

Sustainability Report 2025

Data: January 2022 - December 2024



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Editorial

In 2022, we presented our University's first sustainability report. This report is underpinned by strong ambitions, ongoing commitments, and a range of achievements — some of which were scattered, but all of which were hugely rewarding. Reading the report, what stands out above all is the enthusiasm behind it, which has helped to create a shared ethos to promote sustainability within our community in all its varied guises. This shared drive has informed our actions over the last few years in terms of teaching and research, campus management, outreach, and governance. We have compiled these actions and initiatives in this report with the special pleasure that comes from the conviction of collectively charting a course toward a better future.

With our second Sustainability Report, we wish to share our enthusiastic vision of our University, despite the troubling times we are living through. A University firmly rooted in the reality of environmental turmoil and growing discrimination, and whose values are affected. But above all, it is a university that is not afraid to demonstrate its resistance and unshakeable determination to project itself into the future by redefining — for and with the younger generations — sustainable and worthy socio-ecological trajectories, safe spaces and places that encourage dialogue and debate.

We would like to thank all those who are working on the achievements presented in this report whether individually or with others, in our departments, our associations, our clubs, and our community. It goes without saying that this report will not totally change tomorrow's world, but each step towards a sustainable and fair transition offers a breathing space that is now more important than ever. I'm privileged and fortunate to be able to walk this path with each and every one of you.



Annemie Schaus
Chancellor of ULB



Isabelle Mazzara
Managing Director



Pierre Coheur
Vice-chancellor
for Sustainable
Development

Sustainability at ULB

This second edition of the Sustainability Report presents the progress and achievements made by the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) between 2022 and 2024, and in particular its desire to strengthen its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Defined by the United Nations in 2015, these 17 goals constitute a common framework for promoting economic, social and environmental development that is sustainable, inclusive and equitable. The interconnected SDGs address major global challenges, such as poverty, inequality, climate change and the degradation of biodiversity, which are at the heart of ULB's concerns.

The University's robust approach to sustainability is based on respecting planetary limits, as economic prosperity and social progress can not be achieved otherwise. ULB is therefore committed to contributing to the emergence of a society that respects socio-ecosystemic balances, guarantees social and economic justice, and promotes a culture of peace.

Like the previous report published in 2022, this document is structured around six themes that correspond to the missions and activities through which ULB intends to

commit itself to the socio-ecological transition. New challenges that have emerged in recent years, such as soil conservation and the circular economy, have also been incorporated into these strategic priorities. The report, supplemented with quantifiable indicators, gives an account of the progress made over the period in question, as well as detailing the actions taken in each theme and area. It represents a new milestone in the University's sustainability policy, prior to a more comprehensive assessment to be carried out by 2030.

Legend (challenges)

The statuses of the challenges identified in the previous report are indicated by the following pictograms:



Challenge
achieved



In progress

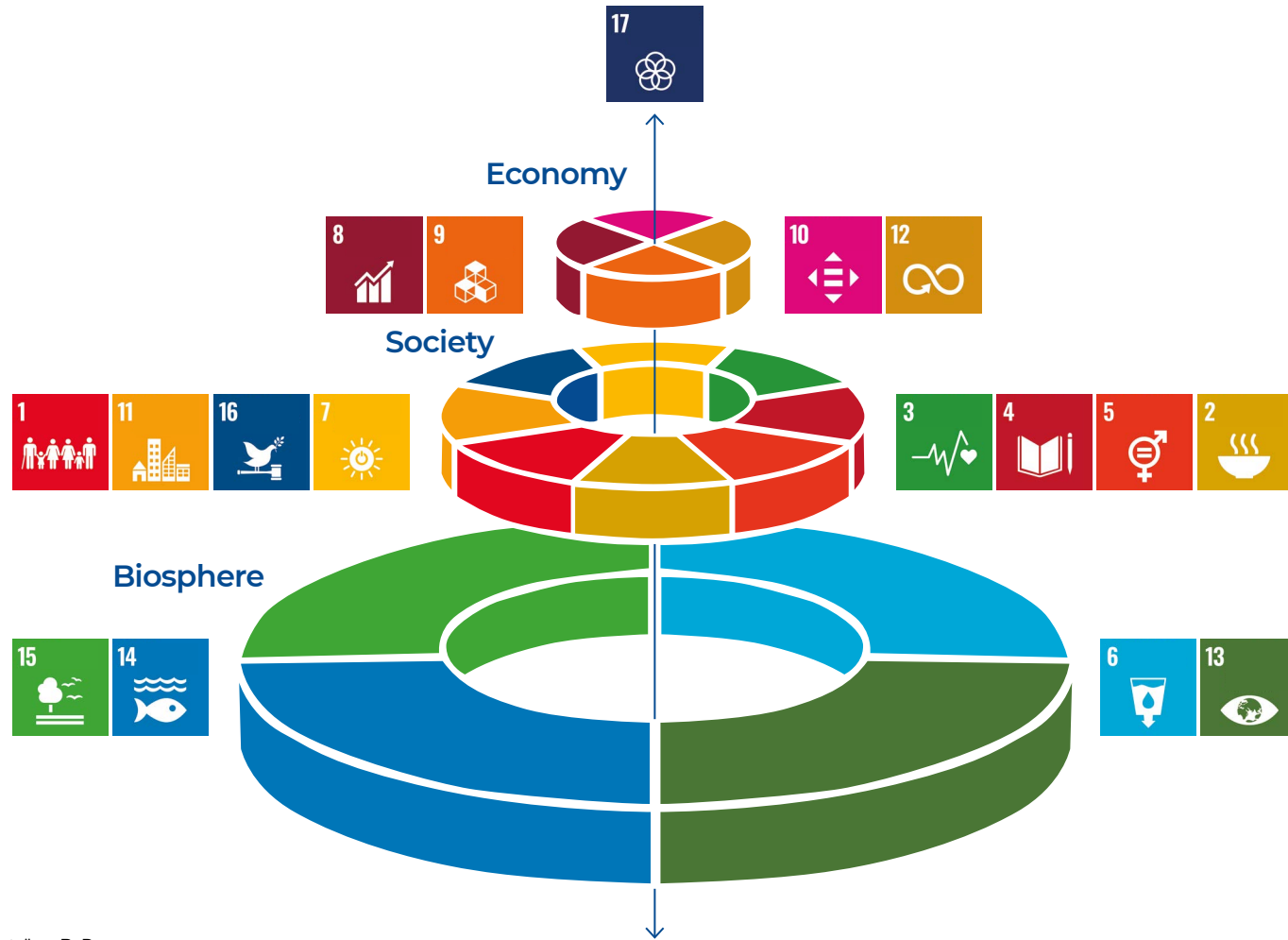


Challenge
postponed



Challenged
halted

The 17 SDGs in relation to the biosphere and global limits



Source: Folke, C., R. Biggs, A. V. Norström, B. Reyers, and J. Rockström. 2016. Social-ecological resilience and biosphere-based sustainability science. *Ecology and Society* 21(3):41.

Theme 1 Teaching

Sustainability training in all disciplines

Teaching at ULB - in 2024

38,000

students

1,500

members of the academic staff of whom 565 are female lecturers

12

faculties

40

undergraduate programmes (BA)

180

Masters degrees and over 65 specialised Masters degrees

6

Erasmus Mundus exchange programmes

100+

course units integrating sustainability into the curriculum

+ 800

course units addressing themes linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



The University's own teaching activities play a crucial role in achieving the SDGs, and are an important lever for promoting an ecological and inclusive transition. With the aim of helping the teaching community and faculties to integrate sustainability into their curricula, ULB launched the EDDuco programme in 2022. Ambitious, multidisciplinary and inter-faculty, the EDDuco programme is being gradually rolled out within the Centre d'Appui Pédagogique (Educational Support Centre). It aims to ensure that every ULB degree holder has a critical understanding of sustainability challenges, while developing their ability to think systemically, and act in a manner that favours an ecological and inclusive transition.

Key Figures - 2022-2024

497

students who took the cross-faculty introductory course on sustainability issues between the start of the 2022 and 2024 academic years

1,200

members of the university community who took part in the Climate Fresk workshop

1,000

presenters from over 8 different faculties who were trained to present the Climate Fresk



1/4

of baccalaureate holders who have integrated the cross-disciplinary course into their studies

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Strengthening the teaching of sustainability issues** taking a cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approach, combining introductory courses, specialised courses, and experimentation
- ▶ **Broadening the target audiences for the EDDuco programme** to embed the teaching of sustainability issues, and the importance of systemic action in all faculties and courses of study

State of progress

Challenges

Integrating the cross-disciplinary introductory course into all subject pathways



Developing tools to support teaching staff to integrate sustainability issues into their courses and/or subject pathways



Supporting the roll-out of the Climate Fresk workshops in the faculties



2023-2024 achievements

- ▶ The programme to integrate sustainability into teaching practices has been launched in **6 volunteer faculties**¹, which will be supported by EDDuco until 2027.
- ▶ During the 2024-2025 academic year, the cross-disciplinary "Introduction to Sustainability" course will be offered for the **3rd consecutive year on the theme of energy**. It is taught by pairs of teachers who take a resolutely multi-disciplinary approach.
- ▶ EDDuco offers support to faculties wishing to **use the Climate Fresk**. By 2024, 4 faculties and ² schools had used the Climate Fresk as a teaching and awareness-raising tool.
- ▶ The CIVIS European Inter-University Alliance has led to the creation of a **Masters in Transdisciplinary Studies of Climate, Environment and Energy (TRACEE)**, within which ULB offers two four-month periods (60 ECTS) in the "*Transdisciplinary Approaches to Climate Change*" pathway.
- ▶ In order to encourage networking between the members of the university community and give greater visibility to the resources available to meet the challenges of sustainability, **ULB launched reACT, the Academic Network for Socio-ecological Transformations**. The network provides a forum for reflection, debate and action to create and strengthen research and teaching activities dedicated to sustainable development and transformations.

¹ École Polytechnique de Bruxelles (EPB), École de Santé Publique (ESP), Pharmacy Faculty, Architecture Faculty, Law Faculty, Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM).

² Interfaculty Schools of Bioengineering, École Polytechnique de Bruxelles (EPB), Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM), École de Santé Publique (ESP).

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ **Developing the cross-disciplinary course** with a new theme for the next three years, and extending it to new courses
- ▶ **Giving greater visibility given to introductory courses on sustainability issues** that already exist in certain faculties or programmes
- ▶ **Developing tools** for assessing the sustainability skills acquired in the various programmes
- ▶ Strengthening the teaching of sustainability by **integrating specific courses and experiments**, for example by establishing a "sustainability pathway" throughout the curriculum
- ▶ Continuing to support the implementation of the Climate Fresk, and offering **awareness-raising tools on sustainability issues** (migration, prejudices, digital technology, etc.).
- ▶ Taking an active part **in setting up the transdisciplinary European Master's degree "Studies of Climate, Environment and Energy (TRACEE)"** and welcoming the first CIVIS students to ULB over the next few academic years for a 60-ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) programme combining compulsory courses, optional courses, and a final-year project on sustainability.



Faculties joining forces to promote sustainability

► At the École Polytechnique de Bruxelles (EPB)

- **"La Rentrée Climat"**: first-year undergraduates at EPB are now taking part in "La Rentrée Climat" climate workshop. The aim of this initiative is to raise awareness, from the start of students' studies, of the crucial issues at stake in the ecological transition, by providing them with an introduction to contemporary environmental challenges. Since 2022, over 1,000 students have taken part in this initiative.
- **Disseminating knowledge and raising awareness of the ecological transition**: the EPB is stepping up initiatives to disseminate knowledge on socio-environmental issues with:
 - "Transition Week", an annual programme of conferences and public debates with international experts, as well as workshops and participatory activities to encourage student involvement.
 - "Ma thèse durable en 180 secondes" (My sustainable thesis in 180 seconds), which since 2023 has helped doctoral students to present their research on sustainability in a more accessible manner.
 - The "A la salle des Profs" (The Teachers' Room) (2022) podcast — which won the ULB 2024 Scientific Dissemination Prize — which shares the research of its experts on sustainability-related themes,
- **Curricula reform**
 - The EPB has completed reviewed its teaching programmes to better integrate sustainability. The first phase involved integrating sustainability into a number of existing

bachelor's degree courses, involving more than 30 ECTS, and introducing a new skill into the teaching profile linked to analysing the impact of technical systems. Among these changes, the Serious Game on the energy transition in the Energy Systems course (MECAH301) deserves a special mention as it has been recognised by a [Socrates Award for Excellence in Teaching](#). True to its commitment to civil society, the EPB has extended its educational mission beyond its walls: Serious Game has been adapted for secondary school students and was successfully trialled with 700 pupils from Brussels secondary schools.

- In the second phase, curriculum reform has enabled a comprehensive restructuring of the bachelor's programme to introduce specific courses aimed at developing a systemic and multidisciplinary vision, as well as training citizen engineers who are aware of the planetary limits and socio-ecological challenges of the 21st century.

► At the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM)

- **Sustainability Bootcamp**: inaugurated in 2022, this back-to-university activity in the form of intensive, immersive training is offered to students in the *Management Sciences* Masters programme and, since 2024, in the *Business Economics* and *Economic Governance & Public Policy* Masters programmes. The aim is to provide students with an accelerated introduction to global sustainability issues (science, ethics, impact on economic practices), and to enable them to meet one another from the start of their Masters. On the programme: two days of interactive workshops (such as the Climate Fresk), lectures given by around twenty experts (NGOs, companies, alumni), and presentations of opportunities for student involvement at ULB. In 2022 et 2023, almost 50 students took part in the "Sustainability Bootcamp"; almost 80 in 2024. The aim now is to make this activity permanent, and gradually extend it to other Masters programmes.
- **Ernest Learning Lab (ELL)**: the faculty has set up a series of events (aimed at the whole faculty community) to encourage experimentation, innovation and collaborative learning around sustainability. Ten events to raise awareness of major societal issues have been organised since 2022, bringing together more than 200 people around themes such as: sustainability in education, carbon footprint, climate change, diversity and inclusion, student-led transformation, systems thinking, power dynamics, and the impact of AI on education.

With this cross-disciplinary and participative approach, SBS-EM aims to foster the development of an open and inclusive learning culture, and to encourage dialogue and debate on the sustainable transformation of organisations.

- **Teaching development**: to respond to societal challenges and integrate sustainability as a cross-disciplinary skill in all its courses, the SBS-EM is developing its curricula over the period 2022-2024, with:
 - the creation of several new Bachelors and Masters degree courses (*Law and Economics of the Environment*, *Impact Investing*, *Energy Policy*, *Sustainability and Management*, *System Theory: From Science to a Sustainable Society*, etc.). These courses focus on developing key skills such as systems thinking, analysing environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues, and understanding complex dynamics (climate, energy, food, circular economy, etc.).
 - strengthening continuing education with a module on sustainability in the *Executive Masters in Management*, the creation of a *Sustainability Fundamental programme* and an *Executive Masters in Sustainability Transformation*, as well as a number of tailor-made courses for the executive committees of major companies.

Theme 2 Research

Encouraging synergies to promote sustainability

Research at ULB in 2024

300

research units of which over 50 contribute to sustainability goals

14

interdisciplinary research centres and institutes linked to the Sustainable Development Goals

3,500

researchers of whom **2,100** are PhD students



Fully convinced of the crucial role that scientific research plays in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and maintaining the Earth's system within its limits, ULB is committed to developing a framework that is conducive to advancing scientific knowledge on environmental and societal changes. Its aim is to guide and accelerate collective action that leads to a fair ecological and social transition. At a time when anti-science movements are gaining traction, particularly in relation to sustainable development issues (climate, biodiversity, inequality, migration, gender equality, etc.), ULB is keen to reaffirm the central role that a rigorous, inter- and transdisciplinary scientific approach can play, as well as strengthening the necessary links with society.

Key Figures - 2022-2024

101

members from all faculties and bodies who took part in the first meeting of the reACT network.

262

people who signed up for two days of scientific meetings on global limits

37

scientists who have presented their research work

157

people from **37** different universities who took part in OpenLab in November 2024

4

sustainability sabbaticals were granted in 2024


Strategic objectives


- ▶ **Providing institutional support** for inter- or trans-disciplinary research initiatives, directly or indirectly dedicated to sustainability issues
- ▶ **Encouraging inter- and trans-disciplinarity** in research into sustainability issues
- ▶ **Supporting the development of *Open Science*** to make scientific knowledge accessible in a transparent and collaborative manner
- ▶ Helping to **make campuses places of experimentation** and societal innovation
- ▶ **Supporting citizen-led participation and co-creation** in sustainability-related research initiatives

State of progress


Challenges

Promoting and accelerating research on sustainability issues 

Encouraging researchers to include sustainability issues into their research projects and methodologies 

Strengthening links between research and teaching in the field of sustainability 

Developing Belgian inter-university collaboration on sustainability issues 

Producing an informative map of the positive environmental impacts of research activities 

Achievements 2022-2024

► Interdisciplinarity and promoting knowledge

- At the crossroads of teaching and research, **reACT, the academic network for ecological and social transformations**, has been officially launched. Taking a deliberately participatory, interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approach, **reACT** aims to be an incubator of ideas and a sounding board for research on sustainability. Open to the entire academic community, the network already has more than 100 members from all faculties and university bodies. The first reACT meeting held in December 2024 brought together around a hundred people who helped to identify the challenges, and ways in which the network can act in the future.
- Two **scientific days** devoted to planetary limits and going beyond them brought together more than 200 members of the scientific community, and created a forum for exchange between different approaches and disciplines (days on "Planetary limits and the challenges of going beyond them" in 2023 and on "Risks, climates, societies" in 2024).

- The Interfaculty Institute for Socio-Ecological Transformations (iITSE) has offered the university community a **wide range of inter- and transdisciplinary activities relating to societies in transformation**, including:

- methodological seminars on "exploring socio-ecological transformations through text and image analysis", and "participatory interdisciplinary research".
- *iITSE's Research Day* in 2023 brought together different disciplines and expertise in relation to socio-ecological transformations. 50 participants took part.
- In conjunction with COP29, ULB organised a **day of information** and meetings with researchers to help journalists decipher the issues at stake at the Baku conference, as well as societal transformations as a response to climate change.
- The Research Communication Service has developed a **number of communication tools**, including the [Research, Science and Society podcasts](#), and the Coffee and ExperTease channel, where researchers share their work and scientific

expertise in the field or in the studio. Themes such as eco-anxiety, ecological transition, migration, architecture and gender diversity, air, soil, agroecology, and ethnic discrimination have been addressed over the last two years as part of the *Open Science dynamic*.

► Integrating sustainability issues into research

Since 2024, ULB has been offering **support for sabbaticals focusing on sustainability issues**, with an additional funds being allocated to the institutional funding mechanism. Sustainability sabbaticals allow researchers to have time to integrate sustainability initiatives into their research or teaching.

► Inter-university collaborations

- At the end of 2024, ULB, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and the HELIOS Foundation launched a **new SWIFT Chair**, a multidisciplinary group of researchers specialising in energy and climate change.
- In November 2024, OpenLab.brussels (ULB-VUB), in collaboration with Europe's Civic University Alliance (CIVIS), organised the **international conference** "Creating knowledge through participatory research: bringing theory and practice closer together" This event is part of ULB's commitment to encourage the exploration of experimental and transdisciplinary research.

► Environmental impact

In 2023, ULB adopted a **new policy for more responsible international travel**, in particular by encouraging the use of trains to European cities classified as "green" or "orange" depending on their accessibility. This policy will contribute to reducing the environmental impact of research activities.



In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ **Anchoring reACT**, the Academic Network for Ecological and Social Transformations into the institutional organigram. Strengthening interdisciplinary approaches to sustainability research, and initiating collaborative, inter-university and inter-faculty projects.
- ▶ **Accelerating research initiatives on the environment and socio-ecological transformations**, both internally and through inter-university collaboration in order to confirm the University's central role in the challenges associated with global changes.
- ▶ **Supporting collaborative reACT projects** that strengthen synergies between sustainability research and teaching
- ▶ **Strengthening inter-university collaborations** on issues related to exceeding global limits and the associated risks

re
act

Réseau Académique
pour les Transformations
Écologiques et Sociales



Theme 3

Campus management

Taking action on the ground to limit impacts

ULB - in 2024

7
480,700 m²

campuses and sites in the Brussels-Capital Region and the Walloon Region

of gross floor area

123

buildings

163,425 m²

of green spaces on the 3 main Brussels campuses (Solbosch, La Plaine and Érasme)

48,000

people (38,000 students and 6,000+ staff members)

59

kt CO₂e in 2022

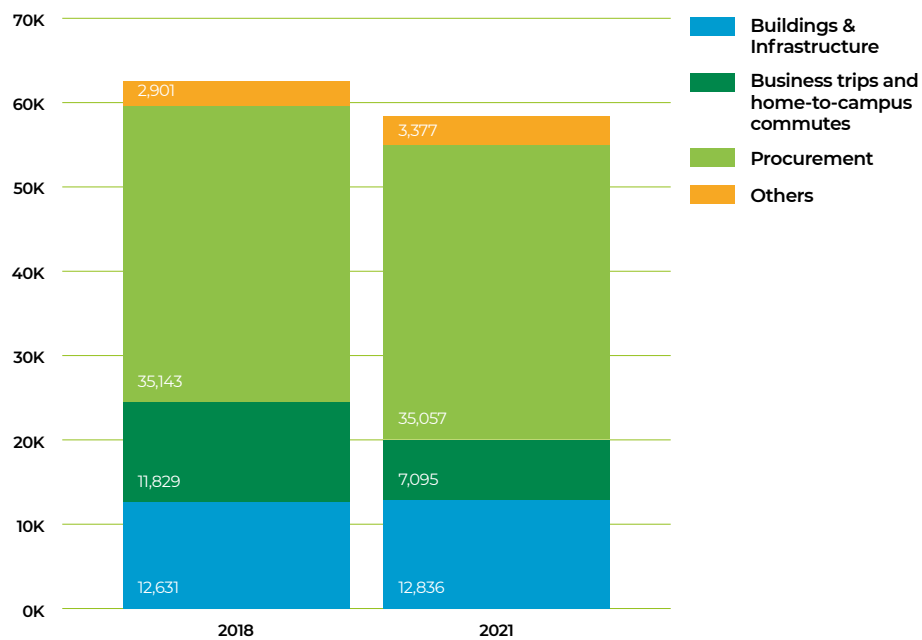


3.1 Climate

ULB is continuing to implement its Climate Plan. At the halfway point, the 6 priority actions of the Operations Section were either completed or are underway, putting the University firmly on track to meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets fixed in 2019 for 2030. By already looking beyond 2030, ULB is maintaining its commitment and reaffirming the priority it gives to climate issues in its core missions, as well as on its campuses.

Key figures

Source of greenhouse gas emissions (tCO₂e)



Source: DTAS/SEM - ULB Carbon Footprint Report - 2018 & 2021

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Reducing** greenhouse gas emissions generated by the University's activities by 13% by 2030 (compared with 2018)
- ▶ **Adapting** the campuses to cope with the effects of climate change

State of progress

Challenges

Accelerating the implementation of priority actions to achieve the 2030 targets of the Climate Plan



Monitoring emission reductions from 2023



Funding the Real Estate Plan (acquisitions, renovations, new constructions)



Coordinating and uniting all the initiatives underway



2023-2024 achievements

► Planning

- All the **Climate Plan's thematic action points** (Energy, Mobility, Resilience and Biodiversity, Responsible IT) are now programmed, approved, budgeted, and planned for 2030.
- **Monitoring information and updates** on the Climate Plan are presented to the Management Board (MB) and the Academic Council (AC) at least twice a year. The University's carbon footprint report is updated every two years. The sustainability report is also published every two to three years.
- **The coordination of the implementation** of the Climate Plan has benefited from the strengthening of the teams for both the Operations and the Education and Research divisions, and from the holding of multi-year meetings.
- A partnership with the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management has enabled us to develop **a rigorous methodology for producing a carbon footprint report for the various faculties**. Over the last two academic years, two groups of students have been supported by the En-

vironment and Mobility Department and teaching staff to develop this methodological framework. From autumn 2025, it will be available to faculties wishing to take actions to their reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

► Priority actions of the Plan

- The **Responsible Travel Policy** was defined and implemented for all work-related trips. At the same time, the **Rambla Traffic Plan** on the Solbosch Campus was launched (see 3.2 Mobility).
- Approved by the Management Board in November 2024, the Real Estate Plan sets out the budget allocations for each campus in order to ensure the structural renovation **of energy-inefficient buildings**. The three-year-funded Réno-3c Plan (climate/comfort/compliance) is the tangible expression of the PLAGE programme (Local Action Plan for Energy Management) for 37 buildings.
- The **Green IT Programme** was launched in 2024 with the signing of the Responsible Digital Technology Charter³. A steering group has been set

up to draw up a specific digital technology policy, and coordinate actions as part of a five-year plan. The aim of the Green IT programme is to move towards a low-carbon data centre and IT infrastructure, and to limit the climatic impact of the university community's use of digital technology.

- The **Green Lab Programme** — to reduce the environmental impact of research laboratories — has been launched with support for two pilot laboratories. The aim is to implement positive actions for all the laboratories, while taking into account the specific characteristics of each one.

► Adapting to the effects of climate change

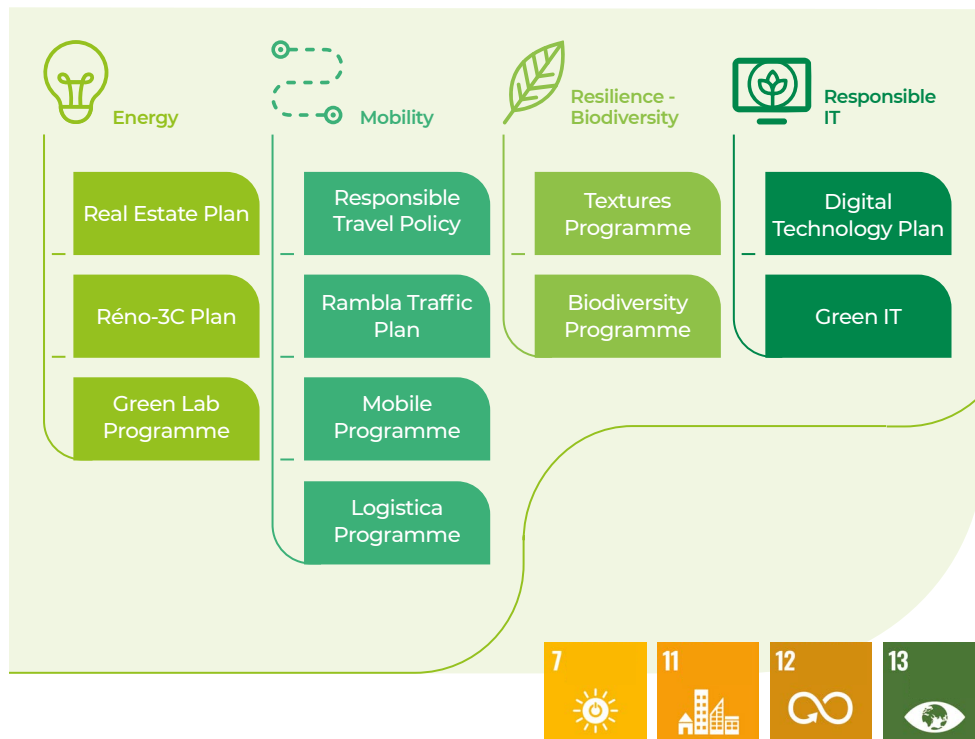
The **Textures, Resilience and Biodiversity** programmes have been developed to reduce heat islands and improve soil permeability, as well as improving plant diversity and creating green corridors on the campuses. (see 3.4 Water and soil and 3.6 Biodiversity).

³The Responsible Digital technology Charter is a voluntary commitment to adopt sustainable, inclusive, ethical and transparent digital practices in order to reduce the environmental and social footprint of digital technology.

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ **Finalising ULB's latest Carbon Footprint Report (2025)**
- ▶ **Achieving the 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set out in the Climate Plan**
- ▶ **Drawing up a Responsible Digital Technology Policy**, and its associated five-year plan
- ▶ **Defining the 2035-2040** greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for ULB

Policies, plans and programmes associated with the Climate Plan



3.2 Mobility

Almost 20% of greenhouse gas emissions at ULB in 2022 were linked to modes of transport. Hence, mobility was one of the main priorities of the Climate Plan. The measures taken cover commutes between home and the campus, as well as international work-related trips and deliveries. Rolled out over the last two years, these initiatives not only aim to reduce the carbon impact of travel, but also to improve the comfort and experience of campus users.

Key figures - 2024

+ 379

new bicycle parking spaces were installed on the Brussels Campus in 2022 (107 of which are secure)

1,355

parking spaces for bicycles are now available on the Brussels Campus

20

charging points for electric vehicles were installed on the Solbosch and Érasme campuses A feasibility study is underway for the La Plaine Campus

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Reducing** the use of the modes of transport that emit the most CO₂
- ▶ **Reducing** the number of kilometres travelled
- ▶ **Reducing** greenhouse gas emissions linked to travel by the University's fleet of vehicles and deliveries

State of progress

Challenges

Adopting and implementing a new parking policy



Adopting a responsible travel policy for work-related trips and students' exchange programmes



Increasing the number of bicycle parking spaces on the campuses



Improving the quality of outdoor spaces, especially for pedestrians



Developing new ways of working



Installing charging points for electric vehicles



2023-2024 achievements

▶ Active mobility

- ▶ The new **Rambla Traffic Plan** for the Solbosch Campus should be completely up and running in 2025. It involves reorganising the main areas where multiple users (pedestrians, cyclists, deliveries) congregate, making soft mobility options safer, and trialling new traffic routes.
- ▶ A former workshop has been refurbished to provide a **new bicycle workshop** on the Solbosch Campus in order to offer a high-quality bicycle repair services for the university community and local users.

▶ International mobility

Since the start of the 2024-2025 academic year, ULB has implemented a **responsible travel policy for work-related trips**, and student exchange programmes. As the University's fourth largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, international travel accounted for almost 10% of the University's carbon footprint in 2018. The policy is based on three principles: optimising, encouraging and compensating.

▶ Improving outdoor spaces

- ▶ The pedestrian nature of the avenue Paul Héger has been enhanced by the re-development of 430 m² to improve the user-friendliness of this thoroughfare on the Solbosch Campus.
- ▶ In the **Janson car park**, a 1,180 m² area is being redeveloped to create a welcoming, inclusive and partially covered space beneath a relatively dense canopy of trees. The re-development will expand the amount of public space on the campus, increase the permeable surfaces (+30% of the re-development is permeable), and green spaces (+400 m²).

▶ Monitoring

In the framework of the University Travel Plan (PDE) and federal diagnostics, a **large-scale mobility survey** was carried out in 2024 to analyse the travel habits of staff members and students. This three-yearly meeting is an opportunity to fine-tune the University's mobility policy.

In planning - 2025-2027

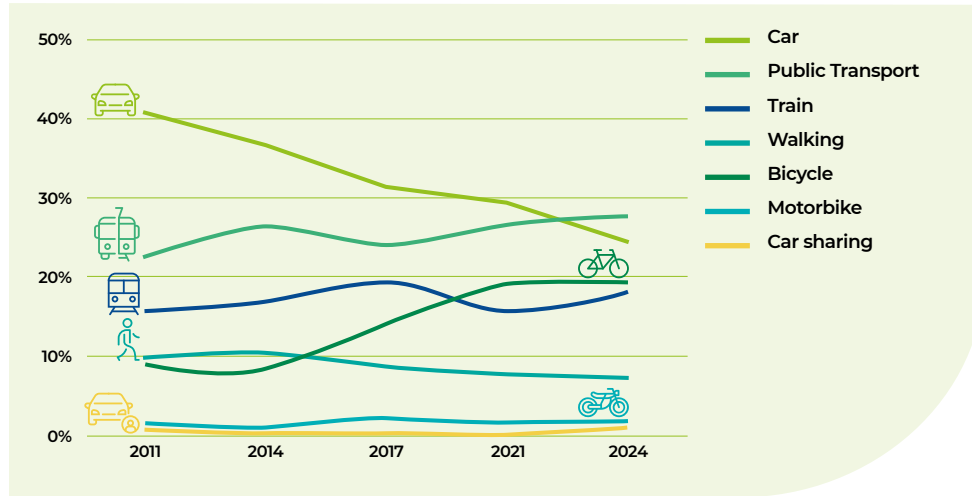
▶ **Strengthening support for and commitment** to responsible travel practices

▶ **Reducing road usage on the campuses**, notably through the implementation of the Rambla Traffic Plan, which aims to gradually transform the Solbosch into a pedestrian-only campus.

▶ **Strengthening support for low-carbon modal shifts**, notably with the electrification of parking zones, and greater flexibility in the reimbursement of home-work travel expenses

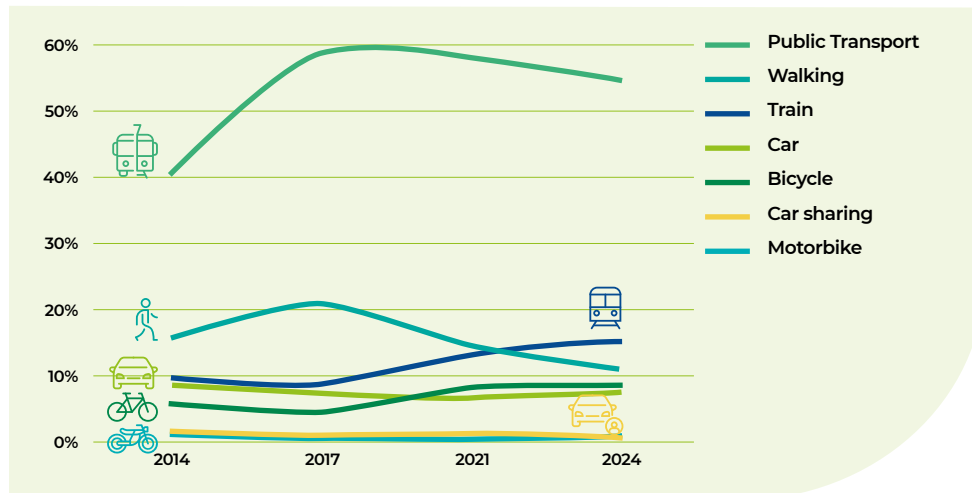
▶ **Setting up a delivery hub** by 2027 to reduce and optimise deliveries on the Solbosch Camous (Logistica project)

Changes in means of transport for members of staff working on Brussels campuses



Source: ULB Work-related Travel Plan - 2024

Changes in means of transport for students on all the Brussels campuses



Source: ULB Work-related Travel Plan - 2024

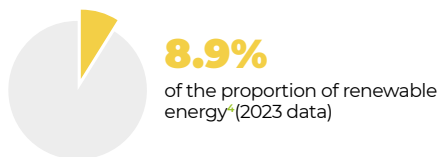
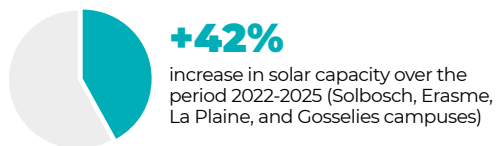


3.3 Energy

A priority of the Climate Plan, ULB's energy policy aims to significantly reduce on-campus energy consumption through renovations, optimised management of operations, and user involvement. This energy policy is an integral part of the real estate strategy, which is based on various plans (Real Estate Plan, Reno-3C Plan, Maintenance Plan, Energy Savings Plan (users)). The policy aims to safeguard the existing heritage while adapting to new needs, particularly the increase in the number of students. Priority is therefore being given to completely overhauling the existing buildings rather than building new ones.

Key Figures - 2022-2024

- 1** building entirely renovated (Building B on the Solbosch Campus)
- 2** buildings are being completely renovated (Buyl Buildings 19 and 21 on the Solbosch Campus)
- 3** complete renovations are being studied (buildings J, L, S on the Solbosch Campus)
- 8** complete renovations are in the study phase (buildings D, JE58-60, O and 4 prefabricated P_x) on the Solbosch Campus
- 3** buildings had new windows installed (BC and NO buildings on the La Plaine Campus, and buildings F1 and H on the Solbosch Campus)










Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Renovating** these buildings and facilities so that they meet the highest energy standards
- ▶ **Maximising** the proportion of renewable energy used
- ▶ **Aiming** for exemplary energy management
- ▶ **Encouraging** users to adopt more efficient and more energy-saving behaviours

State of progress

Challenges

- Completely overhauling 8 buildings (Energy section of the Climate Plan) 
- Implementing the actions set out in the PLAGE 2022-2025 programme⁵ 
- Renovating the centralised technical management system on the La Plaine Campus 
- Carrying out an energy efficiency analysis for all new facilities and renovations 
- Renovating the central heating plant on the Solbosch Campus 
- Replacing the windows 
- Using renewable energy 

⁴Net solar production/Electricity consumption (Purchase + Net solar production)

⁵Portfolio of recommended actions set out in the energy audits of each building

Main achievements 2023-2024*

► Renovating the building's envelope

- **Nearly 3,500 m² of roofs have been insulated** on the R39-41 and T4 buildings on the Solbosch Campus, and the A and C buildings on the Érasme Campus (U=0.24 W/m²K).
- The **windows** in the BC building and part of the NO building on the La Plaine Campus, as well as those in the F1 and H buildings on the Solbosch Campus, were replaced in 2024 with airtight, energy-efficient windows (U= 1.5W/m²K).

► Renovating technical equipment (electrical, heating and ventilation)

- The **complete renovation of the central heating plant on the Solbosch Campus** started in the summer of 2024 (improving boiler hydraulics and regulation). The summer of 2025 will see the renovation of the heating network's substations, with optimised variable flow settings, which will reduce heat consumption on campus by 8% and electricity consumption by 3%.

This programme has benefited from an innovative Reno-Campus funding system (see *Chapter 3.9 – Investments*).

- The completely renovated **centralised technical management system on the La Plaine Campus** can now be used to automate the control of the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment. As a result, excess energy consumption in campus buildings has been reduced by 3% for heat, and 8% for electricity.
- **Six lifts in Building U** on the Solbosch Campus have been replaced by models that are twice as energy-efficient.

► Renewable Energy

- The oil-fired boiler in the F1 Building on the Solbosch Campus has been replaced by a **heat pump for hot water production**, saving almost 10,000 litres of fuel oil a year.
- The most significant achievement was the installation of **more than 1,000 solar panels** on the roof of the main building on the Gosselies Campus. Inaugurated in early 2025, they will cover 1/8 of the Campus's annual electricity consumption, and prevent the emission of 150t CO₂e per year.

► Planning

The **energy policy guidelines** defined in 2023, now serve as a shared frame of reference to inform the design, planning, execution and operation of any activity with an energy impact. They provide both a methodological framework and a decision-making tool, regardless of the stage of the project or the field concerned.

► Raising user awareness

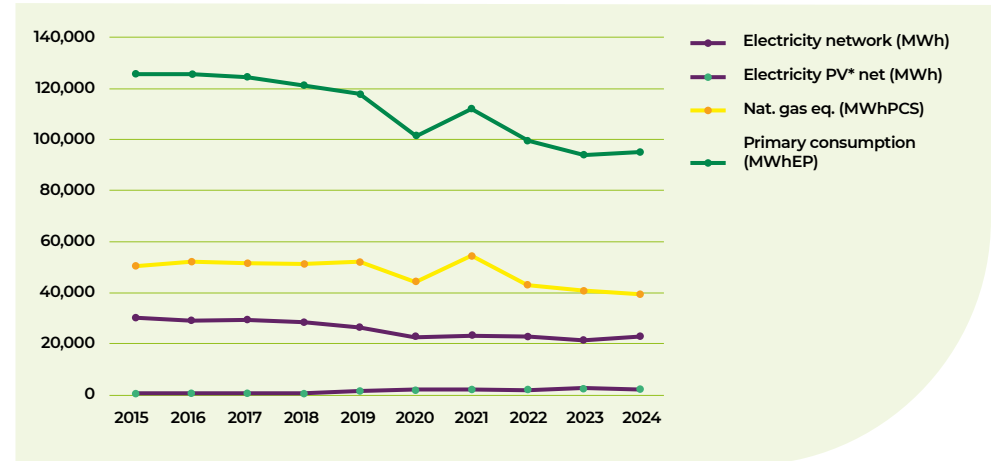
The **internal "Harnessing our energy" campaign** has helped to raise awareness among the university community of the best practices to adopt when it comes to energy consumption.

*Not including complete renovations. See Key Figures.

In planning - 2025-2027

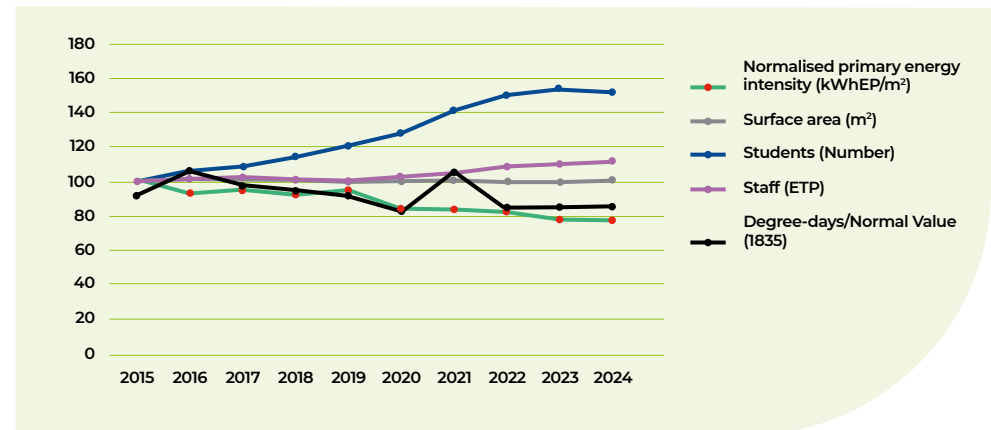
- ▶ **Implementing the PLAGÉ Horizon 2028** programme (portfolio of actions recommended in the energy audits of each building)
- ▶ **Improving ULB's overall energy efficiency** by 20% by 2027 compared with 2019
- ▶ **Producing 10% of the electricity consumed by ULB on site** from energy generated by solar panels by 2027
- ▶ **Ensuring that energy efficiency** is one of the main criteria for informing and implementing building projects, renovations, maintenance, and campus activities.
- ▶ **Training technical and design teams** in energy efficiency
- ▶ **Raising awareness of campus users** of the importance of reducing energy consumption
- ▶ **Finalising the renovation of the heating network on the Solbosch Campus** with the installation of variable flow pumps, and the renovation of the pipe insulation substations
- ▶ **Carrying out renovations on the 8 buildings** currently undergoing orientation studies by 2030-35 (see Key Figures)
- ▶ **Implementing the programme to renovate the ventilation units** in all the La Plaine buildings, and a series of buildings on the Solbosch Campus (A, F1, H, N, S)
- ▶ Continuing the energy renovation programme by **replacing the windows in the GE building** on the Erasme Campus

Changes in energy supply and primary energy consumption - ULB



Infrastructure Department/BTS/Energy Unit

Rate of change in normalised primary energy intensity and main influencing factors (100 = 2015)



Infrastructure Department/BTS/Energy Unit

*Solar



3.4 Water and soil

Between 2006 and 2024, water consumption at ULB fell by 40% despite an 8% increase in gross floor area. Although these results are encouraging, water management remains a major challenge due to the growing impact of climate change and urbanisation. Combating flooding, the quality of waste water, the integrated management of rainwater, anticipating droughts, and safeguarding biodiversity remain major challenges. These challenges are also linked to soil conservation, a theme which is now an integral part of ULB's environmental commitments.

Key figures - 2024

18

rainwater harvesting tanks have been installed, preventing 540m³ of water from entering the drain

2,453 m³

of rainwater harvested, saving 400,000 toilet flushes in 2022

1,000 m²

were demineralised between 2022 and 2024

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Reducing** the consumption of mains water
- ▶ **Discharging** environmentally-friendly water
- ▶ **Making the campuses more resilient** to the consequences of climate change
- ▶ **Increasing the** permeability and quality of ground surfaces

State of progress⁶

Challenges

Formalising a sustainable water management plan for ULB



Having a complete network for taking remote water meter readings



Demineralising a part of non-built ground surfaces



⁶The soil policy was not included in the previous sustainability report.

2023-2024 achievements

Water management

- ▶ Launched in 2021, the real-time **water management platform**, including remote metering for all the buildings on the Brussels campuses, was completed in 2023. This system detects leaks in real time, enabling the technical manager to schedule a rapid response.
- ▶ **The redevelopment of part of the Janson car park into a public space** on the Solbosch Campus provided an opportunity to implement a soil demineralisation programme. This new space includes 400 m² of planted, permeable surface area. It increases the permeable surface of the re-developed area by 30%, allowing 300 m³ of water to be absorbed.
- ▶ On the La Plaine campus, the complete redevelopment of the terraces in front of the BC building has given a new lease of life to an unused area, while also increasing green corridors. The **demineralisation of the terraces has made 300 m²** of land permeable. The project will continue in 2025 with the renovation of the storm water basin into an infiltration zone

of high ecological and scientific value, while offering greater comfort and usability on the campus.

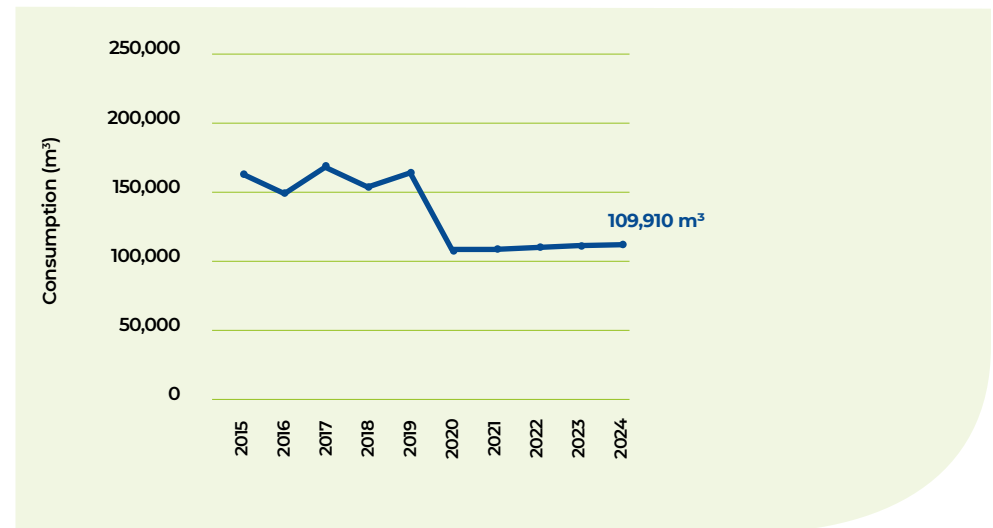
Quality of ground surfaces

On the Erasme Campus, ULB took part in the **Good Soil Project** led by "Bruxelles Environnement" in order to have a better understanding of the condition of the soil in the Brussels Region.

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ Redirecting rainwater from the 4,300 m² of roofs at BC on the La Plaine Campus into the **new high-ecological-value area** on the former disused reservoir
- ▶ Amending the soil through better management of the green spaces on the La Plaine and Solbosch campuses, in particular by recycling some of the green waste on site
- ▶ **Defining an initial Plain — Solbosch Water Plan** — to enable integrated rainwater management, and connectivity to the Region's blue network

Changes in water consumption - ULB



Infrastructure Department/BTS/Energy Unit



3.5 Food

In addition to social, environmental, educational and health issues, food is at the heart of ULB's proactive policy. It aims to provide a low-carbon offering, reduce waste and provide affordable, high quality food. ULB has been involved in the Brussels-Capital Region's GoodFood labelling programme since 2020, and is continuing to offer food that meets its sustainability criteria.

Key figures - 2024



+15%

of meals on average were served per day in 2024 compared to 2023



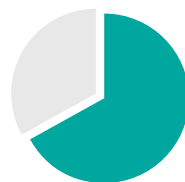
32%

of vegetarian and vegan meals were served in the University's canteens in 2023



11%

of meals on offer are prepared using food sourced from short distribution channels or local suppliers



67%

of the meals sold to students cost €2, thanks to ULB's initiative for students experiencing financial hardship

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Offering food** that is healthy, fair, high-quality, environmentally-friendly, and affordable
- ▶ **Reducing food waste** and food-related waste
- ▶ **Favouring** short circuits and local suppliers
- ▶ **Obtaining** the "2 fourchettes label" from the "Label Cantine GoodFood" for the university canteens

State of progress

Challenges

Obtaining the "2 fourchettes label" from the "Label Cantine GoodFood" for all the University's canteens by 2027, while also guaranteeing affordable prices and a diverse offering.



Monitoring food waste



Obtaining the "3 fourchettes label" for food served in the crèche





2023-2024 achievements

The Chez Théo university canteen on the Solbosch Campus has been awarded the "2 fourchettes label" by the Brussels-Capital Region's GoodFood label, which includes compulsory criteria (minimum quantity of organic products, vegetarian offering, seasonal products, combating food waste, awareness-raising), as well as optional criteria that demonstrate an even stronger commitment (origin of eggs, availability of tap water, socially-responsible products, etc.).

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ Obtaining **the "2 fourchettes label" for the canteens on the Érasme and La Plaine campuses**



3.6 Biodiversity

Faced with the growing impact of climate change and the decline in biodiversity, ULB is stepping up its efforts to create more resilient campuses that are not only pleasant to live on, but which respect the ecological balance. In recent years, particular attention has been paid to the implementation of differentiated management of green spaces, thereby encouraging the maintenance and development of biodiversity in the city.

Key figures - 2024

BAF+

12%

+ 13,000 m²

+ 570 m²

Since 2021, the Biotope Area Factor (BAF) has been rising for all the Brussels' campuses

of lawns set aside for wild flower meadows

of living roofs have been created

of lawns have been planted with native fruit trees

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Safeguarding and encouraging** the biodiversity of the University's green spaces by safeguarding and developing a variety of ecological habitats
- ▶ **Integrating** green spaces into the green networks of the Brussels-Capital Region

State of progress

Challenges

Increasing the biodiversity of green spaces by creating wild flower meadows



Creating ecological corridors



2023-2024 achievements

- ▶ Thanks to an **exhaustive inventory of the trees** undertaken on the Solbosch and La Plaine campuses, the University now has a management tool for planting, maintaining and preserving trees (especially noteworthy trees) and biodiversity.
 - ▶ A **new differentiated management directive** has been introduced for the upkeep of green spaces on the Solbosch and La Plaine campuses. For La Plaine, it is accompanied by a special clause stipulating that contractual work must be awarded to disability-friendly companies.
 - ▶ **More than 300 new trees and shrubs**, including fruit trees, have been planted on the Solbosch Campus, thanks to a soil demineralisation policy, and the redevelopment of planted areas. Although smaller, these new plants will eventually create high-quality plant cover, as well as curbing heat islands and promoting biodiversity. As part of participatory workshops, these plantings were carried out in collaboration with local authorities
- and associations, reinforcing the collective involvement of citizens in safeguarding biodiversity.
- ▶ A **wetland of high biological interest has been redeveloped** on La Plaine Campus. This wetland area of over 1,300 m², bordered by a late-mowing zone, has created a new biotope on the La Plaine Campus.

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ **Guaranteeing the implementation of the new differentiated management of green spaces** from March 2025
- ▶ **Continuing to strengthen the biotope area factor** per surface area (**BAF+**) by replanting denuded areas and/or areas with ageing vegetation, and by diversifying plant species
- ▶ **Creating wet zones** on the La Plaine Campus
- ▶ **Studying a project to upgrade embankments** with the Region as part of an experimental project.

3.7 Procurement and the circular economy

ULB's activities generate little waste that can be directly recycled on site. Integrating the circular economy into the University's procurement policy is a major challenge, and involves including circularity criteria into the specifications.

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Preventing** excess consumption by persuading the community to limit purchases
- ▶ **Integrating** environmental and/or ethical criteria into the specifications of public contracts in order to increase the proportion of sustainable products

2023-2024 achievements

Sustainability criteria are gradually being incorporated into each renewal of public procurement contracts. TO DATE, all the specifications expressly state the obligation to comply with national anti-discrimination legislation, as well as the eight fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO). For contracts subsidised by European funds, DNSH (Do Not Significant Harm) clauses relating to environmental impacts are required.

Many ULB departments are involved in these efforts:

- ▶ **University canteens:** criteria for short circuits and social welfare obligations have been introduced into the specifications.
- ▶ **Travel agency:** criteria for monitoring and reporting the carbon footprint have been introduced at the agency in order to contribute to the implementation of the responsible travel policy.
- ▶ **IT equipment:** as part of its Digital IT plan, the University is committed to extending the lifespan of all mobile IT computers by more than two years.
- ▶ **Ink cartridges:** a new public procurement contract has

been launched for the supply of reconditioned ink cartridges. They are manufactured from used cartridges, which are cleaned and refilled by specialised companies. Once back on the market, they contribute to a circular economy model by reducing waste, and optimising the use of resources.

- ▶ **Paper:** the new public procurement contract guarantees the provision of a single type of paper produced from 100% recycled fibres without chlorine.
- ▶ **Drinking water fountains:** a new public procurement contract will see the installation of drinking water fountains connected to mains water (supplying cold or room temperature water, and still or sparkling water), thereby reducing the use of plastic bottles weighing more than 18 litres.
- ▶ **Small items of office furniture and equipment:** the number of models on offer has been deliberately limited in the new contract with the introduction of second-hand furniture solutions from an official supplier.

Exemplary circular renovation on the Usquare Campus

Housed in the former buildings of the Caserne d'Ixelles on the Usquare site, **the ULB-VUB interdisciplinary hub** has been entirely designed with the circular economy in mind. The project was also supported by a circular economy research team (Bâtir on the ULB side and Architectural Engineering on the VUB side). The approach adopted focused on **conserving and renovating existing buildings** with demolition limited to structures deemed structurally unsafe.

In order to adapt to changing needs, the design and layout are flexible. Maximum use has been made of materials, **e.g. reusing** bricks, windows, tiles, radiators, doors, natural stone, and sanitary fittings. The recuperation of materials was primarily carried out on site while also exploring re-purposing solutions from other sites. **Biosourced** materials, such as wood, shells, fragmented soil and clay plaster, have also been used where possible.

In planning - 2025-2027

- **Setting up an in-house recycling centre** for office furniture on the Solbosch Campus



3.8 Waste

ULB has many years' experience in waste management and sorting. Reducing waste and optimising sorting with a view to recycling remains a priority, particularly in light of the increased number of campus users. Raising awareness among new cohorts of students remains a major challenge.

Key figures - 2024

1,800 tonnes

of waste generated per year (2023 data)

19

Sorting facilities have been set up

48


Pilot stations were trialled (2024 data)

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Reducing** the production of waste
- ▶ **Encouraging** the recuperation and/or reuse of materials and energy through sorting facilities

State of progress

Challenges

Introducing sorting management via centralised recycling stations 

Discouraging the use of single-use items 

2023-2024 achievements

- ▶ To facilitate sorting at source, a **pilot system of four-compartment sorting stations** (organic, PMC, paper, all waste) has been trialled in several buildings, notably on the Solbosch, La Plaine and Erasme campuses. These pilot facilities will make it possible to evaluate the efficiency of the system before rolling it out to buildings on different campuses. The assessment will look at recycling station models, frequency of emptying, and sorting compliance.
- ▶ University canteens are now charging 20 euro cents for **single-use containers** in anticipation of a change in legislation. In this way, the university community is being encouraged to adopt a zero waste approach.

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ **Installing sorting stations** in all buildings on all campuses (by 2028)

3.9 Investments

Over the last two years, ULB has strengthened and structured its socially-responsible investment policy. In-depth work is underway to analyse the impact of the University's financial investments on greenhouse gas emissions, particularly indirect emissions (Theme 3). The aim is to bring the University's investments into line with the climate commitments set out in the Paris Agreements.

Key figures - 2024

132.5 million euros

total amount of ULB investment portfolios

19.9 tCO₂e

are emitted per million invested giving a carbon footprint that is relatively low

2 million euros

were raised as part of the RenoCampus participative fundraising, including 1/3 from individual investors

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Refining** the carbon footprint of ULB's overall investment portfolio
- ▶ **Aligning** the investment portfolio with the climate targets, while maintaining financial profitability
- ▶ **Participating** in innovative ethical and socially-responsible finance projects



2023-2024 achievements

- ▶ **Half of the University's investment portfolio has been analysed** for its carbon impact.
- ▶ In October 2023, ULB's financing obtained the "**Finance solidaire**" label, which certifies the financing of activities that generate social or environmental benefits.
- ▶ The lines and funds in ULB's portfolios have all been converted to **products in category 8 of the SFDR regulation**, which promote social or environmental characteristics, and **category 9** which have a sustainable investment objective.
- ▶ In collaboration with the "F'in Common cooperative", the University has set up **Reno-Campus, an innovative social and solidarity financing scheme**. Supported by the Brussels-Capital Region, the project is part of the RENO-LUTION programme to accelerate the sustainable and circular renovation of buildings. The scheme has raised over €2 million for three energy renovation projects on ULB campuses. The loans taken

out will be repaid thanks to the savings generated by improving the buildings' energy performance, estimated at 3,600 MWh of natural gas and 350 MWh of electricity, equivalent to the consumption of 270 households in Brussels, representing a reduction in CO₂e emissions of around 850 tonnes per year.

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ **Assessing the carbon footprint** of the entire investment portfolio
- ▶ **Developing a reporting dashboard** to compare ULB fund managers on the basis of non-financial data
- ▶ Implementing a **global non-financial report** incorporating various indicators, such as the portfolio's ESG⁷ score, carbon footprint and impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ▶ **Aligning the University's investment portfolio** with the climate trajectory

⁷ Environmental, social and governance criteria



Theme 4 Community

Empowerment for all

Our community - in 2024

38,000

students



59%
female students



68%
Belgian nationals



21%
EU nationals
(not including
Belgium)



11%
non-EU
nationals

6,000+

staff members



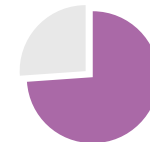
50%
women



23%
aged 30 or
under



18%
aged 50 or over



74%
Belgian nationals



19%
EU nationals
(not including
Belgium)



7%
non-EU
nationals

4.1 Gender and diversity

Sustainability objectives involve combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal access to resources, be they material, financial or social, as well as to services and roles valued by society. The University is addressing these challenges via a strong institutional policy. It has been working on this for over 10 years, with flagship measures such as the "Cascade" initiative, the annual report on the state of gender equality, and the creation of a Vice-rector dedicated to these areas. In 2023, these initiatives culminated in the award of the Diversity Label for a period of two years by the Brussels Region in recognition of ULB's commitment and achievements in the field of diversity in employment. This label complements the "HR Excellence in Research" label awarded by the European Commission for the human resources management strategy for research (EURAXESS HRS4R), which includes a focus on gender equality and the promotion of diversity. A new Gender Equality and Diversity Plan has been adopted, setting out the objectives to be achieved and the resources to be mobilised for the period 2024-2029.

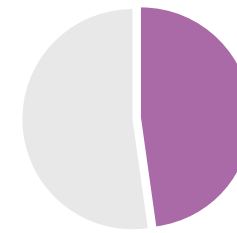
Key figures - between 2015 and 2024

From 18% to 29%	Female tenured professors
From 32% to 37%	Female professors
From 40% to 42%	Female course leaders

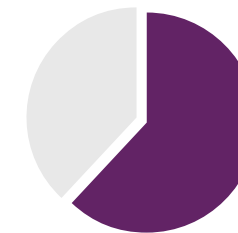
In 2024



38%
of women in the academic community



48%
of women in the scientific community



62%
women in PATGS (administrative, technical, management and specialist staff)


Strategic objectives

- ▶ Implementing equal opportunities, gender diversity and balance in all policies and activities

State of progress

Challenges

New multi-year strategic plan for gender equality and diversity 2024-2029 

Programme to help students living with a disability find employment 

2023-2024 achievements

► For the entire community

- The new Gender Equality and Diversity Plan 2024-2029 was approved by the Academic Council (CoA) in December 2024. It aims to respond with commitment to gender policy in the European Union, and to strengthen the policy currently in place. Its aim is to **promote substantial equality in teaching**, research and services to society.
- An inclusive, **gender-neutral toilet policy** was adopted by the Prevention and Protection at Work Committee and the CoA in 2024.

► For the staff

- Regulations have been adopted to **prevent sexual and discriminatory harassment in the context of the teaching relationship**, and to guarantee impartiality and equal treatment in teaching assignments.
- A **pilot trans-identity training project** has been organised for staff in the Department of Relations and Human Resources. The training will be offered to all HR staff in 2025.
- A **Gender Equality Plan for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics** (2021-2023) was drawn up following ULB's participation in the European [CALIPER](#) project.
- Guides entitled "[Towards gender-sensitive university teaching](#)", "[Integrating the gender dimension and research and innovation](#)" and "[Gender, inclusiveness and popularising science](#)" have been published to help teaching staff and researchers **integrate gender dimension into their activities**.

► For the students

- A **Charter on the management of sexual and sexist abuse within student circles** has been drawn up and distributed to ULB's folklore bodies. The framework note on the organisation and conduct of student activities now includes a pillar on preventing sexual violence and discrimination.
- To accompany the relaunch of the "[If it's not yes, it's no](#)" campaign on consent, an **online training module** is helping to raise awareness of sexual violence throughout the student community.
- The **final report of the "Racism and Discrimination"** has been drawn up by the working group, whose remit focused on the student community, was adopted by the Board of Directors at the end of 2023. In particular, it recommends clarifying and clearly communicating the rights and duties of each individual, as well as creating a reporting system that will bring about real structural changes in terms of prevention.

In planning - 2025-2027

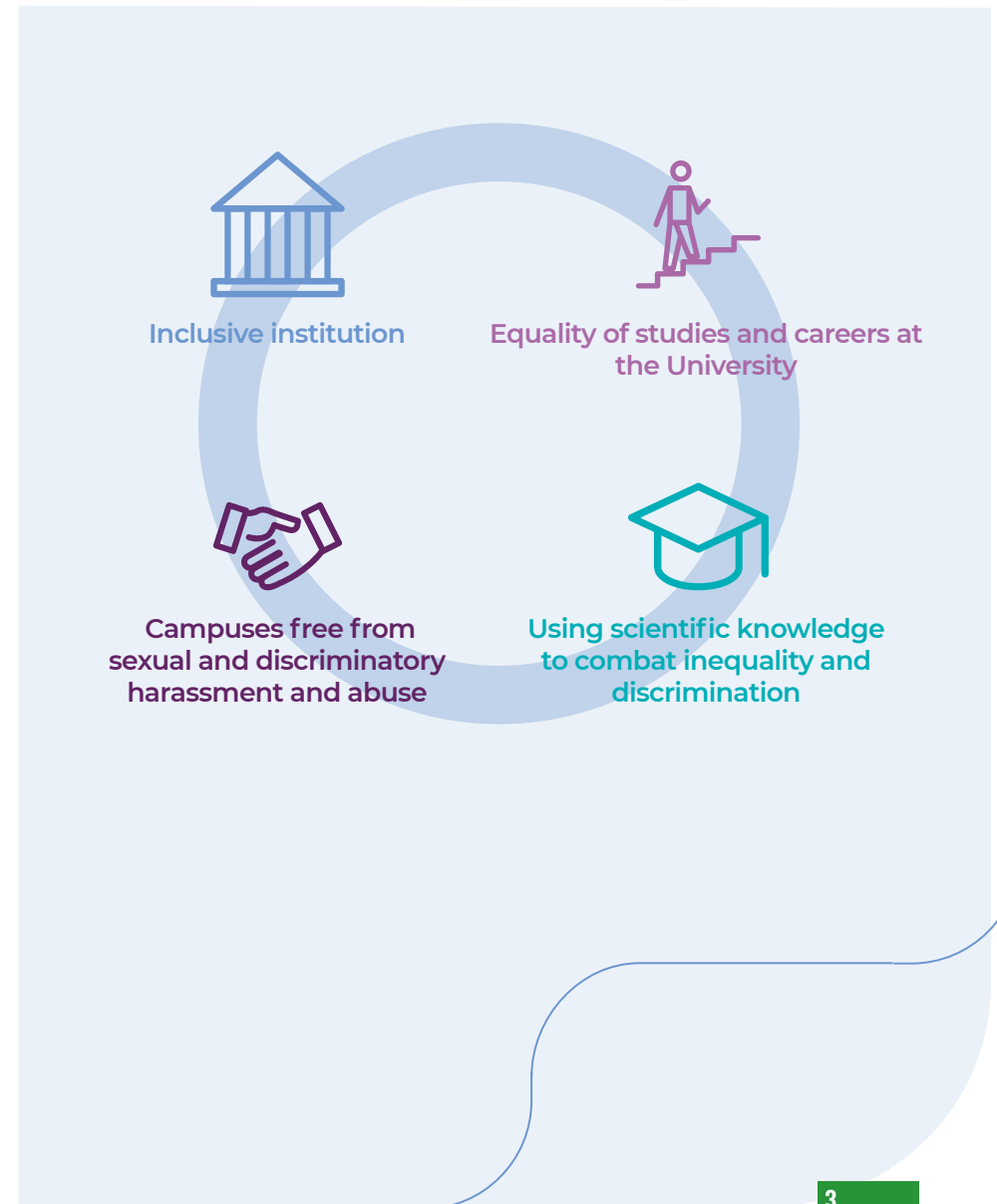
► For the entire community

- Strengthening **prevention measures and managing** sexual violence
- Organising **awareness-raising activities on racism, LG-BTQIA+ phobias**
- Defining **protocols** to support members of the community who are transitioning

► For the staff

- Implementing measures to **encourage the recruitment of women** in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (*STEM*)
- Facilitating the recruitment and integration of **staff members living with a disability** by institutionalising procedures for reasonable adaptations

The priority dimensions of the new Gender Equality Plan - 2024-2029



4.2 Health and well-being

The periods of confinement and social distancing associated with the COVID 19 pandemic have left lasting impacts on the health of certain members of the student community and ULB staff. Other crises — energy, climate, economic and geopolitical — have been added to the mix. ULB has firmly placed the health and well-being of the university community at the heart of its actions, by offering local services to everyone.

Key figures - 2023

3,187

medical and paramedical procedures/ treatments were provided to staff members

3,525

medical and paramedical procedures/ treatments were provided to students

12

workshops were held to raise awareness about addiction and safe traditional folklore celebrations, such as "guindaille"(NB: student parties often involving heavy drinking)

630

members of students' clubs were formed to ensure traditional folklore celebrations are held safely

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Improving** access to health-care for members of the university community
- ▶ **Ensuring** the social, emotional and mental well-being of members of the university community

State of progress

Challenges

Preventing addiction among students



Back-to-work scheme after a long-term absence



Listening platform for staff



Burn-out prevention programme



Access to health and well-being resources in English



Health and well-being dashboard



2023-2024 achievements

► For the entire community

The ULB medical department now offers **consultations on addiction and tobacco use**.

► For the staff

- A **ULB staff support platform** provides a listening service, and confidential, anonymous, multilingual psychological support 24/7.
- A **burn-out prevention workshop** is held twice a year for the staff. Conferences and training courses were offered in 2024 as part of the "Rendez-vous de la déconnexion" (Switch off) campaign.
- Several pages and documents on well-being and managing human resources are being **translated into English** for non-French-speaking staff members.
- **Health and well-being steering indicators** have been defined and are now being monitored.

► For the students

- The **Student Life Watchdog** carried out a survey of students at ULB and the Haute École Ilya Prigogine to assess their habits with regard to the consumption of alcohol, drugs, and performance-enhancing substances. The results provide insights into how to bring about risk reduction and prevention. [Addiction survey](#).



- In addition to the awareness-raising programme for safer traditional folklore celebrations for all, ULB Santé is organising, in collaboration with dedicated partners, **awareness-raising activities on addiction**, and training for members of student clubs and students.

In planning - 2025-2027

► For the entire community

Defining a protocol and sharing information about what to do in the event of an **emergency psychological situation**

► For the staff

- Providing tools and resources to **support the transition to back-to-work** after a long-term absence
- Preparing a training module on **preventing burn-out** for staff members supervising teams
- Developing an awareness-raising training course on **ergonomics in the workplace**

► For the students

- Evaluating and adapting the **health and well-being programme** to the context of traditional folklore celebrations
- Better understanding the behaviours of students in terms of their **relationships, and affective and sexual life**, notably in terms of consent and preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

4.3 Careers











Launched in 2020, the Morpho Administration Transformation Plan sets out an ambitious framework for modernising human resources management, in terms of careers, promotion, training and mobility. Most of the actions implemented over the last two years have already put this policy into practice.

Strategic objectives

- ▶ **Attracting** and improving the recruitment of talents able to contribute to the development of the university
- ▶ **Improving** the end-of-career process

State of progress

Challenges

Improving the recruitment and onboarding of staff members	
Improving the integration between career start-up and career development stages with a personalised training plan	
Making the promotion system for administrative, technical, management and specialist staff fairer and more transparent	
Developing skills through mentoring and <i>peer-to-peer coaching</i>	
Developing and promoting the offer of individual and group training courses	
Developing individual or structural coaching	
Promoting internal mobility	
Improving end-of career prospects	
Improving the management of staff departures	
Developing HR dashboards and indicators	

2023-2024 achievements

▶ Working conditions and career development

- ▶ Introduced on a massive scale at the time of the COVID health crisis, **structural teleworking** is now governed by a collective bargaining agreement negotiated between ULB authorities and workers' representatives.
- ▶ Several projects have **simplified administrative procedures**, notably through the development of centralised tools such as the leave-management tool.
- ▶ A **training catalogue** has been put online, offering more opportunities for staff to acquire new skills.

▶ End-of-career

- ▶ In June 2023, the University's Board adopted a **comprehensive end-of-career plan** in line with the current legal framework. The plan aims to better prevent burnout, strengthen commitment and loyalty, anticipate retirements, and make the most of acquired

experience and expertise. It is structured around four pillars, including the transmission of knowledge, career-long training, the promotion of physical and mental well-being, and the reorganisation of working conditions and working hours for employees reaching the end of their careers. The first three pillars of the plan are aimed at all members of staff. Pillar four only concerns administrative, technical, management and specialist staff (PATGS) aged 55 and over.

- ▶ Implementation of **Project 55 +**, which is part of Pillar four of the overall end-of-career plan, offers flexible solutions (additional leave, teleworking, flexible working hours) to **ease demands made on staff members nearing the end of their careers**.

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ Implementing the project to **reform the PATGS promotion and advancement system**
- ▶ Creating a **skills base**
- ▶ Extending the pilot project to **development circles** for staff members

The four pillars of the End-of-Career Plan



4.4 Fostering success

With a view to guaranteeing equal opportunities and supporting students in socio-economically disadvantaged situations, ULB has drawn up a strategic plan aimed at fostering students' success in accordance with the requirements of the "Décret Paysage 2021". From course orientation prior to enrolment to help organising course work, via financial and material aid, success assistance aims to support the entire student community.

Key figures - 2024

22

students who have benefited from the new "Caregiver" status

9,000

students who have benefited from the subsidised meal rate in university canteens

1,382

students who took part in the "Tailor-made first year" scheme

850

students who were supported as part of the Digital Recovery Plan

5,000

secondary school students who attended "Information Saturday". 80 faculty members took part to help them in their choice of studies

Strategic objectives


- ▶ Providing comprehensive information on the range of courses on offer, and the options available for preparing for the chosen course of study
- ▶ Supporting students in their academic choices and learning processes
- ▶ Ensuring the integration of students with special needs, while respecting their specific developmental conditions

State of progress


Challenges


Improving the information provided to all audiences 

Improving the care and support for students with special needs 

Improving the accessibility, clarity and flexibility of financial aid 

Taking into account digital inequalities 

Adapting support systems to suit diverse learners 

Improving pedagogical follow-up throughout the university journey 

2023-2024 achievements

► Information

A post for a **communications manager has been created within the Fostering Success Service**, enabling wider communication on existing support schemes (campaigns, digital publications, video clips, and information sessions).

► Financial aid and statuses

- A range of **reconditioned computer equipment** enables students using Student Social Services to buy computer equipment at a more affordable price than new equipment.
- **Subsidised meals (€2) in the university canteens** are now available for students experiencing financial hardship. The online application for subsidised meals has been simplified.
- A new **caregiver status** has been created to enable students, who regularly care for a relative losing their independence, to balance this role with their university studies.

► Support

- A **support unit has been set up in each faculty** as part of the "Tailor-made first year" programme to help reduce educational inequalities. This hands-on support enables us to tailor our support systems to students' specific needs. In five pilot faculties, diagnostic tests are carried out in the first year to assess students' level of knowledge and skills, identify their difficulties more precisely, and offer them personalised support from an academic adviser.
- A questionnaire has been developed to **assess the digital vulnerability** of students using the Student Social Services, and to offer them training and coaching sessions as part of the Digital Catch-up Plan.
- **Digitalising procedures** for students with disabilities will speed up and simplify the administrative follow-up of their applications.
- The **new Sherpa scheme** helps students to improve their documentary research skills, thanks to training provided by library staff.

► Guidance at the end of secondary education

- To help secondary school pupils make the right career choices and highlight lesser-known courses of study, ULB has created a **"Higher Education Opportunities Notebook"**. To make it easier to use, this booklet is accompanied by a teaching guide, and online training for secondary school teachers.
- Inaugurated in June 2024, the information morning for parents and future students has been changed to **"Information Saturday"**. This open day for secondary school leavers takes place in June, and aims to help them choose a course of study, as well as learning about university life at ULB (grants, scholarships, administrative procedures). They can also pre-enrol on site.

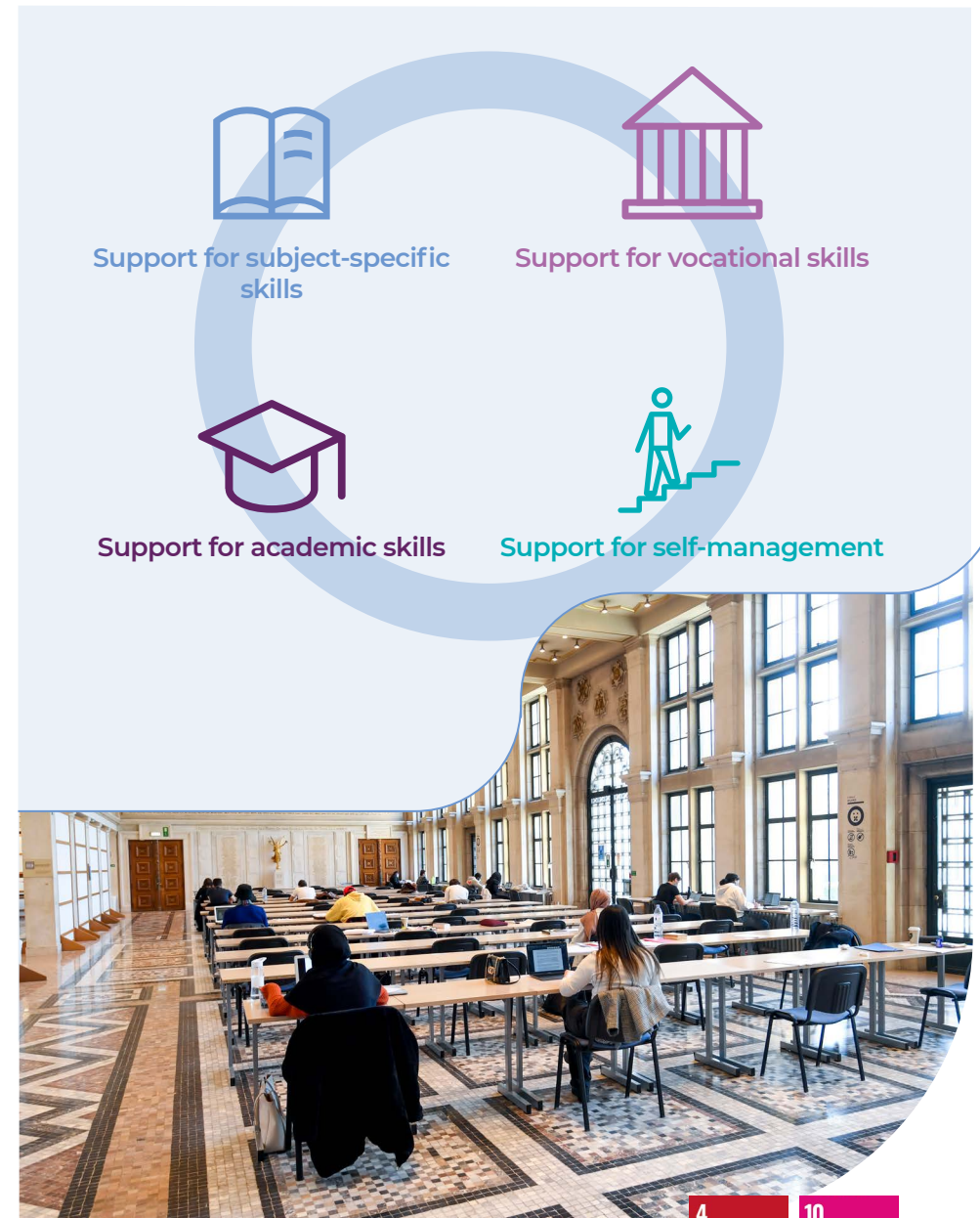
► Monitoring

As part of the Student Life Watchdog, the updated 2020 survey on students' financial resources has identified areas for improvement in order to reduce **inequalities** and support those experiencing hardship. [Report on the survey on students' financial resources](#)

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ Planning **support for mature students wishing to resume their studies**
- ▶ Offering a **new model of institutional support** for students with special needs living with a disability
- ▶ **Using digital technology**, especially the use of Artificial Intelligence, in teaching support
- ▶ Strengthening **the range of financial aid** for students experiencing financial hardship
- ▶ Setting up a **guidance system for secondary school pupils from Year 11**, including guidance training for secondary school staff, and the deployment of an online platform.

The four pillars of learning support



4.5 Student accommodation

Accommodation is a key factor for students' quality of life. Over the last five years (2020-2024), rental prices for student rooms have risen by an average of 21% in Belgium, with prices significantly higher in Brussels.⁸ Charges, such as heating or access to an internet connection are particularly burdensome in cases of financial hardship. Faced with this situation, ULB is striving to improve the energy quality of its accommodation and is working with property developers to offer high-quality housing at affordable prices, located close to the campuses or with good public transport links.

Key figures - 2024

164

new rooms for rent close to the Érasme Campus

988

self-managed rooms, which correspond to a 20% increase compared to 2022

1,500

student accommodation close to the campus offered by private partners



44%

of ULB rooms that are occupied by students with a welfare priority (2023 and 2024)



+ 31%

increasing the amount of rent subsidised by the University

Strategic objectives

- ▶ Offering student-friendly accommodation and halls of residence at fair prices
- ▶ Strengthening the development of social housing by encouraging developers to include it in their projects, and by supporting the development of the Student Housing Agency

State of progress

Challenges

Developing a partnership with the Agence Immobilière Sociale Étudiante -AISE (Student Housing Agency)



Working with the Brussels-Capital Region to lower rents



Renovating halls of residence



Developing student accommodation on the new Usquare site



⁸Source: Kotkompas étude Digit Studentlife Stadim -2024.

2023-2024 achievements

- ▶ The first phase of the **renovation of the Willy Peers residence**, located on avenue Paul Héger on the Solbosch Campus was completed in 2024. It involved replacing all the windows and installing a new ventilation system thus improving the building's energy performance and comfort of its residents.
- ▶ A **new residence for 164 students was opened in Anderlecht** close to the Érasme Campus.

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ Implementing **renovation projects that aim to improve the energy efficiency of the buildings**. These projects include the renovation of the outer envelope and roof of the Willy Peers and Elisée Reclus residences, and the energy renovation of the Lucia De Brouckère residence by 2027.
- ▶ Drawing up by 2030, a **new master plan for student accommodation**, to meet the need to expand the housing stock under its own management or in partnership
- ▶ **Renovating the** existing housing stock to meet the energy performance targets set by the Brussels-Capital Region in the new Brussels Code on Air, Climate and Energy Management (CoBrACE), by 2030.
- ▶ Following up on the **development of accommodation on the Usquare site**. A call for projects was launched and the bids are being analysed



Theme 5 Society

Fostering citizen commitment

Society in a world in crisis - in 2024

28%

of the population lives in a household with an income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold in the Brussels-Capital Region, and 15% in Wallonia⁹

9%

of young people aged 18 to 24 in the Brussels-Capital Region and Wallonia have prematurely interrupted their education

44%

of children in Brussels were at least one year behind in their schooling in 2022-2023

-22%

enrolments in compulsory education courses between 2021 and 2023

39,615

people who have submitted an application for international protection to the Immigration Office in Belgium¹¹

50

countries in the world that are experiencing active conflict; a two-fold increase over the last 5 years¹²

⁹ IBSA, 202

¹⁰ IWEPS, 2024

¹¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Stateless Persons, 2024

¹² ONG, Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)



5.1 Citizenship

With its long tradition of commitment to citizenship especially in a complex political and socio-economic context, ULB is constantly strengthening its role in promoting active and responsible citizenship. Mindful of social expectations, particularly in terms of diversity, inclusion, social justice and equality, the University has put in place innovative measures to promote the empowerment of young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, while encouraging the civic commitment of its entire community.

Key figures - 2023

53

students who took part in the University Certificate in Civic Engagement (CECi)

234

ULB volunteers (students, staff and alumni) took part in the 2nd edition of the "Solidarity Days", which amounted to 1,404 hours of voluntary work over three days.

9

charitable projects that were supported with grants from Hessel and the PEPITE prize

500

student tutors who contributed to the Schola ULB programme

3,041

secondary and primary school pupils with learning difficulties who received weekly tutoring thanks to the Tutoring programme

912

young people who were made aware of the stereotypes and prejudices associated with migration through the "Migration, beyond prejudice" programme

Strategic objectives

- ▶ Encouraging, facilitating, strengthening and improving the social commitment of ULB and its community.
- ▶ Developing a large-scale civic commitment drive, particularly from the University outwards

State of progress

Challenges

Improving the social mix of children taking part in the Children's University (UDE)



Organising unifying events that engage the university community



Proposing a Commitment Award to honour sustainable community projects developed by the university community



2023-2024 achievements

► Children's University

- Partnerships with the Maisons des Enfants de la Ville de Bruxelles and the Maison des Enfants d'Anderlecht have enabled the Children's University (UDE) to **improve the social mix** of its students. As part of Curios'Lab, edutainment workshops run by volunteer members of the ULB academic staff, the rate of children from disadvantaged backgrounds was 17% in 2023, and the aim is to reach 30%. The Explo Campus project, a fun and immersive journey through the unique sites of the Solbosch Campus to discover the careers available through university courses, aims to increase the proportion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds from 82% in 2023 to 85%.
- To **promote the inclusion of children with learning difficulties in workshops**, the Children's University teams have developed "SaCalme", a series of objects that promote calmness and concentration.

► Promoting commitment

- Launched in 2022, "**Solidarity Day**" is an annual opportunity for members of the university community (students, staff and alumni) to volunteer for non-profit organisations. Over the course of the three editions organised between 2022 and 2024, 450 members of the university community took part as volunteers in more than 80 associations.
- Inaugurated in 2022, the "**Pépîte AWARDS**" recognise citizen initiatives that are committed to improving the well-being of society, and that stand out for their originality and added value. The four winners in 2023 include projects supporting victims of harassment, promoting gender diversity in scientific studies, promoting health and supporting journalists in exile. engagee.ulb.be
- Five projects in 2023 and four in 2024 have been selected as part of the **Hessel Grant**, which provides financial support for the launch of citizen and solidarity projects initiated by ULB students.

In planning - 2025-2027

- **Extending the Citizen Commitment Certificate (CECi)** beyond ULB to make it accessible to students from other higher education institutions

- Continuing to adapt the Children's University workshops, in particular to **better integrate children with special needs**

- **Adapting the Schola ULB Tutoring Programme** to the expected reforms in the education sector

5.2 Sites

Deeply rooted in its social, political, cultural and economic environment, ULB never ceases to contribute to the development of the sites it occupies. The last two years have been marked by major achievements in Wallonia, on the CampusUCharleroi, but also in the Brussels Region in collaboration with its Flemish sister university, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). It is in fact its Brussels identity and its role within its City-Region that ULB wanted to reaffirm its commitment through the "Bruxelloise? Non peut-être!" campaign launched in 2024.


Strategic objectives


- ▶ Consolidating its Brussels base, in particular in partnership with the VUB
- ▶ Strengthening ULB's roots in Wallonia
- ▶ Better integrating the campuses in the city
- ▶ Making the campuses centres of experimentation and innovation
- ▶ Strengthening the role of universities in understanding the complexity of our societies

State of progress

Challenges

Improving the quality of public spaces on the campuses 

Sharing teaching facilities with socio-cultural stakeholders outside teaching periods 

Reinforcing joint ULB-VUB actions in favour of the sites 



2023-2024 achievements

► New sites

- Since 2015, ULB has been involved in the CampusU-Charleroi to develop (with its partners from the Province of Hainaut, the UMONS and the City of Charleroi) a centre for teaching, research, training and the dissemination of knowledge, and to raise awareness of scientific and technical careers. 2023 saw the official inauguration of the **Zénobe Gramme, Solvay and Maçonnerie** buildings. They can accommodate 3,000 higher education and social promotion students from the 2023-2024 academic year.
- The **Centre of Excellence in Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Development (C3E2D)** was inaugurated on the CampusUCharleroi in February 2024. It is dedicated to the development of new energy conversion and storage technologies, and the study of integrated energy systems.
- Opened in February 2024 as **part of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union, the ULB-VUB Usquare interdisciplinary hub** is dedicated to research into sustainable development, education, the dissemination of knowledge,

entrepreneurship, and innovation. Located on the Usquare brussels site and designed with the circular economy in mind, this joint project is supported by the European Union and the regional authorities. It represents a way for the two universities to strengthen their urban commitment, and build bridges between the academic world, the city and its users.

The new Usquare hub

Located in the heart of Brussels at the intersection of boulevard Général Jacques and avenue de la Couronne, Usquare is the conversion project of the former gendarmerie school, managed jointly by ULB, VUB and the Brussels-Capital Region, which owns the site. Once the work is completed in 2030, Usquare.brussels will be an urban, academic, international, innovative and sustainable district. The project will include a university center, as well as 480 student rooms, around a hundred accommodation units, a local cinema, a space dedicated to sustainable food, as well as a park, and public and cultural spaces. A true living laboratory, Usquare was designed as a testing ground for research and teaching. Teachers, researchers, students in architecture, urban planning, urban studies, but also in engineering, economics and management, have contributed to the transformation of this historic site into a sustainable space open to the city.

The Learning Innovation Centre

Situated on the border between the ULB campuses of the VUB, the **Learning Innovation Centre (LIC)** was inaugurated in March 2025. This centre — dedicated to incubating innovation and helping scientists and civil society organisations network — offers various learning spaces: quiet areas for individual study, rooms adapted to collaborative work, experimentation centres for small group activities, and classrooms to promote active learning. 80% financed by Beliris, the federal expert in public construction for Brussels, this 9,000 m² building with almost zero energy and designed with sustainable materials, will also house the ULB and VUB Science and Technology Library.

► **Shared management**

- In 2024, the ULB, the Brussels-Capital Region, and Brussels Environment renewed a 15-year agreement for the **management of the Jean Massart Botanical Garden**. This agreement aims to safeguard and develop the scientific, educational, and recreational roles of the Garden. The University is responsible for the specialised management of botanical collections, as well as educational and scientific outreach activities. It is also committed to developing cross-disciplinary research activities on the site.
- ULB has strengthened its commitment to Hainaut by creating the **non-profit organisation called Marie Mineur**; it is the result of a partnership with the University of Mons. The aim of this voluntary association is to develop joint projects between the two institutions in the areas of teaching, research and services to society, while pooling operational activities. To further strengthen the links already initiated within the CampusCharleroi, the two universities held (in Charleroi, in the recently renovated Zénobe

Gramme building) their official 2023-2024 joint academic year opening ceremony, under the banner: “Two universities, one region, one vision!”

► **Aware-raising and support**

- ULB has **provided support to Molenbeek's candidacy for the title of European Capital of Culture 2030**. ULB's involvement in this application goes beyond academic support. By strengthening the links between the University, the local community and cultural institutions, ULB intends to contribute to making Molenbeek an inspiring model of diversity and creativity, to sustainably place culture at the heart of the urban and social development of the municipality, and to strengthen the role of Brussels as a cultural capital open to Europe.
- A field of interaction between scientific disciplines and artistic creation, **ArtScience** promotes transdisciplinarity, invents new modes of scientific narration in all major fields, and offers a different way of contributing to exchanges between the University and society. Organised in partnership with ULB Culture,

Ohme (ArtScience production, research and education organisation) and the Higher Institute for the Study of Plastic Language (ISELP), ULB launched its **first Art Science Day** in October 2024. This pilot event aimed to bring together people interested in ArtScience to stimulate debate, highlight existing initiatives, and encourage dialogue between researchers, scientists and artists.

► **How the University plays a role in understanding our complex societies**

In 2023 and 2024, Prisme, the webzine aimed at educating about complexity created by and for students, addressed the themes of food, peace, artificial intelligence, tourism, disinformation, and elections.

In planning - 2025-2027

- **Maintaining a high quality continuing education** offering in the heart of Brussels
- **Organising events in the city**, particularly through partnerships and collaborations with external cultural actors



5.3 Solidarity

The period covered by this report was marked by an intensification of international conflicts (notably Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the conflict in Gaza and Lebanon), the rise of authoritarian and illiberal regimes, as well as repeated violations of international law, including human rights, threatening both the lives of scientists and academic freedoms. ULB is doing its utmost to support university communities in the face of any form of censorship or repression in the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, and to welcome researchers in danger, as well as students from areas of conflict. The University also ensures that its institutional partnerships are carried out in compliance with international law, particularly fundamental rights.

Key figures - 2023

9

Researchers at risk from Afghanistan, Belarus, China, Ethiopia, Palestine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Russia and Turkey were welcomed at ULB thanks to the Khaled al-Asaad Solidarity Fund.

3

"Daughters for Life Masters Scholarships" have been awarded for the 2024-2025 academic year, with priority given to Palestinian applicants

Strategic objectives

- ▶ Supporting the integration of international researchers, particularly those from conflict zones
- ▶ Developing international solidarity actions towards university institutions or researchers in danger
- ▶ Developing institutional partnerships in full compliance with international law

State of progress

Challenges

Awarding scholarships to students who have difficulty pursuing studies in their country of origin in a safe environment



Developing funding instruments to welcome at-risk researchers to ULB through postdoctoral grants



Enabling Ukrainian researchers to continue their research or teaching work, and to provide students with a specific integration programme



2023-2024 achievements

- ▶ In 2024, ULB drew up an **institutional plan to support asylum seekers** in partnership with grassroots associations (Plateforme Citoyenne -BELRefugees, Equality Law Clinic, Refugee Law Clinic, Clinique des droits, Equity Health Lab, Law Student with Refugee and "Migration au-delà des préjugés"/"Migration beyond prejudices"). Through this partnership, ULB is also leading the debate on asylum seekers' reception in society, and helping to define fairer and more informed policies.
- ▶ In order to strengthen the visibility and effectiveness of actions in favor of researchers at risk, ULB played an active role in the creation in 2023, of a **Scholars at Risk** (SAR) section within the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. This international network of academic institutions works to defend the academic freedoms and human rights of researchers around the world.
- ▶ In response to the conflict in the Middle East, ULB has implemented **several support initiatives**. The University notably proposed and defended the measure of exemption from increased enrolment fees for students from Lebanon and Palestine, which was approved by ARES, the federation of French-speaking higher education institutions in Belgium. A support line has also been opened at the Student Social Services to urgently respond to requests for assistance from Lebanese students.
- ▶ Whether alongside other universities in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, within the CREF or individually (for example, motions adopted by its academic council), **ULB has taken a position on issues relating to violations of international law** or expressed its support for victims of conflicts.
- ▶ In 2023, the University awarded the **institutional title of Doctor Honoris Causa to several renowned figures**, including two women imprisoned for their beliefs and academic commitments: Nasrine Sotoudehet, an Iranian lawyer, human rights specialist and recipient of the Sakharov Prize in 2012, currently imprisoned; and Rahile Dawut, a Chinese ethologist, professor at Xinjiang University and specialist in the Uyghur minority, abducted and reported missing in 2018, then sentenced to life imprisonment in 2023.
- ▶ Following on from the ULB Risk Partnerships Committee, **the International Law Compliance and Dual Use Committee was established** to contribute to the assessment of risks related to

institutional partnerships and projects, and to issue recommendations to the ULB Academic Council. A person was hired to manage the Committee, strengthen its actions and contribute to the development of an awareness-raising plan.

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ Continuing to provide **support to victims of international crises** as far as possible, particularly by developing partnerships with local stakeholders
- ▶ Developing **new funding models to accommodate** a wider audience of students, researchers, teachers in danger or refugees, in particular "Breathing Space" grants allowing foreign academics to undertake short-term transfers (from 1 to 3 months) in a peaceful environment.
- ▶ Participating in the **EU-PASSWORLD project**, funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), to develop a university corridor to Belgium for students in need of international protection
- ▶ Participating in the **European SAFE project** (*Supporting At-risk Researchers with Fellowships in Europe*). Funded by the European Union, this programme aims to support researchers at risk from all over the world (outside the EU) by awarding 60 grants to work in a research establishment in the European Union.
- ▶ **Raising awareness among the university community about respect for international law and Dual Use** and publicising the tools, in particular the **Fundamental Rights Test-ULB**, which allows risks linked to partners or projects to be assessed.

5.4 International cooperation

At a time when cooperation budgets risk being revised downwards, ULB is working to raise awareness among the university community to better support cooperation projects, and to strengthen ties with other universities in partner countries. The University is working to develop relations with its cooperation partners on an equal basis and marked by mutual enrichment. The CIVIS European University Alliance now has six associated African partners, which it is integrating in an increasingly structural manner within its governance and projects. The Jean Monnet Polycivis project is a good example. The University is also strengthening its ties with the NGO ULB Coopération, which is active in four countries (Belgium, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal). The latter is working to intensify joint actions with other cooperation NGOs of the universities belonging to the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

Key figures - 2023


1	ULB office at the University of Lubumbashi, a key partner
70+	cooperation projects supported
31	partner countries
200	scholarship holders welcomed on average each year by the International Service
5	offices of the NGO ULB Cooperation in 4 countries (Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Belgium)

Strategic objectives

- ▶ Mutually strengthening the research and teaching activities with partner countries
- ▶ Building individual capacity within partner country institutions
- ▶ Warmly welcoming scholarship holders from partner countries, and maintaining ties after they leave ULB


State of progress

Challenges

Rolling out the various dimensions of the "Decolonising ourselves" project 

Promoting cooperation within and outside the University 

Strengthening cooperation links with faculties 

Improving the dissemination of information and the visibility of funding for cooperation projects 

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ The "Colonial legacies and decolonisations" steering committee, **which aims to examine and transform the legacies of colonialism**, has undertaken a number of important initiatives, including:
 - the renovation and scenography of the wall of the Science Library with a historical and memorial perspective, including an extract from Aimé Césaire's 'Discours sur le colonialisme'.
 - The purchase, in partnership with the VUB, of a triptych by Kinshasa artist Géraldine Tobé Mutamande entitled "And God created woman." The three paintings created in 2018 examine the effects of Catholicism imported by missionaries.
- ▶ Several actions have been taken to **improve the visibility of cooperation activities at ULB**, in particular during the annual Solidarity Day and on social networks, such as during the ULB-UMons institutional visit to the University of Lubumbashi in September 2024.
- ▶ An **annual calendar** has been drawn up, listing all the calls for cooperation and specifying the funding documents required according to the university audiences concerned.
- ▶ Meetings with the international vice-deans of the faculties help to **improve communication, and raise the profile of cooperation activities** within each faculty.
- ▶ A **network has been set up to connect the various ULB projects linked to the work of Dr Mukwege's teams** at the Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Its main aim is to improve efficiency and the exchange of information. Founded by Dr Denis Mukwege, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 alongside Nadia Murad, the foundation and the Panzi Hospital are committed to combating sexual violence in wartime, and supporting victims in their reconstruction process in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- ▶ **Supporting the merger of ULB-Coopération** with the cooperation NGOs of the Universities of Liège and Mons
- ▶ **Continuing to improve the quality of integration for cooperation grant holders**
- ▶ **Improving support for academic staff** in the development and launch of cooperation projects



Theme 6

Governance

Planning the transition

ULB management bodies in 2024

4

bodies making up the university community: academic body, scientific body, administrative, technical, management and specialised staff (PATGS), and the student body

1

Management Board

1

Academic Council

12

faculties

12

departments within the General Administration

1

student sustainability assistant

7

Vice-rectors (VR) →

1

Student Assembly for the Socio-Ecological Transition of the ULB (SITO)

- VR in sustainable development
- VR in academic policy in charge of the Gender and Diversity Policy
- VR in external relations and cooperation
- VR in student and social affairs
- VR in research and promotion, culture and scientific mediation
- VR in teaching and quality
- VR in prospective and financial resources



Within an institution like ULB, sustainability must be embedded at all levels. Over the last two years, its integration into institutional governance has been considerably strengthened. The development of numerous plans, programmes and projects attests to this, involving a growing number of departments and people, both within the general administration and the faculties. The creation of a dedicated vice-rector, supported by specialised teams, reinforces this cross-functional dynamic. Regular reporting procedures ensure rigorous monitoring, and the continuous improvement of the actions undertaken.

Strategic objectives

- ▶ Strengthening knowledge and the critical understanding of environmental issues, and the socio-ecological transition at all levels of the institution
- ▶ Embracing the challenges of sustainability with a positive vision of the future as part of a humanist vision of society
- ▶ Designing a governance model that mobilises all of ULB's bodies and activities in a participatory and cross-disciplinary approach
- ▶ Through this approach, defining socio-ecological transition paths for the institution and integrating them into current structural policies
- ▶ Making firm and realistic commitments, and monitoring the institution's progress towards its sustainability objectives.

State of progress

Challenges

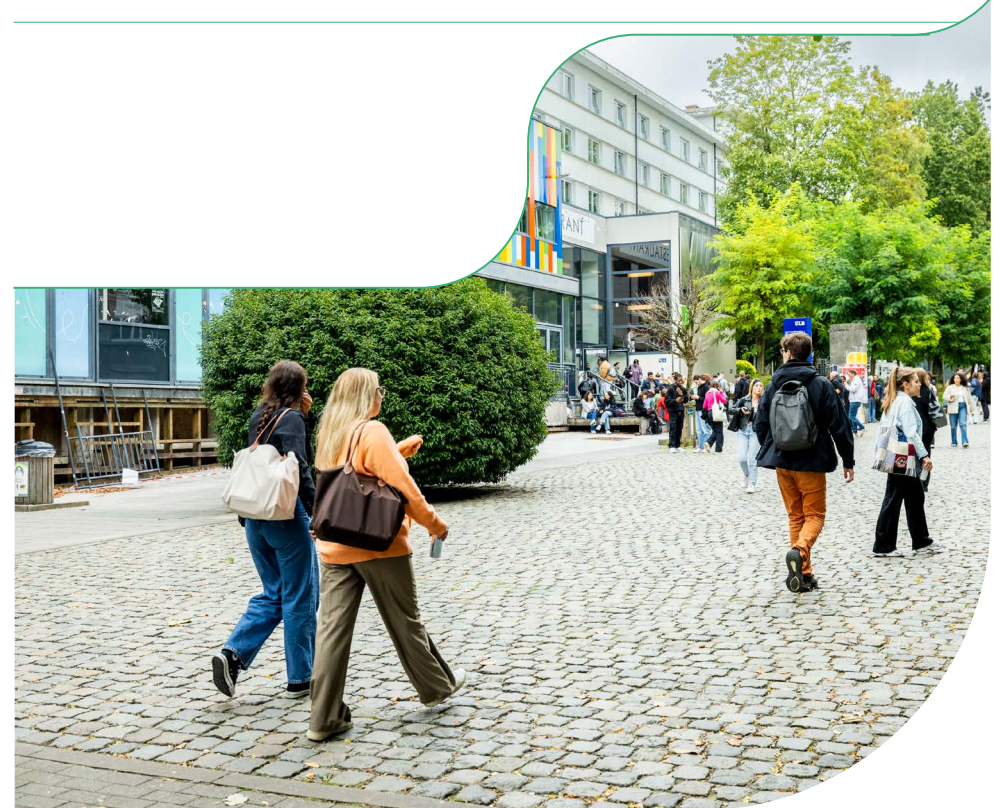
Embedding and encouraging the adoption of sustainability issues within the various services, departments and faculties, in particular through continuing education.



Facilitating cross-functional collaboration between the various stakeholders



Structural coordination of the sustainability approach within the institution



Achievements 2022-2024

► Promoting the transdisciplinary appropriation of issues

- The creation of reACT, the academic network for ecological and social transformations, has opened up an **interdisciplinary institutional forum** aimed at intensifying the embedding sustainability in teaching and research. Open to all faculties and all bodies, it constitutes a pilot for participatory and transversal action. (see *Theme 2 Research*)
- With the roll-out of the ED-Duco programme over the past two years, faculties now benefit from support **to strengthen the integration of sustainability into courses and programmes.** (see *Theme 1 Teaching*)
- **The structural support for the organisation of the Climate Fresk means** that this awareness-raising programme can be offered to a wide range of courses, and general administration departments. (see *Theme 1 Teaching*)

- In October 2023, innovative **activities were carried out as part of the Science Boutique project.** It involves collecting the testimonies of stakeholders in the Brussels-Capital Region, translating them into research questions, and then turning them into concrete actions for students as part of their training (courses, projects, dissertations, placements, etc.).

► Encouraging the integration of sustainability

- The **criteria for promoting academic careers** now give greater recognition to researchers' commitments to sustainability. New categories have been defined to promote activities in the fields of "open science and participatory research" and "scientific culture and outreach". Options related to highlighting the international dimension of research in ways other than travel have also been strengthened.

- Additional **support is available for sabbaticals focused** on sustainability. It gives researchers and academics time to deepen their knowledge of the challenges of the ecological and social transition, strengthen their research, and adapt their teaching in these areas.

► Organising structural coordination

- A **report** is published every two years to inform the university community of the actions taken in the area of sustainability.
- Half-yearly **reports on the progress** of the Climate Plan are submitted to the Management Board.
- ULB has endorsed the principle of **updating its carbon footprint report** every two years from now until 2030, with a review of the quantifiable targets of the Climate Plan.

- Every year, ULB takes part in the **"Times Higher Education Impact"**, a global ranking that measures higher education institutions' achievement with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2024, ULB reported on its commitment to 11 of the 17 SDGs.
- Stakeholder **involvement in specific projects is organised** through various ad hoc structures (steering committees, expertise groups, working groups, coordination groups, etc.). Depending on the project, the levels of participation vary from consultation to co-development.

In planning - 2025-2027

- ▶ Through reACT, **initiating priority projects that strengthen and accelerate the integration of sustainability** into teaching and research missions. Ensuring, via the network, that these actions are implemented and sustained in the day-to-day operation of the University.
- ▶ Fine-tuning and **monitoring key indicators** relating to actions to promote sustainability, and sharing them with the university community

ULB and uts networks

As a member of several national and international networks of higher education establishments working on sustainability issues, ULB regularly participates in projects and exchanges of good practice to improve its sustainability approach. Notably:



Within **CIVIS**, a European university alliance of 11 universities that aims to strengthen existing links between partners through complementary expertise, shared infrastructure, and incentive funding for joint projects.



Since its creation in 2009, ULB has been a founding member of **UNICA GREEN & SDGs**, a working group of UNICA, the network of universities in European capitals. Its members collaborate and exchange ideas with a view to integrating sustainability into each of the universities' missions.



ULB is an active member of the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) **of the Académie de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur (ARES)**, contributing to collaboration and exchanges between universities in the field of sustainable development.



Within the **International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN)**, of which ULB has been a member since 2012, 90 universities and schools from 30 countries and five continents are working together to integrate sustainability into their campus management, research and teaching.

Cross-cutting involvement

Many bodies, faculties and departments are incorporating **sustainability issues** into their operating methods and their challenges, in particular:

For
→



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