

Press Release 03/2023

Welcome Home.

The New Brucity Administrative Center in Brussels

The City of Brussels's prime objective for the new Brucity administrative center is to give locals better service. However, the fully glazed building is more than just a place to apply for ID cards or register changes of address. The new town hall stands for transparency and democracy and wants to be a modern and customer-driven facility. Its Welcome Home slogan is an invitation to associations and students to use the public spaces to convene, study and hold meetings in. The city council's new plenary chamber is the building's centerpiece. The chamber's interior with Wilkhahn seating and tables marries democratic principles with a minimalist design.

Bad Münders, Germany, March 2023. The vast building with floorspace of 37,000 square meters has an impressive glass facade that stands for transparency. This facility is the new workplace for around 1,700 employees of Brussels city council. Glass cylinders that house the elevators run through the building like a spinal cord. A public restaurant and a spectacular rooftop patio with a panoramic view of Brussels city center are located on the two top stories. The building was designed by Belgian architectural firm Bruno Albert Architectes & Associés. Brussels architect Pierre Lallemand was responsible for designing the glass facade. Philippe Van der Velpen, interior designer at Procos, designed the reception on the first story and all the workspaces. He was also in charge of furnishing the plenary chamber.



Brucity, Brussels' new administrative building, stands apart for its impressive glass facade that symbolizes the transparency of democratic processes. Eye-catchers are the atrium on the first story and the elevators in two glass cylinders that connect the floors with one another. Photos: Georges De Kinder

Reinforcing democratic principles

The planning team applied democratic principles to the plenary chamber's design. For instance, all members have an equal say in decision-making processes. A circular or

semi-circular seating layout encourages open debate. Just like the rest of the building, it's important in a democracy that the plenary chamber offers public access. Therefore, plenty of seats for people to see what's going on and easy-to-read signs were a must.

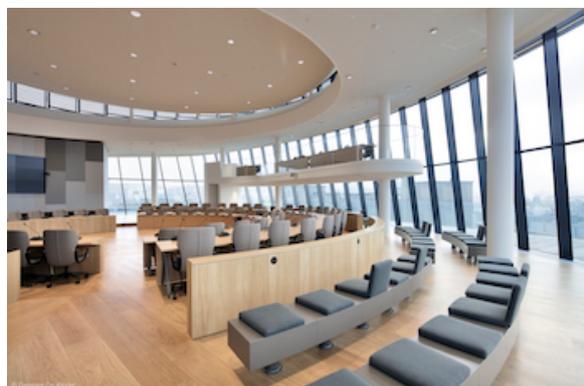


Brucity's interiors are open and transparent – both the council's new plenary chamber, which replaces the one in the historic town hall, and the light-flooded public area on the first story where locals come and go. Photos: Georges De Kinder

The project focused on good acoustics so that attendees of meetings could hear and be heard well. The goal is for council members and local people to be able to follow meetings and decision-making processes in their entirety. Technology also plays a key role. For instance, meetings can be live-streamed and local Brussels people can find information via video conferences or other digital tools. Daylight from the large windows and lighting throughout the building also foster transparency and create a pleasant environment.

Multipurpose spaces

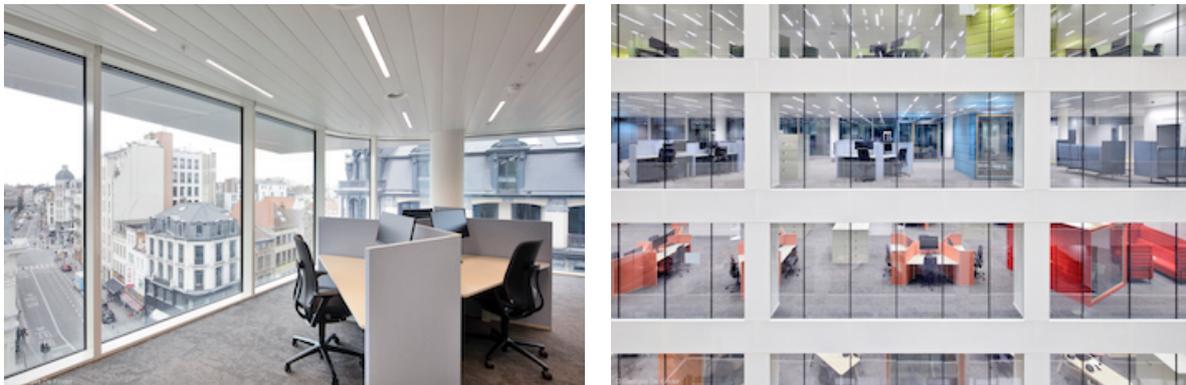
According to the designer, creating a multipurpose environment was one of the most important aspects of the building's interior. "As a result, we wanted to find furniture that met the needs of a prestigious plenary chamber and a range of other purposes. The plenary chamber's design language is also very specific and we sought a partner who could translate it perfectly," explains Van der Velpen.



The round plenary chamber encourages democratic debate. It was furnished with Wilkhahn's Intra conference chair, which can be replaced with the versatile Aline skid-base chair if required.

Photos: Georges De Kinder

Most of the items of furniture are custom made and permanent features of the room. Van der Velpen chose Wilkhahn's mobile pieces of furniture to complement them. He picked Versa tables (design: Wolfgang C.R. Mezger) whose table tops' form and finish can be customized to suit preferences. Versa allows tables and table configurations to be configured for various settings. Intra conference chairs (Phoenix Design) combine superior comfort with a design language that blends in perfectly with the interior design concept. If the plenary chamber needs furniture for a different type of meeting, the Versa tables and Intra chairs are taken away and replaced with Aline chairs (design: Andreas Störiko). The skid-base chair offers relaxing comfort.



In the workspaces, the AT office chair with the centering suspension of the seat shell ensures that people's bodies maintain their center of gravity whatever posture they adopt. Photos: Georges De Kinder

The ergonomic AT office chair with its free-to-move capability encourages healthy dynamic sitting for staff in offices and at reception. It prevents backache and stimulates both body and mind to make office workers more productive and healthy. Similarly to the other items of high-quality Wilkhahn office furniture, AT is also made of hard-wearing, recyclable materials.

In keeping with all public tenders for furniture and to ensure sustainability, Green Public Procurement (GPP) principles were also applied to the new Brussels administrative building. Environmentally friendly materials and products such as FSC/PEFC wood, recycled wool or low-VOC paints were therefore used in the construction and design. And the stringent ecological criteria were ultimately good reasons for picking Wilkhahn's long-lasting and sustainable office furniture.

Wilkhahn

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