

Press Release – 17 May 2009

LERU welcomes new Secretary-General on 1 July

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) has appointed Professor Kurt Deketelaere as its new Secretary-General during the LERU Rectors' Assembly at the K.U.Leuven on 17 May 2009. On the first of July he will take over the reins from Dr. David Livesey, who will retire after four years of stellar service.

"I am delighted to take up this position and hope to meet the expectations of the LERU members! After five years in politics, this great European academic challenge feels like coming home", says Deketelaere, who will serve a renewable five-year term.

In his capacity as Secretary-General, Deketelaere plans to emphasize the need to maintain or increase the volume, effectiveness and efficiency of public and private investment in research and development (R&D) and in innovation. Neither governments nor industry should reduce their R&D spending as a means of cutting costs during the present economic crisis. On the contrary, investments in R&D and innovation can give a serious boost to sustainable development, job creation and the economy as a whole. As recent figures show, the EU has allocated over the past two years, in the framework of its 7th R&D framework program, 44% of the budget for collaborative research to interdisciplinary research such as environment, energy, agriculture, transport, nanotechnologies, ICT, supporting the EU's renewed sustainable development strategy.

Born in Belgium in 1966, Kurt Deketelaere is full Professor of Environmental and Energy Law at the K.U.Leuven and Honorary Professor of Climate Change Law at the University of Dundee. He was until now Chief of Staff of the Cabinet of Mrs. Hilde Crevits, Minister for Public Works, Energy, Environment and Nature in the Flemish Regional Government of Belgium. From 2004 until 2007, he served as principal legal advisor in the same Cabinet under Mr. Kris Peeters, who was then Minister and now Minister-President of the Flemish Regional Government. In both positions, Kurt played a crucial role in the reform of the Flemish environmental and energy policy and legislation, laying the foundations of a balanced and appropriate environmental and energy policy, within a European framework.

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Notes for editors

Mission statement: The League of European Research Universities is an association of 20 leading research-intensive universities sharing the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research. Founded in 2002, LERU advocates education through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding; the creation of new knowledge through basic research, which is the ultimate source of innovation in society; and the promotion of research across a broad front, in partnership with industry and society at large.

For more information on LERU or to arrange an interview, contact Katrien Maes at the LERU Office at +32 (0)16 32 09 04.

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University of Cambridge
University of Edinburgh
Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg
Université de Genève
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg
Helsingin yliopisto (University of Helsinki)
Universiteit Leiden

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