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10 years of joint doctorates at KU Leuven; a tale of challenges and exponential growth

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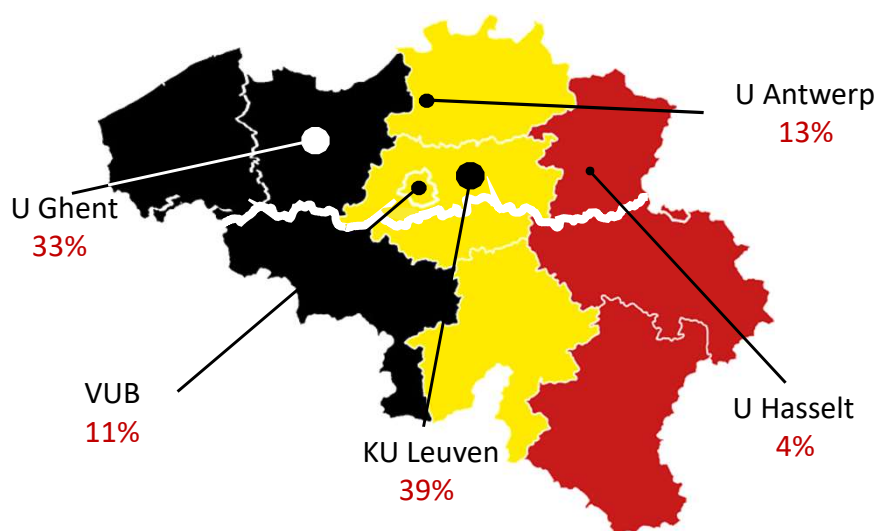
A short intro to KU Leuven

Facts and figures on JD/DD

Challenges & future perspectives

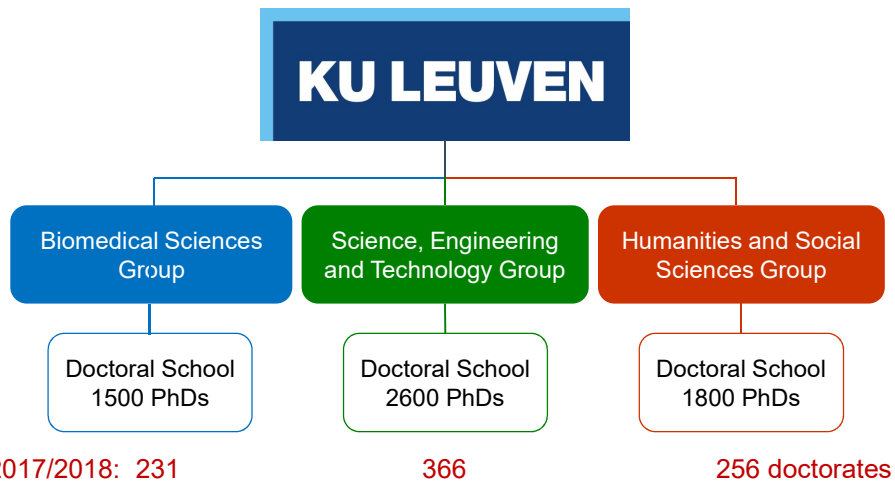
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Flanders has 5 universities and ~2200 PhDs/year



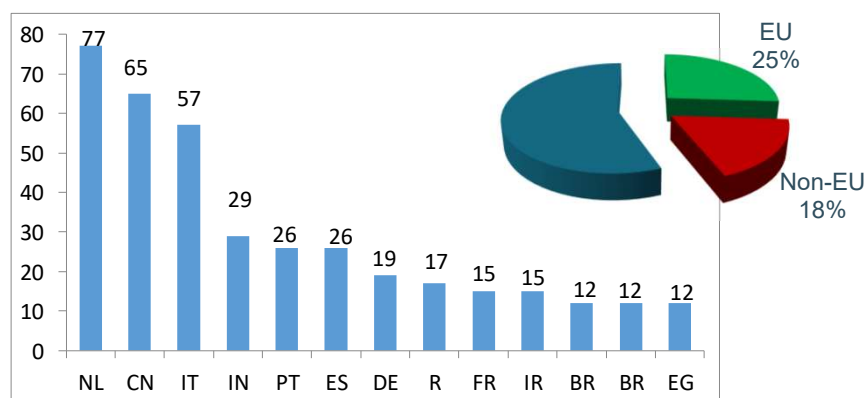
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KU Leuven has 3 groups and 5900 PhD researchers



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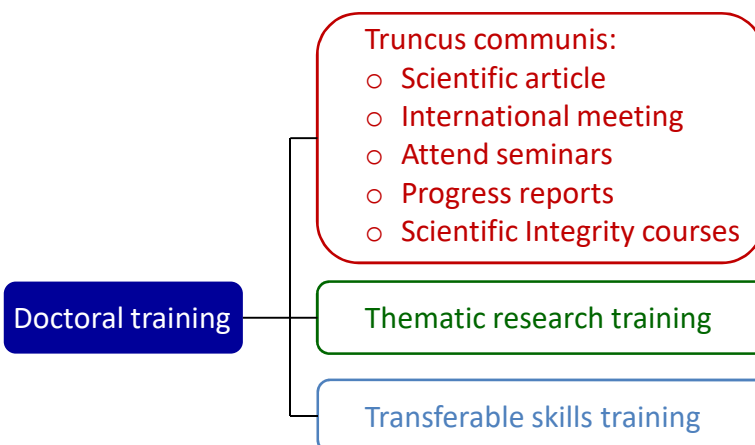
40% of PhD researchers are internationals



Group Biomedical Sciences

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The three components of doctoral training

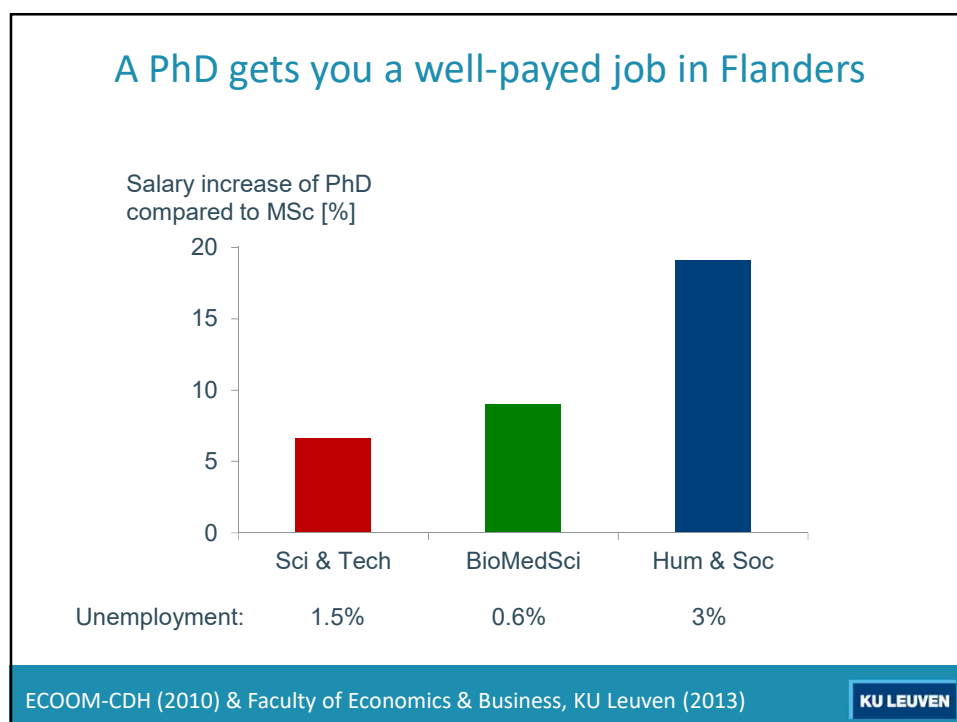
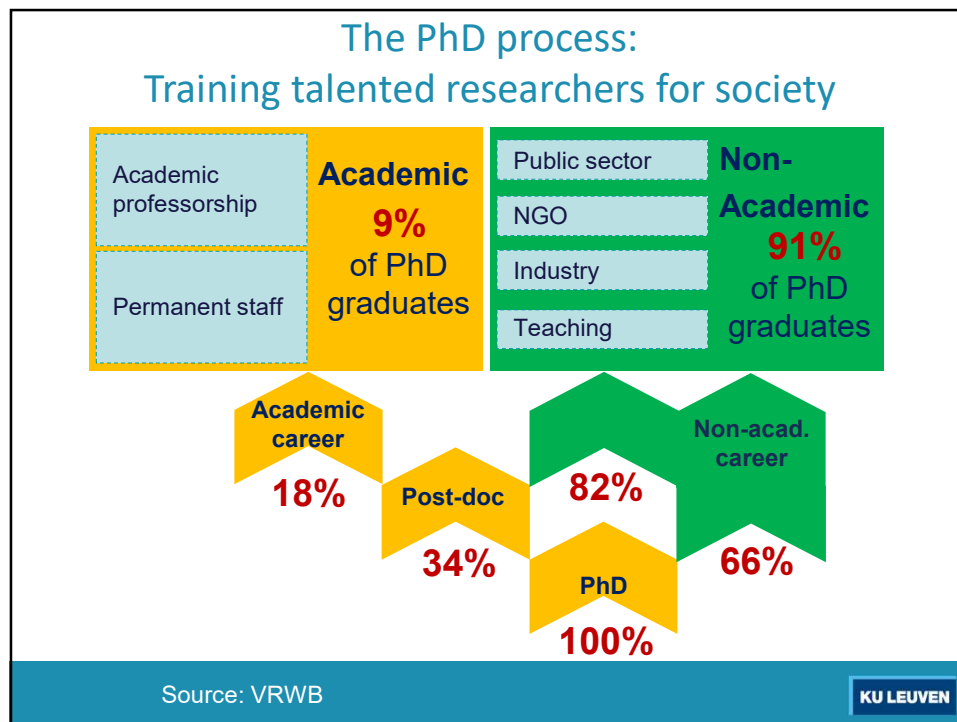


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Yearly progress reports provide independent evaluation by multiple scientists



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What does a joint doctorate at KU Leuven mean?

What are joint and double doctorates?

Joint doctorates:

- A single diploma (printed by main university)
- Obligatory within Flanders
- Preferred (but uncommon) with foreign universities

Double doctorates:

- Two diplomas
- Common with foreign universities (faster)
- Sometimes referred to as cotutelle

What are the basic concepts of JDs/DDs?

- An **intensive** collaboration
- A **main** (lead) university and a **partner** (host) university
- **Doctoral training** of main university
- **Progress reporting** (QC) of main university
- **Thesis defence** at main university (in English)
- **Registration fee** only at main university

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Our minimum requirements as partner

Training:

- At least **6 months exchange**
- Course 'Research Integrity'
- International conference
- Thematic and skills training (in 'lead' university)

Quality control:

- Preliminary work plan (and update on progress)
- Charter: profile of the good promotor & PhD researcher
- Promotor and jury member from both universities
- **1st** authorship publication with KU Leuven affiliation

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What topics are addressed in the agreement?

- Details on candidate, supervisors, topic, institutions
- Tuition fee, doctoral training, QC, research stays
- Financial provisions & (health) insurance (tax!)
- Ownership of intellectual property & confidentiality
- Publications
- Examination committee, thesis defence, award of degree
- Settlement of disputes
- Validity of agreement (signing)

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Why do a joint doctorate?

“The difficulty of going from Vilvoorde to Hong Kong, is not going to Hong Kong, but leaving Vilvoorde.”

Jacques Brel
1929 – 1978



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The Flemish government gives incentives to stimulate international mobility

OJO = “Omkadering Jonge Onderzoekers”
(support for young researchers)

4 M€/year, 1.5 M€ KU Leuven

- Training and education
- Career development
- Interuniversity initiatives
- International mobility



**Vlaamse
overheid**

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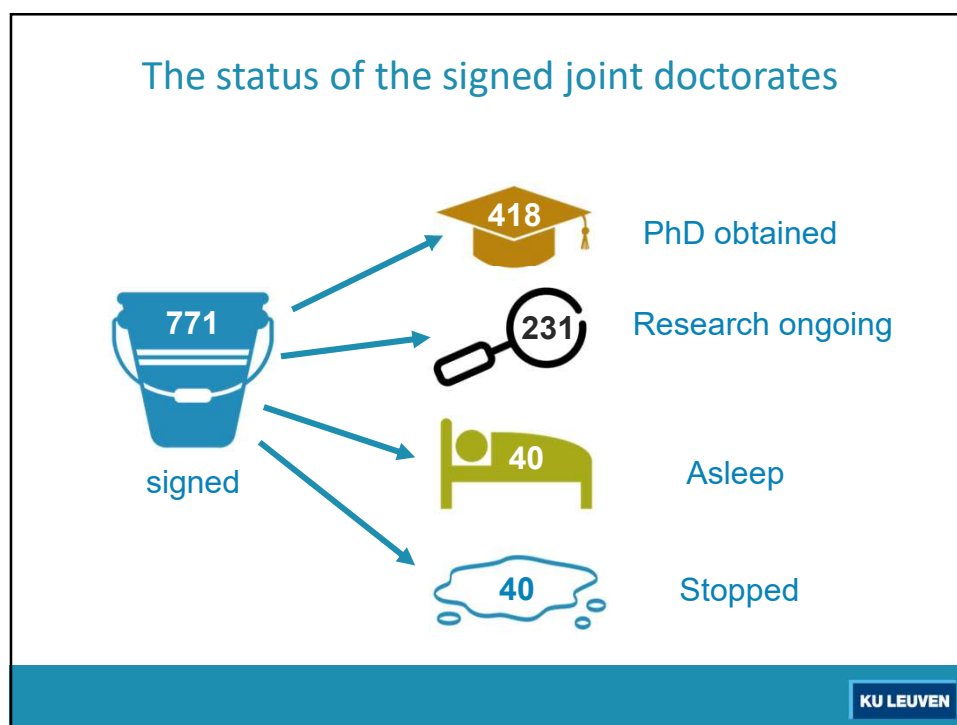
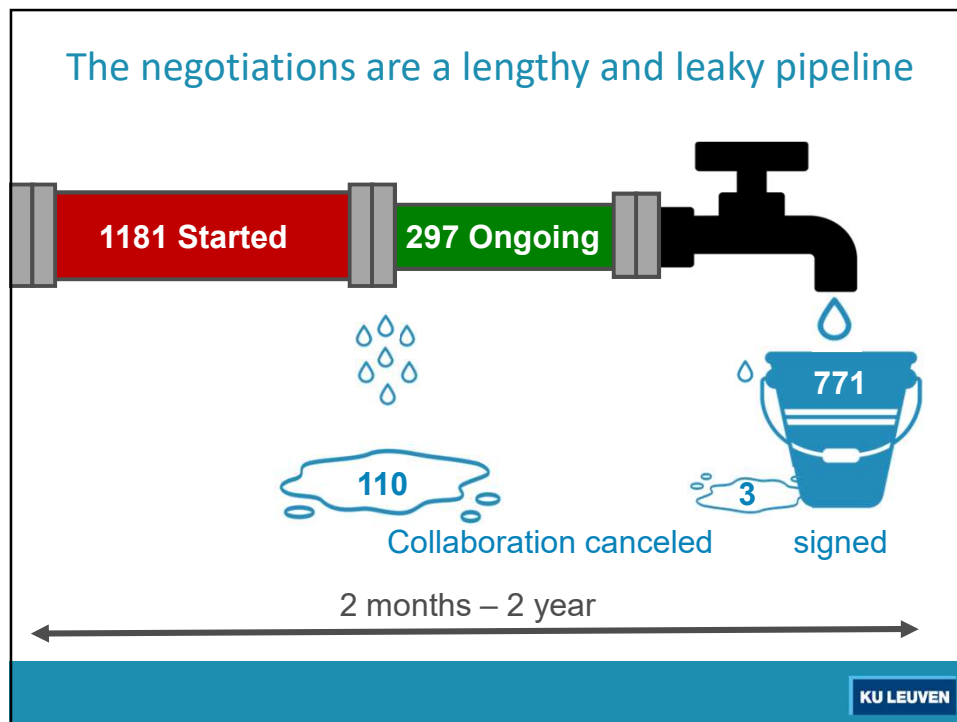
The Flemish government gives a financial bonus
for every completed doctorate

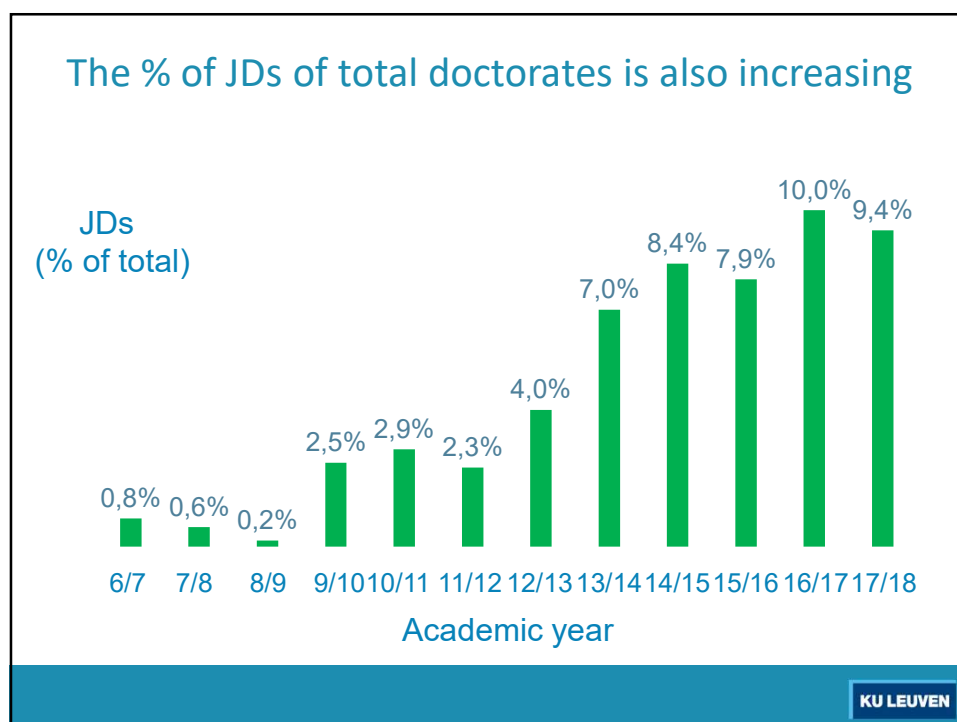
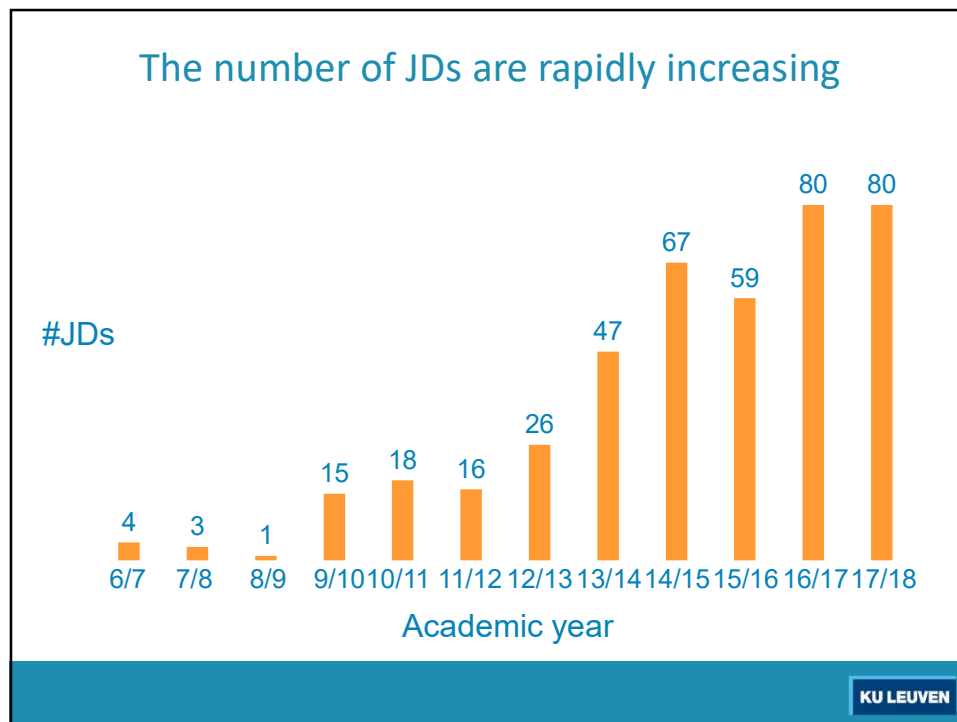


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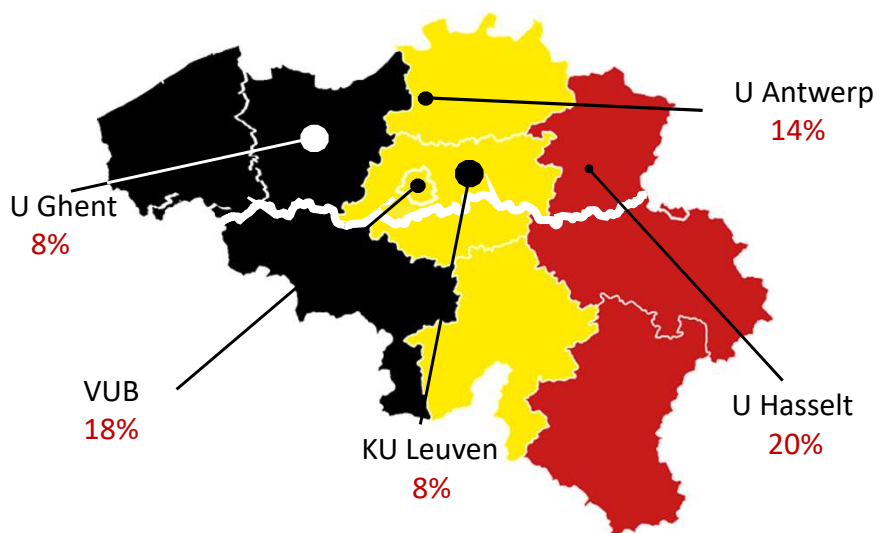
What are the figures?







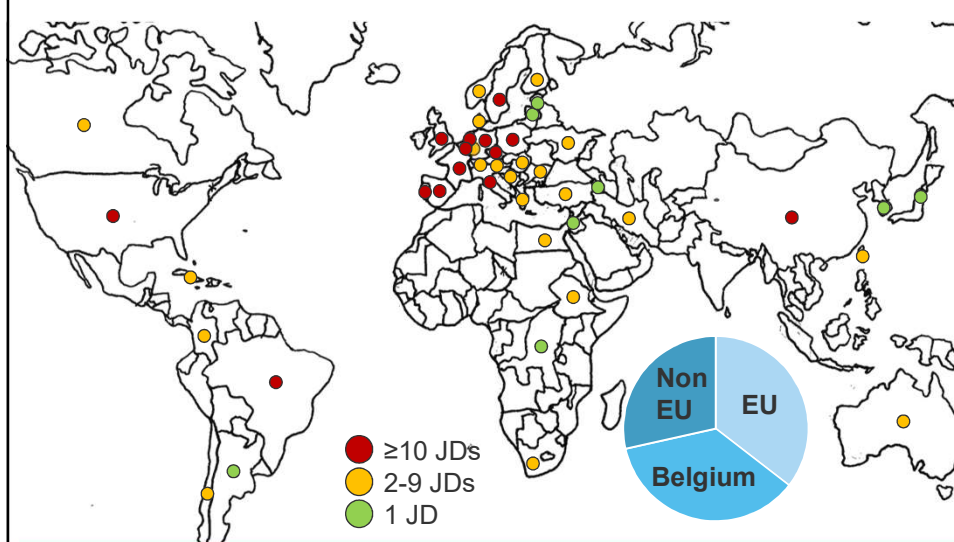
...but within Flanders, KU Leuven is lagging behind



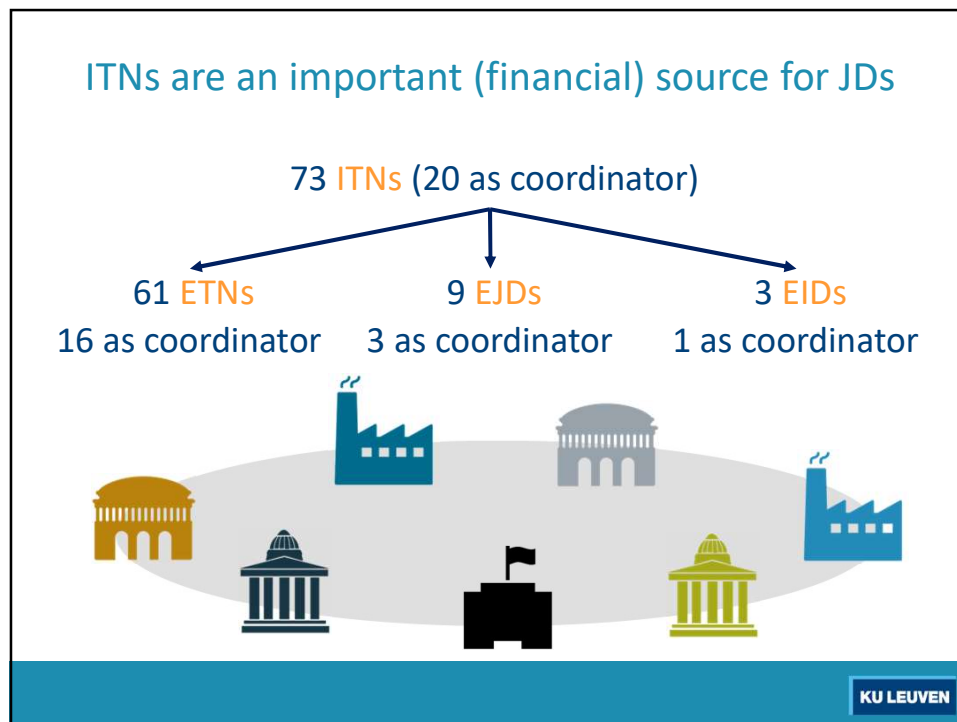
Academic year 2015/2016

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The joint doctorates are globally distributed



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General challenges with JD

- Administrative burden (1.5-2 days/JD)
- Lack of professionalism
- Lack of trust
- Only 3 year funding per doctorate for ITNs
- Country/University-specific issues

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JDs within Belgium can be perversely motivated
and the added value for PhDs is questionable



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Dutch universities sometimes require the public defence to be in the Netherlands even if partner



Some universities have strict language rules



Some Portuguese universities allow
max one promotor at thesis defence



Some Italian universities organize
'bulk defences' once a year





Future prospects

- 'Truly International' policy plan KU Leuven
- UNA Europe (KU Leuven, Berlin, Bologna, Krakau, Madrid, Paris)
- KU Leuven Global PhD partnerships

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Conclusions

- Joint doctorates are increasingly important
- The administration calls for best practices
- Streamlining between universities, countries and funding agencies is needed

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