

Press release

The City of Brussels and the Region of Brussels Capital launch the second phase of the NEO project

The NEO project is going ahead at the initiative of the Region and the City of Brussels.

A decisive step had already been taken thanks to the modification of the PRAS procedure launched by the Government of the Region of Brussels Capital. Taking up the objectives pursued by NEO within the context of the Brussels town planning regulations means it is possible to offer partners and investors a clear sign of the common desire to succeed.

This Monday the local council of the City of Brussels will decide to launch the two procurement contracts which constitute the second phase of the NEO project (redevelopment of the Heysel Plateau as a strategic centre for international development in Brussels).

The first phase consisted of the designation of the chief town planner (KCAP) and the completion of the overall planning model (Master Plan). The second phase consists of the launch of the two main Neo project procurement contracts, which will enable the main goals of the Programme included in the Master Plan to be achieved.



NEO represents a new redevelopment and architectural ambition which will turn the Heysel plateau into an urban hub of international visibility, a real showcase for the Capital of Europe, an economic centre and a major tourist attraction.

As the project gets underway no less than 3 000 jobs will be created.

This final phase of the Project demonstrates the Region and City of Brussels' desire to transform the disparate site of the Heysel plateau into something really special.

➤ To recap, this programme envisages the development of the following facilities on the site of the Heysel:

•A convention centre: 5.000 - seat conference hall and smaller annexed rooms;

•A top class hotel complex;

•A shopping centre: up to 72.000 m² GLA with the accompanying catering facilities;

•A recreation and leisure hub: something for tourists and sports facilities for everyone (amenities of general interest or for public use);

•A housing complex;

•Administrative areas in keeping with the site, limited to 20.000m² GLA.

➤ NEO is consciously committed to a policy of sustainable development. Socially, economically and ecologically.

Socially, NEO responds to the needs of living together and the demographic challenge.

Economically, the construction of the conference centre will mean Brussels can welcome thousands of congress-goers and will reinforce the city's international character. Tourism, the provision of leisure and green spaces for Brussels inhabitants, but also the quality of life in the whole district will benefit hugely. The shopping centre fits in with this dynamic.

Ecologically, NEO sees itself as a model. Its accessibility is streets ahead of other projects. It already benefits from an exemplary public transport system, which will be further improved, meaning that mobility will be greatly optimised.

Buildings will meet the most stringent energy and environmental norms. Ingenious systems will be put in place for the reuse of energy and water. Water absorbent surfaces will mean that the whole area will be greener.

New infrastructures resulting from NEO will be directly connected to the Brussels underground system. This will enable rapid access to the European rail networks -Thalys and ICE- and to Brussels

National airport. On top of this, the metro provides direct access to the historic centre of Brussels and its shops.

Within the context of this redevelopment one of the challenges of the project will be to ensure the harmonious integration of the facilities which are to be created within the existing urban fabric, whilst maintaining the quality of existing and future public and semi-public spaces.

In this perspective, the overall philosophy of the Heysel zone redevelopment project notably consists of doing away with the majority of the open air parking areas and replacing them with underground or covered car parks. The idea behind this decision is to free up as much public space as possible while at the same time maintaining the general quality of the landscape.

Making the most of the heritage and existing activities on the Heysel plateau is in the interests of all concerned. Those already present on the site will have, more than anyone else, a major interest in getting involved in the project, which will modernise and highlight the attractiveness of the various facilities, so that they can evolve in a much more attractive, harmonious and profitable context.

NEO will attract new visitors. Shopkeepers, landlords, firms, catering industry, business and leisure tourism, workers and the unemployed, walkers, sportsmen and women will all benefit from NEO. Everyone will find something of interest and pleasure in the rebirth of this space which has been neglected for far too long.

- The city authorities have perfected a model of good governance for the entire project.

Every stage is subject to a competitive call organised in a transparent manner and new evidence is made of this. This process requires time but it is the guarantee of pertinent, fair, serious and objective choices. It is also the price of efficiency. Since the beginning, local inhabitants and the various occupants of the site have been at the very heart of the consultation with the mayor and aldermen and any interesting ideas have been taken into consideration within this context.

The process of the launch of the procurement contracts laid out above is currently following its administrative course. The authorities will release a more precise and detailed press release on these procurement contracts as soon as the contract notices have been published via the official channels as set down by the regulations on procurement contracts.