

[Large-scale money laundering detected with Eurojust's support](#)

The Hague, 10 July 2019



A criminal network involved in transnational money laundering was targeted by the national authorities of the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with Eurojust's and Europol's cooperation. A coordination centre was set up at Eurojust's premises in The Hague to coordinate the joint action day in all 5 countries involved, swiftly share case-related information on the spot, and collect and exchange valuable evidence. 28 house and company searches were successfully carried out, criminal assets, worth several millions of euros, including luxury cars, were seized, and bank accounts and other proceeds were frozen.

The Public Prosecutor's Office of Zeeland West-Brabant, the Netherlands, initiated its investigation into a large scale-money laundering in November 2018. The case was referred to Eurojust, the EU's Judicial Cooperation Unit, as soon as multiple links to the other countries were identified. The main suspects are allegedly involved in massive money laundering activities through real estate investment in all countries concerned. The illegal proceeds supposedly originate from extended drug trafficking and smuggling between Europe and the USA.


 Eurojust held one coordination meeting in April 2019 to agree on common operational strategies, after the operational meeting at Europol earlier this year, and decide on the course of the joint action day. The Dutch authorities issued several European Investigation Orders (EIOs) towards the Member State involved and 2 mutual legal assistance requests towards Bosnia and Herzegovina to allow for quick sharing of information and evidence, searches and other investigative measures. Eurojust helped the national authorities to issue and fully implement the EIOs.

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[Pimping and money laundering network dismantled with Eurojust's support](#)

The Hague, 10 July 2019

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✘ Eurojust actively supported the national authorities of 15 countries in taking down an organised crime group (OCG) involved in pimping and money laundering. Eurojust swiftly set up a joint investigation team (JIT) with Spain, Finland and Sweden to speed up the criminal investigations into the OCG. 11 EU Member States and 4 third countries participated in a joint action, coordinated by Eurojust, which resulted in the arrest of the main suspects of the OCG in Malta, Romania and Finland. Almost €0.5 million in cash, as well as equipment, illegal assets, such as luxury items, false documentation, and cryptocurrencies were seized, and several web domains were confiscated. Companies' shares and bank accounts worth €1.5 million were frozen and 17 house searches were carried out.

Criminal activities of the OCG

In April 2016, the Spanish authorities initiated an investigation into an OCG, suspected of money laundering of illegal proceeds, which were obtained through aggravated pimping in Nordic countries. Due to the cross-border dimension of the investigation, a Eurojust case was opened in 2016, which targeted the Finnish leader of the OCG. From his base in Marbella, Spain, the alleged main suspect managed websites advertising sexual services offered by women of predominantly Nigerian origin, who worked as prostitutes in Finland and Sweden. A number of similar OCGs in various countries used those websites to also profit from advertising their victims' services.

Money laundering

The OCG leader owned several companies and bank accounts and performed his illicit activities in more than 15 countries. Some companies were registered abroad to disguise the criminal activities. The illegally obtained assets were channeled through intermediaries to international bank accounts and multi-currency IBAN accounts for the purpose of money laundering. The OCG also invested its criminal proceeds in cryptocurrency.

Eurojust's crucial role

During the joint action day, Eurojust set up a coordination centre at its premises in The Hague to coordinate simultaneous operations in 15 countries, allowing for real-time exchange of information. Eurojust enabled the quick issuance of several European Investigation Orders towards Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania and the UK. Eurojust also assisted in swiftly submitting mutual legal assistance (MLA) requests to the USA, Russia, Hong Kong, Panama and Colombia.

Through the JIT, Eurojust financed the deployment of 9 Spanish police officers to Malta, Romania and Finland. Europol supported the joint operations by deploying mobile offices in Spain, Malta and Finland and by participating in the coordination centre set up at Eurojust.

Eurojust's involvement was instrumental in coordinating the actions of all countries in this multinational case. The setting up of a JIT allowed for swift evidence gathering and information sharing. Eurojust assisted in overcoming legal obstacles by advising on a jurisdictional issue and reaching

an agreement on the best place to prosecute. In this way, Eurojust helped to bring the prosecution against the main suspects in Spain. Without Eurojust in the lead, the success of the criminal investigation and the joint operation, as well as the immediate judicial follow-up to the case, would have been impossible.

National authorities

The Judge of the Investigative Court n. 4 in Torrevieja, Spain, the Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings Brigade n. IX of the Spanish National Police, the Central Unit against Illegal Immigration Networks (*Unidad Central de Redes de Inmigración Ilegal y Falsedades Documentales – UCRIF CENTRAL*) and the Anti-Money Laundering Brigade of the Provincial Squad of the Judicial Police in Alicante (*Brigada Provincial de Policía Judicial de Alicante – BPPJ de Alicante*) were the Spanish authorities involved in the national and joint investigations in the context of the JIT, as well as the joint action day. The actions were also supported by 9 Spanish local police units and law enforcement authorities from 15 countries.

Results

- **Arrests:** 3 European Arrest Warrants executed
- **House searches:** 6 in Spain, 2 in Malta, 3 in Romania, 4 in Finland, 2 in Hong Kong
- **Seizures:** Almost €0.5 million in cash, computers, tablets, mobile phones and other encrypted devices, 9 luxury vehicles, expensive jewellery and watches, documentation from tax havens, documentation on companies and bank accounts, contracts and falsified passports
- **Confiscations:** 16 web domains in the USA
- **Freezings:** Bank accounts opened and shares in 6 companies based in Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain Romania, Finland, Sweden and Hong Kong

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[Commissioner Moscovici's remarks presenting the Summer 2019 Economic Forecast](#)

Bonjour à toutes et à tous. Voici les principaux messages de ces prévisions économiques intérimaires d'été pour 2019 et 2020. Elles sont intérimaires parce que nous présentons deux fois par an des prévisions qui ont des conséquences en termes de finances publiques, d'emploi, et deux fois par an, des prévisions un peu allégées qui ne concernent que la croissance et ce sont celles-ci que je présenterai. Les prochaines prévisions complètes seront présentées par mon successeur début novembre. Je ne sais pas qui ce sera mais

il fera ça très bien.

Tout d'abord, l'économie européenne continue de résister à un environnement extérieur moins favorable. Notre économie vit en effet sa septième année consécutive de croissance. Tous les États membres afficheraient des taux de croissance positifs tant cette année que l'année prochaine, ce qui vient dissiper certaines impressions brumeuses ou négatives qu'on aime à diffuser.

Dans la zone euro, la croissance devrait ralentir pour s'établir à 1,2% cette année et à 1,4% en 2020. Par rapport aux prévisions du printemps, cette projection est inchangée pour 2019 et très légèrement inférieure, c'était 1,5%, pour 2020.

Nos prévisions de croissance du PIB pour l'UE demeurent inchangées à 1,4% en 2019 et 1,6% en 2020.

La demande intérieure devrait rester le moteur de la croissance en 2019-20, soutenue par des politiques monétaires accommodantes, dont nous voyons bien qu'elles devraient durer encore quelque temps, la guidance de la BCE là-dessus est claire, une politique budgétaire expansionniste dans certains États membres et un marché du travail qui heureusement se porte bien. L'emploi dans l'UE a atteint un sommet sans précédent et le taux de chômage qui reste trop élevé a diminué à son plus bas niveau de ces dix dernières années.

Deuxième message : si la croissance nous a surpris positivement au premier trimestre, on s'attend toutefois à ce que cette surprise soit entièrement contrebalancée par un affaiblissement de la croissance durant le reste de l'année. En particulier, les secteurs extérieur et manufacturier devraient continuer de peser sur les perspectives à court terme.

Troisième message, nous avons révisé légèrement à la baisse nos prévisions d'inflation de la zone euro, les ramenant à 1,3% en 2019 et en 2020. Ceci s'explique en grande partie par une hypothèse de prix du pétrole moins élevés, mais également par le délai dans la transmission de la hausse des salaires à l'inflation sous-jacente.

Enfin, dans un contexte d'incertitudes mondiales accrues et de tensions commerciales importantes, des risques significatifs pèsent sur nos prévisions. Toute nouvelle escalade de ces facteurs pourrait prolonger le ralentissement du commerce mondial et de l'industrie manufacturière et provoquer une flambée de la prime de risque à l'échelle mondiale. Il faut avoir cela en tête, les risques ont très clairement augmenté.

La vigueur du premier trimestre reflète un certain nombre de facteurs favorables temporaires : la constitution de stocks au Royaume-Uni en prévision de la date initiale du Brexit ; c'est toujours pertinent de faire des stocks car l'affaire n'est pas finie, un hiver particulièrement doux qui a favorisé le secteur de la construction et un rebond des ventes de véhicules neufs après le creux enregistré durant la seconde partie de 2018.

Ces facteurs se sont probablement déjà amoindris au deuxième trimestre. Tant

Les données économiques que les enquêtes sur le climat de confiance ont continué d'apporter des nouvelles moins positives. Nous nous attendons donc à ce que la croissance de l'économie européenne ait ralenti au cours du second trimestre.

Ce rythme de croissance plus modéré devrait persister durant la seconde partie de l'année. En effet, le cycle baissier de la production manufacturière mondiale n'a vraisemblablement pas encore atteint son creux. En outre, les perspectives du commerce mondial sont assombries par la recrudescence du protectionnisme et de crispations entre les Etats-Unis et la Chine. Même si à Osaka, il y a eu une trêve, un sursis, ça ne dissipe pas toutes les possibilités.

Les dépenses des ménages européens devraient être soutenues par des marchés du travail toujours dynamiques, la baisse des prix de l'énergie et les mesures fiscales prévues dans certains États membres en 2019. En outre, des conditions de financement très attractives devraient prévaloir et soutenir l'investissement. Ceci dans la mesure où la BCE a récemment prolongé la période durant laquelle elle prévoyait de maintenir ses taux d'intérêt bas.

Malgré la stabilisation de la croissance mondiale au premier trimestre de cette année, tirée surtout par les économies avancées, la dynamique de l'économie mondiale reste faible. Les données disponibles confirment notamment que le ralentissement dans l'industrie manufacturière et le commerce s'est prolongé.

Pour les raisons que je viens d'expliquer, les perspectives de croissance de l'économie mondiale hors UE se sont donc affaiblies depuis le printemps. Ce graphique nous montre par exemple que l'indicateur global des directeurs d'achats a atteint son plus bas niveau de ces dernières années.

Au-delà du très court terme, l'activité économique mondiale devrait être soutenue par la vigueur des marchés du travail dans les économies avancées, des politiques monétaires plus accommodantes en Europe mais aussi dans le reste du monde, de la part de plusieurs grandes banques centrales et les mesures de relance en Chine. Cependant, nous pensons que ces facteurs de soutien seront insuffisants pour contenir les effets négatifs de l'intensification des tensions économiques et commerciales.

Dans l'ensemble, la croissance du PIB mondial hors UE devrait ralentir, passant de 3,8% en 2018 à 3,4% en 2019, avant de remonter modérément jusqu'à 3,6% en 2020.

L'effet de la recrudescence des dissensions commerciales et des incertitudes est en réalité plus prononcé sur le volume du commerce extérieur que sur le PIB mondial. Ainsi, au cours du dernier trimestre de 2018 et du premier trimestre de cette année, les volumes des importations mondiales hors UE se sont contractés.

Nous prévoyons dès lors une décélération marquée du commerce mondial hors UE dont la croissance passerait de 4,7% l'an dernier à 1,6% en 2019. Il s'agit là du taux de croissance le plus bas depuis 2016 et d'un taux nettement plus

faible que prévu au printemps.

Si le ralentissement du commerce mondial a eu un impact négatif disproportionné sur la zone euro en 2018, parce que nous sommes la zone économique mondiale la plus ouverte, mais la structure géographique de nos exportations semble toutefois nous être plus favorable cette année. Ce graphique vous montre que les importations mondiales à l'exclusion de la zone euro ont diminué de 0,6% au premier trimestre 2019, tandis que les marchés d'exportation de la zone euro ont augmenté de 1,1% sur la même période.

Pour l'année prochaine, et partant de l'hypothèse que les tensions commerciales ne s'accroissent plus, la croissance du commerce mondiale hors UE devrait s'établir aux alentours de 3%.

Mirroring developments at the global level, domestic survey data point to a protracted weakness in the manufacturing sector while the service sector remains relatively resilient. In particular, the European Commission's Economic Sentiment Indicator shows a continued deterioration in industry confidence since the beginning of 2018 while confidence in services moved sideways in recent months. The difference between both indicators is now the highest since the financial crisis. The euro area Purchasing Managers' Indices point to the same conclusion.

The resilience of domestic demand to the challenging external conditions partially explains the dichotomy between a resilient services sector and a declining manufacturing activity. It also illustrates the challenges faced by the European economy as protracted weakness in manufacturing may start to spill over to services.

Inflation in the euro area remains low. The inflation rate averaged 1.4% in the first half of 2019 and is set to ease further in the second half on the back of lower oil prices.

Overall, our forecast for headline inflation in the euro area is slightly revised down from 1.4% in the spring to 1.3% in both 2019 and 2020.

Core inflation, which excludes energy and unprocessed food prices, remained even lower despite solid wage growth and relatively robust private consumption growth. Thanks to positive labour market developments, growth in compensation per employee is relatively high compared to historical standards.

Yet firms are not fully translating higher labour costs in their selling prices. Instead, they seem to be absorbing higher wages at the cost of their profits rather than increasing prices. While this is good news for the purchasing power of households, the subdued demand outlook and elevated uncertainties may hamper investment growth.

As I mentioned in my introduction, the economy of each Member State is expected to grow in 2019. So we don't expect recession anywhere.

The growth map however continues to show wide differences across the EU, with most Central and Eastern European economies growing faster than core Member

States. Robust domestic demand fuelled by dynamic wage growth and the absorption of EU funds is helping to cushion these Central and Eastern economies from the slowdown of their main trading partners.

On the other hand, Germany and Italy are at the centre of the current softy patch. The German economy, which is particularly exposed to the foreign trade and manufacturing weakness, rebounded in the first quarter of this year thanks to a normalisation of automotive sales. It is however unlikely to sustain this stronger momentum in the following quarters as the cooling of economic sentiment has deepened in recent months. In contrast to depressed foreign demand and industrial output, domestic demand is proving resilient. This is spurred by solid wage growth and unemployment at a record low. Overall, growth in Germany is expected to reach 0.5% in 2019 and 1.4% in 2020, driven partly by a higher number of working days next year, and predicated on the assumption that global demand will gradually strengthen.

In Italy, growth has been underperforming for a few quarters now. The country left the technical recession in the first quarter of this year but is expected to have stagnated in the second quarter. Amid a challenging external environment, economic activity is not likely to rebound meaningfully before the end of the year. This rebound is largely expected to rest on private consumption, backed by lower energy prices and the new citizenship income scheme for low-income earners. Overall, the Italian economy is forecast to expand by 0.1% this year before picking up to 0.7% in 2020, also helped by a higher number of working days.

En France, la croissance devrait se maintenir par rapport aux trimestres précédents et s'établir à 1,3% cette année et 1,4% l'an prochain. Alors que l'affaiblissement de la demande extérieure devrait peser sur l'activité, la demande intérieure devrait être le principal moteur de la croissance française. Des conditions favorables sur le marché du travail et des mesures fiscales ont contribué à des gains significatifs du pouvoir d'achat des ménages depuis la fin de 2018, ce qui devrait se traduire progressivement par une hausse des dépenses.

In Spain, the better-than-expected outcome in the first quarter is likely to have persisted in the second quarter. As a result, our forecast for GDP growth this year has been revised up to 2.3%. In 2020, economic expansion is still forecast to ease to 1.9%. Employment growth should slow down but continue to expand robustly allowing for further reductions in the unemployment rate. Together with wage increases, this should support disposable income growth.

In the UK, stockpiling and other actions taken by businesses to mitigate the uncertainties over the date and nature of the country's exit from the EU supported growth in the first quarter. The opposite is set to have happened in the second quarter when these actions unwound. Based on a purely technical assumption of status quo in terms of trading relations between the EU and the UK, GDP is forecast to grow by 1.3% this year and next year. Private consumption is set to be the main growth driver this year, while business investment growth is expected to remain weak as Brexit-related uncertainty persists. Next year, an improvement in net trade is expected to offset

slower domestic demand growth.

The economic outlook remains subject to a number of interconnected downside risks.

An extended US-China confrontation, together with elevated uncertainty around US trade policy, could protract the current downturn in global trade and manufacturing with a possible negative impact on other regions and sectors.

Fears about such developments could also trigger a shift in global risk sentiment at times when valuations appear stretched across many asset classes. This could lead to rapid tightening of global financial conditions, with knock on effects on some vulnerable emerging markets.

Risks related to the recent intensification of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have increased, with a potential significant impact on oil prices.

On the domestic front, persisting policy uncertainty, protracted weakness in manufacturing and downbeat business confidence could start weighing more severely on the services sector. The dichotomy we observe might vanish. This would weigh on investment and employment and undermine the resilience of domestic demand.

Finally, our forecast are again prepared under a technical assumption of status quo in trade relations between the EU and the UK. Any failure to secure a smooth Brexit would impact economic growth, although more so in the UK than in the rest of the EU.

To conclude, this Summer Forecast shows a European economy continuing to expand against a difficult global backdrop.

All EU countries are set to grow again in both 2019 and 2020, with the strong labour market supporting demand.

However, given the numerous risks to the outlook, we must intensify our efforts to further strengthen the resilience of our economies – and of the euro area as a whole. This is why euro area reforms are more necessary than ever and need to be really ambitious.

And now, I am ready to take your questions.

Questions and Answers: European Commission announces winner of Loi 130

architectural competition

Today, the Commission announced the results of an architectural competition launched in the spring of 2018 to identify the best solution to replace part of its ageing offices in the European quarter. The winner is a consortium of five companies specialised in the provision of architectural and engineering services: RAFAEL DE LA-HOZ ARQUITECTOS, Spain (Team leader); Perkins+Will UK Limited, UK; Latz + Partner Landscape Architecture Urban Planning, Germany; TECNICA Y PROYECTOS S.A., Spain; and, MC2 ESTUDIO DE INGENIERIA S.L.U., Spain.

The second prize goes to the consortium 2PORTZAMPARC, France (Team leader); Florence Mercier Paysagiste, France; and, ARTELIA Bâtiment & Industrie, France.

The third prize has been awarded to BUR0 II & ARCHI+I / B2Ai, Belgium (Team leader); C.F. Møller Danmark A/S, Denmark; DELVA Landscape Architects, Netherlands; and, VK Engineering, Belgium.

What is the vision behind the Loi 130 project?

The European Commission is continuously looking for more efficient ways of working that make the most out of every euro spent and are environmentally-friendly. The Commission is also supporting the efforts of the Brussels-Capital Region to make the European quarter a more attractive place to live, work and visit. Through the Loi 130 project, which is being developed hand-in-hand with the Brussels authorities, the Commission is playing its part in this endeavour.

The idea behind the Loi 130 project is to identify a forward-looking, innovative, sustainable and cost-efficient solution to replace the aging Commission premises at rue de la Loi 130. The new premises will combine offices with facilities accessible to the wider public like restaurants, shops and public spaces with green areas. The project seeks to contribute to the livelihood of the neighbourhood and to attract more visitors and residents of Brussels to this part of the city.

How does this project fit into the efforts of the Brussels authorities to make the European quarter a nicer place to work, live and visit?

In 2008, the Brussels-Capital Region adopted a masterplan (Schéma directeur pour le Quartier européen) to give a new impulse to the European Quarter. It then organised an urban planning competition that resulted in the plan [Projet Urbain Loi](#). The project lays down the vision of the Brussels-Capital Region to turn the European quarter into a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

The Loi 130 architectural competition seeks to identify a solution to upgrade the oldest Commission buildings in the area, in line with the vision of [Projet Urbain Loi](#). The competition has been organised hand-in-hand with the

Brussels-Capital Region. The Commission will continue its collaboration with the Brussels and Belgian authorities during the next stages.

Where exactly will the new complex be located?

The new buildings are part of [Projet Urbain Loi](#) and will be built on the site located between rue de la Loi, chaussée d'Etterbeek, rue Joseph II and rue de Spa.

How much will this project cost?

At this stage, it is hard to give a precise cost estimate. Preliminary estimates show that, by concentrating staff and functions in modern and more efficient buildings, the Commission will generate savings compared to renovating its existing buildings or renting alternative office space elsewhere in the European quarter.

What happens next?

Now that the competition is over, the preparatory works should start. This includes negotiating the service contract with the winner of the first prize, developing the design in detail and obtaining all necessary building permits.

When will construction works start and when are they expected to finish?

The first phase of the works, towards chaussée d'Etterbeek, is expected to start in 2025. Once the first phase is finalised, the second phase, towards rue de Spa, can start. The entire complex should be finished by 2035.

How did you ensure a fair and impartial selection process during the competition?

The European Commission organised the Loi 130 competition with the objective of selecting the best possible project that responds to its needs and fits into the development plan for the upgrade of the European quarter as put forward by the Brussels-Capital region – [Projet Urbain Loi \(PUL\)](#). To guarantee a fair process, the Commission followed the internationally recognised standards of the International Union of Architects (UIA/Unesco) – the only global organisation that represents architects worldwide – which also formally endorsed the competition. In line with these rules for example, the identity of all participants was only revealed after the jury had decided who the winners were.

The jury consisted of renowned architects and engineers, as well as representatives of the European Commission and of the Brussels-Capital Region. Through the composition of the jury, technical expertise in the field and an in-depth knowledge of the functioning of the EU institutions and of the region were combined to guarantee that the best projects were selected.

The architects and engineers who participated in the jury meetings were Olivier Bastin, Architect (Belgium); Peter Benuska, Master architect of the European Commission; Paul van Bergen, Engineer (Netherlands); Kristiaan Borret, Master architect of the Brussels-Capital Region; Brian Cody, Engineer

(Ireland); Almut Gruentuch-Ernst, Architect (Germany); Dominique Lyon, Architect and UIA representative (France); and, Monica von Schmalensee, Architect (Sweden).

For More Information:

- [The European Commission announces winner of Loi 130 Architectural competition](#) (10/07/2019)
 - [Website of the Loi 130 Architectural competition](#)
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[European Commission announces winner of 'Loi 130' architectural competition](#)

Today, the Commission announced the results of an architectural competition launched in the spring of 2018 to identify the best solution to replace part of its ageing offices in the European quarter. The winner is a consortium of five companies specialised in the provision of architectural and engineering services: RAFAEL DE LA-HOZ ARQUITECTOS, Spain (Team leader); Perkins+Will UK Limited, UK; Latz + Partner Landscape Architecture Urban Planning, Germany; TECNICA Y PROYECTOS S.A., Spain; and, MC2 ESTUDIO DE INGENIERIA S.L.U., Spain.

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** in charge of budget and human resources said: *“Congratulations to the winners of our first international architectural competition in Brussels. The winning design proposes solid, innovative, efficient and forward-looking solutions to replace our old buildings on the Loi 130 site.”*

Rudi Vervoort, Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital region, said: *“We are very pleased with the outcome of the competition. Thanks to very constructive cooperation between the European Commission and the Brussels-Capital Region, this emblematic competition resulted in a project that represents a significant milestone in the implementation of our own Projet Urbain Loi that aims at finding sustainable, energy efficient solutions for the redevelopment of the European quarter of Brussels”.*

Architect Monica von Schmalensee, who chaired the jury together with Commissioner Oettinger, said *“Architecturally this complex and challenging competition fulfilled very high standards with three innovative winning designs. As a jury we especially valued the large and accessible public spaces the 1st prize winner will create and how the buildings integrate into the urban context. This will bring benefits not only to staff working there but also to residents and people passing by.”*

The winning project was chosen based on a decision of the competition jury

composed of internationally renowned architects and engineers, as well as representatives of the Commission and the Brussels-Capital Region.

In line with the competition requirements, the winning project offers a forward-looking, innovative, sustainable and cost-efficient solution to replace the aging Commission premises at rue de la Loi 130. In addition, the winning project was chosen on the basis of it being the best fit for the development plan for the European quarter adopted by the Brussels-Capital region in 2008 (*Projet Urbain Loi (PUL)*).

In line with the proposal of the jury, the Commission has decided to award the second prize to the consortium 2PORTZAMPARC, France (Team leader); Florence Mercier Paysagiste, France; and, ARTELIA Bâtiment & Industrie, France.

The third prize has been awarded to BUR0 II & ARCHI+I / B2Ai, Belgium (Team leader); C.F. Møller Danmark A/S, Denmark; DELVA Landscape Architects, Netherlands; and, VK Engineering, Belgium.

Next steps

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The first phase of the works, towards chaussée d'Etterbeek, is expected to start in 2025. Once the first phase is finalised, the second phase, towards rue de Spa, can start. The entire complex should be finished by 2035.

Background

The European Commission is continuously looking for more efficient ways of working that make the most out of every euro spent and are environmentally-friendly. With this in mind, and in line with the plans of the Brussels-Capital Region, in the spring of 2018 the Commission launched an architectural competition seeking to identify the best solution to replace part of its ageing offices in the European quarter.

The Commission launched the competition – which received an endorsement by the International Union of Architects (UIA/Unesco) – in March 2018. Teams of architects, landscape architects, building services engineers and structural engineers from around the world were invited to come forward with their vision for the future project.

Interested participants had until May 2018 to express their interest. The pre-selected participants then had between August and November 2018 to create their design proposals and submit them to the jury. The jury, chaired by Commissioner **Oettinger** and architect Monica von Schmalensee, met in January 2019. They decided to admit 9 out of 28 competing designs to the second phase of the competition. Participants then had until April 2019 to refine their design proposals. In late June 2019, the competition jury proposed to the Commission who should win the first, second and third prize. The Commission has followed the jury's decision and has today formally awarded the first,

second and third prizes.

Once completed, the new complex will host offices for at least 5,250 people, two childcare centres, a visitors' centre to welcome 345,000 people per year, 3,000 square meters of restaurants and shops, and public spaces with green areas. The new buildings are expected to generate 50% less CO2 emissions and consume 70% less energy compared to the Commission's existing offices. By concentrating staff and functions in modern and more efficient buildings the Commission will generate savings compared to renovating its existing buildings or renting alternative office space elsewhere in the European Quarter.

For More Information:

- [Questions and Answers: the European Commission announces winner of Loi 130 Architectural competition](#) (10/07/2019)
- [Website of the Loi 130 Architectural competition](#)