

CONFERENCE

# Enhancing the Attractiveness of European Universities as a Destination for World-Class Researchers

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# Destination Europe: Strategies and Good Practices

Barcelona, November 5<sup>th</sup>

KU Leuven

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Vicerector of Research Policy

# Overview

- KU Leuven: Facts, Challenges and Opportunities
- KU Leuven EU/ERC Policy
- Summary and Conclusions

# KU Leuven: Facts, Challenges, Opportunities

- 35 000 Ba/Ma students  
4500 PhD students  
1200 postdocs  
1100 faculty
- Comprehensive, research intensive (research fuelling all teaching and service to society)
  - Humanities and Social Sciences
  - Science, Engineering and Technology
  - Biomedical Sciences
- Inclusive: low tuition/open recruitment
- Language legislation - location

# KU Leuven: Facts, Challenges, Opportunities

- Attention for KU Leuven talent
  - Young researchers
  - Postdocs
  - Mobility
- Attention for international talent
  - Hiring policy
    - Active
    - Government programmes : Odysseus
    - Wage policy – expat status
  - 15% of students are foreign
  - 38% of PhD students are foreign
  - 40% of postdocs are foreign

Research professors			
		Non KU Leuven PhD	
2007	12	5	41,7%
2008	14	3	21,4%
2009	16	5	31,3%
2010	15	2	13,3%
2011	13	10	76,9%
2012	13	5	38,5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36,1%</b>

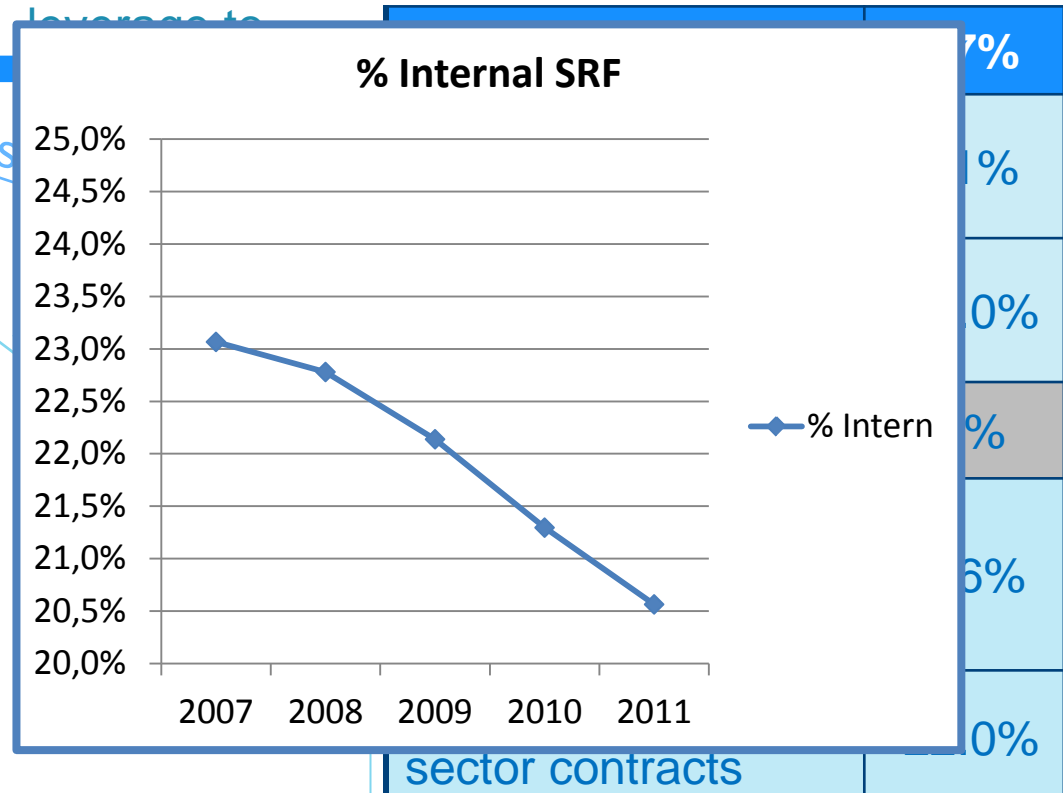
# KU Leuven: Facts, Challenges, Opportunities

Research expenses 2011

€365 Million

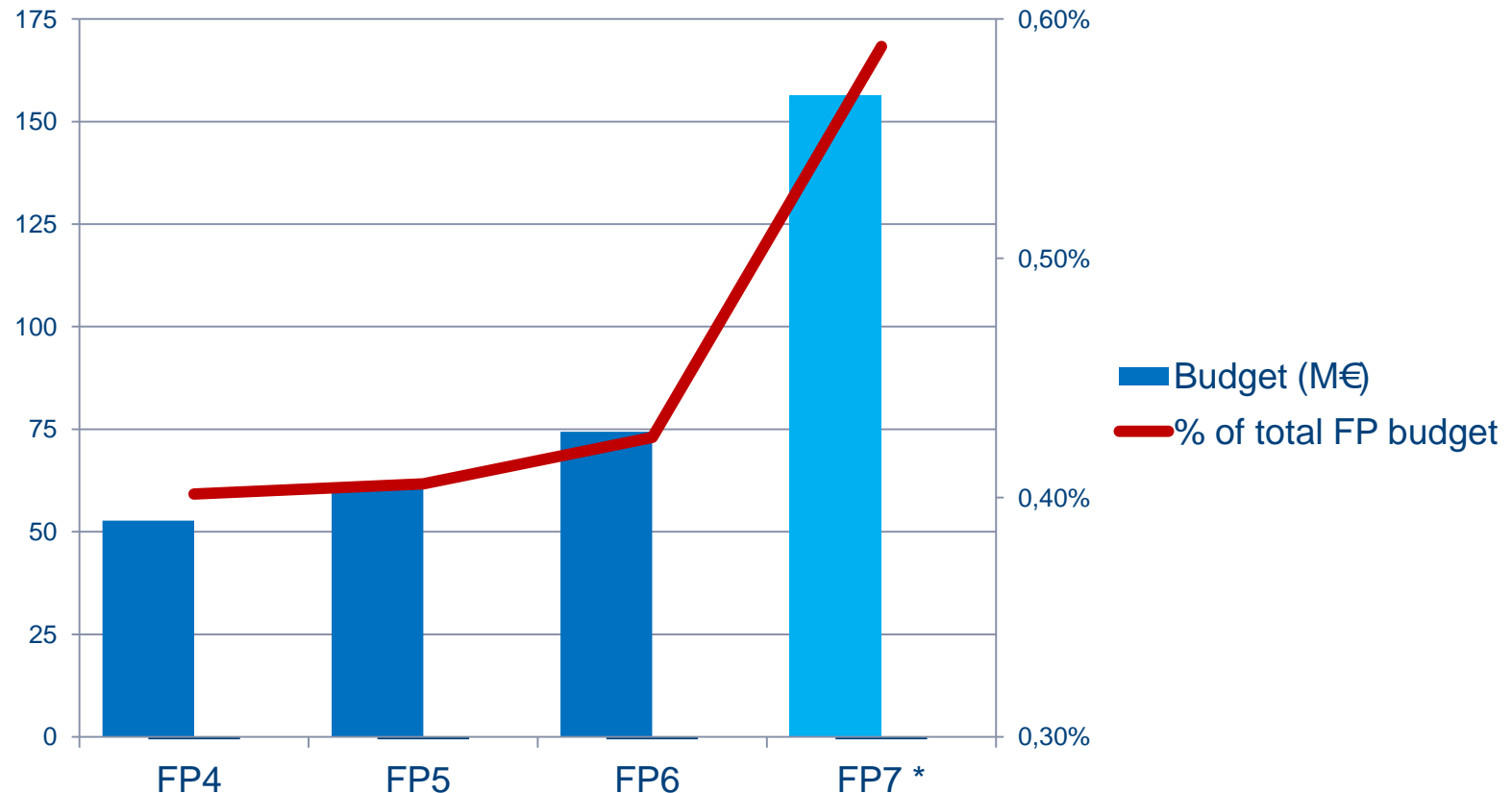
<b>Internal funds</b>	<b>23%</b>
Special Research Fund (SRF)	21%
Industrial Research Fund (IRF)	2 %

- Independent Research Council
- External peer review
- Criteria:
  - excellence
  - innovation
  - sustainability
  - past performance



# KU Leuven: Facts, Challenges, Opportunities

## KU Leuven in FP (1994-2013)



Source: European Commission, via Flemish dep. EWI

\* FP7: up to 02.07.2012; 52.6% of FP7 budget allocated in contracts  
FP4, 1994-1998; FP5, 1998-2002; FP6, 2003-2006; FP7, 2007-2013

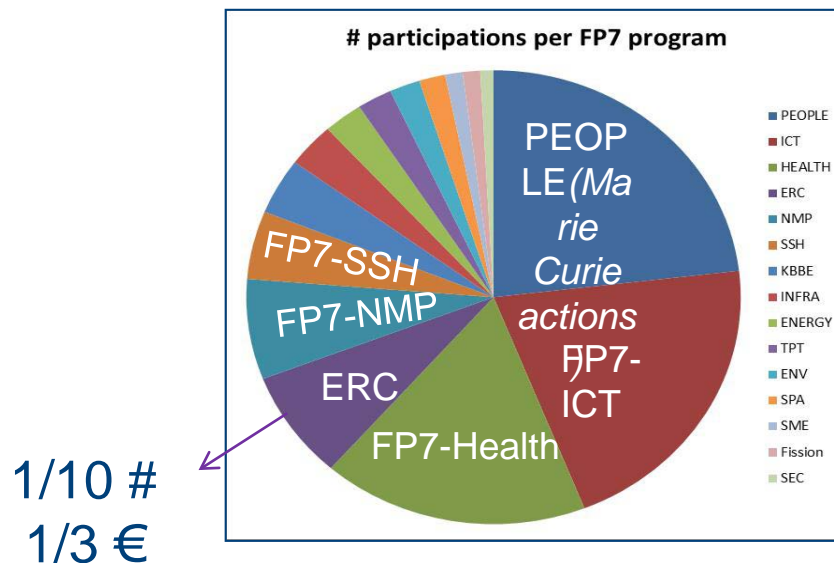
# KU Leuven: Facts, Challenges, Opportunities

## ERC Grants

- | ERC            | Total | Non KU Leuven PhD |      |
|----------------|-------|-------------------|------|
| Starting Grant | 35    | 14                | 40 % |
| Advanced Grant | 13    | 2                 | 15 % |

- 45/48 hired before the application for an ERC Grant

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# KU Leuven EU/ERC strategy

## Establishing a favorable climate

- **Excellence at all levels**

- *Independent Research Council*
  - *No 'institutional policy'*
- *Balance comprehensive quality/excellence*
  - *Internal funds: 35% go to app 10% of faculty, 100% to 60 % of faculty*
- *Hiring/promotions based on realisations in 3 dimensions*
  - *Scientific Output*
  - *Teaching*
  - *Service to society*
- *Research assessment at the level of Science Groups (H&SS, S,E &T, BS)*
  - *Focus on Research strategy of Departments and Faculties*
- *Investments in research infrastructure*

# KU Leuven EU/ERC strategy

## Establishing a favorable climate

- **Stimulation**

- Screening all Faculty and Postdocs
  - Based on career path
  - Assessment of scientific output (independently – “it is possible”)
- ERC Grantees are role models
  - Visibility
  - ERC events
- Incentives
  - Faculty positions for StG CG (may not be sustainable)
  - Rebalancing of duties: research vs teaching

# KU Leuven EU/ERC strategy

## Establishing a favorable climate

- **Support and follow up**

- Administrative support when preparing an application
- Advice and training by Grantees
  - St/C
- Administrative support when a grant is awarded
- Follow up of application
  - Success rate in Humanities & Social Sciences at KU Leuven is 50% lower compared to other Science groups
  - Gender

# KU Leuven EU/ERC strategy

## Support by KU Leuven EU-team



*EU Pro-Act*

**Research Coordination Office**

**Tech Transfer Office LRD**

*EIT, FET-F, JPICH*

*decentral support team?  
preparatory funding?*

*Support for project  
management (central team)*

# Summary and Conclusions

- KU Leuven: Comprehensive, research intensive, inclusive
- Vast majority of Grantees were hired before applying for ERC Grants
- Regional aspects: Language, location

## EU/ERC policy

- A stimulating climate of excellence is the most important element
  - Independent Research council - Special Research Fund
  - Investment in infrastructure
  - Grantees as a role models / incentives for ERC grantees
- Extensive support, pre- and post-application
  - Open screening/stimulation of applications
  - Administrative support
  - Training (by ERC Grantees)
- Screening and follow up