

PRESS RELEASE

Louvain-la-Neuve, 12th of November 2021

Università di Pisa and Universität Wien to join Circle U.

At the General Assembly held on the 12th of November 2021, rectors and presidents of the seven universities of Circle U. voted unanimously for the broadening of the alliance with two new members, the University of Vienna and the University of Pisa. The excellence of these research-intensive universities and their regional, European and global engagement will open new opportunities for Circle U. Both new partners will be effectively entering the alliance from January 2022.

Since Circle U.'s launch in November 2020, we have been working on building a long-lasting and transformational cooperation across seven equally-committed universities, with the goal of establishing an inclusive, research-intensive and interdisciplinary European University by 2025.

The inclusion of the University of Pisa and the University of Vienna strengthens Circle U.'s mission as a European university that is built on centuries of experience in societal impact, that fosters research excellence and research-driven teaching and that thrives for innovative and inclusive teaching to empower its students. Circle U. now represents close to half a million students and 65.000 staff members all sharing a common vision: reinforcing the links between teaching, research, innovation and service to society to have more impact, answering the major global challenges of today and tomorrow such as in the fields of democracy, climate change, and global health.

"The University of Pisa is greatly honoured to join the European Alliance Circle U.," stated Paolo Maria Mancarella, Rector of the University of Pisa. "The atmosphere of great collaboration and perfect agreement so quickly achieved will allow us rapidly to join in with the partner universities, cooperating in the creation of an ambitious, inclusive and sustainable European University. The Circle U. Alliance, thanks to the prestige of the partner universities, will provide important new opportunities for the students and researchers of the University of Pisa, further enhancing our role in the European research and higher education area."

Heinz W. Engl, Rector of the University of Vienna, underlines, "The University of Vienna is very pleased to have joined Circle U. today. This is a further major step forward in terms of the strategic development of the University of Vienna and our identity as a truly European university. We are looking forward to working with our partners in Circle U. to develop innovative teaching methods, conduct high-quality research and make a positive contribution to some of the most important issues in today's society, including sustainability, democracy and global health."

"We are entering a very important new phase for Circle U.'s development," says Svein Stølen, Rector of the University of Oslo and President of Circle U. "Tomorrow, students from Aarhus, Belgrade, Berlin, London, Louvain, Paris and Oslo – but also academics, researchers and staff members – will have even more opportunities to collaborate, to innovate, to co-create with the colleagues in Vienna and Pisa." Yoan Vilain, President's Representative for International and European Affairs at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, who has led the negotiations with the two new members, continues: "From the very first discussions with Universität Wien and Università di Pisa, we felt a strong commitment to Circle U. We are looking forward to their contributions to the current projects but also to the next call for the European Universities Alliances."

The signature ceremony will take place on 28th of January at the Mission of Norway to the European Union in Brussels, in presence of partners and key European, national and regional stakeholders.

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CIRCLE U. EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE

We, Aarhus University (Denmark), Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany), King's College London (United Kingdom), Université de Paris (France), University of Belgrade (Serbia), University of Louvain (Belgium) and University of Oslo (Norway) 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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UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA

Founded in 1343, the University of Pisa is one of the oldest universities of Europe. With Galileo Galilei, 3 Nobel prizes and 2 Field medals among its alumni, and more than 50.000 students and 1.500 academics at 20 departments at present, the University of Pisa has been extraordinarily successful in modernizing and expanding its infrastructure and human resources to meet the new challenges of international research and education. Today the university leads important international research and innovative education networks whose results are incorporated into its study programmes. The University of Pisa is committed to promoting quality in all areas of research and teaching, and to making its programmes available to an increasing number of international students and researchers.

UNIVERSITÄT WIEN

The University of Vienna was founded in 1365 and is one of the oldest and largest universities in Europe: about 10.000 employees, 7.400 of whom are academic employees, work at 20 faculties and centres. Ten Nobel Prize winners have been affiliated with the University of Vienna through research or teaching. About 90.000 national and international students are currently enrolled at the University of Vienna. With 178 degree programmes, the University offers the most diverse range of studies in Austria. The University aims to strengthen its position in innovative, interdisciplinary and internationally visible fields of research. Its research priorities include sustainability and climate change, democracy and governance, data science and digital humanities, health and microbiome, society and communication, molecular biology and cognitive neuroscience, and materials and quantum science.