

**ERC**



# 1. THE PROMOTOR

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The principal promotor of the project is **KEMPENSE STEENKOLENMIJNEN N.V.** (K.S.), a company established within the framework of the normal belgian company legislation.

All its shares are indirectly held by the Flemish Government.

The fully paid up capital of the company amounts to 10.6 billion BEF (313 million USD, 247 million ECU).



**Panorama of coal mine site**



### ***SHORT HISTORY OF THE PROJECT***

**IN 1987**, a joint study group (LIMTOURIST) of the Flemish Government, the Flemish Regional Investment Company (GIMV) and the major Belgian touroperator SUNAIR investigate the opportunity of establishing a themepark in Limburg. A feasibility-study is executed by an association of TKB (Antwerp) and ERA (San Francisco).

**IN 1988**, KS takes over the project from LIMTOURIST. A new project-study is commissioned from TRACTEBEL (Brussels) - ERA (San Francisco) - EDAW (San Francisco) - SHOWSCAN (Los Angeles) - SWARTENBROEKX (Hasselt).



**IN MARCH 1989**, the Board of Directors of KS and the Flemish Government (land destination, access roads, subsidies) agree in principle to support the project. This covers a european recreative/cultural center, a themepark and an educational center within a large (2000 ha) protected area.

**IN 1990**, the different components of the project are further developed in collaboration with belgian and foreign specialists. ARTHUR D. LITTLE carries out a market-study, CITEC technical studies and the GENERALE BANK a financial study. In december of the same year, an investment program of 8 billion BEF (235 million USD, 186 million ECU) is submitted to the Board of Directors of KS.

**IN 1991**, additional studies regarding operational expenses and organizational structures are carried out by ERNST & YOUNG and BUREAU VAN DIJK integrates all studies in a final business plan.

**ON MARCH 6 1991**, the Board of Directors of K.S. approved the following proposals.

1. A firm investment of 8 billion BEF (235 million USD, 186 million ECU) in the ERC Project.
2. A K.S. participation of 3.2 billion BEF (94 million USD, 74.5 ECU) in the form of venture capital and a grant of 0.8 billion BEF (23.5 million USD, 19 million ECU) for renovation of the mine-site and buildings.

It was also decided to start forthwith negotiations with financial institutions to assure the residual project financing of 3.2 billion BEF and with private partners aiming at a participation of at least 50% in the venture capital. The remaining 0.8 billion BEF is to be granted as a reconversion subsidy by the Flemish Government.



## 2. THE ERC PROJECT: A UNIQUE APPROACH

### A. CONCEPT

#### AN ENTIRELY NEW CONCEPT IN THE LEISURE INDUSTRY

ERC is neither a fun park nor a theme park, cultural center or a museum; it is not a bungalow park nor a congress or merchandising center, but it will offer some of the features of each of these tourist-attractions.

People will come to ERC and stay there for very different reasons.

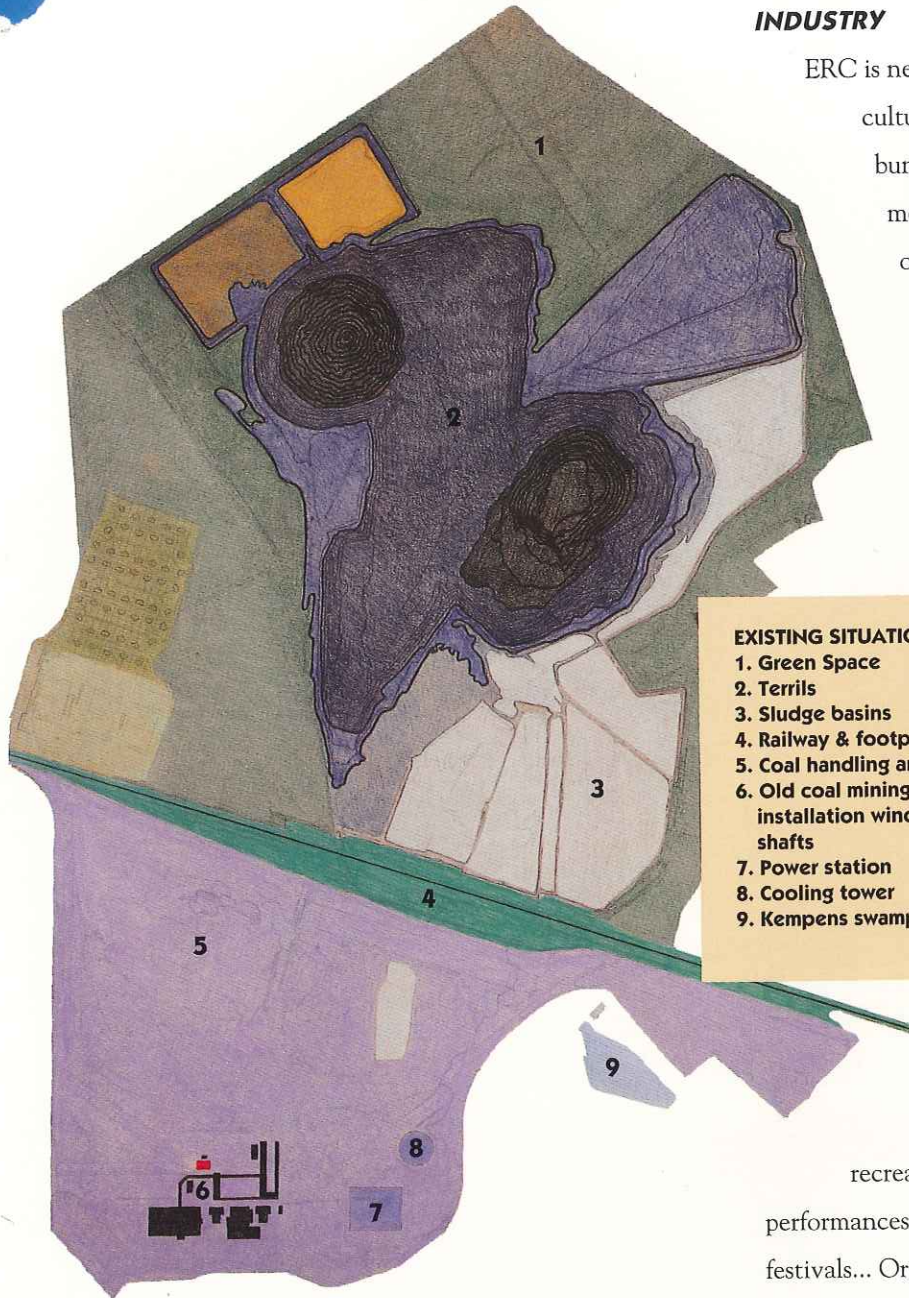
ERC will be a location where people from all over the world

meet for recreative or creative purposes, day and night, every day of the year. Such a european meeting place

corresponds best with the original notion of a small "town" as a market or meeting place.

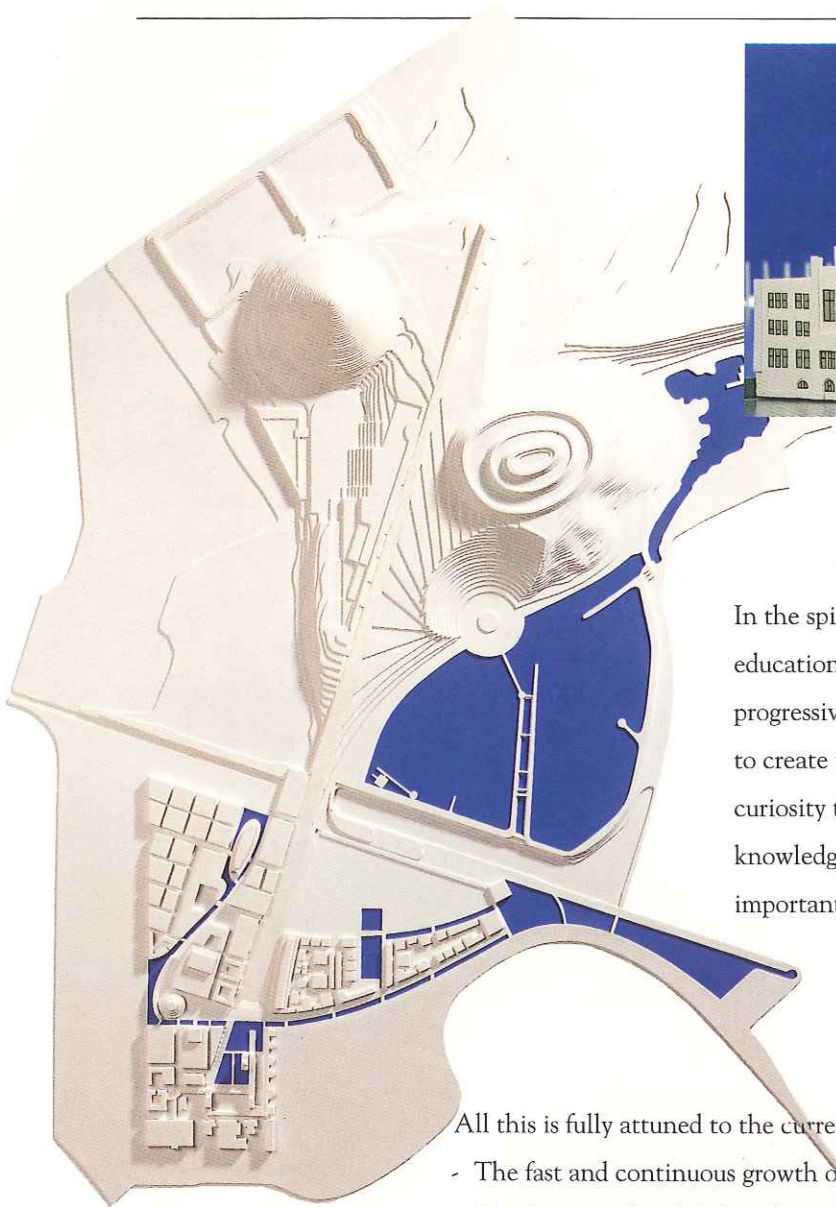
In all seasons, several events will take place simultaneously, serious and educational, funny and

recreative: exhibitions, shows, concerts, performances, workshops, international fairs and festivals... Organized events and spontaneous animation will happen side by side.



#### EXISTING SITUATION

1. Green Space
2. Terrils
3. Sludge basins
4. Railway & footpath
5. Coal handling area
6. Old coal mining installation winding shafts
7. Power station
8. Cooling tower
9. Kempens swamps



In the spirit of ERC, the frontiers between education, recreation and culture progressively fade away. It is more important to create understanding and to arouse curiosity than to communicate knowledge. Fun however must remain an important, if not the dominant factor.



All this is fully attuned to the current socio-economical trends which show:

- The fast and continuous growth of the leisure-market in Europe
- The demographical sliding from the age-segment 6-20 years to the age-segment 50+ years
- The growing available income and the spending trends of the target-groups to which the potential visitors belong
- The mounting level of education.

The unification-process of the European Community and the democratic developments in Eastern Europe favour the ERC concept. Even if most Europeans have only a vague idea about their european identity, it has progressively become more important in the minds of people.



## B. THE LOCATION

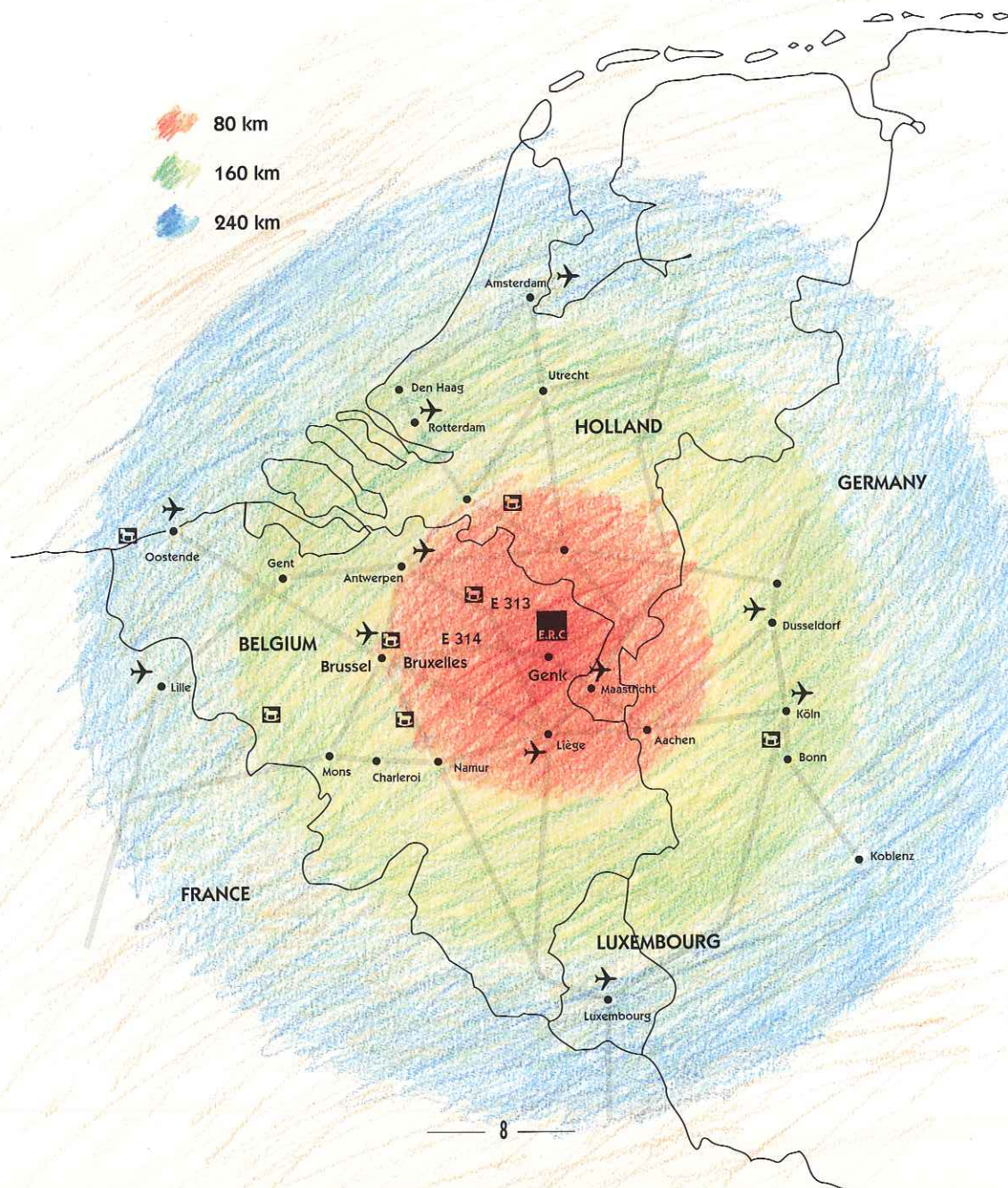
### IDEALLY SITUATED IN THE HEART OF EUROPE WITH EASY ACCESS

The ERC project is located close to Brussels in the most central part of Europe, the so-called Euregio. This region presents the highest population density of Europe: 36 million people live within a range of 160 km and more than 50 million within a range of 240 km.

This area of potential regular customers includes many major cities and industry zones (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Mons-Charleroi, Liège, Luxemburg, the Ruhr, Rhineland-Westfalen, Aachen, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Lille and the industrial North of France... ).

Their inhabitants are always looking out for new one-day trips, weekends or short holiday destinations in the countryside.

This area offers a huge potential market for ERC.



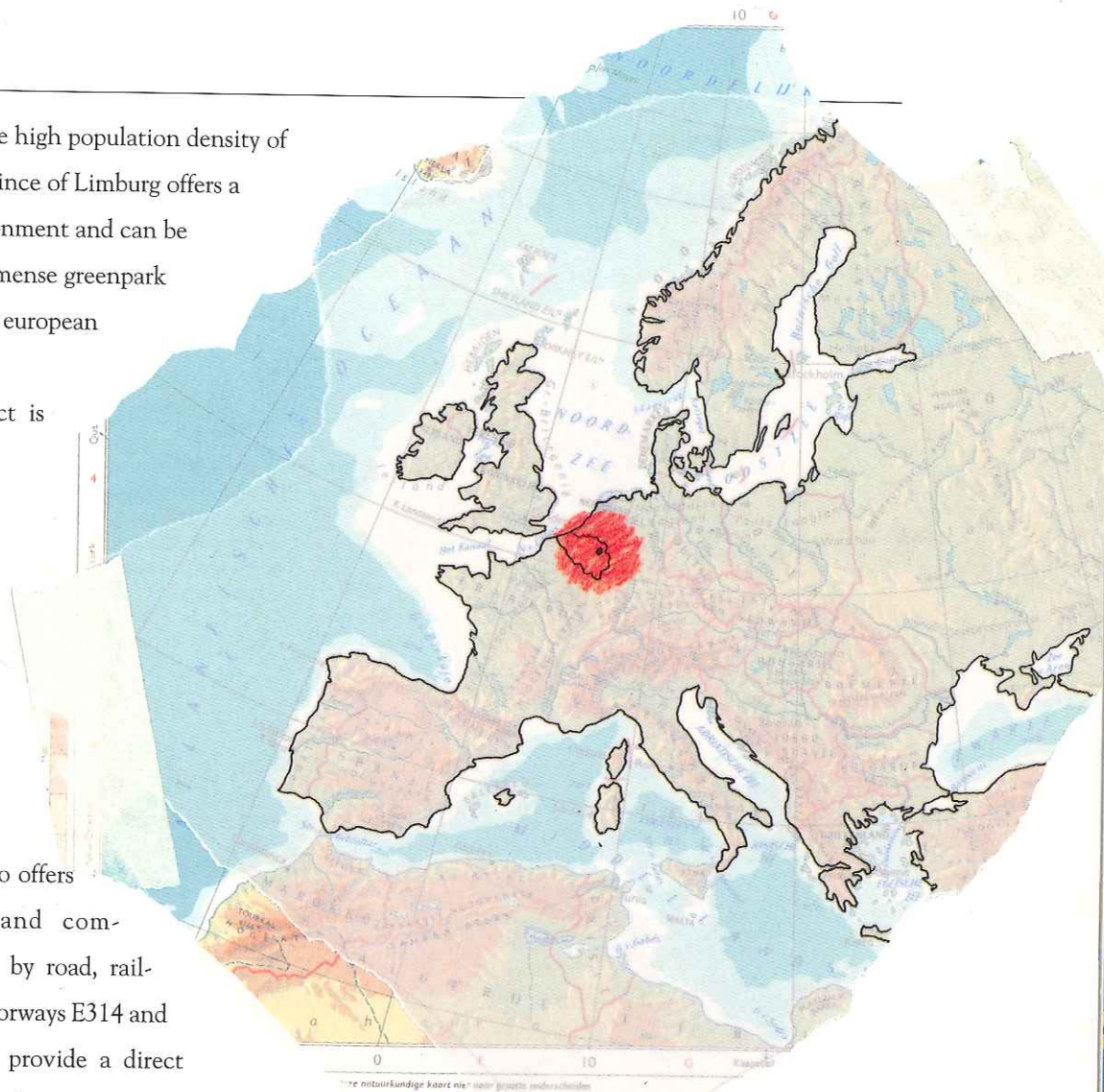


Notwithstanding the high population density of the region, the province of Limburg offers a natural green environment and can be considered as an immense greenpark on the border of the european capital : Brussels.

The ERC core project is situated within an available estate of greenland of more than 2.000 ha (5.000 acres) which will be reserved as a park landscape and/or for future extensions.

The ERC project also offers excellent access and communication facilities by road, railway and air. The motorways E314 and E313 south of ERC provide a direct access to the local and european motorway-networks which are very dense in this part of Europe. Other roads provide direct access for the local population.

The existing railway line will be reopened for passengers and a station on the premises shall assure connections with the european railway-network. ERC is situated at 25 minutes from the TGV station of Liège, 40 minutes from the Antwerp and 60 minutes from the Brussels TGV station.



#### ERC in the heart of Europe

The intercontinental airport of Brussels and the regional airports of Antwerp, Köln/Bonn and Dusseldorf can be reached in less than an hour. The european airports of Liège and Maastricht are within less than half an hour driving distance.

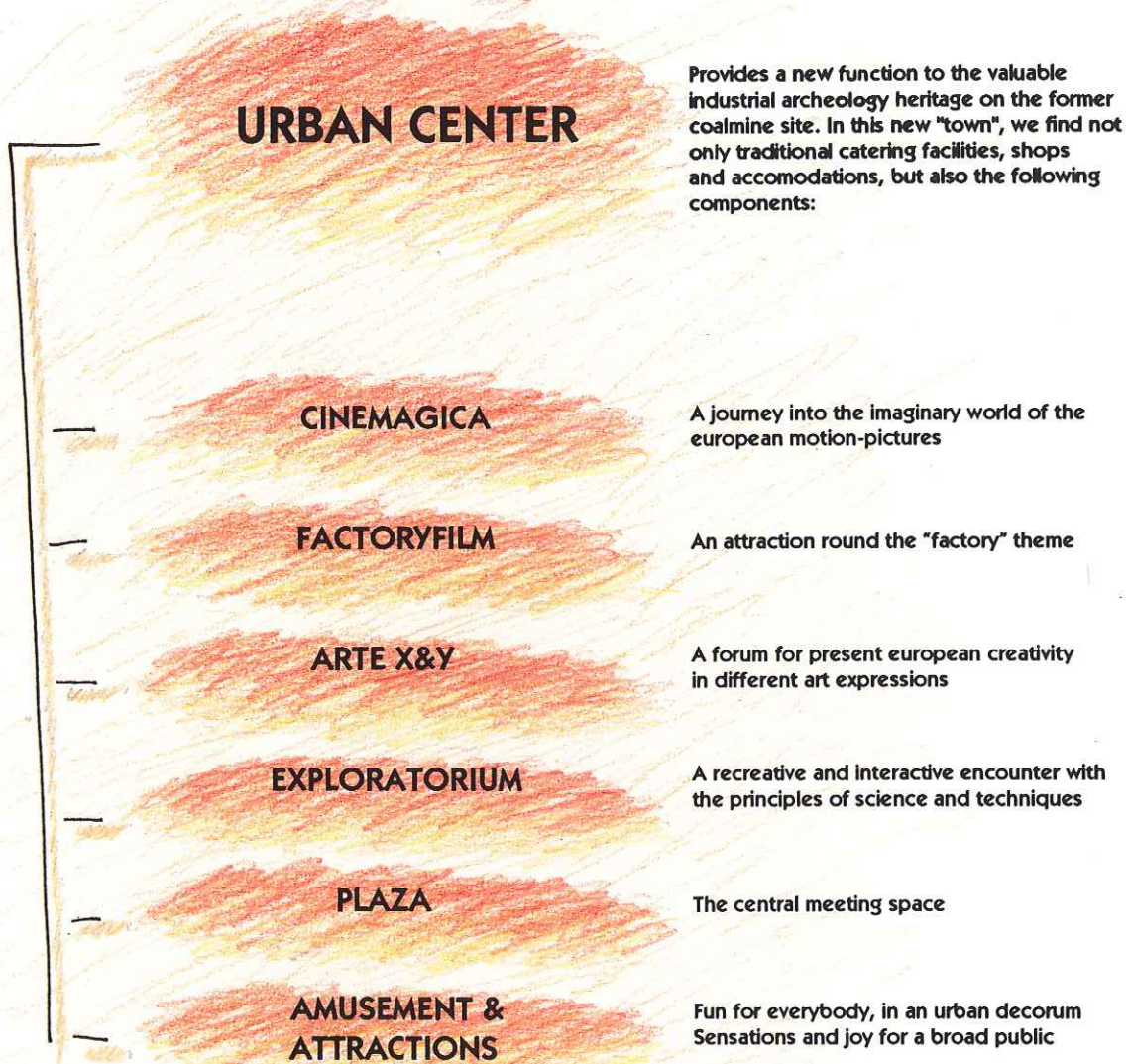




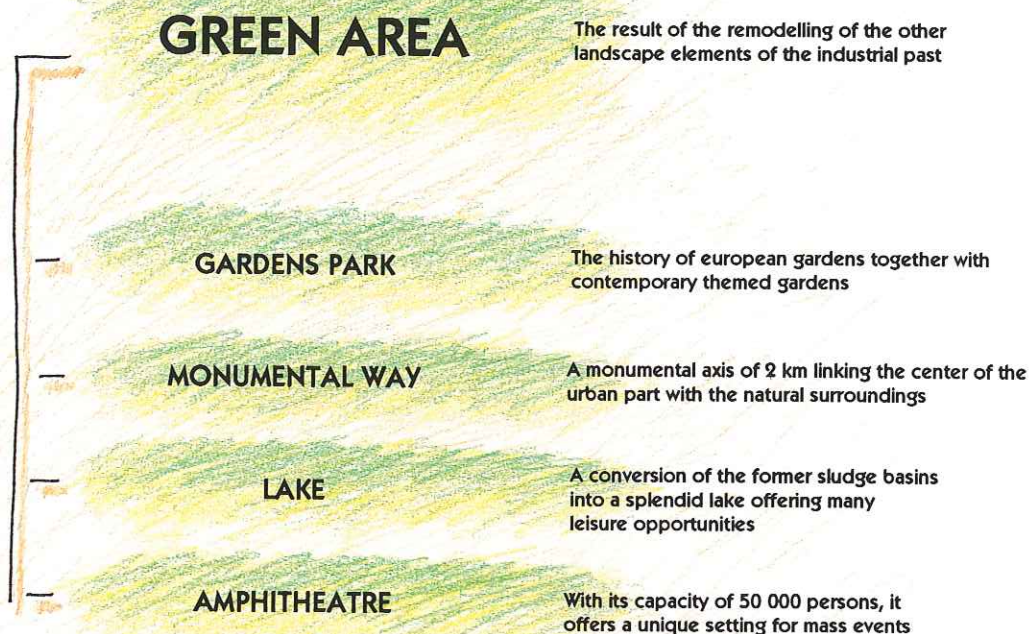
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## C. THE PRODUCT

A CONTEMPORARY ANSWER TO PRESENT LEISURE DEMANDS: AN IDEALLY BALANCED ENTITY



## INDOOR- AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, OF LEISURE, EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES



ERC will offer its visitors the opportunity to discover Europe's creativity in the past, the present and the future. In this context, active discovery is much more important than passive undergoing. A spontaneous, pleasant encounter must take place, an interactive participation in the traditions and processes of creative activity.

The general lay-out and structure of ERC is that of a small town. It is not inspired by any particular town or parts thereof, but the visitor will find all the cha-

acteristics which predominate in european towns:

- One or more centers of activity with different events taking place
- A large diversity of simultaneous activities, indoor or outdoor
- Complete freedom of movement from one place to another
- A unique finality and style which characterize a "Polis" and distinguish it from other towns for indefinable reasons.



## **D. STRUCTURE**

### **THE MOST ADVANCED VISITOR-FRIENDLY FACILITIES**

The structure of the ERC project has been planned in the first place in function of the psychology and the impressions of the visitors. Safety and security, multiplicity and diversity of sensations, the expected versus the unforeseen, walking facilities, accessibility and many other factors have been taken into account.

More practically, the ERC core project basically covers the surface of the former coal mine of Waterschei with a surface of appr. 300 ha (750 acres), diagonally crossed by a railway.

South of the railway is a large and flat open space.

**Structure Plan**



At the far south, the premises are bordered by the former mine buildings, which will be integrated in the project

North of the railway, the land is partly covered by one terrace- and two cone-shaped slag-heaps which form landmarks of resp. 115 m and 88 m height (345 and 264 feet). These will be remodelled to blend with the landscape. Furthermore, the existing basins north of the railway will be sealed by foils and sand to transform them in a big lake integrated in the ERC project.

The surrounding land is covered mainly by pine-woods with here and there heath-land. Predetermined areas are available for accommodation projects or future extensions.

The quality of the site adds a huge value to the project. The integration of a classical industrial complex into a modern recreative environment surrounded by the pinewood- and heathlands of Limburg is indeed an unprecedented opportunity. A last parameter in the planning is the flexibility and the growth of the project. The ERC project is not a static, but a dynamic project, with the possibility to continuously add new activities or to adapt existing facilities.

These are the basic parameters which have guided the structural plans drawn by the Atelier d'Architecture du Sart Tilman. The different physical constituents, the functions (lodging, catering, access, traffic etc.) as well as the urban development are laid-out around an axis North-South. This axis starts from the remarkable industrial buildings. The monumental way mounts in the direction of the slag-

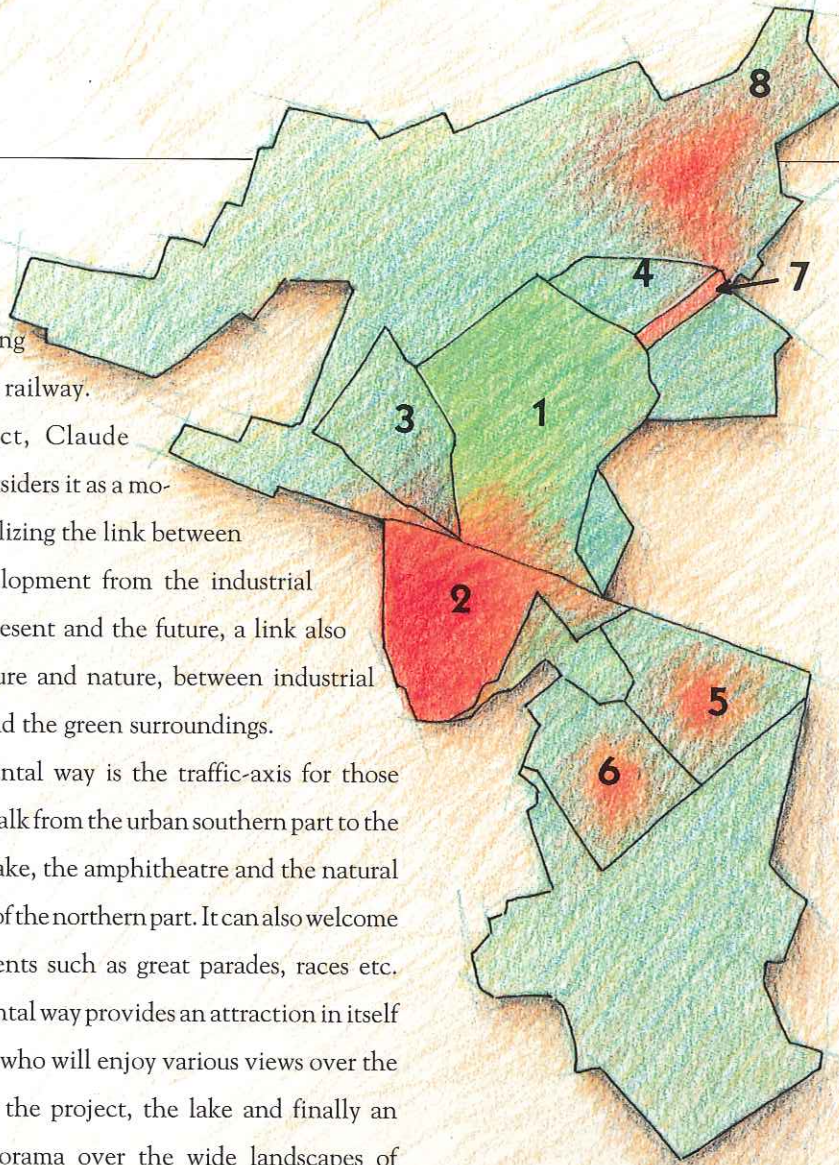


heaps, crossing  
the existing railway.

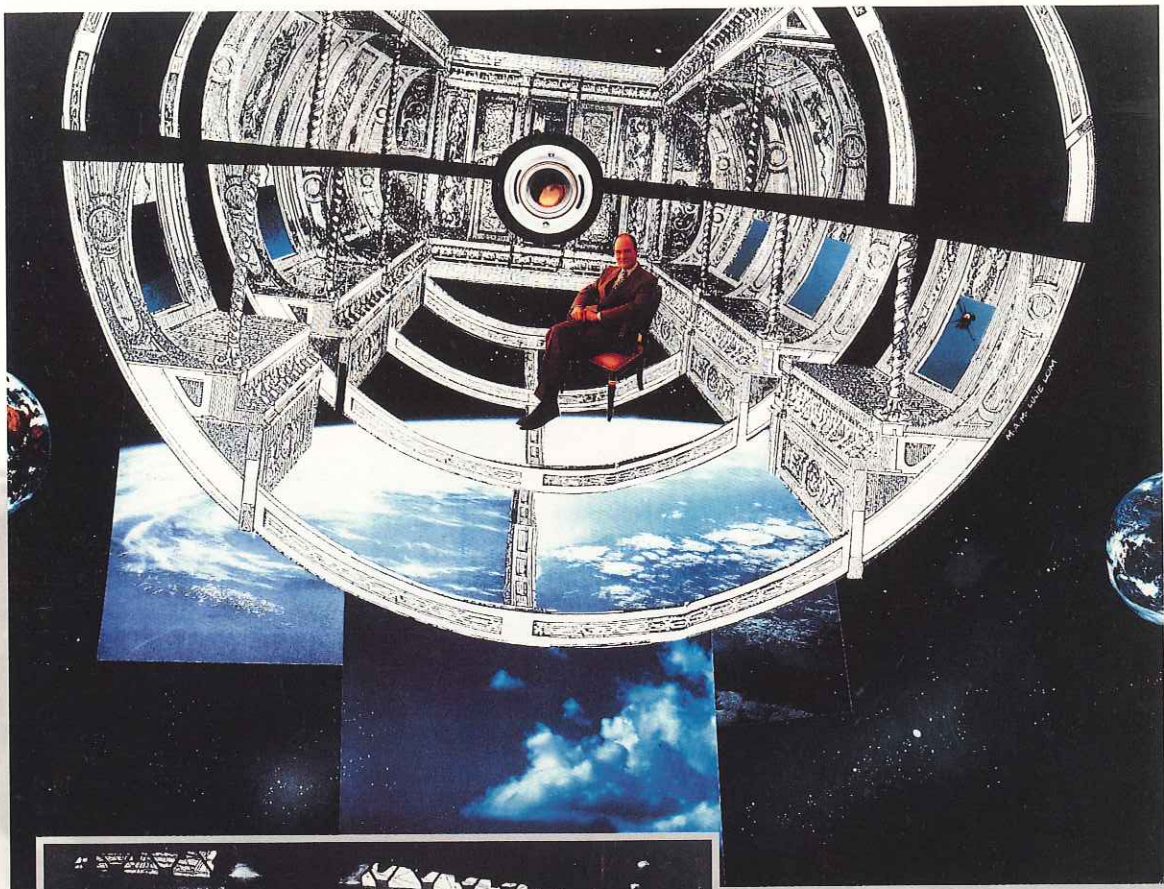
The architect, Claude  
Strebelle, considers it as a mo-  
nument visualizing the link between  
and the development from the industrial  
past to the present and the future, a link also  
between culture and nature, between industrial  
archeology and the green surroundings.

The monumental way is the traffic-axis for those  
who wish to walk from the urban southern part to the  
gardens, the lake, the amphitheatre and the natural  
environment of the northern part. It can also welcome  
important events such as great parades, races etc.  
The monumental way provides an attraction in itself  
for the visitor who will enjoy various views over the  
urban part of the project, the lake and finally an  
immense panorama over the wide landscapes of  
Limburg and even, by clear weather, over the three  
countries forming the Euregio: Belgium, Holland  
and Germany.

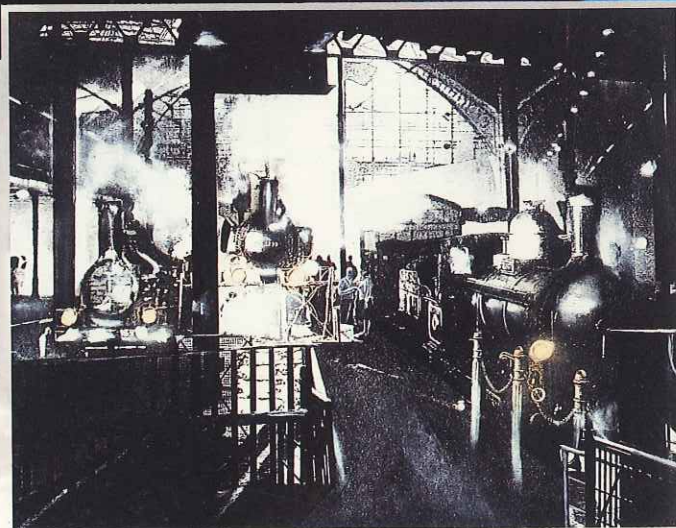
The northern part of the site will include a garden-  
complex of 35 ha (83 acres), the lake and the  
amphitheatre. As all activities are outdoors, this part  
of the program will be more seasonal. The southern  
part of the ERC project offers, through its special  
attractions, Exploratorium, Arte X & Y, Cinemagica,  
FactoryFilm and its catering and fun facilities a  
unique mix of recreation, creativity, fun, and  
education in a very special urban environment.



• <b>KS Coal Mine Site</b>		
1	Core Area North	195
2	Core Area South	125
		<b>320 ha</b>
• <b>Land Purchased</b>		
3	Extension North	63
4	Extension zone Golf	38
5	Hotel expansion zone	91
6	Camping zone	99
		<b>291 ha</b>
• <b>Land to be purchased</b>		
7	Golf facilities	13
8	Zone family facilities	106
		<b>119 ha</b>
<b>TOTAL LAND ERC</b>		<b>730 ha</b>
<b>TOTAL PROTECTED ZONE</b>		<b>1.832 ha</b>



Cinemagica: The Zeppelin



Cinemagica: The Station Platform

**E. THE COMPONENTS**  
**AN IDEAL MIX FOR ALL AGES,**  
**FOR ALL TASTES**

*The strong and unique architecture of the coal-mine premises, the mixture of european creativity with fun and recreation will be a formula distinguishing ERC from other recreation parks. After a study of the market opportunities, the following components have been retained in the initial stage.*

## 1. CINEMAGICA

### THE BIGGEST PERMANENT MOVIE ATTRACTION IN EUROPE

In Cinemagica, the visitor becomes an actor and an explorer on a journey through an imaginary world where he meets a theme that inspired many European movies. Losing all sense of time and space, he finds himself in a zeppelin, in a circus, in a jungle-temple, on stage, in a railway station, on a ship...

With its surface of 18.000 sq.m. (162.000 square feet), this will be the biggest permanent movie attraction in Europe. François Confino signs for the scenography while Alfredo De Gregorio is charged with interior and exterior architecture.



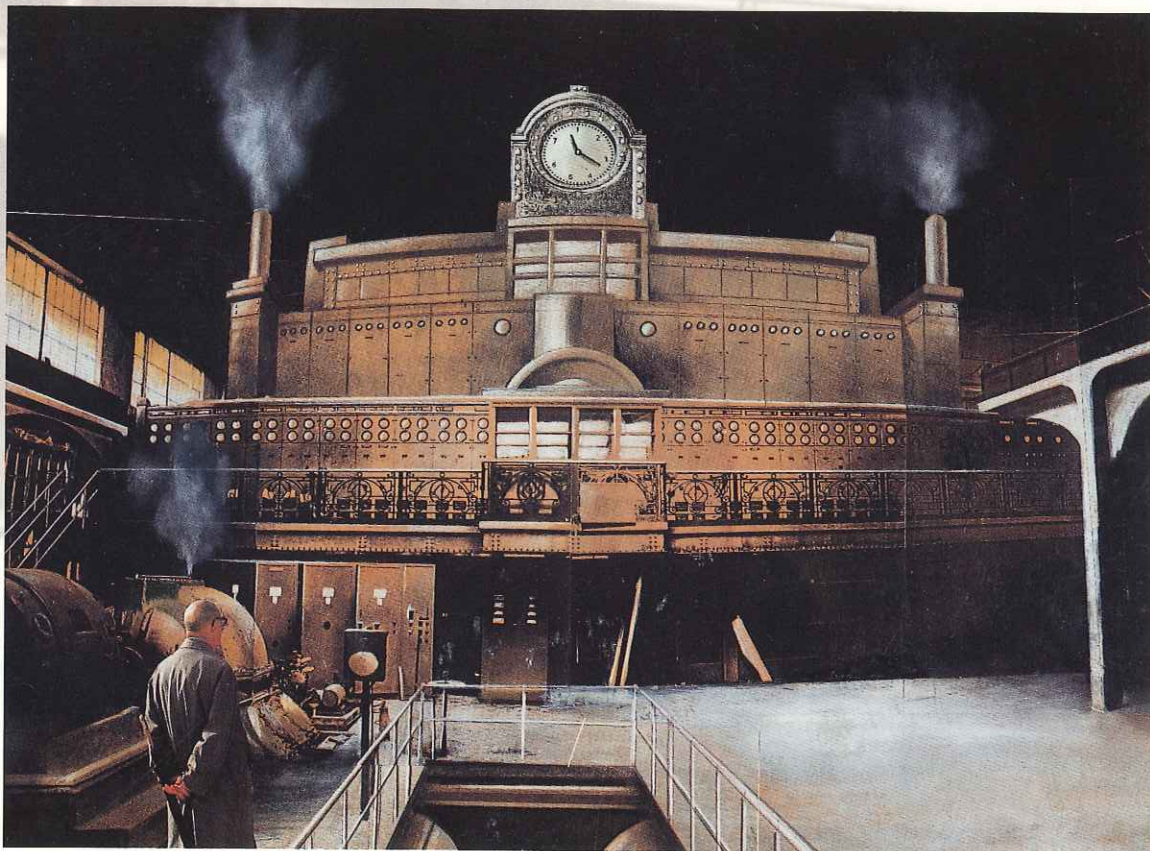
Cinemagica: The Circus

## 2. FACTORYFILM

### A BREATH - TAKING SHOW

FactoryFilm is a spectacular multi-media show in the former central cooling-engines room of the coal-mine. With laser effects, dia-projections, movie-excerpts, integrated into this fascinating machinery setting, the visitor will be disconcerted, thrilled and amused.

FactoryFilm: The Factory



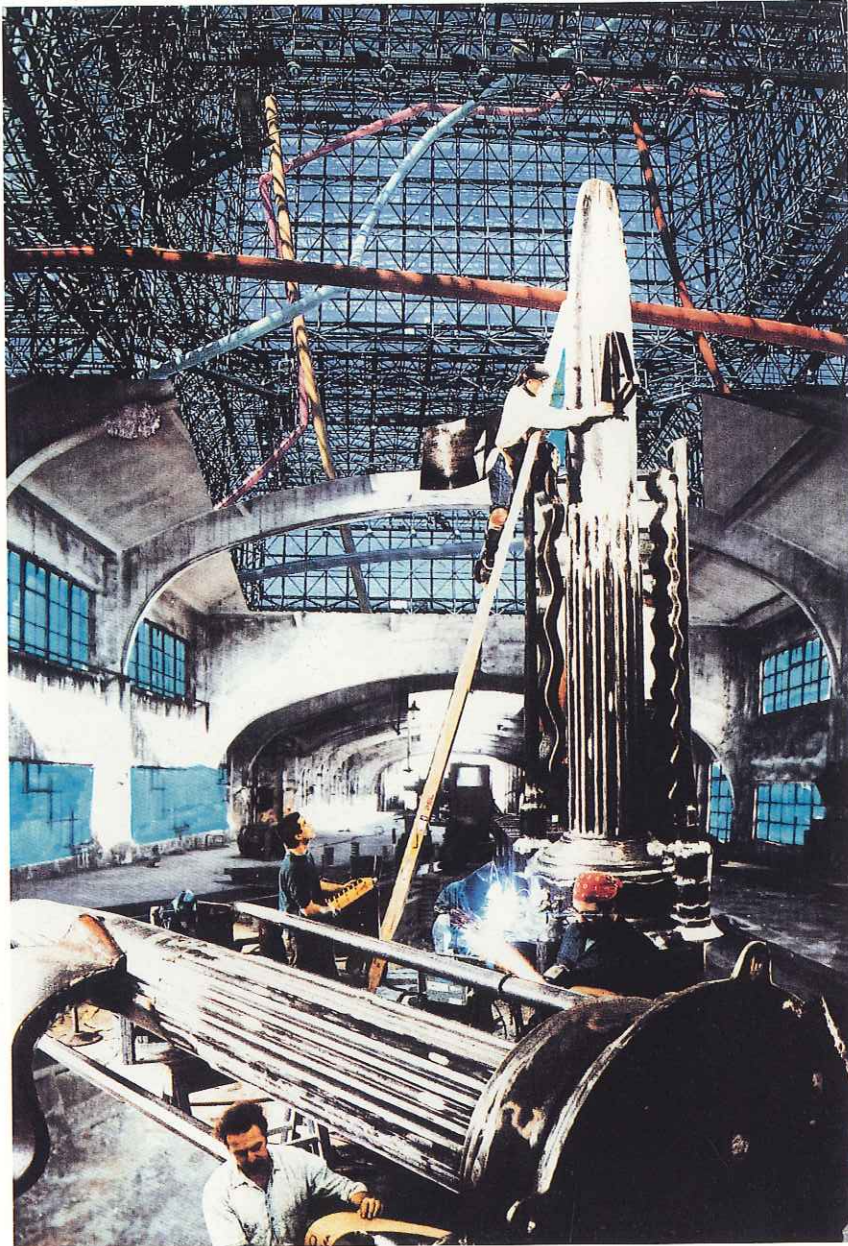


### 3. ARTE X & Y A FRESH LOOK AT ART

In Arte X & Y, the contemporary European creativity in the fields of fashion, architecture, design and art-craftmanship will be displayed. But unlike museums, the display will be interactive. The accent lies on the

production and the evolution of objects rather than on the static effect of the final result. Art becomes a live-entertainment. The maker is no longer a signature or a label, but a person in flesh and blood. **Arte X** stands for **Artefax** that communicates directly

Arte X & Y: The Artefactory



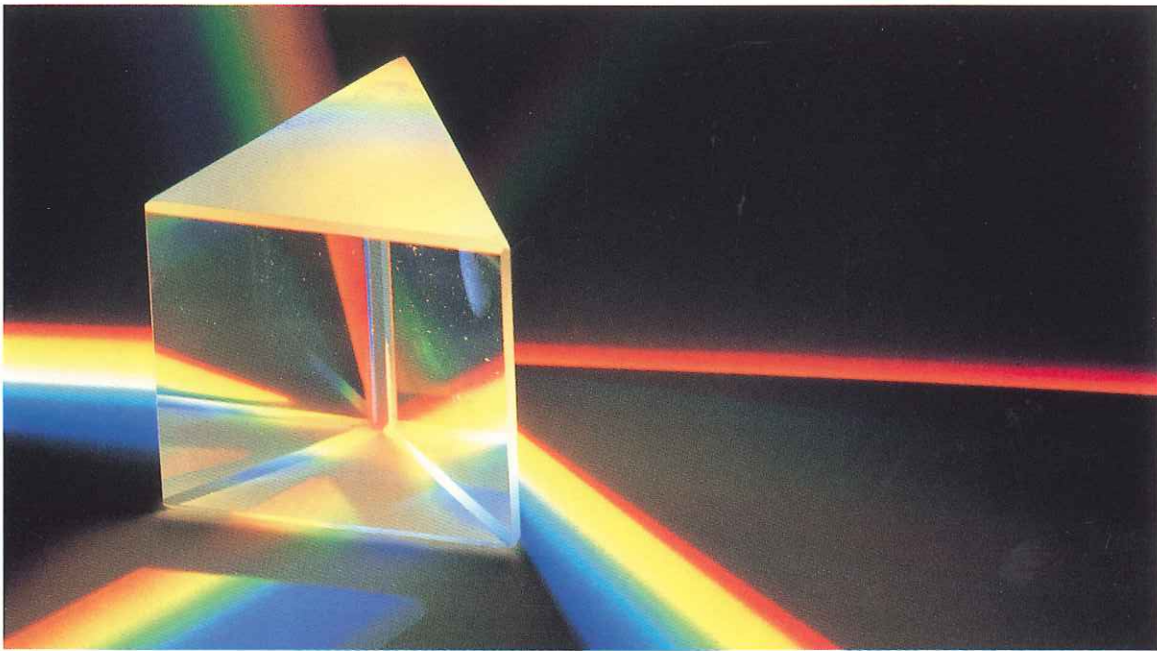
with the European designers' world through telefax and video-transmissions.

**Arte Y** stands for **Arte Factory**: here, this creative process comes true in a show around the production.

As in mathematics, X and Y stand for variable values. Here also, they remain variable. The displays are never the same and at each visit, the public discovers new things.

Arte X & Y is situated in the transport-tunnels around the "Shaft 1" of the former mine. Ettore Sottsass, draws the plans of the transformation, while Massimo Iosa Ghini signs for the interior decoration.





#### **4. EXPLORATORIUM SCIENCES AND TECHNIQUES MADE CAPTIVATING**

People of all ages will discover and marvel at a large number of principles in science and techniques.

The visitor will however remain the pivot of everything in the recreative ERC-Exploratorium.

This effect is obtained through different display-methods: visualization of processes, positioning of techniques in their origins and development, anachronistic arrangements, cross-links between apparently unrelated fields, transcendence of current logical structures, scale-manipulations, interactive displays etc...

The imagination is stimulated, the visitor is challenged by the game in which he participates. All his senses are subjected to the phenomena of mechanics, electricity, magnetism, biology, nature...

The themes will be developed in collaboration with industry and university research centers to guarantee the exactitude of the information provided and to remain up to date in the latest developments of science and their applications.

#### **5. MAJOR ATTRACTION LOVELY SENSATIONS IN A FINE SETTING**

Young and old will enjoy the europe themed musical ride through several scenes with real and mythical characters.



## 6. AMUSEMENT

### SUMMER AND WINTER FUN!

ERC amusements are fully integrated in the town. This formula avoids the need of a cover, which spoils the pleasure when the sun shines, and will also attract a large number of visitors during the winter period. A town indeed keeps its charms as well in summer when one strolls along the streets and the sunny terraces as in winter, when one can always move along from one attraction to another.



The Rollercoaster

## 7. THE PLAZA

### A MEETING POINT OF EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY

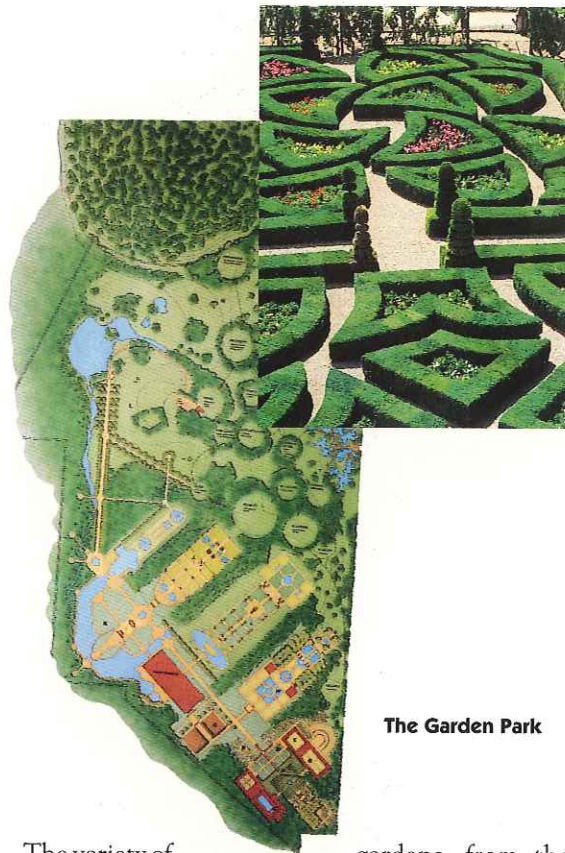
The square between the two monumental shaft-buildings is the real Agora of this contemporary Polis. The Plaza is surrounded by two huge arcades. The dimensions of the square are those of a small town-square with an intimate character.

Next to the entrance of the Arte X & Y, Cinemagica and FactoryFilm, the visitor finds most of the shops and catering services: a welcome occasion to relax from the emotions and to exchange impressions with others.

## 8. THE GARDENS

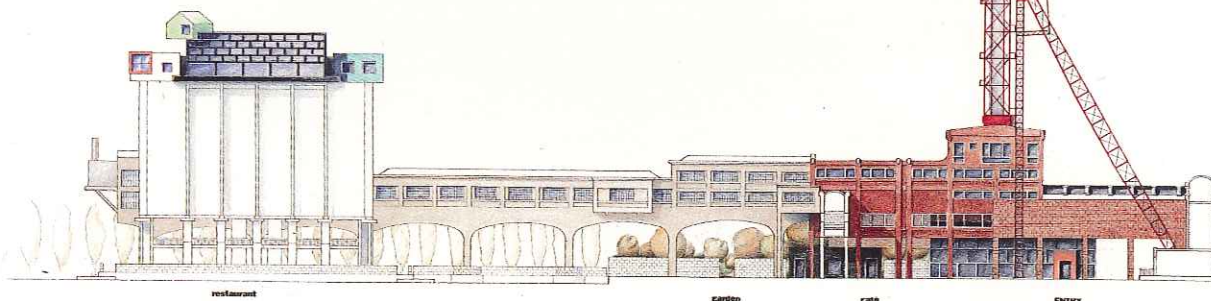
### THE HISTORY OF GARDEN ARCHITECTURE

The gardens give an impression of the garden-architecture in Europe throughout the centuries, as well as a large number of themed gardens which reflect several approaches of men towards nature and their environment. The transformation of a desolate industrial landscape in a flourishing paradise confers an additional dimension to the ERC project.



The Garden Park

The variety of gardens, from the original Garden of Eden up to modern gardens gives a unique character to this garden-park. Garden design is realized by Clouston (GB), in collaboration with the European Foundation for Landscape Architecture.



The Plaza by Ettore Sottsass



The Amfitheatre

### **9. AMPHITHEATRE AND STADIUM FROM CLASSICAL TO POP, THE ATTENDANCES WILL BE HUGE!**

For the organization of concerts, classical or other, big events and mass-meetings, an open-air amphitheatre with a capacity of 50.000 persons will be built offering a sensational view over the lake and the surroundings. The adjoining stadium with a capacity of 20.000 can be used for sport- and other special events. These two installations remedy the lack of infrastructure for mass-events in the Euregio.

### **10. LODGINGS**

In a first stage, the core project provides for several lodging-facilities aimed at the international tourists, short stays by people out of the adjoining regions, and stays by families and special target-groups, such as the participants in workshops or training-programs. For performers and artists, who participate in the special attractions, animations and events, flats will be built.

*As culture is one of the main themes of ERC, the attractions are intrinsic master-pieces integrated in a design decorum. The roller coaster glides through the streets, offering at moments an upside-down view of the town. The visitor who wants to take things easier can board the chairlift to enjoy an aerial view of the town. And if he does not want to take to the air, he can embark in a gondola to long the channels.*

## **F. RELATED PROJECTS**

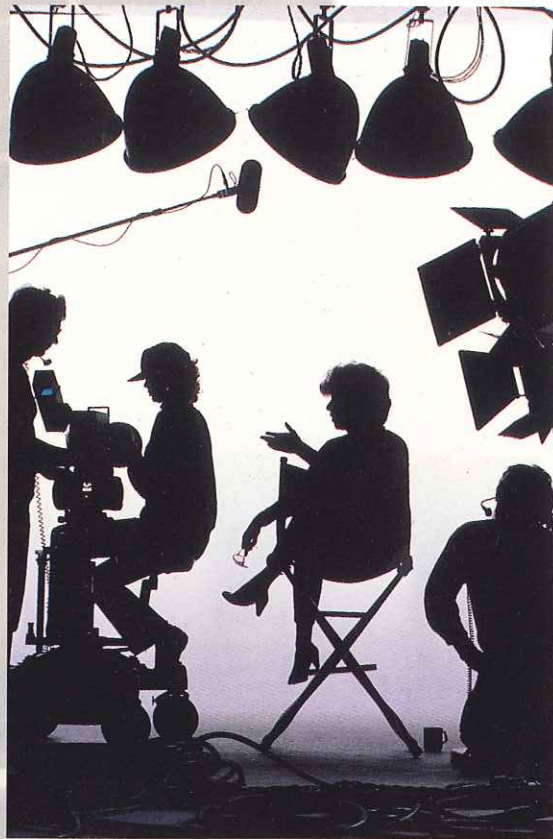
### **1. AUDIOVISUAL INDUSTRY**

In the immediate vicinity of ERC, new audiovisual industry projects will offer a synergetic effect.

The proximity of important production and research centers such as Philips Eindhoven and Hasselt, the existence of specialized educational institutes for visual communication and design with the geographical situation in the heart of Europe are main assets to become a leading center of the audiovisual industry.

The ERC project will not only be an important trade-partner for such companies: it will also form the ideal creative surroundings for media-producers and offer easy accesses and the necessary catering and lodging facilities.

Project plans under discussion include a cartoon movies studio, 2- and 3-dimensional computer generated production facilities, CD-Instudios, creative production companies, whilst a large TV-studio with audience facilities, meeting and production rooms should meet existing demand in this part of Europe.



A Media Expertise Center where people can acquire the necessary know-how and training in the latest media techniques will further be a major asset.



### **2. ACCOMMODATIONS INDUSTRY**

Campings, family accommodations, family hotels and luxury hotels will be needed for lodging ERC-visitors. An international golf court, accessible to the public will further enhance the value of the ERC project as a holiday destination.

## **G. ERC DYNAMICS**

Just like a real town, ERC is not static, neither in its present context, nor in its development. The diversity, the opportunities are endless; at any moment, the visitor might discover entirely new things. ERC is, in the first place, a flexible project, ready to be adjusted to changing trends, new needs or demands, evolving spending patterns and life-styles...

The challenge of the core project is to create the essential components of a new concept, the nucleus for a spontaneous growth.



**MEDIAFLEX CITY**

### 3. THE POTENTIAL MARKET

## A BROAD PUBLIC AND CONSIDERABLE GROWTH-POTENTIALS

Generally speaking, the potential ERC visitors belong to very diversified target groups:

- Those seeking concentrated leisure-experiences, such as the visitors of fun-parks or theme-parks (day tourism)
- Those who like to visit european cities or natural sites
- Those who visit trade fairs, concerts and other events
- Visitors to Europe from other continents
- Those who participate in residential activities such as conferences, workshops, short stays...

The essence of what is offered by ERC is the concentration of a series of experiences which one wants in a city.

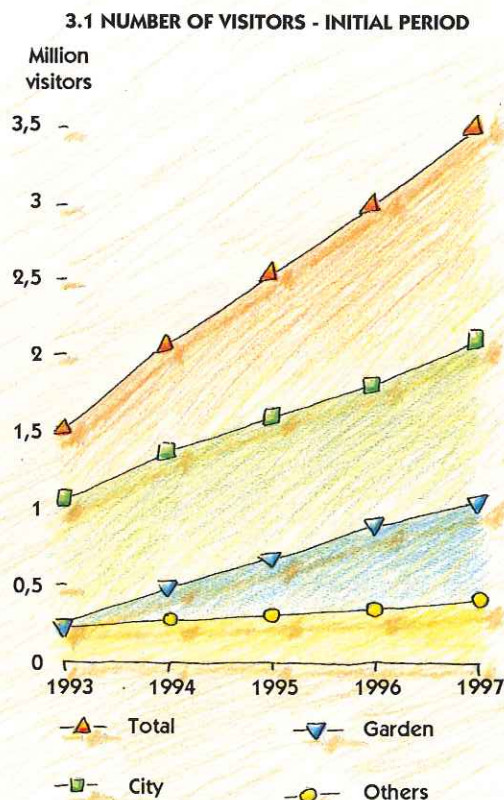
In general, these experiences can be described as follows:

- experiences of encounters/discoveries
- experiences of diversity/variety
- experiences of leisure/fun

ERC provides all these.

#### ATTENDANCE FORECAST

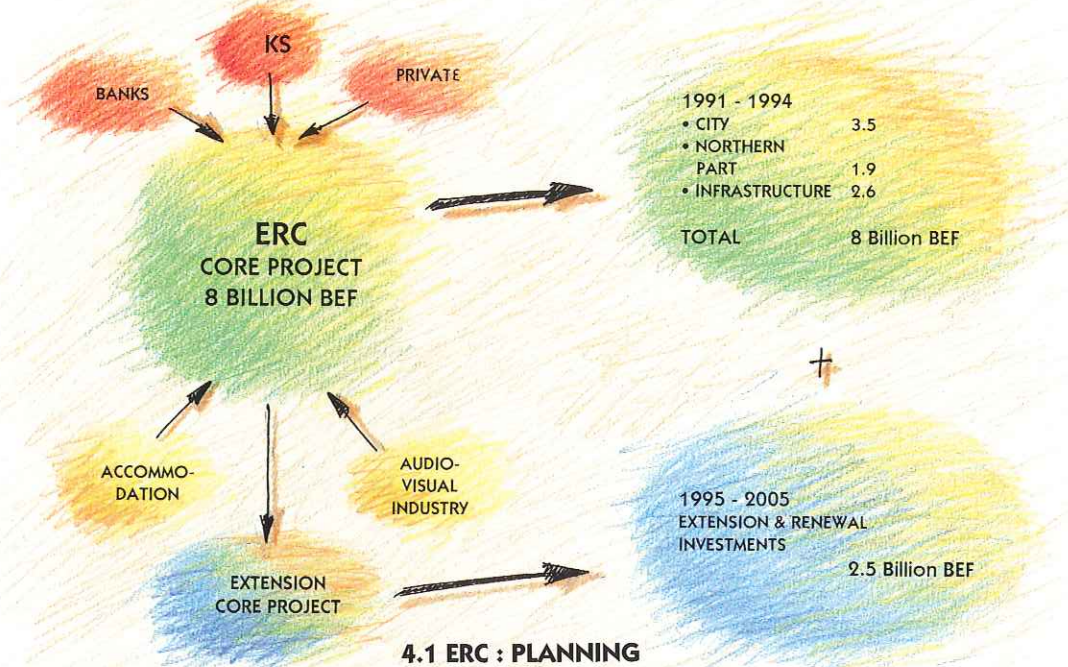
The mature market attendance forecast ranges from 3.4 million visits a year as a low estimate to 5.7 million visits a year as a high estimate. In the starting period, the number of visitors can be expected to grow from 1.5 million in the first year to 3.5 million after five years as shown in the schedule hereunder.



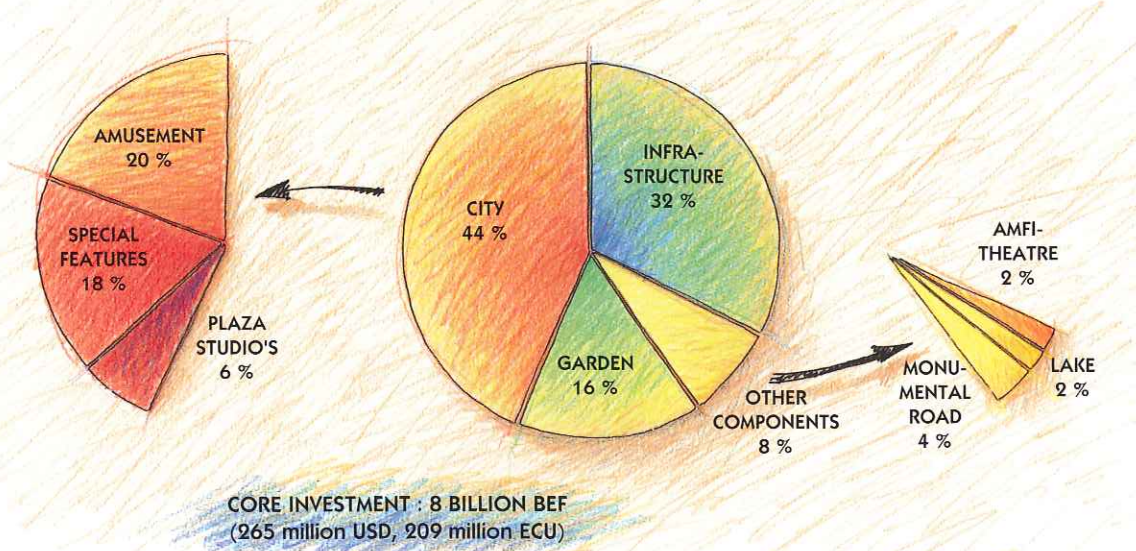
# 4. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

## PLANNED INVESTMENTS

Summary of planned investments:



## CORE INVESTMENT



**4.2 ERC - CORE PROJECT : COMPOSITION OF INVESTMENTS**

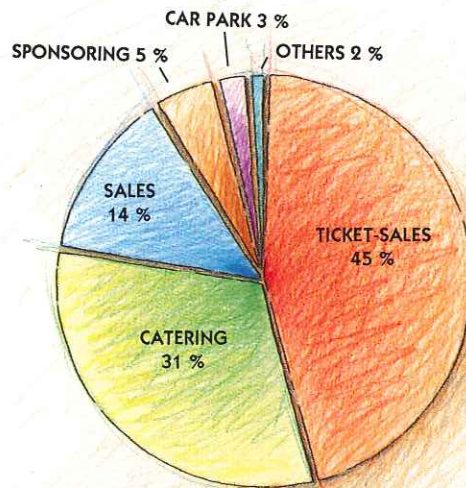


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## REVENUE AND COST STRUCTURE

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The structure of the budgeted revenues is shown in the table hereunder.

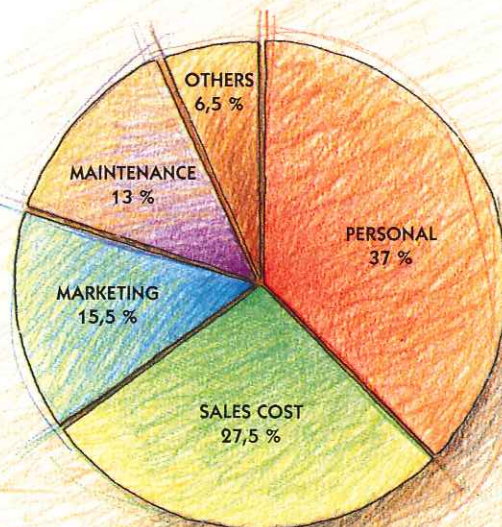


YEAR 2000 : 4.5 BILLION BEF (current)

### 4.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REVENUES

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The structure of the budgeted costs is shown in the table hereunder.



YEAR 2000 : 2.9 BILLION BEF (current)

### 4.4 STRUCTURE OF THE COSTS

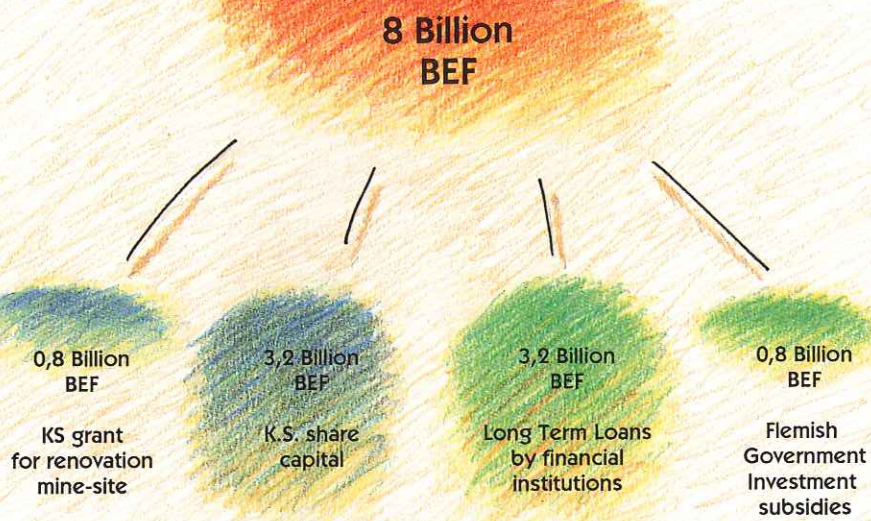
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## CAPITAL STRUCTURE

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The investments will be financed in the following way:



### 4.5 ERC - CORE PROJECT : CAPITAL STRUCTURE





**LIST OF CONSULTANTS / COOPERATORS  
TO THE ERC-PROJECT**

**ADL (USA)**

**ATELIER D'ARCHITECTURE DU SART TILMAN (B)**

**ALKEN-MAES (B)**

**BELGROMA (B)**

**BLACKPOOL LEISURE & AMUSEMENT CONSULTANCY (GB)**

**BUREAU VAN DIJK (B)**

**CARESTEL (B)**

**CITEC (B)**

**CLOUSTON (GB)**

**AGENCE F. CONFINO (F)**

**A. DE GREGORIO & PARTNERS (B)**

**J. DUBRULLE (B)**

**ERNST & YOUNG (B)**

**GENERALE BANK (B)**

**GRANT LEISURE (GB)**

**M. IOSSA GHINI (I)**

**J. KENIS (B)**

**KUIPER & COMP. (NL)**

**O. KUYKEN (B)**

**PGA (GB)**

**H. SCHUEREMANS (B)**

**E. SOTTSASS ASSOCIATI (I)**

**C. STREBELLE (B)**

March 1991

**ERC**