



## Press release

Herstal, 03 July 2024

# NRB and ULiège create a Chair in Artificial Intelligence Research and Application Development

**NRB and the University of Liège announce a collaboration to develop Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the benefit of businesses and the public sector in Belgium and internationally. The collaboration agreement signed today creates a Chair within ULiège's Faculty of Applied Sciences dedicated to the research and development of AI, and more specifically LLMs (Large Language Models) for software engineering.**

The aim of this collaboration is not only to accelerate the adoption of AI by Belgian and international organisations, but also to transform their operational efficiency. By integrating AI, both public and private companies can achieve significant productivity gains, ensure their sustainable development, stimulate innovation at all levels and boost their competitiveness.

As a result of this strategic partnership with ULiège, NRB will be strengthening its range of exclusive services it offers its clients by developing advanced AI technologies, such as large language models, with and for them. These applications, which will meet companies' specific needs, will accelerate the adoption of AI in their processes and support their digital transformation. For the researchers at ULiège, this collaboration will provide a framework that will enable them to use real-life industrial problems to test theoretical methods hitherto developed in the academic world and to drive new scientific developments.

**Laurence Mathieu**, CEO of NRB SA: *"NRB has a complete and competitive technological ecosystem and ULiège has a scientific group of high-level AI researchers and engineers, who are recognised in Belgium and abroad, making our duo a force for scientific and industrial innovation. This collaboration with the University of Liège not only enables us to strengthen our AI capabilities, but also to forge essential links between the academic and economic spheres, with a particular emphasis on training, which is essential if we are to master the technological challenges of the future."*

**Professor Éric Delhez**, Dean of the Faculty of Applied Sciences at ULiège: *"The creation of this Chair reflects the dual mission of ULiège and its Faculty of Applied Sciences to help meet the huge challenges facing our society today and to support the socio-economic development of the region. Faced with the major challenges of AI, both in terms of business competitiveness and ethics, it is essential to develop strong local skills in a synergy between academia and business."*

**Professor Gilles Louppe**, Montefiore Institute, Faculty of Applied Sciences at ULiège: *"This is an ideal collaboration because, via NRB, our research group will be faced with the challenge of real-life industrial problems, as an extension of our core AI research. This connection with practical questions also benefits the quality of our students' training, as they will be directly immersed in technological issues. We will also be welcoming NRB experts to our courses."*

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## **About NRB**

With a consolidated turnover of € 577.5 million in 2023 and more than 3,670 employees, the NRB Group is one of Belgium's leaders in the ICT sector. NRB is positioned as the local ICT partner that supports its clients in their digital transformation. Capitalising on technological developments and innovation, NRB aims to offer them the best solutions available, tailored to their environment. In this context, NRB offers a wide range of IT services based around six key areas: consultancy, software, infrastructure & hybrid cloud, managed staffing, cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence.

NRB caters for a wide variety of business sectors: the public and social sector, the energy and utilities sector, the financial sector and industry. One team is dedicated to the European and international institutions and companies. All of the NRB Group's subsidiaries offer sector-specific solutions, while at the same time benefitting from the Group's size, ITC infrastructure and other support.

Website: [www.nrb.be](http://www.nrb.be)

## **About the AI research group at ULiège**

The Montefiore AI research group has been active in the field of AI and machine learning for more than 30 years. Research goals range from the development of formal methods for automated reasoning and control, machine learning and statistical inference, to the pioneering application of AI and machine learning to computational biology, the physical sciences, electrical power and energy systems, computer vision and robotics. The group comprises around ten professors and forty doctoral and post-doctoral researchers. Every year, ULiège's Faculty of Applied Sciences, to which the group is attached, sees some fifty students graduate from specific master's programmes in AI and Data Science.

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