



ARCHITECTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF LUXEMBOURG CITY DURING THE 1960s

Politico-economic influence on the architectural and urban development of Luxembourg and its representation as a European city

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ABSTRACT

During the 1950s and 1960s, Luxembourg underwent a major economic-political transformation that allowed the country to position itself as an internationally recognised financial hub and centre for European affairs. The degree of influence that this economic-political evolution of Luxembourg had on the architectural and urban development of Luxembourg City marks the focal point of this thesis. Two iconic projects realised during the 1960s serve as case studies: The Grande-Duchesse Charlotte Bridge that functioned as the cornerstone of the city's urban expansion, and the Alcide-de-Gasperi Tower, which represents Luxembourg's integration into European affairs. The architectural and urban transformation during the 60s in Luxembourg City, was mainly driven by the political integration into European affairs, aiming to fulfil the city's role as European capital. Fuelled by the rivalry between the three European capitals Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg, architecture served as a political national branding tool, resulting in international recognition and economic growth.

With its participation in the European Union, Luxembourg needed to create a strong image and international recognition, supported by its architectural infrastructure. Today, the European project is still incessantly growing, and Luxembourg as one of its capital cities is required to grow synchronously and adapt its image to contemporary ideologies. At the core of Luxembourgish politics remains the ambition to modernise the city's infrastructure in order to perpetuate its strong position within the European Union.

Keywords: European capital, Pont Grand-Duchesse Charlotte, Alcide-de-Gasperi Tower, Luxembourg city, urban growth, architectural transformation, image, Strasbourg, Brussels

INTRODUCTION

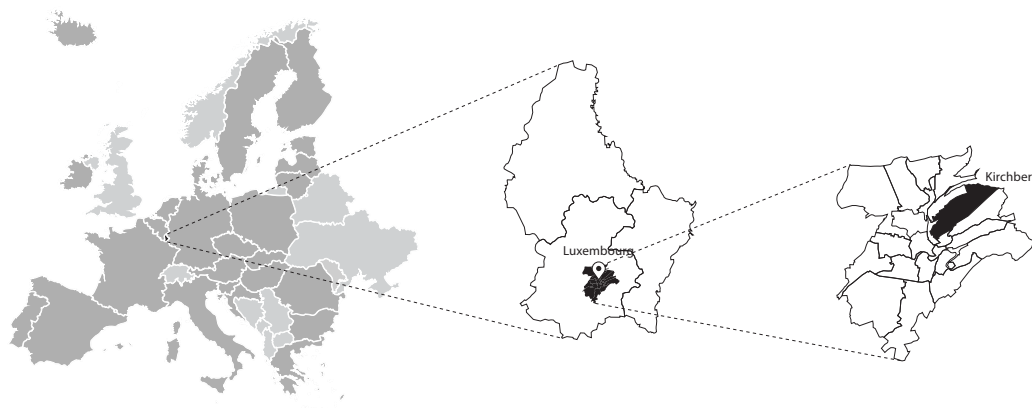


Fig. 1: Map locating Luxembourg, Luxembourg city and the Kirchberg district (Gina Goedert, 9 April 2022, *Location of Luxembourg, Luxembourg city and the Kirchberg district*, Graphic)

The centre of discussion of the thesis focuses on the spatial steps that Luxembourg's officials took in order to make Luxembourg city a European capital and how these initiatives have been beneficial for the image of the Grand Duchy.

Located in the heart of Europe, between Belgium, France, and Germany, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg serves, with its multilingualism, as a meeting point for cultural and economic movements. It represents one of the most important financial centres worldwide. Being home to a constantly growing population with 47%¹ non-nationals including more than a hundred different nationalities,² Luxembourg's diversity applies to its demographic profile and architectural and urban patterns. Today, the capital's urban fabric consists of an agglomeration of solitaire building structures ranging from old historic and baroque buildings from the 19th century to recently established contemporary constructions that complete the diverse cityscape built on top of the remains of the ancient fortress.

Since the completion of the post-war reconstruction in 1953 of spatial, social, and economic infrastructures, Luxembourg's national economy has experienced constant and continuing development.³ The origin of Luxembourg's rapid growth can be traced back to the transitional period during the 1960th from a small country whose economy mainly driven by its steel and coil industry into a worldwide well-recognised finance and banking centre representing nowadays one of the major hubs in European affairs. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and its capital exemplify a very successful case of economic transformation, building on the sectoral diversification from the creative industry to European institutions and the global

¹ STATEC, "Évolution de la population totale, luxembourgeoise et étrangère au 1er janvier", Lu'stat, [https://lustrat.statec.lu/vis?fs\[0\]=Thèmes%2C1%7CPopulation%20et%20emploi%23B%23%7CEtat%20de%20la%20population%23B1%23&pg=0&fc=Thèmes&df\[ds\]=release&df\[id\]=DF_B1115&df\[ag\]=LU1&df\[vs\]=1.0&pd=2015%2C2021&dq=](https://lustrat.statec.lu/vis?fs[0]=Thèmes%2C1%7CPopulation%20et%20emploi%23B%23%7CEtat%20de%20la%20population%23B1%23&pg=0&fc=Thèmes&df[ds]=release&df[id]=DF_B1115&df[ag]=LU1&df[vs]=1.0&pd=2015%2C2021&dq=). (Accessed April 2, 2022)

² Emile Haag, *The Rise of Luxembourg from Independence to Success* (Luxembourg: Editions Ernster, 2021), p.15

³ Ibid, p.151

financial market.⁴ Correspondingly, the spatial development reflects the hegemonic position of Luxembourg. Apart from a mere administrative and political level, the transformation symbolises the beginning of a new era for Luxembourg's architecture and urban development.

This thesis focuses on Luxembourg city's spatial transformation in the 1960s. It aims to identify the impact that Luxembourg's economic and political evolution had on its architectural and urban development and how this spatial evolution represented Luxembourg City as a European city. Investigating the correlation between economy, politics, and architecture marks the focal point of this analysis. The manifestation of Luxembourg's upswing in urban expansion, the architectural expression, and how the new image of the city represented Luxembourg as a European city will be studied by employing significant architectural projects built during that time. The "Red Bridge" (Grand-Duchesse Charlotte bridge) marked the cornerstone of the city's expansion and urban development on the Kirchberg tableland and enabled the creation of a new European quarter by connecting it to the city centre. The "Tower Building" (Alcide-de-Gasperi tower), a seat for multiple European institutions and the first building of the European quarter, functioned as a modernist landmark to create a new image and prove Luxembourg's capability in fulfilling the function as a European capital internationally.

The study begins with a contextual timeline that identifies critical, pivotal events from the Second World War until the late 60s and the involved decision-makers responsible for Luxembourg's economic upswing leading to its architectural transformation. Subsequently, the case studies will highlight the influence, function, and expression of the Grande-Duchesse Charlotte bridge and its importance for the urban development, followed by the Alcide-de-Gasperi tower and the implicated architectural transformation. Furthermore, the study will compare the urban strategies that Strasbourg and Brussels conducted to compete next to Luxembourg as European capitals and will highlight the architectural importance of this rivalry. Finally, the representation of Luxembourg on an international level through the creation of an image utilising architectural structures will be investigated and compared to today's continuous modernisation of the city to perpetuate its strong position in Europe.

The thesis will answer the following research question: How did the politico-economic situation influence Luxembourg's architectural and urban development and representation as a European city?

⁴ Emile Haag, *The Rise of Luxembourg*, p.15

1.1. METHODOLOGY

The primary research methods for this thesis are based on the review of literature, archival, photographic, and newspaper articles. Governmental documents and reports are used to prove political statements and facts. Literature, books, and archival documents are predominantly written in French and German, the two official languages of Luxembourg at the focus period. (The Luxembourgish language became the third official language in 1984.) Sources were translated in order to create a thorough comprehension of the historical context of the architectural revolution in Luxembourg. This thesis will fill the English literature gap about architecture and urban development in Luxembourg during the 60th in the context of national and European politics.

A historical timeline will serve as a tool for recreating the chronological order of events that initiated the progressive transformation of Luxembourg's economy and spatial composition and help understand Luxembourg's entrance into European affairs. For the initial phase of the study, two case studies, the Alcide de Gasperi Tower and the Grande-Duchesse Charlotte Bridge are investigated to relate the architectural transformation to specific projects that will reveal the intention behind the building's expressions, functions, and aesthetics. An analysis of pictures from the analysed periods will help understand the spirit of the time. Field visits to Luxembourg's European quarter and to the projects mentioned in the thesis will allow an understanding of the urban context, the current importance and appearance of the buildings, and the connection between the historical and current spatial structure.

The result of this investigation will serve as a viable material for architecture historians, practitioners, and students operating within Luxembourg's architectural context.

1.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

The existing literature on Luxembourg city's transformation following the post-war reconstruction and uprising economy mostly focuses on Luxembourg in the 1950^t.

Emile Haag in "The Rise of Luxembourg from Independence to Success", comprises a substantial historic portrait of Luxembourg during the past two hundred years. The book serves the understanding of the historical context of Luxembourg during the after-war period that led to the economic and political upswing during the 50th. It outlines the key personalities and related European connections and provides information about the events that led to the foundation of the ECSC, and why the institution's seat was based in Luxembourg city. This portrait of Luxembourg mainly focuses on the political, social and historic aspects.

The book "Luxembourg – Architektur in Luxembourg", comprises several different essays about the architectural evolution of Luxembourg with focus on the 1950s. The essay "Luxembourg, an exception?" recites the importance of the steel industry for the county's economy and its influence on the upswing and evolution towards a major international important finance centre starting from 1950. In addition, this book provides another view of how Luxembourg became the first European capital, how this was influenced by the modernist

architecture and how the post-world war reconstruction provided a basis for the physical transformation of the city.

“The capital of Europe: Architecture and Urban Planning for the European Union” by Carola Hein particularly highlights the architectural development of European cities in the interest of European politics. It debates on the different visions that the cities had for a European capital and especially compares these visions to the real situation of the European capital Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. Especially it highlights the influence that the EU had on the architectural and urban development of those cities, analysing how European quarters were planned. However one of her main arguments is that even if the European politics influences the architectural development, the cities governments rather focussed on the presentation of their own national image, rather than imagining and acting in favour of a European city.

This thesis combines the different topics of history, architecture urban planning and politics and analyses the interrelations between these different fields. In addition, it not only shows how European politics influences architecture and urban development, but also highlights how architecture served as a nation branding tool. Finally, Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg and the related rivalry since 1958 about their role as European capitals are compared, highlighting the role of spatial and architectural planning in this competition. A comparison to today’s relation fills the gap of literature in the field of Luxembourgish architecture.

1. TRANSFORMATION OF LUXEMBOURG: KEY EVENTS AND INITIATING DECISION-MAKERS (1944 – 1970)

In order to comprehend the principles and motivations behind the transforming fifties and sixties' architecture in Luxembourg, the radical change in European and global politics since 1945 as an outcome of the Second World War requires investigation.

Before the Second World War, Luxembourg's foreign policy was based on national survival rather than general economic and political interests. However, the events of the Second World War showed the country's political and economic weaknesses, requiring Luxembourg to build economic alliances. Joseph Bech, Luxembourg's foreign minister at that time, was a fierce believer of a unified Europe that would prevent another break-apart of European countries. Therefore, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands signed the Benelux Customs Union in 1944.⁵ The agreement was the first manifestation of international economic incorporation since the Second World War in Europe, functioning as an exemplary model for future European integration and unions.⁶ Furthermore, the Benelux Union served as a diplomatic application tool for the Marshall plan allowing the three countries to play a more significant role on an international level, during the negotiations of the Treaty of Brussels in 1948 and towards its common neighbour Germany.⁷ As a recipient and member of the Marshall Plan, Luxembourg fully recovered its steel industry, a crucial sector for the further development of Luxembourg's economy, and extended the Findel airport to international standards as an example of infrastructural improvement.⁸

From 1950 on, after the completion of the post-war reconstruction, a time of economic rebound commenced in Luxembourg thanks to the reconstructed steel industry, the central pillar of the national economy.⁹ Besides the Benelux agreement, 1951 marked Luxembourg's entry into European cooperation. On 23 April 1951, the Treaty of Paris established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) as first European institution, following the idea of Jean Monnet.¹⁰ Presented by Robert Schuman, a French foreign minister with Luxemburgish roots, the so-called Schuman Plan would later politically unify the coal and steel industry of Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany.¹¹ Luxembourg had a significant interest in joining the ECSC as, at the time of its formation, its coal and steel industry was closely dependent on those of its neighbouring countries. In addition, the local ARBED company managed to establish itself as the third biggest steel enterprise worldwide. Thus, the industrialisation of Luxembourg was solely possible through

⁵ Haag, *The Rise of Luxembourg*, p.149

⁶ Katharina Garvert-Huijnen, „Die BeNeLux-Zusammenarbeit – Ein Vorbild für europäische Integration?“, *WWU Münster*, July 2007, <https://www.uni-muenster.de/NiederlandeNet/nl-wissen/geschichte/europa/vorbild.html> (Accessed Monday, Mar. 14, 2022)

⁷ Duco Hellema, *Neutraliteit & Vrijhandel. De geschiedenis van den Nederlandse buitenlandse betrekkingen*, Spectrum, Utrecht 2001, S. 161.

⁸ Haag, *The Rise of Luxembourg*, p.149

⁹ Mario Hirsch, „Luxembourg, une exception?“ in *Luxembourg – Architecture au Luxembourg*, (Vienna: Verlag Anton Pustet, 2001), p.19

¹⁰ „Treaty of Paris“, *European Parliament*, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/the-parliament-and-the-treaties/treaty-of-paris>, (Accessed April 4, 2022)

¹¹ „Schuman declaration May 1050“, *European Union*, European Commission, https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/1945-59/schuman-declaration-may-1950_en, (Accessed March 14, 2022)



Fig. 2: Map of Europe, showing Luxembourg, and its relation to its European neighbours (Gina Goedert, 9 April 2022, *Map of Europe*, Graphic)

its openness toward foreign countries concerning the creation of common financial capital, workforce, and market structures.¹²

In July 1952, debates were taking place in Paris regarding the location of the seat for the newly established organisation. After a long night of negotiations, Joseph Bech instantaneously proposed Luxembourg as a headquarters for the new institution, which was promptly accepted by his counterparts, most presumably because of their fatigue from the long debates.¹³ Consequently, Luxembourg became the seat of the ECSC, its Advisory Committee, and the Court of Justice, thus becoming the first temporary European capital. This decision marks a crucial historical moment for Luxembourg's economy and politics, which would prospectively significantly boost the Grand Duchy on a cultural and social level. At the same time, Strasbourg has designated the site of the European Parliamentary Assembly, with its secretariat based in Luxembourg.¹⁴

¹² Hirsch, *Luxembourg, une exception?*, p.19

¹³ "Les institutions européennes au Luxembourg", *Luxembourg Let's make it happen*, Le gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, 20 Mai 2020, <https://luxembourg.public.lu/fr/societe-et-culture/ouverture-internationale/institutions.html> (Accessed March 10, 2022)

¹⁴ "Luxembourg, European capital and seat of EU institutions", *Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*, <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/en/la-presidence/luxembourg-et-ue/luxembourg-siege-institutions-europeennes/index.html>, (Accessed April 1, 2022)

Since the formation of the ECSC in 1952, the permanent localisation of the seats of European organisations was the object of discussions regarding the creation of centralised European capital. Especially since the foundation of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) through the Treaty of Rome on 19 March 1958.¹⁵ These new organisations were supposed to operate instantaneously, creating the need of being located within a city with existing infrastructures, buildings, and urban frameworks. Consequently, a competition was launched to find a permanent European city for the clustering of all organisations. The selection of a headquarter for the different European bodies was potentially very influential for the chosen city. The participation in the competition offered the opportunity to expand national political, economic, and administrative structures to attain economic development, international recognition, and resolve local problems. Luxembourg, which has experienced this potential since providing the seat for the ECSC, entered the competition in 1958 to oppose the denunciation of the city's provincialism and scarcity of metropolitan character that occurred since the ECSC started to operate in the capital city.¹⁶

In the application document from 1958, the "Conseil Communal du Luxembourg" primarily highlighted the potential of Luxembourg's multilingualism, diversity, unusually high openness towards foreign countries and stressed its geographic location between two of the Great Powers in Europe, France and Germany. Furthermore, the document praises the availability of a ready-to-use urban plan that illustrated the construction of a new administrative city on the Kirchberg plateau, which would ultimately serve the European Commission's interest. At that time, the Grand Duchy had a population of approximately 300.000 inhabitants,¹⁷ and it was eager to host and incorporate ten thousand European employees and their families while financing and establishing the necessary infrastructure and buildings.¹⁸ Joseph Bech stated at an international conference in September 1957: "Luxembourg is making preparations to respond, if needed, to any request that the other governments may have, in the common interest of the Europe that we are in the process of building.", reflecting the willingness and dedication of Luxembourg city in keeping its role as a European capital.¹⁹

Eventually, the European Council decided in 1958 to retain the temporary locations of Luxembourg and Strasbourg and to add Brussels as a third provisional headquarter for the EEC, Euratom, and later also for the European Commission (EC), creating a polycentric and decentralised capital of Europe. During the same year, Pierre Werner, a great supporter of European relations, became the Prime Minister of Luxembourg and was confronted with the concerns of reducing the loss of the ECSC to Brussels and keeping a sizeable share of the European institutions in Luxembourg city.²⁰ Subsequently, the Kirchberg project was launched with the construction of the Grande-Duchesse Charlotte Bridge (called "Red Bridge" in the

¹⁵ "Treaty of Rome", *European Parliament*, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/the-parliament-and-the-treaties/treaty-of-rome>, (Accessed April 4, 2022)

¹⁶ Carola Hein, *The Capital of Europe: Architecture and Urban Planning for the European Union*, (Westport, London: Praeger Publishers, 2004), p.79

¹⁷ "Luxembourg Population", *Worldometer*, <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/luxembourg-population/>, (Accessed March 15, 2022)

¹⁸ Hein, *The Capital of Europe*, p.69

¹⁹ Joseph Petit, *Luxembourg - Siège des Institutions Européennes*, (Luxembourg: Bourg-Bourg, 1958)

²⁰ Haag, *The Rise of Luxembourg*, p.156

vernacular). The Alcide-de-Gasperi Tower (called "Tower Building" by the population) represented simply a selection of exemplary urban and architectural projects reflecting the evolution of Luxembourg. From this moment onward, the capital city experienced a significant transformation involving multiple outstanding projects that ought to represent European integration and create a new image of the city.²¹

²¹ Haag, *The Rise of Luxembourg*, p.157

2. PONT GRANDE – DUCHESSE CHARLOTTE: IMPORTANCE FOR THE URBAN EXPANSION OF LUXEMBOURG CITY (1957-1964)

During its thousand-year history until the early twentieth century, Luxembourg City's expansion has been generally spread in three directions, most prominently towards the West. The Eastern plateau remained largely rural; the 85 m deep Alzette Valley, surrounded by craggy rock faces, separated the Kirchberg plateau from the city and prevented the urban development from spreading to the East.²²

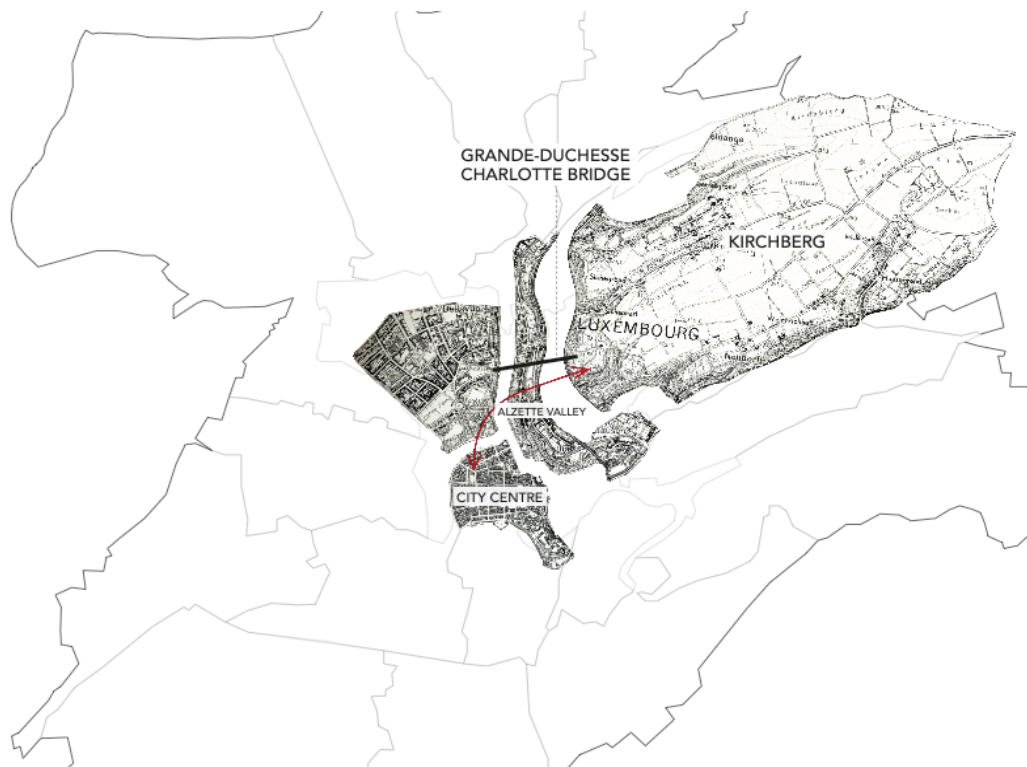


Fig. 3.: Map of Luxembourg City, highlighting the Kirchberg plateau, Alzette Valley, the location of the bridge and the proximity to the city centre. (Gina Goedert, *Location of the Grande-Duchesse Charlotte Bridge*, 9 April 2022, Illustration)

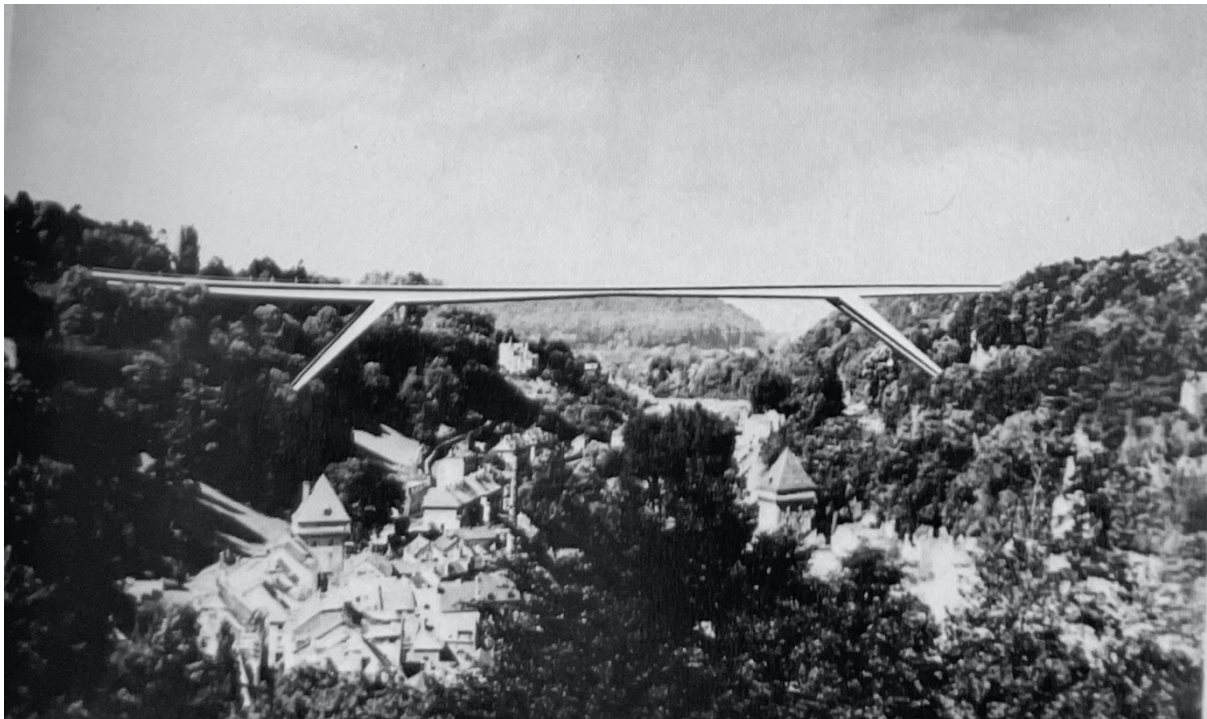
Luxembourg's urban transformation dates back to the 1950s, whereas the city's expansion was launched as part of the political modernisation strategy. This strategy manifests itself in connecting a 365-hectare area on the Kirchberg plateau. Luxembourg was able to proclaim the availability of open land, which would allow the agglomeration of political and economic institutions in the city, even if the outcome of the competition would spread the institutions over several cities. As a major development project for Luxembourg City, the development of the Kirchberg proved that the country was a serious participant and competitor in the headquarters discussion.²³ Besides providing a vast amount of space for office buildings, the Kirchberg plateau offered more than enough space for housing to accommodate several ten thousand expected employees of the European organisations, including their families and any newly founded organisation. Interesting for the European Council was the fact that the new

²² Paul Weitz, "Brückenschlag in die neue Zukunft", *Luxemburger Wort* 116, 171 20. June 1963: p.4-5

²³ Petit, *Luxembourg - Siège des Institutions Européennes*

district allowed for free architectural and urban development which would allow the integration and imposing of European ideas on the quartier's development.²⁴ The Kirchberg district was intended to not only open new economic perspectives for Luxembourg but was meant to also represent a future-oriented European city. Consequently, Luxembourg's officials were primarily concerned with the rapid implementation of the new city district to convince the European Committee to keep Luxembourg City as a European capital.

Before the urbanisation process could fully begin, fast and good connections to the construction sites that enable an efficient working process must be granted. In August 1957, Luxembourg launched with the national road administration a competition for the design of a bridge that would connect the Kirchberg plateau with the city centre, which would ensure rapid urbanisation.²⁵ Eventually, 70 projects from 37 companies were submitted. The evaluation and selection of a winning design for the bridge mainly focused on aesthetics and incorporating the landscape. Hubert Schumacher, the state architect, claimed that the bridge should stand for Luxembourg's technical progress; it should be slightly ahead of time, contrasting the Roman arch of the existing Adolphe Bridge with a straight-lined design as a symbol of modernism. The design must correspond to the existing era, and it should be innovative and be able to represent Luxembourg even sixty years after its completion presumably.²⁶ The view of the Alzette Valley shall remain preserved and not be disturbed by support columns or arches, although the distance of 355 meters would assume the necessity for such a construction.²⁷



²⁴ Hein, *The Capital of Europe*, p.80

²⁵ Weitz, „Brückenschlag in die neue Zukunft“

²⁶ Luxembourg Center for Architecture, *The Red Bridge – Investigation #4: Modernity – Loved, Hated or Ignored?*, (Luxembourg: Luxembourg Center for Architecture, 2014), p.92

²⁷ Weitz, „Brückenschlag in die neue Zukunft“

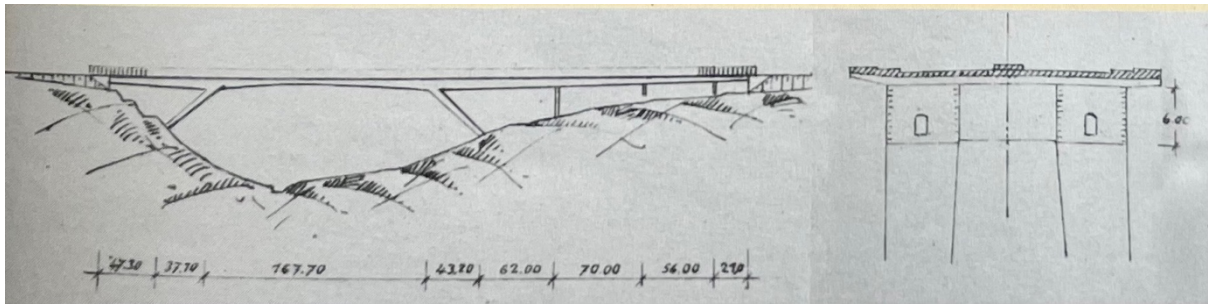


Fig. 4 &5. : Conceptual design drawing and collage of Egon Jux's design proposal for the Red Bridge. (*The Red Bridge – Investigation #4: Modernity – Loved, Hated or Ignored?*, Luxembourg: Luxembourg Center for Architecture, 2014, collage & conceptual drawing)

The winning design of German engineer Egon Jux, presented a steel girder bridge supported by diagonal abutments that fulfilled Luxembourg's function as a sponsor of outstanding technological design.²⁸ The delicate design shows a simple and elegant linear design with a thickness of only 2,8 meters in the middle and 6,6 meters on the abutment points. Its two trusses are arranged in an inclined way to minimise the obstruction of the valley.²⁹ Egon Jux was a student and assistant of Le Corbusier and was further influenced by world-famous architects such as Oscar Niemeyer and Walter Gropius, which is why he understood the assignment of creating modernist architectural landmarks. The bridge's constructions were an important identity-forming infrastructure project, with the Red Bridge becoming one of his flagship projects next to the Köhlbrand Bridge in Hamburg.³⁰

The colouration of the bridge was a significant aspect of the final design, it ought to demonstrate Luxembourg City as a modern European metropole. The length and finesse of the workpiece should contain a "colour of such freakiness that one can name its colour as easily as one can describe its form" while harmonising with the colours of the foliage of the surrounding environment.³¹ The first requirement was fully accomplished with the chosen red colour, resulting in the bridge's nickname "Red Bridge" among the population and creating one of the accentuated highlights in Luxembourg City's landscape. Whether the colour blends in with the natural landscape remains a subjective matter of opinion, yet on a representative level, the chosen colour undoubtedly fulfils its function.

²⁸ Hein, *The Capital of Europe*, p.117

²⁹ Ferdinand Kinnen, „Construction du Pont Grande-Duchesse Charlotte á Luxembourg“, *Revue Technique* 4, October-December 1967

³⁰ „Immer kühner, immer schöner“, *Der Spiegel*, Nr.38, September 15th 1974, <https://www.spiegel.de/kultur/immer-kuehner-immer-schoener-a-d9d61133-0002-0001-0000-000041652306?context=issue>, (Accessed: 14 April 2022) p.128

³¹ Peinture Freitag, „Étude de Couleur pour le Pont de la Grande Duchesse Charlotte á Luxembourg“, *The Red Bridge – Investigation #4: Modernity – Loved, Hated or Ignored?*, (Luxembourg: Luxembourg Center for Architecture, 2014), p.114

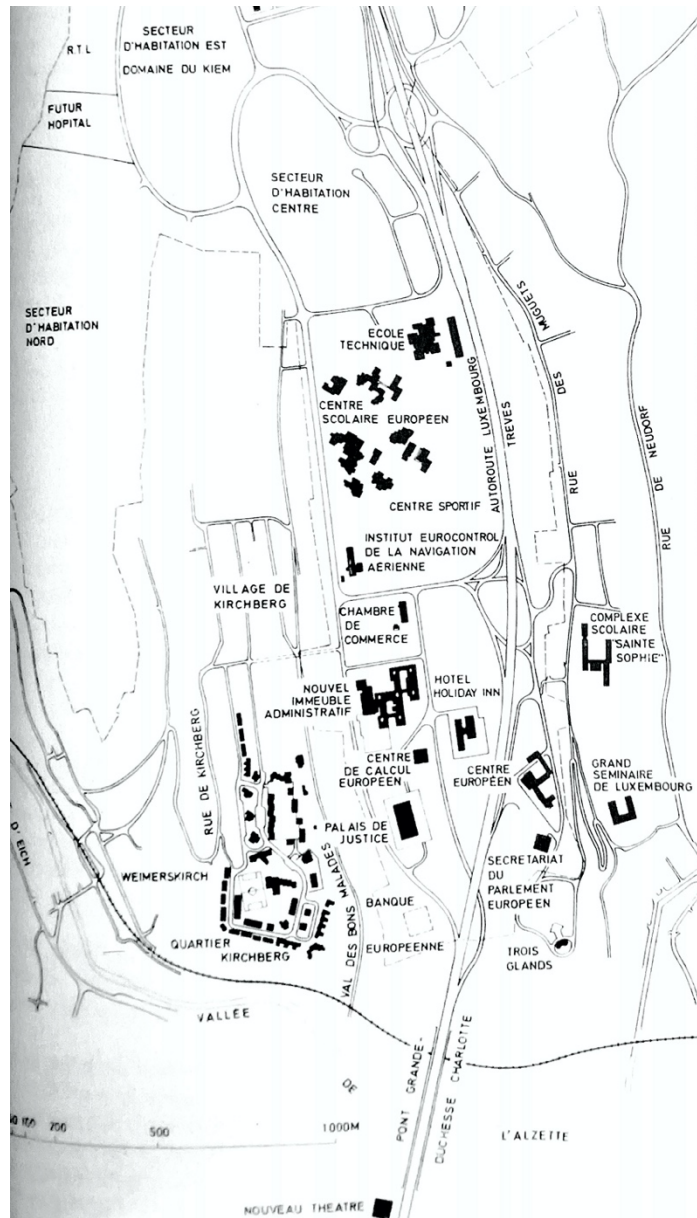


Fig. 5.: Urban plan of the Kirchberg from 1967 (Kirchberg Plateau Planning Project 1967, 19 *The Red Bridge – Investigation #4: Modernity – Loved, Hated or Ignored?*, Luxembourg: Luxembourg Center for Architecture, 2014, map)

For the bridge project, a credit of 160 million Swiss Francs was allocated to realise the bridge, accounting for 3% of the Luxembourgish State's expenditure at that time. The comparison to the Adolph Bridge, which accounted for 13% of the State budget with 1.4 million in 1904,³² clearly shows the evolution and uprising nature of Luxembourg's economy since the beginning of the century. The bridge also served as a showpiece and urban symbol to the national government, similar to the Pont Adolph above the Pétrusse valley, which was built to connect the inner city with the Gare district. It served as a symbol of the country's independence.³³ The new bridge was supposed to emphasise the step into a new European

³² Weitz, "Brückenschlag in die neue Zukunft", 1963

³³ Hein, *The Capital of Europe* p.117

future and the country's constant intellectual and physical expansion. It was named after Grande-Duchesse Charlotte, who guided the country through wars to prosperity and from spatial confinement to uniqueness and independence. Eventually, with a triple inauguration the bridge was opened on 24 October 1966, together with the Alcide-de-Gasperi building and a monument for Robert Schuman who passed away the same year.³⁴

With the Red Bridge and the Kirchberg quarter, a new era of urban design and spatial transformation was launched, forcing Luxembourg City to change its physiognomy fundamentally. Functionally, the new bridge connected to an urban highway that intersects the Kirchberg lengthwise in half to incorporate and prioritise vehicular transportation and fulfil the modern urban concept of a car-friendly city promoted by oversea cities at that time.³⁵ The enhanced road network connects the city towards the airport, the eastern regions of the country Echternach and Grevenmacher, and, beyond borders, towards Trier, Koblenz, Bitburg, and Cologne, thus facilitating the connection to other European countries.³⁶ However, this vehicular division was one of the results of a lack of coherent urban planning and uncoordinated development of the Kirchberg. Insufficient urban policies and administrative disparities would lead to several impromptu decisions that would later result in an incoherent and inefficient urban planning of the European quarter on the Kirchberg. Not until 1961, when the bridge construction project was included in the urban plan of the Kirchberg plateau, an urbanisation fund called "Fond urbanisation et d'aménagement du Plateau de Kirchberg" was created by the Chamber of Deputies.³⁷ As a result, the quarter appeared as separate areas with detached solitary buildings that resisted any integration into the urban fabric. The settlement of the first buildings of the European Community was built after a philosophy of strictly separated function zones that determined the orientation of the Kirchberg as a European quarter. The urge to provide headquarters to the European institutions to prove the seriousness of the candidacy for the centralised European city may have resulted in this precipitous and somewhat impulsive urbanisation and positioning of the buildings on the Kirchberg.

However, the Kirchberg undertaking was undoubtedly the most significant urbanistic sign of Modernity and its design principles in Luxembourg. Until today, the Kirchberg remains a symbol of the hegemonic urban planning approach in Luxembourg City since the 1960s. In this context of a modernised urban transformation driven by European integration, in 1964, Luxembourg's first skyscraper Bâtiment-Tour was erected. It was followed by the Court of Justice, the Schuman, and the European International Bank building, which example outstanding solitary engineer buildings that were considered drivers of economic growth and spatial development.

³⁴ Weitz, "Brückenschlag in die neue Zukunft"

³⁵ Antoinette Lorang, „Une image fidèle du pays - L'architecture et l'urbanisme à Luxembourg dans les années 50" in *Luxembourg – Architecture au Luxembourg*, (Vienna: Verlag Anton Pustet, 2001), p.86

³⁶ Ferdinand Kinnen, „Construction du Pont Grande-Duchesse Charlotte à Luxembourg"

³⁷ Weitz, "Brückenschlag in die neue Zukunft"

3. BÂTIMENT TOUR: KEYSTONE OF THE ARCHITECTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF LUXEMBOURG CITY DRIVEN BY THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION (1957–1964)

At the beginning of the 1950s, the architectural language remained stagnant in Luxembourg City, reminiscent of the pre-war architecture, while being torn between reconstruction and the strive for something new to overcome the war suffering.³⁸ After stabilising Luxembourg's economy and establishing the ECSC institutions in 1952, the development impetus for increasing demand for office space and other urban structures arose.³⁹ Initially, conducive to an instant operation, the administrative services of the ECSC were distributed throughout multiple existing buildings within the city. Subsequently, the construction of the first headquarters was initiated in 1953,⁴⁰ the building representing the first approach of an architectural transformation towards a more modernist design language while maintaining its traditional characteristics. The monolithic building, replaces a complete housing block in the city centre, exposing a traditional regular rhythm of the façade structure and a setback of the last attica level. In contrast, the total devoid of ornaments and rectangular shapes exemplify characteristics of the modernist architecture that was internationally influenced by Le Corbusier.⁴¹



Fig. 6.: First ECSC building in the city centre of Luxembourg. (*Bâtiment de la CECA*, 1973, in Administration des bâtiments publics, “Bâtiment de la CECA”, *Centenaire – Administration des bâtiments publics Luxembourg*, (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Faber, December 2010), p.70, photograph)

³⁸ Lorang, „Une image fidèle du pays“, p.88

³⁹ Ibid, p.88

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.89

⁴¹ Administration des bâtiments publics, “Bâtiment-tour Alcide de Gasperi”, *Centenaire – Administration des bâtiments publics Luxembourg*, (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Faber, December 2010), p.71

However, around the mid-50s, the younger architectural community called for a more radical change, claiming that the architecture at that time, including the ECSC building, did not pursue the required political, economic, and urban purpose. They opted for a city-dominating high-rise building that respects the need for space, air, and light, with parking and greenery surrounding the building, in order to embrace the principles of a modern city.⁴²

In 1957, parallel to the negotiations for a monocentric European capital, the considerations of a high-rise office building for the ECSC commenced. The project was intended to be constructed at the Verlorenkost plateau in the southeast of Luxembourg city. While appropriate for a single building, the site lacked the opportunity for further expansions. Subsequently, the multi-storey project was integrated within the expropriation plan of the Kirchberg plateau.⁴³ The project design was directly transferred to the new location without further adaptation of the design, abandoning the projects for the Verlorenkost. This short-sighted choice of location reflects the Kirchberg's somewhat arbitrary urban planning approach. The definite location was presumably chosen because of its closeness to the Alzette Valley, facilitating the transportation of materials as with the commencement of the constructions works, the Grand-Duchesse Charlotte bridge was not yet completed.⁴⁴ Another aspect may have been the close connection to the new highway, which easily connects European officials and employees to the site from the 3 km distant city centre and the airport located in the opposite eastern direction. Ultimately, intended or not, the location of the 78-meters-high building stands out visibly on the Kirchberg from all over the fortification wall of the inner city, leading to its representational character.

In being the first erected project on the Kirchberg plateau, due to its dimension and its architectural style, the Alcide-de-Gasperi tower (nicknamed Tower Building), named after the Italian prime minister and co-founder of the European Union, played a vital role in the urban development and architectural language of the Kirchberg plateau. The 22 story-high building, designed by the Luxembourgish architects Gaston Witry and Michel Mousel, shows an elegant, convex curved shape of the two main collocated facades divided into a traditional base, ground floor, and stories. These large juxtaposed glazed surfaces emphasise the horizontality through large windows set in parallel bands, contrasting the dominating vertical appearance of the building. Together with open-floor plans that were hosting among 500 offices and multiple spacious conference rooms,⁴⁵ principles of modernist architecture characterise the architectural language. Spatially, the building was surrounded by a vast parking area, embracing the car- and technology-driven urban city of the 50s. With the Tower building, the public authorities adopted the modern construction method spatially and architecturally and ultimately opted for a new image.

⁴² Lorang, "Une image fidèle du pays", p.88

⁴³ Weitz, "Brückenschlag in die neue Zukunft"

⁴⁴ Hein, *The Capital of Europe*, p.119

⁴⁵ Administration des bâtiments publics, "Bâtiment-tour Alcide de Gasperi", p.97



Fig. 7.: The Alcide-de-Gasperi Tower is the first completed building on the Kirchberg plateau with a generous parking area giving room for a car-driven city. (*Bâtiment-tour Alcide de Gasperi*, 1973, in Administration des bâtiments publics, “Bâtiment-tour Alcide de Gasperi”, *Centenaire – Administration des bâtiments publics Luxembourg*, (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Faber, December 2010), p.97, photograph)

With a triple inauguration under the sign of the European idea, the Tower Building was opened on 24 October 1966.⁴⁶ The inaugurated ensemble embraces a panorama rich in contrasts from the terrace accommodating the monument and shows a new perspective of the traditional sites. The Red Bridge's audacious presentation overlooks the thousand-year-old fortress of the City of Luxembourg and the old suburbs of the Alzette valley. Behind the forested valley, it opposes the dynamic silhouette of the Tower Building. To the Luxembourgish authorities, the inaugurated projects proved their preparedness to fulfil the country's role in European cooperation, adding to the buildings' national significance, European importance, and international resonance. Being the tallest construction in Luxembourg at that time, the project marks the cornerstone of the hegemonic architectural transformation of Luxembourg City. It amounts to one of the modernist pioneer projects realised in the 1960s.⁴⁷

In 1965, during the Merger Treaty of Brussels, the decision was made to merge the ECSC, Euratom, and EEC into one institution, the Commission of the European Communities (EC),⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Weitz, “Brückenschlag in die neue Zukunft“

⁴⁷ Ministère d'État, *Le centre européen de Kirchberg à Luxembourg*, (Luxembourg: Service Information et Presse du Gouvernement luxembourgeois, 1971)

⁴⁸ “Merger Treaty”, *European Parliament*, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/the-parliament-and-the-treaties/merger-treaty>, (Accessed 4 April, 2022)

which moved into the Berlaymont building in Brussels.⁴⁹ After losing the High Authority to the Belgium capital, the Alcide-de-Gasperi tower eventually became the seat of the General Secretary of the European Communities.



Fig. 8.: This old postcard shows the three projects from the triple inauguration in 1964: the Schuman monument (in the front at the right) and the Red bridge relating to the newly developed Kirchberg area where the Alcide-de-Gasperi tower (left) arises as the first skyscraper in Luxembourg. (*Le Pont Grande-Duchesse Charlotte et lo monument Robert Schuman de 1966*. 1966. Timbresponts. https://www.timbresponts.fr/types_de_ponts/archbetondossiers/arches_modernes, postcard)

Hence, Luxembourg focused on its recognition as the financial and judicial centre of the EC, with the construction of the Court of Justice as a second building of the newly established international Kirchberg quarter, juxtaposed to the Tower building. The design shows a Japanese palace-inspired building with an articulation of symmetry, composition, and proportions of both materials and form in order to convey a monumental impression. The load-bearing steel skeleton, made from Corox steel fabricated by the national company ARBED, is exposed on the outer façade, following the modernist principles of uncovering the structural elements of a building while representing the national coal and steel history. The interior of the building contains an art collection, including numerous works from artists from each of the Member states, expressing their different origins while symbolising the deep rooting of the Court of Justice in the cultural life of the European Union's citizens. The Court of justice building was inaugurated in 1973.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ „Historique du Berlaymont“, *Berlaymont 2000*, 2003, <http://www.berlaymont2000.com>, (Accessed 4 April, 2022)

⁵⁰ European Communities, *Architecture and art of the Court of justice of the European Communities*, (Luxembourg : Office for official publications of the European Communities, 2002)



Fig. 9.: Court of Justice in 1973 (*Cour de justice des communautés européennes*, 1973, in Administration des bâtiments publics, “*Cour de justice des communautés européennes*”, Centenaire – Administration des bâtiments publics Luxembourg, (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Faber, December 2010), p.108)

4. ARCHITECTURE AS COMPETITIVE TOOL: RIVALRY BETWEEN LUXEMBOURG, STRASBOURG, AND BRUSSELS

Almost simultaneously to Luxembourg, since the establishment year of the ECSC in 1952, Brussels and Strasbourg undertook large-scale modernisations of their urban structures, engaging in a battle of to become European centres. Both Brussels and Strasbourg established similar outstanding building projects as the Tower Building in Luxembourg, representing their national architectural character in the interest of a European capital.

In 1954, the Belgian government decided to undergo a fundamental transformation and modernisation of its capital Brussels, following an urban strategy featured in its application document from 1958 that ensured the headquarters of the EEC and Euratom to the city. One advantage of Brussels was the existence of multiple available office buildings that were ready for occupation for the newly founded institutions. Similar to the situation of the ECSC in Luxembourg, the rapid growing pace of the EEC, the foundation of new institutions, and the dispersion of the different organisations rapidly resulted in the quest for a centralised and modernised headquarters.⁵¹

In June 1958, the idea was launched to construct a new building on the site of the old Berlaymont monastery offering two to three thousand office units. The construction of the X-shaped four-wing building began in 1963, the east wing being the first one to be completed and occupied by the EEC. The remaining wings were still under construction but the building was already offering more office spaces than the Tower building in Luxembourg. With the completion of the Berlaymont in 1968, the Belgium government would not consider another location for the European district than the Léopold quartier, fixing the location of other European institutions around the Schuman roundabout.⁵² Thus, the modernisation of Quartier Léopold began with the Berlaymont building, similar to the Tower Building on the Kirchberg, which is considered a critical piece for architectural and urban transformation.

Consequently, Brussels underwent a radical large-scale modernisation, including building a local metro service, expanding the vehicular route network, and a significant investment in massive office buildings. However, the urban development was somewhat sporadic and with little consideration in urban planning, resulting in an inexorable modernisation fever that had a significant influence on the urban structure and the identity of the city. This urban transformation approach, also known as Brusselisation,⁵³ included large-scale demolitions of decaying buildings, especially around the Quartier Léopold, to provide space for creating a European district. Hence, the construction of the Charlemagne and other sizeable office buildings was enabled instantaneously, supporting the choice of Brussels as the seat for the EC.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Catherine Frammery, "Le Berlaymont, où d'échoue l'idéal européen", *Le Temps*, July 10 2019, <https://www.letemps.ch/monde/berlaymont-sechoue-lideal-europeen>, (Accessed 30 Mar, 2022)

⁵² Hein, *The Capital of Europe*, p.141-143

⁵³ Bjarne van der Drift, *Brusselization and the urban impact*, Research Seminar Urban Architecture, TU Delft

⁵⁴ Carola Hein, *Une capitale européenne polycentrique et opportuniste*, *Brussels Studies*, Numéro 2, 18 December 2006, p.3

Brussels exemplifies perfectly how the presence of European institutions has brought symbolic and economic prosperity to a city, but also the sacrifices that were made on an urban and socio-economic level to win the competition among the European capital.



Fig. 10: Berlaymont building in Brussels (Berlaymont, photograph, Le temps, 28 August 2019, <https://www.letemps.ch/monde/berlaymont-sechoue-lideal-europeen>, photograph)

In Strasbourg, the situation was similar to its competitor counterpart cities, and it most urgently had to provide office buildings to host the Council of Europe already in 1949. Architect Bertrand Monnet, a friend of the secretary-general of the Council of Europe, designed a clean, horizontal, two-story building that included a hall for plenary meetings and office spaces and was quickly constructed at the Place Lenôtre in order to receive the second meeting of the Council of Europe in 1950.

The so-called House of Europe acted as a visible symbol of a unified Europe. It was the cornerstone for the incorporation of the Council of Europe into the city of Strasbourg, which was consequently transformed through a primary urban modernisation strategy. In 1960, Monnet published an urban plan that intended to prove the city's ability to provide sufficient space for hosting the constantly growing Council of Europe and the European Parliamentary Assembly at the location adjacent to the House of Europe. Same as the Kirchberg plateau, this urban project included a high-rise building that would exceed Luxembourg's Tower Building by one story and should represent Strasbourg's attempt of changing into a modern metropole. In 1962, the plan was updated by the Palace of Europe building hosting the European Court of Human Rights, which would be the only aspect of the project to be realised and completed in 1965, juxtaposed to the House of Europe. Designed by Monnet, the design

featured new approaches that were influenced by the modernist ideas of Le Corbusier, thus representing the architectural modernisation of the city.⁵⁵

Eventually, with the Merger Treaty, the primary European institution, the EC, was relocated to Brussels, and the city became the host of most of the Communities' departments. Strasbourg maintained the European Parliament and Luxembourg gained the General Secretary of the Assembly. The Council of the European Communities would hold its sessions in the Grand-Duchy during April, June, and October. In addition, the Court of Justice remained in Luxembourg, followed by other the judicial bodies. The European Investment Bank would also be located in Luxembourg, together with the financial departments of the ECSC comprising the Directorate-General for Credits and Investments.⁵⁶



Fig.11: House of Europe (*Assemblée parlementaire européenne*. Strasbourg: Parlement européen, 1967-68. Noir et blanc.) (left)



Fig.12: European Palace (*Bâtiment Palais de l'Europe à Strasbourg*. Strasbourg: Parlement européen. Noir et blanc.) (right)

During the mid-1970s, Luxembourg faced serious competition from the Palace of Europe that was under construction in Strasbourg and would include enough office spaces and a vast plenary hall that could host all bodies from the European Parliament under one roof. Subsequently, the Luxembourgish government, which desired to maintain the General Secretary of the Parliament, aimed to build a large conference centre on the Kirchberg between the Tower Building and the Schuman building. In 1967, the national government hired the French architect Roger Taillibert to design a monumental construction with a plenary hall and offices that should have convinced the European Parliament to settle in Luxembourg. The proposed design, which would function as a European symbol, was dominated by a 174-meter-high skyscraper, counterbalanced by a plenary hall with room for 600 deputies that cantilevered by 80 meters, overshadowing the existing Tower building.⁵⁷ The ambitious project could have rivalled the contemporaneous Palace of Europe in Strasbourg and Brussels, striving for modernisation plans. Nevertheless, the publication of the project in 1977 caused protests among citizens that claimed the project was out of scale next to the traditional city of Luxembourg, calling it "Big Raven" ("Grousse Kueb" in Luxembourgish) due to its

⁵⁵ Hein, *The Capital of Europe*, p.96-101

⁵⁶ "Merger Treaty", *European Parliament*

⁵⁷ Administration des bâtiments publics, "Centre 300 – Grousse Kueb", *Centenaire – Administration des bâtiments publics Luxembourg*, (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Faber, December 2010), p.115

dominant shape.⁵⁸ Consequently, the project was withdrawn and replaced by the more decent Hémicycle building. This project illustrated how the need for fulfilment of the European interests almost took overhand in influencing the architecture to a state that it would overshadow national interests.

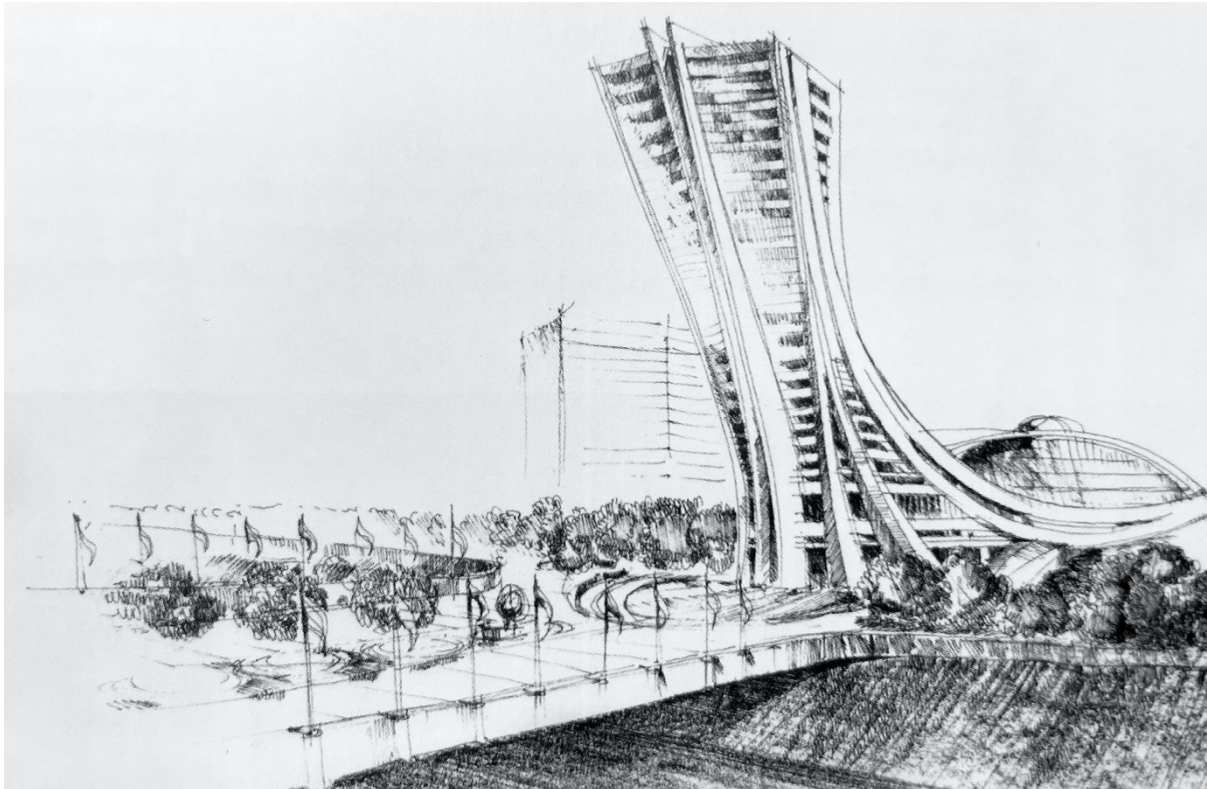


Fig.13.: Sketch of the project "Grousse Kueb". (Roger Taillibert, *Centre 300 "Grousse Kueb"*, 1978, in Administration des bâtiments publics, "*Centre 300 "Grousse Kueb"*, Centenaire – Administration des bâtiments publics Luxembourg, (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Faber, December 2010), p.114)

Mutual to all three cities was the subsequent need to prove their ability to host European institutions and the urge to provide sufficient office spaces to ensure a rapid operation of the newly established organisations. The cities were challenged to find an adequate location within their urban structures that allowed them to host the current institutions and provide the opportunity for future expansions. This necessity for appropriate infrastructure and the pressure from competing cities might have been the reason for relatively precipitous and sporadic urban planning decisions in all three cases. All three cities insisted on keeping their share as they recognised the economic and symbolic advantages accompanied by the accommodation of European bodies. However, the status of respectively functioning as centres for European institutions remained precarious for almost five decades until the Edinburgh Agreement in 1992 permanently confirmed Europe's polycentric capital among the three cities. Thus, the cities needed to create new images of important cosmopolitan metropolises in Europe, that would promise international recognition, national economic and social development for the three capitals of Europe during the following decades. A constant battle between the three capitals would endure for decades, requiring a continuous urban modernisation of their cities to remain competitive against each other and stay attractive for European officials and employees.

⁵⁸ Marc Reiter, *Le Kirchberg: l'entrée dans la modernité du Luxembourg*, Forum für Politik, Gesellschaft und Kultur, February 4 2008, Nr. 273, p.19

5. NEW IMAGE, SAME RIVALRY: CONTINUING MODERNISATION TO FULFIL THE FUNCTION OF EUROPEAN CAPITAL

Most recently, ongoing debates are suggesting that Brussels aims to centralize the European institutions threatening Luxembourg as host nation to European organisations and its staff. After the recent transfer of the Consumers, Health, Agriculture, and Food Executive Agency (Chefea) to Brussels, questions were raised about the Luxembourgish government's steps and measurements to ensure the EU offices in the country.⁵⁹ In 2015, Luxembourg's foreign minister Jean Asselborn negotiated an agreement with Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner for budget and human resources, that consolidated the presence of the European Commission in Luxembourg and ensures the country retains around 12% of the European Commission's staff.⁶⁰ In return, Luxembourg was obligated to stay attractive for European servants and allocate two buildings located on the Kirchberg plateau to relocate the Commission services, including the usage of the Tower Building for conferences and enabling the accommodation of approximately 1.100 employees. Moreover, the agreement included the decision that the Commission would gradually transfer the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) to Luxembourg as a natural choice regarding the function of the country as the European juridical centre.⁶¹ The recent location of the EPPO and other new institutions, such as the Unified Patent Court (UPC) and the EuroHPC high-performance computing centre in Luxembourg City, ensure to maintain this high number of civil servants and secure its status as a European capital. Consequently, by the end of 2020, 10.910 residential people worked for European institutions in the Grand Duchy.⁶² However, the constant growth and modernisation of the city's infrastructures and economy create an image that remains a crucial tool for keeping and attracting European staff members and organisations in the future.

With the development of the Kirchberg, including its prominent project designs for the European Court of Justice, the Red Bridge, and the Tower Building, Luxembourg's government intended to create a symbol of the union of European countries.⁶³ The latter, together with the three extension towers of the Court of justice and the twin towers, hosting offices of the EU Parliament and the EPPO, the skyscraper ensemble forms what is called the "Entrance of Europe" (also "Porte de l'Europe"). The skyline around the "Place de l'Europe" visibly expresses Luxembourg's openness to Europe and the welcoming character of European citizens to Luxembourg. In 2018, the Fond de Kirchberg launched a new project to join the skyline ensemble, comprising a tower with an extended building below that should fulfil the request from the Asselborn-Georgieva agreement and the need for more space for the European Commission. This Jean Monnet II building will centralise the different services

⁵⁹ Edouard Ombredane, "Luxembourg confident over role as EU seat", Delano, Luxembourg: 8 March 2022, <https://delano.lu/article/is-luxembourg-as-an-eu-capital>, (Accessed: 6 April, 2022)

⁶⁰ Duncan Roberts, "Asselborn renews call for solutions to cost of living differences", Delano, Luxembourg: 5 April, 2022, <https://delano.lu/article/asselborn-renews-call-for-solu>

⁶¹ Jean Asselborn, Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes, *Georgieva-Asselborn Annexel*, Luxembourg: 24 December 2022

⁶² Claude Haagen, Ministère de la Sécurité sociale, *Réponse commune de Monsieur le Ministre de la Sécurité sociale, de Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires étrangères et européennes et de Monsieur le Ministre du Travail, de l'Emploi et de l'Economie sociale et solidaire à la question parlementaire n° 5587 du 26 janvier 2022 de Monsieur le Député Mars Di Bartolomeo au sujet de la croissance de l'emploi*, 28 February 2022, N°5587, Luxembourg

⁶³ Hein, *The Capital of Europe*, p. 123

of the European Commission, providing space for around 3.600 officials that are currently scattered around the multiple buildings on the Kirchberg and Cloche d'Or. The project should exemplify the new architectural and urban image at the Kirchberg of a sustainable city through the design and implementation of production techniques that will have a low energy impact, also fulfilling the European Climate Pact.⁶⁴



Fig.14.: The European quarter and its buildings on the Kirchberg. (Original picture by Eddy Thaux in "Habiter et travailler au Kirchberg, des futurs logements adorables", *Les Frontaliers & residents*, 20 July 2020, <https://www.lesfrontaliers.lu/societe/habiter-et-travailler-au-kirchberg-enfin-des-futurs-logements-abordables/>, edited by the autor for the purpose of this document, collage)

The urban planning of the Kirchberg and Luxembourg city also reflects the image of a sustainable city. During the past few decades, the initially dispersed urban fabric of the European district was constantly developed to transform the area into a multifunctional, more human-centred, and sustainable district. Understanding that office spaces are not the only aspect of attractiveness for the European Commission's staff led to the integration of public functions into the composition of the Kirchberg that should promote Luxembourg as a family-friendly environment with progressive and high living standards. The area was densified through cultural buildings, including the Coque, a multifunctional sports centre, the Philharmonie, the Mudam (Museum of Modern Art), and the National Library, breaking the privatised character of the European quarter through the coexistence of different functions and amplification of urban diversity. This urban program serves the national population and should also make the city more attractive to European servants and their families, which is also demonstrated by the construction of another European school. With an increasingly strong focus on residential constructions, including housing for staff of the European organisations, the Kirchberg Fund aims to balance office and residential spaces with green outdoor spaces

⁶⁴ Fonds Kirchberg, Jean Monnet 2 Building", *Fonds Kirchberg*, 8 April 2021, <https://fondskirchberg.public.lu/en/projets/lieux-de-travail/jmo2.html>, (Accessed: 7 April, 2022)

that function as linking urban elements. The emphasis lies on breaking the rigid longitudinal structure of the Kirchberg that is dominated by the dissecting boulevard, with the creation of multiple syndetic centres, including a range of different types of housing with different requirements.⁶⁵

As the European quarter functions as a "European shop window" for the European climate goals, the public transportation system on the Kirchberg also underwent significant modifications, starting with the transformation of the once constructed car-friendly highway plateau into an urban boulevard. The reimplementation of the tram, which was dismantled in 1964 in order to make space for private vehicles,⁶⁶ was undoubtedly an epochal decision for Luxembourg, aiming for sustainable urban and traffic planning with minimal car traffic and maximum eco-friendliness. The first section of the tram network was finalised on the Kirchberg plateau, demonstrating the vital image and functioning of the district to the City of Luxembourg.⁶⁷ People should be motivated to use the boulevard by public transport, by bicycle, or by foot, which is also supported by implementing a bicycle path network and a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge, relating the Kirchberg plateau to the residential Cents area. Same as the Red Bridge, constructed initially to overbridge the Alzette Valley, the new bridge⁶⁸ connects two plateaus above the Neudorf Valley. However, the pedestrian bridge would not support the car-driven city as before but instead imposes more importance on pedestrianisation and sustainable image of the city.

Simultaneously, as Luxembourg is working towards creating a sustainable city image, Strasbourg and Brussels focus on realising their new urban strategies.

Strasbourg is planning its second European district, after having strengthened its existing Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau. It plans on reconquering the banks of the Rhine river to establish the new Deux-Rives urbanisation project while creating an urban connection with its German neighbours. This project focuses on environmental, social and participatory democratic principles and aims to meet the strong demand for housing to meet the challenges of a proliferating city. The relief of traffic plays a crucial role in Strasbourg's accessibility strategy. In the agglomeration centre, the highway inherited from the development plans in the 1970s will be downgraded into an urban boulevard. Furthermore, Strasbourg will have to improve its missing link to European capitals to meet the need for economic development around European attractiveness, which remains the primary goal of the urban transformation. Same as Luxembourg, Strasbourg expresses concerns about the ability to maintain European institutions caused by the increasing pressure from parliamentarians to refocus all the parliamentary services in Brussels.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Anabel Witry, „Auf dem Weg zu einem lebendigen Stadtviertel“ in *(In)Progress*, ed. Marc Theis (Luxembourg: Fonds Kirchberg, 2020), p.49

⁶⁶ Lorang, „Une image fidèle du pays, p.88

⁶⁷ Heiner Monheim, „Ein zeittypisches Denkmal autogerechter Stadt und Verkehrsplanung“ in *(In)Progress*, ed. Marc Theis (Luxembourg: Fonds Kirchberg, 2020), p.49

⁶⁸ Direction Génie Civil - Constructions Service Ouvrages d'art, "Connexion Cents Weimeschaff Neiduerf", *Ville de Luxembourg*, CNW_1909, 4 March 2021, <https://www.vdl.lu/de/die-stadt/verpflichtungen-der-stadt/stadtentwicklung/kuenftige-bauvorhaben/fussgaenger-und-fahrradueberfuehrung-zwischen-den-vierteln-cents-neudorf-und-weimershof>, (Accessed: 26 March, 2022)

⁶⁹ Olivier Miguet, "Strasbourg projette son deuxième quartier européen", *La Tribune*, 6 March 2018, <https://www.latribune.fr/regions/alsace/strasbourg-projette-son-deuxieme-quartier-europeen-770294.html>, (Accessed: 7 April, 2022)

Since the Treaty of Brussels, the sessions of the European Parliament have taken place in Brussels, but once a month, Strasbourg hosts the conferences. However, due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic and different pandemic-related restrictions in France and Belgium, the parliamentary sessions temporarily stayed in Brussels only. Another reason for the centralisation of Brussels capital is the environmental impact of the constant relocation. Climate protectors assume that the European Parliament is responsible for up to 20,000 tons of CO₂ a year with its monthly moves, hypocritically opposing the European climate goals. However, France would not sign a treaty giving up Strasbourg's position, and neither would Luxembourg, fearing it could consequently lose its share of parliamentary institutions.⁷⁰

As the main centre of the European Commission, Brussels is not threatened as much as its counterpart in losing European institutions. It focuses more on consolidating its position and making up for its somewhat random urban transformation during the 1960s. In the past, its transformation has often happened in haste, the authorities having to satisfy a growing demand for premises from European civil servants. With the ambition to restore the liveability of the Léopold District in Brussels, the Belgium Government has approved a master plan for the European district in 2008 that would undergo profound changes. This new master plan aims to return to a human scale metropolis with its cultural and economic dynamism and international position. The project focuses mainly on creating an environmental-friendly eco-district with plural alternatives in the choice of mobility and the return to a multifunctional urban space. Additionally, Brussels decided to reduce its heavy roadway network and enhances its public transport system to relieve the heavy traffic within the city. The city aims to develop a peaceful and diversified district based on a new balance between residential, cultural and office areas.⁷¹

The aim to fulfil the interests of the European institutions remains an important topic related to the urban development and improvement of the European districts of the three discussed cities. Luxembourg and Strasbourg are focussing on keeping the institutions they are hosting while improving their European quarters by expanding their offer for office buildings and infrastructure. Meanwhile, Brussels, which has a more consolidated position in the rivalry, emphasises improving its current urban structure. The recognition of Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg as capital cities in 1992, created room for compensation for the overhasty urban development since the 1950s. The cities are nowadays concentrating on improving the existing structures of their European districts, accommodating their national interests. The quarters should be more integrated into the overall urban frameworks by focussing on sustainability, traffic deceleration and human-centricity, thus opting for differentiated images based on contemporary ideologies.

⁷⁰ „Das pendelnde EU-Parlament: Die Brüssel-Strasbourg-Connection“, *Deutschlandfunk*, 22 October 2022, <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/das-pendelnde-eu-parlament-die-bruessel-strasbourg-100.html>, (Accessed: 7 April, 2022)

⁷¹ Wilfrid Duval, „Quartier Léopold, vers un nouveau visage du Bruxelles européen“, *URBAPARIS*, <https://urbaparis.fr/quartier-leopold-vers-un-nouveau-visage-du-bruxelles-europeen/> (Accessed: 7 April, 2022)

CONCLUSION

As presented in the late 1950s and 1960s, the European context served as an opportunity for cities to boost their urban development and create a strong national image. Luxembourg's European integration was the cornerstone for many economic, societal, cultural, and spatial opportunities.

The decision of locating the ECSC in Luxembourg, fueled by Joseph Bech, was a crucial historical moment for Luxembourg's future development. During this period, the political events and decisions provided the basis for significant growth and the modernisation of Luxembourg City during the 1960s. Serving as the first temporary European capital, the city had to improve its spatial physiognomy to accommodate the new institutions and meet European interests. With a modernisation strategy, including political and administrative structures, the diversification of the country's economy, and the urban infrastructure's improvement, the Luxembourgish government sought to prove its ability to continue serving as a European centre.

This strategy involved the construction ex-nihilo of a European site in Kirchberg with architectural highlights constructed to symbolise the country's strong integration into international affairs. Besides its purpose of connecting the city to the European quarter, the Red Bridge served with its extravagant colour and straight-lined innovative design as a showpiece for Luxembourg's government. It helped to represent Luxembourg city and create its image of a modern European capital, thus the plan was politically influenced. A likewise approach can be observed in the first buildings constructed on the Kirchberg site. The Tower Building and the Court of Justice show an architectural language that represents the international recognition of Luxembourg.

However, the rapid urban process also shows the political changes' influence on spatial development: To promptly meet the European institution's needs for office buildings and accommodation for their employees, the urbanisation process was overheated instead of well planned. The result was a dissected area with separate buildings that functioned as solitaires rather than as an architectural whole. These planning approaches were also observed in Strasbourg, especially in Brussels, where the lack of proper urban planning resulted in the loss of architectural heritage. Competitiveness among the three cities, Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg, fuelled these architectural and urban tendencies by intensifying the need for architectural and urban development.

However, with the presence of European bodies, Brussels, Luxembourg, and Strasbourg succeeded in recreating strong competitive images through the rejuvenation of their infrastructures and the modern architectural language of their constructions for European institutions. This continuous rivalry remains a valid topic in terms of city image and nation branding of those three cities until today. These new images promised the cities international recognition and national economic and social development. In conclusion, Early European Communities functioned as an engine for all the three capitals, Luxembourg, Strasbourg and Brussels.

Today, the European Project is still incessantly growing and Luxembourg, performing as one of its capital cities, requires it to develop synchronously. The continuous modernisation of the city's infrastructure to perpetuate its strong position and compete against Brussels and Strasbourg remains of substantial importance for Luxembourgish politics. Today, this topic shows relevance again, as with the BREXIT or the recent Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the European Union will have to recuperate its organisational structure and image again.

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