



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

A golden calling card for Europe

The European Court of Justice in Luxembourg

Small and picturesque, yet prominent in the European Union (EU): over the centuries the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has repeatedly been at the center of far-reaching decisions because of its central location between Belgium to the north and west, Germany to the east and France to the south. As one of the six founding members of the European Community (EC), Luxembourg, covering just 2,586 square kilometers, is today the seat of numerous international organizations and authorities. For over 50 years it has also been the home of the European Court of Justice (ECJ). In 1992, the Edinburgh EU summit decided that the common organ of jurisdiction of the member states of the EU, today numbering 27 countries, would remain permanently in Luxembourg. The result was that the Kirchberg Plateau in the north east of the capital city experienced an unparalleled building boom. In addition to numerous European institutions – the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Auditors or the European Investment Bank – in recent years a number of banks, the headquarters of the RTL Group and "local" institutions like the trade fair ground, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Philharmonie, the Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean and the 4,300 square meter National Sporting and Cultural Center Coque have also settled on the Kirchberg Plateau. No wonder Luxembourg ranks after Strasbourg and Brussels as the third capital of the European Union.

A new center for 2,000 European civil servants

Until the beginning of the '70s, the European Court of Justice was located in two rented buildings in the city: in the Villa Vauban (from 1952 to 1959) and in a rather inconspicuous building on the Rue de la Côte d'Eich (until 1972). Then, in 1972, the Luxembourg government built the Palais de Justice on



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the Kirchberg Plateau as a permanent home for the Court – just in time for the expansion of the Union. But this building soon became too small, and the next twenty years saw three expansions of the construction. These extensions also proved insufficient in the long term, which is why the Court has so far had to rent four additional buildings. For this reason, the Luxembourg parliament decided in 2002 on a fourth – and for the time being last – constructional expansion of the Court of Justice of the European Communities. With a budget of around 350 million Euro, this has been the most expensive construction project in the history of the country. By 2008, it will reunite the staff of the Court, currently numbering about 2,000, in a single building complex.

A golden ring around the Palais de Justice

After the removal of asbestos from the old 25,000 square meter Palais de Justice, the expansion planned by the French architect Dominique Perrault was conducted in two stages: the refurbishment and extension of the main building and the construction of two new office towers. The original Palais de Justice, freed of asbestos, was surrounded by a two-storey ring of offices on 14 meter high stilts. The new façade consists of vertical golden glass panels of varying widths which create a visual connection between the two floors of the ring and the supporting ceiling on the stilt structure – as an unpretentious and at the same time contemporary response to the early 70's architecture in the middle. The ring provides 10,500 square meters of office space for the President of the European Court of Justice as well as for the judges and the advocates general of all EU member states. The highlight of the structure will be the new principal courtroom with 40 judge's benches and seats for 280 spectators. Its tent-like ceiling will feature a golden metal mesh which will float over the room like a shining Medusa. The shimmering tent will give the courtroom on the ring-shaped office



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gallery a ubiquitous presence, while at the same time concealing the action of the trials taking place within. In line with Dominique Perrault's plans, the renowned Düren-based metal weaver GKD – Gebr. Kufferath AG is producing the metal mesh for this spectacular ceiling construction, which will be installed in the middle of 2008.

Sculptural towers as new landmarks

Not far from the new "old" Palais de Justice, the expansion on the Kirchberg Plateau has also given the European Court of Justice two 100 meter high office towers. With their 24,000 square meters of floor space, these will finally provide enough room for all the translators and lawyer linguists. Here, too, metal mesh, as a typical trademark of Perrault's architecture, plays an outstanding visual role. As puristic, sharp-edged sculptures shimmering all round in gold tones, the two towers with their 24-storeys complement the low, plain structure of the Palais de Justice to create a representative ensemble. The gold-colored cladding of the twin towers, visible from afar, is formed of 7,724 panels of an aluminum mesh especially developed for this particular application. Each panel was installed between two window panes in a frame also colored gold.

Zigzag edging as a design highlight

Once more, GKD has provided the sort of partner Perrault needs, one that can provide responses to the challenges of his designs through innovative technical solutions in terms of mesh features and finishing. The design highlight of this construction is a specific zigzag edging of the mesh that gives the apparently seamless all-round façade an additional depth while at the same time allowing sophisticated accentuated lighting. This required the development of a particularly light mesh. GKD solved the problem with a type of material similar in structure to its Alutherm mesh 6010, but with a



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different wire diameter and a weight of just 2.6 kg/m². In addition to its aesthetic features, the mesh also offers the advantages of long service life and complete recyclability. A total of 20,190 square meters of this gold-colored anodized mesh was supplied as already edged panels in varying sizes – but for the most part measuring 3.72 x 0.73 meters each. In the meantime, installation of the panels has been completed.

A strong symbol for a strong community

Self-confident and expressive yet at the same time with a minimalistic elegance, the twin golden monoliths reflect the identity of the European Court of Justice as the defender of the community rights of the EU's current 27 member states. Transparent and yet closed, perfectly in tune with the obligation of the Union's organ of jurisdiction, Dominique Perrault's design combines structural strength with translucence to create a strong symbol for a strong community.

6,365 characters incl. spaces

GKD – WORLD WIDE WEAVE

As a privately owned technical weaver, GKD - Gebr. Kufferath AG is the world market leader in metal, synthetic and spiral mesh solutions. Four independent business divisions bundle their expertise under one roof: Industrial Mesh (woven metal mesh and filter solutions), Process Belts (belts made of mesh and spirals), Architectural meshes (façades, safety and interior design made of metal fabrics) and Mediamesh[®] (Transparent media façades). With its headquarter in Germany and five other facilities in the US, South Africa, China, India and Chile – as well as its branches in



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France, Spain, Dubai and worldwide representatives, GKD is close to markets anywhere in the world.

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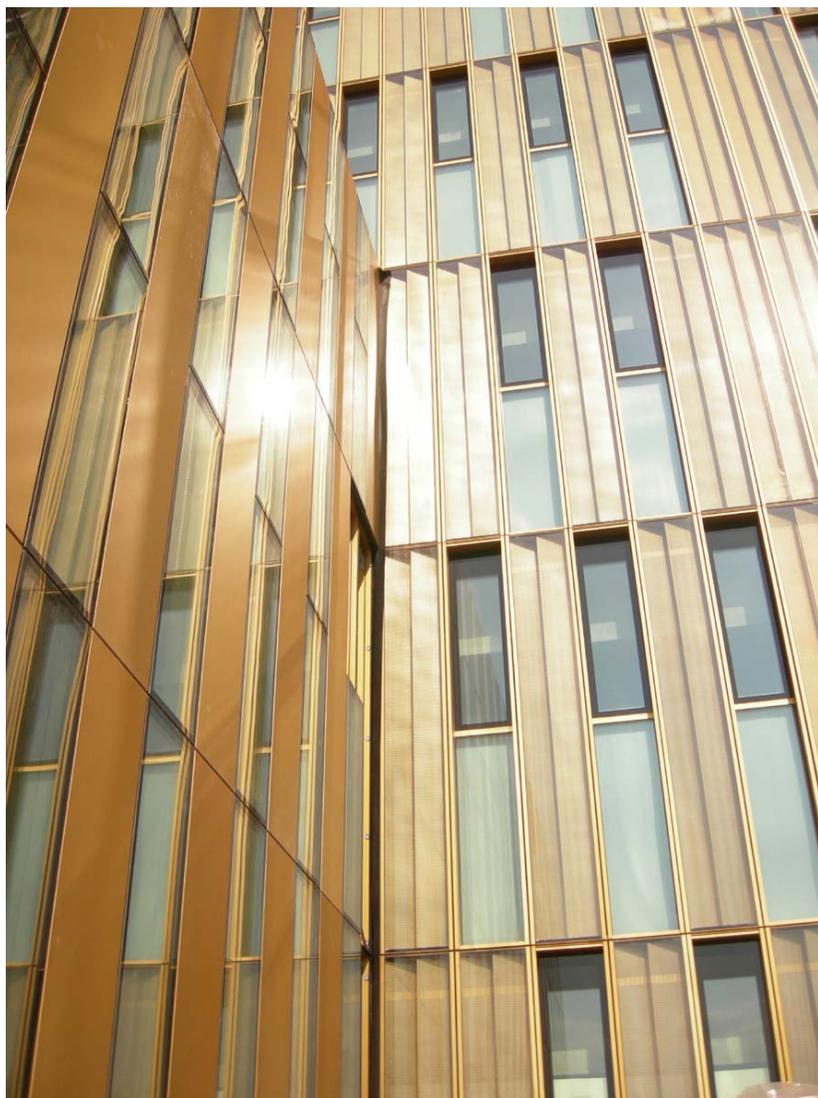


Photo 1: During the day, the mesh façade of the towers shimmers in the sunlight.



Photo 2: A golden skyline on the Kirchberg Plateau.

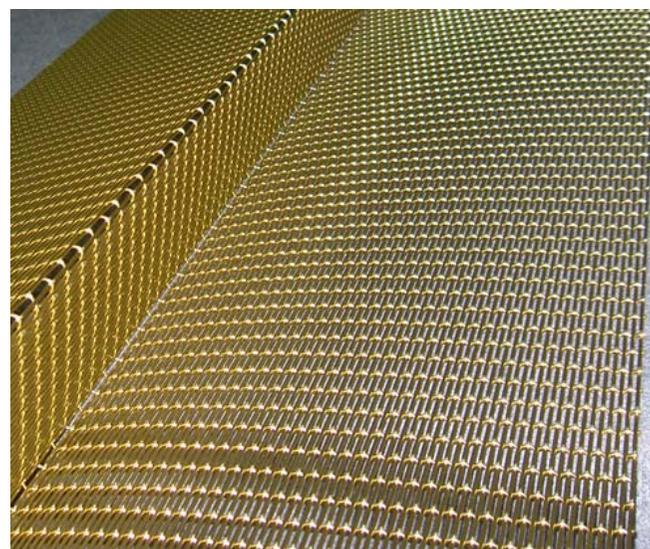


Photo 3: The special zigzag edging of the mesh.

Photos 1, 2 © Perrault Projets

Photo 3 © GKD

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