



Press release 19.11.2013

LERU appoints new Chair at 25th Rectors' Assembly

Last week the LERU Rectors held their 25th Assembly at the University of Oxford, appointing a successor to Prof. Bernd Huber, President of LMU Munich and current Chair of the LERU Board of Directors and the Rectors' Assembly. After a successful second term Prof. Huber will officially hand over the reins to Prof. Alain Beretz at the end of the next LERU Rectors' Assembly in May at the University of Helsinki.

Prof. Beretz*, President of the University of Strasbourg, is currently a member of the Board of Directors and will become LERU's fourth Chairperson. Prof. Bert van der Zwaan**, Rector Magnificus of Utrecht University, was appointed as a new Board member at the Oxford meeting. Beretz, Van der Zwaan and Prof. Andrew Hamilton, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, will thus constitute the LERU Board of Directors as of 18 May 2014.

At their meeting the Rectors also approved two LERU papers for publication, one on research data and one on innovative practice in doctoral training. Both papers are scheduled to be publicly released before the end of the year and dissemination events will be organised early in 2014.

The Rectors exchanged views with Dr John Bell, Chief of Cabinet with EU Research Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, on EU research policy and on ERA in particular, about which LERU and the EC signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2012.

More information

For questions you may contact Prof. Kurt Deketelaere, Secretary-General of LERU (Tel. +32 499 808 999 – e-mail Kurt.Deketelaere@leru.org).

***Prof. Alain Beretz, President of the Université de Strasbourg**

Professor Beretz graduated in Pharmacy and has been a member of the Pharmacology faculty of the University of Strasbourg since 1990. His research deals with thrombotic disorders, vascular pharmacology and chronic vascular diseases. He was Vice-President in charge of technology transfer, and then President of the Louis Pasteur University in Strasbourg. He was elected in January 2009 as the first president of the University of Strasbourg, resulting from the innovative merger of the three previous universities. The University of Strasbourg is a laureate of the "Operation campus", leading to a €375 million endowment for the improvement of campus buildings, and one of the first three winners of the "Excellence Initiative", a series of competitive calls for projects yielding a total €1.2 billion of endowment. He is one of three members of the Board of Directors of LERU.

****Prof. Bert van der Zwaan, President of Utrecht University**

Since the start of his academic career in 1982, and following the successful completion of his PhD thesis, Bert van der Zwaan has been working at Utrecht and Nijmegen universities in the Netherlands, and has held many positions outside of the academia. Being trained as a paleontologist, his main

research interest involved (paleo)ecology, although already early in his career he participated in many interdisciplinary programs. This led to building an interdisciplinary research group exploring the (at that time) rather unknown area between Biology and Geology. The research of Bert van der Zwaan and his group - composed of geologists (paleontologists and geochemists), microbiologists, ecologists, (paleo)climatologists and modelers - focused on the development of the modern global climate system and co-evolving ecosystems over the past 60 million years. The success of this and other research groups, recognized by the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences, led to the foundation of the Darwin Center for Biogeology of which Bert van der Zwaan became the first scientific director. Bert van der Zwaan has led a substantial number of large scientific programs, has been amongst others lead-writer and quartermaster for the government funded (100 million euro) program Knowledge for Climate, coordinator of the Earth and Sustainability program of Utrecht University and partners in which 1200 scientists participate, chair of the Utrecht Center of Geosciences, and lately coordinator and interim-CEO of the EU/EIT Climate-Knowledge and Innovation Community. In the latter program he has been leading a network of five of Europe's best universities (Utrecht University, Imperial College, ETH, Paris Tech and Berlin/Postdam PIK). The aim of the program is to generate innovation by bringing research-teaching-business together. Through this work he became very interested in the (regional) impact of universities on innovation.

After becoming dean of the Faculty of Geosciences in 2006, he has left the chair of Biogeology at Utrecht University since 1 September 2008 and became completely involved in science management. He was appointed Rector Magnificus of Utrecht University as of 2011.a