

EIB buildings: from Brussels to Luxembourg

1958-2008

Where it all started: rue du Bois-Sauvage, Brussels

The European Investment Bank began its activities in some rented offices in Brussels in February 1958. The Member States were looking for a permanent seat at the time, but could not find any. The Banque Nationale de Belgique offered some room in their buildings at 9, rue du Bois Sauvage, close to the Saint Michel cathedral. However, in October 1958, just a few months later, the Bank had to move to Mont des Arts.



Map view of the EIB's first address, rue du Bois Sauvage, Brussels



Panoramic view of the Mont des Arts building

Mont des Arts, Brussels 1958-1965

In October 1958, Pietro Campilli, the EIB's first president, and the 65 staff members moved to some other rented offices at 11, Mont des Arts, in Brussels. The building was home to several European institutions, close to the main railway stations in Brussels and to the Brussels Banks. Seven years later, the EEC Council of Ministers needed some additional space, and the European Investment Bank had to move again.



Façade of the building in Mont des Arts

Mont des Arts, Brussels 1958-1965

EIB President Pietro Campilli signs first EIB contract on 21 April 1959



EIB's President Campilli signs first EIB contract, 1959



Staff celebrating the EIB's first signed contract, 1959

Boulevard Waterloo 1965-1968

The treaty to merge the executive bodies of the three European Communities (ECSC, EEC and EURATOM) was signed in 1965, transforming the three separate Communities into one "European Community". It came into effect in 1967. Meanwhile, the Bank moved headquarters in Brussels for the third time, this time to a building on the boulevard de Waterloo.



EIB offices in Boulevard Waterloo. Behind them, the historic centre with the Royal Library of Belgium

Boulevard de Waterloo, Brussels 1965-1968

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EIB offices in Boulevard Waterloo
and behind them, the Law Courts



EIB canteen, “the Mess”. Staff were served at their table, 1966

Place de Metz, Luxembourg 1968-1980

In September 1968, President Paride Formentini and the 160 staff members moved to Luxembourg. The new EIB address was 2, Place de Metz, which at the time hosted the ECSC High Authority. The decision of moving the Bank to Luxembourg created some troubles between management and staff. The EIB staff was reluctant to leave their families and the capital of Belgium. Luxembourg was far from the EIB's traditional partners, the EEC Commission, Member States' and Associated Countries' representations. Besides, the historic Luxembourgish building lacked space and light. More offices were rented. In the 1970s, the Bank expanded rapidly. Its staff, which amounted to 300 people at the time, was hosted in ten town houses along the boulevards and the streets surrounding the headquarters.



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2, Place de Metz – The EIB's offices covered 2 580 m², divided into 134 offices



Main entrance

The EIB moves to the Luxembourg City centre, 1960s

In the early 1960s, the Management Committee wanted to build a new building that could host all EIB staff. Two options were available: sharing the existing building in Boulevard Roosevelt with the Kredietbank of Luxembourg or build a new building.



Adolphe bridge and external views of the Banque Lambert, Franck, l'Assurance Liégeoise, le Foyer (Casino de Luxembourg) and the Kredietbank on the Boulevard Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Luxembourg City in the 1970s



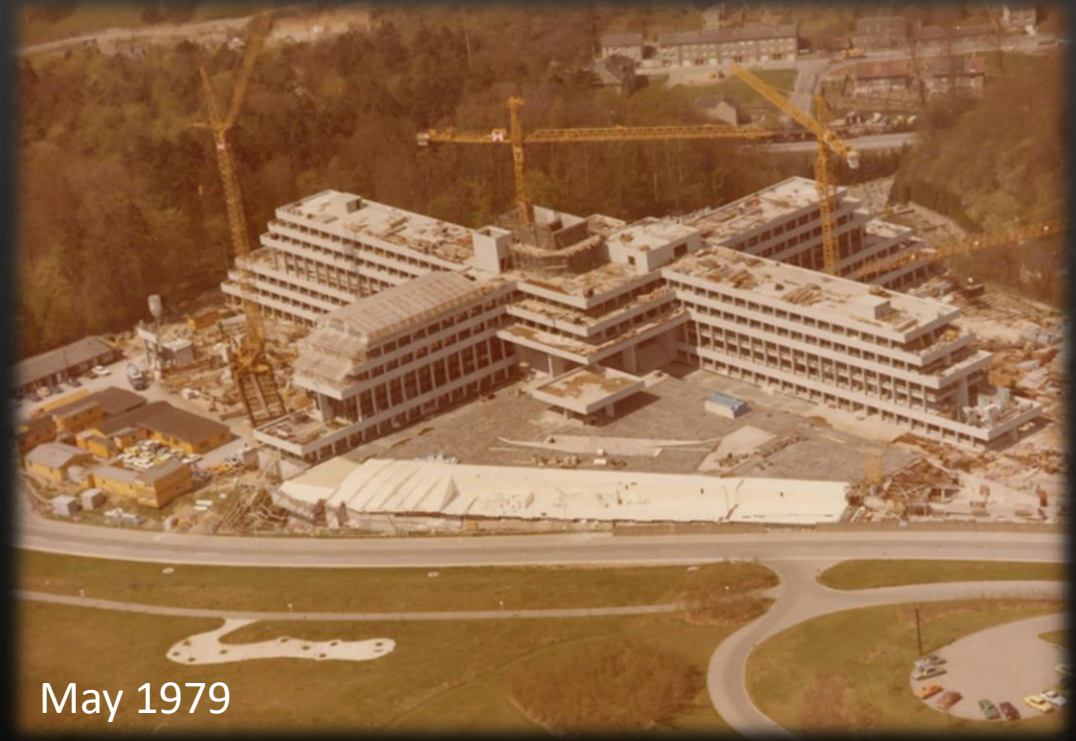
Front view of the Banque Lambert, Franck, l'Assurance Liégeoise, Le Foyer (Casino de Luxembourg) and the Kredietbank on the Boulevard Franklin Delano Roosevelt in Luxembourg in the 1960s

The EIB buys land on the Plateau du Kirchberg, 1976-1980

In December 1970, the EIB Management Committee decided to build a new building to host the EIB staff coming from the EU countries. In 1972, the Luxembourg authorities sold 2.5 hectares of land in Kirchberg to the Bank. A year later Sir Denys Lasdun, an eminent English architect who had designed the London National Theatre, was asked to start working on a project for the Bank. Construction of the West Building (WKI) began in 1974. The EIB building was completed in August 1980.



The land close to the Plateau du Kirchberg purchased by the Bank, 1976
Construction works in 1978



May 1979

EIB headquarters under construction at 100, Boulevard Konrad Adenauer, Luxembourg Today, this building is known as the West Building.

The EIB moves into the West building, August 1980

The new building had four wings and could host 800 staff members. The Management Committee wanted the new building to be ready by 1978, but confrontations between the building constructors and the British architect delayed the completion of the building, until the Bank's French President Yves Le Portz decided to intervene. The EIB staff moved to the West Building in September 1980.



Riichtfest ceremony: the last beam is placed on top of the West building, 1979



Riichtfest ceremony with Sir Denys Lasdun, Vice-President Steffe and Secretary general Lenaert, 1980

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Luxembourgish authorities at the inauguration ceremony, 20 May 1981: Grand Duke Jean, Grand Duchess Joséphine Charlotte, Prime Minister Pierre Werner and EIB President Yves Le Portz

Inauguration ceremony with the Grand Duke Jean, 20 May 1981

Yves Le Portz: « La construction de ce bâtiment est un acte de foi dans l'avenir de l'Europe »



Grand Duke Jean, Grand Duchess Joséphine Charlotte and Prime Minister Pierre Werner at the inauguration ceremony at the EIB's West building, 20 May 1981

West Building: an architectural revolution

WKL was a revolutionary and innovative building when it was designed in the early 1970's. It reflected, embodied and represented the core values of the EIB. It celebrated a new way of working and staying together.



Denys Lasdun made very specific requests: the EIB building shouldn't be taller than the trees surrounding the site

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Richtfest ceremony (placing of the last beam on top of a building, 1979)

WKL Extension, 1995

In 1980 the Bank could rely on 500 staff members and some offices in the West Building were rented to the European Parliament until 1984.

In 1990, the EIB German President Ernst-Günther Bröder and his management made the decision to extend the building to create space for 300 additional staff members. In February 1992, the Board of Directors approved the project.

Three years later, in May 1995, the Bank inaugurated the offices today known as the WKL Extension.



Extension of the West Building



Panoramic view of the EIB's West Building and Extension

The East Building, 2008

In the late 1990's the EIB had around one thousand staff members. The enlargement of the European Union required the recruitment of approximately 500 additional staff members. The WKI Building had reached its maximum capacity. In July 2001, the Bank launched an International competition and received 56 applications. The jury, chaired by the Spanish architect Riccardo Bofill, unanimously selected an innovative project signed by Ingenhoven Architekten, a firm based in Düsseldorf. Ingenhoven Architekten designed a building based on high energy efficiency, distributed over 72 500 square metres, hosting 750 employees. The EIB staff inaugurated the new East Building (EKI) on 2 June 2008.



EIB Vice-President Roth and future Director Enzo Unfer met Riccardo Bofill, chairman of the selecting Jury, September 2001



The East Building