



Maastricht University

Campus Brussels

2020-21 Activity Report

Campus Brussels

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1. Introduction

Welcome to Campus Brussels' latest annual activity report. This is the first report that we have the pleasure to present to you after succeeding Prof. Dr. Christine Neuhold as co-directors of Campus Brussels in September 2020. In this edition, we look back at an academic year that has been definitely unconventional, but also decidedly transformative for Maastricht University's Brussels hub – a year of challenges, opportunities, and new ways of working.

We have missed having Campus Brussels' premises buzzing with UM staff, students, alumni, and (inter)national partners; we are eager to fully reopen our doors to the public and while retaining the benefits of new technologies, to return to the more human face-to-face dimension of our work life.

The Campus Brussels building may have been largely closed, but the Campus has not stood still. We have taken the time to both take stock and to begin organising our own activities, in addition to supporting UM and our Faculties with their activities in Brussels. This makes the present annual report somewhat different from those that precede it: you will find the usual activities that we have supported and, in addition, some of the actions that we have initiated such as our '[compendium of research outputs](#)', the new podcast series '[Stories from Brussels](#)' the '[What's up, EU?](#)' talks, the implementation of the [RELAY project](#), or our actions within the YERUN and UnLiON networks.

We hope that you find them inspiring and do encourage you to reach out to us with your ideas for activities in Brussels. We also want to highlight that there are opportunities for members of the UM community, irrespective of their field of work. While traditionally the Campus has been predominantly used by those who study Europe from a political, legal, historical, and cultural point of view, organising activities in Brussels can also be beneficial to members of the UM community who work on issues and challenges that aren't only about Europe but are high on the European agenda, such as sustainability, digital transformations, and public health.



 Stories from Brussels





This has also been the last full academic year during which Campus Brussels has been led by Prof. Dr. Martin Paul, who will leave UM in October. In the last decade, the Campus has developed under Prof. Paul's leadership as president of the UM Executive Board – we would like to thank him for the continued ideas, encouragement, and support that have characterised his mandate and without which the Campus could not have spread its wings. The report features a farewell interview with Prof. Paul in which we look back and reflect on the role of Campus Brussels within UM – do check it out!

As we look ahead to new developments, the Campus will work towards a renewed strategy in synergy with UM's new internationalisation and Europe strategies. To co-create our strategy together with the UM community we serve, we have already been consulting widely within UM about how to best continue adding value from Brussels. We are grateful to those who have taken time to think along with us and, as we embark on a new phase in the life of the Campus, we are delighted to continue our work under Prof. Dr. Rianne Letschert's vision when she takes UM's presidential office in November.

We invite you to read the report and look forward to seeing you either virtually or, hopefully, in person in the coming months. If you're looking to organise an activity in Brussels, be sure to book our meeting rooms and services well in advance – the EU capital is picking up the pace!



Maastricht University (UM) Campus Brussels is UM's very own representation in the capital of the European Union (EU). It functions as an **inter-faculty hub for education, research, knowledge transfer, and networking** activities in the framework of UM's **internationalisation** strategy. Campus Brussels is available to use for all UM staff and students. Non-commercial activities related to education, research and knowledge transfer of UM can make use of Campus Brussels free of charge.



Campus Brussels' facilities comprise three equipped **meeting rooms** – one for ca. 60 and two for ca. 25 people, which are there to be used for events by the UM community.

The Campus also provides **staff support** when organising online and on-site activities, from event planning and implementation (e.g. programme design, speaker search, registration management, coordination with local suppliers, promotion, etc.) to monitoring EU policy and funding developments of interest to the university.

You can find out more about our **services here**.

Maastricht Room



Brussels Room

2. People matters

The Campus Brussels Team



**Tatiana
Caftea**
Events Officer



**Fèlix
Ruiz Cabré**
Policy Officer



**Corina
Costinas**
Events Officer



**Melissa
Beltgens**
Operations &
Communications
Manager



**Mariolina
Eliantonio**
Director



**Paul
Stephenson**
Associate
Director

How to get in touch?

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Call us at **+31 43 388 4383**

Visit us at **Avenue de Tervueren 153, 1150, Brussels, Belgium**

The Campus Brussels Board



Prof. Dr. Christine Neuhold
Chair of the Board



Prof. Dr. Mathieu Segers
Representative of Studio Europa



Prof. Dr. Martin Paul
Representative of the Executive Board



Dr. Stefan Straetmans
Co-Representative of SBE



Prof. Henry Otgaar
Representative of FPN



Dr. Annemarie Koster
Representative of FHML



Prof. Dr. Rachel Pownall
Co-Representative of SBE



Dr. Hylke Dijkstra
Representative of FASoS



Prof. Dr. Jos Welie
Representative of FSE

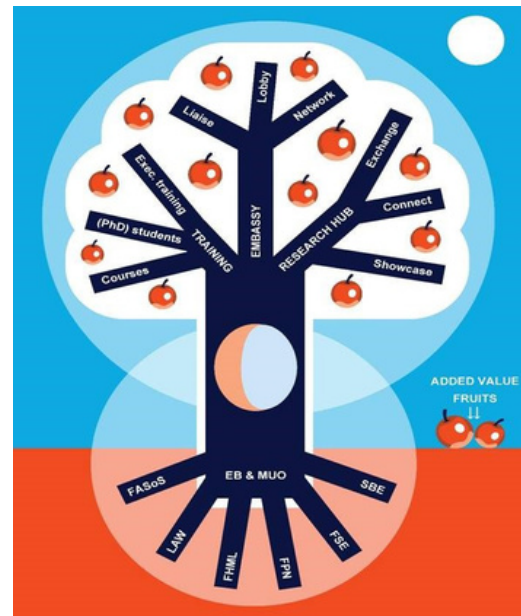


Prof. Dr. Marjan Peeters
Representative of Law

3. Campus Brussels Mission

Campus Brussels was founded in 2010 with the mission to add value to Maastricht University (UM)'s three core missions: **Education**, **Research**, and **Knowledge Transfer**. It is a bottom-up success that has grown organically, fostered by the interest of the UM community in exploiting the opportunities created by UM's field station in the heart of Europe.

The Campus creates opportunities that would not be possible without a strong presence in the European capital. This is achieved through the Campus' own **three functions**, which are intimately linked to UM's triple mission: **Teaching and Training**, **Research Community Hub**, and **UM Embassy**.



The work of the Campus is illustrated with the “**Campus Brussels tree**”. The Campus is “rooted” in Maastricht and nourished by the Faculties, the Executive Board, and Maastricht University Office. It then flourishes in Brussels and produces “**added-value fruits**” that are directly brought back to UM. As such, this highlights the direct added value of the Campus that feeds into the university’s missions. This added value comes in the form of increasing quality of education and research through discussions and exchanges, supporting network expansion, enhancing visibility in Brussels, and enabling more opportunities for collaboration vis-à-vis international academic and policy-oriented stakeholders.

The tree shows how **Campus Brussels brings together the entire university**. Everyone within the UM community – students, alumni, researchers, educators, support staff, (inter)national partners – across disciplines can benefit from using its facilities, and can contribute to its further development. As the ambitions laid out in the Campus Brussels Strategic Plan 2017-2022 are being realised, preparations are underway to draft the Campus’ future strategic programme. The new programme will be presented in the framework of UM’s strategy as the European University of the Netherlands. The whole community has been invited to participate in the process, and we encourage you to come to us with your ideas on how you think UM’s representation in Brussels can best continue to add value in the years to come. Help us help you!

4. A conversation with Prof. Dr. Martin Paul on a decade full of developments



"Being in Brussels gives you access to the European Commission, the European Parliament, NGOs, etc. Talking to people is very different from doing it at a distance. It really makes a difference."

Prof. Dr. Martin Paul
President UM

Mariolina Eliantonio (ME): Thank you very much Professor Paul for taking the time to be with us today and to reflect on your role as a leading figure, not only for Maastricht University (UM) as a whole, but also for our Campus Brussels in particular.

Campus Brussels is commemorating its tenth anniversary. We were unable to celebrate it in style due to the pandemic, but we would still like to look back over these ten years. Did you think that the campus would expand as much as it has today, and that it would come to have this important role in UM policy?

Martin Paul (MP): No. Like many things we do here at UM, it was an experiment. But if you don't try, you never find out. And it turned out to be a great success to have a campus in Brussels because it really fits with our profile.

ME: The Campus Brussels team currently consists of four employees. We have a policy officer, a communications and operations manager, and two event officers. The team has professionalised over the years and acquired new skills so as to cater for the evolving needs of the UM community. When we started, as you will remember, recent UM graduates carried out internships at UM Campus Brussels. Could you share some memories with us from the time when interns were hired and how also they contributed to the growth of the campus?

Reflecting on ten years of developments with Prof. Dr. Martin Paul

MP: That goes back to the early days of the Campus. One of the reasons to establish it was for it to serve as a UM embassy and as a place for our graduates. There are a lot of them working in Brussels after they finish their studies in Maastricht.

We also thought it was a good idea to offer the campus as a platform to acquire work experience in the Brussels bubble, much as we have an academic workspace in the hospital. Why not also do it for the European environment?

This was very successful because every one of these interns got fantastic jobs afterwards in European organisations. It was wonderful for their career opportunities, and it also reflects the grassroots experience of the campus.



Later on, as you mentioned, with more volume and more professionalism, we also had to hire permanent staff. But the mix of having UM students involved as interns generated the capacity and great atmosphere we have at Campus Brussels.

ME: And what do you think is the strategic advantage for UM of having a physical presence in Brussels?

MP: As you know, our new strategic programme is called The European University of the Netherlands. We have many European programmes both in research and education. Our graduates are really present in Brussels. On many levels, it's a logical choice.

The Campus gives us a certain image and visibility in the European context, and it really contributed to many successful activities. I also think about the European networks that we formed or the European research grants that we received.

Reflecting on ten years of developments with Prof. Dr. Martin Paul

And really the Campus' three pillars create a very lively community - as a center for education, as a research hub and as an embassy, also for our graduates. That's why our university is so unique in this context.

ME: You have mentioned a number of Europe-related initiatives. How do you see the synergies between them and Campus Brussels?

MP: The Campus offers an added element to UM's European activities. For example, masterclasses or students who can do site visits there.

And if you talk about European policy, European politics, European development... being in Brussels gives you access to the European Commission, the European Parliament, NGOs, etc. Talking to people is very different from doing it at a distance. It really makes a difference.



Campus Brussels is very important and creates an added benefit to many of Maastricht University's activities that are geared towards Europe.

ME: The Campus had a full lineup of events for the whole year 2020, but in March 2020 we had to close our doors due to the pandemic. We are only now starting to welcome again members of the UM community. What are your thoughts on what will be the future of events both in and out of the Campus?

MP: I still refuse to call it 'the new normal'. What is normal anymore? The pandemic has of course affected our thinking throughout not only in our university, but in many institutions.

We have to adapt to that, which the Campus has done. For example by installing more audiovisual equipment to organise online events. My personal view on this is that the future is going to be hybrid.

Reflecting on ten years of developments with Prof. Dr. Martin Paul

You probably have to play around a bit more with having some people in the room, having some people online to create a new togetherness. That's the challenge that many of us face.

It's a benefit to have Campus Brussels in Brussels and not in a virtual space. Because that generates authenticity and also accessibility, and I think the mix between the two will be essential, so it's not a monoculture.

ME: Swinging now from the future to the past. Professor Paul, what has been your most memorable experience of the Campus?

MP: It was the events and meetings that we had when we created the YUFE Alliance. The Young Universities for the Future of Europe alliance, which is now funded by the European Commission.



Reflecting on ten years of developments with Prof. Dr. Martin Paul

It was wonderful to be at Campus Brussels with colleagues from other universities, all in the same spirit. I remember very well that we did this in the room where we have a painting signed by all heads of state from the Maastricht conference where the Maastricht Treaty was negotiated. It's also the spirit in this room that helped us to really bond together as representatives of ten European universities. This was something that is still very memorable for me and has a special place in my heart.

ME: Truly in line with our ambitions of being The European university of the Netherlands.

MP: Certainly. That does mean UM is exclusively the only university with a European focus, but we can put forward many arguments as to why we are indeed the European university. Campus Brussels is one of the very unique points that we offer.

ME: a final question, looking again at the future. What would be your tip for the new president that will take over the Campus Brussels portfolio?

MP: I know the new president of the university very well [laughs]. I know that she is also very committed to the European dimension. I will just say: keep in contact and appreciate and support the good work that the Campus Brussels team is doing.

I'm quite optimistic for the future. The Campus will be an essential part also under a new leadership of this university. It should be that way.

ME: Professor Paul, we come to the end of this interview. We wish to thank you again for all your support to the campus throughout these years. And of course from all of us at the Campus, we wish you the best for your next career step.

MP: Thank you very much. I will remain a UM Campus Brussels alumnus to stay in touch with you and watch your successes from a distance. Thank you.

5. Campus Brussels in times of Covid-19

Campus Brussels is known for being buzzing with activities and events throughout the year. UM researchers, staff and international partners, students, alumni use the Campus as a meeting point.

The pandemic may have brought our cherished face-to-face interactions to a temporary halt, but the work continued online and behind the scenes.

Adapted to the new 'normal'

- Most of our policy, communication, and events work took place online
- Trained our staff to support online and hybrid events
- Upgraded our infrastructure to meet the evolving needs of the UM community

Supported UM staff & students living in Belgium



Implemented a workplan full of new initiatives

For example:

- Carried out a proactive outreach campaign to the UM Community
- Started a podcast series
- Edited research dissemination videos
- Organised virtual info sessions on EU policy
- Designed field trips for staff and students to Brussels
- Launched an academic co-working space

6. Activity overview and highlights

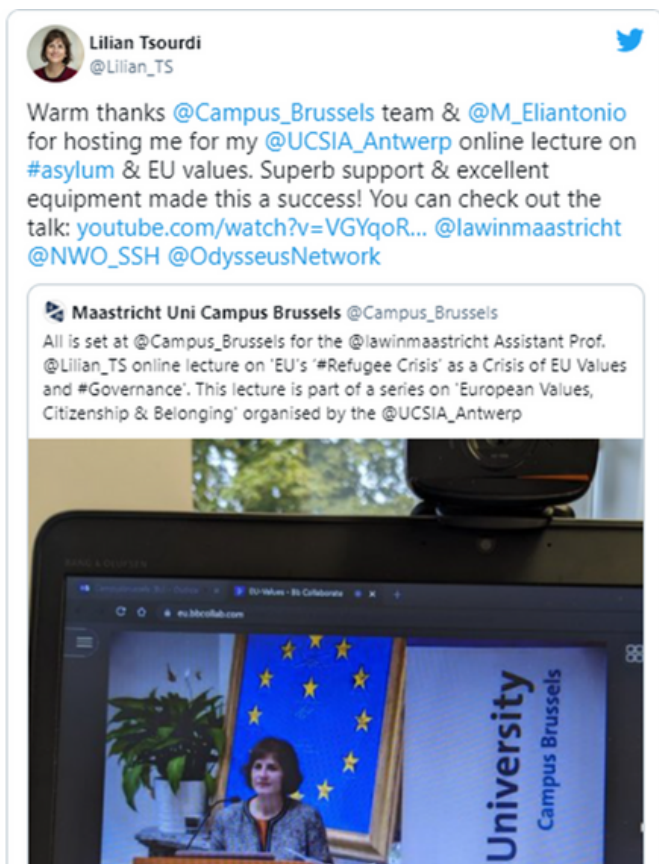
Since its inception, Campus Brussels has been supporting the many activities that the UM Faculties and community organise in the European capital. In recent years, the Campus has also been strengthening its role in communicating about UM and representing the university in European Union policy circles. The pandemic has facilitated a third development: to some extent, the cancellation of events has also been a blessing in disguise as it freed up staff capacity to both take stock and plan ahead, allowing the Campus to begin initiating own activities to support the UM community in addition to its traditional facilitator role.

This annual report is therefore slightly different from previous ones: it contains highlights about the activities organised by the faculties and community, and in addition, an overview of those launched by Campus Brussels.

6.1. Teaching and Training

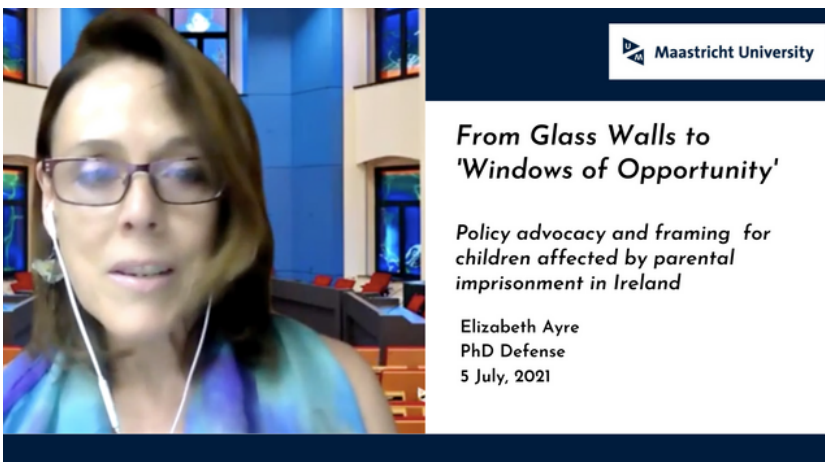
Continued supporting UM education

During the most difficult weeks of lockdown, Campus Brussels put its infrastructure at the disposal of UM educators based in Belgium to deliver remote lectures and trainings.





Thanks to the new equipment available in the meeting rooms, the Campus also hosted **hybrid trainings** such as a new edition of the now-traditional Data Protection Officer certification course organised by UM's **European Centre for Privacy and Cybersecurity** (ECPC). Including communications material such as a dedicated brochure and logo for UM staff to make use of.



Part-time PhD programme temporarily moves online

The Campus Brussels **[part-time PhD programme for professionals in European Studies, led by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences](#)**, continued online!

This year, we interviewed three of the recent graduates, where you can **[read their reflections on pursuing a PhD alongside a job](#)**, and on how the flexibility offered by programme hosted by Campus Brussels has contributed to making this possible.

And, if you're curious, **[here is the list of researchers currently enrolled and the topics they are working on](#)**. These programmes also allow UM to tap into a rich network of policy professionals.



"Student Forum Maastricht (SFM) looks back on five years of fruitful cooperation with the Brussels Campus, which is vital for our student-run foundation as we are based in Maastricht, but host our conferences in the Belgian capital.

The Campus is therefore the ideal link to realise this undertaking and we are immensely glad to call the Campus a reliable partner of ours. Without its support, SFM would surely not be the same as we profit from its outreach, network of contacts as well as the immediate proximity to the European institutions and experts.

SFM highly values the expertise and know-how the Brussels Campus provides each year, which makes us only wish for continued cooperation in the future.'

Annika Kirfel, UM Alumna
Former HR Manager, Student Forum Maastricht

Student activities

The Campus regularly supports students who organise activities in Brussels or who reach out for contacts and advice for their research and future professional life.

While most student activities in Brussels were halted, the 2021 edition of Student Forum Maastricht (SFM) was still opened from Campus Brussels. SFM is a yearly one-week problem-based learning (PBL) policy conference organised by UM students in collaboration with UM academics and external experts. At the end of the conference, students produce policy proposals about topical issues that cover a diverse range of policy fields. Campus Brussels is the proud host of this excellent cross-faculty student initiative.

We commend the organising team for being able to put together a successful online edition and look forward to welcoming SFM again for a face-to-face edition in 2022!





"The evening reception at Campus Brussels with programme alumni really made our Brussels trip. After a visit of the institutions it was wonderful to be able to bring current and former students together for an informal gathering. The table set-up enabled students to have conversations with our graduates in small groups and get tips on how to promote themselves when looking for a job"

Dr. Hylke Dijkstra
 Director of Studies, MA European Studies

Field trips for students

Campus Brussels has long been supporting UM faculties with organising field trips to Brussels. These trips give students the opportunity to gain professional insights from a multiple range of policy-oriented organisations based in the EU capital, many of which employ UM alumni and are future employers. Such trips can also include social and cultural elements, making them a great instrument to improve group dynamics, especially in small programmes.

In 2020-21, the Campus engaged in a comprehensive round of consultations with programme directors from all UM Faculties. As a result of the positive discussions, Campus Brussels will from the next academic year offer not only to support programme directors, but also to design the field trips as well as make all the practical arrangements on behalf of programme directors to ensure everything runs smoothly, from meetings with speakers to hotels reservations and museum visits. [You can find more information on the Campus Brussels website.](#)



6.2. Research Community Hub



'To organise the third edition of the online Zoom Psychology and Law Symposium, we asked Campus Brussels for their professional support.'

One of the main reasons to ask the Campus was because they have a wealth of experience in hosting international symposia and, hence, could help us with the organisation. Our experience with the Campus was very positive: they supported us through all stages of the event, from designing a webpage to providing technical support on the day of the symposium.'

I wholeheartedly recommend everyone to contact Campus Brussels when they plan to organise a conference or meeting.'

Prof. Dr. Henny Otgaar
Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience

Continued supporting UM research events

Campus Brussels provides both infrastructure and support for UM researchers use of to organise meetings, from discussing work in progress to disseminating and showcasing research findings to a European and international audience.

The Campus is also a useful platform for preparing research bids for EU funding programmes, making it easier to share ideas with EU policy-makers and international project partners thanks to its strategic location. In addition, the Campus infrastructure can be included in project proposals as a venue in which to hold kick-off, midterm review, and project conclusion meetings - a definite added value for EU-funded projects.

During the lockdown, Campus Brussels continued supporting UM researchers with their events, both online and in hybrid format. The Campus staff trained to provide services better suited to digital formats. For example, support with Zoom webinars, promotional and summary videos are now a breeze and just some of the many new services offered by the Campus.



Compendium of selected research events

As the Campus celebrated its 10-year anniversary, we took the opportunity to look back at research events held in recent years. We asked UM researchers about whether their research outputs benefitted from the events they organised at Campus Brussels, and we received an overwhelmingly positive response!

As a result, we published a compendium with a selection of research events to emphasise the added value of organising research activities in Brussels supported by the Campus' team and infrastructure. You can [download a digital copy on the UM Campus Brussels website](#). We invite everyone in the UM research community to read it and hope that it will inspire many future activities at the Campus!

Academic co-working space

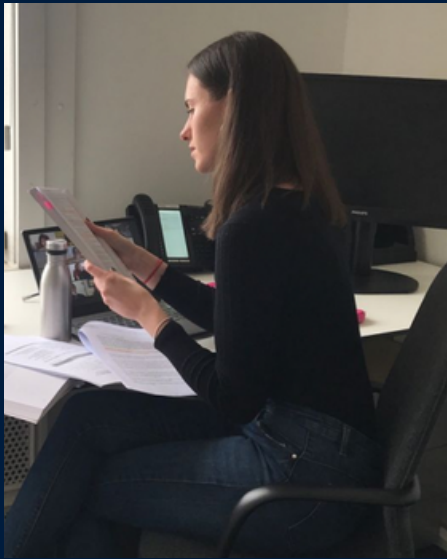
UM researchers have long been finding their way to Campus Brussels for a place in which to work quietly in between meetings in Brussels or research interviews. As Campus Brussels has seen an increase in demand for working spaces, we are launching an academic co-working space!

We are making more flexible office space available for all researchers who need it, free of charge. You can find out more [here](#).



Academic Coworking Space





Dr. Ilaria Piovesan
Faculty of Law

"The UM Campus in Brussels, and the fantastic colleagues who run it, were my saviours when some street works left me with unstable internet at home for almost two weeks. Initially, I only planned to use the premises on the days in which I was teaching, but then I felt so at home that I started coming to the Campus even just to prepare my classes or to read.

And even after the internet came back, I kept coming to the Campus regularly: being in a quiet space with a fast and reliable internet connection, having a printer and a great coffee machine at my disposal really improved my productivity, my concentration and my ability to teach comfortably without having to worry about things such as my neighbours playing loud music or an unexpected landlord visit."

UM Embassy

Continued engagement in EU affairs and policy

Throughout the pandemic, Campus Brussels has remained actively engaged in European Union (EU) affairs and policy matters to speak on behalf of UM as well as ensure that the community is kept informed of relevant developments.

This has been a particularly trepidant year for EU policy as Horizon Europe, the new research and innovation investment programme 2021-2027, was being finalised and launched alongside the European Union's budget for the same period. The EU is also preparing a renewal of the European Research Area (ERA) and the European Education Area (EEA) that are the cornerstone of the EU strategy on the future of universities. Campus has been closely following them.

"As funding advisor to the Faculty of Science and Engineering, I very much appreciate the regular information flow coming from the Brussels Campus. Through the Campus, the funding advisors receive new information on upcoming Horizon Europe consultations, updated work packages, or opportunities for collaboration, amongst other things. This helps me stay up to date with developments in Brussels, and I can then share relevant information with FSE researchers.

Also, in 2021 I participated in a (hybrid) meeting on research funding opportunities organised by an FSE researcher hosted by the Brussels Campus. The infrastructure and support present at the Campus greatly contributed to making the day a success – and we are now working on an EU project proposal based on the discussions that day."

Dr Eva Rijkers
Research policy & funding advisor
Faculty of Science and Engineering



YERUN

Campus Brussels is Maastricht University's representative within the Policy Platform of the Young European Research Universities (YERUN) network, the umbrella organisation through which UM responds to many EU policy developments alongside other like-minded universities. As member of YERUN's Policy Platform, in 2020-2021, Campus Brussels actively participated in drafting these publications, also with the input of colleagues throughout UM (click to access them):

27.11.2020

The new European Research Area Communication through the eyes of young universities

30.06.2021

The Future Starts Today!

Inspiring initiatives from Young European Research Universities

02.07.2021

From Talent to Societal Impact: An Evolutionary Journey for Universities

20.07.2021

The new Pact for Research and Innovation (R&I) in Europe: what next? YERUN's reflection on the future European Research Area (ERA) Governance

Campus Brussels has also been in close contact with the YERUN office to provide input for EU stakeholder consultations launched by the European Commission. Reacting to and being actively engaged in EU policy discussions allows UM to keep abreast of developments and to raise our university's voice on issues of importance that affect our community.

UnLiON

Campus Brussels is also a member of UnLiON, the network of Brussels-based university liaison offices. UnLiON is an informal network of 50 offices representing 156 excellent universities based in Europe, Japan and Russia. It functions as an arena of exchange where participants share information, nurture collaboration, and act as information multipliers towards the represented organisations. Currently, Campus Brussels is co-managing the network as part of its secretariat.

Thanks to Campus Brussels' active participation in UnLiON, UM has had early access to EU funding and policy information that has allowed the university to be better prepared for the future. The network has also organised a myriad of events on a wide range of issues from navigating Brexit to brokerage activities for our researchers.



The Campus also coordinated the organisation of UnLiON's 2020 annual event, in which university executives publicly discussed the latest EU policy developments with EU officials and elected representatives, including members of the European Parliament Milan Zver (Erasmus+ rapporteur) and Cristian Silviu Buşoi (Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research, and Energy), Jean-Pierre Bourguignon (president ad interim of the European Research Council), and high-ranking European Commission representatives. The video and a summary of the conference can be retrieved [here](#).

This public conference was complemented by a closed-doors meeting between UnLiON executives and the current Trio presidencies of the Council of the European Union (Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia) to discuss their shared agenda for education, research, and innovation until the end of 2021 and how it will affect universities.



NTNU EUROPEAN CONFERENCE 2020

18 January 2021

#Knowledge4EU

In Collaboration with




Knowledge for a Better World:
The need for Sustainability and Collaboration in a disruptive age



Anne Borg
Rector, NTNU



Kumsal Bayazit
Chief Executive
Officer, Elsevier



Themis Christophidou
Director General
for Education, Youth,
Sport and Culture,
European Commission



Jean-Eric Paquet
Director-General for
Research and
Innovation, European
Commission



Armand Sánchez
Vice-Rector for Research
and Transference,
Universitat Autònoma de
Barcelona



Erik Renström
Rector electus, Lund
University



Bjarne Foss
Pro-Rector for Research,
NTNU



Martin Paul
President of Maastricht
University and the Chair
of YUFE Alliance



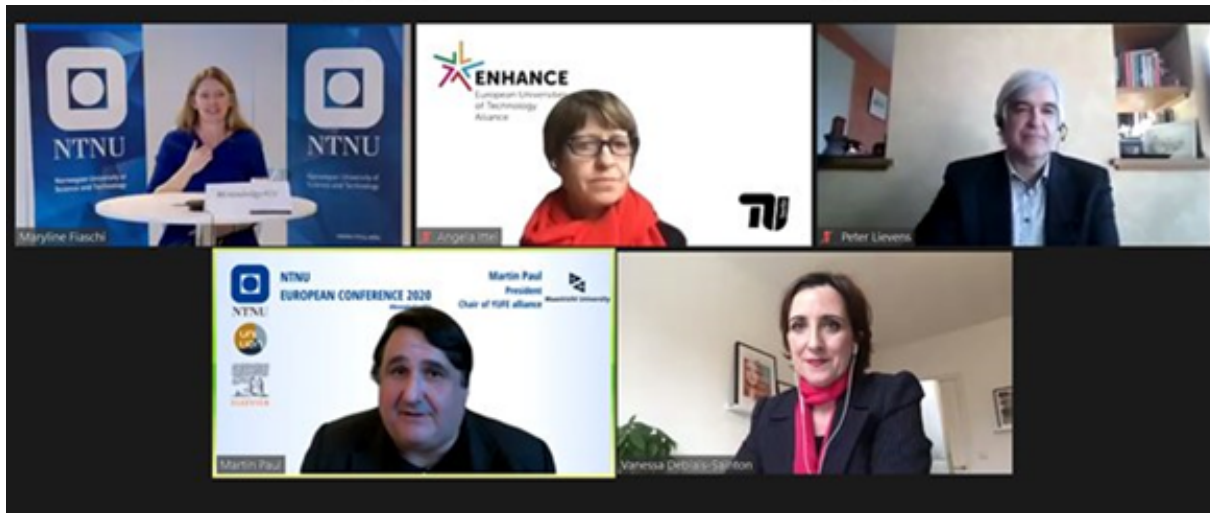
Angela Ittel
Vice President
ENHANCE, TU Berlin



Peter Lievens
Vice Rector of International Policy and
LERU, Alumni Policy, UNA Europa, KU
Leuven



Maryline Fiaschi
Managing Director,
Science | Business



Through the Campus' contacts within the network, UM was also featured in the Norwegian University of Science and Technology's (NTNU, Norway's largest university) annual conference, in which president Martin Paul discussed alongside high-level speakers about how Maastricht University, through YUFE, will increase collaboration and impact across Europe.

[Here you can find more news about the activities organised by the network.](#) Please send Campus Brussels a message if you'd like to be kept updated about future uniLION initiatives.

Implementation of RELAY Jean Monnet project

At the end of the last academic year, Campus Brussels received the excellent news that it had been awarded Erasmus+ funding for the RELAY Jean Monnet project. This two-year project coordinated by the Campus builds on cross-faculty expertise while involving many UM initiatives (e.g. YUFE, Studio Europa, BISS, MSI) and partners.

RELAY aims at discussing the European Commission's political guidelines with a diverse array of stakeholders. In 2020-21, Campus Brussels coordinated the implementation of the first year of the project. Four events were organised: a kick-off conference and three thematic workshops out of which working papers are being published. Below you can find more details, video recordings, and [working papers](#) about each of the conferences organised thus far:

- 4 December 2020. ['Europa', what are the main challenges that you are facing?](#)
- 5 January 2021: [A European Green Deal](#)
- 12 April 2021: [An Economy that Works for the People: Beyond Brexit and Covid-19](#)
- 17 June 2021: [A digital Europe that benefits all](#)



An Economy that Works for the People: Beyond Brexit and Covid-19

by Christine Neuhold and Félix Ruiz Cabré



Prof. Dr. Christine Neuhold, Chair of the UM Campus Brussels Board and coordinator of the RELAY project, wrote an article together with Fèlix Ruiz Cabré, Policy Officer at UM Campus Brussels, about the European Commission's headline ambition 'An economy that works for people'. The article was featured in the annual report of [Dublin City University's Brexit Institute](#), where it can be read in full (pp. 32-34).



What's up, EU? talk series

Campus Brussels launched the 'What's up, EU?' talk series dedicated to learning and discussing about issues that are high on the European Union (EU) agenda. The launch of this initiative is not coincidental. It comes at a time of UM's reinforced commitment to its role as the European university of the Netherlands, in the framework of increasingly important EU initiatives in education, research, and innovation.

With this in mind, the aim of the 'What's up, EU?' talk series is to inform UM about developments in and around EU policy, with a focus on issues that closely affect universities, and invite the UM community to reflect about how these developments may impact them.

Two 'What's up, EU?' talks have been organised so far, one on research and one on education in EU policy. During the talk on research, we discussed gender equality in Horizon Europe with Ms Mina Andreeva, Head of Sector – Gender at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. During the talk on education, we invited Jakub Grodecki, the Vice-president of the European Students' Union, to tell us about the EU policy developments that the ESU is closely following and how students can get involved. Both talks were recorded and are available on the ['What's up, EU?' webpage](#).

Stay tuned for more! If you're interested in participating in one of these events, either as an attendant or as a speaker, please get in touch with Campus Brussels!



"In order to get better acquainted with the 'Brussels scene' in terms of funding opportunities, a 24 person delegation of the SBE management and board visited Brussels, incl. the UM Brussels Campus and the European Parliament. In the morning, the Campus provided excellent facilities to host speakers from DG RTD and EASSH.

Additionally, lunch was provided at the Campus, followed by a brainstorming session in several small groups. In the afternoon, the group strolled to the European Parliament for a guided tour and the - very successful- day ended with dinner at a nice Brussels restaurant."

Raymunde Neven
Senior Consultant EU Grants
School of Business and Economics

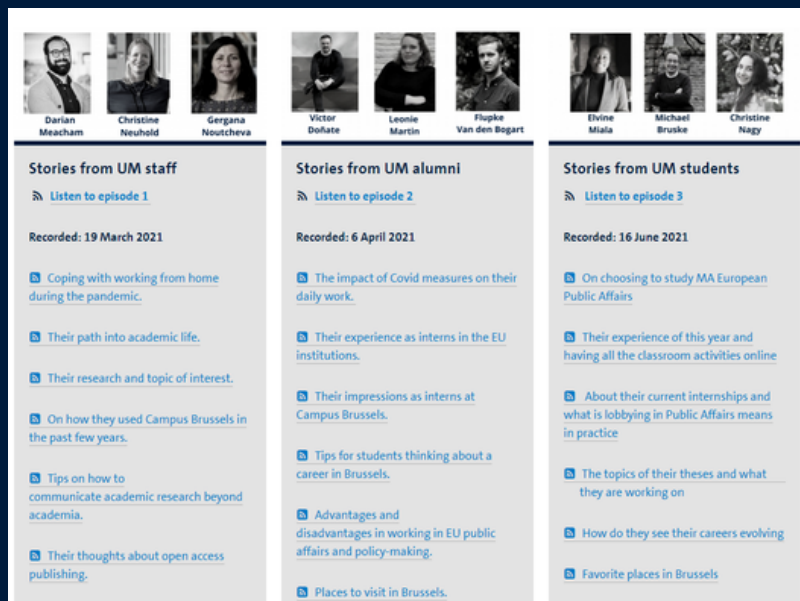
Field trips for UM staff

Capitalising on the extensive network of partners that Campus Brussels has developed over the past decade, and inspired by successful experiences in the past, the Campus has launched the possibility to host and organise Brussels trips for staff. Concepts for different types of field trips were created alongside with an awareness campaign aimed at UM faculties. A targeted survey was made and sent out in order to tailor-make the concepts to meet requirements. This process included the design and creation of a promotional video, webpage creation, announcements in faculty newsletters and meetings held by UM Campus Brussels directors together with heads of departments from different faculties.

Staff trips can for example take the form of an **interfaculty day** to foster synergies across UM (e.g. a day away for all communication officers of all faculties), a **team building trip** ('heidag') for your department, or a **pressure cooker meeting** (deep-impact meetings designed to attain specific goals). Campus Brussels will assist in format design, identify and arrange potential speakers, coordinate transport and accommodation, liaise with local partners, and so on.



[Visit the webpage here](#)



Podcast series 'Stories from Brussels'

The past year has been one of change for the entire UM community: students, staff, and alumni. To keep the community spirit alive, Campus Brussels has launched the podcast series **'Stories from Brussels'** to connect people from different UM communities in order to share personal experiences on what it's like to live and work in Brussels. The first episodes are dedicated to how members of the community with a strong connection to Brussels have experienced the pandemic.

Tune in as we chat informally with UM researchers, alumni and students about what they are working on, how they have adapted, and how they see the future on the UM Campus Brussels website.

Listen to the three episodes below.



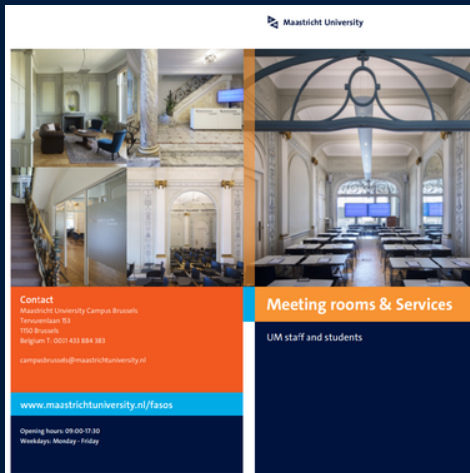
Episode 1
Stories from UM staff



Episode 2
Stories from UM Alumni



Episode 3
Stories from UM students



Communication campaign: proactive outreach

Campus Brussels has undertaken a communication campaign to inform the UM Community about the possibilities at the Campus and how it can add value to their work.

More than 50 dedicated outreach meetings were organised with different UM internal stakeholders (deans, department heads, graduate school and master programme directors, secretaries, student associations, communications officers, etc.). The UM Campus Brussels team presented the Campus' latest activities, gave a virtual tour for colleagues to get remotely acquainted with the building, answered participants' questions, and discussed their ideas on how Campus Brussels can support them in the future.

In addition to these meetings, promotional material on possibilities at the Campus was further circulated by email, UM News, and all UM Faculties' internal newsletters.

Campus Brussels also wants to highlight that there are opportunities for all researchers and students, irrespective of their field of work. While traditionally the Campus has been predominantly used by those who study Europe from a political, legal, or historical point of view, organising activities in Brussels can also be beneficial to members of the UM community who work on issues and challenges that aren't only about Europe but are high on the European agenda, such as sustainability, digital transformations, and public health.

Highlight: Observant interview

Campus Brussels spoke with the Observant to discuss how the Covid-19 pandemic is affecting Brussels, and what to expect in the near future. The view of the Campus directors is clear: Brussels will soon be full of life again! You can read the interview on the Observant website.

“In Brussel komt straks het leven weer terug, ook op de UM-campus”

08-03-2021

MAASTRICHT/BRUSSEL. Hoe staan de zaken ervoor in Brussel? De campus die de Universiteit Maastricht bestiert op het Montgomeryplein is sinds oktober noodgedwongen op slot – alle activiteiten, zoals gastlezingen en diploma-uitreikingen, zijn digitaal. De Brusselse horeca is op slot, EU-ambtenaren werken thuis. Maar campusdirecteuren Mariolina Eliantonio en Paul Stephenson, die zelf in de stad wonen, zijn optimistisch. “Het leven komt weer terug. De Europese wijk rond het Schumanplein zal niet leeg blijven.”

Highlight: meeting with members of the Maastricht Platform for Community-Engaged research

One of the many meetings that Campus Brussels organised was dedicated to MPCER. They wrote a brief follow-up article that can be consulted [here](#).

 Maastricht University

📅 April 21, 2021 - 2 min read

Lessons learned: Doing (community-engaged) research in Brussels? Consider UM Campus Brussels as your partner

UM Campus Brussels offers a variety of facilities and services to researchers interested in carrying out education and research activities and engaging with the broader community in Brussels.

Contribution to UM's institutional development

Campus Brussels is also engaged in the strategic and institutional development of Maastricht University. As a member of the Strategic Board for Internationalisation and the Europe Strategy Group, the Campus provides a fresh perspective that is driven by the input received in the capital of the EU.

The Campus is now also better embedded in UM's organizational structure. It holds regular meetings with the internationalisation team at Academic Affairs and also participates in the monthly meetings of UM's faculty-based funding advisors to ensure that activities in Brussels are always aligned with strategic interests at home.

Campus Brussels also takes part in grassroots initiatives, and as such is a proud ambassador of Female Empowerment Maastricht (FEM) and plays an active role in the design of the new UM flying policy in the framework of the university's sustainability strategy.

A renewed strategy for Campus Brussels

Campus Brussels is currently operating under its 2017-22 strategic plan. A new strategy is necessary in order to align the strategic goals of Campus Brussels with the new UM framework strategies, focus on further development after the conclusion of the Campus' consolidation phase, and take into account the many developments that have taken place both internally within UM but also externally.

In 2020-21, the process of renewing the strategy was initiated with a phase of 'input collection' from the UM Community, from the Executive Board and the Faculties order to better understand everyone's needs and wishes – from support with events to EU funding/policy monitoring and lobbying. The input was collected through a survey and face-to-face meetings, and largely revolved around how Campus Brussels can best continue adding value.

The strategy will be drafted in the coming academic year under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Rianne Letschert and in close collaboration with Academic Affairs.



7. Looking ahead

We hope that you enjoyed reading this account with highlights of activities that took place in the past year. We are proud that, with the Maastricht University Community's trust and support, we were able to transform the pandemic's challenges into lessons and developments that have contributed to Campus Brussels' further growth and resilience.

As we leave the pandemic behind, we are eagerly awaiting the full re-opening of our doors to colleagues, students, and international partners. Campus Brussels will continue to support the university's ambitions from the EU capital and play a key role to achieve Maastricht University's strategic objectives as 'The European University of the Netherlands' under Prof. Dr. Rianne Letschert's leadership.

In the months ahead, Campus Brussels will launch the design process to renew its strategic plan, finish the implementation of the EU-funded RELAY project, organise new editions of the 'Stories from Brussels' podcast and the 'What's up, EU?' talk series, continue actively representing the university in European networks and EU policy circles, and, most important of all, carry on helping UM lecturers, researchers, and students make their activities in Brussels a success.

We look very much forward to welcoming you to UM's ideal in the EU capital, whether it is to increase your research impact, to offer your courses in Brussels, or to develop your international network!

