

# European Quarter Manifesto

Open, Welcoming & Diverse



Prepared by the European Quarter Fund



# European Quarter Manifesto

Open, Welcoming & Diverse

## Introduction

The acceleration of remote working, a greater shift towards active mobility, and environmental sustainability targets represent both a challenge and an opportunity for the European District.

Conscious of the urgent need for change, the members of the **European Quarter Fund (EQF)** have agreed on a shared vision for the future of the European District, called the **"Manifesto"**, as well as committing to short-term tactical urban actions, grouped in the **"Charter"**, that will start the transition of the District towards a more Open, Welcoming, and Diverse area.

The **European Quarter Fund** is only one of the stakeholders that will have to cooperate in the delivery of this long-term vision. Therefore, the **Manifesto** declares the intentions of its members, but will also continue to evolve.

On the other hand, the **Charter** is a document that contains practical urban actions that the members commit to for their existing buildings and any new developments in the European District.



## What is the European Quarter Fund?

The **European Quarter Fund** was created in 2001 with the aim to contribute to the improvement of the image, functioning, and redevelopment of the European District.

The fund includes approximately 40 members, representative of all areas of private and public life.

For more information, visit their website:

[www.europeanquarterfund.eu](http://www.europeanquarterfund.eu)

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## European Quarter Manifesto

# Context

**The European District is not only the historic seat of the European institutions, but it is also the largest office-based employment and cultural centre in Belgium.**

Over the last decade, the European District has increasingly attracted new inhabitants and retailers. With new flagship European cultural offering, it has established itself as Brussels' second most visited area.

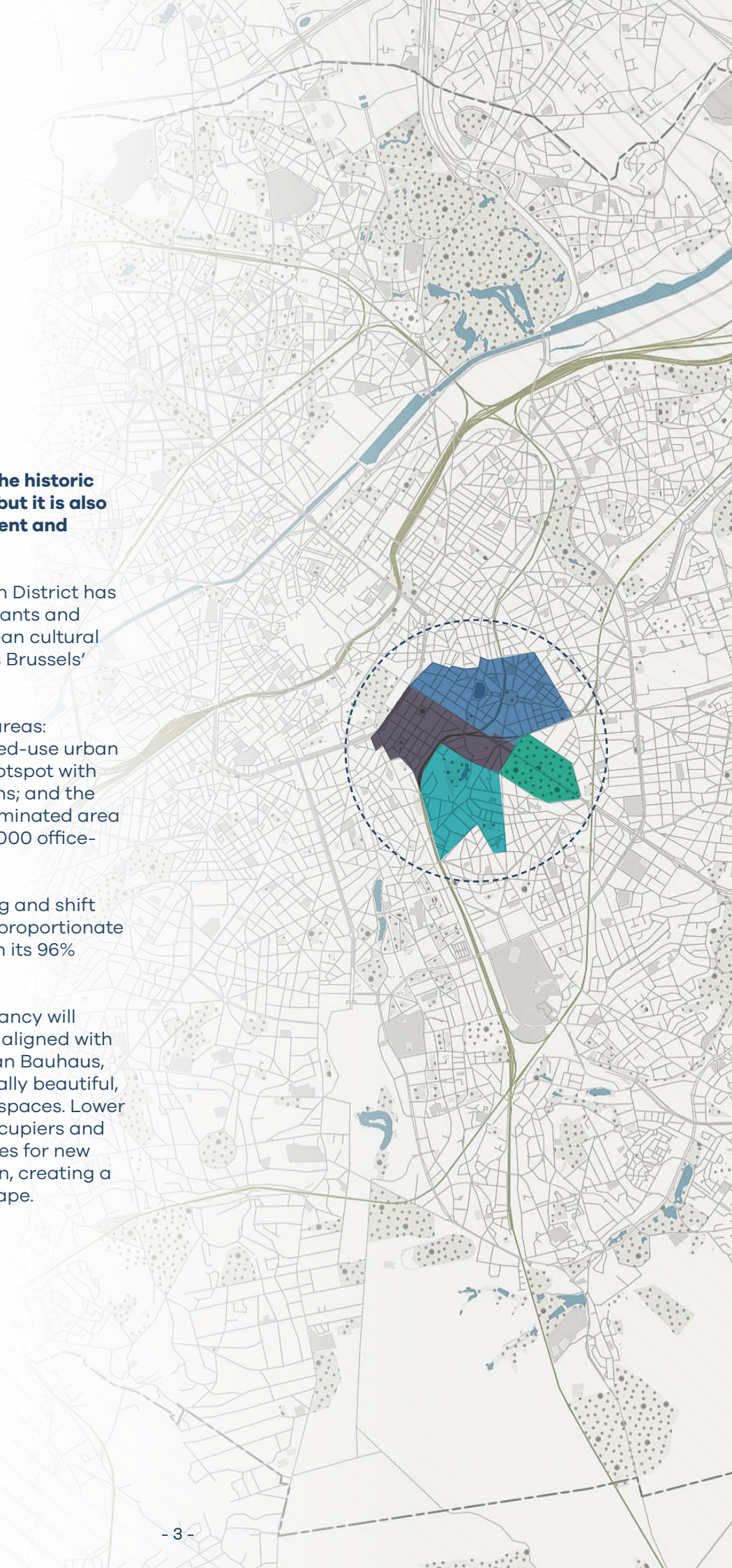
The District is composed of 4 key areas: Jourdan and Squares, vibrant mixed-use urban hubs; Cinquantenaire, a cultural hotspot with numerous museums and exhibitions; and the core Leopold District, an office-dominated area with only 3,000 inhabitants for 90,000 office-based jobs.

The acceleration of remote working and shift towards active mobility have a disproportionate impact on the Leopold District with its 96% office dominance.

An expected increase in office vacancy will offer possibilities for reconversion, aligned with the philosophy of the New European Bauhaus, pleading for more living, aesthetically beautiful, socially inclusive, and sustainable spaces. Lower office occupancy will also allow occupiers and investors to free ground floor spaces for new potential public infill and activation, creating a more vibrant and inviting streetscape.

### Legend

Léopold	90.000 Workers 3.000 Inhabitants
Squares	14.000 Workers 13.000 Inhabitants
Jourdan	3.000 Workers 9.000 Inhabitants
Cinquantenaire	Public Park





## Long-term vision:

### The Manifesto

**The Manifesto, prepared by the European Quarter Fund, is based on a process of wide consultations and represents the long-term vision for the European District.**

The **European Quarter Fund** is only one of the stakeholders involved in shaping the future of the European District, therefore the **Manifesto** represents the current views of its members and will continue to evolve towards what needs to become a shared vision.



**The European Quarter Fund aims at playing the role of interface between all stakeholders in the European District. Among other things, it functions as a “régisseur” between the available real estate (“hardware”) and the various types of occupations for these places (“software”).**

Following a process of wide consultations with key stakeholders representing the interests of the European District (ranging from public authorities to inhabitants’ associations), the European Quarter Fund has prepared a Manifesto.

It aims to represent the long-term vision of the European District in order to reinforce its position as an Open, Welcoming, and Diverse area.

The **European Quarter Fund** has aligned its strategy and proposed actions with the Regional government currently preparing a new Urban Planning Framework.

The main identified actions are focused on 4 key axes: Increase Functional Mix, Support Soft Mobility, Create Greener Space, Deepen European & Cultural Identity.



# The Manifesto

## 4 key axes supporting the long-term vision

### ✔ Increase Functional Mix

Increase, where possible, the functional diversity of buildings at neighbourhood level, with a particular focus on the Leopold District. Priority actions include ground floor activation (transparency & infill) to create a more open and lively streetscape, stimulate the local economy, and foster social interaction..



### ✔ Create Greener Space

Conscious of the urgency of climate change as well as the demand from occupiers, one of the key priorities is to increase green surfaces at street, inner courtyard, and roof levels. Green surfaces will be a key lever to limit the severe heat island effect in a concrete-dominated area. Additionally, where possible inner courtyards will be made accessible. The aim is to create a great neighborhood where where people like, want to live, and work.

### ✔ Support Soft Mobility

The European District has one of the country's highest automotive pressure and pollution. The Loi/Belliard axis acts as urban wall, cutting the district into 3 parts. We recommend breaking this wall by creating a North-South soft mobility path. It is also essential to improve the infrastructure within office buildings that will support, and most importantly encourage, the use of soft mobility and create a true ecosystem for alternative mobility.



### ✔ Deepen European & Cultural Identity

Make the European identity of the District more visible and increase the integration of the local cultural offering. Create stronger links between the sub-districts (Leopold, Jourdan, Squares, Cinquantenaire). Show the democratic character of the fabric of Europe.



# The Charter

## Introduction

We realize that our long-term vision, the **Manifesto**, will require alignment with other stakeholders, therefore we decided to commit to a number of practical and tactical urban actions that will foster material change in the European District in the short term, whilst supporting our long-term vision.

## Feasibility & Impact

To assess the feasibility of our recommended short-term actions, we conducted an audit of office buildings within a pilot area stretching from Square de Meeûs to Square Frère-Orban. A total of 21 office buildings were visited, representing 350,000 square meters (or 10% of the total estimated office footprint of the European District).

Following the positive results and recommendations of this audit, it has been agreed to extend the program to the entire Leopold district.



● Visited Office Buildings    ● Not Visited Office Buildings    ● Historical or Residential Buildings



# The Charter

## Our short-term commitments



### Activate Ground Floors

Where possible, support the infill of the ground floors with open functions (retail, café, bike repair, art, coworking, places of dialogue and encounter, etc.) At least, ensure they are transparent and interact at street level.



### Soft Mobility Friendly Buildings

Promote active mobility by ensuring all types of soft mobility users are welcome (including visitors), from facilities provision to services and social activities in favor of active mobility.



### Open Courtyards

Where possible, open inner courtyards, terraces, and increase green surfaces at street- and roof-level. Create new use cases for courtyards and infill with public uses.



### Green Roofs

Where technically feasible, create green rooftops accessible to occupiers, or alternatively convert to extensive or intensive green surface.



Before



After

- ✓ Increase Functional Mix
- ✓ Create Greener Space
- ✓ Support Soft Mobility
- ✓ Deepen European & Cultural Identity



# The Charter

## Results of the pilot area audit



### The 4 key actions of our Charter will have material impact on the European District



61%

#### Ground floor transparency

Only **39%** of the façades analyzed are transparent. **46%** have the potential to be made visually open.



65%

#### Ground floor infill

**Two-thirds** of the buildings analyzed have no ground floor infill activation.



31%

#### Greening the roofs

31% of roofs analyzed, **(9,657 sqm)** have the potential for greening.



4

#### Inner courtyards

**4 buildings** with an inner courtyard have the potential **to be made accessible to the public**.



76%

#### Soft mobility facilities

76% of buildings have average or poor facilities. **Only 4 buildings** have good facilities to support the use of soft mobility.



53%

#### Shared mobility services

**Only the buildings occupied by the EU Commission** offer single-mode shared mobility services (bikes). The other buildings do not have any services in place.

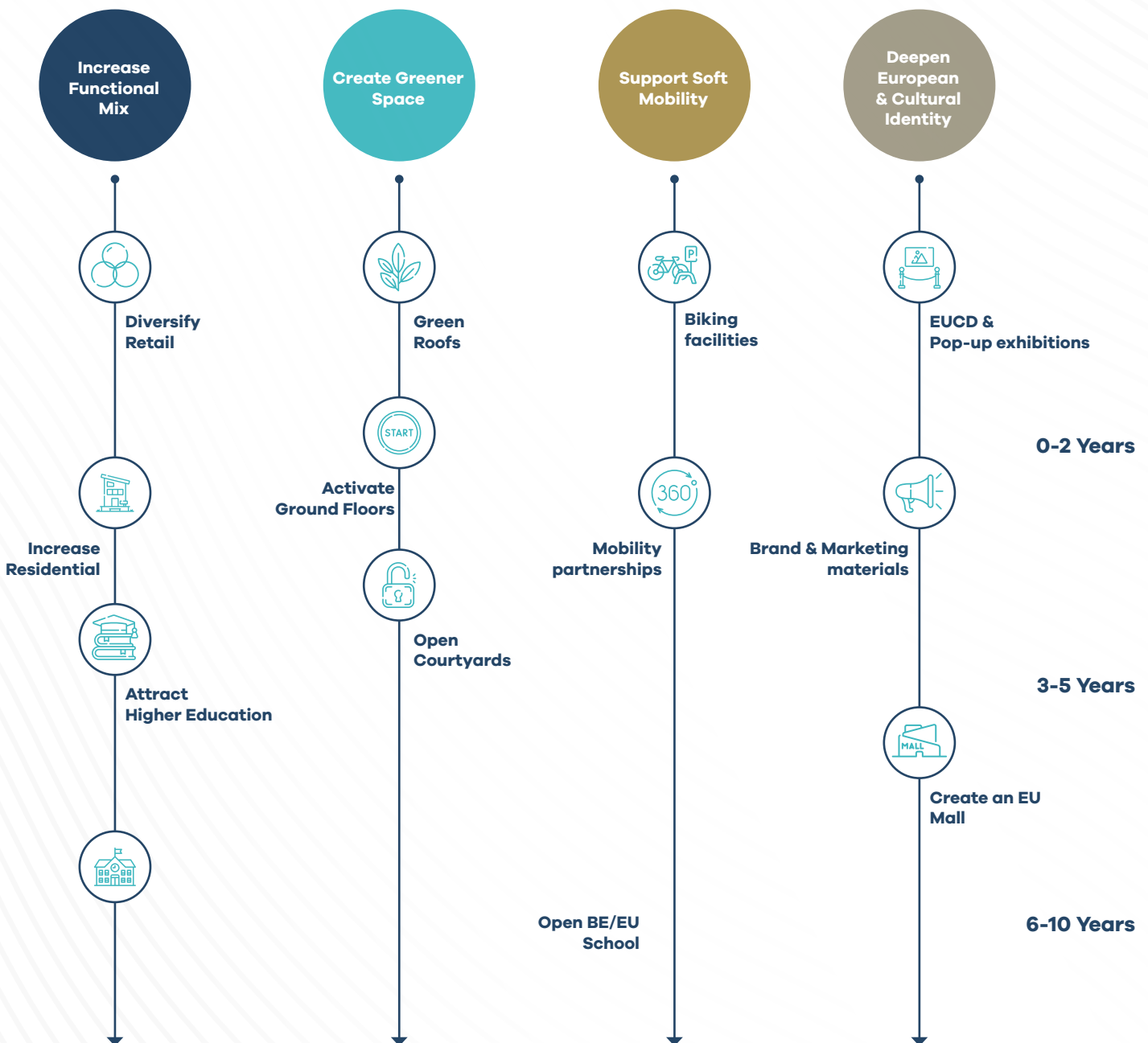


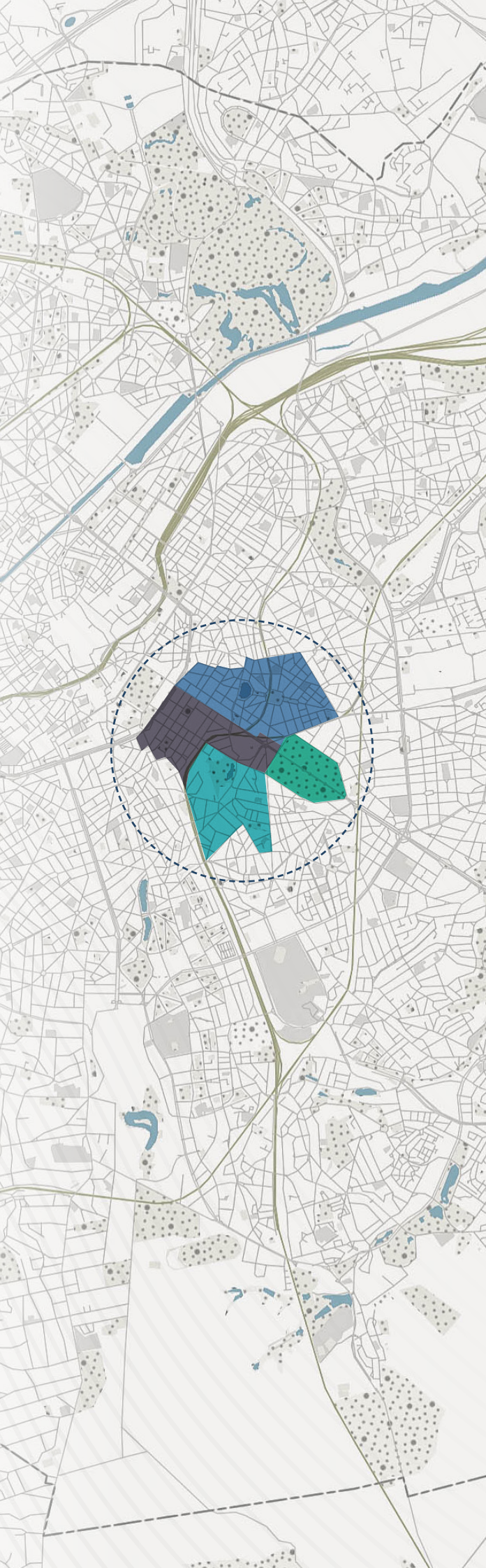


# Timeline

## Overview of all key proposed actions

Whilst there is an urgency to start the transformation of the European District, this will take time. We have therefore planned key actions based on their feasibility and potential impact, starting with those that can deliver positive and visible change mobilizing wider stakeholders.





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Prepared by the European Quarter Fund, a corporate fund of the King Baudouin Foundation.

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