



KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT  
**LEUVEN**



K.U.Leuven in brief 2010 ■ 2011



# Foreword

It is impossible to gauge the dynamism of an institution. It is possible to estimate it fairly realistically, however on the basis of a number of relatively large-scale developments, characteristics and achievements. This is also true of a complex whole such as K.U.Leuven. I use the word 'whole' very consciously. Indeed, however complex and apparently disparate our university may be, it is also one, supported by staff and students who are very aware of the fact that they are 'from Leuven'. They form the heart of this organisation of people, and it is they who provide the form and content of the multifaceted dynamism of our university.

Rather than opting for details and comprehensiveness, it has been decided that this brochure should provide an overview of only a few (though important) developments and characteristics of our university. We hope that this selective approach does not hinder the reader from acquiring a reasonably good impression of what K.U.Leuven is and does. In addition to the pages dedicated to research and education, this brochure will also inform you of what characterises us as an organisation; an organic whole of working, thinking, searching people who enjoy working, studying and living at the university that is their own.

This brochure contains quite a number of 'facts and figures'. Figures and their accompanying explanation do not, however, tell the whole story. First and foremost, a university must be 'experienced'. And K.U.Leuven is a good experience. The intention of this little book is to provide a short explanation of why that is.

Leuven, 21 September 2009

Prof. M. Waer  
Rector K.U.Leuven





# People

**The university revolves around people and their 'brains'. That is why caring for people is one of the central aspects of this institution. Care is expressed in the development of a transparent staff policy, which pays special attention to career advancement and a healthy balance of private and professional life.**

Our staff policy strives to develop a recognisable career identity for all our colleagues as well as a career path with well-defined promotion criteria. In evaluating the appointment or promotion of senior academic staff members, educational activities and research activities are of equal importance. Reliable assessment tools determine achievements in both areas.

We are expanding the stimulating educational and research environment of our junior academic staff. Our doctoral programmes provide the necessary space for the development of a variety of skills that are not limited to research and education. Clear insight into the possibilities of one's personal career is of essential importance for professional satisfaction. The implementation of the 'tenure track' system for professors is one key element in this regard.

The career paths of the administrative and technical staff are also being increasingly honed. A well-designed organisational chart and function classification ensure a good grasp of the different functions and the proper correlation of work content, performance and salary.



Research and education are human endeavours and are only able to flourish in a positive environment that facilitates the combination of professional tasks and personal and family life. This combination must be nurtured constantly.



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One of our central focuses is to nurture diversity and equal opportunities. We consider diversity in all its facets to add great value to our university, as it contributes to essential creativity and innovation. Targeted actions contribute to gradually breaking through all forms of 'glass ceilings' and implementing a change of mentality. We are also making an effort to limit counterproductive administrative excesses, as well as focusing on the material preconditions for guaranteeing a pleasant atmosphere in the workplace.

K.U.Leuven is one of the largest employers in the region, with 17,880 staff members (9,258 at the university and 8,622 at the University Hospitals). In 2009, K.U.Leuven employed 1,467 professors. The administrative and technical staff consisted of 3,057 members, the junior academic staff numbered 774 members and the remaining academic staff comprised a further 3,960 members.

The university exists by the grace of its students. One aspect of its mission is to strive to form students into critical and mature citizens. This perspective gives a new, additional dimension to student participation in the management of the university.

On 1 February 2010, 36,923 students were enrolled at K.U.Leuven, of whom 5,702 were first-time students (i.e., students who enrolled in the first year of a university programme for the first time). Approximately 55% of our first-time students are female.

In 2008-2009, K.U.Leuven awarded 4,746 Master's degrees.

About 86% of the students enrolled at K.U.Leuven are Belgian nationals, while about 7% are from other EU countries and a further 7% are from outside the EU. In the table below, you will find the most represented foreign countries at our university. The number of international students at K.U.Leuven increases every year.

The Netherlands	1,111	China	421
India	267	Italy	221
USA	217	Spain	192
Germany	182	Iran	118
Russia	99	Greece/Turkey	97

(information: 1/2/2010)

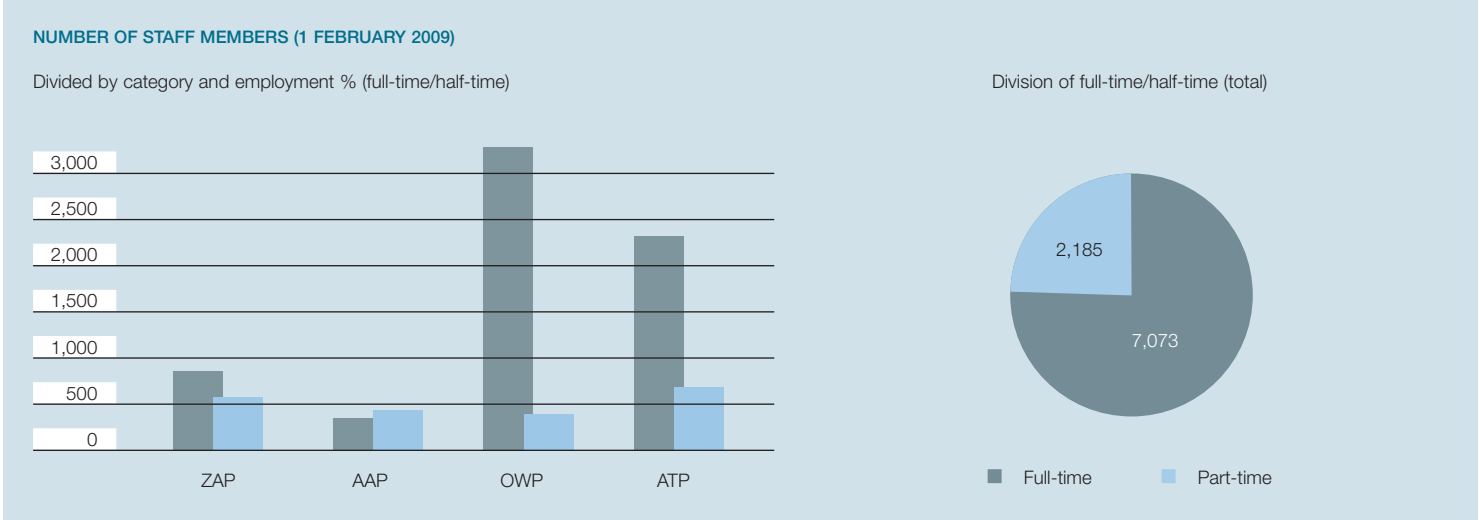


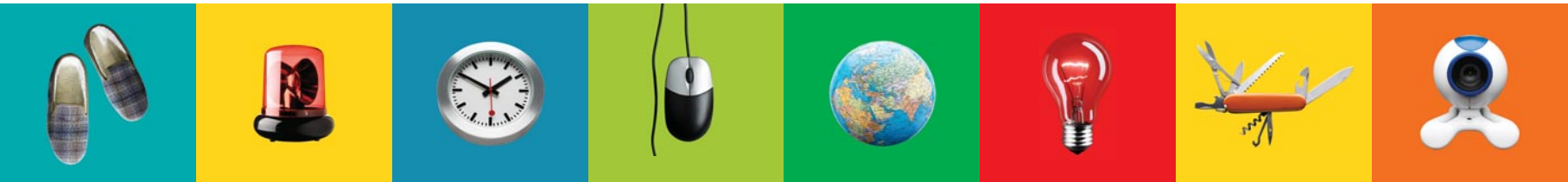
The K.U.Leuven Association is a co-operation between K.U.Leuven itself and 12 institutions of higher education located across Flanders. Over 80,000 students are enrolled at the association's various partner institutions. Consequently, the association is by far the largest provider of higher education in Flanders.

Our student services ensure that the students' study and living environment is of the highest standard. The Study Advisory Centre accompanies students throughout their studies at K.U.Leuven. In addition, we have co-operation agreements with the partners of the K.U.Leuven

Association in the fields of nutrition, accommodation, psycho-medical and social-judicial support. We continue to devote particular attention to integrated housing and support for students with disabilities, such as physical and sensory limitations, chronic illnesses and dyslexia. The Student Employment Service organises the employment of approximately 1,200 job-students.

The student services also contribute to equal access to our university. Good social services, both concrete and intangible, are essential in this regard. It is possible to facilitate the intake of students by systematically





removing material, financial and psychological obstacles without compromising the quality of the programmes. From this perspective, we continue to be dedicated to efficient policies that are geared specifically towards young members of ethnic minorities in Belgium, in order to involve them further in university education and thereby to contribute to the formation of an intellectual elite in these communities.

Both K.U.Leuven and the City of Leuven provide an extensive range of sports and cultural facilities for students. New policies and action

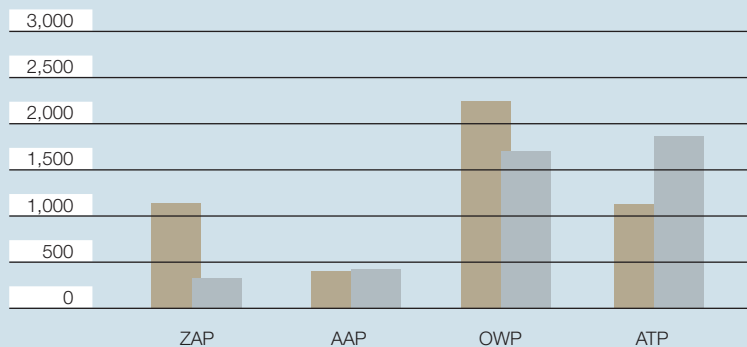
plans in both areas are promoting further expansion and improved links with the city and wider region.

We consider engaging in sports and cultural activities to be an integral part of intellectual formation.

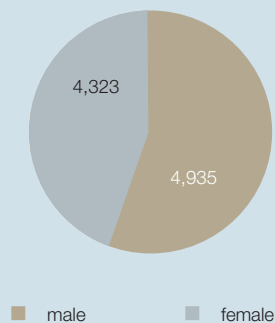
This also applies to the University Parish, which endeavours to integrate spirituality, liturgy, religious formation and education. In this way, the UP concretises the Christian identity of our university, both for Flemish students and the international student community.

#### NUMBER OF STAFF MEMBERS (1 FEBRUARY 2009)

Divided by category and male/female



Division of male/female (total)



- ZAP: Senior Academic Staff
- AAP: Junior Academic Staff
- OWP: Other Academic Staff
- ATP: Administrative and Technical Staff

In addition to the staff groups mentioned in the table, in January 2009 K.U.Leuven also employed 17 sports trainers, 1,149 voluntary staff members and 304 volunteers.



# Education

**Universities are institutions at which scientific endeavours are conducted by a knowledge-based community in a free and open climate. Knowledge is derived from reflection and research. However, knowledge must also be transferred and implemented in society, and it requires new 'knowledge developers'. For these reasons, education is the heart, indeed, the very raison d'être of our university. After all, a university without students and without education is completely unthinkable.**

At our university, research and education are inextricably intertwined. In a manner of speaking, scientific research is the fertile ground from which academic education can grow, while education is the touchstone of high quality research. The objective of this education is to teach students to attain knowledge. Grounded in the thorough knowledge of their own field, and yet linked to a broad interdisciplinary perspective, they develop an inquiring approach that may be described as follows: insight into the way in which research results are obtained, thought strategies in the treatment of facts, data and problems, an orientation towards the solving of fundamental problems and the search for innovative applications, and a critical, scientific attitude in which analysis does not obstruct synthesis.

Moreover, the students integrate their education into a broader ethical, cultural and social formation. This enables them to assume a relevant

and well-founded perspective independently, to act effectively and to take up their social responsibilities.

K.U.Leuven offers approximately 60 Bachelor's programmes and more than 125 Master's programmes in 18 fields. In addition, it organises preparatory and bridging programmes, teacher training courses, post-graduate programmes and various forms of lifelong academic formation.

The organisation of bridging programmes in the K.U.Leuven Association ensures the smooth transition of students between the programmes offered by the university and its partners. K.U.Leuven offers 2 Bachelor's and 77 Master's programmes in English, in addition to its English doctoral programmes. K.U.Leuven also organises various programmes in the context of international university co-operation projects, such as Erasmus Mundus.

The academic offering at K.U.Leuven is registered as part of the European Higher Education Area. Each curriculum is adapted to new insights and needs whenever necessary. The flexibility of education provides new opportunities for students to adapt their studies to their own specific desires and needs.

These developments present our university with certain challenges, but also result in education that is tailored to each individual student instead of to abstract principles. The implementation of the credit accumulation system has maximised the flexibility of each student



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whilst avoiding the proliferation of paperwork and administrative tasks. Students become members of an academic community in which they can enter into dialogue with professors and researchers, which enhances their learning and formation.

The Toledo electronic learning platform is a university and association-wide virtual learning environment that enables students and professors to enter into an interactive dialogue with one another in order to enhance the education process.

K.U.Leuven aspires to the highest quality in the realisation of its educational objectives. Internal evaluations and external visitations emphasise its current strengths but also expose possible avenues that must be explored in order to monitor and develop K.U.Leuven's high standards in the future. The perspectives and priorities of the students are an integral part of this evaluation process. Thus, K.U.Leuven is contributing constructively to the development of a Flemish and European education area of the highest quality. The results of professors evaluations are included in their staff records.

Guaranteeing quality and improving upon it further is a dynamic process that requires space for new initiatives. Various projects have been established over the past ten years, each providing innovative professors with the opportunity to develop new approaches. New projects are continuously being embarked upon.

The Educational Development Fund (OOF) promotes educational innovation in the K.U.Leuven Association. A number of working groups guide new ideas and initiatives from their conception to their concrete implementation. Such a context facilitates the rapid integration of cross-institutional activities.

The quality of education is guaranteed by the quality of the people involved in it – students and professors. Offering students the opportunity to contribute to their own education constructively and valuing instructors for their efforts in education are the fundamental objectives of our university's policy and services. These services are tasked with offering the necessary support, providing the necessary means and establishing the necessary conditions to ensure a smooth yet profound educational process on a day to day basis.

The contribution of the Kortrijk Campus is a particularly valuable aspect of the educational spectrum of K.U.Leuven. Its unique approach and specific appeal make the Kortrijk Campus a truly transitional campus, while its small scale is not at odds with a broad horizon, and its regional identity is reconciled with international openness. The close bond between Leuven and Kortrijk ensures the fruitful exchange of people and ideas, and will also guarantee a healthy partnership between both institutions in the future.



# Research Research Challenges



**Academic research sustains our university; it is the substrate of its education and the basis of its social commitment. Consequently, investment in high-quality research in an international environment is indispensable.**

Scientific research flourishes when researchers are able to work in an environment that stimulates their passion.

Postdoctoral researchers are the backbone of the research that has placed K.U.Leuven at the foundation of scientific innovation in Flanders and ensures its enduring commitment to serving social needs. By conducting research and by forming independent young people with innovative ideas, K.U.Leuven actively contributes to both the Flemish and international knowledge economy.

By analogy to the system used in the United States, K.U.Leuven has introduced a tenure track system in which researchers are given the opportunity to prove themselves for five years, in expectation of a permanent position. In accordance with Flemish norms, having experienced international research is an important requirement in obtaining a permanent position at K.U.Leuven.



This policy has in part been implemented through the recent foundation of the K.U.Leuven doctoral schools in each of the three scientific groups. By recruiting internationally, they bring together talented researchers from across the world. In addition, they offer extensive doctoral programmes to those who fit the K.U.Leuven qualification profile for doctoral students, as well as enabling these students to develop greater depth within their field and the opportunity to broaden their horizons both academically and otherwise. A doctoral degree from K.U.Leuven provides numerous opportunities for a career outside the university. Sound career guidance within the doctoral schools has proved very valuable in this context.

With respect to financing research, K.U.Leuven strives to implement two principles besides quality: increase and innovation. Finances from the Special Research Fund (BOF) are used to increase successful research. In addition, Excellence Financing is also awarded to top researchers and the Methusalem Programme is geared towards large-scale research projects on an international scale. The financing of research infrastructure has also increased significantly through the Hercules Programme, while K.U.Leuven devotes particular attention to innovative scientific research with specifically economic objectives through the Industrial Research Fund. This research promotes the feedback and implementation of its results in the economy.





# Research Research Results

**K.U.Leuven produces more than 42% of Flemish academic publications and almost half the citations in the fields in which a bibliometric approach applies. Thus, K.U.Leuven performs considerably better than might be expected given its share of Flemish research funds.**

Research expenditure at K.U.Leuven amounted to approximately 157 million euro in 1999. By 2009, this figure had more than doubled, to 330 million euro. K.U.Leuven focuses particular attention on supervising doctoral research at its three doctoral schools, resulting in a steady increase of graduates from the doctoral programmes every year. The number of doctoral graduates increased to 570 in 2008-2009, of which 160 were obtained by international students. In February 2010, 1,100 postdoctoral researchers were employed at our university, 35.9% of whom were from abroad.

With respect to the quality of research, there continues to be a marked increase of publications in top journals: 56% of the scientific publications of K.U.Leuven researchers appear in journals that are in the top 25 in their field. A considerable increase in the impact of the average publication has also been noted. As a result of its intense participation in the



European Framework Programme (5th place FP7), K.U.Leuven makes its expertise available abroad, in accordance with its international character.



Establishing research networks with the partner institutions of the K.U.Leuven Association is a particular challenge facing our researchers. Such networking is essential to ensuring the 'academisation' of the programmes at our partner institutions, whose research must comply with the manner in which research is conducted at our university.

To achieve this objective, the scientific groups and the relevant faculties make enormous efforts to ensure that the education offered at the partner institutions of the K.U.Leuven Association is based on sound scientific research.

The Kortrijk Campus also provides a distinctive contribution to K.U.Leuven's research, through its highly beneficial multidisciplinary approach.

Research is not only valued highly within the academic community, but also outside it. With the support of K.U.Leuven Research & Development, a largely independent operation within the university, K.U.Leuven has achieved excellent results in the fields of research valorisation and in particular the transfer of research results to society and its economic sectors. K.U.Leuven R&D has assumed responsibility for establishing and guiding about 90 spin-offs, the management of an impressive patent portfolio and, in general, an excellent relationship between the university and the corporate world. In 2009, 73 new patent families were submitted to the patent procedure and 24 new patents

were granted. K.U.Leuven is currently among the top 10 academic institutions in terms of revenue from the valorisation of intellectual property based on patents and licences. Approximately 90% of the more than 300 K.U.Leuven R&D patent families are actively valorised and marketed at the moment, while the average for European universities is currently 33%. K.U.Leuven thus contributes significantly to the transfer of research results to innovation and economic applications.

Furthermore, researchers at K.U.Leuven participate in social debate. The university management encourages professors and researchers to publicly engage in this debate and acknowledges their efforts to do so. In doing so they not only contribute to the diffusion of Leuven's scientific expertise, but also to the awareness of our university's values.

A sound registration system for the many kinds of contributions to the social debate is the first step towards this acknowledgement. In an innovative way, the Metaforum structures and promotes multidisciplinary reflection by the academic community - aimed at contributing to the social debate.



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# Challenges



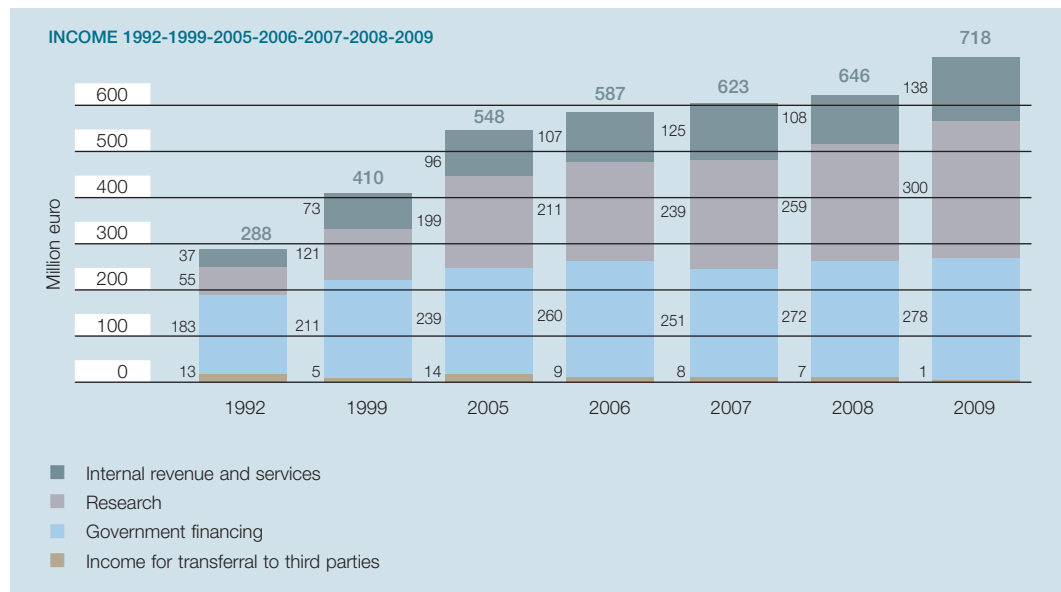
The increase of funds for scientific research (x5.5 since 1992), is of course beneficial to our university. However, basic financing used to cover the costs of academic, administrative and technical staff, as well as operations and infrastructure, has increased far less substantially (x1.5). K.U.Leuven and the other Flemish universities are faced with a number of particular challenges as a result of this imbalance. Indeed, the supervision of junior researchers and projects must take place within an almost unchanged academic, administrative and technical framework. At the same time, however, a significant increase in spatial requirements and equipment is necessary. Without a substantial commitment from the government, no viable solution to this urgent problem can be found. New forms of financing from the Flemish government may improve the situation somewhat, but they do not sufficiently address the rapidly growing needs of staffing and infrastructure.

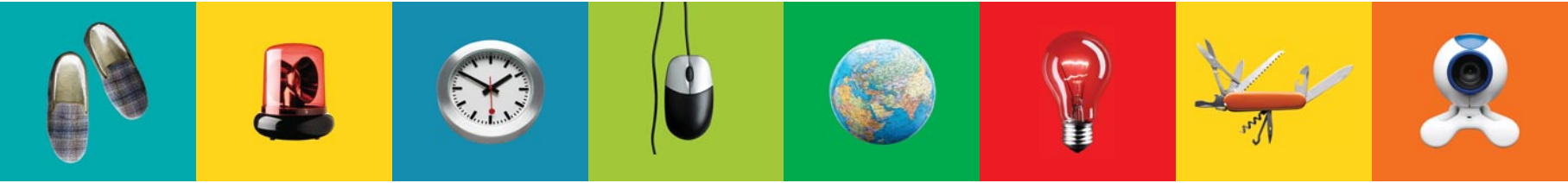
Extensive groundbreaking research requires enormous infrastructural investments, which must also cover equipment that is often extremely expensive and heavy. Great efforts are being made in this regard, not least through important investments from the Flemish government.



By establishing flexible co-operation structures, both within our own university and with other universities in Belgium and abroad, K.U.Leuven is endeavouring to strengthen the vitality of its research and to increase the efficiency of infrastructural investments. Furthermore, there is an enormous need for extra funds for the acquisition of specialised archives and virtual subject-specific libraries.

Distinct from research, important infrastructural initiatives have been developed, which are intended to benefit not only the university but also the city of Leuven. Very important challenges remain, however, concerning the maintenance and restoration of existing, often historic buildings, which are not always suited to the needs of current research.





# International

**Modern universities think and operate internationally. K.U.Leuven emphasises this in numerous ways. It is a founding member of LERU (League of European Research Universities), the association of European research universities established in 2002, of which it is the only Belgian member. Furthermore, K.U.Leuven is also very active in the Coimbra Group (founded in 1985), a co-operative network of historical, multidisciplinary universities of high international standards.**

The students of K.U.Leuven participate intensively in the Socrates and Erasmus exchange programmes to carry out part of their programme at another European university. Annually, approximately 700 of our students travel to other European Erasmus universities, and approximately the same number of European Erasmus students come to Leuven. K.U.Leuven is also actively involved in 13 new Erasmus Mundus mobility programmes with countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Researchers from abroad are actively recruited by K.U.Leuven, while its own researchers are increasingly required to benefit from more extensive foreign experience. 'Brain mobility' is thus central to the policy we pursue.

Numerous co-operative agreements and a strong presence in the competitive European education and research area underline the importance we assign to the international dimension of our university. We have also established co-operation agreements with leading non-European universities, of which the most recent is an agreement with Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Co-operation with new partners abroad occurs on the basis of a thorough, careful selection process. In 2010, K.U.Leuven was involved in central bilateral agreements with 13 of the most prominent universities in the world. In total, it was involved in 516 central and faculty international agreements.

K.U.Leuven is also actively engaged in co-operation with universities in developing countries, especially in the poorest countries. Professors and researchers from all our faculties are involved in this co-operation. In particular, we must mention the extensive research activities that groups from the Faculties of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Bioscience Engineering, Medicine and Pharmaceutical Sciences have established in developing countries. As a result, our university contributes to the development of an effectual dialogue and co-operation between North and South.

Our increasing co-operation with our sister university, the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL), also provides opportunities for the stronger international profiling of both institutions' research and education. The joint celebration of our Patron Saint's Day and conferral of honorary doctorates on 2nd February 2009 epitomised this close co-operation. In the spring of 2009, K.U.Leuven and UCL jointly hosted the ministerial conference on the Bologna Process, which evaluates the state of affairs of the Bologna Process every two years and stipulates priorities for the future. The conference resulted in the Leuven Communiqué.



# University hospitals

The social mission of the Leuven University Hospitals as an Academic Medical Centre comprises achieving three objectives in co-operation with the university:

- To provide high-quality health care, not only on the level of the most specialised care, but also with respect to every form of care the University Hospitals provide in the fulfilment of their social mission as hospitals.
- To assume an important position in the education and formation of care providers; this entails the obligation to conduct medicine based on existing expertise, to integrate innovations after critical reflection and to transfer these through educational programmes, in order to spread them across the broader healthcare landscape.
- To develop new diagnostic and therapeutic approaches based on fundamental and applied research in the broad field of healthcare.

More than ever, high-quality translational research demands multidisciplinary, international co-operation. On the basis of its social responsibilities, the mission of the University Hospitals must be to develop further as a leading European academic medical centre.

At the same time, this entails that the University Hospitals must legitimate themselves internationally, based on evaluations by external, independent experts. Consequently, in 2010, the University Hospitals invited an external,

independent accreditation organisation to conduct an audit. This resulted in the Leuven University Hospitals being the first hospitals in Belgium to be awarded the internationally recognised JCI accreditation. Joint Commission International (JCI) is an organisation that stipulates international norms concerning the quality of care and patient safety. This accreditation confirms the core of the operations philosophy of the University Hospitals, namely the constant endeavour to provide patients with better and safer care.

Offering high-quality patient care and conducting leading translational research demand suitable infrastructure. To this end, the hospital and university are joining forces in a comprehensive approach for the development of a Health Sciences Campus at Gasthuisberg, which will accommodate the facilities for patient care, education and research on one site. In 2010, after an extensive investigation, the European Investment Bank (EIB) allocated a credit line of 325 million euro to this investment project. This is the first time the EIB has allocated such a credit line to a non-profit project.

The number of clinical studies established every year is an important parameter of the intensity of conducted translational research. In 2009, there were 602 such studies, of which 283 were established on the initiative of researchers themselves and 319 were organised in co-operation with external companies.



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# The university and the region

**K.U.Leuven is an important partner and employer both in the city and the region. Moreover, the many students who take up temporary residence in Leuven provide a very significant contribution to the local economy. Furthermore, the rapid growth of research-based companies in the area around Leuven generates considerable added value and has created thousands of new jobs.**

The university and its community make Leuven a city with a unique atmosphere and immense international appeal. The constructive co-operation of town and gown illustrates their mutual interests and promotes the development of both.

On its own scale, the Kortrijk Campus has integrated itself into the initiatives taken by the city of Kortrijk and the province of West-Flanders. In particular, attention is being paid to the development of the Euro District that is emerging around Lille, Kortrijk and Tournai.

**If you would like more information about K.U.Leuven, please surf to the following web pages:**

Main page: [www.kuleuven.be/english](http://www.kuleuven.be/english)  
General information: [www.kuleuven.be/about](http://www.kuleuven.be/about)  
Admissions: [www.kuleuven.be/admissions](http://www.kuleuven.be/admissions)  
Students & staff: [www.kuleuven.be/english/living](http://www.kuleuven.be/english/living)  
Research: [www.kuleuven.be/research](http://www.kuleuven.be/research)  
Education: [www.kuleuven.be/education](http://www.kuleuven.be/education)  
International Co-operation: [www.kuleuven.be/international](http://www.kuleuven.be/international)  
University Hospitals: [www.uzleuven.be/en](http://www.uzleuven.be/en)  
K.U.Leuven Research & Development: [ird.kuleuven.be/en](http://ird.kuleuven.be/en)  
News: [www.kuleuven.be/english](http://www.kuleuven.be/english)



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