



**Words of welcome by the rector, addressed to the new honorary doctors of the University of Girona, from the lectern.**

*Distinguished doctors, President of the UdG's Board of Trustees, Director of the School of Doctoral Studies, Directors of the Departments of Chemistry and of Environmental Sciences, and Director of the Institute of Computational Chemistry and Catalysis, sponsors of the honorary doctorate recipients, and friends,*

Universities are institutions shaped by a wide variety of historical, territorial, economic and social factors. Established to increase and transfer knowledge, they cannot avoid certain obligations. These include providing training that contributes to social progress and improves conditions for students; conducting research to deepen and widen our knowledge of the world and of how this knowledge influences our well-being; and being involved in sustainable development and in the struggle against inequality.

And much more than that.

However, there comes a time, a precise moment, in which universities, aware of all these obligations, also demonstrate what they are and what they represent: an authentic measure of their characters.

In one of the more solemn ceremonies celebrated during the academic year, the University of Girona does the same. By awarding honorary doctorates, the University defines and reaffirms its values, pays tribute to the individual persons who have made it what it is, and recognises their accumulated merits. Awarding honorary doctorates is proof of the University's respect and admiration and a way of demonstrating that to the world.

The University is also, and to an extraordinary degree, all the persons – men and women – who have earned the most important degree awarded by our institution. The honoris cause doctorate ceremony is one of great institutional significance.



The University welcomes, as one of its own, a person or persons who have excelled in their personal lives and professional careers and whose achievements have benefitted the University, with which they have maintained a close, productive and ongoing relationship.

The University's honorary doctorate recipients include psychologists, chemists, singers, historians, economists, philosophers, geologists, physicians, legal scholars, politicians, chefs, intellectuals, writers, ichthyologists, educators, physicists, poets and health professionals. These men and women have, in one way or another, contributed to progress in the sciences, the humanities and society.

Today we expand this list of honourees to include two renowned professors, recognised worldwide, from the field of science.

Through their work and masterful teaching, they have contributed, not only to scientific progress in the fields of chemistry and ecology, but also to the University of Girona's reputation as a leading research institution open to international collaboration.

We have already drawn attention to their merits. I can only add, in the name of the University, our congratulations and our deepest and most sincere gratitude for your relevant academic work.

The University's most recent honoris cause doctorate recipient, the poet Narcís Comadira, once said, "Universities are the future of our country". With ceremonies like this, we reaffirm that purpose. It is achievable if we all work toward it. Today, with two new honorary doctors, we have more reasons, more hope, more support to meet the challenge.

To Doctor Evert Jan Baerends, who unfortunately cannot be with us today, and to Doctor Sovan Lek, for whose presence I am very grateful, thank you very much.



The University community welcomes you with enthusiasm and is eager to continue our collaboration. The University of Girona is your home.

Thank you,

Quim Salvi

Rector

Girona, May 9, 2019