



Laying the first stone of the Marie-Elisabeth Belpaire building is a sustainable milestone for CFE Contracting

On the ZIN site in the Brussels Northern Quarter, CFE Contracting reached an important milestone with the first stone laying ceremony for the new office building of the Flemish government. This is not simply yet another first stone being laid; it is the erection of the first oblique column that is to form the main entrance to the circular building. A first stone that, moreover, is composed of 100% circular concrete.

On Thursday, October 7, 2021, Flemish Minister-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Culture, Digitalisation and Facility Management Jan Jambon, in the presence of Minister of Brussels Affairs, Youth and Media Benjamin Dalle, laid the symbolic first stone of the Marie-Elisabeth Belpaire building. This building is an important part of ZIN, a multi-purpose project being built for Befimmo by CFE Contracting (Van Laere, BPC and VMA). It is an exceptional project, not only because of its size, but also from a logistical point of view. As it is located in the centre of town, transport is done as much as possible by waterways, and an intermediate storage zone is used in order to limit traffic congestion and the impact of material deliveries on the neighbourhood.

The erection of the oblique column marks the start of the works on the piano nobile of the intermediate building (construction volume) that will connect the two towers. Four oblique columns will bridge four floors. They will rest on two steel consoles. The way of positioning visually creates a letter A. What is more, 17 columns (legs) together form eight A's, while a post-tensioned horizontal beam ensures that the legs cannot slide away. The first column weighs 6.5 tonnes, the heaviest element 14 tonnes. As the outcome of an extensive study, this operation is an absolute tour de force.

First stone is 100% C2C

The Marie-Elisabeth Belpaire building will be Belgium's first circular office building. The existing building (the former WTC 1 and WTC 2 towers) will be utilised as much as possible: 95% of the materials of the existing structure will be retained, reused or recycled, and more than 30 new types of material are certified circular.

Manu Coppens, CEO Van Laere: "The oblique columns that will be put up from now are cradle-to-cradle certified. This means that what we have here is a 100% circular concrete element. This should not be taken for granted, for it took us months as a construction group to motivate suppliers to win this C2C certificate for the production of concrete."

"CFE Contracting plays a major pioneering role with this reference project," says CEO **Raymund Trost**. "This first stone laying ceremony will undoubtedly persuade more construction players to become committed to the circular economy. As one of the country's largest construction groups, CFE Contracting is aware of its responsibility, and resolutely opts for sustainable innovative building methods."

About CFE Contracting

CFE Contracting is one of the three divisions of the Belgian industrial group CFE, which encompasses the group's construction, multitechnics and rail activities in Belgium, Luxembourg and Poland.

This business division specializes in the construction and/or renovation of public, residential and industrial buildings, electrotechnical installations, production and industrial process automation, HVAC and electrification works for high-voltage networks and railways.

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