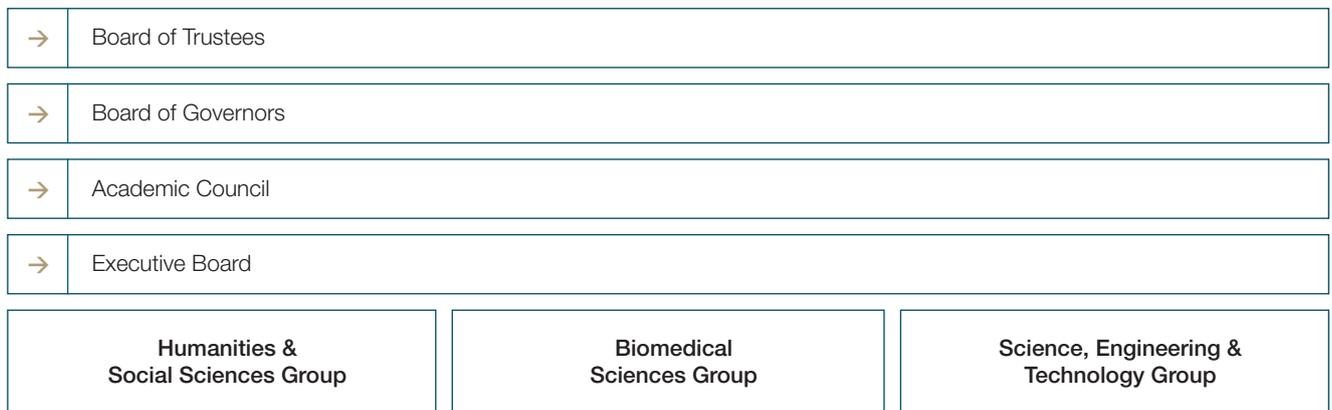
## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE & POLICY

KU Leuven is composed of three units:

- the University, which performs an academic role;
- UZ Leuven (i.e. the University Hospital), which performs a clinical role;
- KU Leuven Research and Development (LRD), which supports the knowledge transfer activities inherent to KU Leuven’s societal mission

The university’s decision-making bodies include the Rector and Vice Rectors, the Board of Governors; the Academic Council; the Special Academic Council; the Joint Executive Board; the Managing Director; the Group Executive Committee and the Special Group Executive Committee; and the Management Bodies of Faculties and Departments. In addition, the Management Bodies and Executive Positions are responsible for KU Leuven’s programs at Partner University-College campuses. The groups are supported by professional and supportive technical and administrative services with a strong focus on sustainability.

### 15 FACULTIES ORGANISED INTO 3 GROUPS



## EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The KU Leuven has 15 faculties supporting 58.278 students (AY 2017-2018) enrolled in 50 bachelor's programs, 128 master's programs, and 44 advanced master's programs<sup>3</sup>. 14% of KU Leuven students are "generation students", students enrolling at a Flemish institution of higher education for the first time. 18% of KU Leuven students are international, coming from more than 155 countries<sup>4</sup>. The largest student populations are found in the following faculties: the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Economics and Business, and the Faculty of Engineering Technology.

KU Leuven organizes its faculties and research departments into three groups: Humanities and Social Sciences; Science, Engineering, and Technology; and Biomedical Sciences. Each group organizes its own doctoral school. Humanities and Social Sciences organizes its research groups within faculties, while the other two groups have research departments.

KU Leuven is ranked among Europe's leading centers of learning, and its voice can be heard throughout the global scientific discourse. The university consistently secures funding from the most competitive research funds, including the prestigious ERC grants awarded by the European Research Council. KU Leuven researchers have received a total of 81 ERC grants, placing the university eighth overall among European universities. The university also ranks among the European leaders in terms of total projects and funding from the EU's large-scale Framework Programs.

KU Leuven also has an exceptional record as regards the tech transfer of research and collaboration with companies. **KU Leuven Research & Development (LRD)** was founded in 1972 to support tech transfer and entrepreneurial outreach. In 2018 3.318 new university-to-industry contracts were signed, most of which were for contracted research, and research within university consortia. More than 120 spin-offs, established as a result of research activities, form a unique belt of knowledge-driven, high-tech companies in and around Leuven, and are responsible for thousands of direct jobs and a large number of secondary jobs in supply and support positions.

## Humanities and Social Sciences



### Faculties

- Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies
- Institute of Philosophy
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Economics and Business
- Faculty of Social Sciences
- Faculty of Arts
- Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

### Affiliated centres

- Documentation and Research Center for Religion, Culture and Society (KADOC)
- Leuven Language Institute

### Doctoral School for the Humanities and Social Sciences



<sup>3</sup> Corporate Booklet 2018 - <https://www.kuleuven.be/brochures/assets/664>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kuleuven.be/over-kuleuven/pdf/Jaarverslag%202018%20KU%20Leuven.pdf>

## Science, Engineering and Technology

→	<p><b>Faculties</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Faculty of Architecture</li> <li>- Faculty of Science</li> <li>- Faculty of Engineering Science</li> <li>- Faculty of Bioscience Engineering</li> <li>- Faculty of Engineering Technology</li> </ul> <p><b>Departments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department of Architecture, Urban Design and Regional Planning</li> <li>- Biology Department</li> <li>- Department of Biosystems (BIOSYST)</li> <li>- Department of Civil Engineering</li> <li>- Department of Chemistry</li> <li>- Department of Chemical Engineering</li> <li>- Department of Computer Science</li> <li>- Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences</li> <li>- Department of Electrical Engineering (ESAT)</li> <li>- Department of Materials Engineering (MTM)</li> <li>- Department of Microbial and Molecular Systems (M<sup>2</sup>S)</li> <li>- Department of Physics and Astronomy</li> <li>- Department of Mechanical Engineering</li> <li>- Department of Mathematics</li> </ul> <p><b>Center for Science, Technology and Ethics (CWTE)</b></p> <p><b>Arenberg Doctoral School of Science, Engineering &amp; Technology</b></p>
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## Biomedical Sciences

→	<p><b>Faculties</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Faculty of Medicine</li> <li>- Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences</li> <li>- Faculty of Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences</li> </ul> <p><b>Departments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department of Cardiovascular Sciences</li> <li>- Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine</li> <li>- Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine</li> <li>- Department of Human Genetics</li> <li>- Department of Imaging &amp; Pathology</li> <li>- Department of Kinesiology</li> <li>- Department of Microbiology &amp; Immunology</li> <li>- Department of Neurosciences</li> <li>- Department of Oncology</li> <li>- Department of Oral Health Sciences</li> <li>- Department of Public Health and Primary Care</li> <li>- Department of Pharmaceutical &amp; Pharmacological Sciences</li> <li>- Department of Reproduction, Development &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>- Department of Rehabilitation Sciences</li> </ul> <p><b>Doctoral School of Biomedical Sciences</b></p>
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## PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING

KU Leuven places strong emphasis on ethical business operations in its daily management, and advocates democratic decision making. Checks and balances between governing bodies ensure correct and substantiated decision-making. Staff are represented in the Academic Council and in all underlying faculty and departmental structures. Both the management functions (including the Dean and Departmental Chair) and the members of the various advisory committees (for example, assessment committees, evaluation committees) are elected by the faculty council or departmental council. Student participation is also ensured through the participation of their representatives on the Board of Governors and the Academic Council. At the lower management levels, for example, they are represented in the Group Boards and the Permanent Education Committees. The students have a full vote in all these bodies. The ombuds-person is part of the Academic Council and is available to all KU Leuven students and staff. There is also a structured consultation with the Labour Council and the Committee for Prevention and Protection at Work, and the Human Resources Committee plays an active role in a variety of procedures. KU Leuven also has various ethical committees (Scientific Integrity Committee, Medical Ethics Committee, Animal Testing Ethics Committee, Dual Use Ethics Committee, Social Ethics Committee) that support and monitor respect for integrity and ethics in academic activities. In recent years, KU Leuven has made major efforts to further integrate and streamline the work of these various committees and councils.



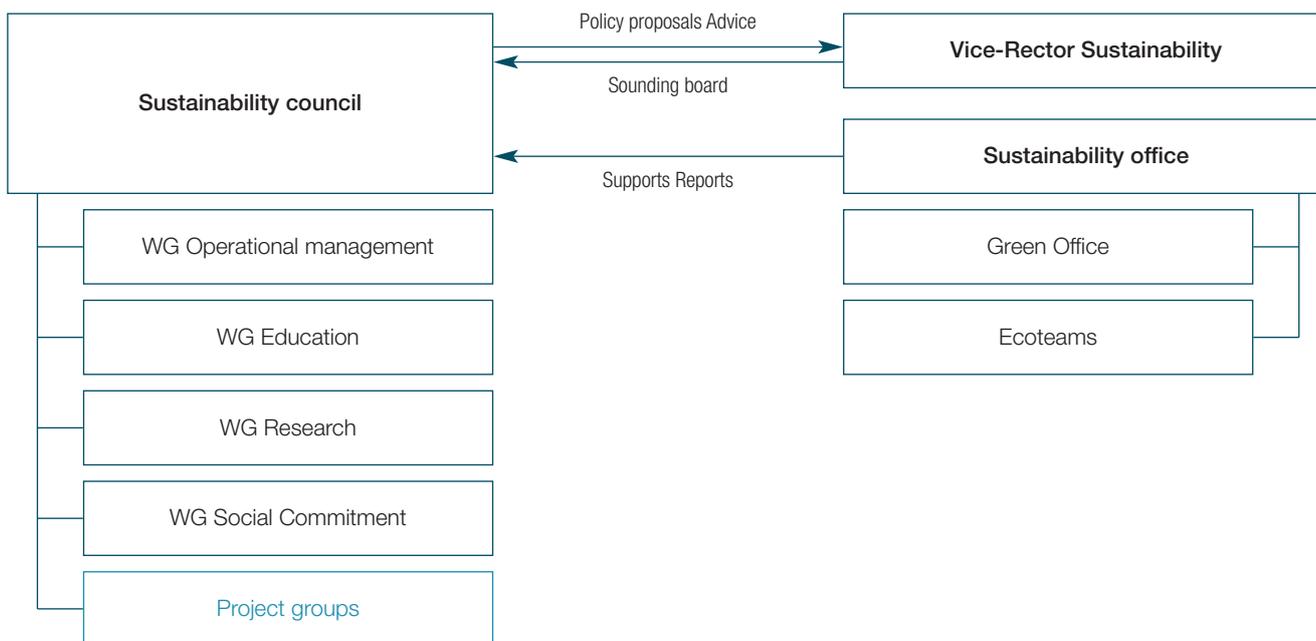
## SUSTAINABILITY

In 2013, an internal workgroup, organized by Metaforum, developed a first action plan for KU Leuven to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. The action plan called for the inclusion of sustainability within the governance structure and vision of the university as a whole. In 2014, the university launched its first Sustainability Policy Framework and established a Sustainability Office.

By launching its new strategic plan “On Crossroads, for a Sustainable Society” in 2018, KU Leuven reinforced its sustainability policy. With the new strategic plan, the KU Leuven aims to align its policy with the UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) framework. The plan covers internal management, education, research, and societal engagement. Within the plan, the main focus of internal management is on climate change and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, while the three other areas cover all of the SDGs, including links between the SDGs. The new sustainability plan outlines five targets for the university as regards sustainability:

- KU Leuven considers sustainability as one of its core values.
- KU Leuven strives to become a CO<sub>2</sub> -neutral university, and in the coming years will continue to focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and combating global warming by setting a good example in its own business operations.
- KU Leuven integrates sustainability into its various study programs, so that all students acquire the knowledge and skills needed to foster sustainable development.
- KU Leuven encourages leading and high-end interdisciplinary research for and regarding sustainability.
- KU Leuven actively interacts with society, and makes a commitment to help it in the search for sustainable solutions and shape the transition to a sustainable society at the local, regional, and international level.

**Organisational Chart**



Sustainability, as described by the 17 SDGs of the United Nations, is integrated into all organizational facets of KU Leuven in one way or another. Describing all of these interconnections is beyond the scope of this report. Instead, this section presents the main councils/structures for which sustainability is at the core of their mission.

**The Sustainability Council** is the main body responsible for preparing and implementing sustainability policies at KU Leuven. The mission of the Sustainability Council is to provide expert advice to the Executive Board and the Academic Council on developing an ambitious and coherent sustainability policy. As a think tank, the Council prepares the long-term vision for a sustainable university. It elaborates policy proposals in the short and medium-term, and draws up an action plan on sustainability for education, research, and management. Furthermore, it acts as a sounding board and works on awareness-raising and networking. The council receives input from **four working groups**: management, education, research, and societal engagement.

**The Sustainability Office** coordinates, promotes, and supports the sustainability policy and helps to further integrate sustainability into the activities of KU Leuven. In addition, they support and facilitate the coordination of the KU Leuven Ecoteams and the Green Office for KU Leuven.

## DIVERSITY

The KU Leuven Diversity Policy Office aims to foster an inclusive culture, so that people with different backgrounds and beliefs (both students and staff members) are empowered to realize their full potential, while promoting the recruitment and (out)flow of a diverse student population via specific actions.

The KU Leuven Diversity Policy and Action Plan proposes 6 objectives:

1. increase wellbeing, community building, participation, and involvement of all;
2. broaden the substantive frames of reference in which we approach diversity at KU Leuven from the perspective of power, strength, and added value;
3. combat exclusion, stigmatization, stereotyping, abuses of power, overstepping of the mark, and discrimination on a systematic basis;
4. promote the inflow, through-flow, and outflow of a diverse group of students on all campuses;
5. profile itself in external and internal communications as a university with an inclusive culture; and
6. organize joint consultation to monitor and evaluate the realization of these objectives.



## DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Development cooperation at the KU Leuven Association is based on international solidarity, mutual involvement, equality, and respect for human dignity. The Flemish agency VLIR-UOS supports partnerships between universities and university-colleges in Flanders (Belgium) and the South looking for innovative responses to global and local challenges. The KU Leuven currently coordinates more than 65 VLIR-UOS funded projects, from institutional partnerships, to joint study programs, to research projects with specific impacts (including disease prevention, biodiversity conservation, and social inclusion). Student mobility to and from the South is also encouraged.

The Global Minds programme of the VLIR-UOS aims to strengthen and deepen the capacities and knowledge of Flemish universities and university colleges in the area of development. Through this programme t KU Leuven offers a special scholarship fund for PhD students from developing countries (The Global Minds Programme), where 50% of students' research is conducted at KU Leuven and 50% at the student's home institution (supported by a local co-promoter), and a PhD degree is awarded by KU Leuven. The scholarships are offered to outstanding proposals which address a development-related research topic, preferably linked to the Sustainable Development Goals.

## UNIVERSITY PARISH (UP)

Drawing on the University's Christian heritage, the University Parish (UP) offers an open and dialogical space to explore and deepen the search for meaning in our contemporary world. We emphasize community building, local and worldwide solidarity, lifestance reflection and an environment to celebrate deeper values and vulnerable experiences. We value and promote interdisciplinary processes of discerning meaning within the university, and encourage its critical constructive role within our society.



**Our commitment to sustainability challenges our understanding of who we are as human beings in a world that sustains us and reflects the meaning we give to life. It answers the call-to-be addressed to all beings, the heartbeat of the dearest desire that creatively inhabits and connects all that is. In our university we study the many faces of this heartbeat and the ever-new expressions it conceives; we empower students and collaborate with them in an effort to descry a sustainable future and engage reality; we grow into a sustainable university and research how to envision and build a sustainable world and society.**

Prof. Jacques Haers,  
head of the University  
Parish



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

KU Leuven has incorporated the concept of ‘universitas’ as the basis for enhancing campus-wide ownership of sustainability. The concept of ‘universitas’ refers to the ‘university community’ that comprises all components of the university: students, academic, administrative and technical staff, alumni and emeriti. Involvement of the top tier and the base (a sense of community) is essential. As such, a structure was set up containing workgroups and project groups, which is open for all staff members and students.



In 2018, the KU Leuven held a general assembly on sustainability to garner input and insights from students and staff. The themes of: using KU Leuven as a living lab, further integrating sustainability into the university’s teaching, re-thinking “excellence” research criteria, and further contributing to societal needs through research were identified by stakeholders at the general assembly as being particularly relevant. These insights were incorporated into the sustainability policy plan. Another general assembly was held in 2019 to discuss the role of KU Leuven within the roadmap of Leuven 2030.

## GREEN OFFICE FOR KU LEUVEN

Green Office for KU Leuven is responsible for informing, inspiring and engaging student stakeholders on the subject of sustainability. Their bottom-up organization means that a motivated group of students receives the knowledge, support and resources to form their own ideas as Green Office initiatives. Examples include a student garden, Living Lab theses, the ‘Tap it Up’ campaign, the ‘Mine your Phone’ e-waste collection, a Fair Fashion Fair, the Eco Challenge competition, the Sustainability Week. Around 60 students from various KU Leuven faculties and campuses are active members of the Green Office. Together with the support of a Sustainability Office staff coordinator, they organize events, projects and campaigns for their peers. Green Office is an international model that promotes the integration of student engagement in the area of sustainability within higher education. More than 35 universities and higher educational institutions worldwide feature a Green Office.



## Highlights



# A year in review: 2018-2019

where students meet sustainability

## Why?

We inform, inspire and engage students. Our goal is to make our university (including you!) more sustainable



26 collabs



2 challenges



66 members

**Outreach**  
 3900 Facebook followers  
 677 Instagram followers  
 400 monthly website visits  
 193 Twitter followers  
 active on 2 campuses



## Members engaged in 10 working groups



GO E-Waste



GO Campus Brussels



GO Living Lab



GO Slow Clothing



GO Repair Hub



GO Economics



GO Nature's Heroes



GO Ecolicious



GO Tap it Up



GO Zero Waste

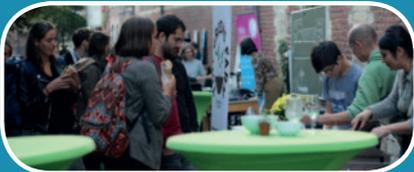


81 activities



15 pop-ups

5 projects



## Achievements

5000 reusable bottles distributed • 11 Tap it Up water taps installed  
 • 1118 broken phones collected • 312 trees planted • 26 activities  
 organised in 1 Sustainability Week • 50 Fair Fashion Fair vendors  
 gathered • 1 repair hub established • 22 objects repaired and 214 kg  
 CO<sub>2</sub> prevented at Repair Café • 8 Living Lab thesis projects supported

3 campaigns



47 events



9 workshops



[www.greenofficeforkuleuven.be](http://www.greenofficeforkuleuven.be)



Zwartzustersstraat 2, Leuven



GOforKUL



[greenoffice@kuleuven.be](mailto:greenoffice@kuleuven.be)



Green Office for KU Leuven



[greenofficeforkuleuven](https://www.instagram.com/greenofficeforkuleuven)

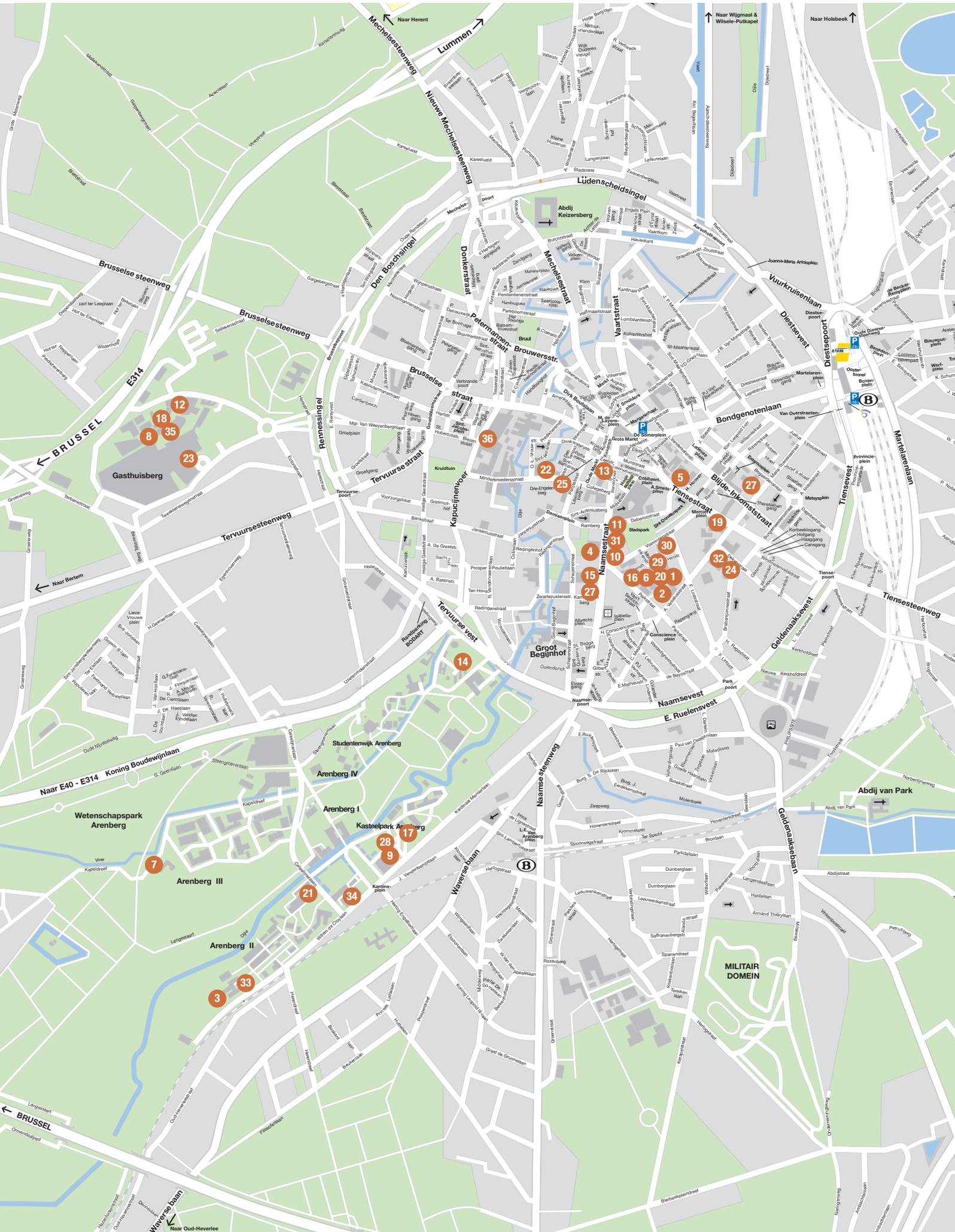
## ECOTEAMS

An Ecoteam is a group of colleagues who decide to work together to make their workplace more sustainable via a bottom-up approach. The KU Leuven Sustainability Office supports the bottom-up initiatives of Ecoteams via an Ecoteam coordinator, developing resources (for example, an online toolkit with ideas of initiatives that Ecoteams can choose to take up), and organizing the Green Impact Challenge in which the teams take part in a friendly competition to reduce as much CO<sub>2</sub> as possible.



- 1 Agora
- 2 HIVA
- 3 Ecoteam TD
- 4 Ecoteam DSV
- 5 De groene valkjes
- 6 PGI Goes Green
- 7 KaDee62
- 8 CME
- 9 Esat
- 10 AFI
- 11 ECOOM
- 12 O&N 2 Ecoteam
- 13 Ecoteam SAB
- 14 Green Moves
- 15 Ecoteam DOPO
- 16 LINES green team
- 17 50 tinten groen
- 18 CEE
- 19 Ecoteam PPW
- 20 SBIB Green Team
- 21 BMe
- 22 Eco-marketing team
- 23 Ecocrino
- 24 ILT/NT2
- 25 LRDuurzaam
- 26 Letteren
- 27 Amerikaans College
- 28 het Groenhuis
- 29 Social Green
- 30 KADOC ECO
- 31 International Office
- 32 Green Team PBIB
- 33 Ecoteam ICTS
- 34 Ecoteam SUSST
- 35 Ecoteam Oncologie
- 36 AccentWV Ecoteam

Our FEBulous world  
Ecollega's



## EXTERNAL NETWORKS

KU Leuven plays a major role in society, both locally (with a significant presence in both the City of Leuven and the Flemish Region of Belgium) and globally (as a leading educational and research institution). KU Leuven is an active player in various networks and organizations, including (but not limited to):

- **Leuven 2030:** a non-profit association committed to achieving a sustainable, climate-friendly, resilient and manageable Leuven ([www.leuven2030.be](http://www.leuven2030.be), see box).
- **The Shift:** a Belgian sustainability network that brings together partners from the public sector and the business community. Within The Shift, KU Leuven actively participates in the 'Learning Network for climate-friendly investment', and has signed the 'Green Deal Sustainable Purchasing', the 'Green Deal Biodiversity' and 'Green Deal Sustainable Building' ([theshift.be](http://theshift.be))
- **The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN):** commissioned by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to identify ways to strengthen evidence-based policy making in the EU, in the context of the SDGs and Agenda 2030 (<http://unsdsn.org/>).
- **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT):** an independent EU body that enhances Europe's capacity to innovate by nurturing entrepreneurial talent and supporting new ideas in the areas of raw materials, food, health, and energy ([eit.europa.eu](http://eit.europa.eu)).

KU Leuven also has an international commitment: we aim to put the topic of sustainability on the agenda of the various university networks in which KU Leuven is a member, including LERU and the Coimbra Group.







# III. Education

## “TO LEARN TODAY FOR A WORLD OF TOMORROW”

**1**

KU Leuven is one of Europe’s leading centers of learning, offering a total of 50 Bachelor’s programs, 125 Master’s programs and 44 Advanced Master’s programs for 58.278 (2017-2018) organized in 15 faculties. KU Leuven boasts fourteen campuses, spread across 10 cities in Flanders.

**2**

KU Leuven believes that students should be provided with the necessary knowledge and skills, not just in order to be successful individuals in a complex society, but also to help build a more sustainable global society.

**3**

The faculties identified 229 courses explicitly relating to sustainability; 15 of those courses are highlighted courses in this report.

**4**

KU Leuven aims to strengthen cross-disciplinary education and professional and societal engagement through, among others, extracurricular activities, honours programs and service learning.



## OVERVIEW OF COURSES

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THEORIES: MARXISM AND SOCIALISM • INTERCULTURALITY • SERVICE LEARNING APPROACH • SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LIVING LAB AND PROJECT • BIOSCIENCE ENGINEERING IN PERSPECTIVE • NATURAL RESOURCES ECONOMICS AND POLICY • WATER PURIFICATION AND REUSE • SUSTAINABLE PRECISION AGRICULTURE • BUSINESS ETHICS • ETHICS, RESPONSIBILITY, SUSTAINABILITY (ERS) • SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

This section of the sustainability report aims to provide insight into how sustainability themes are integrated into the educational programs of KU Leuven. Given the scale of the university and the complexity of the concept, a holistic description of all cases of where and how sustainability is integrated into learning is not possible. Instead, selected programs, courses, and initiatives are highlighted. Throughout this section, quotes from deans provide insight into how each faculty uniquely relates and contributes to the concept of sustainability, and the multi-faceted nature of KU Leuven's approach to sustainability in educational activities.

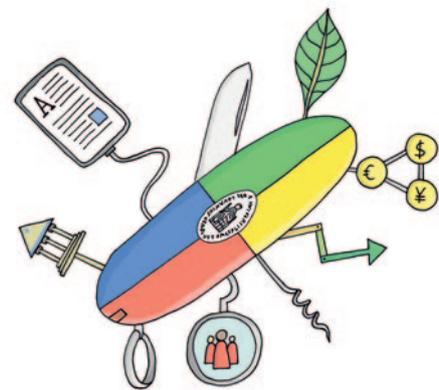
With fifteen faculties, the KU Leuven offers a broad range of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs. The 2014-2017 strategic vision for education emphasized developing students' "future selves", characterizing the development of a person as a social process. New perspectives gained through interaction with others helps students to question absolute truths by gaining new insights and experiences. The new strategic plan of KU Leuven includes future-oriented education as one of its five pillars. It emphasizes the need for more active learning and activating teaching, more emphasis on personalization, and study programs rooted in scientific research and focused on future-oriented knowledge, skills, and expertise. The plan also pays special attention to the integration of sustainability-related themes into the educational programs of the university:

*"Our society is increasingly faced with complex problems, in which social and scientific aspects are intertwined. A sustainable society can only be achieved if its members are aware of this complexity and these links, and if they possess the necessary competences to deal with it. As a university, we have a crucial role to play in this. The university is a unique place where the world of tomorrow plays a central role. A university should offer students the necessary knowledge and skills, not just to be able to be a successful individual in a complex society, but also to be able to help build a more sustainable and global society. Education has to have a central role in this, and offer people the necessary tools to create more fair, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. It should give people the understanding, skills and values they need to work out solutions for the interlinked sustainability issues or social challenges of the 21st century."* Strategic Plan KU Leuven, On Crossroads, for a Sustainable Society, pg. 85.

KU Leuven's future ambitions to further integrate sustainability into learning include: integrating sustainability and related themes during the introductory week for new students, further developing learning modules related to the SDGs in open learning platforms (for example, massive open online courses – MOOCs), designing a bachelor's course on global challenges, developing a joint platform for (cross-disciplinary) educational initiatives and public outreach, developing an international micro-master in collaboration with UNA Europa, and developing resources for lecturers wishing to further integrate sustainability into their course.

**The KU Leuven Work Group Education and Sustainability** was set up in 2015 to develop an overarching vision on sustainable education, to promote that vision, and to facilitate its implementation. The vision on sustainable education emphasizes two important facets of sustainable education: long-term thinking and systems thinking (with inter- and transdisciplinary education key to both). Systems thinking helps detect, investigate, and analyze complex societal challenges, while long-term thinking relates to anticipating the future implications of current actions.

**The KU Leuven Sustainable Education Network** is a learning network that brings teachers together to discuss how sustainability can be integrated in education. This network is currently comprised of thirty teachers and assistants from the different faculties of the university. They meet on a regular basis to discuss inspiring examples of sustainability integration in education, discuss literature on the topic, and provide inspiration towards developing a future-oriented agenda for sustainability education at KU Leuven.



## EXAMPLES OF STUDY PROGRAMS

While all of KU Leuven's educational programs strive to contribute value to society, some programs specifically address the concept of sustainability in a holistic manner. Several examples of these bachelor's and master's programs are outlined below. More information on the scope of educational programs can be found online ([onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be](http://onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be)).

### MASTER OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(Faculty of Science)

The Master of Science in Sustainable Development contains two different tracks. The Erasmus Mundus joint Master in Sustainable Territorial Development (STEDE) aims to produce experts in the area of sustainable territorial development. Specifically, it trains professionals to be able to help organizations acting within the territory (businesses, local communities, civil society organizations) to draft sustainable development policies for economic, social, environmental, international, and intercultural management.

The ICP Master of Science in Sustainable Development embraces sustainable development beyond the walls of universities and classrooms to engage with real world settings and localities in their search for solutions to their most pressing problems. In the active research-driven education model research based teaching courses are combined with serving the needs of the Global South, carrying out fieldwork in the South and using the university as a living lab.

### MASTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

(Faculty of Science)

This program addresses rapid urbanization in the developing world and contemporary urban transformations, within the scope of sustainable development. The program aims to provide insight into the problems of human settlements in the context of rapid change, and the interaction between modernity and tradition, formal, and informal city-planning. Architecture, urbanism and spatial planning are the core disciplines of the program. Contributions from the fields of economics, geography and anthropology, among others, supplement this core.

### DUAL DEGREE MASTER IN SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS ENGINEERING

(Faculty of Engineering Science in collaboration with Montanuniversität Leoben (Austria), University of Trento (Italy), Grenoble INP (France), and University of Milano-Bicocca (Italy))

Sustainable Materials Engineering (SUMA) combines top-level materials expertise with competences in sustainable materials engineering and sustainability, to educate responsible materials-oriented entrepreneurs, innovators, and leaders for the future. The program aims to stimulate innovation, entrepreneurship, and leadership in students, while focusing its content on circular (eco)design, materials substitution, life cycle engineering and circular economy design, materials processing and recycling, manufacturing, and innovation.

### OVERVIEW OF COURSES

• SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS • PUBLIC HEALTH ETHICS AND ETHICS IN HEALTH POLICY • ADVANCES IN HEALTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION IN SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES • ARCHITECTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY & SUSTAINABLE STRUCTURES • LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT • OUTDOOR MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES • AGRO-SYSTEMS AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICE • EARTH OBSERVATION • ECOLOGY • SOIL FERTILITY MANAGEMENT • GLOBAL

### **MASTER OF BIOSCIENCE ENGINEERING: ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY**

(Faculty of Bioscience Engineering)

The program aims to give insight into the processes in eco-systems, the risks of environmental pollution, technology for the prevention and remediation of these risks, the sustainable management of natural raw materials and the social context of environmental policy.

### **MASTER OF GENDER AND DIVERSITY**

(Faculty of Social Sciences in collaboration with the University of Antwerp, the University of Gent, the University of Hasselt, and the Free University of Brussels)

This interuniversity program focuses on theories about social inequality and discrimination and international research in the domain of gender and diversity. The program has a strong emphasis on practice through internships.

### **BACHELOR/MASTER IN ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT**

(Faculty of Economics and Business)

This combined bachelor's/master's program aims to educate students on the challenges relating to environment, safety, health, welfare, and sustainability. Students are trained as managers who have an integral vision, with strong emphasis on the connection between man, environment, and society. The program straddles the fields of: (business) economics, ecology, statistics, physics and chemistry, energy, physiology and anatomy, law, and philosophy.

### **MASTER OF CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (CADES)**

(Faculty of Social Sciences)

The program is rooted in contemporary social and cultural anthropology and draws on a large international and interdisciplinary platform to cover development issues from an anthropological perspective. Development is only sustainable when it fully acknowledges the culture-specific ways in which societies or networks deal with often increasingly scarce life resources, and manage the processes of production, exchange, or habitation. CADES pursues the ideal that "development" does not entail the end of local cultures and endogenous knowledge systems, but rather reinforces and emancipates them. Only a profoundly diverse intercultural understanding of, and commitment towards development can open innovative avenues of equity. The master's thesis, seminars and especially the Interdisciplinary Seminar and the Internship invite students to develop critical-analytical tools and intercultural competences.

### **MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION: SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT TRACK**

(Faculty of Economics and Business)

The Sustainability Management track strongly focuses on the development of leadership skills and the importance of ethics, sustainability, and corporate responsibility. It has a managerial focus and is designed to provide students with academic knowledge as well as hands-on expertise, enabling them to be successful in different (international) management positions.

## EXAMPLES OF COURSES



### SCIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY: A SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

The Science and Sustainability course is organized by the Faculty of Science. This course aims to give students the experience of setting up transdisciplinary sustainability research that can truly make a difference. Students work in teams on projects related to e.g. energy, sustainable fishery, and reducing carbon footprints. At the end of the course, students present their main results, as well as the experiences and insights they have gained from tackling their specific topic.



In its education and research, the Faculty of Sciences strives to actively incorporate sustainability, based on the Sustainable Development Goals, the concepts of the Planetary Boundaries, and the Sustainability Doughnut. This is achieved by developing a transversal learning line on sustainability through all courses, by supporting activities and project applications related to sustainability, the Leuven Sustainable Earth (LSUE) network, stimulating working groups on sustainability in each of the departments and a faculty working group, and hiring a new colleague to support the integration of sustainability into all Bachelor's programs. In addition, sustainability-related activities are organized and communicated within the faculty.



Philippe Muchez  
Dean Faculty of Science

### OVERVIEW OF COURSES

PROCESSES • NATURE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION • SOCIETY-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION • TROPICAL RELATION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT • ETHICS AND SOCIETY • SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT • SUSTAINABLE CHEMISTRY • SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT • SUSTAINABLE DESIGN OF STRUCTURES • SUSTAINABLE INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT • CRITICAL REVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



### Pioneering sustainability in education at KU Leuven

The LONDO initiative (Leuven Research Network on Sustainable Development; *Leuvens ONderzoeksnetwerk Duurzame Ontwikkeling*) provided one of the earliest examples of integrating an interdisciplinary vision on sustainability issues at a systems level into curricula. The Interdisciplinary Course on Sustainable Development grew out of this initiative, and has been offered since 2006 to a broad group of students from different faculties. This Master's course covers themes ranging from the sustainability aspects of energy generation, housing, food supply, production and consumption, and transport, with perspectives from disciplines as diverse as social sciences, economics, engineering, international law, and ethics – ensuring insights in the complexity and interwoven nature of these different dimensions of real societal systems.

**Observing the multi-disciplinary complexity of environmental issues at a systems level and the lack of an integrated vision on sustainability issues, we decided to bring together colleagues from different faculties in order to reinforce each other. The need for an educational offering covering an interdisciplinary systems view on sustainability problems was soon identified as one of the essential tasks for this group.**

Professor Wim Dewulf, Professor Joost Duflou

L SOIL FERTILITY MANAGEMENT • ECONOMICS AND ETHICS • INTERNATIONAL PROJECT CSR • PHILOSOPHY IN  
 BLE MANAGEMENT • APPLIED SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT • SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS • SUSTAINABLE  
 INABLE PROCESS ENGINEERING • PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY • SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION •  
 NT POLICIES AND PLANNING • ECONOMIC AND SUSTAINABILITY ASPECTS OF ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN DESIGN

## PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY

The Pathways to Sustainability course is organized by the Faculty of Engineering Technology. Within the course, students are introduced to the multi-faceted debate on sustainability and sustainable living, and are invited to consider and to try to establish their own contribution to this debate. Students learn about different conceptions of sustainability and the ways in which these influence people's thinking about sustainability, and their corresponding choices and goals. Ultimately, not only should students be able to arrive at their own vision of sustainability, they also need to be able to identify the shortcomings that may accrue to their own position and to offer an account of how those shortcomings might be mitigated.



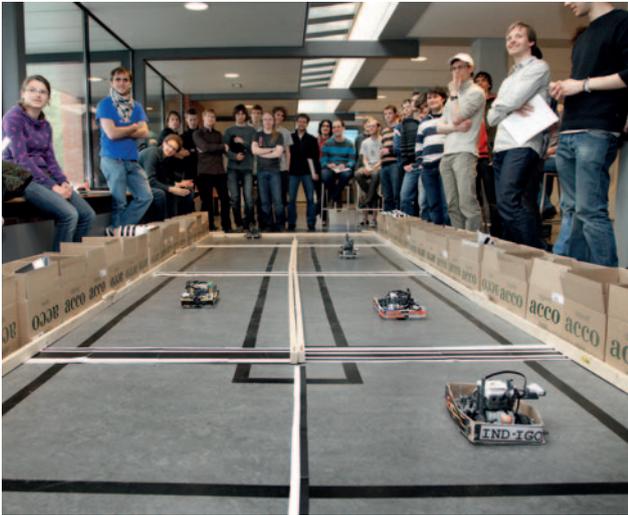
**Sustainability is the subject of specific attention in the Faculty of Engineering Technology. On the one hand, the total concept of sustainability is covered in a number of specific course units; on the other hand, specific aspects of sustainability are addressed in a wide range of educational activities. Not only does an industrial engineer need to develop technological solutions for complex issues in today's society, but he also needs to be able to justify these to future generations. This means that sustainable thinking is part of the professional attitude we try to inculcate in the students. It goes without saying that such education must be substantiated in a scientific way, and engineering sciences are ideally suited to contribute to this. As a multi-campus faculty with offices in various cities throughout Flanders, sustainability is also a theme in our daily practice: how can we strengthen the involvement of students, teachers, and staff on all campuses in a sustainable manner? The implementation of distance learning and multi-location meetings are good examples in this respect.**

Bert Lauwers  
Dean Faculty of  
Engineering Technology



## OVERVIEW OF COURSES

• EXERGY ROUTE TO SUSTAINABLE CHEMISTRY • MATERIALS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT • METALS S  
ENGINEERING • SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS • SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT • SUSTAINABLE RURAL AN  
• DIGITAL CULTURAL HERITAGE • HISTORY OF EUROPEAN COLONIZATION; INTRODUCTION TO MATERIAL CULT  
TRANSCULTURAL AND TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE • RELIGIONS IN EUROPE • SCIENCE, VISUAL CULTURE,



### SEMINARS ON INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Seminars on Industrial Production and Sustainability course is organized by the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering. This course provides students with an introduction to industry's role in sustainable development, with a focus on the chemicals industry. The challenges and criteria which a production process should incorporate are explored. The sustainable business concept is illustrated using practical lectures and guest speakers who explain the approaches with practical examples from the chemicals industry. Students integrate what they have learned from the various group assignments (linked to lectures and guest speakers) and gather additional relevant information to analyze the sustainability of given chemical processes.



The Faculty of Bioscience Engineering is conscious of the need to unceasingly question the content and approach of its educational programs, given the rapidly evolving science and educational insights, as well as the ongoing global and social changes. We prepare students so that they, as graduates and in interaction with others, can contribute in an (inter) disciplinary, compassionate, sustainable, and critical (professional) way to delivering solutions for the following challenges:

- simultaneously increasing sustainability, environmental efficiency, and productivity of agricultural and forestry systems and related industrial sectors;
- controlling and possibly reversing climate change, the responsible use of natural resources, protecting the natural and agricultural production environment and biodiversity;
- addressing the growing global competition for land, water and energy;
- promoting a bio-based economy with stronger integration of renewable resources, including waste, in product development and energy generation; and
- promoting human and animal health through, inter alia, adapted and balanced nutrition.



Nadine Buys  
Dean Faculty of  
Bioscience Engineering

## SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

The Sustainable Materials Management course is organized by the Faculty of Engineering Science. The first part of the course teaches the importance of sustainable development from an ecological perspective and concepts/aspects of sustainable technology, such as industrial ecology, green chemistry, circular economy, etc. In the second part of the course, instruments to evaluate the ecological sustainability of technological systems are explored, such as: Life Cycle Analysis (LCA), material flow analysis (MFA), environmental Life Cycle Costing (LCC), Ecological Footprint Analysis (EFA), and In/Output analysis. In the third part of the course, case studies of the implementation of sustainable technologies are examined through seminars provided by relevant actors (for example, from industry).



Sustainability is an attitude, as well as heritage, costs, choice of materials, efficiency, accuracy, energy, design, ethics, mobility, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, social importance, safety concern, etc. The Faculty of Engineering Science strives to contribute understanding of the multi-faceted nature of sustainability.

Michiel Steyaert  
Dean Faculty of  
Engineering Science



## CLIMATE DESIGN & SUSTAINABILITY

The Climate Design & Sustainability course is organized by the Faculty of Architecture. In lectures and studio-work sessions, the concepts of low energy, passive, zero emission, and autarchic buildings are examined (including analysis and prediction methods and concepts). Students work on the design of a small ZEB-project on a macroscale, mesoscale, and microscale level, with the main criteria for the design being: 1) a sustainable concept, 2) smart building, 3) low tech, and 4) zero impact.



"Sustainability" as a term is no longer used by the Faculty of Architecture. For students and teachers, naming it or making it explicit is almost accusatory, as dealing with the built environment always starts from a perspective of concern and care. Architecture as a discipline is inherently concerned with people in their environment in this critically complex world. Architecture, by definition, wants to improve that world. Themes of responsibility and accountability are integrated into every course – or are even the main components. Society as a theme manifests itself in the faculty in terms of design, but also in terms of content, continually looking towards the future. Our students turn dreams for a more prosperous society into proposals on a daily basis. The nuancing of this "prosperity" is the main subject of both education and research. The campuses in Brussels and Ghent are biotopes of sensitivity. The Faculty also supports Youth Climate Houses.

Dag Boutsen  
Dean Faculty of  
Architecture



## OVERVIEW OF COURSES

POSTCOLONIALISMS • INTERNATIONAL PROJECT-BASED LEARNING • SERVICE LEARNING • PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION • MONDIAL EDUCATION • SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY • CULTURE, ECOLOGY, AND DEVELOPMENT • ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS • POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY • HEALTH SOCIOLOGY • SOLIDARITY IN EUROPEAN WELFARE • GLOBAL CHANGE, ECOSYSTEMS, AND SUSTAINABILITY • GEOGRAPHY OF DEVELOPMENT • HERITAGE AND SUSTA



**CULTURE, ECOLOGY, AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Faculty of Social Science organizes the Culture, Ecology, and Development course. The course explores theoretical and methodological approaches, and debates in the study of culture and social activity in relation to ecological systems and the environment. Particular emphasis is placed on the various dimensions and scales of social organization and activity, and on the role of cultural, religious, and political institutions in shaping ecological relationships as well as economic behavior. Specifically, the course introduces students to classic studies as well as contemporary research on political ecology, anthropology of food, environmental anthropology, climate change, ecotourism, conservation, and natural resource management.

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The Faculty of Social Sciences has deliberately opted for ethical, caring, inclusive, and sustainable education. It is our responsibility to focus on the sustainable development goals, and related topics, based on our disciplinary knowledge. Our educational programs deal with the most advanced scientific insights into (relationships in) society, but also aim to sharpen social awareness, aiming to inculcate sensitivity to current social issues and the challenges of the future. In other words, our p re. They instill a permanent awareness in students of the added value of a social-scientific, research-based background for a (professional or other) role in society, now and in the future. Education within the Faculty of Social Sciences is based on quality-driven research, ranging from fundamental knowledge development to application-oriented research with the possibility of direct knowledge sharing and application rograms consider sustainability in the broad sense of the word. They also offer students a perspective on what is currently socially relevant, and what will be in the futu of knowledge in society. As social and political aspects are inherent in each of the **SDGs, the social sciences play an indispensable role in developing knowledge that contributes to the social capacity to deliver on these SDGs.**



Steven Eggermont  
Dean Faculty of Social Sciences

## INTERNATIONAL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The International Corporate Social Responsibility course is organized by the Faculty of Economics and Business. The course aims to give students real-world insights into themes of sustainable development/corporate social responsibility. Students are presented with themes in the Belgian context, then have the chance to compare the Belgian context with that in the UK during a five-day study trip that includes guest lectures and company visits. Examples of recent themes include NGO-business collaboration, sustainable mobility, sustainable finance, and sustainable business administration.



The Faculty of Economics and Business does not consider sustainability as a separate policy domain; ERS (Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability) is at the core of our mission and values and is therefore an integral dimension in all our policy domains. We integrate ERS into our teaching in two ways: vertically – as the primary focus of certain key course modules and even an entire program; and horizontally – as a critical perspective from which to explore themes ranging from macroeconomics to organizational studies, and from finance to logistics. Similarly, ERS is the main focus of individual research lines and research projects, but also serves as a cross-cutting perspective in a variety of other research initiatives. ERS is also an essential factor in other policy domains, ranging from mobility to campus infrastructure and from student associations to international networks. Above all, FEB strives to instill an awareness for ERS in its graduates, as they are the future managers, policy-makers, and entrepreneurs. They should consider ERS not as a cost driver but as a basis for more efficient production, higher customer and/or employee satisfaction, and even entirely new products and services.

Wilfried Lemahieu  
Dean Faculty of  
Economics and Business



## OVERVIEW OF COURSES

• TRANSDISCIPLINARY INSIGHTS • CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THEORIES: MARXISM AND SOCIALISM • SUSTAINABILITY: A SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL APPROACH • SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LIVING LAB AND PROJECT • BUSINESS MODELS OF TECHNOLOGICAL PROCESSES • NATURAL RESOURCES ECONOMICS AND POLICY • WATER PURIFICATION AND TREATMENT • CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY • BUSINESS ETHICS • ETHICS, RESPONSIBILITY, SUSTAINABILITY (ERS) • SUSTAINABLE FINANCE

### PUBLIC HEALTH ETHICS AND ETHICS IN HEALTH POLICY

The Public Health Ethics and Ethics in Health Policy course is organized by the Faculty of Medicine. The course is based around the following themes: the characteristics of public health ethics (in contrast to a clinical approach to bioethics); theories used in the ethical analysis of public health issues and conceptual issues in public health and health policy such as a right to healthcare, justice, solidarity, responsibility and their practical implications; and specific case studies in the field of public health ethics and health policy (including neonatal screening, vaccination, rationing and priority setting, inequalities in health and benchmarks for health promotion, issues regarding cultural diversity, life style issues, prenatal diagnosis).

→ Sustainability should not be confined to specific courses, but rather should be dispersed throughout an entire study program. Through their knowledge, skills, and attitude, our graduates will assume leading roles in contributing to a sustainable world, as healthcare professionals and in biomedical research, but also as woke citizens of the world.



Paul Herijgers  
Dean Faculty of Medicine

### ETHICS IN PHARMACEUTICAL CARE

The Ethics in Pharmaceutical Care course is organized by the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences. This course is based around comparing different ethical models and pondering ethical questions relating to pharmaceutical care (for example, drug addiction, euthanasia, and ethical questions related to pregnancy/fertility). In addition, the topics of scientific integrity and misconduct are explored in relation to the pharmaceutical world.

→ Sustainability in the context of pharmaceutical sciences is important from various perspectives. During the many practical exercises, attention is given to the safe handling of potentially harmful products, their minimal consumption, and alternatives. Sustainability in the context of healthcare also implies the sustainable use of medicines.



Paul Declerck  
Dean Faculty of  
Pharmaceutical Sciences

## OUTDOOR MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Outdoor Movement Activities course is organized by the Faculty of Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences. Spending time outdoors has proven health benefits for individuals. This course aims to equip students with the ability to organize outdoor physical activities, taking into account safety, infrastructure, materials, and the corresponding regulations. Respect and care for the environment when organizing and guiding outdoor activities is emphasized in the course.



**Physical activity is one of the most cost-effective, pleasant, and effective investments in preventive health care. Moreover, physical activity in the form of active transport is a key to healthy and sustainable mobility. The study of the moving person, and of the person on the move, is a common thread throughout the study programs at the Faculty of Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences. This contributes to the "active lifestyle" of the students so that they learn to manage their own body and health in a sustainable way, and later transfer this in their professional activities in various contexts, and to different target groups.**

Christophe Delecluse  
Dean Faculty of  
Kinesiology and  
Rehabilitation Sciences



## ECO-PHILOSOPHY

The Eco-philosophy course is organized by the Institute of Philosophy. The course aims to familiarize students with theories and important issues in eco-philosophy (philosophical reflection on our relation to the non-human world in the light of the so-called ecological crisis). Students need to gain insight into the multidisciplinary nature and complexity of eco-philosophical problems; develop a critical attitude towards proposed analyses of the causes as well as solutions to the ecological crisis; learn to critically read texts on eco-philosophical issues as regards their argumentation, rhetoric, and ideological presuppositions; and feel challenged to articulate, critically question, and develop their own position with regard to the issues addressed.



**"Il faut cultiver notre jardin" - with this, Voltaire indicated that the philosopher cannot afford to neglect his environment – that great theories make little sense if they do not also serve society. The fact that it is precisely "the garden" that we have to maintain says something about the management of nature: the garden is a delimited piece of nature that people control. The garden symbolizes our own domain, the place where we organize our lives. A place that is not a paradise in which everything will sort itself out, but a place that we must constantly monitor. We bring this advice from Voltaire across to our students while working with them, in education and research, to reflect on the issue of sustainability and responsibility towards future generations.**

Gerd Van Riel  
Dean Institute of  
Philosophy



## OVERVIEW OF COURSES

OIKOLOGY (ECOLOGICAL STRUCTURES) • SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS • PUBLIC HEALTH ETHICS AND ETHICS IN HEALTH MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES • ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION IN SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES • ARCHITECTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY • INNOVATIVE & SUSTAINABLE STRUCTURES • LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT • OUTDOOR MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES • TECHNOLOGY • BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICE • EARTH OBSERVATION • ECOLOGY • SOIL FERTILITY



**LITERATURE FROM A TRANSCULTURAL AND TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

The Literature from a Transcultural and Transnational Perspective course is organized by the Faculty of Arts. In recent decades, the study of literature has increasingly started to catalogue the mobility of literature across national and cultural borders, which has resulted in more dynamic and wide-ranging accounts of literary history and has highlighted the important role of literature in the ongoing dissolution and redrawing of cultural and national borders in the globalized present. The course aims to introduce students to this transcultural and transnational perspective through discussions of a set of contemporary literary and cultural texts from different linguistic realms (German, English, Spanish). Texts are situated in relation to theoretical and critical debates on topics such as migration, diaspora, orientalism/occidentalism, and multilingualism.

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Through its diverse expertise, the Faculty of Arts aims to contribute to sustainability in the broadest sense of the term. All Arts disciplines protect material and immaterial heritage, by conserving historical sites and by digitizing and publicizing important texts, music, artefacts and art. A key value at this faculty is Global Citizenship. Arts research and teaching not only shows how our worldview is always culturally mediated, but also strives to facilitate interactions between different cultures and groups. That is why the Faculty of Arts hosts intercultural competence training sessions and classes for both students and staff. The Faculty of Arts aims to broaden the conceptualization of sustainability. How is climate change represented in literature and film? And does that representation influence our view of the environment? How can historical conflict mediation strategies promote (religious) tolerance today? What is the role of our colonial past in our current relations with the Global South?



Johan Tollebeek  
Dean Faculty of Arts

## DISCRIMINATION LAW

The Discrimination Law course is organized by the Faculty of Law. The course involves a study of the principle of equality and non-discrimination within the law of the European Union and the Council of Europe. It starts with an introduction to the different theories of equality, then offers an overview of the basic concepts and problems of discrimination law, including the notions of direct and indirect discrimination, the system of justification, the grounds of discrimination, the methods of pro-active discrimination law (affirmative action, diversity management and mainstreaming), and the rules regarding proof and enforcement of discrimination law. Lastly, the course explores a number of areas in which the principle of non-discrimination comes into conflict with other values (for example, hate speech regulation). These aspects are considered from a comparative perspective.



Achieving the SDGs requires fundamental societal changes. As the law regulates society, it is an indispensable instrument in achieving sustainability. In the curriculum of the law faculty, the SDGs are not only taken into account in more specialized courses such as environmental law or non-discrimination law. The faculty believes that the role of the law in achieving the SDGs merits reflection in each and every course, including reflection and research on, for instance, the role of property and contract law in achieving sustainable consumption and production, the role of economic law in enabling new/circular business models... Moreover, the faculty believes that close cooperation with other disciplines is indispensable to effectively use the law as a tool to achieve the SDGs.

Bernard Tilleman  
Dean Faculty of Law



## ISSUES IN GLOBAL AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

The Issues in Global and Intercultural Education course is organized by the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. Within the course, students reflect on the transcultural relationship in educative practices from the perspective of an understanding of social violence (i.e., prejudice, marginalization, discrimination, organized violence, and persecution). The course aims to equip students with an understanding of (the interplay between) remembering and forgetting injustice in individual and collective processes, and learn to reflect on their role in educative practices with refugee, asylum-seeker, immigrant, and community populations in host and home societies. In addition, the course aims to enable students to articulate how transcultural educative practice may form the locus of the question on plurality and alterity.



Through their research and education, pedagogues and psychologists contribute to a more sustainable society. They study issues related to education, work, and welfare, as well as the implications of these for the world of tomorrow. Psychologists provide insight into how behavioral changes can be brought about, and how social dilemmas can be addressed. This is particularly relevant in the context of academic or social actions concerning sustainability. For pedagogues, the theme of sustainability and sustainability education is central in thinking about the education and society of the future, and the way in which community development is possible.

Bea Maes  
Dean Faculty of  
Psychology and  
Educational Sciences



## OVERVIEW OF COURSES

DRAINAGE • HYDROLOGICAL PROCESSES • NATURE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION • SOCIETY-ENVIRONMENT  
PROJECT CSR • PHILOSOPHY IN RELATION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT • ETHICS AND SOCIETY • SUSTAINABLE  
ENERGY SYSTEMS • SUSTAINABLE CHEMISTRY • SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT • SUSTAINABLE DESIGN  
ENERGY PRODUCTION • INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT • CRITICAL REVIEW

### DEVELOPMENTS IN THEOLOGICAL ETHICS

The Developments in Theological Ethics course is organized by the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies. The course is based around insights into the relationship between the study of theological and social-religious issues and the actual social context—which is characterized by religious and ethical plurality and a multiplicity of fundamental life options. The course aims to equip students with the ability to: understand and specify the enduring challenges which Modern thought presents for religious ethics; situate Leuven in personalism and recent moral-theological approaches in their historical, cultural, and ecclesial contexts; explain the personalist theological-anthropological framework and discern its dimensions in concrete situations; understand the specificity of an individual-oriented moral theology and interpret moral cases in this light; and be sensitive to the moral complexity of human realities.



→

**“The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature” This quote from the Earth Charter perfectly expresses the contribution of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies to a more sustainable world. Students from more than 70 countries also readily address the 'global challenges' and the importance of the SDGs.**

Johan De Tavernier  
Dean Faculty of Theology  
and Religious Studies





## OVERVIEW OF COURSES

ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN DESIGN • EXERGY ROUTE TO SUSTAINABLE CHEMISTRY • MATERIALS AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN  
SUSTAINABILITY IN INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING • SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS • SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT  
CHANGING CULTURES IN EUROPE • DIGITAL CULTURAL HERITAGE • HISTORY OF EUROPEAN COLONIZATION; INTRODUCTION  
• LITERATURE FROM A TRANSCULTURAL AND TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE • RELIGIONS IN EUROPE • SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

## SUSTAINABILITY AS A TRANSVERSAL THEME

In certain faculties, sustainability (and related themes) are the subject of special focus as a transversal theme, which is then integrated into all study programs and/or courses. This is the case, for example, in the Faculty of Economics and Business, where the themes of ethics, responsibility, and sustainability are integrated into all programs, and in the Faculty of Science, where sustainability is also a transversal theme.

### HONOURS PROGRAMME TRANSDISCIPLINARY INSIGHTS

Transdisciplinary Insights is a Master's-level Honours Programme course that promotes transdisciplinary research and is supported by the Institute for the Future. The programme allows students to explore diverse topics by taking an innovative, creative and cross-disciplinary approach, helping them grow as solution-oriented researchers or entrepreneurs (see <https://rega.kuleuven.be/tdi>). Students work in transdisciplinary groups and attempt to find a solution for a specific multi-faceted challenge. The challenges are selected from a database which is compiled by the academic team, based on submissions from researchers at KU Leuven, industry, community groups (such as NGOs), or even from the students enrolled on the course.

The course culminates in a talk at a symposium, and a publishable abstract with, as an option, a full paper or relevant supplements in the Transdisciplinary Insights e-journal. Past themes have included: vaccine hesitance, prenatal screening, an equitable society, HIV drug resistance, global warming, farming, and the Circular Economy.





## GET MORE OUT OF YOUR THESIS

An emerging trend within KU Leuven is for students to use the university as a “living lab” in order to explore thesis topics<sup>5</sup>. The Green Office Living Lab is an initiative which transforms questions relating to sustainability at KU Leuven into actual thesis projects. Examples of past living lab topics include: “How can the various basic philosophies of sustainability be put into practical use in sustainable education at KU Leuven?”; “How do the green spaces within medical facilities influence the wellbeing of patients and staff?”; “How do the ecological footprints of the various student restaurants compare?”; Evaluation of the natural resources and soil absorption in Arenberg park; and Analysis of the flying behavior of KU Leuven staff and the effect of the new KU Leuven travel policy. The Green Office for KU Leuven and the Young Research Society of Sustainability support students’ living lab theses by actively matching students with possible promoters, and guiding these students along their thesis pathways.



<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kuleuven.be/duurzaamheid/haal-meer-uit-je-thesis/english/get-more-out-of-your-thesis>

## SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The *Leuven Community for Innovation driven Entrepreneurship* (Lcie), is the one stop shop at KU Leuven for all entrepreneurial students, staff and professors. Lcie aims to create an entrepreneurial mindset throughout KU Leuven, with sustainability being one of its key values. Various educational formats as well as extracurricular tracks help students think about society’s challenges and how to do something about them.

In the elective course *Product Innovation Project* (PiP), interdisciplinary teams of 9 students work together for a year to tackle a real life problem. Some of these problems are directly focused on sustainability, in others sustainability is a requirement for the eventual solution.

The Lcie Entrepreneurship Academy is a set of courses focusing on entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship. The fact that it is vital that students consider sustainability in all their future endeavors, is stressed in a number of these courses. There are also some courses that focus specifically on sustainability, such as the course *Duurzaam ondernemen*.



## OVERVIEW OF COURSES

SUBALTERNITY, AND POSTCOLONIALISMS • INTERNATIONAL PROJECT-BASED LEARNING • SERVICE LEARNING • P  
AND ADULT EDUCATION • MONDIAL EDUCATION • SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY • CULTURE, ECOLOGY, AND DEVELOP  
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS • POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY • HEALTH SOCIOLOGY • SOLIDARITY IN EUROPE  
SOCIETY • GLOBAL CHANGE, ECOSYSTEMS, AND SUSTAINABILITY • GEOGRAPHY OF DEVELOPMENT • HERIT



## SERVICE LEARNING

Service-learning (also referred to as “community-based learning” or “community-engaged learning”) is a teaching approach that connects classroom learning with civic engagement (<https://www.kuleuven.be/english/education/sl/servicelearningatkuleuven/servicelearningatkuleuven>). Civic engagement refers to service that meets community-identified needs. There is a broad range of possible approaches to service learning, but a key aspect is that students actively engage with other groups in society. Students can follow courses together with prison inmates, or develop a website together with people who have limited access to, and experience with, technology. They can also provide medical assistance to vulnerable communities, or teach the importance of archaeology to underprivileged children.

Service-learning strives to achieve a mutually-beneficial experience, both for the community (partners) and students. By critically reflecting on their experiences, students learn at the academic, civic, and personal level. They encounter diverse groups and issues in society: as such, they grow in terms of human understanding, empathy, and solidarity, and acquire a different perspective on the problems confronted by the disenfranchised members of society.

These are skills that cannot be taught in a standard classroom. The communities the students work with also benefit: not only do they get access to knowledge and information that may otherwise be difficult to acquire, they can also benefit from reflecting together with students on what has been learned and how they can use this to empower themselves. KU Leuven strives to make service-learning accessible to every student at KU Leuven. Currently, 15 service-learning courses are already offered at KU Leuven across several faculties.





# IV. Research

**1**

KU Leuven is a leading European research university, ranked in 7th place in the Reuters World Ranking of Most Innovative Universities (2018). It is the highest-ranked European university, with a total of 7,296 Researchers, 5,098 PhD Students and 124 spin-offs<sup>6</sup>.

**2**

The Research Policy plan (2018-2022) is centered on excellence, interdisciplinarity, internationalization, impact and research integrity. KU Leuven aims to pursue a responsible, ethical and integral research agenda.

**3**

The University boasts a wealth of research projects linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. In this report we highlight 21 of such research projects.

**4**

Leuven Sustainable Earth (LSUE) is an inter- and transdisciplinary expertise center in the area of sustainability at KU Leuven.

KU Leuven is a research-intensive, internationally-oriented university which, within a culture of academic freedom, conducts basic research (fundamental and strategic) and applied scientific research. This research has a strong inter- and transdisciplinary focus, is regarded as excellent at the international level, and serves society through the knowledge it generates. This section of the report will present a flavor of the type of research that is conducted at KU Leuven, as well as the scale of the impact the university has through its research activities.

The Research Policy Plan 2018-2022 is centered around excellence, interdisciplinarity, internationalization, impact, and integrity. The plan is designed to allow KU Leuven to continue profiling itself as a stable and inspirational platform of knowledge culture in a changing world, and as a leading research institute with an undeniable impact:

*"It is a privilege but also a responsibility to use our academic freedom both to strive for 'knowledge for knowledge's sake' and to tackle society's problems and challenges. Moreover, pioneering research that leads to high-level scientific output is the best guarantee of future innovations (Rodríguez-Navarro & Narin 2016<sup>7</sup>). This means that we must maintain the ambition to further stimulate creative thinking and the development of paradigm shifts, in order to offer our intellectual knowledge for economic and social progress, cultural enrichment, environmental improvements, ... whilst acting in a local and global context. The university and its researchers cannot deliver the necessary insights if they work in isolation."* (KU Leuven Research Policy Plan 2018-2022, pp. 2).

Research within the Humanities and Social Sciences group is organized by faculties, while research within the Science, Engineering, and Technology group, and within Biomedical, is organized by departments. (cfr. Infra) In addition to the faculties and departments, there are also intergroup, interfaculty, and interuniversity research institutes.



<sup>7</sup> Rodríguez - Navarro, Alonso; Narin, Francis. 2018. "European Paradox or Delusion – Are European Science and Economy Outdated?" *Science and Public Policy* 45 (1):14-23. doi:10.1093/scipol/scx021.



## RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The principles of truth and honesty are seen as fundamental within the educational community. The reliability of scientific outcomes is vouchsafed by collective dialogue with colleagues and peers. Principles of integrity, including effective data management, integrity of authorship, correct citing of peers, mentioning of acknowledgements, etc., are fundamental considerations for any scientist. KU Leuven expects both senior and junior researchers to embody these principles, thereby protecting and upholding the considerable international recognition of its research and institution. As such, research integrity has become an integral part of the institutional research policy. Research at KU Leuven strives to meet the highest standards, while impeccable scientific rigor is the norm here. As Rector Luc Sels stated in his address at the opening of academic year 2018-2019, "The university must vigorously point out the importance of scientific integrity. It has to work on optimal preconditions for research. It must increase awareness and provide information where possible, pursue and sanction when necessary. It must create a safe environment for whistle-blowers."

The KU Leuven Commission on Scientific Integrity was set up to address the discussions and problems affecting the integrity of academic practice. The Commission's tasks include: investigating reports of problems and formulating recommendations in terms of the actions to be taken; staying abreast of the procedures currently applied in other institutions, in relation to those applied by researchers at KU Leuven; proposing adjustments to procedures if necessary; proposing norms for academic integrity; studying questions relating to academic integrity on its own initiative, or at the request of the Research Policy Board, the Executive Board, or the Academic Board; and making proposals for education and awareness-raising as regards any problems relating to academic integrity which may arise (for example, seminars, programs, possible research into integrity-related problems).

## RESEARCH ETHICS

KU Leuven is fully committed to advancing high-quality academic research, while promoting high ethical standards of research. The university achieves this by fostering a culture that embraces the principles laid down in institutional, national, and European codes, and in legislation designed to protect the rights, dignity and welfare of the people involved in research; maintaining a review process carried out by research ethics committees which means that research projects can be subject to a level of scrutiny which is in proportion to the ethical risk; providing ethical guidance in the areas of regulatory requirements and best practice.

Various committees have been set up to ensure that KU Leuven's academic activities are underpinned by ethical considerations. The Ethics Committee Research evaluates medical and health-related research (clinical research) and provides advice following scientific and ethical review by a panel of experts. Protocols are in place for research involving human subjects, human pathological material, or embryos. The Social and Society Ethics Committee evaluates research into human subjects that is not related to health science practices, or which includes medical or pharmacological procedures. The Committee includes a multidisciplinary panel of experts who review the ethical aspects of research in the humanities, and the behavioral or social science research disciplines. The Ethical Committee for Animal Experimentation deals with and advises on research involving animals. The Ethics Committee on Dual Use, Military Use & Misuse of Research evaluates research with potential dual use, military use, or misuse concerns ("dual use of research" is research that can be used for both civilian and military purposes; "misuse of research" is research that could be misused for unethical purposes).





## OPEN ACCESS

Having signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in Sciences and Humanities (in 2007), KU Leuven encourages open access to research. Open access helps other researchers, governments, organizations, and individuals access research findings, thereby better serving society by disseminating knowledge. At KU Leuven, researchers archive their digital articles on the Lirias system, after which the content becomes freely available (with due observance of copyright laws). The KU Leuven Fund for Fair Open Access was also set up to help researchers wishing to provide open access to their research.

### KEY AREAS OF KU LEUVEN RESEARCH

Researchers pursue research agendas in a bottom-up fashion. Nonetheless, KU Leuven focuses on key areas of research, which include:

- **human health:** basic processes of human life; cancer; cardiovascular diseases; virology and immunopathology; brain; psychology, health, and cognition; sports, wellbeing, aging, and disability
- **medical technologies:** genetic technologies; intensive care medicine and clinical research; medical care; medical engineering technologies; technologies for medical research, and health care; tissue engineering and bone development
- **bioscience and environmental:** ecology and evolution; microbes and yeast; alternative animal models; plant and food science; sustainability and climate; human environment
- **matter materials and energy:** energy technology; sustainable chemistry; biomaterials; innovative materials; innovative recycling; material building blocks; material characterization; nanoscience and catalytic science
- **nature unlimited:** mathematics and computing; physics; space research
- **manufacturing and ICT:** artificial intelligence and big data; communication technologies; construction engineering; electronic systems; innovative ICT applications; medical engineering technologies; optimizing Engineering processes; security
- **arts, religion, and culture:** archeology; architecture; cultural heritage; arts and culture; history and culture; language and literature; religion
- **economy, law, and society:** economics, entrepreneurship, markets, and innovation; global politics and economies in transition; governance: tools and management; family and population; citizenship and democracy; law and restorative justice; society and technology
- **human behavior:** brain, cognition, and emotion; school psychology; wellbeing and sustainability; consumer behavior and environment

### YOUNG RESEARCHERS' SOCIETY FOR SUSTAINABILITY (YOURSS)

YouRSS is a network for young researchers, bringing together PhD students and postdocs from throughout KU Leuven. In order to promote sustainable research and systems thinking, by stimulating interaction between the various disciplines, YouRSS meets up every last Thursday of the month at the Sustainability Office. Over lunch, a member of the network presents their research to the group. YouRSS also supports university-wide initiatives, which have included the KU Leuven 'Facing the Future Symposium' (May 2018) and the 'Leuven Sustainable Earth Research Group' (LSUE) Symposium on living labs at KU Leuven (November 2018).



### CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Various research lines of the "Centre for Environment and Health" within the Department of Public Health and Primary Care are related to sustainability. The potential adverse health effects, for workers or consumers, of exposure to industrial chemicals and pollutant particles, including nanoparticles, are investigated in the laboratory using *in vitro* methods and animal models. Clinical and epidemiological studies are also conducted in the general population, as well as in various categories of workers. For instance, the centre coordinates an interuniversity research programme on the health effects of green spaces in the Belgian population. Another example is collaborative research into the health impact of the mining of cobalt (used for making rechargeable batteries) in DR Congo.

## POLICY RESEARCH CENTERS

KU Leuven is actively engaged in supporting government policies through its research activities. The inter-university consortia, organized under the "2016-2020 Policy Research Centre Program" conducts policy-relevant research in fields and subjects of priority importance to the Flemish Government. KU Leuven is involved in ten policy research centers, and acts as coordinator for six.

### POLICY RESEARCH CENTER LABOR

The Center of Expertise for Labor Market Monitoring focuses on developing indicators, time series, projections, and benchmark analyses pertaining to the Flemish labor market. The Center also actively promotes the further development of relevant databases and serves as a hub for the dissemination of labor market information.

### POLICY RESEARCH CENTER FOR ECONOMICS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Support Center for Economics and Entrepreneurship analyzes spearhead clusters, evaluates government programs, and catalogues entrepreneurship in Flanders through intensive cooperation with the Flemish government, partners, and stakeholders.

### THE POLICY RESEARCH CENTER WELFARE, PUBLIC HEALTH & FAMILY

The Center for Welfare, Public Health, and Family conducts scientific research to support the Minister of Welfare, Public Health and Family in developing a decisive, innovative, effective, inclusive, and integrated policy on well-being and health.

### POLICY RESEARCH CENTER GOVERNMENTAL RENEWAL

The Center Governmental Renewal brings together a critical mass of multidisciplinary expertise in the field of public administration, as well as in related disciplines and research fields such as finance, regulations, future explorations, transition thinking, behavioral sciences, and staff policy to support policy preparation, implementation, and evaluation.



### **POLICY RESEARCH CENTER SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

The Center Sustainable Material Management in a Circular Economy conducts research for the development of an index, to monitor the progress made towards achieving a circular economy, support policy advice on nurturing a circular economy, and assess how new societal trends may affect it.

### **POLICY RESEARCH CENTER SPORTS**

The Center Sports distinguishes three main lines of research: policy monitoring, participation in sports, and broad motor development in young children.

In addition to the six policy research centers coordinated by KU Leuven, the latter also collaborates in: the Center of Environment and Health, the Policy Research Center on Housing, the Policy Research Center on Education, and the Youth Research Platform.

### **ECOOM (EXPERTISE CENTRUM O&O MONITORING)**

The mission of the interuniversity Expert Centre ECOOM is to develop and maintain a performing and accessible system of science, technology and innovation data, methods and indicators providing the Flemish government with up-to-date and relevant statistics on the science, technology and innovation performance of the Flemish region benchmarked in an international context. (Partners: KU Leuven, UAntwerpen, UGent, UHasselt en VUB)

### **LEUVEN SUSTAINABLE EARTH (LSUE)**

LSUE is the expertise center in the area of sustainability at KU Leuven. LSUE provides scientific and technological knowledge that will help sustain natural systems and the environment, so that future generations can still access the necessary resources. LSUE's mission is to bring together scientists from various disciplines, who have a common interest in sustainable development. The aim is to take the research, education, and service to society in this area to a higher level, by capitalizing on complementary expertise and insight. The center will stimulate inter- and transdisciplinary research at KU Leuven. LSUE's scope covers a broad range of topics, including in the research domains of geo- and ecosystems, soil, water, land, sea, climate, biodiversity, ecosystem services, materials, sustainable production processes, development policy, and environmental policy.



## HIGHLIGHTED RESEARCH

With more than 5,000 academics at KU Leuven, the output and impact of research activities is substantial and highly diverse. This section of the report offers a small taste of just some of the subjects covered by the research at KU Leuven. The impact of the research is presented in the light of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals:



An additional goal of critical thinking has been incorporated:



## CANCER TREATMENT DURING PREGNANCY



Cancer during pregnancy directly affects two lives. Before research into this issue was started at KU Leuven (which was made possible by a grant from the European Research Council), cancer treatment during pregnancy was mostly avoided due to the unknown effects it had on the fetus. This research revealed that cancer treatment, including chemotherapy, is not detrimental to intrauterine life, and that children born in this way develop like other children of the same age. There are three major consequences in this regard: fewer terminations during pregnancy, less delay in providing cancer treatment, and fewer pre-term deliveries (due to more treatment during pregnancy).

## AWARENESS-RAISING OF GENDER GAPS IN EDUCATION



Funded by a grant from the European Research Council, the KU Leuven Faculty of Social Sciences looked at the implications of reversing the gender gap in education on family life in Europe. In almost all European countries, women are more educated than men in the generations that have recently come of age. The project highlighted the fact that, among recent couples, the implication is that if there is a difference in educational attainment between husband and wife, the wife typically has the higher degree. The team also demonstrated that this is associated with an increased likelihood that the woman is the breadwinner in the family, despite the gender pay gap, which still disadvantages women. Conversely, in new generations of families, men are expected to play a significantly larger role in child care and housework than was the case until as recently as one generation ago. This clearly has important implications for how businesses can be run effectively, making the most of the human capital that is available in the population.

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## THE WORLD'S LEADING ANTI-HIV DRUG



KU Leuven has a long tradition of developing innovative and effective medicines. An excellent example is the antiviral agent tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, discovered in 1993 by the KU Leuven Rega Institute for Medical Research (with funding from the 5th European Framework Program for Research and Innovation) in collaboration with the IOCB in Prague and Gilead Sciences. Tenofovir was licensed to the American biopharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences, which further developed it and now manufactures and distributes the drug under the trade name Viread®. Drugs containing tenofovir are effective at reducing the HIV viral load in the blood, so that HIV-infected patients treated with this medicine can manage the disease for many years. The drug is sold at production cost in developing countries. Around 10 million people in the third world currently receive HIV treatment based on tenofovir.

## SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS



The Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA) has launched a three-year research project funded by the Flemish government, to explore innovative ways to make the supply chains of KU Leuven and UZ Leuven more socially-sustainable. The project will start by cataloguing the supply chains of both organizations, following which the researchers will be able to identify four critical supply chains with high risks for human rights violations. HIVA will then work closely together with the purchasing departments of KU Leuven and UZ Leuven, with suppliers, and with external partners (notably the Shift and Rikolto), to experiment with innovative ways to make these pilot supply chains more socially-sustainable. Finally, with the help of VLIR-UOS, the results of the project will be made available to other universities, hospitals, and other public organizations, in the form of a practical guide.

## THE SDGS AS A LEVER FOR CHANGE IN POLICY PRACTICES

The Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA) is involved in a comparative study to provide an overview of good policy practices which implement the 2030 Agenda. In Belgium, establishing and coordinating an efficient governance model for sustainable development, while implementing the UN sustainable development goals, is a greater challenge than in most other countries, due to the complex structure of the Belgian state.

### PolyCe: ENABLING RECYCLING OF PLASTICS FROM ELECTRONIC WASTE



PolyCe is a European Commission-funded project that focuses on sustainably transforming the lifecycle of e-plastic materials. PolyCE is made up of a consortium of 20 expert organizations working together to significantly reduce the use of virgin plastics, and foster the

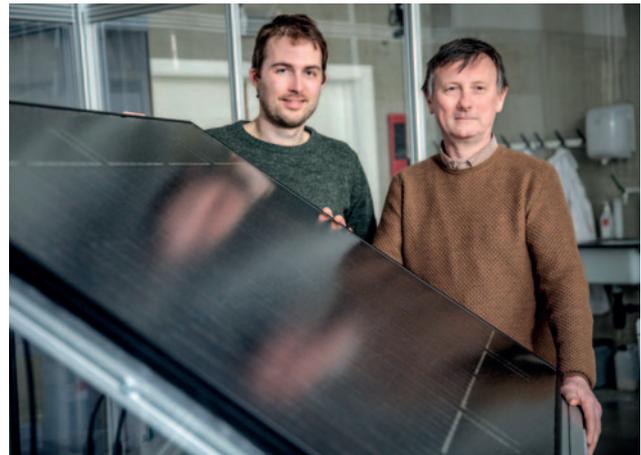
use of recycled plastics in new electronics applications.

### LIVING LAB: BUILDING CARE AND ENERGY OPTIMIZATION IN HISTORICAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS



This research project focuses on increasing the energy efficiency, and share of renewable energy sources, for a cluster of buildings in the historical city center of Bruges, where the obligation to conserve historical heritage (buildings) is a constraint when it comes to enhancing energy efficiency.

## CATCO<sub>2</sub>RE: KU LEUVEN SCIENTIST CRACK THE CODE FOR AFFORDABLE, ECO-FRIENDLY HYDROGEN GAS



This project aims to develop technologies to convert CO<sub>2</sub> into high-quality chemicals, using catalysis and renewable energy in the form of solar hydrogen. The researchers have created a hydrogen panel that produces hydrogen gas from moisture in the air. After ten years of development, the panel can now produce 250 litres per day – a world record, according to the researchers. Twenty of these panels could provide electricity and heat for one family for an entire winter.

### BIOWOOD



This project aims to strengthen the Flemish bio-economy, by developing new knowledge to implement a new timber-based value chain for the chemical and agro-industry.

This value chain would be based on inventive conversion technology, starting from local, cost-effective, and available woody biomass sources, and would target high-quality agro-industrial applications.



**LIVING LAB: SOLIDARITY-BASED AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR THE HOUSELESS, A MOBILE MODEL IN THE BRUSSELS CAPITAL REGION**



This project aims to address the problem of affordable housing by developing, testing, and refining a resilient model for the co-creation of solidarity-based living in mobile homes on vacant lots in Brussels. Through the co-creation of eight affordable housing units, this project will develop prototypes of alternative solidarity-based housing. The project also includes the creation of collective spaces, thereby facilitating interaction with the community as an essential element. The project will bring various stakeholders together in a participatory living lab. This lab will result in the co-creation of a learning space with the houseless. Experimental forms of empowerment and inclusion will be explored, with a focus on solidarity.

**URBANISM AND LANDSCAPE APPROACHES FOR SUSTAINABLE CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION IN RAPIDLY DEVELOPING CITIES**



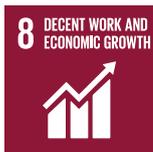
This international program (2019-2025) is a collaboration between KU Leuven and the University of Architecture Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Vietnam is one of the countries most (tangibly) affected by climate change and this collaboration encompasses: 1) integral research (involving 6 PhD pathways) investigating the crossroads of socio-ecological development issues, urbanism, and adaptation to climate change; 2) the development of a new Master's in Urbanism and Landscape, in which future urbanism professionals are trained; and 3) cooperation in ongoing urban planning processes in South Vietnam.

**GREENING OF INTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES: TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN ECOSYSTEM SERVICES/BIODIVERSITY AND PRODUCTION AND INCOME OF THE FARMER**



Producing food has become increasingly intensive (e.g. chemical fertilizers, mechanization ...), allowing it to keep ahead of global population growth. However, the number of people on earth continues to rise and the demand for meat and biofuels is increasing, putting further pressure on agriculture. The success of modern agriculture has also caused severe problems to our natural environment, contributing to the 6th mass extinction in the history of the earth. As there are obvious tradeoffs between agricultural production and biodiversity conservation, the question arises how the increasing global demand for food can be met at the least cost for biodiversity. aims to evaluate greening scenarios of intensive farming landscapes, looking at their tradeoffs between yield and farmer income on the one side, and biodiversity conservation and ecosystem service (ES) provisioning on the other side. The information gathered will then be used to model and evaluate the effect of different policy decisions (subsidies and assignment of protected areas) on the adoption of the greening scenarios, and on their regional consequences for biodiversity and ES provisioning.

## CAPACITY BUILDING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FISHERY IN LAKE TANGANYIKA (DC CONGO): BIOLOGICAL MONITORING AND SOCIO-ECONOMICS OF SARDINE STOCKS



The objective of this VLIR-UOS project is to improve applied biological knowledge of two key fish species in Lake Tanganyika, which provides more than 60% of annual fish

production. In addition to being the second-oldest and second-deepest lake in the world, Lake Tanganyika provides millions of people with their livelihood and food security. This projects aims to increase knowledge of clupeid biology with an integrated, innovative, and cost-effective strategy to monitor lake-wide and long-term trends in clupeid stocks, taking into account the impact of climate change and overexploitation. Improved knowledge will help create the strategies to achieve sustainable sardine fishing on the lake.

## SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO BENEFIT THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES OF NORTHERN TANZANIA



By integrating proper strain selection of bananas and legumes for intercropping, this project will contribute to improved knowledge of sustainable banana farming systems that should ultimately result in increased yields without increasing environmental stress.

## BEYOND PETROLEUM. RE-IMAGINING ENERGY IN CONTEMPORARY FILM AND LITERATURE



Apart from being a technological challenge, the shift to alternative energy sources is also a cultural issue, which demands a re-think of dominant values, narratives, and cultural ideas. One important development is the emergence of the “energy humanities”, a sub-discipline that examines how cultural artefacts such as movies and literary texts reflect on particular sources and uses of energy. This project complements the existing work in the energy humanities and contributes towards a re-think of the values and narratives associated with energy in a post-oil age.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY



The ecological crisis confronts political philosophy with fundamental challenges. Climate change, biodiversity loss and air pollution are not just environmental problems—they are symptoms of a profound crisis of the metabolism between our global society and the ecosystem. This research project aims to examine philosophical questions related to our fundamental values (individual freedom, economic growth, development) and institutions (democracy, the market) that are at stake.

**PROJECT DATA-DRIVEN LOGISTICS**



This project aims to utilize big data to enhance the efficiency of logistics and transportation systems. If the efficiency of these systems could be enhanced, the result would be substantial energy savings.

**EUROPEAN TRAINING NETWORK FOR THE REMEDIATION AND REPROCESSING OF SULFIDIC MINING WASTE SITES (SULTAN)**



For more than 100 years the EU mining industries have been discarding their extractive-waste residues. Estimates suggest this represents 29% of the EU-28's current waste

output. When poorly managed these residues are a significant environmental hazard. However, these tailings also contain valuable metals. To develop a highly-skilled workforce, limit environmental risks, and recover valuable raw materials economically, this European Training Network for the remediation and reprocessing of sulphidic mining sites (SULTAN) offers the very first training program aimed at reprocessing landfill sites. SULTAN combines the interdisciplinary and intersectoral expertise from leading members of EIT RawMaterials and world-leading mining and chemical companies, which include links in the entire chain for residue processing.

**HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES: OPENING THE BLACK BOX**



The starting point of this project is the observation that lecturers in the humanities and social sciences draw on knowledge and approaches from other disciplines in

teaching Higher Education for Sustainable Development (HESD) courses. More specifically, HESD in the humanities and social sciences makes use of interdisciplinary scientific research as well as interdisciplinary perspectives on the root causes of sustainability problems. The aim of this project is to prise open the under-investigated black box of HESD lecturing, based on insights from the educational, philosophical, and social sciences.

**LICOS RESEARCH PROGRAM "POLITICAL ECONOMY AND INSTITUTIONS OF FOOD SECURITY"**



This research program focuses on hunger and other food security issues, including: 1) the determinants of food and nutrition security; 2) food prices, biofuels, and food security; 3) the political economy of global food security and development policy; and 4) regional issues in food security.

**EQUITY, EQUALITY OR NEED? PUBLIC OPINION ON DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE IN THE CHANGING WELFARE STATE**



The central goal of this project is to provide insight into the context-dependent and far-reaching significance of public opinions on distributive justice. The project aims to

advance knowledge on distributive justice preferences by offering a context-sensitive conceptualization, identifying the roots of preferences, and illustrating the consequences of distributive justice preferences for highly-debated policies. This project contributes to the empirical knowledge on justice preferences.



# V. Community

1

As of 2018, KU Leuven (excl. UZ Leuven) employed 12,654 staff members: ca. 70% of all staff members are academic staff and professors while ca. 30% consists of administrative and technical support staff.

2

20% of the staff members of KU Leuven have an international background.

3

KU Leuven still has a predominantly male professor corps. However, the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and the innovative “gender vanguards” has considerably reduced gender bias.

4

In 2017-2018, 58.278 (2017-2018) students were registered at KU Leuven, including 10,738 international students from more than 150 nationalities.

5

Although there are now almost as many male as female first-time students at KU Leuven, 60% of Bachelor's programs have an 'imbalanced intake' of predominantly male or predominantly female students.

As of 2018, the KU Leuven community (excl. UZ Leuven) was made up of 58,278 students<sup>8</sup> and 12,654 members of staff. A new **Diversity Policy and Action Plan** was published in 2018 with the aim of fostering an inclusive culture within the university for all members of its community. This is a departure from the previous approach, in which the focus was on specific groups. Fostering a culture of inclusivity is the cornerstone for achieving equal opportunities for every member of the university community. At the same time, KU Leuven's diversity policy aims to address the UN SDGs related to alleviating poverty, promoting health and well-being, quality education for all, gender equality, the reduction of inequality, and increasing accessibility to public services, as well as peace and justice, etc.

The **Harassment Help Desk** can be contacted by students, staff, and external parties if they have questions or wish to report an act of verbal or physical aggression, bullying, sexual harassment, etc. The Help Desk aims to ensure that problems can be handled at an early stage, that people are given care and, if desired, provide targeted referrals for follow-up. Confidentiality is guaranteed. Cooperation with external services is also an option.

The university's **Religion & Philosophical Diversity** contact point is on hand to provide information and support in the areas of faith and religious matters, to current and prospective students alike.

A proactive approach has been taken to physical accessibility, with the recent publication of the **Access Guide** and the further implementation of KU Leuven's accessibility standard. A user survey of Toledo (the online learning platform) resulted in a series of changes to promote accessibility. Plans are envisaged to expand the range of accommodation available to the target group of students with a physical disability, in order to meet their demands for independent living. In addition, a project has been launched to support students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and/or psychological vulnerability, in settling into student life in Leuven. KU Leuven aims to bolster successful initiatives and share good practices across all campuses.



<sup>8</sup> <https://www.kuleuven.be/over-kuleuven/pdf/Jaarverslag%202018%20KU%20Leuven.pdf>

## STAFF

Support for the staff community is overseen by the HR Department (support and advice, recruitment and selection, training opportunities, etc.), the Health and Safety Department (promoting health, ergonomics, psychosocial aspects at work, risk-activities, etc.), and the Diversity Office (policy support, the Harassment Help Desk, ombudsman services).

Every three years, KU Leuven conducts a survey into staff satisfaction through the **Staff Satisfaction Monitor**. The results from 2018 suggest that, overall, staff members are satisfied in their jobs at KU Leuven. KU Leuven staff members tend to be highly engaged in their work, and the risk of stress and burn-out is slightly lower at KU Leuven compared to the overall working population of Belgium. Some groups, however, are slightly more vulnerable than others. The results of the Staff Satisfaction Monitor are discussed in the various entities of KU Leuven (faculties, departments, etc.) so that measures can be developed and adapted within these entities.



Concern for the wellbeing of KU Leuven employees is two-pronged, with a focus on both the general health of employees and workplace safety. The Health and Safety department provides advice and support to promote health, prevent risks, and avoid accidents. Customized support, tips, and advice are given at the organizational, team, and individual level. KU Leuven strives to foster a culture of safety. Aspects including ergonomics, healthy living, and psycho-social wellbeing are among the main concerns. A "Healthy University" campaign will be launched in 2019. A Healthy University aspires to create a learning environment and organisational culture that embodies a holistic approach to health, wellbeing, and sustainability.



**"Busy is the new stupid"** There is nothing wrong with working hard, but when striving for sustainable engagement and sustainable careers, saving time to reflect and relate in work and life is crucial. We need to spend our time in a smart way and stay focused on what is relevant and purposeful. Sustainable engagement throughout life and career is only feasible when resources for recovery are available on a regular basis such as new experiences, disconnection, sharing ideas with colleagues, friends & family, physical activity, reflection and reading, ....

HR will therefore further invest in self-leadership and broad development, well-being, mobility (internal and external), career guidance and flexible working conditions (i.e. telework, sabbaticals, family leave,...). To guarantee a sustainable and stimulating environment where students and researchers can flourish, we also need to attract and develop talent with an open and inclusive mindset and inspire supervisors how to lead, coach and motivate the talented next generations.

Deb Vansteenwegen  
Head HR Department

## SUPPORTING POLICIES

### Wellbeing at Work

KU Leuven uses the term Life@Work to refer to its efforts to help staff find and maintain a good personal balance between work and other commitments. KU Leuven organizes: 1) workshops on resilience and self-management (titles of past workshops include: Resilient at Work and in Your Life; Stress Management, Self-Management and Leadership; and Self-Management: the Impact of Your Personal Mindset); 2) Life@Work group coaching sessions in which a small group of employees, under the guidance of an experienced coach, look for their ideal work-life balance, and the steps they can take to achieve and maintain this balance; 3) The Life Wheel, an interactive, online tool for staff members to reflect on their desired work-life balance, and help them make sustainable choices ([www.kuleuven.be/personeel/work-life](http://www.kuleuven.be/personeel/work-life)).



### Childcare

As mandated by Belgian law, KU Leuven offers its employees four types of parental leave: 1) maternity leave is an obligatory three-month leave for women which must be taken around the time of childbirth, 2) paternity/co-parent leave is an optional 10-day leave for co-parents which can be taken following the birth of a child, 3) parental leave is an optional leave of up to four months to which all parents are entitled, and can be taken from the birth of the child up to the age of 12, and 4) adoption leave (depending on the age of the child).

Pregnant employees are entitled to a number of protective measures, including: a ban on discrimination linked to the pregnancy, the right to be absent (without loss of salary) to attend pregnancy-related medical appointments, protection against dismissal (except for reasons unrelated to the pregnancy, for example, redundancy for economic or restructuring reasons), and a ban on overtime and night work.

There are six university daycare centers accredited and subsidized by the organization "Kind & Gezin" (Child & Family). These facilities are available to everyone, but priority is given to children of KU Leuven staff and students. Additionally, university daycare centers also provide homecare for sick children. If a staff member's child unexpectedly falls ill, the university daycare centers can temporarily send a trained childcare provider to look after the child at home while the staff member is at work. KU Leuven also partners with the non-profit organisation "Sporty" to provide childcare during the periods when daycare centers are closed.

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### Additional Leave

Medical assistance leave allows workers to temporarily interrupt their careers to assist or care for a seriously ill family member or relative. Palliative care leave offers staff the opportunity to temporarily interrupt their careers so they can devote themselves to the palliative care of a person in the terminal phase of an incurable disease (this person need not be a family member).

Staff members are entitled to take up to 10 working days off for urgent reasons, referred to as: emergency leave, leave for compelling reasons, or family leave. This arrangement is not required by law, but it is an additional benefit for KU Leuven staff.

### University Sports Center & UniefActief

KU Leuven staff and students have the possibility to join the University Sports Center and the UCLL sports hall, where they can use the sports facilities, swimming pool, take part in group fitness classes, and more. UniefActief is a collaboration between the Human Resources Department, the Communications Department, the University Sports Center, and the Faculty of Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences, with the objective of increasing physical activity on the part of staff. Staff members can register for a personal consultation with the physical activity coach and take part in exclusive exercise programs organised especially for them (swimming, yoga, circuit training, and more). KU Leuven encourages staff to take active breaks throughout the day, to help mitigate the health risks of sitting for more than eight hours a day.



### Mobility

KU Leuven encourages its staff to use sustainable transport. Staff commuting by train have their travel fully reimbursed, and commuter journeys by bus or tram are partially reimbursed. KU Leuven has a contract with Blue-bike, a Belgian bike sharing organization, for work-related travel. Staff are reimbursed for using a Blue-bike (available in 50+ locations in Belgium) for work-related travel (as an alternative to using taxi, bus, or tram). KU Leuven also procures its own line of bikes, called "(E-)2WD" bikes. Every employee who undertakes to use the bike to travel to and from work, and for short trips between departments, can apply for a KU Leuven bike. KU Leuven bikes can also be leased by faculties or departments to be used by staff for short work-related travel. KU Leuven also encourages carpooling, and has entered into an agreement with Taxistop, an online platform where staff interested in carpooling can register and will immediately be provided with a list of potential carpool partners. KU Leuven has a teleworking policy that covers three types of teleworking: teleworking on an occasional basis, on a structural basis, and in exceptional cases. KU Leuven discourages staff to commute using the car.

### THE HOUSE OF SILENCE

In 2015, KU Leuven opened the 'House of Silence' in a former country home of the Jesuits in Egenhoven. KU Leuven staff can meet or work there, write, read or just enjoy the peace and quiet. The tranquility of the building and the surroundings make it an inspiring place where people can reconnect, recharge and decompress.



## STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>9</sup>

Staff is divided into three categories: professors, academic staff, and administrative staff.<sup>10</sup> As of 2018, KU Leuven employed 12,654 staff members. The majority of these (54%) were academic staff (PhDs, postdocs, junior academic staff, etc.). Professors made up 16% of total employees, and administrative staff accounted for 31%.

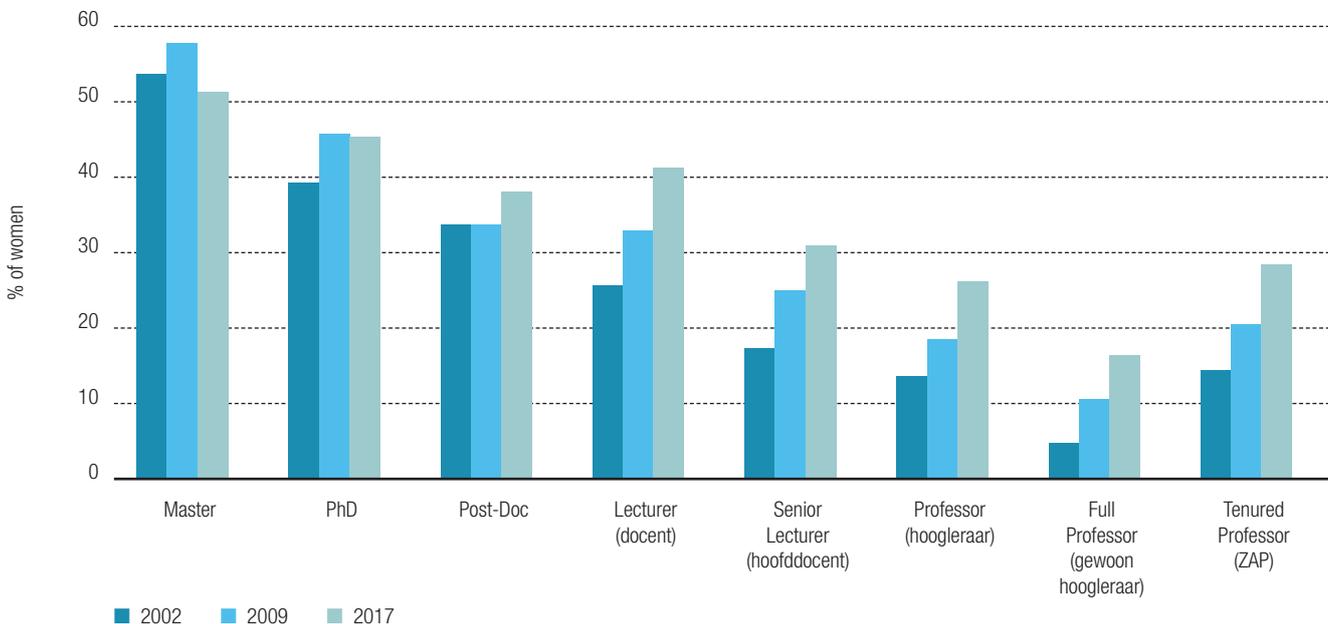
### Gender

While a majority of Master's graduates from KU Leuven are women, the proportion of women tapers off the further we go up the academic ladder. In 1998, the first KU Leuven **Gender Report** revealed that only 3% of full professors were women, which prompted a targeted drive to close the gender gap among academic staff.

A series of steps were taken to help to close the gap. One important innovation in this regard was the creation of "gender vanguards" to reduce gender bias in the assessment committees. A gender vanguard is a full professor (M/F) and member of the assessment committee who, among other things, defends equal opportunities for women and men in the appointment and promotion policies, but also the gender neutrality of the assessment committee. All assessment committees now have their own gender vanguard.

These initiatives have produced positive outcomes. In 2013, the second Gender Action Plan revealed that 12.7% of full professors were women, and as of 2018, 28.7% of full professors were women, while women had been hired at a higher rate than men. In 2017, Rector Luc Sels was pleased to announce the first gender-balanced rectorate.

### Evolution of the percentage of women in academic appointments (all campuses).



<sup>9</sup> This section will present an overview of staff members based on specific demographic characteristics (gender, age, nationality). The data used in this section were abstracted in September 2018, UZ Leuven staff members are not taken into account.

<sup>10</sup> In certain cases, an individual may be included in multiple categories (if they have multiple appointments). In such cases, they are counted for each category, but only counted once for total KU Leuven employees. New employee and turnover ratios are calculated as the percentage of inflow or outflow for academic year October 2017 to September 2018.

### 2018 Staff gender balance and new hire rates (September 2018; all campuses).

	MALE	FEMALE
<b>Professors</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>576</b>
% of total staff	70.85%	29.15%
New hire rate	2.79%	3.13%
<b>Academic Staff</b>	<b>3870</b>	<b>2931</b>
% of total staff	56.9%	43.1%
New hire rate	23.13%	24.19%
<b>Administrative Staff</b>	<b>1439</b>	<b>2525</b>
% of total staff	36.3%	63.7%
New hire rate	8.34%	10.53%
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>6656</b>	<b>5998</b>
% of total staff	52.6%	47.4%
New hire rate	5.82%	16.52%

### Parental Leave

The HR Department does not keep track of who is entitled to leave compared to who actually takes their entitled leave, although it does monitor when parental leave is taken. There is a discrepancy in the rate at which mothers take leave compared to co-parents. If the birth rate of KU Leuven is calculated using maternity leave, the average birth rate for the KU Leuven staff community in 2018 was 2.22%. Based on paternity/co-parent leave, it would have only been 0.8% for the same period. It can therefore be assumed that not all KU Leuven staff take the paternity/co-parent leave that they are entitled to. This discrepancy may partly be explained by the fact that, while paternity/co-parent leave is optional, maternity leave is obligatory. However, the same trend can be observed when looking at the data for parental leave (optional for both parents). For example, while women accounted for only 29% of professors in 2018, they took parental leave at a rate four times higher than their professorial counterparts who were men.

### Number of employees who took maternity leave between October 2017 and September 2018 (all campuses).

	AGE		
Staff Category	<30	30-50	Total
Professor		14	14
Academic Staff	22	116	138
Administrative Staff	13	117	130
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>282</b>

### Number of employees who took paternity/co-parent leave between October 2017 and September 2018 (all campuses).

	AGE			Total
Staff Category	<30	30-50	> 50	Total
Professors		1		1
Academic Staff	17	40		57
Administrative Staff	2	41	1	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>102</b>

### Number of employees who took parental leave between October 2017 and September 2018 (all campuses).

STAFF CATEGORY	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Professor	5	20	25
Academic Staff	33	64	97
Administrative Staff	102	260	362
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>484</b>

### Age and Turnover

In 2018, KU Leuven had a turnover rate of 13.81%. While this is relatively high for an organization, it is fairly typical for an academic institution. Two categories stand out as having particularly high turnover: academic staff under 50 and administrative staff under 30. Academic staff includes PhDs, postdocs, and people working on projects for a specific time period. This kind of employment is temporary by definition, which accounts for the high turnover in this category. In addition, short-term contracts with external financing contributes to the high turnover of administrative staff under 30. KU Leuven's HR Department assists with outplacement help (for example: skills training, career centers, employment help in doctoral schools, etc.).

### Age of staff and turnover rate (September 2018; all campuses).

	<30	30-49	>=50	TOTAL TURNOVER
<b>Professors</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>1016</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
% of Total Staff	-	48.58%	51.42%	
Turnover Rate	-	1.04%	7.38%	
<b>Academic Staff</b>	<b>3544</b>	<b>2706</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>18.89%</b>
% of Total Staff	52.11%	39.79%	8.1%	
Turnover Rate	14.95%	25.5%	11.8%	
<b>Administrative Staff</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>2203</b>	<b>1273</b>	<b>9.56%</b>
% of Total Staff	12.31%	55.58%	32.11%	
Turnover Rate	27.46%	7.49%	6.28%	
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>4025</b>	<b>5833</b>	<b>2796</b>	<b>13.81%</b>
% of Total Staff	31,81%	46,10%	22,10%	
Turnover Rate	16.45%	14.83%	7.87%	

## Nationality

The majority of KU Leuven staff are Belgian at the present time. As part of the new Strategic Plan, KU Leuven has the ambition to be “truly international”. To achieve this, a welcome policy encompassing a warm welcome for, and integration of, international researchers, policy advisers, and professors, will need to be implemented, in addition to monitoring the evolution of international recruitment. New hire rates for 2018 show that attention has been given to recruiting international staff.

### Nationality of staff members and new hire rates (September 2018; all campuses).

	BELGIAN	EU (NON-BELGIAN)	NON-EU
<b>Professors</b>	<b>1728</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>30</b>
% of Total Staff	87.45%	11.03%	1.52%
New Hire Rate	1.74%	11.01%	10%
<b>Academic Staff</b>	<b>4422</b>	<b>1259</b>	<b>1120</b>
% of Total Staff	65.02%	18.51%	16.47%
New Hire Rate	21.30%	28.44%	27.14%
<b>Administrative Staff</b>	<b>3813</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>25</b>
% of Total Staff	96.19%	3.18%	.63%
% of New Hires	9.10%	26.19%	24%
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>9886</b>	<b>1594</b>	<b>1174</b>
% of Total Staff	78,13%	12,60%	9,28%
% of New Hires	13.31%	26.04%	26.66%

## ILLNESS

As academic staff have a high degree of independence in their work, shorter absences are not always recorded. As such, the data on absenteeism among academic staff is unreliable, and only the data on administrative staff is presented here. In 2018, absences among administrative staff due to illness accounted for 402,828 hours (6% of working time). There is an upward trend of long-term absenteeism, which is in line with an overall trend in Belgium.<sup>11</sup>

### Evolution of percentage of working time lost to illness (administrative staff; all campuses).

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
< 1 month	2.03%	2.05%	2.07%	2.23%	2.05%
1 month- 1 year	1.07%	1.27%	1.89%	1.64%	1.56%
> 1 year	1.92%	1.93%	1.90%	2.06%	2.24%

## OCCUPATIONAL ACCIDENTS

In 2017, there were a total of 253 occupational accidents, including accidents that occurred during commutes, and accidents involving interns. While there were a relatively high number of incidents involving interns, the majority of these accidents were minor injuries such as cuts. Commuting accidents involving a bike accounted for the majority of this type of accident, as well as the most lost days. These types of incidents are on the rise. In 2017, commuting accidents involving a bike resulted in 1007 lost days for Campus Leuven staff, compared to 546 in 2016.

The Department of Health and Safety is taking steps to reduce the amount of occupational accidents, including: a continual focus on safe working methods, analysis and follow-up when accidents (or near-misses) occur, targeted prevention to reduce falling/stumbling incidents, and developing a knowledge toolkit on safe cycling in the winter.

## PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

Students and staff can address questions or remarks about psychosocial well-being (stress, conflict, aggression, unacceptable behaviour, feeling unwell, etc.) to their supervisor, HR advisor or consultant, a colleague, or via their confidential network. In 2017, 255 incidents (conflict, stress, unacceptable behavior, etc.) were reported via confidential channels (ombudspersons, external prevention advisers, the contact point for unacceptable behavior – GOG). KU Leuven takes all reports of unacceptable behavior seriously and provides professional support and follow-up. Reports are always anonymous and are expertly followed-up via internal confidential advisors or external channels.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.sdworx.be/nl-be/pers/2018/2018-02-15-ziekteverzuim-belgische-werknemers-neemt-laatste-tien-jaar-fors-toe>



## STUDENTS

As determined by decree, KU Leuven Student Services carries out KU Leuven's task to provide services for students. These services aim to promote equal access to and participation in higher education for all students, by improving basic study conditions and promoting students' well-being. This is done by providing material and immaterial help and removing any obstacles students may encounter during their studies.

In doing so, KU Leuven Student Services chooses to devote special attention to students who may experience disadvantages, expanding its focus outside of its decretal working areas, including food, housing, social assistance, medical and psychological aid, transport, and student concerns. Student Services also unites more central, education-related services, such as student counselling, support for graduating students, gaining work experience and services for students with a functional impairment.

In addition to providing help for students, the aim is to work in a sensitising and preventive way, signalling any problems that may arise. Student Services not only aims to remove individual barriers for students, but also to help shape their environment so that these barriers are easier to overcome or disappear altogether.

KU Leuven is a multi-campus university, with campuses all across Flanders. Student Services wants to provide equal services for all KU Leuven students, regardless of which campus they study on.

KU Leuven devotes special attention to students who may experience disadvantages. Working students, top athletes, artists, students with a functional impairment or students with a different religious belief can all have their academic life affected. These students can have their special status officially recognised by KU Leuven, which makes them eligible for special education and/or examination facilities (i.e. rescheduling examination dates). Students combining two study programs or students facing special individual circumstances (i.e. a severe disease or the death of a family member) can also apply for facilities.



**A sustainability policy also implies caring for people. At Student Services, we always go the extra mile for our students, regardless of their background or personal characteristics. We respond to their needs in an accessible way and promote their well-being. In addition, we gladly contribute to interaction and solidarity among our students. That way, we assist them on their path to becoming global citizens who dedicate themselves to a social, diverse and sustainable society.**

Ann Gaublomme, Manager of Student Services

### ASSISTED LIVING: A SPECIAL INITIATIVE ON CAMPUS LEUVEN

KU Leuven wants to support students with a functional impairment by offering specialised university housing. “Assisted living support groups” are groups of 10 to 15 students who live together in university residences. Every group also has one or more students with a functional impairment (i.e. physical, visual, auditory, chronic sickness... ). Non-impaired students in these groups agree to be available for four to six hours per week (as well as one night every two weeks) to support fellow students. Students with a functional impairment can ask for assistance during daily activities (such as personal care, shopping, supplying study materials, cooking, eating...).



### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>12</sup>

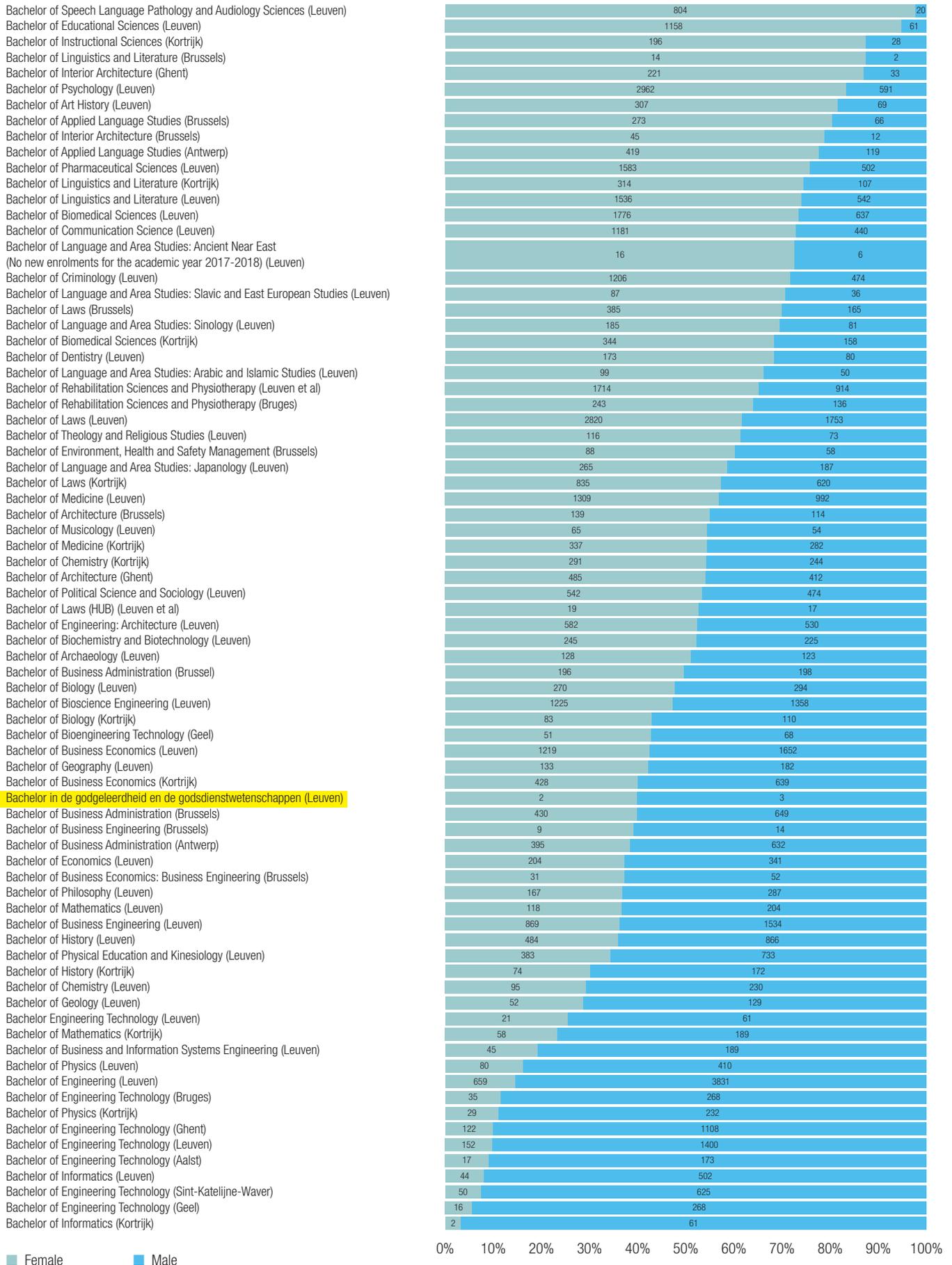
#### Gender

Although the gender balance among first-time students at KU Leuven is fairly evenly split each year, more than half of Bachelor's programs is unbalanced in terms of gender. For instance, 50.2% of the generation-students in the 2017-2018 academic year were women, but 58.3% of the Bachelor's programs saw an imbalanced intake. In the 1992-1993 academic year, half of the generation-students were also women, but only 36.5% of the programs showed an imbalanced intake. We can therefore conclude that the number of programs with an imbalance increased sharply over the past 25 years. Each year, there are slightly more programs with an under-representation of male students than there are of female students. Female students perform better than male students in almost all of the Bachelor's programs.

In addition to this, in almost all Bachelor's programs, female students academically outperform their male student counterparts.

<sup>12</sup> Data and number of Academic Year 2017-2018.

Total absolute and relative numbers of men and women, by studies, for the ten most recent cohorts of generation students (2008-2009 to 2017-2018).



## Nationality

As of 2018, 10,239 international students were studying at KU Leuven (18% of the overall student corpus), accounting for more than 150 nationalities.

### Nationalities (2017-2018, all campuses)

TOP 5 EU NATIONALITIES	
Netherlands	1,926
Italy	728
Spain	568
Germany	479
Greece	266
TOP 5 NON-EU NATIONALITIES	
China	927
India	511
United States	366
Turkey	235
Iran	196

In addition to international students, 12.5% of students entering KU Leuven in academic year 2017-2018 were Belgian with a migration background. At Campus Antwerp, this proportion was 20%, rising to 28% at Campus Brussels.

## Socio-Cultural

Every year, KU Leuven welcomes a highly diverse group of new students. In 2017-2018, 33.8% of “generation-students” (students attending higher education for the first time) had at least one special social-cultural characteristic (6.2% spoke a language other than Dutch at home; 16.6% received a scholarship; 12.5% had a migration background; and 12.2% were a “pioneer student” – a student whose parents did not attend higher education). The percentage of students with one of these special social-cultural characteristic has remained fairly stable over the last ten academic years, and across the programs. 10.5% of students combined two or more of these characteristics. There is a correlation between these characteristics and a lower study success rate. While disadvantaged, these students tend to catch up over time (an adjustment period is sometimes necessary). KU Leuven tries to accommodate this, for instance by providing orientation days for pioneer students, an ambassador program aimed at reaching out to students in secondary education, and by offering coaching to students.

## Special Physical, Mental, or Learning Needs

The number of students with a disability quadrupled in the last 10 years. The figure was still only 3.1% ten years ago. Despite this rather gradual increase, the total number of students with a disability has tripled: from 876 in 2008-2009 to 1,253 in 2012-2013 (before integration) to 2,766 in 2017-2018 (including the integrated programs). This increase was highest for students with a psychiatric disability (x3.4). This is the reason why, since 2015-2016, we have distinguished between students with a developmental disorder and students with a psychiatric disability. The number of students with a learning disability (x4.2), a physical (x1.8), a chronic (x1.8) or multiple disabilities (x4.2) also increased.



### #IMAKEKULEUVEN

In line with the move away from a target-group approach to diversity management, the #imakekuleuven project, led by Dr. Drew Mallory of the Faculty of Economics and Business, seeks to understand the experiences and effects of "hidden" diversity at KU Leuven. In addition to overt membership of specific categories, the university's membership conceals a vast body of diverse characteristics, backgrounds, orientations, and identities. However, many individuals with minority social identities are subject to stigma and discrimination, which may prompt them to conceal their backgrounds in certain situations. Understanding and responding to the stories of these individuals is essential. Without accounting for their experiences, a false impression of organizational homogeneity is put across, resulting in increased feelings of detachment on the part of the people concealing their backgrounds, and less chance that the organization can benefit from the positive characteristics of an openly diverse membership. Opening with a series of video-based interviews from KU Leuven staff and students in the context of a research project, in 2018 the project was given additional funding by the Rector to develop an online portal, including an inventory of resources available to students and staff. The project will also work with campus groups to develop identity- and diversity-related training opportunities, and participate widely in awareness-raising efforts regarding the diverse membership on campus, and the resources available to its members.

### PANGAEA

"Pangaea" refers to the name of the single continent which made up the entire land surface of the earth some 175 million years ago. Pangaea at KU Leuven aims to promote intercultural exchange among students, staff, and the public through activities including Orientation Days, a Buddy Program, a meeting center and coffee bar, logistical support for student groups, and the organization of workshops and events. Pangaea is a part of the KU Leuven Student Services' "International Student Cell", working in collaboration with student associations (such as Leonardo International, an LGBT group), and hosting an active network of more than 150 volunteers. Pangaea offers support to student associations (such as meeting spaces and helping to secure funding) and encourages students to organize events based on connecting people. Pangaea also organizes its own activities, including language cafes, getting to know Leuven/Belgium through days out and lectures, and intercultural dialogue events. Pangaea collaborates with the University's parish on events relating to the crossroads of interculturality and spirituality (including lunchtime meditation sessions from different religious or cultural perspectives). Pangaea also collaborates with societal partners on larger events. In 2018, for example, Pangaea collaborated with the African Film Festival and hosted the filming of "A Fruitless Tree" and a post-film discussion on cultural perspectives on feminism and the stigma of infertility. Pangaea aims to foster a community of openness and connection at the KU Leuven.





### PEACEJAM BELGIUM

PeaceJam is an international organization that collaborates with Nobel Peace Prize winners to encourage students to “think global and act local.” In 2019, 200 students gathered in Leuven for the PeaceJam Belgium conference with guest speaker Tawakkol Abel-Salam Karman – a journalist, politician, and human rights activist from Yemen. In 2011, she won the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to improve women’s rights in Yemen. At the PeaceJam Belgium, students discussed topics of leadership, understanding global problems, and setting up initiatives to prompt sustainable change. The goal is for students to learn from each other to take action in their own environment: at home, at school, and in their local community.

## IMPACT ON SOCIETY

### LOCAL IMPACT

KU has been an integral part of the City of Leuven for six centuries. KU Leuven’s contribution to a knowledgeable society has arguably been its most significant impact in this regard — knowledge it generates from research activities, through the graduates who go on to become working professionals, and the transfer of knowledge into society via university-society interfaces. The university also has positive economic impacts most notably as an important local employer and supporting local business. The university generates various spin-offs, which become active as knowledge-oriented companies (including high-tech, bio-industry, and applied research), which make a vital contribution to the knowledge-oriented profile of the City of Leuven. This profile attracts financial investment, but also an influx of talent from all over the world, thereby creating an international demographic in Leuven. KU Leuven plays an important role preserving the historical buildings and monuments which constitute the city’s heritage. The strong interweaving of the city and the university is made concrete in Leuven Mindgate, an initiative that aims to make **the Leuven region** worldwide top of mind when it comes to health, high-tech and creativity, and that is supported by the city, the university and the other knowledge centers in the region.

The intense interweaving of the university with the urban fabric of the City of Leuven also has adverse effects, such as heavier traffic, the pressure of the students on the housing market, and student-related disturbances.

## KU LEUVEN METAFORUM

Metaforum is KU Leuven's interdisciplinary think-tank that aims to bring together the existing learning and scientific expertise to tackle various societal issues. This is achieved by giving academics from across KU Leuven's various disciplines a single platform, with the objective of developing a common vision, including for controversial subjects, such as genetically modified organisms. Since 2008, over 400 professors at KU Leuven have contributed to one or more position papers on subjects ranging from human genome sequencing to the use of cannabis and the functioning of democracy. Metaforum also organises a range of other activities to stimulate interdisciplinary exchange, as well as exchange between academia and the broader society. Notwithstanding its focus on fostering productive trans/interdisciplinary debate, Metaforum also plays an essential role in providing guidance and inspiration for a sustainable KU Leuven. The fact is that most sustainability issues can only be addressed through a trans/interdisciplinary approach, which is precisely what Metaforum has achieved in the past: it played a key role in drafting the first strategic note on climate neutrality for KU Leuven, and has since produced position papers on a range of topics including mobility, food security, biodiversity and the circular economy. It goes without saying that the perspectives offered by Metaforum are not only relevant to KU Leuven, but all stakeholders in these issues. As such, Metaforum members are often actively involved in debates in the press and on social media on the topics in question.



## KU LEUVEN SCIENCE DAY

KU Leuven actively participates in Science Day (Dag van de Wetenschap). Science Day is a chance to disseminate knowledge and a love for learning to the general public. In 2018, visitors discovered the inner workings of an electric race car, learned how to write their name in hieroglyphs, saw beautifully-illustrated books, explored the Zoology Museum, got to know more about drones, watched movies from a scientific perspective, followed workshops, listened, learned, and enjoyed themselves.



### FAB-LAB

FabLab-Leuven is a joint initiative of the KU Leuven and the City of Leuven. The initiative was inspired by the work of MIT-professor Neil Gershenfeld, whose “How to make almost anything” lectures were highly popular not just among engineers, but with artistic and creative minds in general. This was the impetus for Gershenfeld to open the first FabLab: a place where people can create computer models and develop their ideas by using high-tech machines, such as 3D printers. FabLab-Leuven is now integrated within the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the Faculty of Engineering Science, and is open to everyone.

### OMEGABAARS SPIN-OFF

The Omegabaars (Omega Bass), a fish which is an excellent source of healthy Omega-3 fatty acids, is sustainably farmed by the KU Leuven spin-off Aqua4C. Thanks to research conducted at KU Leuven, this sustainable fish farm is able to breed Omegabaars on 100% vegetable feed, which is primarily composed of seeds and grains. Aqua4C farms their fish locally using a revolutionary circular system, which saves both water and energy. In addition to reusing rainwater collected by nearby tomato-growing greenhouses, Omegabaars also draws on the heat generated by these greenhouses. Aqua4C's waste water is organically purified by an adjacent reed bed, and the manure produced during the farming process can also be reused as fertilizer or as an energy source for biogas plants.



### ENERGYVILLE

EnergyVille is a collaboration between the Flemish research partners KU Leuven, VITO, IMEC, and UHasselt in the field of sustainable energy and intelligent energy systems. Researchers provide expertise to industry and public authorities in the field of energy-efficient buildings and intelligent networks, in order to foster sustainable urban environments. This encompasses smart grids and advanced district heating and cooling, among other things.



## DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

KU Leuven is celebrating the 20th anniversary of VLIR-UOS, a Flemish initiative to support partnerships between universities in Flanders (Belgium) and the Global South. These partnerships work towards crafting innovative solutions to global and local challenges. As of 2018, KU Leuven was involved in more than 80 VLIR-UOS projects, as well as investing its own funds in development cooperation projects. Additional funding from a Special Research Fund will finance 18 new PhD scholarships every year from the South, starting in 2019. KU Leuven partners with universities all over the world to promote research coordination and student mobility.

### INTERDISCIPLINARY LECTURE SERIES ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD ECONOMY, THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2018, the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, in collaboration with VLIR-UOS and the Belgian government, coordinated a lecture series on Developing Countries in the World Economy, the Sustainable Development Goals, and Human Rights. The aim was to explore the inter-connection between economic globalization, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and human rights. In organizing their economies and participation in the world economy, various developing countries are confronted with widespread sustainability challenges. These challenges can be addressed within the framework of the SDGs (including, for instance, the eradication of poverty and the protection of the environment) and from the viewpoint of protecting human rights, including fundamental labor rights.



## STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

### STUDENT COUNCIL STURA

The KU Leuven Student Council (STURA) represents all KU Leuven students at the university level, including international students, regardless of whether they are studying at the campus in Leuven or one of the other campuses. The Student Council defends the various interests of the students at KU Leuven (which primarily relate to studies). For example, a representative of the KU Leuven Student Council participates in the Education and Examination Regulations (OER), reflects on the course of studies and counseling for first-year students, and makes a contribution to the educational quality assurance policy. In addition to educational material, the Student Council also contributes to student-related policies, sustainability, diversity, internationalization, and ICT at KU Leuven. Student representatives of STURA are officially part of all of KU Leuven's administrative bodies (such as the Board of Directors, the GEBU, and the Academic Council). The Student Council actively promotes sustainability within KU Leuven. STURA is a member of the Sustainability Council, supporting the initiatives of the Green Office for KU Leuven while also being involved in a range of activities to promote sustainability.



### LOKO

LOKO is the overarching student organization for all students in and around Leuven (Campus Leuven, the University-College Leuven Limburg, and LUCA Lemmens). LOKO's three core areas of action are representation, activities, and services. The main focus is on representing students, both nationally and internationally, with a multi-faceted approach, covering diversity, sustainability, internationalization, and more. LOKO represents the student population by participating in meetings and councils at the city and university level. In addition to representing students' values at these meetings, LOKO also organizes various events to actively promote these values. Good examples in this respect are the campaign against disturbances and irresponsible drinking ("Oktobercampagne"), the campaign against sexual harassment ("Can't Touch This"), 'International Week' to welcome international students, as well as a range of other events. LOKO also provides a raft of services for all students, from providing subsidies to organizations and projects to offering rental services. All member organizations take part in the general assembly to discuss or give feedback. This interaction between LOKO and the student organizations is at the core of its mission, and serves as a platform to promote sustainability initiatives throughout student organizations.



### UNDIVIDED

UNDIVIDED is a bottom-up initiative of students interested in focusing on diversity issues at KU Leuven. UNDIVIDED is powered by the Diversity Office of KU Leuven, but serves as an independent diversity platform by and for everyone connected to KU Leuven. It is a model in which students, associations, and staff work together in creating a positive diversity culture at KU Leuven. Through various pathways, UNDIVIDED works towards achieving more inclusivity: by influencing policy, awareness-raising campaigns, cooperation in activities with other organizations, stimulating diversity in research, etc. UNDIVIDED receives funding from KU Leuven to employ three student staff members.





## GREEN OFFICE FOR KU LEUVEN

The Green Office for KU Leuven, established in October 2016, is the sustainability hub of KU Leuven where students and staff members work together towards a more sustainable university. It is a unique set-up within KU Leuven, existing both for and thanks to students. Students and staff members work together on campaigns, projects, activities, and events, with the over-riding aim of making our university more sustainable. (cfr. P.)



## CORE

Set up in 2012, CORE is a cooperative student enterprise consisting of engineering students. This team project was set up in the context of the Postgraduate Program in Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Engineers. Every year, a motivated team works on projects that address Leuven's energy demand and supply, as well as that of its surroundings, via a multi-pronged approach. This approach is split into three main pillars; awareness-raising, energy monitoring and energy feasibility studies. In awareness-raising projects, students of all ages gain insight into their energy habits via nudging, classes and interactive workshops. Together with the Green Office, CORE raises awareness among KU Leuven students living in student housing. Energy monitoring projects often go hand in hand with awareness-raising efforts. As part of these projects, the team investigates the consumption of (non-)residential buildings to identify and eliminate sources of energy waste. A good example of one of CORE's energy feasibility studies involved calculating the feasibility of a water-water heat pump, using the Dijle River as a heat source, in order to provide heat for a new secondary school. In this and similar projects, CORE analyses the feasibility of a range of sustainable energy solutions to provide energy for new and existing buildings.

# CORE

## STUDENTS FOR SOLIDARITY

Students for Solidarity, founded in 2018, is a project by and for the students of Leuven with an interest in solidarity, ecology, North-South cooperation, and (international) justice. Students for Solidarity is a network organization bringing together several student organizations to promote the mutual dialogue and efficiency of the affiliated organizations. The following organizations are active within the network: Humasol, North-South Students Leuven, Amnesty International Youth Leuven, Green Office for KU Leuven, ICARE/UP, UNDIVIDED for KU Leuven, BeMSA Leuven, OXFAM Leuven, Teach the Teachers, and Pati Pati. Students for Solidarity also collaborates with the KU Leuven Development Cooperation office and other organizations including LOKO and Pangaea. Students for Solidarity applies a broad definition of the term “solidarity”, with the result that it encompasses anti-discrimination, North-South cooperation, the defense of human rights, sustainability, and more. To give an example of its activities, Students for Solidarity works closely with the non-profit organization Poverello, which prepares and serves food to people in need.



## ACADEMICS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Academics for Development (AFD) is a non-profit organization founded on the concept of social entrepreneurship. Throughout the academic year, it organizes projects in which students work in teams to apply their academic knowledge in solving a problem of a given international NGO. During the summer, the project is then implemented in the country in question. AFD's work meets the real needs of developing communities through these student projects. Current AFD projects include: supporting social entrepreneurship in Fort Portal, Uganda; valorizing local flora as a food source in Lombok, Indonesia; and improving access to healthcare in Sundarban, India. AFD aims to bring students, communities in developing countries, and companies together in a unique way – students get practical and international experience alongside their studies; companies are able to participate in sustainable development and engage with entrepreneurial students; and developing countries are able to find sustainable solutions for issues in their local communities. On top of international projects, AFD organizes local events for students to learn more about the potential of entrepreneurship for sustainable development.



## HUMASOL

Humasol is a non-profit organization with the objective of making renewable energy, water, and sustainable technology accessible to everyone. Students can apply to be part of a project. Following a preparatory period in Belgium, students spend several weeks (or months) at the project location in Africa, Asia, or South America. Humasol works closely with local partners in the South on technical projects (such as designing and installing photovoltaic solar panels), as well as socio-economic projects (such as setting up local management organizations that maintain and monitor the installations). Humasol also helps interested students looking to carry out their thesis in a developing country, by putting them in touch with contacts in the South.



### WE THE FUTURE (APRIL, 2018)

To promote the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), several KU Leuven student associations organized the “We The Future” event; a day of interaction, events and workshops by students, for students. During the event, 6 workshops on the different SDGs, a festival, and a Panel Discussion were organized. The event attracted some notable guests (including Queen Mathilde of Belgium) and panelists from the fields of government, the corporate world, education, and young people. The event was sponsored by BNP Paribas Fortis Belgium, Hello bank Belgium, Stad Leuven, LOKO, and KU Leuven.

## SUSTAINABILITY WEEK (MAY, 2019)

The Green Office for KU Leuven, in collaboration with the KU Leuven Sustainability Office, STURA, LOKO, Pangaea, and other student organizations, organized a Sustainability Week. The goal of this event was to raise awareness on the subject of sustainability in all its facets, by placing less familiar aspects, such as economic and social, in the spotlight. During Sustainability Week, the Green Office organized a different main activity every day, while other organisations, students and staff members were encouraged to organize their own event in the context of this initiative. In total, 26 events were organized in Leuven, Brussels, Kortrijk and Genk. Highlights included the lecture with renowned economist Prof. Martin Weitzman, the symposium on sustainability, cross-disciplinarity and engagement and a "foodprint" panel discussion.





# VI. Footprint

**1**

Over the past 10 years, KU Leuven managed to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent emissions by 50% per square meter. For the next 10 years, we have set the target of reducing the emissions by at least an additional 20%.

**2**

More than 60% of employees use a means of transport other than the car to come to work, which is far higher than the average for Flanders (29%).

**3**

KU Leuven launched a sustainable travel policy focusing on two action points: taking the train instead of flying and offsetting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions when flying is unavoidable.

**4**

KU Leuven eliminates bottled water wherever possible: The use of tap water is promoted in collaboration with the Green Office for KU Leuven.

**5**

The Masterplan for Campus Arenberg is currently being updated to enhance the ecological value of the campus.

KU Leuven has 15 campuses in 10 cities<sup>13</sup>. This section will present an overview of the university's ecological footprint, with particular focus on Campus Leuven and Campus Arenberg. In future reports, the intention is to expand the scope of this analysis to more campuses. KU Leuven (excluding the university hospitals, car and bike parks) is spread over a gross surface area of 1,331,192 m<sup>2</sup>, encompassing more than 500 buildings and complexes. This section will explore the themes of energy and climate, water, waste, mobility, green spaces, and food, and will present the main initiatives aimed at reducing the university's ecological footprint.





Over the past 10 years, we have managed to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions by 50% per square meter. For the next 10 years, we have set the very ambitious goal of reducing at least an additional 20%. Customized solutions, combining proven techniques with new, advanced and experimental technologies, will result in a further minimization of the fossil fuels in our very diverse building heritage.

Stefaan Saeys

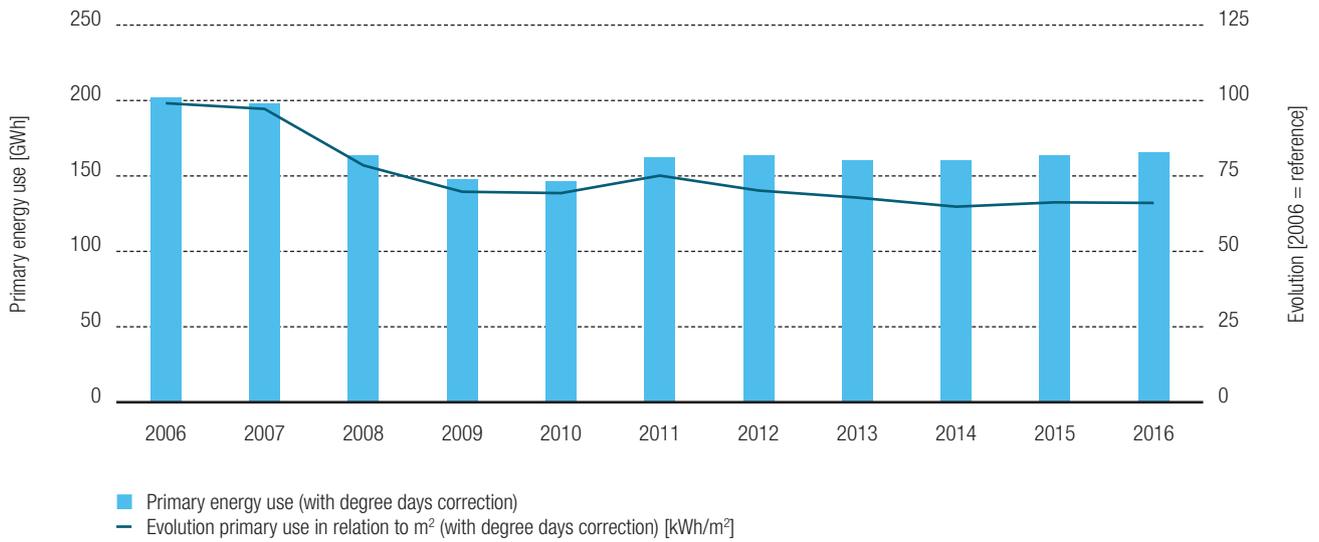
## ENERGY

Since the first energy policy plan of 2007-2013, KU Leuven has been taking drastic steps to reduce the impact of its energy use. The actions so far have been focused on: reducing wasted energy (e.g. through better insulation), switching to renewable energy sources (e.g., purchasing certified green energy, installing solar panels), using fossil fuels as efficiently as possible (e.g., switching from oil to natural gas and incorporating heat recovery).

In 2017, the total primary energy use of the Humanities and Social Sciences Group was 35 GWh (total gross surface area 132,278m<sup>2</sup>), The figure for the Science, Engineering and Technology Group was 62 GWh (total surface area 203,443m<sup>2</sup>) and the total energy use of the Biomedical Sciences Group was 52 GWh (total surface area 173,592m<sup>2</sup>). The primary energy use of the University Administration and Central Services was 14 GWh, more than half of which was accounted for by the university's datacenter. The graph below shows the evolution of total energy consumption for academic and administrative buildings over time. KU Leuven has achieved an absolute reduction in the primary energy use of its academic buildings of 18% in the last ten years, mainly thanks to the purchase of renewable electricity<sup>14</sup>. This resulted in a 38% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, despite a 24% increase in the academic surface area over in the same period. KU Leuven aims to achieve an additional reduction of 20% in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent by 2027, even with a further 15% increase, at the least, of the academic surface area, by increasing the energy intensity of new buildings.

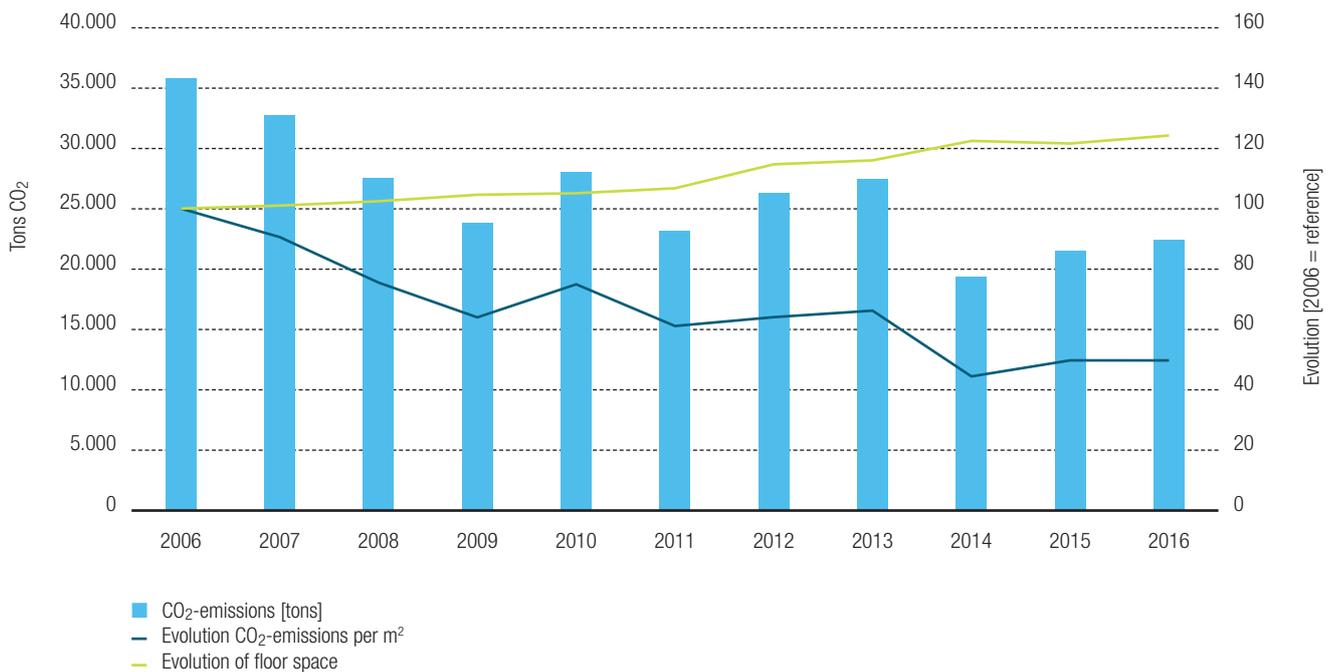
<sup>14</sup> Primary energy is defined as the energy used at the source to cover the actual energy need. By producing electricity in a thermal power plant; 2,5 kWh primary energy is needed to produce 1 kWh electricity; when using renewable sources this factor is 1,3. A more thorough explanation can be found at: <https://pixii.be/ontdek/kennis/wat-primaire-hernieuwbare-energie> (in Dutch).

### Energy consumption compared to floor space



As shown in the graph below, KU Leuven has managed to achieve a considerable reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per m<sup>2</sup> of floor space. Emissions per m<sup>2</sup> are now approximately 40% of what they were in 2007. This has been achieved through a series of combined measures: 1) the use of green electricity, which is produced with less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 2) the replacement of old, inefficient, fuel-based heating installations by modern, natural gas installations, and 3) the systematic refurbishing of old buildings to make them more efficient.

### CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions of academic buildings



In order to achieve the targeted reduction in energy consumption, a KU Leuven energy fund has been set up to fund energy saving investments in buildings (in addition to the standard renovation budget). Projects with a return on investment that is within half of the lifetime of the project are eligible for this funding. Between 2007 and 2016, 4.8 million EUR from this fund was invested in renovation projects.<sup>15</sup>

### Energy Reduction Projects

A first example in this regard is the New De Valk. Within the W&T Group, an interdisciplinary project was initiated in 2013 with representatives from the Departments of Architecture, Urbanism and Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering, in order to develop, based on scientific research and via interdisciplinary optimisation, a KU Leuven construction project into an energy-efficient and sustainable building, and to use this as a real-world platform to communicate the knowledge in the area of sustainability to the outside world. The insulation of the outer wall of De Valk 3 results in considerable energy savings that can be used to the maximum extent to finance the project.

- **Camilo Torres:** the ‘Camilo Torres’ student residence houses 440 students and is one of the largest student residences managed by KU Leuven. The building is currently being renovated to improve its energy efficiency. The façade is being fully insulated and will get a new, modern coating, and all glazing will be replaced by high-efficiency double glazing. Following the renovation, energy consumption for heating (and hence its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) will be reduced by one-third.
- **Justus Lipsius:** a living lab project in the ‘Justus Lipsius’ halls of residence retrofitted 30 student rooms with smart heating systems, to monitor energy use. The goal of the project was to see how energy use could be reduced in student residences while maintaining comfort (for example, deactivating the heating during vacant periods and preheating in anticipation of the arrival of occupants, to assure comfort).
- **CORE & Green Office for KU Leuven (cfr. Infra):** The student groups of CORE and Green Office are also working together on a project to monitor energy use in relation to behaviour in student housing. The aim of the project is to identify which type of campaign or awareness-raising action has the biggest impact on students’ energy use.

### Energy Intensity According to Building Type

The buildings of KU Leuven range from protected historical monuments to recently constructed buildings, with everything in between. There is also significant variety in terms of the use of buildings: from office space to laboratories. The type of building and its use can have a major impact on its energy efficiency. The KU Leuven Technical Services work with the Department of Monuments to look for solutions to increase the energy efficiency of historic buildings, while still preserving their heritage. Increasing the energy efficiency of laboratories will also be vital in meeting KU Leuven’s targeted reduction in energy use.

#### LEUVEN 2030

Leuven 2030 is a consortium made up of citizens, companies, research, and education institutions and (semi-) public institutions living and/or working in Leuven. Leuven 2030 has the ambition of making Leuven one of the most livable, climate-friendly, and sustainable cities in Europe, by combining the strengths of all the parties involved for the further development of Leuven. To achieve this, not only does Leuven 2030 stimulate dialogue and interaction, but it also actively pursues specific projects: the recently-launched ELENA project will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from a number of large buildings in the City of Leuven. Leuven 2030 recently launched a roadmap towards a climate-neutral City of Leuven by 2050. Not only is the roadmap fully supported by the city council, but also by all the major companies and institutions active in Leuven. While this is an important achievement, it is clear that the hard work has only just begun, given that the objectives formulated within the main strands (heating of private and public buildings, transport, spatial planning, energy generation, etc.) now have to be put into action. KU Leuven is a major player within Leuven 2030. The university sees it as a unique opportunity to develop solutions for sustainable living, together with all stakeholders, right on its home turf. The consortium presents unique possibilities for collaboration, and the university expects that it will inspire researchers and lecturers to explore new forms of co-creation of knowledge and to address new challenges.

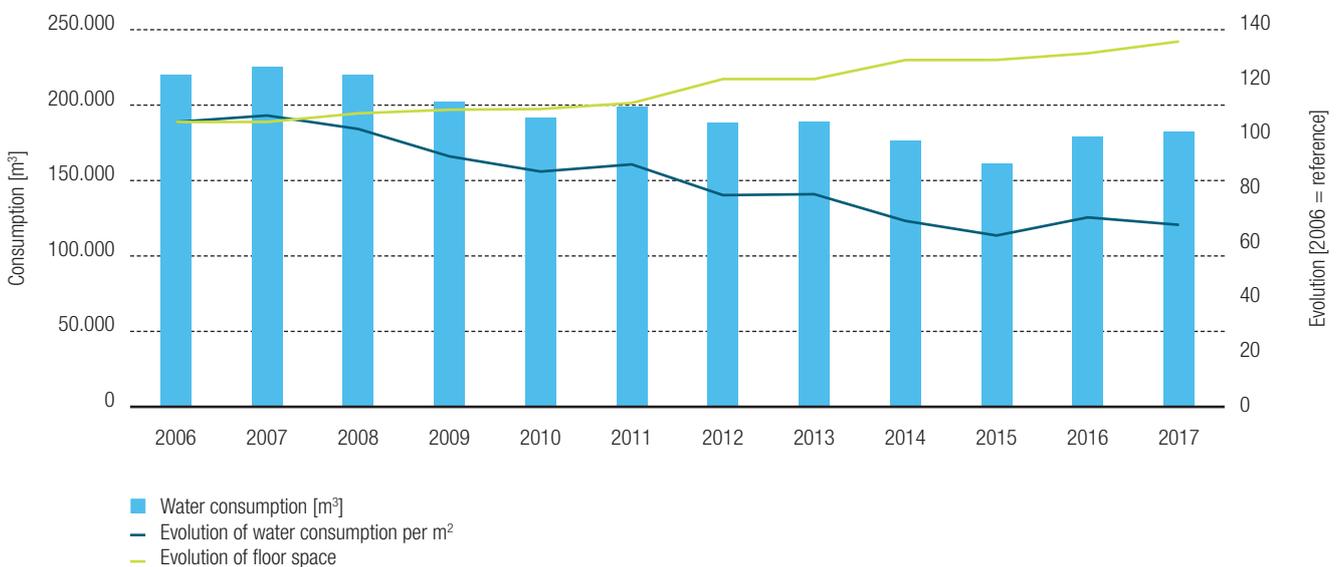


<sup>15</sup> Energy Policy Plan 2018-2021: [https://admin.kuleuven.be/td/intranet/documenten\\_energie/ku-leuven-energiebeleidsplan-2018-2021.pdf](https://admin.kuleuven.be/td/intranet/documenten_energie/ku-leuven-energiebeleidsplan-2018-2021.pdf) (Dutch only).

## WATER

KU Leuven strives for the efficient use of water. In 2017, the consumption of drinking water was 40,000 m<sup>3</sup> for the Humanities and Social Sciences Group; 81,000 m<sup>3</sup> for the Science, Engineering and Technology Group; 51,000 m<sup>3</sup> for the Biomedical Sciences Group; and around 11,000 m<sup>3</sup> for the Administration and Central Services. As shown in the graph below, potable water consumption per m<sup>2</sup> has been steadily decreasing over the last ten years. The increased use of rain water and the further extension of a leakage control system are the main factors behind this evolution.

### Water consumption



## WASTE

The KU Leuven Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) Department oversees the collection and effective disposal of waste. KU Leuven's waste management policy is based around three pillars: legal compliance, economic consideration, and reducing the ecological impact. KU Leuven's different waste streams include: non-hazardous (general; plastic, metal, and drink containers – PMD; paper; glass); electronic waste (ICT, batteries, lights, etc.); hazardous waste (chemical, biological, and radioactive); and waste from building materials used in research activities. General "household" waste, PMD, and paper is collected by cleaning staff directly from work-places, whereas glass, metal, wood, styrofoam, and electronic waste can be deposited in "waste zones" located in each building or cluster of buildings. Bulk waste (general "household" waste, PMD, and paper) is collected near the buildings in semi-underground containers, or large roll containers. Waste from the "waste zones" is transported on a monthly basis to the KU Leuven collection park in Heverlee by Technical Services, and from there is collected by municipal waste collection services. The collection of hazardous waste is coordinated with the HSE-Department by specific labs which require this kind of waste collection. KU Leuven produces an average of 2,283 tons of waste per year (excluding waste from construction and renovation activities), costing approximately €1,000,000 annually for collection and disposal. While hazardous waste accounts for only about 13% of the overall waste of KU Leuven, it accounts for 50% of the collection and disposal costs.

### Average Annual Waste Production - kg

	2016	2017	2018
<b>Non Hazardous</b>	<b>2,534,579</b>	<b>2,455,185</b>	<b>2,583,944</b>
General "household" waste	1,461,579	1,346,996	1,473,800
Plastic, metal, drink containers (PMD)	56,396	53,629	64,092
Paper/Cardboard	524,833	528,755	608,367
Glass	80,787	90,393	66,087
Electric	60,644	68,771	52,572
Building materials	69,380	85,970	63,000
Green waste (GFT)	71,948	63,579	106,147
Other	209,012	217,092	149,879
<b>Hazardous</b>	<b>390,690</b>	<b>370,648</b>	<b>406,242</b>
Chemical	151,172	136,760	162,640
Biological	233,098	229,044	240,159
Radioactive	6,420	4,844	3,443

KU Leuven is involved in a number of projects to reduce its waste and raise awareness among staff and students regarding the effective disposal of waste. For instance, the HSE Department developed a website for staff and students where they can find information on the use of sustainable materials and waste management at KU Leuven. In the future, the HSE department plans to analyze the current logistics and processing of materials at KU Leuven, to identify the potential for increased sustainability throughout the university (e.g. additional collection streams for plastics). Sustainability will be explicitly included as a selection criterion in procurement contracts for waste collection (this is already the case for hazardous waste collection). In collaboration with the Sustainability Office, the HSE department is developing a campaign to make laboratories more sustainable.

Additional circular economy projects:

- **Digital pay slips for staff:** as of June 2015, KU Leuven has digitized pay slips. Thanks to this switch from paper to electronic pay slips, KU Leuven is able to simplify its administration while saving more than 10,000 sheets of paper every month.
- **The KU Leuven internal website for reusable goods:** an internal website was launched in an effort to promote the reuse of second-hand or unused goods. Staff members can post an item on the website (for example: furniture, office supplies, IT or audio-visual equipment, electrical appliances, and lab materials) and other staff members can then use it.
- **Reusable plastic cups for events:** in academic year 2018-2019, the Alma restaurant/catering service invested in 3,000 reusable plastic cups that can be rented for events for a cost of 300 EUR (including delivery and cleaning). Events in Alma 2 are obliged to use reusable cups.
- **Tap it Up:** in 2018, the Green Office for KU Leuven launched the Tap it Up campaign. Three new water taps were installed around Campus Leuven and free reusable drinking bottles were distributed (for example, every incoming student in academic year 2018-2019 was invited to the Green Office to pick up a water bottle). The taps have been installed by the non-profit 'Join the Pipe', which uses its revenues to fund drinking water projects in developing countries. KU Leuven installed an additional 9 taps the following year.





### BIKE REPAIR STATIONS

For small repairs or to inflate tires, KU Leuven students and staff can use Velo fix stations (VFS) or the bicycle pump network. The VFS are equipped with various tools for bike repairs, which users can learn to use by watching instructional videos (accessible with QR codes). There are also 15 pump stations in the bicycle pump network. If students or staff need more substantial repairs, they can use the bike repair shop, where they learn to fix their own bike with the help of a professional Velo bike technician. The advice and the use of tools are free of charge.

## MOBILITY

KU Leuven aims to promote sustainable mobility by emphasizing three aspects: promoting public transport and bicycle use, encouraging teleworking, and launching a new sustainable travel policy for staff.

### PROMOTING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION & BIKE USE

Every three years, KU Leuven conducts a mobility survey among staff members. Based on the results of this survey, more than 60% of KU Leuven employees use a means of transport other than the car to get to work, which is far higher than the average for Flanders (29%). A positive evolution has also been observed over time regarding KU Leuven staff members choosing for a means of transport other than the car to commute, with a roughly 9% decrease in car usage over 10 years.

	BRUSSELS	FLANDERS	KU LEUVEN			
			2017	2014	2011	2008
Walking	3,4%	1,7%	3,7%	3,4%	5,0%	5,5%
Bicycle	3,0%	14,9%	29,7	28,8%	27,2%	25,8%
Moped/moto	1,1%	1,3%	0,7%	0,8%	0,8%	0,9%
Car	39,1%	71,8%	38,5%	40,5%	43,5%	47,0%
Train	34,1%	5,3%	22,3%	21,0%	19,0%	16,2%
Bus/Tram/Subway	19,0%	3,9%	4,6%	5,1%	4,1%	4,3%
Other	0,3%	1,1%	0,5%	0,4%	0,4%	0,3%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Travelling to work by bike use is popular for staff who live within a radius of 10 kilometers, while travelling by train is most popular for people who live more than 25 kilometers away. Travelling by car is most popular for staff who live between 10 and 25 kilometers away. KU Leuven aims to promote commuting by public transport and bike, by reimbursing travel with public transport and offering (free) bikes and bicycle repair to its staff. In 2018, KU Leuven launched the campaign “Wednesday Bike Day” and promoted an annual “Car Free Day” to stimulate staff members to commute by foot, bike, or public transport. KU Leuven recently introduced electric bikes, which extend the range of bike commuting to 15-20 km. Staff members contribute about a third of the total cost, while the rest is financed by the university. At present, over 500 electric bikes are in use, and the aim is to increase this number significantly in the coming years.

Students can purchase an annual bus pass, which is valid within the limits of the city of Leuven, for the reduced rate of 20 EUR. In partnership with the non-profit organization Velo, KU Leuven provides around 5,000 rental bikes for students. For students who want to repair their own bike, 17 repair stations are available, as well as a “bike atelier” for assisted self-repair. Based on the Student Mobility Survey, 77% of students in Leuven stay in the city during the week. Of these students, 87% report having a bike for use in the city. 66.7% report using the bike to go to class, while 27% report going on foot, and about 5.7% report using the bus.

The use of bikes is also promoted within the KU Leuven Technical Services. For more than ten years, KU Leuven has adhered to the “last mile” principle of logistics. Mail is first brought to a central hub outside the city center, and then delivered within the city by the Technical Services. In 2017, KU Leuven started using e-cargo bikes to deliver its mail within the city center. As of the end of 2018, e-bikes were used for more than 100,000 travelled kilometres instead of by car, saving an approximate 16+ tons of CO<sub>2</sub><sup>16</sup>.



## TELEWORKING

Teleworking is seen by KU Leuven as a form of flexible and self-organizing work that can have a positive effect on the output and well-being of employees. The teleworking policy is based on mutual trust and a sense of responsibility, and aims to extend the flexible working arrangements in non-location specific activities. All employees can request teleworking one day a week from their supervisor, regardless of their staff category, and the supervisor has the responsibility to discuss teleworking options with their employee(s).

### SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL POLICY

To reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from staff travel, KU Leuven launched a sustainable travel policy in 2018 focusing on two action points: taking the train instead of flying and offsetting for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions when flying is unavoidable. The use of train is preferred (instead of air travel) for destinations when the flight time plus three hours (average time spent getting to airport, checking-in, etc.) is less than the time of a train ride from Leuven (for example, when traveling from Leuven to London). It is faster to travel to these “white” cities by train than by flying, when taking into account the time spent going to and from the airport and waiting in the airport. A subsequent “grey-list” consists of cities that can be reached by train from Leuven in less than seven hours.

Secondly, KU Leuven launched a voluntary initiative in 2018, for staff to include carbon offsetting in their air travel costs. Staff/departments can voluntarily sign up and agree to pay 40 euros per ton of CO<sub>2</sub> from airplane travel. As of 2018, more than 820 KU Leuven staff members have joined this voluntary initiative (342 of which are budget holders representing an entire department). People who sign up can choose where their funds go: 1) reforestation projects in the South, 2) extensions to the videoconferencing facilities at KU Leuven, or 3) research projects on sustainability.



## GREEN SPACE

Green spaces provide habitat for local flora and fauna, and enhance the wellbeing of the community. Campus Leuven, Campus Arenberg, and Campus Gasthuisberg all feature green spaces. The KU Leuven Technical Services are responsible for maintaining KU Leuven's green spaces, as well as developing policies and management plans regarding their use. Emphasis has been placed on supporting habitats (expanding current habitats and providing corridors), supporting the wellbeing of the community through green spaces (for example, reducing urban heat islands, supporting mental health), as well as sustainability considerations in terms of maintaining green spaces (for example, herbicides have not been used by KU Leuven for 25 years). In recent years, community gardens have been popping up around KU Leuven, bringing new life to green spaces.





In 2015, a subgroup of the Sustainability Council worked together with the KU Leuven Technical Services on a Green Plan, which was approved by the KU Leuven General Council (GEBU). The Green Plan acknowledges the importance of green spaces for the wellbeing of staff and students, heightening the attractiveness of the university, supporting ecosystem services (for example, fine particle filtering, flood prevention, visual buffers), preserving biodiversity, and the potential of green spaces to be utilized as living labs (for biology, forest and nature management, geography, and related courses). The plan identifies eight principles that are fundamental for KU Leuven's management of green spaces, like participation in green policy. The Green Plan calls for open consultation during decision-making processes, strengthening green considerations in master plans (for example, the master plans of Campus Arenberg, Campus Gasthuisberg, and Campus Kortrijk), utilizing the professional expertise and the experience within the university community around green, utilizing green spaces as living labs, ramping up the communication regarding the university's green resources (for example, developing a guide on KU Leuven's green heritage), developing a green inventory in which the various green elements and their heritage value (including biodiversity value) are mapped as dynamic geographical information layers, as well as synergies between the university's green policies and mobility policies.

## CAMPUS LEUVEN

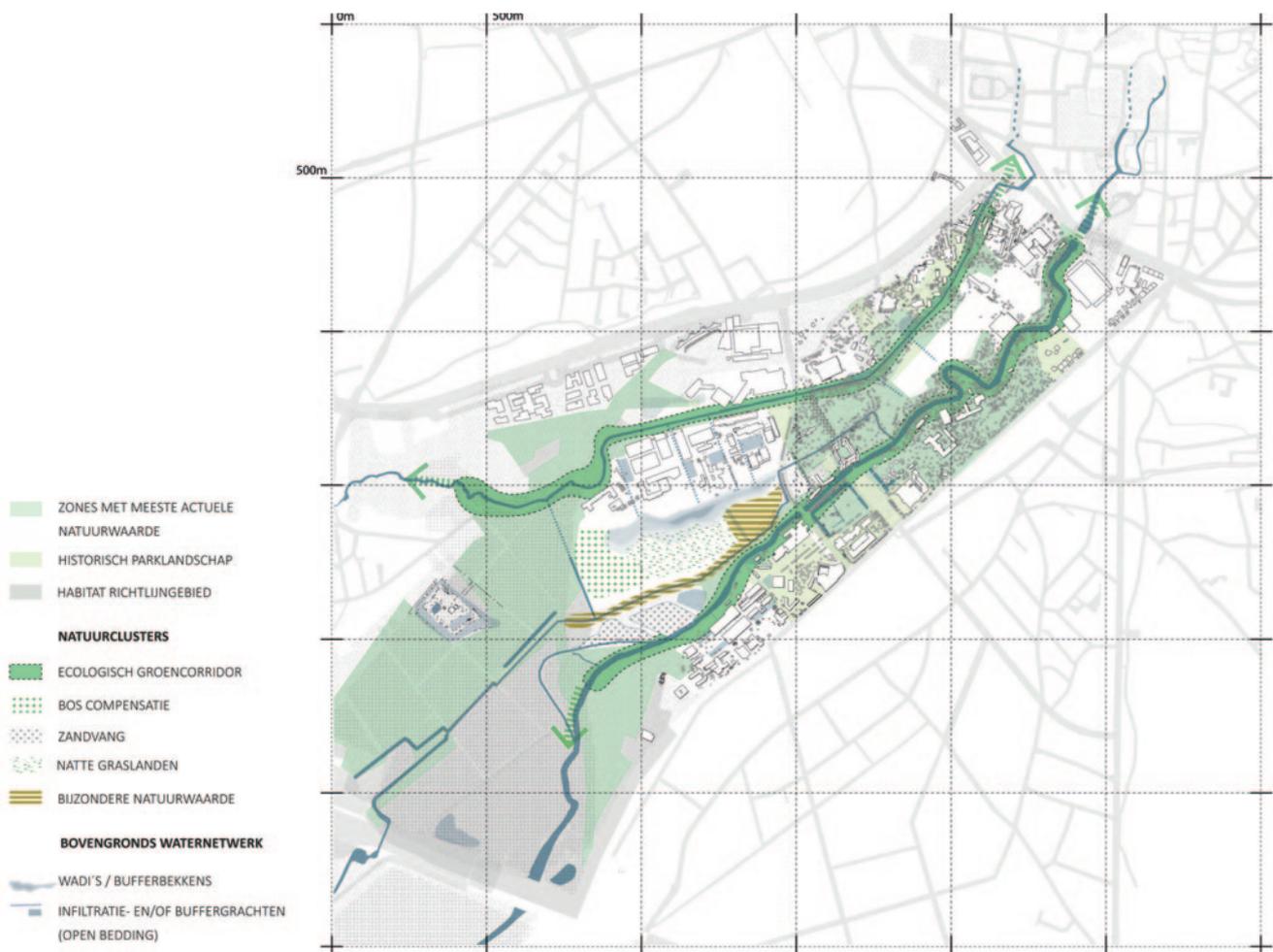
KU Leuven underwent major expansion during the 1960s and 1970s, and the buildings constructed during this period are now ripe for renovation. Emphasis is given to ensuring consideration for green spaces during building renovations. While the decision whether to incorporate green spaces into renovation plans or not remains at the discretion of faculties, many are choosing to integrate green spaces into their renovation plans. For example, in 2016-2017, the Faculty of Law renovated the New Falcon building, integrating vast tracts of green spaces around the buildings, in addition to achieving energy efficiency within the buildings.

## CAMPUS ARENBERG

The master plan for Campus Arenberg is in the process of being updated (from the previous 2008 version). The new master plan places greater emphasis on sustainability criteria. The planning process is ongoing and emphasizes six themes: water, landscape and green spaces, natural heritage, buildings, energy, and mobility. Academic expertise has been solicited throughout the project. The aim is to compile all the relevant expertise and knowledge of water and green spaces at Campus Arenberg<sup>17</sup> and identify experts in these domains. Ambassadors (KU Leuven academic staff) have been assigned to provide thematic input and feedback on the plan.

Campus Arenberg encompasses various habitats including alluvial forest, ancient oak-beech woodlands, parklands with arboretum, and moist hayfields. The habitats of Campus Arenberg abundant flora and fauna species. A list of flora and fauna at Campus Arenberg is available on the website of Natuurpunt<sup>18</sup>. For example, 287 species of fungi have been identified at Campus Arenberg<sup>19</sup>, of which four are provincial priority species (French amanita, Anemone cup agaric, Large venomous fungus and Zonnerussula – *Russula solaris*).

Map of the Arenberg Campus with indication of the valuable natural habitats.



© TV BUUR-ANTEA i.s.m. 3E en Studio Roma (uit Actualisatie Masterplan Campus Arenberg)

17 <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pIPBs1SQUlPk-zfHnSGfuYPLsSzMNx44c-SXE1dkak/edit>

18 [waarnemingen.be/gebied/species\\_list/30920](http://waarnemingen.be/gebied/species_list/30920)

19 Source: [perceptions.be](http://perceptions.be) + Funbel database Royal Flemish Mycological Association

For many species in the old forests, it is essential that natural processes can occur as much as possible (e.g. trees decaying in situ). As various species depend on older trees, it is also important that there is continuity in the age class structure of trees (new trees need to be planted in time so that they are already aged when the oldest trees die). Grasslands also serve as habitats if they are not fertilized and are managed consistently (this involves removing the hay, and avoiding the use of heavy machinery and other forms of soil degradation).



### UNIVERSITY FOREST

KU Leuven owns the 165 ha domain of Beverbeek in Hamont-Achel, an attractive blend of forests, wetlands, and farmland. The domain is managed in accordance with the highest sustainability standards, including a forest management plan approved by the Flemish Government. The wood produced in the forest is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified. The valuable bocage landscape with old oak trees interspersed in the meadows is being restored, and unique mesotrophic wetlands and riverine forests have been recognized as nature reserves by the Flemish Government. The domain includes trails that are open to the public and information panels to raise awareness about the natural and cultural heritage of the domain. KU Leuven was awarded the prestigious Inbev-Baillet Latour award for the environment in 2009, in recognition of its management of the domain.





### COMMUNITY GARDENS

In 2018, the “Geo Garden” saw the light of day at Campus Arenberg, made possible by the passion of the researchers and students for gardening and relaxation in a flourishing green environment. The Geo Garden is intended not only to grow delicious organic vegetables, but also to bring life to Campus Arenberg and connect people from different disciplines in a convivial and open atmosphere. This success story at the Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences has inspired other groups, leading to the launch of the Physics Department’s community garden in 2019.

## FOOD

Between 2014 and 2015, a KU Leuven Metaforum Working Group examined the topic of food (specifically food production and insecurity). Building on the momentum of the Metaforum and driven by Leuven 2030 and Rikolto, KU Leuven made a substantial contribution to the Food Strategy for Leuven<sup>20</sup>. The Food Strategy for Leuven focuses on promoting healthy and sustainable food, bringing producers and consumers closer together, giving space to sustainable food production, sustainable agriculture, making sustainable food products accessible to all, preventing food waste, and stimulating innovation for sustainable agriculture and nutrition.

KU Leuven is currently in the process of preparing its own food strategy, focusing on collaboration with local restaurants and catering services (in particular Alma<sup>21</sup>), as well as procurement practices. The emphasis will be on minimizing waste (for example from packaging), promoting healthy and sustainable food options to students and staff, and including procurement criteria for more sustainable food sourcing).

### THE VEGGIE BAG

Since 2007, the KU Leuven Sustainability Office has striven to promote healthy, conscious and eco-friendly consumption by coordinating an optional produce basket. Interested staff and students can sign up for a weekly fruit, vegetable, or combined basket. The vegetables and fruits are organic, local, seasonal and supplied by de Wikke, a project of the non-profit Wonen en Werken organization, who are active in creating a social economy.



<sup>20</sup> [https://www.leuven2030.be/sites/default/files/attachments/Leuvense%20voedselstrategie\\_Voeding%20verbindt.pdf](https://www.leuven2030.be/sites/default/files/attachments/Leuvense%20voedselstrategie_Voeding%20verbindt.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Alma is an autonomous non-profit organization serving as the KU Leuven university restaurant. Its main focus is to provide decent and affordable meals to students, subsidized by Student services. KU Leuven staff can also eat here at reduced prices.



# VII. Economic

1

KU Leuven *senso strictu* realized an operating income of €1,002.8 million (2018).

2

Socially responsible investment (SRI) is seen as an integral part of the investment process and is incorporated into every investment decision.

3

Social and environmental criteria are integrated into framework agreements as much as possible.

4

Used PCs are either sold to students and staff or donated to 'Close The Gap' and 'Worldloop', two initiatives that bring ICT infrastructure to people without access to it.

## GOVERNANCE

The KU Leuven Financial Department oversees processes related to financial transactions (management of supplies, registration and control of purchase invoices, etc.) carried out within the central financial services. The central financial services are also responsible for preparing the budget and the annual accounts. The budget is reported to the governing bodies (the Joint Executive Board, Audit Committee, and Board of Directors). The KU Leuven General Manager monitors financial processes and supervises the financial policy and financial balance of KU Leuven on behalf of the Joint Executive Board. The corporate governance of the university, including financial management, is audited every three years. The KU Leuven Remuneration Committee is responsible for the overall framework within which remuneration decisions are made, and serves as a sounding board for remuneration discussions in general. Individual salary decisions for employees of the university (non-directors) are based on the remuneration policy (baremic structure) imposed by the Flemish government.

## FUNDING

In Flanders, recognized state and private universities are all subsidized under the same allocation rules that take into account a wide range of input and output factors. Once the amount of funding has been determined, it is provided as a block grant which the university is free to distribute according to their own priorities. The funding received by KU Leuven can be categorized as follows:

### First stream: teaching and research block grant

The teaching and research block grant consists of an overall budget to be distributed as a fixed amount, taking into account scale effects. The two most important factors that influence the calculation of the block grants are: 1) the volume of teaching activity (the number of study points taken by newly-enrolled students; the number of credits awarded; the number of Bachelor's and Master's degrees awarded – where only the academic preparatory, transition, Bachelor's and Master's programs are taken into account<sup>22</sup>) and 2) the volume of research activity (the number of Master's and PhD degrees awarded; the number of publications and citations; the diversity of the institution's research population).

### Second and third stream: research funding allocations

KU Leuven also receives a second and third funding stream for research driven by inquisitiveness (BOF second stream) and a grant (IOF) aimed at stimulating universities to collaborate with business and industry and foster innovation (third stream), as well as various smaller targeted allocations (for example, the Odysseus program that supports the appointment of top researchers from outside Flanders). In addition, public research funds are also provided by the Flemish Fund for Scientific Research (FWO). These funds are allocated through research projects, PhD grants, and postdoctoral grants.

### Other

The Flemish government provides minimal funding for real estate and large equipment as well as various smaller targeted grants.

Tuition fees generated remain relatively low, accounting for about 4% of total university revenue.

Other funding also includes fundraising & endowment, rental income, etc.

KU Leuven's first-flow funds are provided by the government, largely on the basis of the degrees delivered (output financing), and then allocated across groups and faculties on the basis of an allocation model (based on teaching effort and research output). Faculties/research departments secure second and third stream funding, as well as income from consulting activities (fourth stream), government-funded project money, and chairs funded by the private sector.

22. The block grant does not reward the teaching activity in post graduate studies. For those programs the university can charge a higher tuition fee.

## ECONOMIC VALUE GENERATED AND DISTRIBUTED

In 2018, KU Leuven (exl. UZ Leuven) realized operating income of €1,002.8 million. Of this total amount, €918.6 million (91.6%) pertained to education, research and services; €19.1 million (1.9%) related to donations and legacies; and €65.0 million (6.5%) related to other operating income (including recovery of costs from third parties and rental income from the non-social sector).

	2014		2018	
	in k €		in k €	
<b>Total revenue linked to education, research, and services</b>	<b>855.752</b>	<b>91,7%</b>	<b>918.637</b>	<b>91,6%</b>
Government grants and subsidies – basic funding (1st flow)	382.045	40,9%	412.325	41,1%
Government funding – fundamental research (2nd flow)	127.435	13,7%	131.176	13,1%
Government funding – applied research (3rd flow)	118.545	12,7%	146.275	14,6%
Contracted research with the private sector and scientific services (4th flow)	145.798	15,6%	135.673	13,5%
Other revenue linked to education, research, and services	81.929	8,8%	93.188	9,3%
<b>Other operating revenue</b>	<b>77.572</b>	<b>8,3%</b>	<b>84.118</b>	<b>8,4%</b>
<b>Total operating revenue – university</b>	<b>933.324</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>1.002.755</b>	<b>100,0%</b>
Purchases of goods	- 14.226	1,6%	- 10.484	1,1%
Services and other goods	- 209.901	23,5%	- 250.281	26,3%
Remuneration, social security costs and pensions	- 567.239	63,5%	- 616.703	64,7%
Depreciation and amortization	- 48.522	5,4%	- 59.527	6,2%
Amounts written off on stocks and trade debtors	1	0,0%	- 864	0,1%
Provisions for risks and charges	- 32.043	3,6%	- 572	-0,1%
Other operating expenses	- 21.231	2,4%	- 15.988	1,7%
<b>Total operating expenses – university</b>	<b>- 893.161</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>- 953.276</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

### INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

KU Leuven's investment framework is incorporated into the university's Mission Statement. The guidelines are outlined in a strategic framework that was completely updated, and submitted to the Board of Governors on 26 June 2018. The general principles are that KU Leuven invests with due diligence, is risk-averse and takes a limited currency risk. The concern about reducing KU Leuven's environmental impact is also reflected in the university's investment strategy. Within the strategic framework, explicit attention is therefore paid to the ethical and sustainability dimension of the investment policy. In addition, KU Leuven considers socially responsible investment (SRI) to be an integral part of the investment process. This includes, among other things:

- Socially responsible investment is included in every investment decision.
- No new purchases are made from funds that invest exclusively in fossil fuels. A divestment of existing positions has already been carried out: KU Leuven no longer has any funds that are exclusively or mainly focused on investments in fossil fuels.

- The already initiated diversification towards SRI funds is being continued. The emphasis here is, among other things, on the global impact of climate change, as well as on social and governance objectives. The equity funds focused on sustainability in the KU Leuven portfolio have increased from 5% (2015) to 42% (2018).
- In its contacts with the financial sector, KU Leuven raises awareness among the market players to give priority in the composition of their funds to those companies that apply a global sustainable approach in their business policy. Fund managers are also urged to use their voting rights to encourage companies to pay more attention to climate change, and to align their business strategy with it.

In addition, the university actively participates in the public debate on sustainable investment, among other things through participation in the learning network Climate Friendly Investments set up by The Shift (<https://theshift.be/en>), the largest sustainability network in Belgium.

## PROCUREMENT

The KU Leuven Purchasing Department uses “framework agreements” for various types of common purchases, like office and ICT equipment and furniture. Many framework agreements incorporate social and environmental criteria (e.g. FSC wood in furniture, Fair Wear label for apparel, certified green electricity, cleaning products with Eco label, recycled toilet paper, ICT equipment with EnergyStar labels, cooperation VELO bike services). For instance, KU Leuven only uses sustainably-sourced paper: 1) recycled grey paper (Blue Angel, EU Ecolabel, and Nordic Swan certified) and 2) recycled white paper (Blue Angles, EU Ecolabel, and FSC certified). These certifications ensure environmental management of sourcing (forest management) and production (for example, chlorine-free bleaching), as well as social criteria (rights of local communities where paper pulp is sourced). Another notable example is the use of Giroflex office chairs. Giroflex adopts various sustainability approaches in the design, production, and end-of-life phases of their products, including: pollutant-free lacquers; a “cradle-to-cradle” approach, ISO 14001 certification for environmental management, and ergonomic considerations of end users. Faculties and departments can choose from predetermined product ranges in framework agreements for their purchases. Each framework agreement has a product owner – an expert in a specific domain that determines the criteria of the framework contracts.



**The work to achieve greener IT is never finished - we're constantly looking for new ways to facilitate sustainable initiatives or save on power, paper, ink or hardware.**

Annemie Depuydt,  
ICTS directorate

### GREENER IT

Special efforts are made with respect to procurement and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment. The Information and Communication Technology Service (ICTS) manages about 3500 personal computers (PCs) used by staff in their offices and laboratories and another 2500 PCs in libraries, computer classrooms, and learning centres. Computers for staff are used for four years; computers in libraries and other such spaces are used as long as is feasible. Screens are replaced only when they break down. Other ICT materials are also kept in use for as long as possible with routers and switches being replaced only after eight years. PCs are not scrapped when they reach the end-of-life phase: some are sold to students and staff. The rest are donated to Close The Gap (<https://www.close-the-gap.org/>) and Worldloop (<http://worldloop.org/>). These charities use this equipment to bring ICT infrastructure to people who would normally not have access to it. These charities are also professionally organised, guaranteeing that all PCs are properly wiped (all data erased) and will be properly recycled after use. KU Leuven ICT equipment that can no longer be used is disposed of through a certified recycling company.

KU Leuven also tries to make sure that ICT equipment is used as sustainably as possible during its useful lifetime. Printers are centrally managed in order to reduce energy and paper consumption. As part of KU Leuven’s promotion of videoconferencing, upgrades have been made to infrastructure to increase the availability of videoconferencing technology for remote meetings and distance learning.





## INDIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Universities are major drivers of knowledge dissemination and growth within society, serving as major employment hubs and sources of technological innovation. This facilitates start-ups, attracts students from all over the world, and makes a contribution in terms of intellectual and human capital. The community activities of academics, students, and university leaders contribute to regional governance, community capacity building, cultural programs, and more. In 2017, a report was prepared on the economic impact of LERU universities, including KU Leuven, highlighting some of the direct and indirect economic impacts (contribution to income and employment; students spending, working, volunteering and undertaking placements; knowledge transfer, enterprise and innovation activity; tourism contribution created by visitors to staff and students and attendance at conferences and events held at the Universities; and life-time productivity gains from teaching and learning delivered by each institution (graduate premium). Based on the findings of this report<sup>23</sup>, it is estimated that every €1 of Gross Value Added (GVA) directly contributed by the universities generates almost €7 of GVA in the wider economy; and for every €1 of income generated, universities produce almost €5 of GVA. On this basis, in 2016, KU Leuven contributed €7.4 billion Gross Value Added (GVA) and 79,550 jobs to the European economy; and €5.1 billion GVA and 67,870 jobs to the Belgian economy.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.leru.org/files/Economic-Contribution-of-the-LERU-Universities-Full-paper.pdf>



# VIII. The way forward

KU Leuven's first sustainability report has attempted to provide an overview of the university's approach to sustainability in 2019, what our vision is and to what extent we have succeeded in implementing it. The report allows any interested party to see the steps already taken by KU Leuven to make its own operations more sustainable, incorporate sustainability and sustainable development into education programs, and how the KU Leuven community contributes to a more sustainable society through its research and engagement.

Knowing at what point we are at now prompts us to reflect upon the future, and how at KU Leuven we will take sustainability forward. In order to monitor our progress in the future, we will make our ambitions even more concrete and verifiable. This is not something we want to achieve via a top-down process, the aim instead is to involve the entire KU Leuven community in the process. We strongly believe that a combination of clear governance decisions and bottom-up participation of our community will lead to a sustainable university. A university which not only leads by example within its management operations, but also fosters research that focuses on the societal challenges we face today and equips the next generation of citizens and leaders with the skills and knowledge they will need to tackle the problems of tomorrow. As a university, we are creating a vision on what a (more) sustainable society could look like, and which pathways we need to follow to get there. This culture and vision can only be developed by continuous interaction and collaboration with the global research community, and society as a whole.

We have already made significant progress in reducing our environmental footprint. However, we are not yet an emissions-free university. We will define clear pathways and collaborate to develop, test and implement new innovations. An important point of attention here remains travel and mobility. Even more people can make their commute (almost) carbon-neutral and we will encourage them by further implementing and deepening our sustainable travel policy. Similarly, a significant proportion of our buildings can be made more energy-efficient, thereby reducing emissions to a significant extent. This also means developing novel approaches for the management of historic buildings that cannot be made climate-neutral using conventional techniques.

Not only do researchers try to predict the future, they also shape it by developing the solutions which are needed by future societies. At KU Leuven, we foster a research culture that allows sustainability science to thrive, leading to important technological and societal innovations, as well as the development and implementation of novel policy measures. We will further strengthen this culture by intensifying the dialogue between researchers from different disciplines, so that even more research projects can bring a truly transdisciplinary perspective towards solving so-called wicked problems such as climate change.

Furthermore, we will take further steps with respect to the education and training of our students, the scientists and leading citizens of tomorrow. Sustainability is already an important theme in many of our education programs but we have to give every student of KU Leuven the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to participate in societal debates and sustainability efforts, and address the challenges faced by modern societies. We will also extend our efforts to stimulate active, interdisciplinary education since current, complex problems often require multidisciplinary collaboration to arrive at a solution.

But it is not just about continuing and strengthening our sustainability efforts. We also need to broaden these efforts by implementing the SDGs, as drafted by the United Nations, given the realization that sustainable development can only be achieved if we also develop just insights and good practices with regard to objectives such as participation, housing, the fight against poverty etc. We undertake to value fundamental respect for people in all their diversity, in an environment in which ideas can be freely exchanged. Diversity may indeed pose challenges, but we also see it as a tremendous asset.

We will invest in helping our talented people fulfill their ambitions. We are committed to a culture of continuous learning and coaching, a culture that encourages people to challenge themselves to unlock their potential in a truly academic environment. Our projects focus on excellence in education, on innovation, entrepreneurship, empowerment, promotion of inclusion and the recruitment and strengthening of talent. These areas reflect our learning culture, our awareness of social justice, solidarity and responsibility.

Building a sustainable future is not something a university can achieve alone. We will further intensify our collaboration with other stakeholders (institutions, administrations, companies, NGO's) working on sustainability in the cities where we have campuses, as well as at the regional, national and international level. KU Leuven does not only want to bring ideas to the table within these networks. The unique combination of advanced research, high-level education and societal service at KU Leuven obliges our university to take up a central role in outlining and implementing the sustainability transition we all need. This is a challenge we gladly accept.



# REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report has been realized on initiative from the Sustainability Council with the help of many contributors. We want to thank everyone who helped make this report possible!

## EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

We want to thank all the deans and department chairs who contributed to this report!

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- Nicole Van Lipzig - Professor Geography, Chairman Leuven SUSTAINABLE Earth (LSUE)

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- Bert Overlaet - HR Department
- Luc Timmers - HR Information Management
- Deb Vansteenwegen - Manager HR Department

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- Ann Gaublomme - Manager of Student Services
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- Lieven Put - Head HSE Department (Health, Safety & Environment)

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- Chantal Van Audenhove - Vice Rector of Diversity Policy and Student Affairs

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- Leen Van Houdt - Green Office for KU Leuven
- Tom Husson - Academics for Development
- Jessy Baeken - Student Council KU Leuven (Stura)
- Floris Vankrunkelsven - Student Council KU Leuven (Stura)
- Julie Gaillard - LOKO
- Reine Spiessens - LOKO
- Olivier Schottey - CORE
- Jonas Swinnen - CORE
- Thijs Ceunen - Students for Solidarity

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- Stefaan Saeys - Manager Technical Services Department

### Energy & Gas

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### Waste & Recycling

- Lieven Put - Head HSE Department (Health, Safety & Environment)

### Green Spaces

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- Mich Vanderwegen - Head of Outdoor Infrastructure
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### Mobility

- Karen De Geyndt - Purchasing Department; Sustainable Mobility Coordinator
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### Procurement

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- Karen De Geyndt - Purchasing Department; Sustainable Mobility Coordinator

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- Koenraad Debackere - Managing Director KU Leuven
- Gerard Govers - Vice Rector of Sustainability
- Karel Van Acker - Chairman Sustainability Council
- Deirdre Maes - Sustainability Office
- Stefaan Saeys - Manager Technical Services Department
- Talia Stough - Sustainability Coordinator - International Relations KU Leuven Faculty of Economics and Business

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