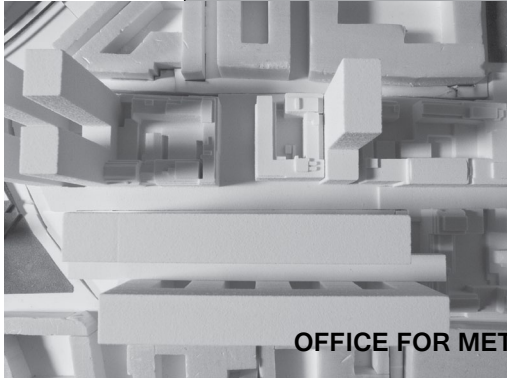
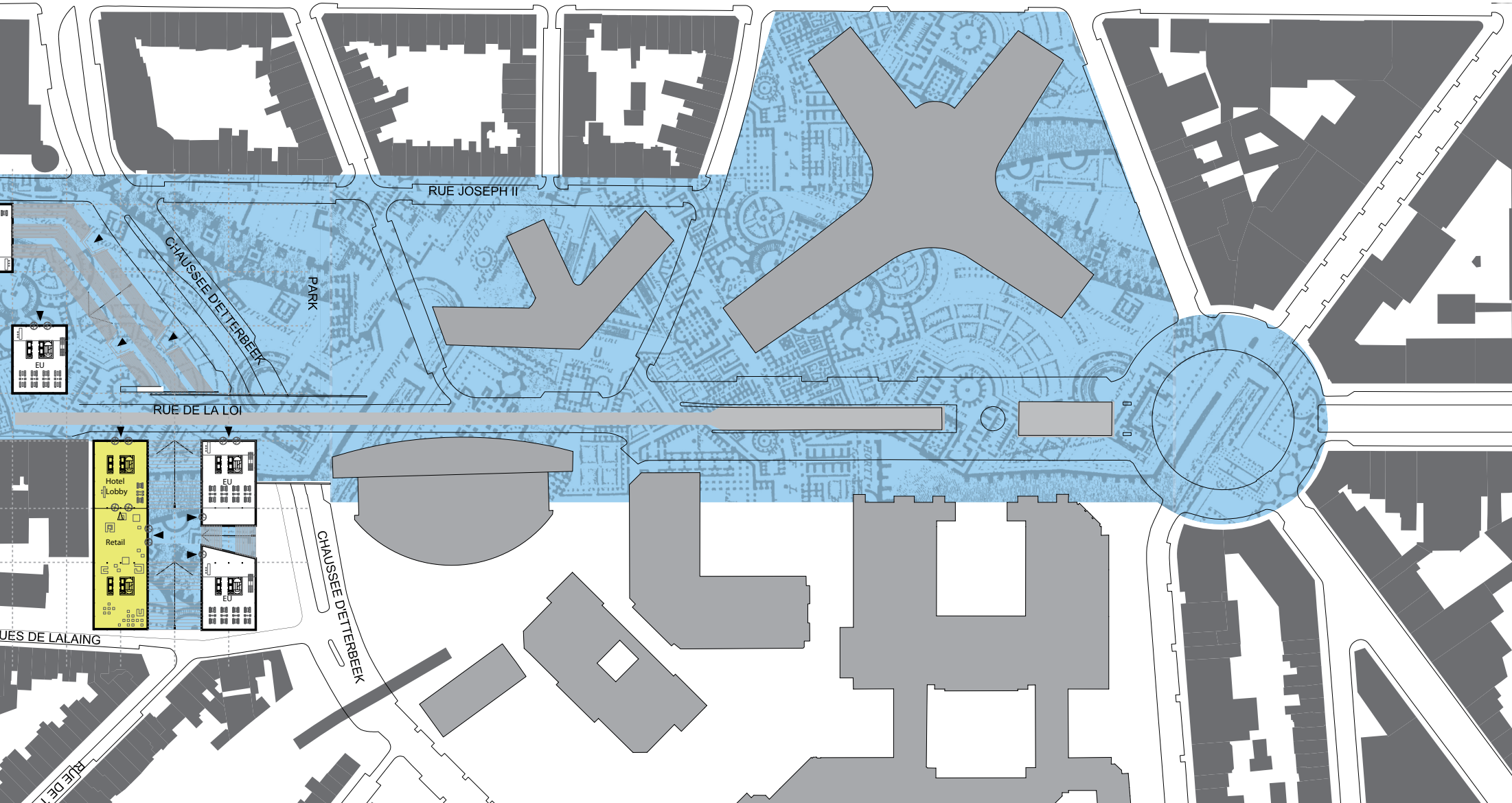
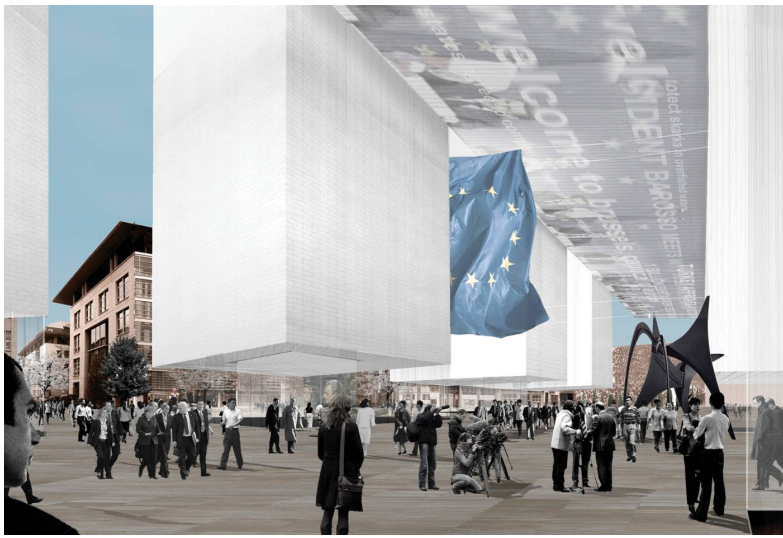
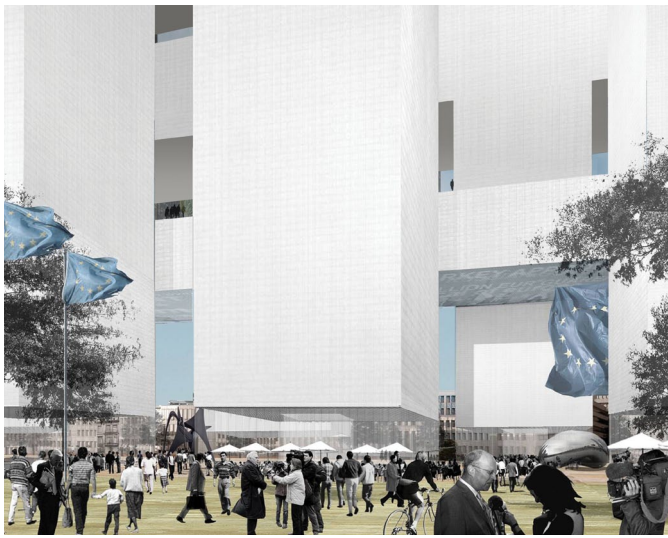
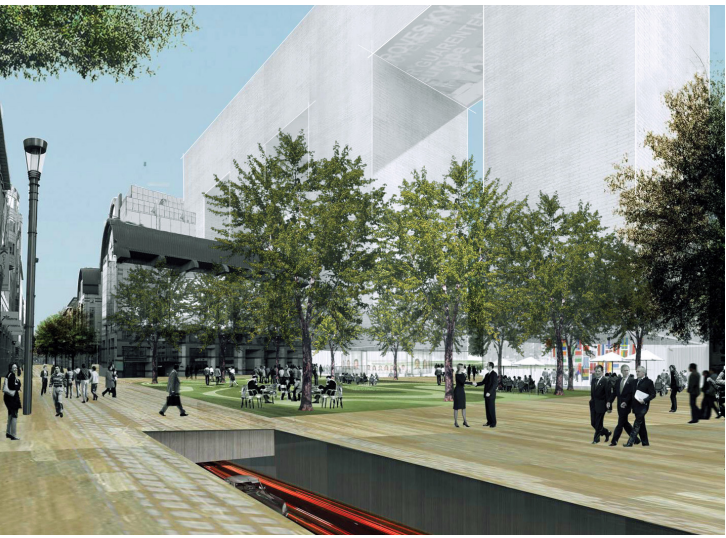


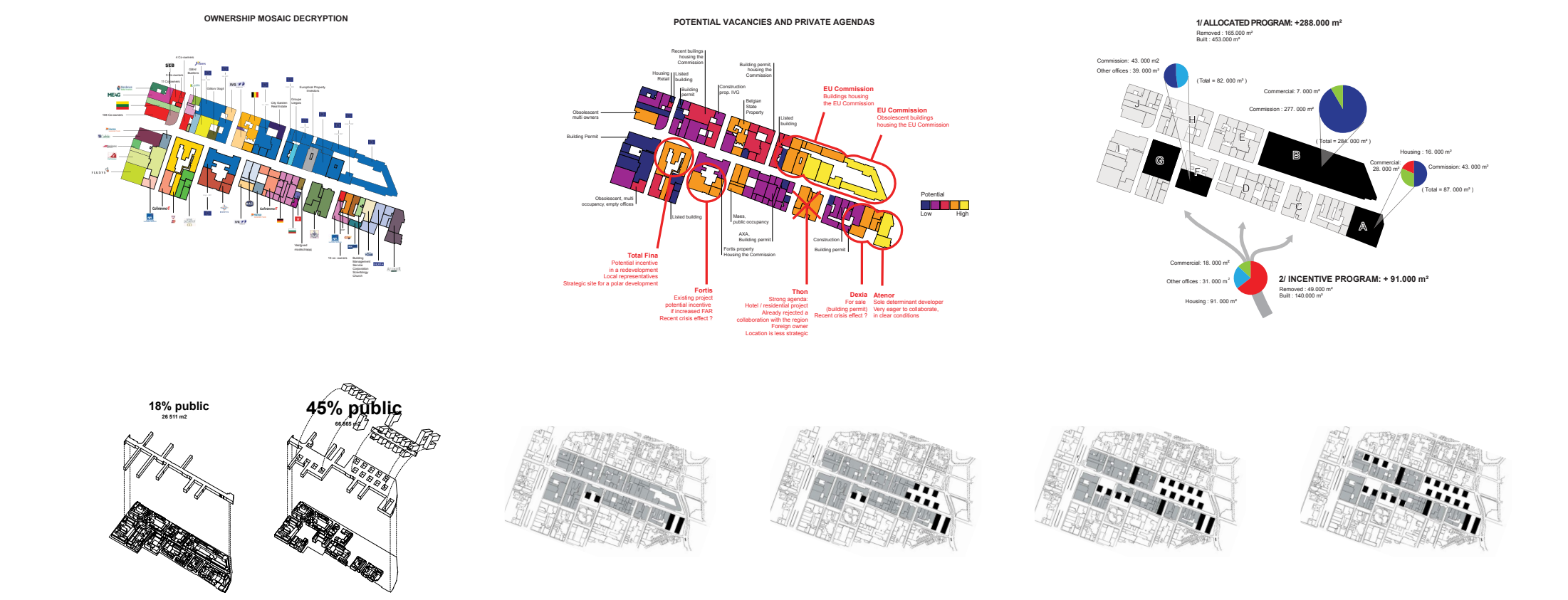
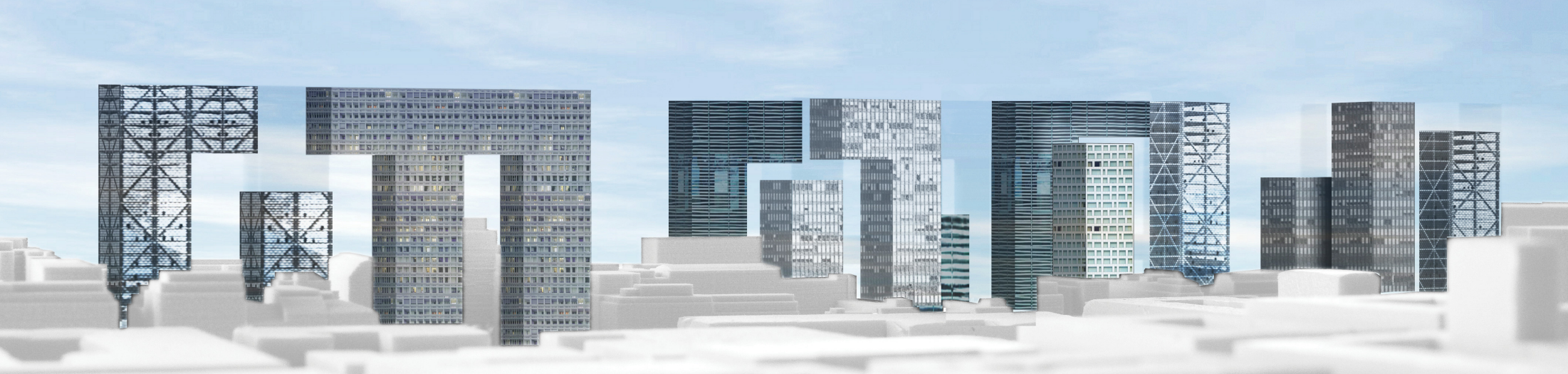
RUE DE LA LOI . BRUSSELS

OFFICE FOR METROPOLITAN ARCHITECTURE - NICOLAS FIRKET ARCHITECTS



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OMA-NFA / RUE DE LA LOI

TWO SETS OF CONTRADICTORY DEMANDS DEFINE THIS COMPETITION:

TO IMPROVE THE URBAN QUALITIES OF THE ALREADY CONGESTED RUE DE LA LOI BY DOUBLING ITS DENSITY.

TO CREATE A NEW EUROPEAN QUARTER ON A SITE ALREADY OCCUPIED BY A CLASSICAL EXAMPLE OF THE TRADITIONAL EUROPEAN CITY.

THE FIRST ISSUE IS MORPHOLOGICAL, THE SECOND SYMBOLIC.

TO ADDRESS THE MORPHOLOGY, WE INTRODUCE IN BRUSSELS THE ANCIENT EUROPEAN TYPOLOGY OF THE 'PORTICO', THE CLASSICAL EMBLEM OF THE 'PUBLIC'. IT FORMS A SCREEN OF SHIFTED FOOTPRINTS THAT INTRODUCES IN THE CLAUSTROPHOBIC STREET WALL OF THE RUE DE LA LOI A LATERAL DEPTH OF OPENINGS THAT DEFINES A LINEAR POLITICAL SPACE, IF NOT AN AGORA. THE PORTICO IS 'CAPPED' WITH FEDERATING ELEMENTS PARALLEL TO THE RUE DE LA LOI THAT DEFINES A "EUROPEAN" AXIS.

AT RIGHT ANGLES TO THIS POLITICAL AXIS, HOUSING AND IN GENERAL, THE "PRIVATE", WILL BE ALIGNED PERPENDICULAR TO THE STREET, SO THAT ITS BULK DOES NOT REINFORCE THE PRESSURE ON THE RUE DE LA LOI. AS A SKYLINE, THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE 'EUROPEAN' AND THE 'PRIVATE' ORIENTATION, REPRESENTS A PROTOTYPE OF RETROACTIVE PLANNING THAT IS NOT BASED ON THE BRUTE POWER OF THE TABULA RASA, BUT THAT ACCEPTS THE GIVENS OF CONTEXT TO AVOID THE STERILITY OF A NEW BEGINNING THAT TYPICALLY DEFINES ARTICULATIONS OF POLITICAL SPACE FROM WASHINGTON'S MALL TO THE FORBIDDEN CITY.

TO ADDRESS THE SYMBOLISM, WE IDENTIFY TWO EUROPEAN "SITES" OR INTERRUPTIONS, IN THE RUE DE LA LOI.

TOGETHER WITH THE EXISTING, EUROPEAN ENTITIES, THE FORM A SEQUENCE OF EUROPEAN FRAGMENTS EMBEDDED IN THE EXISTING BRUSSELS SUBSTANCE.

TOGETHER THIS CHAIN OF FRAGMENTS OFFERS AN EXEMPLARY DEMONSTRATION OF THE COMBINATION OF THE MODERNITY AND HISTORY WHICH IS THE ESSENCE OF THE EUROPEAN PROJECT.

