

PRESS RELEASE

Paris, 18th of November 2022

Prof. Vincent Blondel elected as new President of Circle U.: “We are now entering a new phase for making our alliance a long-lasting reality for our communities”.

At the General Assembly held on 18 November 2022 at the *Université Paris Cité*, Vincent Blondel, Rector of the University of Louvain, was elected as new President of Circle U. Succeeding Svein Stølen, Rector of the University of Oslo, he will steer the strategic development of Circle U.

The Circle U. President is the highest representative of the alliance. The President chairs the General Assembly which is the decision body where rectors, presidents and students make decisions on the strategic development of the alliance. Vincent Blondel will fulfil his mandate for a one-year period; however, the General Assembly has already asked him to pursue his function for an additional year.

Svein Stølen, Rector of the University of Oslo and outgoing President of Circle U. said: *“Vincent has played a central role in shaping Circle U. since the very start of its development. Considering the pivotal moment, we are in, preparing the next application and ensuring the sustainable and long-lasting development of the alliance, I am convinced – as all rectors and presidents – that Vincent will be instrumental for our cooperation”.*

Vincent Blondel said: *“Since our first discussions on the alliance back in 2018, I have been convinced that the European Universities initiative will drive the future of the European higher education and research landscape. After two years of pilot phase and while preparing the application, I am even more convinced that the alliance will impact significantly what we are as individual universities and how we fulfil our missions of education, research and service to society. With this ambition in mind, I am delighted to succeed to Svein and I am looking forward to working with my colleagues to make Circle U. a reality for all.”*

Born in Antwerp in 1965, Vincent Blondel has been Rector of the University of Louvain since 1st September 2014. Trained in philosophy, engineering and applied mathematics at the University of Louvain, *Institut National Polytechnique de Grenoble* and Imperial College London, Vincent Blondel has been professor at the University of Louvain since 1999. He has also been a visiting professor at MIT, the Royal Institute of Technology of Stockholm, the Australian National University, the University of California at Berkeley and the Université Paris VII – Diderot.

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CIRCLE U. EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE

We, Aarhus Universitet (Denmark), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Germany), King’s College London (United Kingdom), UCLouvain (Belgium), Università di Pisa (Italy), Universität Wien (Austria), Université Paris Cité (France), Universitetet i Oslo (Norway) and Univerzitet u Beogradu (Serbia), we have agreed to combine our expertise and common interests to build a European University with the name Circle U. By 2025, Circle U. is an inclusive, research-intensive and interdisciplinary European university. Students, staff and partners from civil society, businesses and the public sector collaborate to jointly develop competencies and solutions for keeping Europe and our planet healthy, peaceful, democratic and prosperous.

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