

# The K.U.Leuven Association: a network of opportunities

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Regional cooperation in higher education: challenges and opportunities

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# Context: Belgium in Europe



10 million inhabitants

# Context: Linguistic regions in Belgium



- Federal country
- Regions responsible for education and research
- Flanders: 6 million inhabitants
- Higher education: universities and university\* colleges (\*Polytechnics/Fachhochschule)
- No technical universities: engineering is integrated in university

# Context: a decade of change

- **European space of higher education**

(Bologna Declaration, 1999)

- Greater compatibility and comparability of the systems of higher education in Europe
- Increasing the international attractiveness and competitiveness

- **Restructuring of the higher education in Flanders**

(Decree of April 4, 2003)

- Introduction of the Bachelor-Master structure
- Introduction of a binary higher education system (professional – academic)
- Introduction of an accreditation system
- Foundation of the university networks ('associations')
- Flexible study paths (credits system)

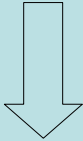
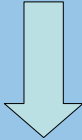
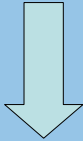
- **Formation of 5 associations in Flanders:**

5 associations of 5 universities and 21 university colleges\*

\*Polytechnic/Fachhochschule

# Context:

## Bachelor-Master structure in Flanders

Higher Professional Education	Academic Education	
<b>University colleges</b>	<b>University colleges</b> (cf. Fachhochschule)	<b>Universities</b>
From: 1 cycle 	From: 2 cycles  <b>Conditions:</b> Academisation in the context of an association	From: 2 cycles 
To: <u>professional</u> bachelor	To: - <u>academic</u> bachelor - master	To: - <u>academic</u> bachelor - master
----- advanced bachelor	----- advanced master	----- advanced master ----- doctoral programme

# Context: academisation & integration

from 2003 to 2011  
2-cycle programmes  
at the university colleges

integration  
academisation

Academic Ba and  
Ma degrees

integration

Decision Flemish Government - July 2010:  
All academic programmes\* of university  
colleges will be integrated in universities  
(excl. academic art programmes)

- All programmes in one go: **2013-2014**.
- Academic degrees: awarded by universities only
- Preservation of distinct profiles and finalities of different programmes

\*Academic programmes: Commerce and Trade, Translation and Interpreting, Industrial Engineering, Physiotherapy, Arts and Architecture

\*\*A decree is a regional law

# Context: networks → 'associations'

- An association consists of one university and at least one university college. A university or university college cannot belong to more than one association.
- To award Ma-degrees, university colleges must be member of an association
- Associations were formed around
  - K.U.Leuven: University of Leuven
  - Ghent University
  - University of Antwerp
  - Vrije Universiteit Brussel
  - Hasselt University / transnational University Limburg

# Context: why associations?

*“To organise, to plan & to improve, through mutual cooperation, the quality and efficiency of higher education and research”*

- Cooperation between the university and the university colleges
- Boosting research capacity of the Ba-Ma programmes at university colleges and preparation of integration
- Optimisation of course programmes
- Avoiding fragmentation of funds and creating synergy by joint processes of the administrations (finances, logistics, etc.)

# Context: assignments of associations

- Academisation and integration
- Smooth transfer opportunities between study programmes (mobility)
- Long-term plan: rational supply of study programmes
- Long-term plan: educational innovation
- Long-term plan: research
- Long-term plan: of capital investment and infrastructure
- Systems of quality assurance
- Innovation, tech-transfer and know-how valorisation

# Context: perspectives

- To a fully integrated higher education area: from higher vocational training until PhD-programmes
- Bachelor-Master: 3 + 2
- For some last year masterprogrammes (e.g. Master Industrial Engineering): thesis & innovation project (in close cooperation with industry in broad sense)

# K.U.Leuven Association

- Hogeschool-Universiteit Brussel
- Groep T – Internationale Hogeschool Leuven
- Hogeschool Sint-Lukas Brussel
- Hogeschool voor Wetenschap & Kunst
- Katholieke Hogeschool Brugge-Oostende
- Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen
- Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven
- Katholieke Hogeschool Limburg
- Katholieke Hogeschool Sint-Lieven
- Katholieke Hogeschool Zuid-West-Vlaanderen
- Lessius Antwerpen
- Lessius Mechelen
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

# K.U.Leuven Association

23 locations across Flanders



# The K.U.Leuven Association

## Number of students

'Statistisch jaarboek Vlaams  
onderwijs 2008-2009'  
students initial courses  
31 September 2009

		<b>% of total in Flanders</b>
• university students	27.848	37 %
• university college students	52.489	47 %
- professional	39.356	47 %
- academic	13.133	47 %
<hr/>		
total	80.337	43 %

# The K.U.Leuven Association

## Structure: organisation/management chart

**General Assembly/Board of trustees**

**Board of Directors**

advisory committees

related task groups

advisory committees linked to a specific (determined by decree) assignment or fund/subsidy

cooperation by discipline

Student council Association Leuven (StAL)

Association is an independent, non-profit organisation determined by decree and protected by the Belgian Constitution

# K.U.Leuven Association:

## Governance structure

- General Assembly (trustees)

12 legal bodies -  
university colleges  
represented by  
12 persons

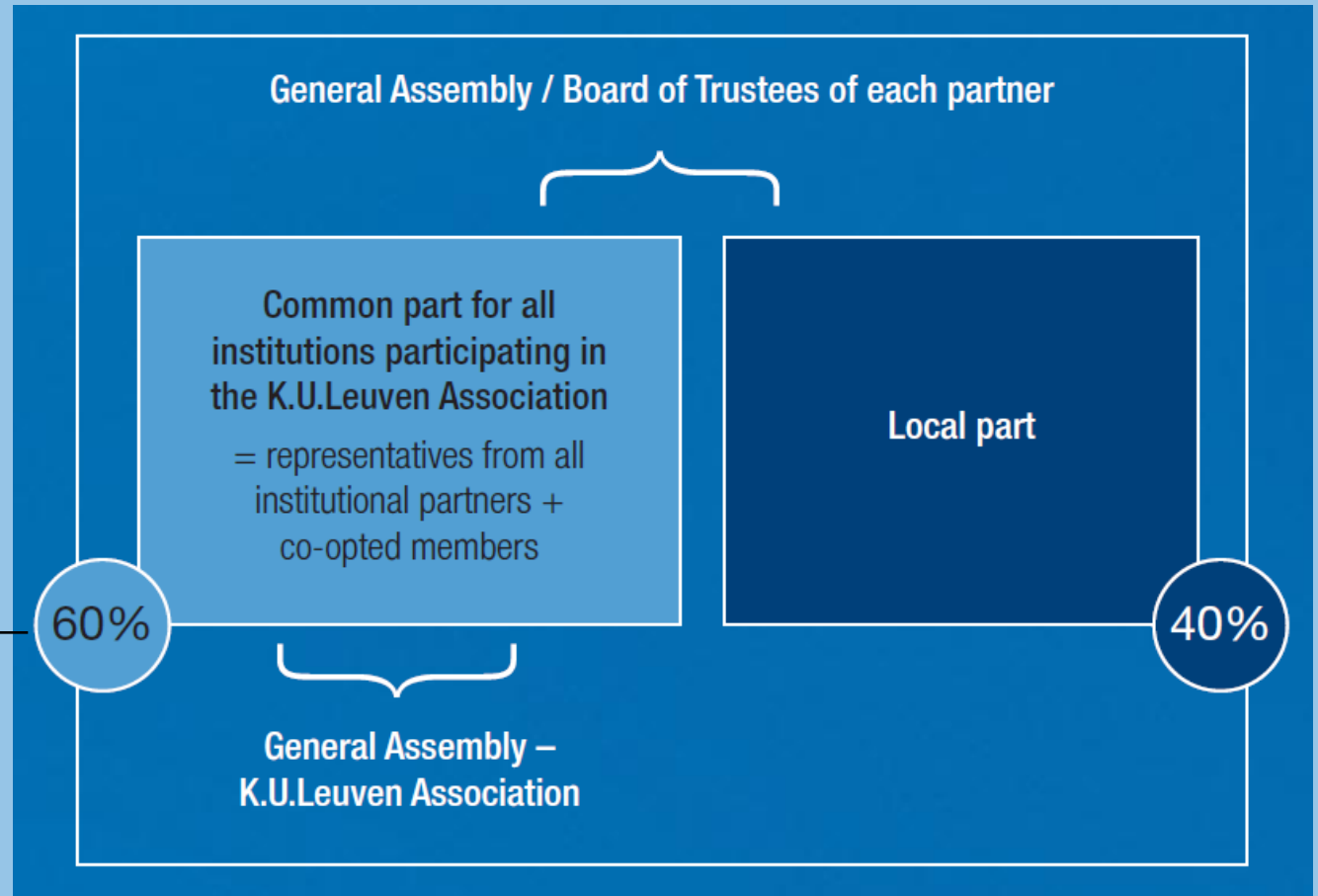
1 legal body  
university  
represented by  
12 persons

12 independent persons  
co-opted

- Board of Directors (management)

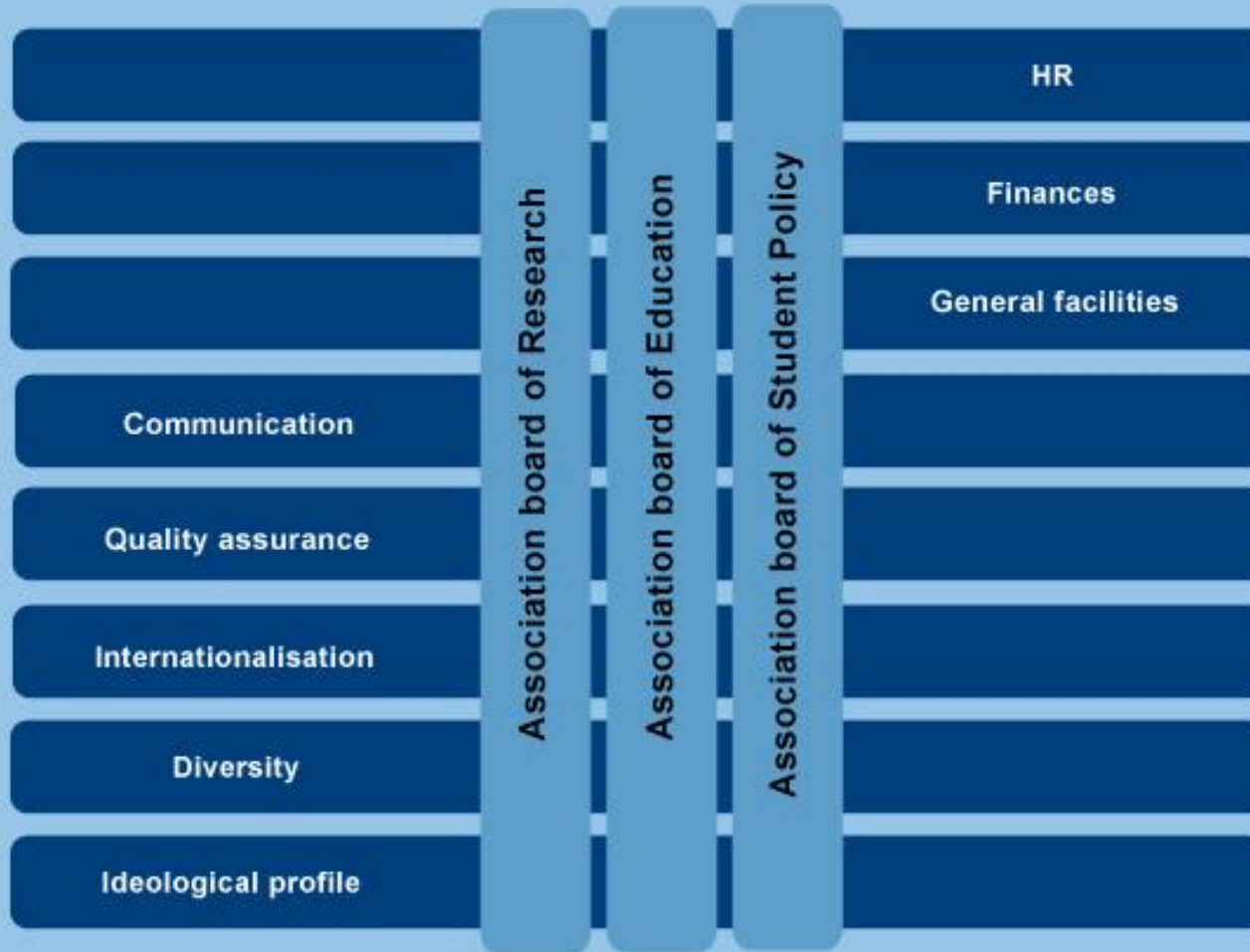
- 12 directors of the 12 university colleges  
unless the university college governors indicate another person
- 12 members appointed by K.U.Leuven and K.U.Brussel
- 3 student representatives

# K.U.Leuven Association: Governance structure for all member institutions



Moving on to 100 % ←

# K.U.Leuven Association: Advisory committees



# K.U.Leuven Association: Mission statement

- an open and dynamic network
- creative partnership
- wide and varied range of study programmes
- cluster of centres of excellence
- inspired by human-Christian values

*The Catholic university as well as the Catholic university colleges are independent from the Church. The names are based on tradition.*

# K.U.Leuven Association: Priorities 2012

- Preparing the integrated higher education area
- Developing an effective governing system and optimal organisational structure
- Integrating administrative processes (e.g. 1 computer system, 1 financial service)
- Rolling out multi-campus teaching
- Encouraging innovation, valorisation and social engagement
- Promoting professionalisation, exchange of expertise and involvement

# K.U.Leuven Association: Academisation & integration

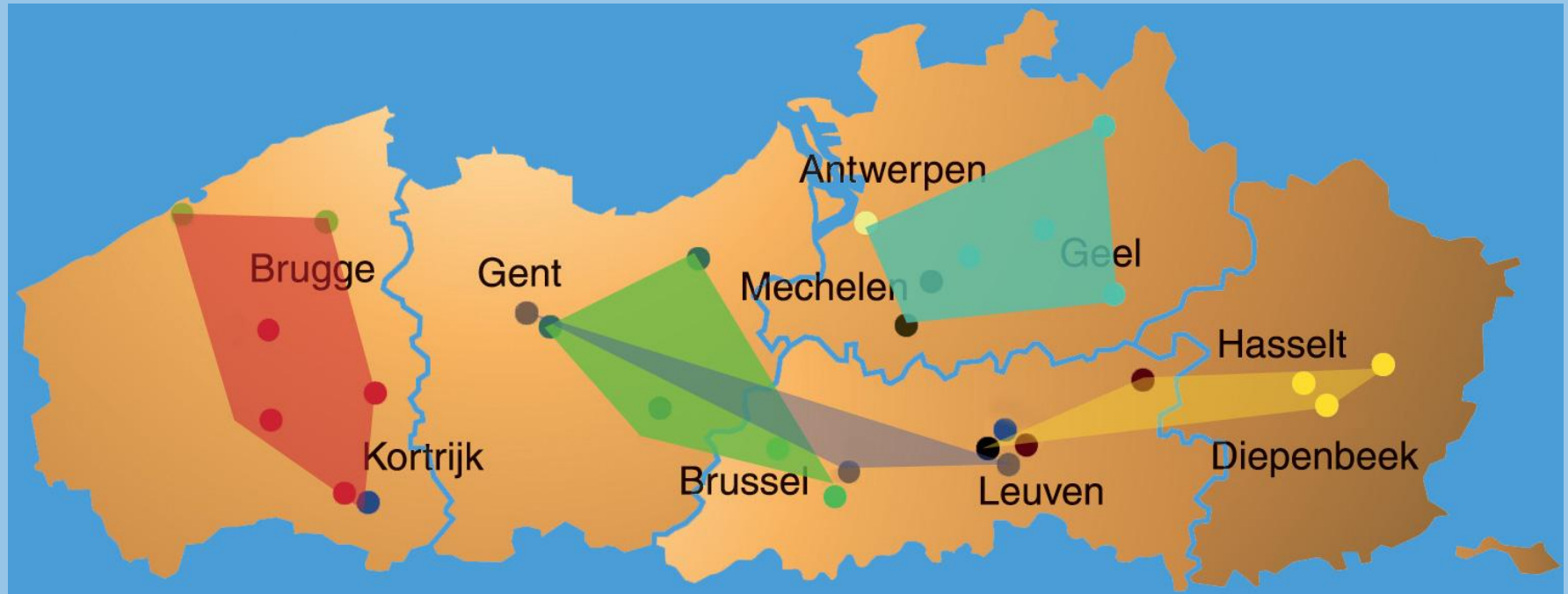
Ba-Ma programmes  
at the university colleges



Academic Ba and  
Ma degrees

- Perspective: **Legal integration** into K.U.Leuven in 2013-2014
  - Studyprogrammes are still offered on the campi of the university colleges: multicampus organisation
  - Final responsibility for all academic study programmes at K.U.Leuven
  - Degrees only awarded by K.U.Leuven
  - Delegation of responsibilities to local (boards of) directors of university colleges
- Preparation of **new integrated / new faculties**
  - Research coordination
  - Optimisation & rationalisation programme offer (profiles)
  - HRM
  - Student recruitment
  - ...

# K.U.Leuven Association: Clustering



- Government funding  
→ institutions to small
- Manageability

- Economies of scale
- Quality
- Rationalisation and optimisation

# K.U.Leuven Association:

Link professional and academic education

After the integration university colleges remain fully responsible for the professional programmes and the local support for the university studyprogrammes on their campus

- Strengthen the profile of higher professional education
- Maintain and stimulate connections between professional and academic programmes (e.g. smooth transitions between programmes)

# Three basic principles in higher education

Institutional autonomy

Academic freedom

Accountability

# Institutional autonomy and academic freedom

- Belgian Constitution guarantees: freedom of organisation of education and institutional autonomy
- Protects universities from undue interference by governments
- Right to design own internal structures and develop own policies.
- All members of K.U.Leuven Association are fully autonomous institutions
- Intellectual independence
- Freedom of speech vs. unlimited academic freedom
- State universities and free universities receive the same amount of subsidies from the Government

# Accountability

## The cornerstone of trust

- Autonomy is vital, but not absolute
- Responsibility toward stakeholders: students, staff, government, industry, business, alumni, ...
- Transparency of structure and decision making
- Checks and balances in the governance structure
- 'Shared balance governance' (between external and internal members)
- Control criteria, but with limitation of administrative impact
- Visitations and accreditation by transnational body (Dutch-Flemish)
- Evaluation of professors

# Financing system

inspired by principle of accountability and performance

- Block grants: allocation based on performance: input and output factors
- Free to spend according own priorities
- Goal: support teaching, research and third stream activities
- Different types of funding:
  - Teaching and research block grant
  - Second stream research funding allocations to universities
  - Third stream: know-how transfer funding

# Financing system

## Teaching and research block grants

- Government funding: 5 parts
  - Fixed amount (max: 15% of total)
  - Budget for professional programmes
  - Budget for academic programmes in university colleges
  - Budget for academic programmes in universities
  - Budget for research at universities
- Block grants for university: based on 5 factors:
  - Volume of teaching activity
  - Volume and quality of research activity
  - Type of study programme
  - Type of student (full-time – part-time)
  - Specific weights

# Financing system

## Second stream block grants research funding allocations to universities

- Curiosity-driven research based on number of:
  - Researchers
  - Master and PhD degrees awarded
  - Publications and citations
  - New external or female professors
- Innovation and knowledge transfer based on:
  - Number of patents
  - Number of spin-offs
  - Revenue from industry
  - Participation in EU framework
  - Number of researchers
  - Number of publications and citations
- Various smaller targeted allocations

# More information

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