



Sustainability Report 2022

DATA JANUARY 2020 – MARCH 2022



Acknowledgments

We warmly thank all the teams who took part in drafting this report, as well as all members of the ULB's community for their efforts in favour of sustainability, whether the form and nature of this commitment.

We hope that this first report will give you a clear picture of how ULB is contributing to sustainability and thus stimulating reflection, debate and action. We also hope that it can help identify new avenues of collaboration and solutions to tackle the many challenges of sustainability with enthusiasm.

Charline Urbain
Vice-Rector for Sustainable Development

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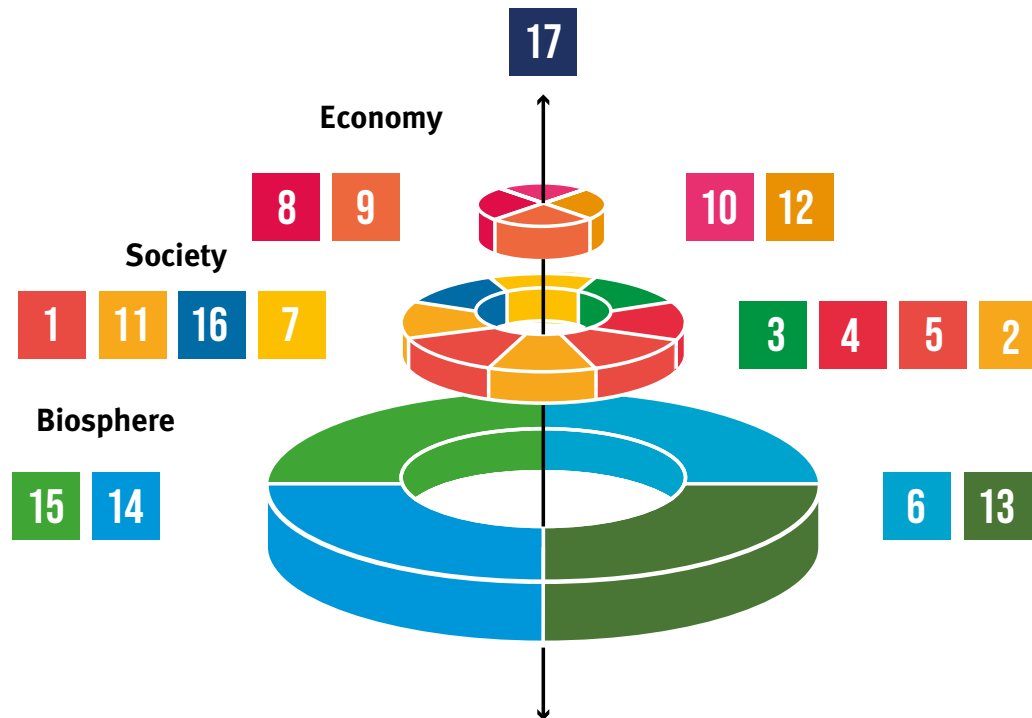
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Our report at a glance

OUR COMMITMENT

Contribute to the implementation of a society that understands and respects socio-ecosystemic processes, nature and the limits of the biosphere, that implements social and economic justice and global equity, and that contributes to a culture of peace, for present and future generations. In this respect, our commitment is fully in line with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as defined by the United Nations.



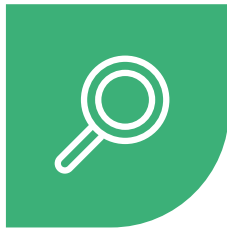
Source: Folke, C., R. Biggs, A. V. Norström, B. Reyers, and J. Rockström. 2016. Social-ecological resilience and biosphere-based sustainability science. *Ecology and Society* 21(3):41.

OUR 6 AXES AND 18 FIELDS OF ACTIONS

TEACHING



RESEARCH



CAMPUS MANAGEMENT



- Climate
- Mobility
- Energy
- Water
- Food
- Green spaces
- Purchasing
- Waste

COMMUNITY



- Health and well-being
- Diversity
- Careers
- Help to succeed
- Student housing

SOCIETY

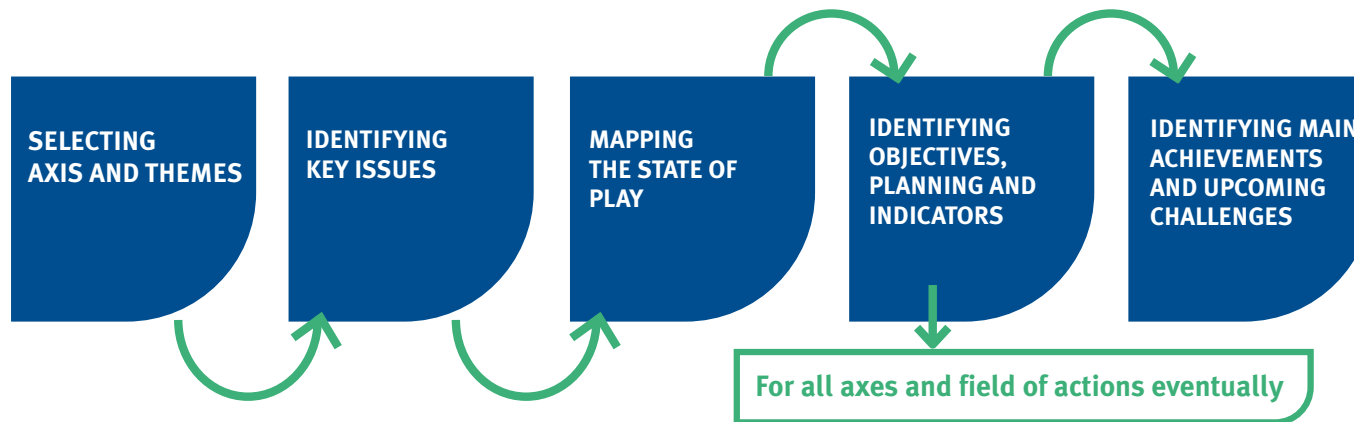


- Teaching and dissemination of knowledge
- Citizenship
- Territory
- Solidarity
- International cooperation

GOVERNANCE



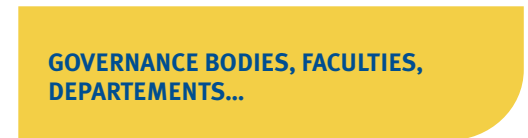
WORK METHODOLOGY FOR PRODUCING THIS REPORT



2 STRUCTURES DEDICATED TO SUSTAINABILITY



TRANSVERSAL INVOLVEMENT



PROGRAMMES, POLITICS AND PLANS LINKED WITH SUSTAINABILITY



TRANSVERSAL COMMITMENTS

- Rio +20
- CAP2030 (Strategic Plan)
- Morpho Plan (Administration transformation)
- Climate Plan



COMMUNITY

- Framework note on well-being policy
- Staff diversity plan
- Gender Equality Plan
- Strategy Plan of the Learning Support Office
- Inclusive policy for special needs students



TEACHING

- EDDuCo (Teaching and sustainability)



CAMPUS MANAGEMENT

- Full Access (Accessibility)
- Mobile (Mobility)
- Logistica (Deliveries and purchasing)
- Textures (Development of outdoor areas)
- STRAT IMMO (Building renovation)
- 3C_PLAGE (Climate - Comfort - Compliance and Local Action Plan for Energy Management)
- Digital Plan@ULB (Datacenter)
- GoodFood label (Food)
- Biodiversity++

Sustainability at ULB

We are pleased to present the first sustainability report by the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). It aims to show how ULB is acting today and how it intends to improve its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the future, in its teaching and research missions, but also in the management of its campuses and as an actor organisation at the heart of the city.

The University's activities are considered in terms of the six axes that form the framework of this report:

- the **teaching** and **research** missions, where the University must have an essential role in advancing the SDGs in all disciplines within its 12 faculties;
- the **management** of its 11 sites and campuses in Brussels and Wallonia;
- its involvement with the **university community**, made up of over 37,000 students and over 5,000 members of staff;
- its commitment to **society** in order to defend and promote its humanist and democratic values;
- its **governance** in order to ensure that the organisation considers sustainability in all its strategic decisions.

For each axis, the themes where the University's contribution seemed the most significant have been identified. The institution's sustainability commitments vary by activity. The University is highly advanced in certain fields and is gradually developing or opening up new work areas, depending on priorities and possibilities. In certain cases, therefore, the report sets out the current state of play and some points of attention for launching new initiatives. In other cases, the framework is much more clearly defined, with operational goals and monitoring indicators. However, the long-term intention is indeed to adopt a progress measurement approach and to be able to provide periodic, concrete and objectifiable data, as part of an approach based on transparency and continuous improvement.

Under the responsibility of a transversal steering committee, the teams on the ground were heavily involved in preparing this report: as experts in their fields, their members are the most able to identify issues, goals and achievements.



PARTICIPATION IN NETWORKS

ULB is a member of several national and international networks of higher education institutions, working in synergy on issues related to sustainability. These structures are essential for exchanging ideas and best practice.

- ULB is a member of **CIVIS**, a European university alliance of 10 universities, which aims to strengthen links between partners through complementary expertise, shared infrastructure and incentive funding for joint projects. CIVIS members tackle major global issues and aspire to be forces for change and innovation in areas closely linked to the Sustainable Development Goals such as health, cities, territories and mobility, climate, environment and energy, digital and technological transformations, society, cultures and European heritage.
- The **Academy for Research and Higher Education (ARES)** is the federation of French-speaking higher education institutions in Belgium. Within it, the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) supports collaboration and exchange between universities in the field of sustainable development. ULB has been an active member since it was founded. Six projects coordinated by ULB have been selected since the CSD's first call for projects in 2020. In 2020, the CSD issued two important detailed opinions: one to strengthen sustainability in initial training, the other on a preliminary draft decree organising the coordination and strengthening of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation's actions in favour of an ecological transition.
- **UNICA GREEN & SDGs** is a working group of UNICA, the network of universities from the capitals of Europe. Members of UNICA GREEN & SDGs collaborate and exchange views in order to integrate sustainability into each of the universities' missions. ULB is a founder member, active since its creation in 2009 in Oslo. ULB was its co-chair along with the University of Lausanne in 2020-2021.
- Since 2012, ULB has been a member of the **International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN)**, an asbl (non-profit association) bringing together over 90 universities and schools from 30 countries and 5 continents. Its members work together to integrate sustainability into their campus management, research and teaching.



KEY FIGURES

- Over 37,000 students
– 140 nationalities – 33% international
- 5,300 staff members (excluding hospital sites)
- 12 faculties – 39 bachelors – 174 masters
- 11 sites and campuses in Brussels and Wallonia (excluding hospital sites)



Axis 1.

Teaching: providing sustainability education in all disciplines

The current and future climate, environmental and social challenges require a profound transformation of society. Young people are rightly calling for an urgent systemic change in education to enable them to take an active part in the ecological and social transition. Aware of the essential role it can play, ULB has long been committed to providing teaching and training in sustainability issues for those who, today and tomorrow, are going to explore new paths and solutions.

Today, however, the dedicated course offering mainly consists of specialist Master's degree courses. Very few courses integrate sustainability concepts in the first years or in a continuing education context. ULB must therefore increase the supply of transversal and interdisciplinary courses on sustainability for students, regardless of their subject or how far they have progressed in their studies.



STRATEGIC GOALS

- Improve education on sustainability issues following a cross-cutting and interdisciplinary approach
- Broaden the audiences concerned to ensure that all ULB degree holders, in any subject and at any stage in their career, acquire a critical understanding of sustainability issues and increase their ability to think systemically and act in favour of an ecological and solidarity-conscious transition



KEY FIGURES

- Over 130 teachers including sustainability in their courses
- Over 100 course units mainly devoted to sustainability issues
- Over 800 course units on themes relating to the Sustainable Development Goals

PLANNING

2018 **EDDuco** programme. This dedicated programme aims to support existing initiatives, to broaden the community's interest in sustainability education and to act as a catalyst to increase the transversality and interdisciplinarity of the concepts and approaches in the various subjects.

EDDuco is based on 5 axes of work:

1. Promoting the creation of transversal introductory courses on sustainability and their integration into Bachelor's programmes.
2. Supporting the development of specific sustainability courses at Master's level in the faculties
3. Providing teachers with tools and courses aimed at integrating sustainability within existing programmes and classes.
4. Promoting collaboration with field experts on practical sustainability projects as part of students' work and projects.
5. Facilitating the sharing of best practice and tools, as well as collaboration between teaching teams and between the University's different staff bodies.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2022

- The **updating of the inventory of sustainability-related courses at ULB**, which identifies course units relevant to the themes of the Sustainable Development Goals and sustainability education (2022).
- The **definition of a common sustainability learning base**, developed by an interdisciplinary working group to define «what all ULB students should know about sustainability/transition, regardless of their course or faculty» (2020). This base must now be adapted so it can be offered as a basis for reflection by course/subject.
- **Support for 6 pilot courses** that include a sustainability component related to, depending on the case, climate change, biodiversity, the systems approach or life cycle analysis, for example, in Pharmacy, Sociology, Science and Polytechnics (2019-2020).

- **Preparation of a transversal course** providing an introduction to sustainability and accessible to all students (2021-2022).
- **Inauguration of the EDDuco platform** of online resources at the ULB Virtual University, intended for teachers, to give them access to experiments carried out at ULB or other universities, advice on how to include sustainability in a class/course, and turnkey tools (2020).
- **Creation of the Prisme Webzine** : produced by and for students, this project aims to raise awareness of the complexity of major societal issues among the university community members. Drawing on scientific expertise from all disciplines, Prisme contributes to a better understanding and well-informed action by the younger generations for a more sustainable society (2021).
- **Organisation of multidisciplinary conferences in the Environment and Society Cluster** concerning the transformation of societies in response to environmental and climate issues. These conferences are open to all and bring together speakers from academia, politics and civil society. Social inequalities, the role of emotions, the contribution of psychology, individual responsibility, the impact of ICTs, and teaching in universities are some of the themes that were addressed in 2021.
- **Creation of the University Certificate for Civic Engagement** (Certificat d'Université en Engagement Citoyen – CECi), an extracurricular course worth 10 credits created by the non-profit association ULB Engagée in order to encourage students to make a commitment for society (2022).



Knowledge and skills

Sustainability issues in the field of higher education are specific to each field of study and mostly a matter of subject choice. Sustainability education involves both:

- The **acquisition of knowledge** related to the key social issues of the ecological and social transition: climate change, social, environmental and gender inequality, loss of biodiversity, depletion of resources, access to health and well-being, social justice and sustainable economic models, citizen mobilisation and initiatives, etc.
- The **strengthening of competencies and skills** to understand reality in a systemic, interdisciplinary, multi-perspective and transformative way.

Pioneering programmes dedicated to sustainability issues

Some teachers at ULB made the decision to create tailored programmes and update their courses to address unavoidable ecological and social challenges. More than 15% of the courses taught at ULB already deal with themes related to the Sustainable Development Goals and about a hundred of them directly address sustainability issues in a systemic, interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary manner.

- Since the 1960s, the Master in Population and Development Studies has offered interdisciplinary training, anchored in the field, to train high-level professionals who are able to think critically and independently about development concepts, which are essential for the transition to a more sustainable society.
- The Master in Environmental Sciences and Management (1993), a course which combines the hu-

manities and natural sciences, aims to provide the knowledge and know-how necessary for a critical, interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach to environmental problems, with a view to sustainability and transition.

- A dozen other Master's degree programmes offer focuses or specialisations directly linked to sustainability issues: ethics, gender, environmental health, ecology, agroecology, environmental technologies... not to mention the continuing education offering.

Faculty initiatives in favour of transition

- In 2017, the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM) launched the **Sustainable Development Initiative** to work on integrating sustainability into its courses. Varied classes and coordination among teacher allow it to offer students a multi-perspective, more systemic approach to each theme, with sustainability in mind.
- In 2020, the **Interfaculty Chair in Environmental Law** was launched jointly by the Faculty of Law and Criminology, Faculty of Sciences and SBS-EM to offer their students an understanding and critical approach to legal issues surrounding environmental questions in their fields of study.
- In 2021-2022, Brussels School of Engineering appointed a **Vice-Dean with responsibility for transition and two student deputies**. Together, they organised the first conference about the role of engineers in the transition to a more sustainable society and obtained climate change education for students at their school via the Climate Fresk workshops (2022).

Examples of introductory courses about sustainability issues

- Earth Sciences, Environment and Society – compulsory for the Bachelor in Geography (ENVI-F1001).
- Earth and Bioengineering Science, Environment and Society – compulsory for the Bachelor in Engineering: Bioengineering
- Interactions with the Environment – compulsory for the Bachelor in Architecture (ENVI-P1003).
- Introduction to Sustainable Development – compulsory for the Bachelor in Economics (ENVIS-101).
- Sustainable Development and Organisations – compulsory for the Bachelor in Business Engineering (GESTS-2002).

EDDuco

This is the name of the sustainability education programme at ULB, in reference to the Latin verb *educare* (to nourish, to instruct), but also, as Albert Jacquard points out, to *educere* (to bring forth), «to teach (the child of man) to take part in the construction of humanity and, to this end, to encourage him to become his own creator, to come out of himself in order to become a subject who chooses his own destiny, and not an object who undergoes its making».

CIVIS, inter-university alliance for sustainability education

With shared courses (face-to-face or online), microprogrammes, workshops and events, CIVIS is a real hotbed of pedagogical skills and courses that increases the diversity of content related to sustainability issues for the ULB community. In 2020-2021, the launch of the CIVIS «Climate, Environment and Energy» hub made it possible to share courses on sustainability issues that are accessible to all members of CIVIS universities.

UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Optimize student access to transversal introductory course on sustainability and develop the content of this course by integrating resources available within the institution**
- **Develop tools and support methods for teaching staff to help them integrate sustainability into their class or course**
- **Support the rollout of Climate Fresk workshops at ULB**

THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TAKES ACTION TOO!

- In 2019, students from the Faculty of Architecture La Cambre Horta worked on the accessibility of the Solbosch campus to people with reduced mobility, which highlighted the improvements needed to allow better access to the campus and its buildings.
- In 2020 and 2021, two groups of students from SBS-EM contributed to developing ULB's business travel policy project. Based on an analysis of business travel-related data, one group proposed a carbon emissions monitoring system for ULB, in collaboration with SmartCampus. Another group assessed the pertinence and modalities of carbon offsetting for staff members air travel.
- In 2021, students at the Brussels School of Engineering took action to make their faculty authorities aware of climate change issues by organising a «Climate Fresk» workshop. This educational tool popularises the IPCC's findings and makes them accessible to higher education students: in 2 to 3 hours of collective intelligence, it helps them connect the causes and the environmental and social impacts of climate change in a large «fresco» and rapidly gain a systemic understanding of this process.
- Other student initiatives are going ahead in order to broaden the scheme and offer other workshops to a larger number of students, thanks in particular to the involvement of the Student in Transition Office (SiTO), the Free Enquiry Society (Cercle du Libre Examen), the As Bean non-profit association and SBS-EM students.



Axis 2.

Research: stimulating interaction in favour of sustainability



Scientific research plays an essential role in understanding the challenges and conditions of a sustainable society. As the main research cluster in Brussels, ULB has nearly 300 research units and hosts researchers and PhD candidates from around the world. More than 50 ULB research units devote all or part of their work to issues that contribute directly or indirectly to the Sustainable Development Goals: from climate to biodiversity, through energy, housing, inequalities, migration, health, citizenship, gender equality, governance, etc.



STATE OF PLAY

A whole host of initiatives exist within the institution, some established a long time ago. This report was an opportunity to identify clearly which ones can help ULB to achieve its goals in the area of sustainability for research.

Support for innovative research mobilising inter- or transdisciplinary approaches

To understand a research subject in its entirety and complexity, to insert and embed it within the societal challenges of sustainability, we need to combine different approaches, diversify our expertise, and increase our skills. For many years, ULB has been following this approach, whereby researchers from different disciplines work on common research subjects. The University has therefore created various instruments to encourage interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, including:

- **funding to support interfaculty research centres**, which make it possible to stimulate scientific exchanges between researchers from different faculties who are grouped around the same theme;
- **funds that contribute to the operation of technological platforms** shared by different research units;
- **«actions blanches»**, programmes designed to promote research that would not normally receive support from traditional funding bodies. In the face of their inertia, this programme has a natural tendency to support innovative initiatives in interdisciplinary fields, and welcomes transdisciplinary experimentation (2021);
- **strategic projects** to support new research initiatives whose benefits goes beyond a specific group or a particular entity. By nature, these projects are multi-thematic and the Authorities ensure that they are in line with the institution's sustainability policy and also address social issues (2021)

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Provide institutional support for inter- or transdisciplinary research initiatives, directly or indirectly dedicated to sustainability issues
- Encourage inter-and transdisciplinarity in research
- Support the development of a broader «Open Science», to make science accessible to all, in terms of results as well as methods, players and institutions
- Promote the evolution of the campuses and territories where ULB is established into places for societal experimentation and innovation (Living Labs)
- Support citizen participation and co-creation programmes with sustainability players in the design and implementation of research initiatives



Interdisciplinary institutes

Within ULB, there are eleven interdisciplinary research institutes which cover essential societal questions and whose activities, at least in part, contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. These include:

- **BRIAS - Brussels Institute of Advanced Studies:** this institute is designed to enable guest academics to spend time in Brussels, meeting other academics and pooling expertise from different disciplines around a single theme.
- **EBxl - Interdisciplinary network of studies in Brussels:** this network includes researchers in public health archaeology, architecture, law, economics, history, political science, sociology, etc., who come together to make sense of the major societal issues in the Brussels-Capital region.
- **IEE - Institute for European Studies:** this institute focuses its research on EU law, political science, economics and history.
- **iiTSE - Inter-faculty Institute for Socio-Ecological Transformations:** created in 2021, iiTSE aims to encourage interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research that contributes to the understanding of societal transformations in response to ecological issues. The research undertaken may be fundamental, applied, epistemological, empirical or civic. The aim is to bring together all forms of research conducted at ULB on the development of a systemic perspective on human-nature interrelations.
- **Institute for Interdisciplinary Innovation in Healthcare:** This institute is a virtual collaborative environment, linking the necessary areas of expertise to provide education and awareness-raising programmes,

and interdisciplinary research projects on new models of collaborative innovation in healthcare.

- **MSH-ULB - Institute for Human Sciences (Maison des Sciences Humaines):** this is a structure for hosting and supporting interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences. In its multiple activities, it aims to resonate with the questions and debates that animate civil society.
- **TRANSFO - Research Centre for Social Change:** this research centre aims to provide insight into current social transformations, inequality structures, the dynamics of social change and the conditions for social emancipation.

Transdisciplinary experience and expertise dedicated to sustainability

At ULB today, many research units host transdisciplinary research programmes to address the challenges facing society. While for some researchers, transdisciplinarity has arisen through collaboration and research projects, others are now making it their primary scientific approach, with the aim of participating in the socio-ecological transition to a sustainable society. A notable body of transdisciplinary expertise has thus developed at ULB, especially within:

- The **AgroecologyLab** emphasises transdisciplinary approaches to study the links between natural resource management, social interactions, development economics and human well-being.
- The **Centre for Economic and Social Studies on the Environment (CEESE)** is a multidisciplinary research team dedicated to the qualitative and quantitative assessment of economic-social-environmental interactions.

- **The Research Centre CR4 - Environmental Health and Occupational Health** contributes to public health by taking into account and objectifying situations of individuals' exposure to risk, whether in the workplace, at home or in other locations. The approach focuses on multidisciplinary work with a view to protecting human health.

- The **Laboratory for Landscape, Urbanism, Infrastructures and Ecologies (LoUIsE)** directs its research towards understanding transformation dynamics in metropolitan territories and the processes for making urban projects. This research is developed by a multidisciplinary team of researchers in architecture, urbanism, landscape, economy and ecology.

- The **Socio-environmental Dynamics Research Group – SONYA** (previously: Centre of Studies for Sustainable Development – CEDD) fosters dialogue between different perspectives and disciplines for the study of the links between society and the environment. Their work contributes to empirical and fundamental research on socio-environmental dynamics and uses a wide range of methods (both quantitative and qualitative) to address problems from a systemic and holistic perspective that combines micro and macro.

- The **Systems Ecology and Resource Management Research Unit (SERM)** works to understand and predict the spatio-temporal dynamics of vegetation and landscape using methodologies from different disciplines.

The desire to place research within a broader Open Science approach

For research to contribute fully to the Sustainable Development Goals, it is necessary to facilitate data identification and accessibility as well as the dissemination and popularisation of knowledge gained, and to increase the transparency and accessibility of the research methods used. At ULB, this approach takes the form of various initiatives, in particular:

- **Recruitment of a Data Management Officer** whose aim is to support researchers in the «FAIR» (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) management of their data, in line with the research data management policy adopted by the Academic Council (2021).
- **Creation of the Prisme webzine**, a digital magazine produced by and for students on complex questions relating to major societal issues in collaboration with researchers from all disciplines at ULB (PhD candidates, postdocs, professors) (2021).
- The **Infosciences department**, which is part of the Faculty of Sciences and whose mission is to disseminate science and the scientific process to the general public. It provides many activities for primary and secondary schools.
- **Meetings between journalists and scientists** in connection with COP 26, with the organisation of an information day for journalists to talk about the issues linked to climate change and the challenges of COP 26 (2021).
- **Participation of ULB in various committees of experts** who provide public bodies (e.g. Federal Council for Sustainable Development, Brussels-Capital Region, Walloon Region, Wallonia-Brussels Federation...) with impartial, science-based advice to identify solutions, evaluate existing policies and objectify elements useful for political decision-making in the field of sustainability. As part of the recovery and resilience

plan, ULB is also participating in the inter-university platforms launched by the Walloon Region and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation devoted to the energy transition, green biomaterials and space.

CIVIS and research in favour of sustainability

Launched in January 2021, the RIS4CIVIS Research and Innovation Strategy enables CIVIS alliance members to pool their expertise in order to help address current societal challenges, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal, and to increase societies' ability to adapt.

The first phase of the project aimed to provide CIVIS member universities with a view of their strengths and weaknesses in terms of infrastructure, research and innovation strategy, open science and career development. A number of initiatives will be launched in the coming months, including a common point of access to CIVIS research infrastructure, an innovation support programme, a transferable skills training catalogue and a network of experts on citizen science. All of these tools aim to develop a stronger European research and innovation ecosystem, allowing for greater scientific collaboration, both within and outside academia. A pilot microprogramme for popularising science communication has already been developed between the University of Bucharest (UB), the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM) and ULB.

Campuses hosting living labs and citizen science

ULB aims to be a university that is open to its environment and an active player in the city. Its contribution to the transition to a sustainable society also involves a desire to bring research outside of laboratories, in order to understand and experiment with sustainable solutions on the campuses and territories where ULB operates. Design, education, energy, infrastructure, organic waste management, land use planning... The potential for experimentation and societal innovation is immense. The citizen science movement encourages non-professionals to play a more active part in advances in knowledge.

Numerous projects, led by the University, faculties or departments, provide examples of this approach, including:

- **FabLabs (ULB Usquare and Charleroi)**: these digital manufacturing workshops provide global access to modern invention methods. Students and all types of creators can come and test, train, interact and receive advice on making (nearly) anything.
- **SmartCampus**: this project aims to use connected objects on ULB campuses to improve their management and operation with a view to saving resources, while providing the various stakeholders with easy



and standardised access to data. Since 2019, Smart-Campus has made it possible, for example, to provide technical data and a monitoring tool to track the status of solar panels installed on the roofs of buildings.

- **Brussels Research Open Lab:** this project, launched in 2020 as an initiative by ULB and VUB and soon to be located on the future bi-university Usquare campus, is largely defined by sustainability and environmental transition objectives. The Brussels Research Open Lab aims to be an open space for all Brussels actors – students, academics, citizens, entrepreneurs, non-profit sector players and public sector managers – to meet and collaborate in order to create collaborative learning and research communities for the benefit of the area, its residents and its users. It has taken part in a variety of concrete actions, exploring the issue of sustainability through diverse themes, in particular organising the Summer School «Exploring the Potential of ‘in-between spaces/places’ for Promoting Processes of Collaborative City Making» (2021) and supervising internships, dissertations and projects by some thirty students with a focus on territorial issues.
- **Policy Lab:** created in 2019 with the aim of improving the way we live together, the Policy Lab is a service and advice platform dedicated to promoting co-governance in public action.
- **Co-Create research projects:** funded by Innoviris, the Brussels Institute for Scientific Research, Co-Create projects rely on participatory research and societal innovation to meet the challenge of urban resilience.

Examples of Co-create projects involving ULB teams:

- **(E)change Bruxelles** (since 2016): this project aims to develop and implement a broad range of innovative tools giving access to media of exchange other than money, in order to build a resilient, sustainable and inclusive economy.
- **CAMIM** (since 2017): this project aims to improve the reception of migrants through participatory research and action involving newcomers, associations active in the reception sector, and citizens of the Region.
- **ValueBugs** (since 2017): this co-creative, participatory research project is developing a method of utilising organic waste in a domestic setting involving the black soldier fly, with the creation of a network of citizens and field workers.
- **Voisins d'Énergie** (2018-2021): this project co-creatively performed a series of energy experiments, within groups of residents living together or close to each other, in the Brussels area.



UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Identify ways of reducing the environmental impact of research activities**
- **Integrate sustainability into the revision of the research inventory at ULB**
- **Develop and intensify links between sustainability research and education**
- **Make all ULB researchers aware of the need to examine and integrate sustainability into their research goals and methods**
- **Develop social valorisation of research on the theme of sustainability**
- **Contribute to the development of Belgian inter-university collaborations in the field of sustainability**

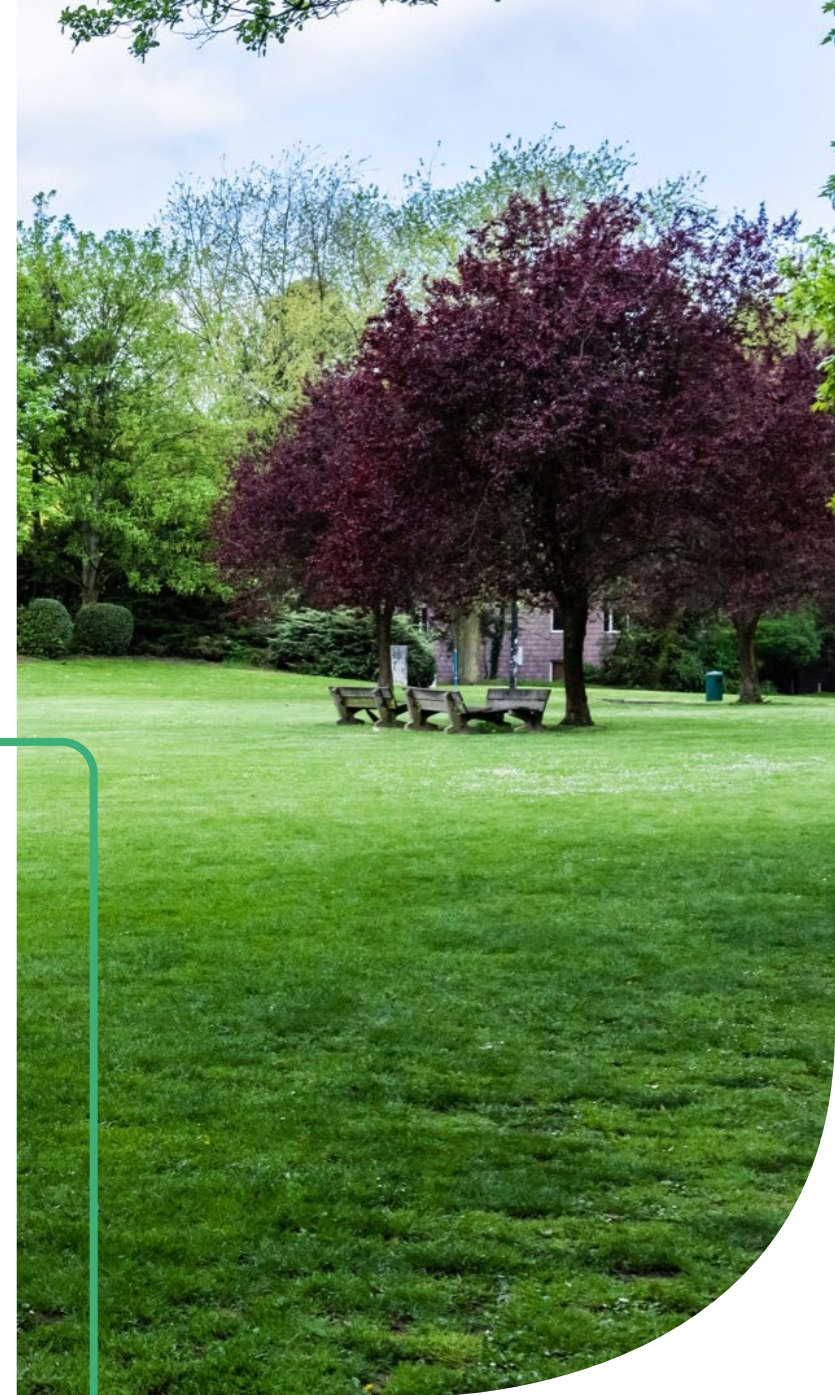


Axis 3.

Amplifying environmental management of the campuses

The University is not only responsible for incorporating sustainability into its teaching and research missions. It also has a duty to take action, set the example and innovate in its ways of working. Since 2006, ULB is gradually implementing a series of actions aimed at reducing the negative impact of its activities on the environment: by adapting to the effects of climate change, reducing energy and water consumption, adopting sustainable purchasing practices in the supply chains and catering services, offering sustainable mobility solutions and adopting waste reduction programmes.

ULB is making increasingly demanding commitments and its achievements are multiplying. Adaptation of existing infrastructures, development of sustainable solutions for the community, support for changes in behaviour: the successes are real, even if there is still a long way to go. This is all the more true given that other challenges are adding to the urgency: the climate issue, of course, but also the loss of biodiversity, health crises, social difficulties and the need to develop infrastructure to accommodate the growing number of students.





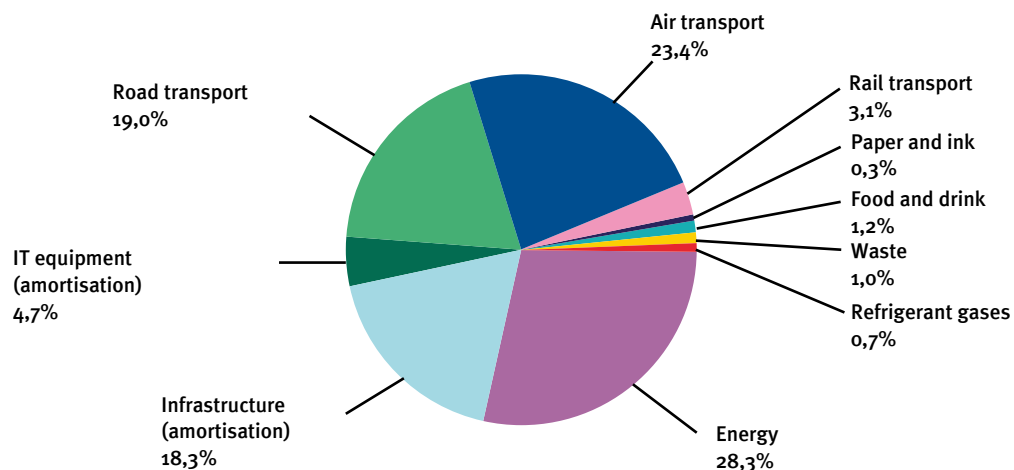
3.1 Climate: reducing ULB's carbonfootprint

In response to the climate emergency, political commitments and the mobilisation of its university community, ULB adopted its Climate Plan in 2019. This is a very concrete roadmap to reduce the University's impact in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and gain essential scientific knowledge to accelerate our ability to adapt and anticipate the solutions of tomorrow.



KEY FIGURES ULB Carbon Footprint 2018

36,845 tonnes of CO₂e



STRATEGIC GOALS

- Reduce our greenhouse gas emissions with an initial target of -13 to -14% of emissions in 2030 vs 2018 compared to a business-as-usual scenario
- Enable our campuses to adapt to the effects of climate change

PLANNING

2019 Adoption of the ULB **Climate Plan** with an Operations axis, relating to efforts to reduce carbon emissions, and a Teaching & Research axis, to improve scientific knowledge and develop responses to the effects of climate change. The Operations axis is primarily focussed on mobility and energy, the institution's two main CO₂-emitting areas. For these two themes, the Climate Plan contains 64 actions, including 6 key priority actions, the implementation of which will make it possible to reduce emissions by 13 to 14% in 2030 vs 2018, compared to a business-as-usual scenario.

The 6 priority actions of the Climate Plan

1. Implement a business travel policy.
2. Organise optimal allocation of surface use and implement domotics for key priority areas of buildings.
3. Implement a structured renovation plan and schedule the reduction of the energy debt by working on energy blockages as a priority.
4. Rationalise IT equipment and cooling units and optimise their management.
5. Implement efficient technology to reduce energy consumption.
6. Accelerate the establishment of a framework for recurrent remote working and adapt the policy for reimbursement of commuting expenses.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2022

Mobility¹

- A new **policy for reimbursement of commuting expenses** in order to encourage means of transport other than driving.
- A **new framework for remote working**.

Energy²

- **Structuring a 10-year renovation plan** (STRAT IMMO) aligned with the campus development guide plans.
- **ULB's Recovery Plan for Europe application** for a green renovation of the university's infrastructure.
- **A data centre renewal strategy** taking account of energy efficiency.
- **Strengthening the Planning service at the Infrastruc-**

¹ See Mobility section for more information about completed and ongoing projects.
² See Energy section for more information about completed and ongoing projects.

ture Department and finalising the land register project, an essential prerequisite for optimising the allocation of surface use.

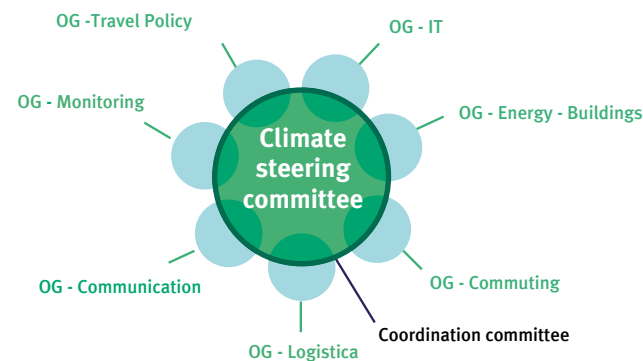
Campus resilience

- Defining the Textures programme for **developing the outdoor areas of the campuses**, in order to plan improvements to deal with rising urban temperatures, in accordance with the campus development guide plans.

Governance

- The launch of **participatory governance** with the creation of the various Climate Plan monitoring groups, in particular the operational groups (OGs) in charge of steering their theme and taking operational decisions. This governance structure aims to encourage teams to take responsibility and work autonomously. In 2021, 3 OGs out of 7 began work: Monitoring OG, Business Travel Policy OG, Institutional Communication OG.

Climate Plan governance structure



Partnerships

- The **development of partnerships** with the teams in charge of the Climate Plans for the municipalities of Ixelles and the City of Brussels, where two of ULB's main campuses are located, is under way.



UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Accelerate the implementation of priority actions in order to achieve our 2030 goals**
- **Monitor emissions reduction from 2023**
- **Finance the property renovation plan**
- **Coordinate and unite all the dynamics in motion**





3.2 Mobility: encouraging sustainable travel

With more than 37,000 students and 5,000 staff members (excluding hospital staff), ULB's activities generate a multitude of journeys which represent more than 40% of its carbon footprint. In concrete terms, ULB wants to take action on travel between home and campus, on business travel and on journeys that are part of exchange programmes. Spread over almost 500,000 m², the ULB campuses and sites are living spaces, essentially located in the heart of dense urban areas. But they each have very different realities in terms of accessibility and sustainable modes of transport must be encouraged. And with nearly a quarter of its carbon footprint linked to air travel, international mobility is the institution's other major mobility issue, with the challenge of combining climate issues with the desire for international openness.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Reduce use of the transport modes that emit the most CO₂
- Reduce the number of miles travelled
- Reduce travel-related emissions from the internal vehicle fleet
- Turn campuses into welcoming living spaces that are accessible to all users

PLANNING

Since 2012, ULB has been implementing a sustainable mobility policy to support the use of sustainable modes of transport and improve the accessibility of its campuses. This policy has been made concrete through a number of programmes and projects, including:

- 2016 **Full Access** for physical accessibility of campuses
- 2017 **Logistica**, for the implementation of sustainable procurement and logistics organisation
- 2019 **Mobile** for measures concerning commuting to and from campus, set out in the Climate Plan
- 2019 **Travel** for measures concerning business travel, set out in the Climate Plan
- 2021 **Textures** for the development of outdoor spaces on campuses



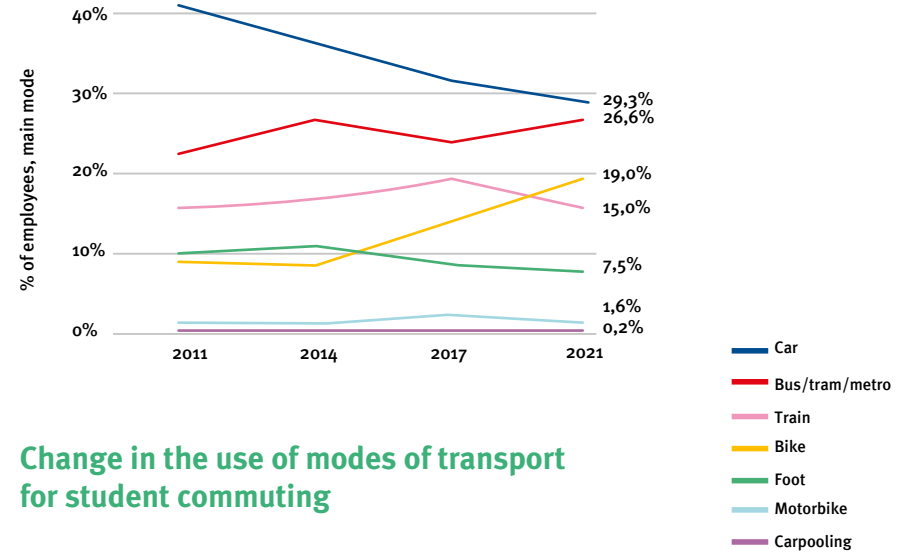


KEY FIGURES

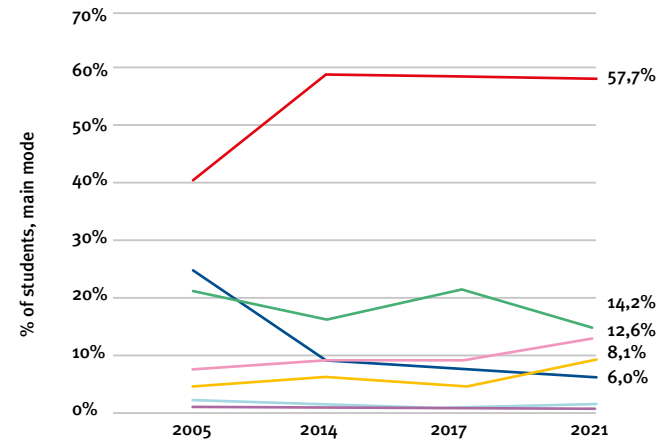
- 29% of staff members travelling by private car in 2021, a decrease of 12.1 points in 10 years
- 6% of students using private cars to travel to campus in 2021, a decrease of 2.6 points in 7 years
- A big increase in cycling for staff members between 2014 and 2021 (+ 11 points)
- Nearly a quarter of ULB's carbon footprint due to air travel
- Around 1,000 students per year going on international exchange trips (excluding health crisis)
- Top 3 destinations for student exchanges in 2021-2022: France, Italy and Spain



Change in the use of modes of transport for staff commuting



Change in the use of modes of transport for student commuting





MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2022

Commuting to and from campus

- Definition of a new **policy for reimbursement of commuting expenses** in order to encourage means of transport other than driving. This measure is combined with restricting access to car parks (2020).
- Implementation of **structural telework** for ULB administrative staff (2022).

International mobility

- Since the start of 2022, ULB has been applying the **CIVIS travel policy**. This policy, which applies to activities organised within the alliance, includes recommendations to limit the number of trips and to favour rail over air.

Logistics

- Reduction in the **frequency of deliveries** from the official supplier of office equipment to encourage group purchasing and reduce journeys (2021).
- Establishment of two single points on the outskirts of campuses for the **delivery of private parcels** to reduce traffic flows on the sites (2022).
- **Transition from a carbon-based service vehicle fleet** to an electric fleet and **pooling** of service vehicles (2022).

Campus improvements

- An audit and improvements to the **physical accessibility of campuses to persons with reduced mobility**: reserved parking, access ramps, toilets, auditoriums, etc. (2020).
- **Provision of areas dedicated to sustainable mobility initiatives** for Remorquable and the Espace Vélo at Solbosch (2021).

Information, awareness and advocacy

- **Provision of advice** on regional plans or development projects affecting the accessibility of the campuses including: the GoodMove regional mobility plan (2020), renovation of Etterbeek station (2020), Fraiteur bridge redevelopment and conversion to a one-way system (2021) and maintenance of tram line 25 (2021).
- **Raising awareness of sustainable travel** in the information given to students who are choosing their exchange programme destination (2021).

Monitoring

- **Conducting regular mobility surveys** to help guide the institution's mobility policy: survey on business travel practices (2020) and survey on commuting among staff members and students (2021).



THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TAKES ACTION TOO!

- Remorquable offers a bike trailer loan service on the Solbosch campus, providing an alternative to carrying loads by car.
- The Espace Vélo at Solbosch organises community bicycle maintenance workshops. Run jointly by the non-profit associations Ateliers Roue Libre and Ateliers de la Rue Voot, the Espace Vélo offers an affordable way for cyclists to make everyday bike repairs, which encourages them to mend their bike instead of buying a new one. The Espace Vélo also offers other services, like rental and sale of reconditioned bikes, accessories for sale and free personal advice, and hosts a cycling community with conferences, themed workshops, group outings, etc.

UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- Adopt and implement a new parking policy to rebalance the way the public space is shared on the campuses, and manage access to parking in a coherent manner, in line with the sustainable mobility policy and the campus development guide plans
- Adopt a climate-compatible travel policy for business trips and student exchange programs.
- Increase the quality and quantity of bicycle parking on the campuses
- Improve the quality of outdoor spaces, especially for pedestrians
- Make coworking hubs available to staff members so they can travel fewer kilometres, while benefiting from quality remote working facilities
- Install charging points for electric vehicles on the various campuses



The energy consumption of University buildings alone accounts for nearly half of ULB's greenhouse gas emissions. With a property portfolio of more than 100 buildings, a mixture of old and new structures, and a large stock of scientific equipment, improving energy efficiency is a priority that also helps increase comfort at work.

Energy (mainly natural gas and electricity) is consumed by the equipment used for heating (boilers and cogeneration units), ventilation, lighting and accessibility of buildings, as well as by the electrical equipment in offices, laboratories and computer rooms.

3.3 Energy: drastically reducing consumption

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Upgrade all of ULB's buildings and equipment to meet high energy standards
- Maximise the share of renewable energy, in terms of our own production as well as energy supplied
- Develop systems (infrastructure, remote management, communication or procedures) to guide users' behaviour towards efficient and economical practices

In addition, our guidelines are to:

- Keep the development of air-conditioned cooling systems to a minimum and favour low-tech options
- Organise energy-efficient computer facilities and laboratories
- When purchasing equipment or contracting projects, favour the most efficient options
- Intervene quickly if energy drift is observed
- Raise awareness and involve users in «cracking down on waste» and in reducing the energy intensity of activities

PLANNING

2013 **ULB energy policy** following the Trias Energetica model and **the Energy Department's Operational Plan**

2019 **Digital@ULB** plan to modernise the data centre with a focus on energy efficiency

2021-2030

STRAT IMMO structured building renovation plan (Climate/Energy Plan goal) partially financed via the **Recovery Plan for Europe - Green Deal**

2021-2024

3C-PLAGE (Climate - Comfort - Compliance and Local Action Plan for Energy Management) property renovation plan to achieve 12% energy savings through a programme of actions following energy audits of each building

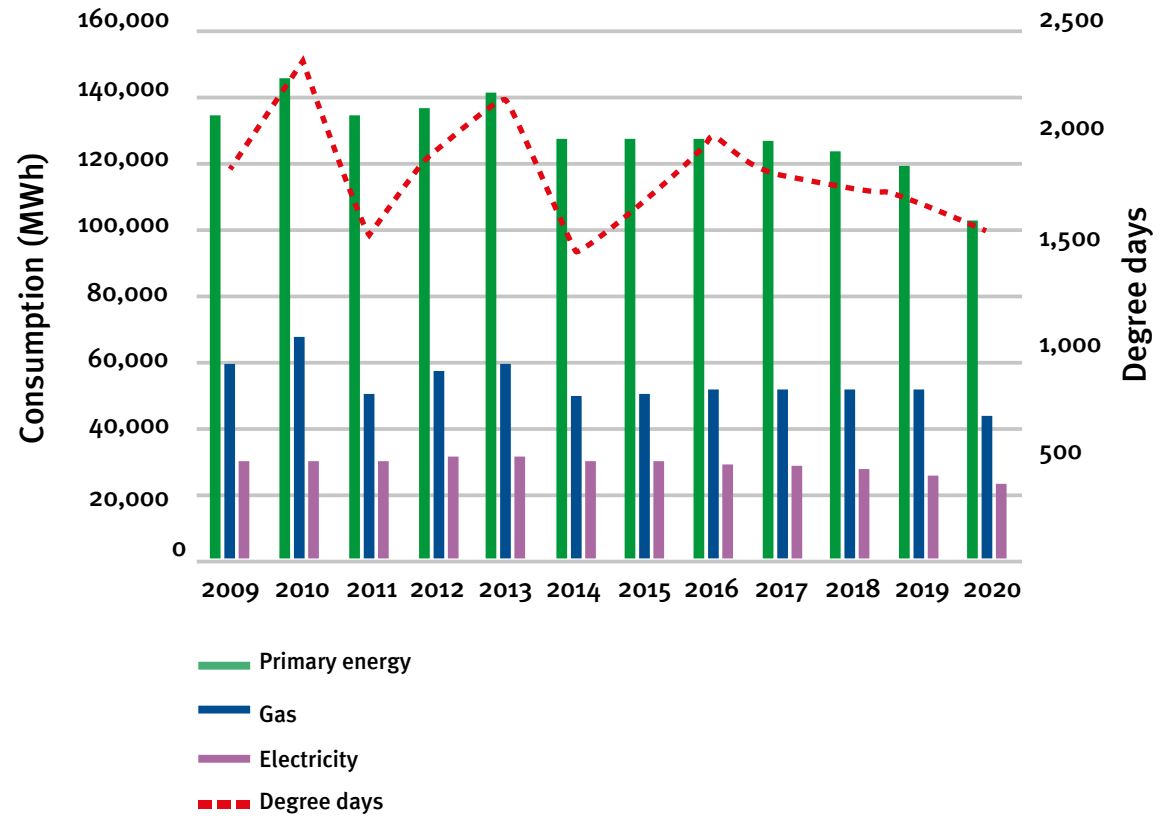


KEY FIGURES

- More than 15,000 m² of roofs insulated in 10 years
- - 35% of primary energy intensity (climate normalised) between 1990 and 2019³
- 63% of heat supplied to the Solbosch campus by the cogeneration unit (2020)
- 7.5% of electricity consumption produced by photovoltaic panels in 2021 (1,740 MWh)
- 20% energy saving thanks to centralised technical management and close energy monitoring

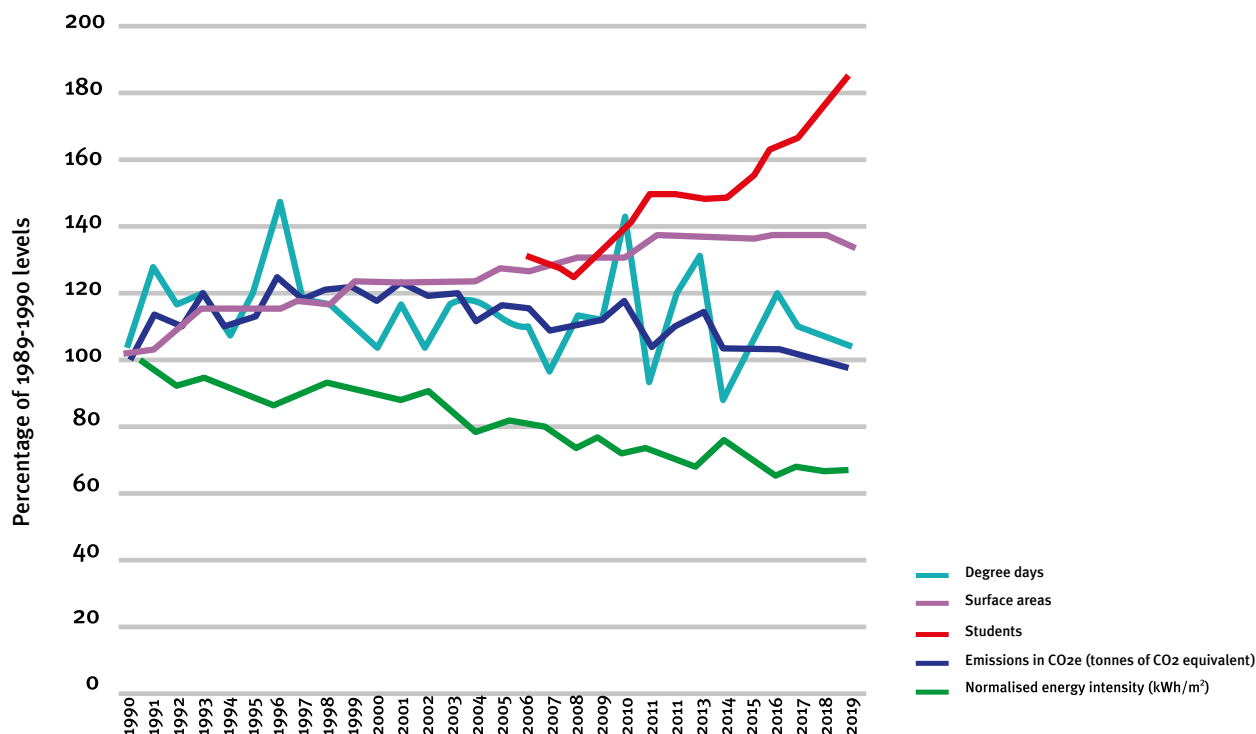


Change in energy consumption of ULB



³ The decrease in natural gas and electricity consumption in 2020 is linked to a year of milder weather and the reduction in activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Change in surface areas, number of students, greenhouse gas emissions and normalised energy intensity



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Building envelope

Gradually, building envelopes are being improved (insulation, sealing and ventilation equipment). In 2020-2021, the following improvements were made :

- The complete **renovation of building B** on the Solbosch campus, with the insulation of 375 m² of roofs, 185 m² of walls and the replacement of 200 m² of high energy performance window frames.
- **3,500 m² of roofs insulated** on building EG on Erasme.
- Replacement of **500 m² of window frames** in building A on Erasme.

Equipment

- Installation of 2 **cogeneration units** to supply the heating system on the Solbosch and Gosselies campuses.
- Gradual improvement of the **technical installations for heating and ventilation** of buildings as the renovations are carried out.
- Lighting equipment (auditoriums, communal and outdoor areas) improved under a **100% LED** programme and **smart management**.
- Over **700 blinds** installed to reduce overheating of building S on Solbosch (2020-2021).
- Renovation of the **heating system substation** in building E1 on Solbosch (2020-2021).
- **Replacement of the old boilers** including those in buildings B105 and V4-V5 on Solbosch (2020-2021).



UPCOMING CHALLENGES

As part of the STRAT IMMO structured building renovation plan:

- Thoroughly renovate 7 buildings (energy axis of the Climate Plan)
- Construct building E following the passive energy concept on the Plaine campus
- Monitor and implement ULB's bid for the European Recovery, Resilience, Facility (RRF) project for the green renovation of university infrastructure
- Develop and implement the renovation of a heritage building, the Janson auditorium on the Solbosch campus, while aiming for a higher standard of insulation

As part of the 3C (Comfort - Compliance - Climate) Property Renovation Plan:

- Implement the actions of the PLAGÉ 2022-2025 programme (portfolio of actions recommended by the energy audits of each building)
- Innovatively place photovoltaic solar panels on the façade of building D on Solbosch
- Completely renovate the centralised technical management system on the Plaine campus
- Put in place an energy efficiency analysis for any new equipment or renovation

Renewable energy

- Installation of a **solar water heater** for pre-heating of sanitary water in the Solbosch sports building (Building E).
- Installation of a **heat pump** to heat building M on the Erasme campus.
- A **certified green electricity supply contract**.
- Installation of 12,500 m² of **photovoltaic panels** on 16 buildings on the 3 Brussels campuses including **2,400 new modules** in 2020-2021 for an output of 851 kWp.
- Installation of a **heat pump coupled with 4 geothermal wells** (Building E in Solbosch) in 2020-2021.

Management

- Implementation of **centralised control** of buildings' heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and lighting installations via a centralised technical management system for each campus.
- **Development of an energy accounting platform** (Data Hub) allowing real-time monitoring, periodic reporting and close monitoring of electricity and heating consumption.
- **Energy audits** and **PEB certification** of each building in accordance with regional regulations.
- Introduction of a **crowdfunding** scheme for third-party funding of photovoltaic installations (2020).



3.4 Water: reduce, recover and anticipate

Consumed mainly for sanitary purposes, the water used by the University comes mainly from the drinking water distribution network. While the challenge is above all to continue to reduce the quantities of drinking water consumed, the University also aims to manage rainwater more effectively. New buildings will systematically have a rainwater recovery system. Moreover, the University must also anticipate probable periods of heavy rainfall by reducing the amount of waterproofed surfaces.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Reduce drinking water consumption
- Discharge water that does not harm the environment
- Make our campuses more resilient to anticipate periods of heavy rainfall



KEY FIGURES

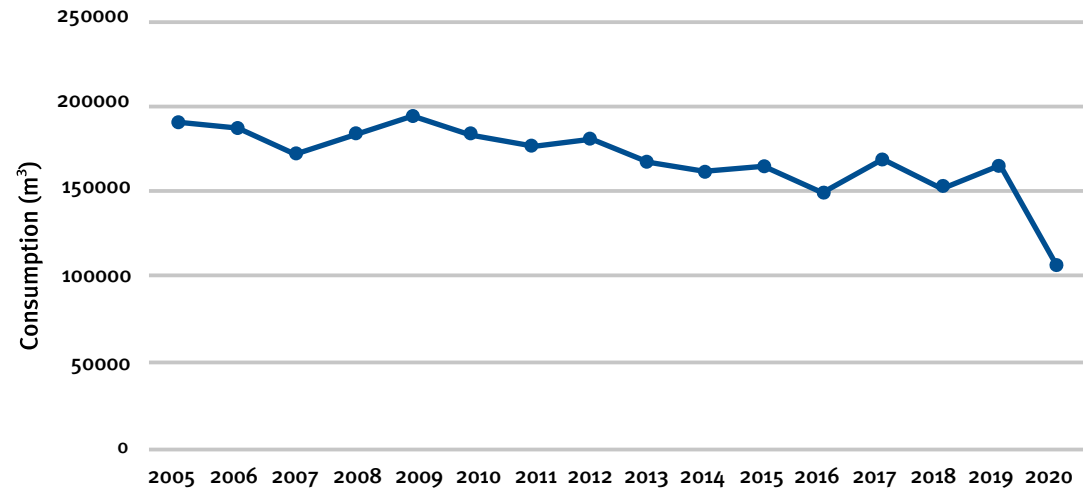
- 150,000 m³ of water taken from the distribution network consumed in 2019⁴
- A decrease of 25% on 2005
- 2,034 m³ of rainwater taken from recovery tanks to supply toilets

⁴ In 2020, consumption dropped to 100,000 m³ due to the reduction in activity on campus as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Close monitoring of water consumption** in order to intervene quickly in the event of consumption drift.
- A **real-time water management platform and remote reading** for all buildings on the Solbosch and Erasme campuses (50 meters) and one meter (out of 7) on the Plaine campus.
- **Gradual improvement of sanitary installations** (pressure reducer, energy-saving taps, automatic trigger urinals or dry urinals, dual-flush toilets, etc.).
- **Definition of water management requirements** for all new building projects (drinking water, rainwater recovery, rainwater management on the plot and grey water management).

Change in water consumption of ULB



UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Formalise a sustainable water management policy at ULB**
- **Have full coverage of remote water metering so that all buildings can be monitored closely and in real time**
- **Demineralise unbuilt upon areas of our campuses with a view to integrated rainwater management**





3.5 Food: providing a healthy, sustainable and accessible supply

ULB's university restaurants serve an average of 2,500 meals every day. Although food only accounts for a small part of ULB's greenhouse gas emissions, its social, educational, cultural, health and symbolic dimensions make it a major issue in terms of sustainability

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Offer healthy, fairly traded, high-quality, eco-friendly and affordable food
- Reduce food-related waste and food wastage
- Favour local distribution networks and suppliers
- In 2022, earn a 2 forks rating from the Cantine GoodFood Label for university restaurants and a 3 forks rating for nursery menus



KEY FIGURES

- 2,500 meals a day on average
- One vegetarian or vegan hot meal available every day = 17% of meals sold in 2021
- One balanced and less expensive meal (Smart meal) every day = 13% of meals sold in 2021

THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TAKES ACTION TOO!

- The **Shared fridge** is an area where unsold products are distributed in food baskets to students on the Solbosch campus.
- Run by the **Oxfam Society** and volunteers, the Oxfam Shop on the Solbosch campus sells fair trade food products and handicrafts at very competitive prices.
- Collectives made up of students, staff members and residents maintain **collaborative vegetable gardens** on the Solbosch campus (Jardin du Semeur) and Plaine campus (Jardin Mimosa).

Suppliers doing their bit

- Founded by former ULB students, **As Bean** is a non-profit association that aims to make sustainable food accessible. Since 2020, it has been offering a vegetarian meal made from seasonal and local vegetables at La Turbean, its canteen on the Solbosch campus, for €5, thus supporting fair and ecological agricultural production. La Turbean has been awarded a 3 chef's hats rating by Environment Brussels' GoodFood Restaurant label.
- The **Arpeije** non-profit association provides training for young people and supports their social integration. Its restaurant L'Architecte has been rated 2 chef's hats by the GoodFood certification programme.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2022

Food offering

- **New menus at the university restaurants**, through the introduction of sustainable criteria into the specifications of service providers, including minimum thresholds for fresh and seasonal fruit and vegetables, local, organic or fair trade products, the development of vegetarian and vegan menus, and measures to eliminate single-use packaging (2020-2022).
- **New menus at the nursery** to offer meals that meet sustainable food criteria (2021-2022).
- **New restaurants** on the Solbosch and Flagey campuses, operated by the As Bean and Arpeije associations: service providers committed to promoting sustainable food, the social economy and/or occupational reintegration (2020).

Prices

- **Financial support** from ULB allows university restaurants to keep the prices of all hot and cold food attractive and affordable.



UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- For university restaurants, earn a 3 forks rating from the Cantine GoodFood Label by 2030, while meeting other requirements such as affordability and a diverse offering
- Introduce measures to monitor food wastage and reduce waste





3.6 Green spaces: favouring biodiversity

ULB's various campuses include a variety of green spaces, located in the city or near natural areas. The University thus manages genuine reservoirs for urban biodiversity which are home to remarkable trees, living collections of plant species and small animals.



KEY FIGURES

- A biotope area factor of 0.17 for the Solbosch campus, 0.38 for the Plaine campus and 0.23 for the Erasme campus
- Trees included in the inventory of remarkable trees: 51 for Solbosch, 4 for Plaine and 1 for Erasme
- 1 protected species, the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Protect and increase the biodiversity of the University's green spaces by protecting and developing varied ecological niches
- Integrate green spaces into the Brussels-Capital Region's network of green spaces.

PLANNING

- 2009 Management plan and signing of the **Natagora Nature Network Charter** for the Erasme campus
- 2016 ULB **green space management policy** & pesticide-free campus
- 2017 Political commitment in favour of wild bees
- 2021 **Biodiversity++** programme

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Management

- **Environmental criteria** in the specifications for the maintenance of green spaces, in particular with regard to the management of invasive plants, avoidance of phytosanitary products, differentiated management, working around nesting and flowering periods, and noise pollution.
- Introduction of the **offsetting criterion**: 1 justified tree felling = 2 trees planted

Improvements and infrastructure

- **Greening 5,300 m² of flat roofs** on the Solbosch, Erasme and Plaine campuses.
- **Late mowing** for the Solbosch campus: around half of lawns were not mown between May and September 2021 in order to increase biodiversity and provide safe areas for wildlife on campus.
- **Planting indigenous species** that produce honey or fruit, to increase biodiversity (2021).
- **Securing the nest of the pair of peregrine falcons**

located in the tower of building A on the Solbosch campus and **installing a camera** to monitor the nesting process live. These improvements, made in partnership with the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, contribute to preserving this species, which is protected by the Brussels-Capital Region. They also help to raise awareness of our natural heritage and show the results achieved by our nature conservation measures.

Information, awareness and advocacy

- Creation of the Solbosch **Tree Trail**, a discovery walk with over 40 rare, ancient or remarkable tree specimens.
- Creation and distribution of the Podcast series **«Au grand air» on the theme of biodiversity preservation**, about the agroecological transition, plastic pollution in the oceans, the greening of Brussels and the remarkable example of the Josaphat brownfield (2021).
- Publication of the **Kotager**, a useful guide on setting up a permaculture-based vegetable garden in student housing (2021).



UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Increase the biodiversity of our green spaces by creating flowering meadows on 15% of our lawns**
- **Create ecological corridors by introducing various types of plants (diversified hedges, trees, lawns...)**



3.7 Purchasing: using products that respect people and the environment

Food, office equipment, furniture, car fleet, IT equipment, maintenance products for premises or green spaces... The purchases made by a university such as ULB are extremely varied, which makes the adoption of sustainable purchasing policies complex. So ULB has chosen to focus on strategic purchasing and suppliers that represent a particularly significant volume of purchases.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Avoid overconsumption by encouraging the community to limit its purchases
- Integrate environmental and/or ethical criteria into public procurement specifications to increase the share of sustainable products

PLANNING

2017 **Logistica** programme to define an optimised and sustainable purchasing and procurement policy

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- Setting up a **printer cartridge collection network**.
- Printing syllabuses on **100% recycled paper**.
- Adding **recycled products** to the clauses of public tenders for IT consumables.
- Joining the **central purchasing service for ecological office supplies** introduced by Environment Brussels (2019).
- Ensuring that **100% of paper procured is recycled** and Ange Bleu-certified (2021).



KEY FIGURES

- **30.8 tonnes of paper ordered by ULB in 2021. Of which 52% was FSC-certified paper and 14% was 100% recycled paper.**

3.8 Waste: reduce, reuse, recycle, sort

In the university's offices, auditoriums, laboratories and restaurants, ULB's activities generate an average of 1,400 tonnes of waste per year. Hazardous waste must be safely disposed of while other waste is reused or recycled. As well as sorting, we are aiming to reduce the volume of waste at source and convert waste into a resource.



KEY FIGURES

- 1,400 tonnes of waste per year (2018)
- 16 waste recycling circuits
- 300,000 water bottles saved every year by installing water fountains

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Drastically reduce waste production
- Integrate and optimise waste management
- Encourage recycling or reuse of materials and energy

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- Installation of **drinking fountains** connected to the city water supply on the Solbosch, Plaine, Erasme and Flagey campuses.
- Introduction of **16 differentiated waste collection and treatment circuits**.
- A catering contract with **clauses to reduce food waste and waste**, including a ban on plastic packaging and non-returnable glass for drinks, pre-packaged individual portions and single-use plastics, and the possibility for customers to bring their own containers (2020).
- In collaboration with its catering partner, the introduction of a Billie Cup reusable cup system at Le Campouce restaurant (2021).

THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TAKES ACTION TOO!

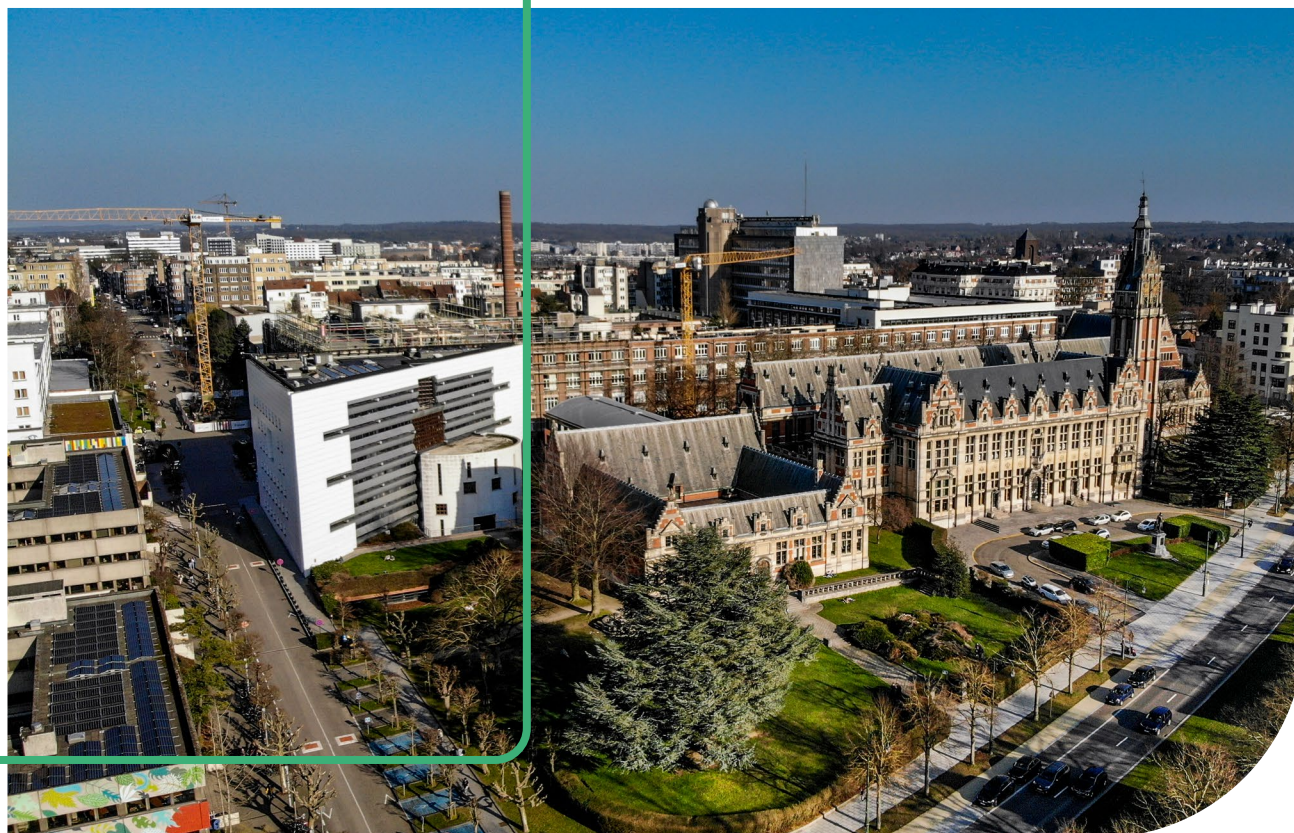
- Since 2010, the Association of Student Societies (ACE) has been offering **loans of reusable cups** for all major student events.
- Since 2015, the Polytechnic Society has been organising a monthly **Repair Café**.
- Zero Waste Month, Zero Waste Ball, responsible drinks policy... The student societies' **eco-responsibility** representatives organise activities every year to encourage sustainable purchasing and waste reduction.
- On the initiative of the Faculty of Architecture La Cambre Horta, a student collective has launched La Fourmilière, **a reuse centre** established on the Solbosch and Flagey campuses to provide students with second-hand materials for their architectural models, following a circular economy approach.



SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENTS

ULB has decided to take account of sustainability criteria in its financial investments:

- Since 2016, the various managers have had to progressively include socially responsible investments in all portfolios, with priority given to renewable energy and investments with a social impact. The arms and tobacco industries are completely excluded. The new agreements also include compliance with the principles of the United Nations Global Compact.
- In 2018, ULB asked for fossil fuels to be excluded from its investment portfolios. By 31 December 2021, all fund managers had completely divested from fossil fuels. The conversion of all portfolios into sustainable and socially responsible mandates is in the process of being finalised.
- In 2019, ULB invested 200,000 euros in the creation of the Belgian citizens' bank NewB.



Axis 4.

Supporting and encouraging the emancipation of the **community**

Ever since it was founded, the University has gone well beyond its legal obligations in its efforts to care for its community (students, current and former staff members). Staying true to its values, ULB has also reaffirmed its desire to be and remain an inclusive and attractive university, in its CAP 2030 Strategic Plan. Yet the challenges are enormous.

The movement to democratise higher education has led to a sharp increase in the number of students at ULB (around 10,000 more students in 10 years). As the CAP 2030 Strategic Plan points out, as well as being larger, the student community is much more varied, with heterogeneous educational backgrounds, increasingly precarious socio-economic situations and longer courses of study. The University is therefore always on the lookout for innovative solutions to help its student cohorts succeed in their studies and to support the most vulnerable students in particular.

ULB is also an organisation (one of the biggest employers in the Brussels region) which employs many different types of staff, including academic, scientific, administrative, technical and management staff. Recruitment, training and retention, as well as diversity and inclusion, mobility and digitalisation are among the essential sustainability challenges, to which we must now add the effects of the pandemic on the organisation of work. ULB wants to continue promoting their well-being, by acting in the field of physical and mental health as well as social emancipation and professional fulfilment.





4.1 Health and well-being: taking a global approach to health

Like all large organisations, ULB has legal obligations in the area of its staff's health. But it has also always been attentive to its community's social and emotional life, ensuring access to quality social and medical services. Back in 1963, ULB created the first School of Public Health in Belgium and since 1968, the Aimer à l'ULB centre has been at the forefront of all action taken in favour of a liberated and responsible approach to sexuality.

Today, the well-being of the University's employees is more of a priority than ever for the Authorities. In fact, it is a central aspect of the Morpho Plan, the administration transformation plan. Moreover, the lockdowns represented a new challenge in terms of preserving the well-being of staff members and the student community.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Facilitate access to healthcare in its community
- Ensure the social, emotional and mental well-being of university community members

PLANNING

2022 Framework note on well-being policy

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2022

Well-being and health promotion

- **Creation of the Well-being Unit**, to develop and structure institutional well-being policy for all staff (2021).
- **Adoption of the Disconnection charter** to reaffirm the need for reasonable and moderate use of digital communication media (2021).
- **Well-being audits**, in the context of a dynamic occupational risk management system, with an in-depth well-being survey of workplaces and workstations (2022).
- A «**Workplace prevention and well-being**» training module for team managers (2022).
- The «**Mardi Healthy**» operation, with weekly activities and self-care tips during the health crisis (2020) and «Stress Management» and «Physical Activity» virtual modules during the final exam preparation sessions (2021).
- **Virtual modules on «Sport and Well-being»** and orienteering trails, in partnership with ULB Sports (2020-2021), and provision of a padel court on the Solbosch campus (2021).
- As part of the «**Ça m'saoule**» project, training on risks in party environments provided by the eco-responsible students of the Association of Student Societies (ACE) (2021).



KEY FIGURES

- 1,950 medical and paramedical treatments provided to students in 2020
- 191 students in societies formed to prevent sexual harassment and violence in 2021
- 4,356 vaccines administered at ULB vaccination centres in 2 months of operation, and 1,267 tests performed at testing centres (2020-2021)

- Opening on the Erasme campus of a new branch of **Aimer à l'ULB**, the on-site family planning service (2020).

Healthcare offering

- Opening of **osteopathy** consultations, along with consultations in general medicine, sports medicine, specialist medicine and physiotherapy (2021).
- **Providing more help and psychological support** to students and University staff on the three main campuses (2021).

Prevention and the fight against harassment

- **Creation of the CASHe unit**, a joint effort by the student offices and the Authorities, to offer help to ULB students suffering from bullying, sexual harassment, intimidation or psychological pressure (2020).
- Organisation of a **consent campaign**, "Si c'est pas oui, c'est non" («If they don't say yes, they mean no») (2021).
- **Creation of Safe Zones** during student festivities (2021).
- **Training in the prevention of harassment and sexual violence** for 191 students from the baptism committees (2021).

Covid-19 health crisis

- Establishment of a sampling, tracing and testing centre (2020) and saliva testing (2021).
- Opening of a **vaccination centre** on Solbosch and Erasme (September - November 2021).
- **Organisation of support activities** for students struggling during lockdown, in partnership with Psy-Campus (2021-2021).
- ULB Santé and ULB Engagée issued a **call for soli-**

arity among mental health professionals to come and offer consultations to students who were struggling during the pandemic. 5 psychologists and psychiatrists answered the call (2020).

- **Back to campus**, a participatory project enabling students to take part in setting priorities for the back to campus action plan in the new academic year 2021-2022, and a version for staff members, **Back Together** (2021).

THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TAKES ACTION TOO!

- A whole host of players are very active in the field of preventive health and well-being on campus. For example: the FRESH (Fight against Racism, Exclusion, Sexism and Harassment) collective, BEMSA (medical students' collective), Balance ton Féminisme, the ULB Feminist Society, the Amnesty International Society, etc.

UPCOMING CHALLENGES

Well-being and health promotion

- **Strengthen the health promotion policy around substance abuse issues, in partnership with student associations, and organise addiction awareness days**
- **Develop a burnout prevention project for staff members**
- **Prepare an institutional support policy for those returning to work after a long absence**
- **Launch a pilot project to provide employees with confidential, anonymous and multilingual support, 24/7**
- **Provide non-French-speaking staff with resources in English about health and well-being**

Prevention and the fight against harassment

- **Finalise the charter on the management of sexual and gender-based assaults in the student societies**
- **Train ULB security staff in sexual harassment and violence issues**
- **Organise a sexual violence, harassment and consent awareness week**

Monitoring

- **Develop dashboards and human resource management indicators**





4.2 Diversity: guaranteeing gains made and further reducing inequalities

ULB was the first university in Belgium to accept female students; it appointed the first female assistant, then the first female professor; and it also had the first women assume the offices of dean and rector. It opened the first halls of residence for female students, the first university nursery, and the first family planning centre. The emancipation of women is therefore a real historical commitment that the University continues to implement by making gender equality a priority. But diversity is not limited to this, far from it. Cultures, origins, philosophical convictions, disabilities, age, socio-economic situation: at ULB, diversity is a mosaic and we are constantly striving to guarantee the gains already made and win new rights.

KEY FIGURES

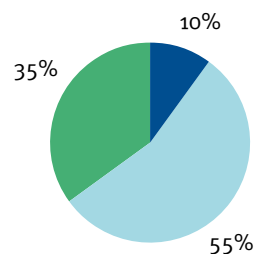


See also the [Report on the state of gender equality 2020-2021](#)

Breakdown of staff members

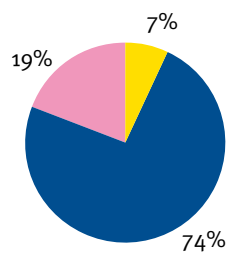
Breakdown of students

by age range



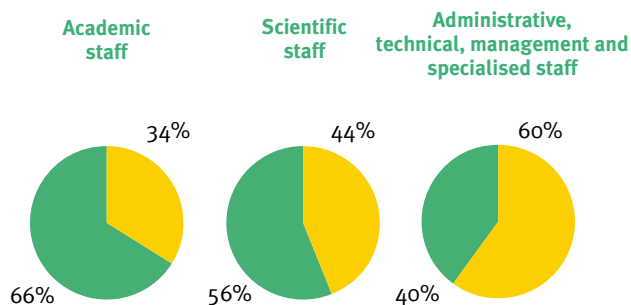
- < 26 years old
- 26-45 years old
- >45 years old

by nationality



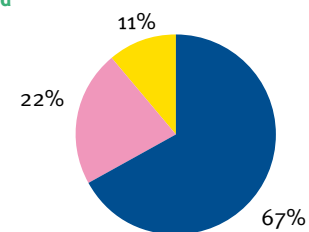
- Belgium
- European Union
- Non-European Union

by gender



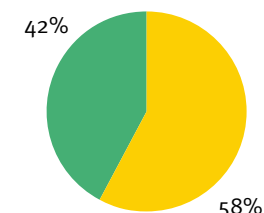
- Men
- Women

by nationality



- Belgium
- European Union
- Non-European Union

by gender



- Men
- Women

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Implement equal opportunities, gender equality and diversity in all policies and activities

PLANNING

2019-2022	First staff diversity plan
2020	Gender Equality Plan
2020-2024	Equality plan in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (European Caliper project)

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2022

Services and organisations

- **Institutional management of the gender and diversity theme**, with the recruitment of a Gender and Diversity resource person and a staff member in charge of inclusion and diversity (2020).
- Creation of an **internal network of contact persons for gender issues**.

Measures taken

- **Support** for students with recognised disabilities to benefit from accommodations according to their needs⁵.
- **Centralisation of good practices** in terms of recruitment, integration and support for people with disabilities within the institution.
- **Creation of partnerships** with external organisations to promote the employment of people with disabili-

ties, with 10 introductory work placements and professional adaptation contracts initiated since July 2020 despite the health situation.

- **Support for staff members** with physical disabilities in their professional retraining.
- **Introduction of gender parity** on the electoral lists of the Plenary Assembly and the Student Council.
- Introduction of an **easier registration procedure** for trans and intersex people.
- **Integration of binding measures** in the academic staff promotion procedure to reduce gender inequalities in academic careers («Cascade» measure).

Information, awareness, advocacy

- **Organisation of Diversity Year** (2017-2018).
- Participation by ULB in **Belgian Pride**, alongside VUB.
- Annual publication of a Report on the state of gender equality.
- Organisation of a **consent campaign**, “Si c’est pas oui, c’est non” («If they don’t say yes, they mean no») in 2021.
- Publication of an issue of the **Prisme webzine on «Sexes-genders-identities: de-construction»** (2022).
- **Participation in DUODAY** to raise awareness of employment of people with disabilities (2019).

THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TAKES ACTION TOO!

- Since autumn 2021, the Association of Student Societies has been taking action to fight sexual violence within the student societies, including the creation of new representatives for inclusivity, a new charter, training of baptism committee members, etc.
- Yes She Can is a project put in place by two alumni of the Brussels School of Engineering in order to promote civil engineering courses to girls in secondary education.

UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Unite all gender and diversity actions and initiatives within the new structural gender and diversity plan**
- **In collaboration with the Faculty of Sciences, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences and Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication, set up a project to encourage the employment of ULB students with disabilities**

⁵ See also the chapters on mobility and help with succeeding.



4.3 Careers: developing a responsible employment policy

As one of the Region's biggest employers, ULB implements actions for the well-being of all employees, whether they are part of the academic staff, the scientific staff or the administrative, technical, management and specialised staff (PATGS). Beyond questions of health and diversity, this responsible employment policy results in a career management policy that enables staff to change roles, manage their career and anticipate changes in their jobs and professional practices.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Attract and improve the reception given to talent likely to contribute to the development of the institution
- Improve the end of career experience

PLANNING

2020 **Morpho Plan**, strategic and operational administration transformation plan

2022 **Framework note on well-being policy**

2013-2018 / 2018-2021

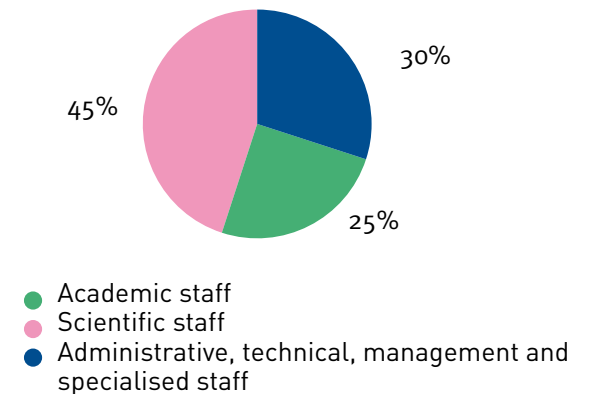
EURAXESS HRS4R, strategy for human resource management in research



KEY FIGURES

5,300 staff members

Breakdown of staff members by staff body



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2022

Start of career

- **Training programmes for new recruits**, in particular the 3-year DANA (Dispositif d'Accompagnement des Nouveaux Académiques – Support Programme for New Academics) and the CORSCI initial training, offered to scientific staff members (since 2013).

Career and career development

- Creation of a **Training and skills development service** (2021).
- Launch of a pilot project, «**development circles**», for administrative staff (2022).
- A **support package for teachers**, academics and scientists. During the health crisis, particular support was provided for the switch to remote working.
- Strengthening of **team manager skills** through a new training and peer coaching programme.

Mobility and career changes

- The **creation of a «skills assessment» fund** to help staff with an externally funded contract prepare for a career change (2019).
- Career development **training and workshops** for PhD candidates and post-doctoral researchers.
- Provision of **career change coaching** and a skills assessment for staff who have successfully completed the accession process⁶.

⁶ Accession is intended to enable a member of the University's administrative, technical, management and specialised staff, who does not hold a university degree at the time of appointment, to gain access to level 1 posts and to benefit from the career opportunities associated with grades at that level.



UPCOMING CHALLENGES

Start of career

- **Improve recruitment and reception of staff members**
- **Improve integration between the start and development stages of a career with a personalised training plan**

Career and career development

- **Make the promotion system for administrative, technical, management and specialised staff fairer and more transparent**
- **Identify, promote and valorise the skills present within the institution via mentoring and peer coaching**
- **Develop and promote the collective and individual course offering**

- **Develop individualised or structural coaching to support teams**
- **Promote and valorise mobility throughout the institution**

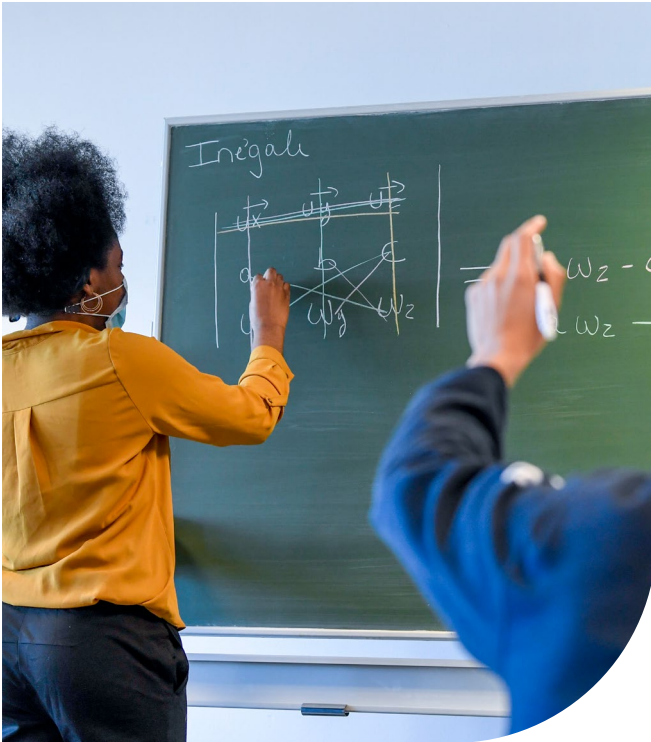
End of career

- **Improve the end of career experience by valorising the diversity of profiles and professions at the University and ensuring well-being and motivation among workers coming to the end of their career**
- **Improve management of staff departures in order to ensure a smooth transition and successful knowledge transfer**

Monitoring

- **Develop dashboards and indicators for human resource management**





4.4 Help to succeed: guaranteeing equal opportunities and supporting the most vulnerable people

The University welcomes a large number of students from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, with sometimes heterogeneous educational backgrounds. Many combine paid work and higher education or are involved in civic engagement. Some struggle to adapt to the pace of higher education or choose courses that they find difficult to complete. Others have special needs or are in a precarious situation.

Faced with these non-linear paths, ULB aims to be inclusive and provides information upstream to help people make an informed choice of course, and offers support systems for students during their studies to help them succeed throughout their course.

KEY FIGURES



- Nearly 30% of students receive social security benefits
- 500 students have Special Needs Student (SNS) status
- Over 1,600 information interviews and 680 career guidance interviews were conducted in 2020-2021
- Over 8,000 visitors attended the various career guidance events held in 2021

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Provide complete and objective information on the courses offered and ways to prepare for them
- Assist students with their academic choices and learning processes
- Ensure integration of students with special needs while respecting their particular development conditions

PLANNING

- 2014 **Inclusive policy for special needs students (SNS)**
- Plan **Social policy for students** (annual package of additional social aid)
- 2019 **Strategy Plan of the Learning Support Offices**



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2022

- **Launch of the Rosa Fund** to support students in precarious situations (2021).
- **The first survey conducted by the Observatory of Student Life** on student precarity (2021).
- **Creation of new assistance by the Student Social Service** to provide psychological support, help with buying digital equipment and fighting period poverty (2020-2021).
- **Introduction of SNS status for pregnant women and young parents** (2021).
- **Launch of the experimental programme «Ma Première Année sur Mesure» («My Tailor-Made First Year»)** to fight educational inequalities including diagnostic tests at the start of the year (2020).
- **Launch of the UAE-ULB Mentoring programme** by the Union des Anciens Étudiants alumni association, in collaboration with ULB (2021).
- **Collective and individual measures to help students succeed and provide mentoring** with a specific focus in 2020 on the requirements of hybrid or all-online teaching, and getting started with digital tools.
- **Programmes** to inform secondary school pupils and existing students about studying and life at ULB and to help them choose a career or change career.

UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Improve information for all audiences**
- **Improve consideration of students with special needs and identify new needs in terms of statuses**
- **Take action to improve the accessibility, clarity and flexibility of the various types of financial help available**
- **Take account of digital inequalities**
- **Adapt support measures to the diversity of learners**
- **Improve educational monitoring throughout the course of study**

4.5 Student housing: developing a quality offering that meets existing needs

Brussels is Belgium's leading student city: more than 100,000 students are enrolled at a higher education institution, of which more than a third live in so-called «student» housing. However, the shortage of supply in the capital is such that it is very difficult to find suitable accommodation in terms of rent, community facilities and accessibility of public transport. Aware that access and success at university are closely linked to housing conditions, ULB adopted a master plan for university housing in 2012. But in a capital where property prices are soaring, ULB wants to play a leading role by helping private or public sector investors to develop projects adapted to housing issues.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Provide student housing and student-friendly residences at affordable prices
- Achieve 25% of all housing priced at the social rate by developing partnerships with existing players (Agence Immobilière Sociale Étudiante, property developers, etc.)

PLANNING

2012 **Master plan for university housing**

2020 **Admission rules** in residences giving priority to students supported by the Student Social Service

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2022

- Being awarded «**Pour un logement étudiant de qualité**» certification by the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region for a period of 5 years for the 4 residences (i.e. 649 rooms) on the Solbosch campus.
- **Developing partnerships** by participating in the creation of two Brussels-based organisations in charge of developing student housing in Brussels (Plateforme Logement Étudiant and Agence Immobilière Sociale Étudiante). The University is also a partner for innovative solutions: from a room to a shared apartment, from a short stay to an «academic year» lease.

KEY FIGURES



- More than 5,000 beds available, of which just over 800 are under our own management
- A threefold increase in provision between 2012 and 2019
- 6 university residences on 3 campuses (Solbosch, Plaine, Erasme)
- 824 rooms priced below the market rate
- 50% of rooms occupied by students from the Student Social Service

UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Develop a partnership with Agence Immobilière Sociale Étudiante by reserving rooms and studios specifically for ULB students**
- **Collaborate with the Brussels-Capital Region to help lower rents**
- **Renovate residences with a view to sustainability**
- **Develop the Usquare site which will include nearly 480 homes for ULB and VUB students**



Axis 5.

Fostering a commitment to serving **society**

Since it was founded in 1834, ULB has defended deeply held humanist values. It has always fought discrimination and promoted the emancipation of women and men, here and elsewhere. Being committed to serving society is part of its DNA. Lifelong learning, social, cultural and economic development of society, solidarity and promotion of civic engagement: many of the Sustainable Development Goals are an integral part of its history and functioning.

The CAP 2030 Strategic Plan strongly reaffirms this vision of the University as a civic University, attentive to the defence and promotion of the values of free enquiry and democracy, committed to the resolution of major societal problems and participating in the public debate against disinformation, ideological regression and retreat into identity groups. It also intends to be a University open to its environment and active in the city, anchored in its social, political, cultural and economic environment, concerned with making its contribution to regional development and being a driving force in networks of alliances and partnerships in Brussels and Wallonia.



5.1 Teaching and dissemination of knowledge: taking action for education at all ages

Increasing enrolments, spectacular growth in knowledge, rapid innovation cycles: these are all developments in society that raise questions about access to higher education, which is still too often determined by social criteria. Yet the temporality of education also has to change in order to meet the need to update knowledge constantly. ULB thus wants to contribute to the dissemination of knowledge, skills and expertise generated by its research and teaching activities, but also to increase interactions with compulsory education.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Invest in the initial and continuing education of players in compulsory education, as part of a genuine partnership
- Position the University as a legitimate player and reference in the field of continuing education and promote the continuum between initial education and lifelong learning
- Provide more ways of accessing knowledge and personalising the learner journey
- Institutionally support expertise activities and distribution of knowledge in society

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS⁷

- The new **University Certificate in Environmental Medicine** (2020) and the Executive Master in Resilient and Carbon Neutral Cities (2022), which are part of an existing range of more than 100 continuing

education certificates and a very large number of short courses, online courses, summer schools and a teachers' university.

- A programme to support teachers in **developing MOOCs-ULB**, massive open online courses that are free to access.
- Created in 1975, the **Council for Continuing Education (CEPULB)**, ULB's Inter-age University, is one of the first universities open to all, with no entry requirements in terms of qualifications or age limit. It offers its members access to more than 530 faculty courses alongside the students.
- The **E.Col.E** project which, since 2019, has been bringing together and promoting various ULB initiatives aimed at players in compulsory education: 30 projects and initiatives are networked in this way.
- ULB's participation in the development of **Écoles secondaires plurielles**, secondary schools with active teaching methods in North-West Brussels.
- The **Évolution** exhibition on the mechanisms of



KEY FIGURES

- 30 ULB projects and programmes for compulsory education, coordinated by the E.Col.E project
- 5,000 adults in continuing education per year

evolution, organised by ULB's Centre for scientific culture and ULB's Museum of Zoology, and aimed at schools and families. Students studying for the qualification to teach biology at upper secondary level took part in putting together the educational trail (2021).

- **Participation in Le Printemps des Sciences**, a week to raise awareness of science, common to all French-speaking universities in Belgium. In the Brussels region, the event is coordinated by Infor-sciences, the Science Dissemination Department of the Faculty of Sciences, which also organises activities all year round.



⁷ For other teaching and knowledge dissemination activities, see also the chapter on Teaching and the Research chapter → Open science section

5.2 Citizenship: mobilising the university community

Alongside teaching and research, service to the community is the University's third mission, to which ULB is very attached. This desire to serve led to the creation of the ULB Engagée association in 2017. As an incubator for citizens' projects, its mission is to mobilise the university community through civic actions and to design, support and promote this community's societal engagement actions.



KEY FIGURES

- 13 weeks of workshops on the 3 campuses, 1,067 enrolments of 413 children, 73 professors and researchers from the community volunteering at the University of Children
- 5 student solidarity projects supported by the Stéphane Hessel Scholarship in 2021 for a total of €25,000
- 2,650 secondary and primary school pupils in difficulty receiving support every week from the Schola ULB Tutoring Programme and its 470 committed tutors
- 40 events at 17 schools and youth organisations run by 42 volunteers from Migration, Beyond Prejudice and 533 young people made aware of migration issues.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Inspire, facilitate, strengthen and promote the societal engagement of ULB and its community
- Develop a dynamic of civic engagement on a large scale, especially radiating outwards from the University

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- Launch of the **TIME online platform** for «solidarity matching» between associations advertising volunteering activities and members of the community looking for ways to volunteer (2019).
- The launch on 18 March 2020 of the **#CoronaSolidarité Campaign** facilitated and supported contact between volunteers from the university community and healthcare centres in difficulty. The campaign brought in 1,486 volunteers through the online platform and the additional mobilisation of 800 student volunteers on health study programmes.
- The **workshops of the University of Children** were adapted to guarantee continuity of action and continued reception of children, despite the public health crisis (2021).
- Schola ULB and ULB Engagée carried out an **exploratory study of existing practices in academic recognition of student civic engagement** in higher education in the Wallonia Brussels Federation (2021).

- The **Toolkit** was launched to help students design, begin and manage a personal project (2021).
- The **University Certificate of Civic Engagement**, a new extracurricular university certificate worth 10 ECTS and recognised by ARES, enables ULB students to gain recognition for their societal engagement and develop new skills in the field (2022).

UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Increase the diversity of children participating in the University of Children**
- **Inspire and promote engagement among the university community through an event that brings people together, in the style of the «Engagement Days»**
- **Design and launch the Engagement Awards to honour long-term citizen projects developed by the university community**





5.3 Territory: developing campuses integrated into the city

ULB considers that it has a crucial role to play in the major social and environmental challenges facing the areas where it is established. Its historical roots in Brussels has shaped the University's identity to a great extent. Its location within the capital is a key factor in recruiting students and has a major impact in the field of housing, mobility, safety, and social and cultural activities. ULB wishes to continue consolidating its presence, with its Flemish sister university VUB amongst others. Moreover, the establishment of ULB research centres in Gosselies, over 20 years ago, attracted a large number of academic and non-academic players, who have now helped to place ULB at the centre of the Biopark Charleroi Brussels South ecosystem. Mindful of the lack of university courses in the Charleroi region, and in partnership with the University of Mons, ULB also wishes to invest in that area, thus becoming one of the major players on the Charleroi Ville-Haute campus.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Consolidate our integration in Brussels, particularly in synergy with VUB
- Intensify our integration and engagement in Wallonia
- Integrate the campuses into the city, taking account of its socio-cultural aspects
- Draw on the expertise, scientific rigour and creativity of the university community to make the campuses places of experimentation and innovation

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Open campus:** green spaces, museums, libraries, exhibitions, conferences and sports activities are among the services offered by the University that are accessible to all.
- **weKONEKT.brussels:** this joint movement by ULB and VUB aims to form closer ties between the universities and the regional ecosystem. This results in moving learning activities into the city, bringing students into contact with the city and its riches. This closer connection also involves the creation of lasting synergies with different sectors (associative, cultural, entrepreneurial or political) and their players, in order to put students in close contact

with the professional world so they can learn from specialists in the field and be better prepared for the employment market.

- **Witches exhibition:** designed and produced in partnership with the City of Brussels, this exhibition explores the historical and artistic dimensions of witches, one of our most fascinating and controversial symbols (2021-2022).
- **Usquare:** in partnership with the Brussels federal and regional governments, ULB and VUB are among the major driving forces behind this urban redevelopment project, located on the 4-hectare site of the former federal police barracks at the corner of Avenue de la Couronne and Boulevard Général Jacques. The ambition is to develop, through a responsible renovation of the existing building, an urban project integrated into the city, exemplary from an environmental, social, cultural and circular economy point of view. ULB and VUB are contributing to this through a joint research centre on urban issues and socio-environmental transformations and by setting up a permanent infrastructure for its living labs and citizen science actions⁸.

CIVIS, an alliance with deep local roots

The aim of the Open Labs is to connect CIVIS to the local communities in the cities and regions of the member universities. As meeting places between universities and citizens, Open Labs aim to support the co-creation of creative and inclusive projects that respond to local challenges and have a positive impact on the community. The Brussels Research Open Lab is an example of this aim⁸.

⁸ See Research chapter



KEY FIGURES

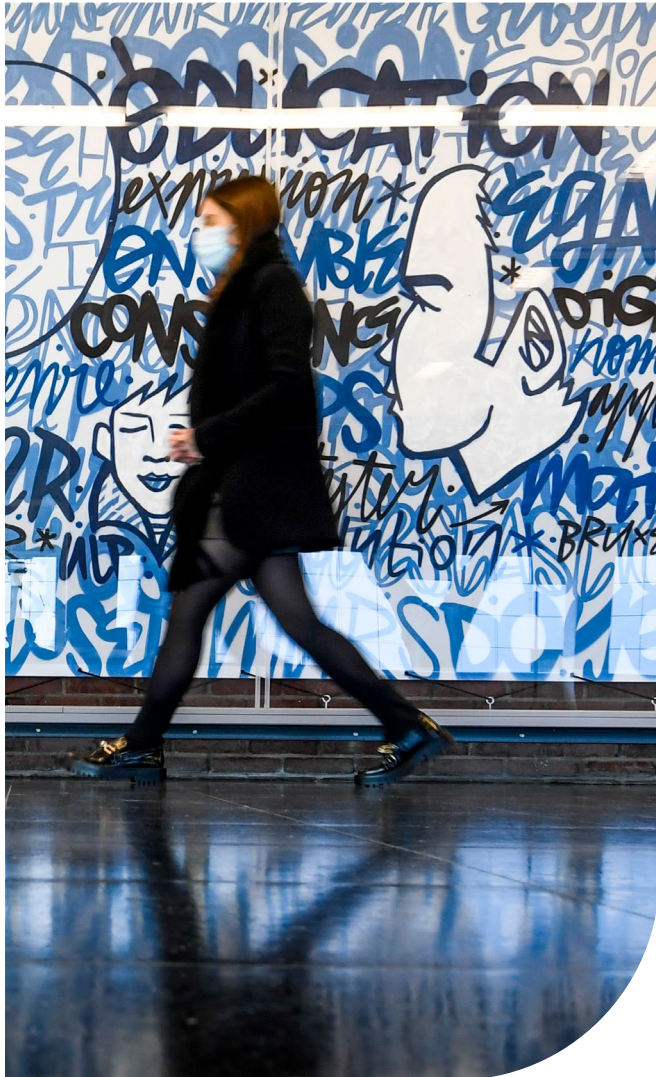
- 11 sites and campuses (excluding hospital sites)
- Over 500,000 m² of campus areas



UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- Improving the quality of public spaces on campus by ensuring mixed use by both the university community and neighbourhood residents
- Increase and rethink the availability of teaching infrastructure for socio-cultural actors outside teaching periods
- Strengthen joint ULB-VUB actions in support of Brussels-based players, in order to meet the challenges of society while optimising their effectiveness by maximising economies of scale and valuing complementarities





5.4 Solidarity: always defending human rights

The expansion of radicalism, disengagement of the State, proliferation of conflicts, distortion or negation of knowledge: these are all afflictions of our time that ULB intends to denounce in order to defend and promote its founding values of respect, justice and equality, freedom of thought, and the fight against totalitarianism and extremism. If solidarity is an essential value of the ULB, it should be translated into action as often as possible: by taking a stand in the public debate and by proposing ways to show solidarity.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Welcome refugees
- Develop international action for solidarity with threatened university institutions or colleagues

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Creation of a Solidarity Fund** from ULB's own budgets to award postdoctoral scholarships to researchers who are under threat in their country of origin.
- **Official appeals or motions of support** that ULB has always issued to defend academic freedom, freedom of research, university autonomy and fundamental rights. In particular:
 - A motion of support to migrant persons (2018).

- A strong expression of support for colleagues and students at Bosphorus University in Istanbul who are facing repression and censorship (2021).
- A motion of support for the International Memorial Association, an NGO threatened with dissolution in Russia and since dissolved (2021).
- A motion for a debate on the condition of undocumented migrants in Belgium, in particular in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic (2021).
- A call for **Flood Solidarity** donations made by ULB Engagée, which enabled 3 flooded schools to buy new equipment (2021).
- An **exemption from the course fee** (minerval) for students from Lebanon, initiated by ULB and adopted by the French-speaking Belgian universities (2020).



KEY FIGURES

40 scholarships awarded to 31 researchers in danger

- The **Welcome Desk for Refugees** which, since 2016, has been welcoming refugee students and individually assisting them with all their procedures, before, during and after their registration at ULB.
- The **Help Ukraine initiative** for the provision of emergency accommodation for members of the university community in danger, fleeing Ukraine and being of Ukrainian nationality or entitled to international protection, as well as Russian and Belarusian opponents of the war. Many members of the university community (staff, students, alumni...) were quick respond to the ULB appeal by offering to provide accommodation to those in need (2022).



THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TAKES ACTION TOO !

- **Law Students With Refugees (LSWR)** aims to provide frontline legal information to refugee applicants about their rights and to offer the services of a lawyer through twice-weekly sessions at the Immigration Office. This initiative also runs awareness-raising campaigns in academia.

UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Develop funding instruments to support students who do not have access to education in their country of origin, in partnership with the Daughters for Life foundation**
- **Welcome Afghan researchers to ULB through new postdoctoral fellowships set up by the University**
- **Enable Ukrainian researchers to continue their research or teaching work and provide students with a specific integration programme and possibly courses and programmes**





5.5 International cooperation: consolidating and developing inclusive partnerships

Cooperation is a strength. It mutually enriches teaching and research, and increases the human capacities dedicated to projects which are all relevant to at least one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. A fundamental challenge today is to decolonise thinking and rethink cooperation in order to move beyond obsolete analytical schemes and implementation strategies that are still too often unilateral.

Developed by the faculties or by its main NGO, ULB Cooperation, cooperation activities play a full part in the internationalisation of ULB and remain a priority, as emphasised in the CAP 2030 Strategic Plan. From offices in Brussels, Kinshasa, Goma, Ouagadougou and Dakar, the ULB Cooperation team runs about ten projects per year with about fifty partners and stakeholders. Two special partnerships have also been developed with the Joseph Ki-Zerbo University (Burkina Faso) and the University of Lubumbashi (Democratic Republic of Congo) in collaboration with the Brussels School of Engineering (CODEPO) and the Faculties of Medicine (FOSFOM) and Pharmacy (CoDePhar).

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Mutually strengthen research and teaching activities
- Increase individual capacities within the institutions of partner countries
- Offer a quality welcome to grant holders from partner countries (advanced master's degree, PhD, post-doctorate) and maintain ties after their stay at ULB



KEY FIGURES

- 5 offices in 4 countries for the ULB Coopération NGO
- 6 new projects given funding of €500,000 per project over 5 years
- 29 partner countries, around 60 projects and 15 themes for cooperation projects, be they student, research or teaching projects



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Launch of the «Décolonisons-nous»** project to question and transform the legacies of colonialism and to make relationships with partner institutions more egalitarian. This reflection process has also led to the creation of a **«Héritages coloniaux et décolonisations» steering committee**, responsible for driving the University's policies on these issues, and for stimulating and coordinating the various projects and studies on the subject that take place within the University.
- **Signing the agreement for the restitution of human remains from the colonial period** with the University of Lubumbashi.
- Taking an inventory of our collaborations and creating a **«Partnerships at risk» working group** to manage situations where external partners act in a manner contrary to the humanist values of ULB.

- **Establishment of an «Academic Freedom»** committee to serve as a focal point for our institution's commitment to academic freedom and to draw our partner universities into the fold.
- **Support for several cooperation project applications**, including 6 new selected research and teaching projects in health, psychomotricity, science and architecture.
- **Improvement of information and communication materials**, in particular with the aim of improving the visibility of the funding granted by ULB.
- **Advocacy work to align the value of doctoral and PhD scholarships** for nationals of partner countries with other scholarships that exist in Belgium.
- **Organisation of social and cultural activities** for grant holders and cooperation.

UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Deploy the various dimensions of the «Décolonisons-nous» project and continue the work of the «Héritages coloniaux et décolonisations» steering committee.**
- **Do more to promote cooperation and raise its profile internally and externally**
- **Form closer ties with the faculties in these areas**
- **Improve the information given about funding and increase its visibility in synergy with the Research Department**



Axis 6.

Governance: organising the transition

Governance is an essential lever for the definition and implementation of policies in favour of sustainability, but it is also a real challenge, as the approach is systemic and questions all the institution's activities, at all levels. It is a question of simultaneously initiating multiple changes which must reinforce and amplify each other, in order to create a new sustainable operating model. To manage this transition, ULB relies on an inspiring vision of an ecological and sustainable society, which envisages a positive future by thinking about transformations based on creative and solidarity-conscious solutions.



STRATEGIC GOALS

- Propose and share an **inspiring vision of the future** as part of a humanist plan for society
- **Define transition paths** that integrate grassroots initiatives with the institution's structural policies and serve society as a whole
- **Design a governance model** that mobilises all of ULB's activities (teaching, research, administration, community services), creates synergies, and achieves tangible and measurable results
- **Make firm and realistic commitments** and endeavour to **demonstrate** through a measurement approach the institution's progress towards its sustainability goals
- **Encourage critical thinking** in the community about sustainability issues and solutions based on scientific principles and free enquiry

COMMITMENTS

- **Rio+20:** in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, ULB made an official external commitment which is broken down into 5 areas: teaching, research, campus management, support for sustainable development efforts and sharing of results.
- **CAP 2030:** formalised in 2019 following a participatory process involving all bodies of the University, CAP 2030 is ULB's strategic plan for 2030. The plan's transversal approach integrates sustainability, both in its teaching and research missions and in the management of its campuses, but also as a civic university that is committed to solving major societal problems, open to its environment and inclusive.
- **Climate Plan:** adopted in 2019, the ULB Climate



Plan includes an Operational axis, a Research axis and an Education axis. While support for the Operational axis aimed at reducing ULB's greenhouse gas emissions is clear, more support must be given to the Research and Teaching axes working to create and disseminate scientific knowledge and methods to address climate issues.

- **Morpho Plan:** launched in 2020, this strategic and operational plan for the transformation of the ULB administration integrates sustainability both in its desire to implement a benevolent and inclusive approach to human relations and in the management of the campuses and operating methods.

UPCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Embed sustainability issues and encourage their adoption within the various services, departments and faculties**
- **Facilitate transversality for smooth collaboration between various stakeholders**
- **Structurally coordinate the sustainability approach within the institution**

PROGRAMMES, POLITICS AND PLANS



TRANSVERSAL COMMITMENTS

- Rio +20
- CAP2030 (Strategic Plan)
- Morpho Plan (Administration transformation)
- Climate Plan



TEACHING

- EDDuco (Teaching and sustainability)



COMMUNITY

- Framework note on well-being policy
- Staff diversity plan
- Gender Equality Plan
- Strategy Plan of the Learning Support Office
- Inclusive policy for special needs students



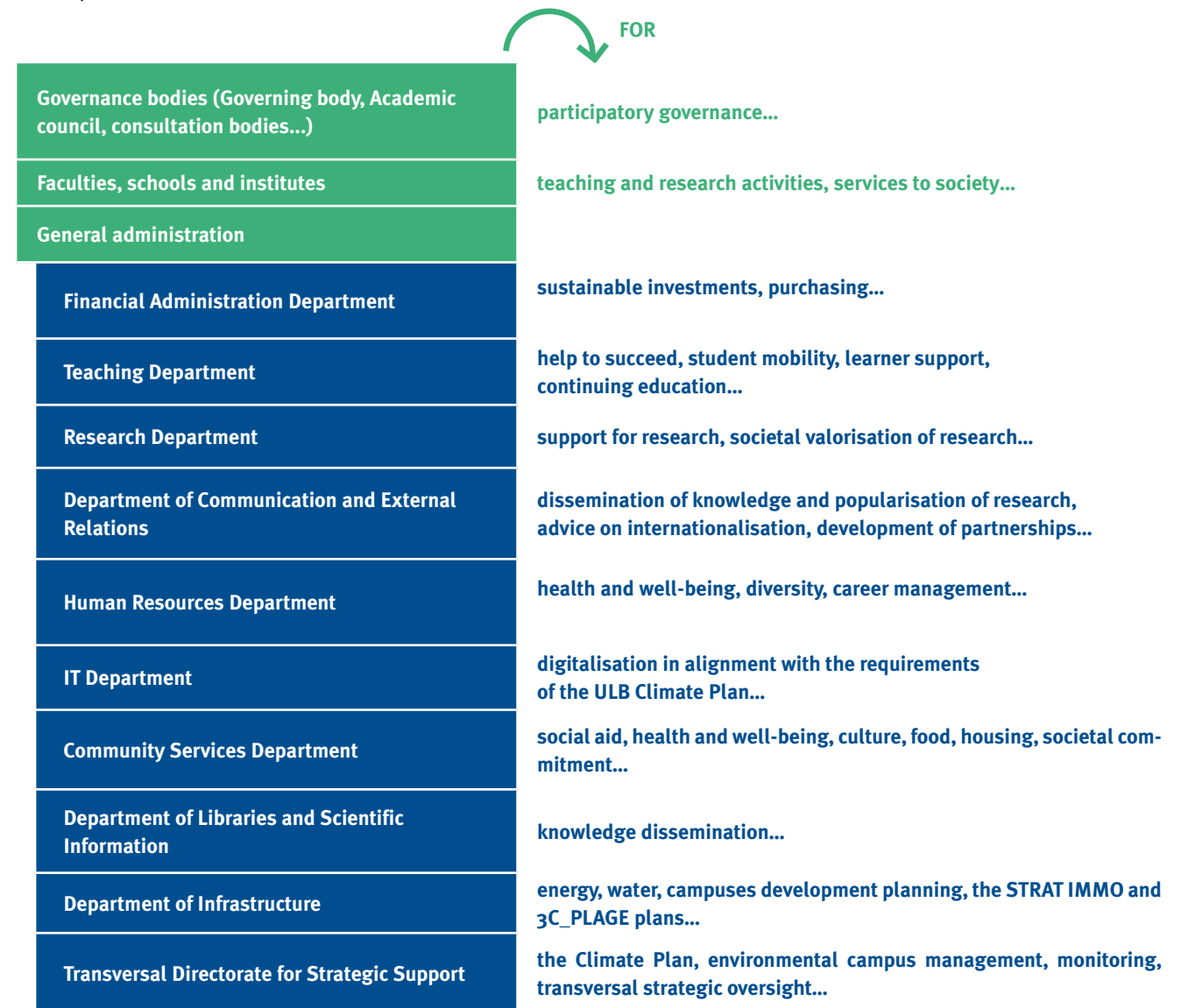
CAMPUS MANAGEMENT

- Full Access (Accessibility)
- Mobile (Mobility)
- Logistica (Deliveries and purchasing)
- Textures (Development of outdoor areas)
- STRAT IMMO (Building renovation)
- 3C_PLAGE (Climate - Comfort - Compliance and Local Action Plan for Energy Management)
- Digital Plan@ULB (Datacenter)
- GoodFood label (Food)
- Biodiversity++



TRANSVERSAL INVOLVEMENT

Many bodies, departments and faculties incorporate sustainability issues into their modes of operation and challenges, notably:

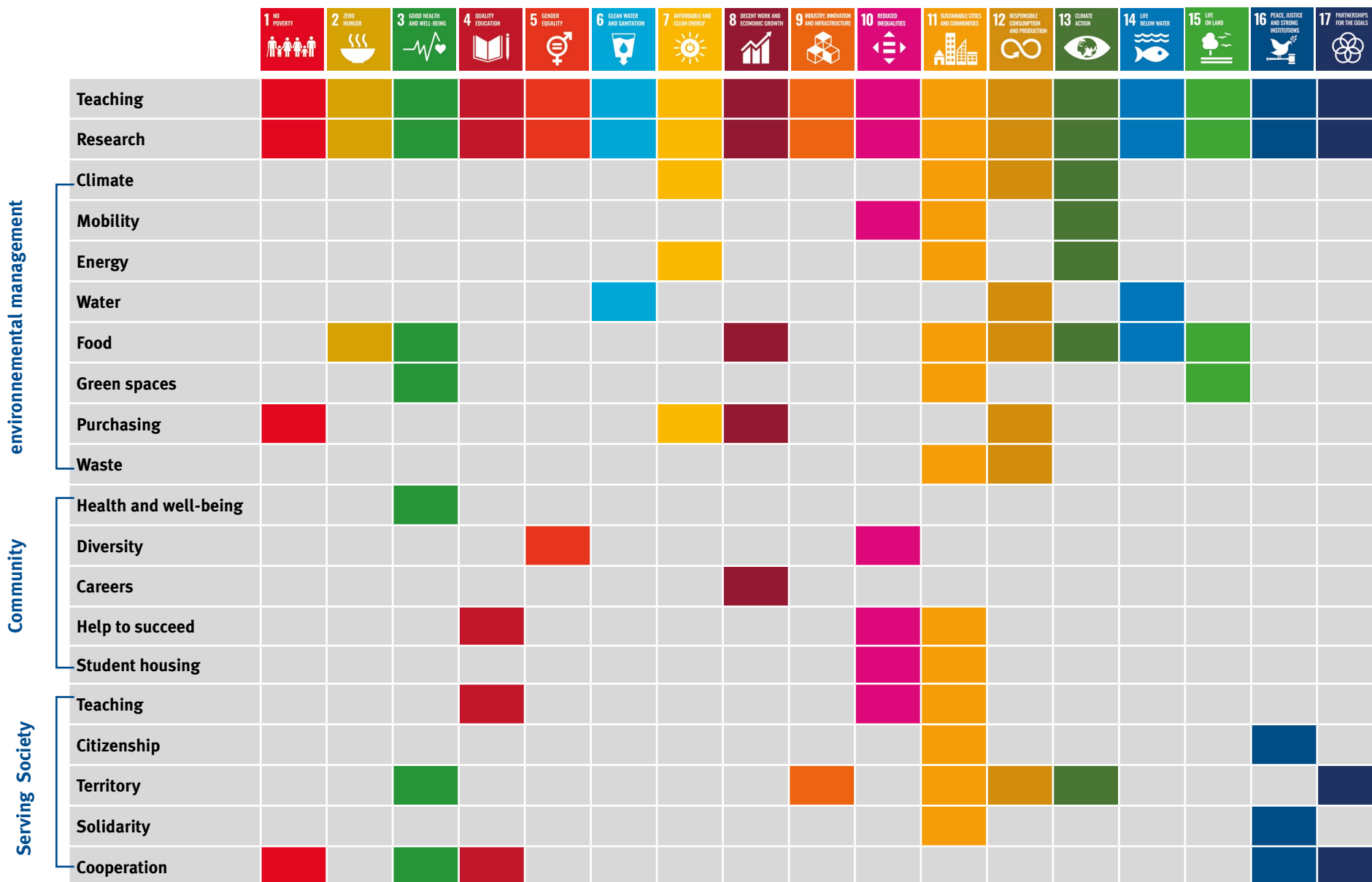


DEDICATED STRUCTURES

ULB has set up two transversal structures dedicated to sustainability:

- The **Vice-Rectorate for Sustainable Development** to accelerate the institution's engagement process (2020): assisted by 5 advisors and a student deputy and acting in concert with the other vice-rectorates following the transversal approach that sustainability requires, it has particular responsibility for defining the sustainability strategy jointly with community members, and for facilitating the implementation of the strategic commitments made by the University.
- **Students in Transition Office (SiTO)**: created in 2021, this student body for mobilisation and consultation on transition at the University defines an annual programme of transition-related mobilisation, surveys or actions that it wishes to carry out during the academic year. Including many members of the student societies and offices, the SiTO brings together, unites and supports students who wish to carry out sustainability projects within ULB. It facilitates their ability to act while making them aware of the complexity of sustainability issues.

ULB'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





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