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Press release

Eiffage installs the first wooden components of the Hypérion tower in Bordeaux, a symbol of the Group's low-carbon strategy

On Tuesday, 10 December, Benoît de Ruffray, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Eiffage, laid the first “plank” of the Hypérion wooden residential tower in Bordeaux, in the presence of Nicolas Florian – Mayor of Bordeaux, Elisabeth Touton – President of Bordeaux Euratlantique, Laurent Thibaud – Associate Regional Director of ADEME and Jean-Paul Viguiier – Architect.

This unprecedented project has already garnered several industry awards and ties in perfectly with Eiffage's low-carbon approach, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for all the Group's developments. The tallest wooden tower ever built in France, Hypérion also stands out for its technical sophistication, with BIM-led design and two registered patents.

Hypérion: flagship project of the Eiffage group's low-carbon strategy

With the aim of becoming a key player in low-carbon design and construction, Eiffage has made ecological transition and innovation two major elements in its strategy. Investments in R&D have the dual objectives of reducing the Group's greenhouse gas emissions right across every business line's value chain and increasing the use of bio-sourced materials. One such material is wood, which is 100% natural and recyclable, and has already enabled the Group to complete around 30 projects in recent years.

Hypérion: showcase for urban regeneration in the new Euratlantique district

Designed and undertaken by the Viguiier architectural practice, built by Eiffage Construction and backed by Eiffage Immobilier, Hypérion is a mixed housing complex that will contain 176 homes, 340 m² of retail space and 3,900 m² of office space, across five buildings. It will rise in the centre of Bordeaux, close to the Saint-Jean railway station, at the heart of the new Euratlantique district.

Since 2010, this district has been part of a vast urban regeneration programme led by the Bordeaux Euratlantique public development agency (EPA). By 2021, it will be not only a major business centre accommodating 15,000 workers, but also a cultural hub as home to the new Maison de l'Économie Créative et de la Culture en Aquitaine (MECA), and a cosmopolitan district boasting plenty of housing and amenities. The Euratlantique district is more generally a part of the “Bordeaux 2030” city modernisation plan, which aims to make Bordeaux a top-tier European city.

The Hypérion complex will play a major part in this regeneration. Through its innovative design symbolic of newly emerging low-carbon construction methods, this project will not only become the city's showcase, but also represent the Eiffage group's expertise in and commitment to sustainable construction that benefits the local economy.

Wood: key component of a high-added-value approach

One of the unique features of this project is its 55-metre, 16-storey wooden-framed tower with cantilevered balconies, named "Hypérion" after the largest tree in the world, a redwood growing in Northern California.

Hypérion consists of a concrete core containing lifts and staircases, complemented by a wooden structure: glued laminated timber beams, CLT (cross-laminated timber) flooring and Hypermob[®] wooden-framed walls developed under Atex as category A. The tower's carbon footprint will be 370 kg CO₂/m² – 45% lower than its traditionally built equivalent. The solid wood used will store at least 1,400 tonnes of CO₂ throughout the entire lifespan of the building.

In this respect, Hypérion is a natural fit with the new Low-carbon Building (BBCA) label it was recently awarded, which aims to halve the carbon footprint of new buildings. Recognised by the State as a "sustainable city industrial demonstrator", the project benefited from a grant from ADEME's Investments for the Future programme.

Eiffage Construction's teams face a real technical and logistical challenge in building the Hypérion tower, which will involve 1,500 pieces of wood, all regionally sourced and manufactured. A "forest sourced label" established by Eiffage makes them traceable from forest to worksite.

The Hypérion complex has been recognised for its architectural and technical sophistication, largely made possible by its BIM-led design, and has been awarded the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Pyramides d'Argent Urban Mixity Prize 2019, the Grand Prix Régional and the Pyramides d'Or Grand Prix national 2019. It also won the BIM d'Or 2019.

Key project phases

2016: Eiffage Immobilier and Viguier architecture win the contest launched by the EPA Bordeaux Euratlantique
March 2019: Works begin
September 2020: Delivery of office building
January 2021: Delivery of concrete residential building
May 2021: Delivery of wooden residential tower

Key project figures

17,000 m² floor surface area
3,900 m² of office space
340 m² of shops and activities
176 homes: 98 in the tower (6,533 m²) and 78 in the other buildings (5,718 m²)
151 parking spaces
€50 million budget

About Eiffage

Eiffage is one of Europe's leading construction and concessions companies. The Group's activities are organised around the following business lines: construction, real estate and urban development, civil engineering, metal, roads, energy and concessions. Thanks to the experience of more than 70,400 employees, Eiffage generated revenues of €16.6 billion in 2018, of which almost 26% was outside France.

About Eiffage Construction

Eiffage Construction incorporates the complementary business lines of urban planning, property development, construction, facility management and maintenance. The company is strongly established in France with 10 regional divisions, and also in Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Poland. With a workforce of 11,140 employees, Eiffage Construction generated revenues of €4 billion in 2018.

About Eiffage Immobilier

Eiffage Immobilier, the construction and development subsidiary of Eiffage Construction, is a major player in the real-estate market with a broad portfolio throughout France. As a partner both to local authorities for their urban development projects and to public housing companies for their housing programmes, Eiffage Immobilier is also highly active in the private sector: housing and residential services, hospitality, corporate real estate and urban retail planning. Eiffage Immobilier generated revenues of €845 million in 2018.

About Viguier

Viguier is an internationally recognised architecture and urban planning practice. Pluralist and innovative, it designs and implements projects with a global, integrated approach, from urban planning to landscaping via interior design of offices, homes, facilities and retail outlets, for both public and private use. With an inter-generational perspective, the practice employs 150 people from 17 countries, led by Jean-Paul Viguier and 12 partners. Many of its iconic works have gained international recognition, including the French pavilion at the Seville World Fair (1992), the Coeur-Défense twin towers (2001), the Sofitel Magnificent Mile in Chicago (2002), the SFR campus in Saint-Denis (2013), the Majunga Tower in La Défense (2014), the Oncopole and the Institut Universitaire du Cancer in Toulouse (2014).

These will be followed by, among others, the contract won recently to remodel the site of the 1958 World Fair around the Atomium for the new Europea district in Brussels, the Vinci headquarters in Nanterre, the Orange headquarters in Issy-les-Moulineaux, the Banque de France hub in La Courneuve, an office tower in Casablanca and the IoT Valley in Toulouse. In the wooden construction sector, the practice sets itself apart with the Jo&Joe wooden hotel/open house and with Hypérior, the wooden residential tower that will stretch 55 metres into the skies above Bordeaux.

Placing the architect in a constant contextual movement, many of Viguier's works are part of a reflection on the connection between heritage and contemporary architecture, such as the Pont du Gard archaeological museum (2000), the Reims library opposite Notre-Dame de Reims cathedral (2002), the Natural History Museum in Toulouse (2008) and more recently in Paris, the Canadian Embassy and Cultural Centre and the architectural remodelling of the flagship Maison Chanel store at 19 Rue Cambon.

Press contacts

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