

--- Once upon a time, in the 20th century, when tensions were high between the universities, divided by faith or language but united in their scientific quests, a few physicists took it upon themselves to weave links. What was motivated as a scientific endeavour came to cement personal friendships.

Actually , it was not "once upon a time" but for repeated occasions.

Chanoine Lemaître, a catholic priest became a frequent visitor of ULB ,, whose Rector was an astronomer, and the theorists were, like him fascinated by the nascent relativity.

It was not limited to this "Big Bang" , since decades later, at the onset of a completely new understanding of the microscopic world of fundamental interactions Robert Brout and François Englert (you can ask him! ) started itinerant courses at KULeuven and Louvain-la-Neuve. (not to mention VUB which was still in the same buildings as ULB).

This enterprise was followed by a very successful Inter-University-Attraction pôle , and its quality was saluted over 15 years (and then the program ended at the federal level).

Hence, on the occasion of the Nobel Prize of François Englert, the Belgian Senate voted a motion demanding the creation of a common research center.

The proposal, for reasons which don't have their place here , could not be realized at the federal level, but the Brussels Region proposed to host such a centre in these beautiful settings.

It took time, the project's structure evolved, and if we see today a breath-taking realization,

much remains to be done between the 4 universities, with the help of the Brussels Region, to let the Center grow its roots here. Beyond the keystone tasks (common seminars and workshops, prestigious invitations), the project also expects links to the artistic community and outreach activities.

Let us hope that what was started in very difficult times by Brout, Englert and Lemaître can find the support it still needs.