



## DOCKS BRUXSEL: CHALLENGE MET!

**Brussels, 17 October 2017 – Since opening on 20 October 2016, the Brussels Shopping District has demonstrated its optimism and the appeal of its offering with a growing clientele looking for the next generation of shopping centres. This new concept is consolidating its positioning "like no place else". Docks Brussel takes a look back over this first year of operation and the lessons learned.**



Located between the canal and Boulevard Lambert, Docks Brussel offers the most contemporary trends in all sectors (Fashion, Leisure, Food, Culture, Beauty, Home and Services) for a truly unique leisure and shopping experience, alone or with family or friends. In its first year of operation, the Shopping District complex attracted 5 million visitors, firmly establishing itself in the commercial landscape of Brussels and particularly the north of the capital.

*"We have succeeded in creating a new benchmark in the market. It meets the expectations of a public looking for new and diverse experiences. We are delighted with this; it boosts our confidence in our convictions and encourages us to continue our efforts to improve our visitors' experience,"* says **Nadia Vranken, CEO of Equilis Belgium**, the Docks Brussel developer.

### Docks Brussel ratings

A recent survey by GFK gives a positive assessment of this first year:

- **A very encouraging awareness rate:** after just one year, the shopping district enjoys a high awareness rate at 88%. The study shows that the efforts made through multiple communication channels, social networks (115,000 fans on Facebook) and the influence of "word of mouth" have been decisive factors in developing its visibility.
- **Customer profile:** families and Millennials looking for a unique experience, which the Docks Brussel offers. Thanks to its large and diverse offering (shopping, leisure, culture and quality food), the Shopping District mainly attracts families, but its vibrancy is also winning over young adults. The gender ratio is fairly balanced in relation to other places, but with slightly more women (66%).
- **A Brussels and Dutch-speaking clientele:** multilingualism is a major factor among Docks Brussel customers. The majority of customers come from the Brussels-Capital Region and more than 20% from Flemish Brabant. 17% of visitors speak a language other than French or Dutch. One of the factors behind this is the proximity of the European institutions. Indeed, many expatriates living in the immediate area visit and enjoy the unique experience that the site offers.



- **Transport, another challenge achieved:** Docks Brussel is very accessible, as it is served by two tram lines (3 and 7) and three bus lines (47, 57 and 58). Schaerbeek station is a ten-minute walk away. According to the Brussels transport operator STIB (Société des transports intercommunaux bruxellois), initial figures show the Docks Brussel stops to be a big success. The GFK study confirms a car-to-public transport ratio of 50-50.
- **A well-located site:** the choice of location (just four kilometers from the Grand Place in Brussels) promotes and encourages the use of several modes of transport. There are seven different ways to get to Docks Brussel (walking, tram, bus, train, bike, car, and boat in the summer).
- **Visitor rate:** the eagerly awaited figures are a cause for satisfaction, with a target visitor rate of 5 million achieved.
- **Visitor loyalty:** the Shopping District has the loyalty of its visitors as the vast majority come back more than once a month.

### **Once they have experienced Docks Brussel, they love it**

The commercial offering is appreciated by all visitors. Once they have experienced Docks Brussel, they love the concept and return for the main reasons outlined below:

- A unique environment and new "shopping codes": the large walkways and the natural light in the new buildings provide a pleasant environment.
- The innovative and dynamic ambiance.
- A high-level experience - a number of regular events: "There is always something going on at Docks Brussel."
- The diversity and quality of the offering: shops, leisure, culture and food.
- Security.
- Easy access with public transport (tram, bus and train, and boat in the summer).
- Easy parking.

*"Our visitors' enthusiasm is infectious and motivating for the entire team working to develop Docks Brussel," comments Helga Cosyns, Head of Retail Management at JLL, the management company for the complex. "Consumers are generally conservative, they come the first time to have a look, then generally tend to go back to their old habits, but gradually realise that they really want this new concept, this amazing experience, to be in this new environment, and they then become regular customers, and that is how Docks Brussel is building its loyal following. In one year, our "myDocks" loyalty programme has gone from zero to more than 90,000 members."*



## A strong concept that meets the expectations of customers

Docks Brussel offers a unique experience, a diverse offering that is balanced and harmonious and which makes it different from and unlike other shopping centres.

- **Innovation and entrepreneurship:** in the past thirty years, no other shopping centre of this size has been opened in Brussels. Docks Brussel was designed to integrate seamlessly into the future urban development of north Brussels. It was a strategic and visionary decision. North Brussels and the canal are in fact undergoing economic expansion. It is also a challenge for the regional authorities.
- **Iconic architecture:** the architectural approach is original and bold. The architects from Art & Build placed emphasis on natural light and large, open spaces to make Docks Brussel a next generation centre for shopping, leisure and relaxation.
- **Shopping District:** Docks Brussel is: a two-storey shopping centre; an innovative indoor adventure park concept, Koezio, which is unique in Belgium; an eight-screen multiplex, White Cinema; a Food District with some 15 brand names spanning the cuisines of the world; and a museum space (Rodin space) exhibiting the history of the site. The site also has some 3,000m<sup>2</sup> of productive activities. An events venue also hosts a number of large events.
- **A welcoming, family, "lifestyle" venue** where there is always something going on.
- **Breeam Certification:** Its creators have made a deliberate effort to set Docks Brussel in the 21st century by opting for an environmentally responsible building design. For example, 4,500m<sup>2</sup> of solar panels provide the site with green energy. The deliberate lack of air conditioning in the walkways offers visitors the opportunity to experience the seasons.  
The proximity of the north Brussels incinerator means that hot water can be recovered for the heat pump for the entire complex, making it energy autonomous without producing any additional heat.

## Docks Brussel sets out its major challenges for tomorrow

After one year of operation, the Docks Brussel designers are very satisfied with the results achieved but do not plan to stop there. They intend to continue their efforts to best meet the expectations of their visitors.

The studies have shown that Docks Brussel already has a good reputation, but communications on the shopping, leisure and relaxation opportunities must be improved. *"We need to increase awareness of what we offer and invite our target public to try out the experience. Our challenge now is to increase our reputation with a broader public and to continue to enhance the experience of every visitor,"* says Nadia **Vranken, CEO of Equilis Belgium.**



### **About Docks Brussel**

Docks Brussel is a Shopping District that guarantees a unique urban experience combining leisure activities with shops, food, culture and entertainment.

Its ambitious and environmentally responsible architecture offers a bright urban environment that is both pleasurable and welcoming.

Perfectly located and connected, Docks Brussel can be accessed by all contemporary means of transport (walking, bike, tram, bus, train, car and by boat in the summer).

A mixed, balanced and harmonious offering with something for everyone that can be explored by walking around or by using digital tools. The products and services on offer can be divided into seven categories: fashion, leisure, food, culture, beauty, home and services.

### **About Equilis, creator of living environments**

Equilis, a real estate development company created in 2006, develops and supports ambitious projects in various business sectors: business, rehabilitation of disused industrial sites, residential. Initially specialising in business real estate, Equilis has branched out and significantly expanded its portfolio by first incorporating residential projects in Belgium. With a view to supporting its growth and diversification, the international market then became a strategic objective. France and Spain became a priority for expansion and it has had subsidiaries in these countries since 2014 and 2015 respectively. In the other countries targeted by the group (Poland, Hungary and Ukraine), Equilis has locally positioned partners.

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