



CFE Contracting starts work on ZIN – a boost for circular construction

CFE Contracting began drilling the first pile foundation for ZIN, a multipurpose project in the Nord business district in the north of Brussels. The redevelopment of the WTC 1 and 2 towers for Befimmo will be an innovative and sustainable undertaking, with a circular approach as a key factor. A real boost for the future of sustainable building!

ZIN involves redeveloping the site of the present WTC 1 and 2 towers in Brussels. This multipurpose project covers an area of 110,000 m² and will include offices (73,000 m²), housing (14,000 m²) and a hotel (16,000 m²), as well as leisure facilities and retail outlets. The Flemish government awarded the contract for construction and office fitting to Befimmo, which in turn engaged CFE Contracting.

CFE Contracting will be responsible for all aspects of this project except demolition: Van Laere and BPC will take care of the building work, while VMA will manage the multitechnics. The three subsidiaries will bring all their specialist expertise to this mixed-use building, including in geothermal energy solutions, façade engineering and building management systems. After an exciting preparatory phase, the pile foundation now marks the first milestone.

Building towards a circular economy

Right from the outset, Befimmo expressed a clear wish: ZIN must and will be built according to circular principles. This circular approach starts by preserving 65% of the existing WTC towers, which will greatly reduce the amount of demolition waste and the use of new construction materials. It is the first project in Belgium to apply the principles of circularity on this scale. In a nutshell, up to 95% of the existing materials will be retained, reused or recycled, and 95% of the new materials for the offices will be cradle-to-cradle (C2C) certified.

ZIN will therefore act as a catalyst for the circular economy in the construction industry. “C2C legislation is not yet widely known in the industry,” says **CEO Raymund Trost**. “So we and Befimmo are pioneers in this area: our people need to persuade subcontractors and suppliers to come on board with the idea and adapt their production and way of working.”

Unsurprisingly, the structural works are an important part of this process. “If we make concrete production circular, we’ll already have gone a long way towards achieving our objective,” adds Trost. “And since our concrete supplier is now C2C-certified, there’s no doubt we’ll do that. We’re also working with a C2C expert to help us develop our expertise in this field.”

Making construction methods more sustainable

A sustainability strategy looks great on paper, but only has real value if it delivers tangible results. ZIN is helping CFE Contracting to achieve its sustainability ambitions. “The property and construction sectors currently still account for 38% of total CO₂ emissions,” says Trost. “We’re well aware of this fact. But by recycling or thinking in a circular way, we can make our construction methods even more sustainable and efficient. In that respect, ZIN will be a landmark project, both for the companies in our group and for the entire sector.”

Last month CFE Contracting stepped up its sustainability ambitions by joining the **Belgian Alliance for Climate Action**, an initiative of The Shift and WWF Belgium that encourages organisations to set ambitious climate goals and achieve them. And last week the **Tivoli GreenCity** project was awarded BREEAM Outstanding certification for communities, recording the highest score ever. BPC helped create this sustainable district in Brussels, where the principles of circularity were applied in innovative ways, such as dismantling and reusing materials on site. MBG also recently completed **Gare Maritime**, the largest timber construction project in Europe, located on the Thurn&Taxis site in the Belgian capital.

Tomorrow's world

The creation of **Wood Shapers** early this year also reflects CFE's belief in new building techniques as a way of reducing its carbon footprint. Wood Shapers is a new company specialising in large-scale timber and hybrid construction projects in partnership with BPI, the CFE group's property development company. Simply put, the list of sustainability commitments and innovative projects within the CFE group just keeps on growing.

CFE's slogan "Together shaping tomorrow's world" has never been more relevant. **Sustainability Officer Isabelle De Bruyne** know this only too well "ZIN fits in perfectly with CFE Contracting's sustainability strategy: circularity of materials, innovation, flexible use of space and, above all, sustainable partnerships between the various parties involved in the project – with the aim of shaping tomorrow's world, together."

3X CFE Contracting and ZIN

- CFE Contracting (Van Laere, BPC and VMA) is starting work on the multipurpose ZIN project for Befimmo.
- ZIN will be the largest circular construction project in Belgium, with clear requirements in terms of cradle-to-cradle (C2C) certification.
- Working on this unique project fits in with CFE Contracting's long-term sustainability strategy. ZIN will give a huge boost to the circular economy and help enhance the image of the property and construction sectors.

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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