



Everything about

Three high-speed stations

Brussels South
Antwerpen-Centraal
Liège-Guillemins



The advent of the high-speed train at Brussels South, Antwerpen-Centraal and Liège-Guillemins gave NMBS/SNCB the opportunity to thoroughly renovate these three stations. The idea was based on the ambition to welcome its several thousands of domestic travellers as well as its (new) international customers

in a modern, practical and customer-friendly environment. And the reception is quite impressive indeed: each station has its own travel centre, waiting room, shops, cafeteria, public telephones, well-tended sanitary facilities etc.

The design of the plans is especially forward-looking, as the three stations are expected to boom in the next few years. In order to cope with the growing flow of travellers, tracks are being renewed, longer and wider platforms built and walkalators and escalators installed. Traveller transit zones become more spacious and agreeable thanks to the sophisticated incidence of light.





Antwerpen-Centraal

The (re)arrangement of the stations has moreover been planned in a way allowing travellers to smoothly transfer from high-speed trains to conventional trains. Or to another means of public or private transport, as metro, bus stations and parking spaces, all situated within merely a stone's throw.



Moreover the three cities seized the opportunity to smarten up the whole station district. Entire neighbourhoods are getting face-lifts, new buildings are mushrooming and squares are being laid out or renovated.

Liège-Guillemins

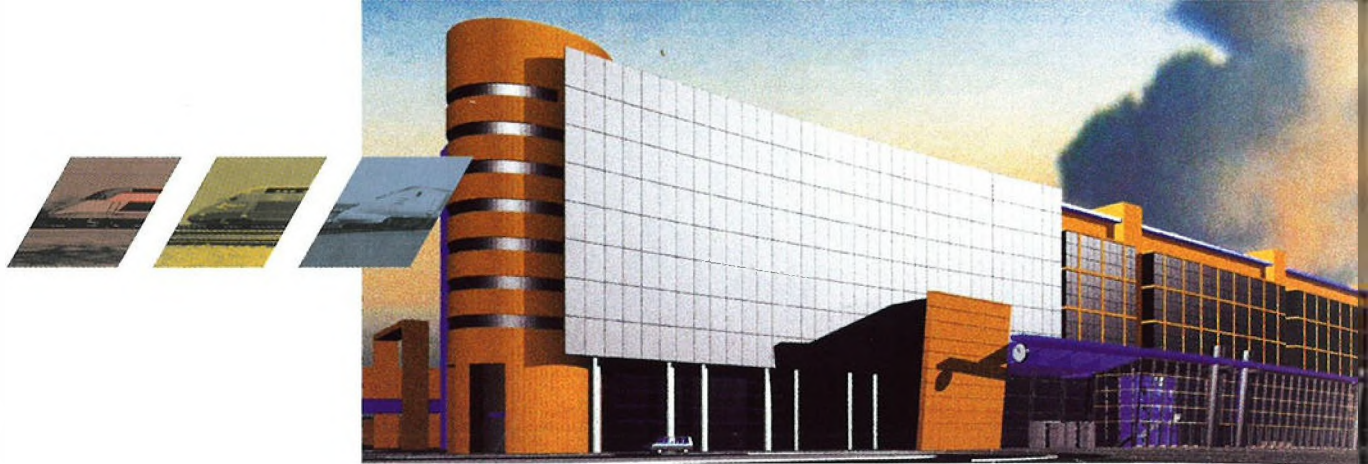
BRUSSELS SOUTH



14 November 1994 marked a new era for Brussels South. It was the day when the station welcomed its first high-speed traveller. Eurostar was taking its first travellers from London to Brussels. Since then the number of high-speed trains only kept growing: Thalys to Paris, Cologne and Amsterdam, TGV Brussels – France to over forty French destinations. Brussels South also became increasingly important to the domestic network, resulting in a steadily growing number of travellers.

This impressive number of (new) customers required a thorough renovation of the station. And now, a few years later, much work has been done. Eurostar travellers as well as Thalys customers were given their own terminals. These were both integrated in the old station, which kept its existing structure but in the meantime underwent a serious facelift. The new Brussels South station is more spacious, better organized and more pleasant for travellers to find their way. Part of the tracks, platforms and coverings have already been renewed and the rest is to be done shortly.





The surrounding area will be brushed up too. The alterations of the station are part of a large-scale urban renovation project with some 120,000 m² office space, 20,000 m² commercial space, 20,000 m² hotel space, 10,000 m² residential space and 2,500 parking places. Part of the Rue de France is for instance to make way for a green freshened up square called the Place de France (France Square).

Modernity

A STATION WITH A FUTURE

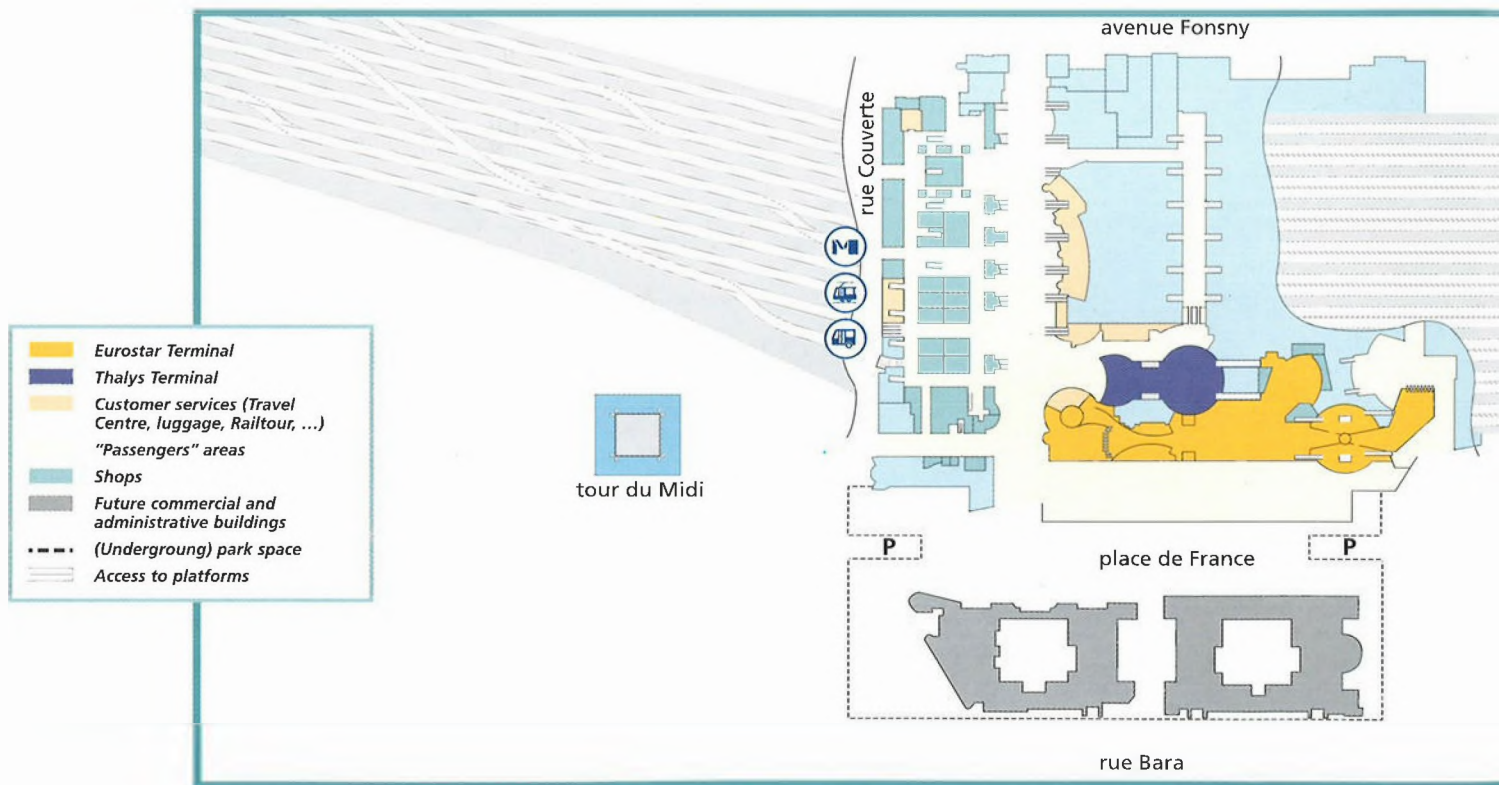


Although the renovation may still take up a few more years, Brussels South has already undergone a metamorphosis. It is no longer merely a place where trains leave and arrive. The station has for instance developed a symbiotic relation with other means of transport; indeed tram, metro, bus, taxi or private car are all waiting just round the corner. And on top of that Brussels South hosts a true microcosm; it accommodates a diversity of shops such as a supermarket, boutiques, newspaper stands and gift shops, car rental companies, snack counters, bars etc.

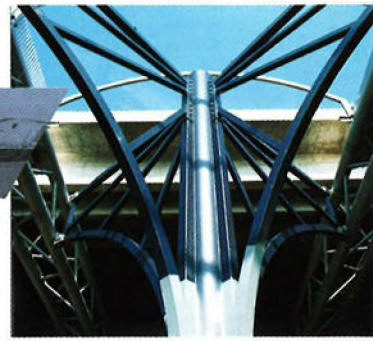
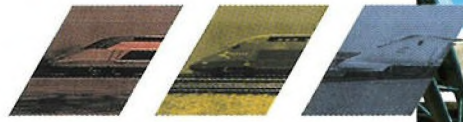




The structure and the two levels of the station have been maintained. Services and travellers' accommodation on the ground floor and tracks and platforms on the first floor. The large transverse corridor still remains the backbone. A board in the middle of the large passage gives a clear overview of all the services offered. The shops, snackbars etc. are on the side of the covered street, the Travel Centre (with 34 desks) is right accross and both high speed train terminals are situated off the rue de France. The Eurostar terminal is only reserved for people travelling to Lille, Ashford (Kent) and London. This terminal is completely partitioned off.



The Eurostar traveller boards his train via a screened off security zone. As Eurostar crosses the Chunnel, strict security measures apply and a brief check-in period in the terminal is required, but once that is over and done with, here too the shops and (snack)bars are waiting. Lifts, walkalators and escalators give access to the platforms (1 and 2).



The demanding businessman can go to the Eurostar Lounge and take a breathing spell in one of the leather lounge chairs. Or work on at one of the writing desks: skim through a file, send a fax or make a phonecall. Meanwhile service staff has hot or chilled beverages and various refreshments ready for you.

Part of the Eurostar terminal is occupied by the Railtour desks. This is where travellers who reserved their seats on the high-speed train in advance can collect their tickets.



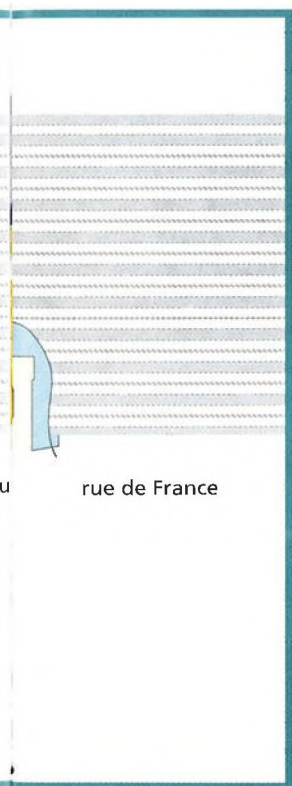
The Eurostar terminal is bordered by the Thalys terminal, which is open to everyone. It holds two waiting rooms, a few hundred luggage lockers, public telephones and well-tended sanitary installations.

The Thalys terminal constitutes an important link within the station. Lifts, escalators and walkalators give easy access to the Thalys and TGV Réseau platforms (3 to 6). And the central passage leading to the Thalys terminal allows travellers to change smoothly from the high-speed train to domestic trains or vice versa.

Brussels South is undergoing a major face-lift to adapt to the changing needs and offer a better response to the expectations of the travellers of today and tomorrow.

In view of the development of a European high-speed network and a growing number of travellers, the prospect of building another high speed terminal in the north of the Brussels agglomeration is currently being considered.

Thalys



ANTWERPEN-CENTRAAL STATION



Antwerpen-Centraal is one of the most important – and according to many, one of the most beautiful – stations in the country. On average workdays, the station handles some 50,000 passengers. The station holds a strategic position in the heart of the city, within walking distance of work, home, shops and recreation. On this account – and also because of the arrival of the high-speed train – it will still grow in importance. Certain prognosis are based on the assumption that the current number of train passengers will double. By 2010, Antwerpen-Centraal should accommodate 20 million passengers a year, of whom 1.5 million international travellers.

By 2005, the station will be ready to welcome all these passengers. To this end, measures are to be taken in order to increase the stations' capacity and to improve traffic to and through Antwerp: in less time, more trains should run to and from the centre of Antwerp – or simply pass through it.

THE STATION CAN BREATHE AGAIN



At present, Antwerpen-Centraal station is faced with a capacity problem. It has ten dead-end tracks. Consequently, all trains have to reverse direction and the train offer is more limited than it should – and could - be. By 2005, the modernized station will have four additional tracks. The construction of a tunnel, will also provide – in part – through lines. The capacity will double and the station will be able to expand.



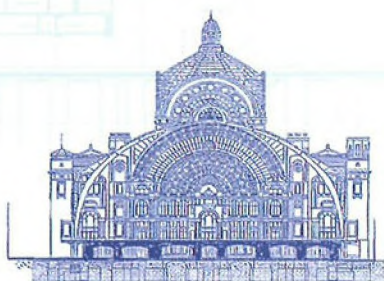


All of this will be achieved with due respect for the magnificent architecture of the present station. The new station has four different levels and is opened out as much as possible, in order to create a surveyable entity, bathing in light. A reconciliation of modern and traditional construction.

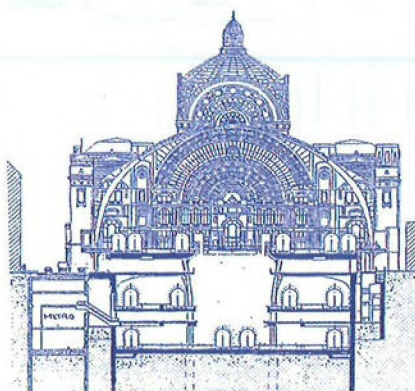
The station will offer more facilities. All services the modern traveller may expect to find in his station, will be abundant: large parking space, good connections with other public transport, shops...



The platforms will be wider...and longer (to 400 m). Longer platforms, meaning longer trains, and consequently more seats per train.



before

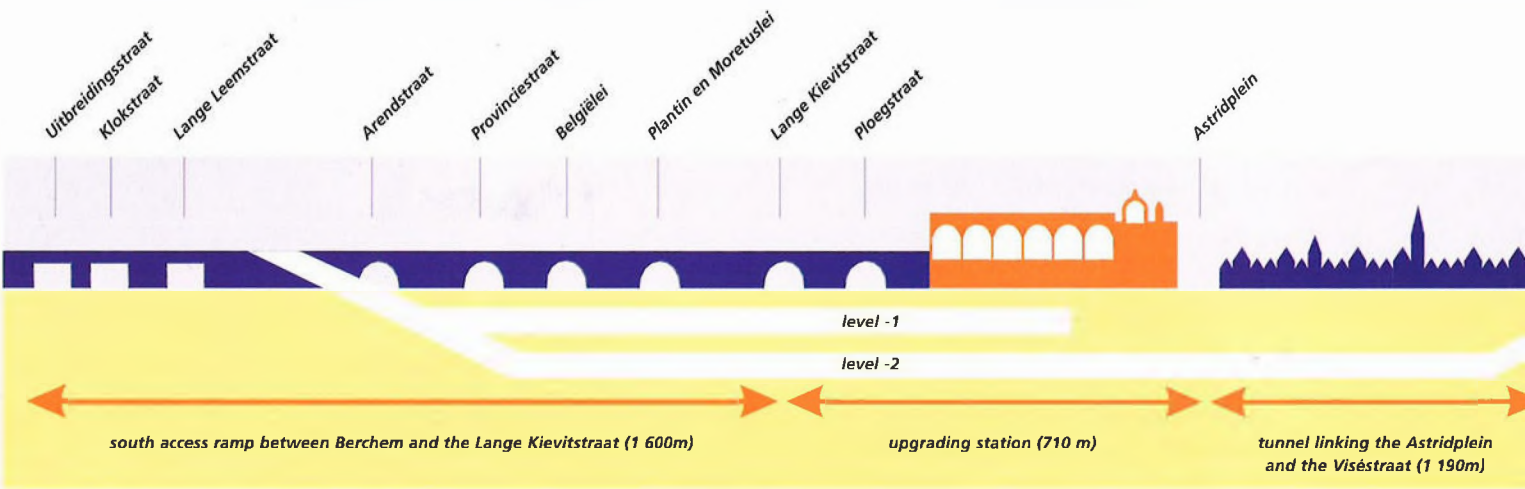


afterwards



ANTWERPEN CENTRAAL STATION: A WELL-CONSIDERED RENOVATION

The station will have four different levels: six dead-end tracks on the same level as the present tracks (level +1), underneath a pedestrian area with shops and station services (street level), then four dead-end tracks on level -1, and finally four through tracks on level -2, leading to the two single-track tunnels which constitute the actual north-south connection. The tracks on the bottom level are destined for high-speed traffic as well as for conventional trains. The entire construction with its different levels will remain surveyable because of the opened out design.



In the future, changing trains will require less time. A sophisticated system of lifts, escalators and walkalators allows the passengers to change platforms rapidly. There is an additional communication between platforms in the direction of Berchem.

All platforms are fit for receiving long domestic trains or even two coupled high-speed train sets (400 m). The longer -- and wider -- platforms extend quite a stretch from under the existing roof. Passengers will find shelter under discreet glass porches.

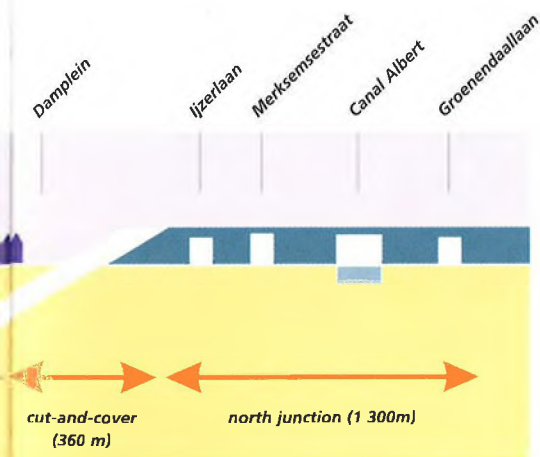


SURROUNDING AREA: INTERFACE WITH THE CITY

Korte Kievitstraat' and vicinity will be transformed into 'Kievitplein'. Here comes a new access to the station, with direct communication to the railway hall. At this access, the passengers will also find ticket offices, luggage accommodation, shops, buffet...

The future 'Kievitplein' will hold an underground parking facility, a bicycle shed, a kiss'n ride strip and a zone for coaches to stop and let passengers dis-/embark. Under the railway viaduct a parking space for coaches is planned.

The 'Astridplein' – in front of the station – will also be redesigned and returned to 'mankind'. The square, where cars, taxi's, buses and trams had to work their way through the hustle for years, will again be reserved for public transport. And for the vulnerable road user: the square must again become a refuge, a place to recover.



NORTH-SOUTH CONNECTION

In the future, Antwerpen-Centraal station will have 14 platforms at its disposal and a direct tunnel communication to the north of the city. In short: the north-south connection. Thanks to this project, the train traffic to and from the centre of the city will run more smoothly and efficiently and will better be able to meet the growing demands.

The achievement of this project will be a fundamental progress for the numerous international response to the expectations of the travellers of today and tomorrow.

Eurostation, a NMBS/SNCB subsidiary, ensures the study and follow-up of the Brussels South and Antwerpen-Centraal projects. Eurostation has also been entrusted with the modernisation of the areas surrounding these two stations



LIEGE-GUILLEMINS

As a Walloon station of prime importance, Liège-Guillemins is an essential railway junction, not only for the domestic traffic but also for the international services.

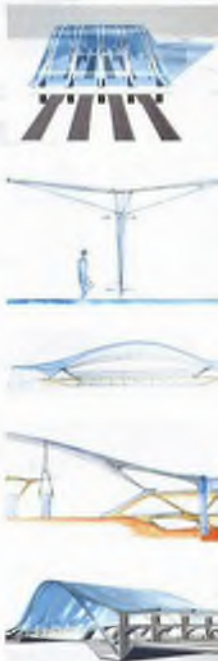
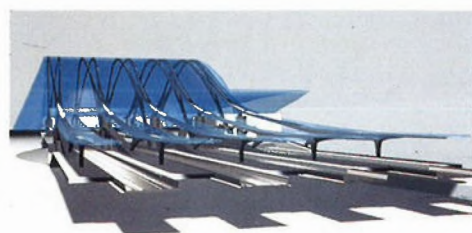
The Guillemins station handles an average of 30,000 travellers and 400 passenger trains per day.

AN INDISPENSABLE EVOLUTION

The station is the commercial meeting point between the rail and its customers. In this capacity, it must meet various requirements: accessibility, comfort cleanness, fluidity of movements, safety, intermodality, ...

The existing passenger building and the railway infrastructures do no meet such criteria and do not allow to make use of the assets that high-speed offers. Everything had to be completely redesigned with the traveller, its needs and expectations at the heart of the debate.

The future station of Liège-Guillemins will be a modern and passenger-friendly travel centre accessible to all kinds of railway traffic. In this way, it will confirm its role as mix station combining domestic traffic and international traffic. Tomorrow, the completely refurbished railway infrastructures will give priority, as regards the route and the speed, to the axis Ostend – Cologne, which ensures more than 50% of the traffic and will operate the fastest trains.





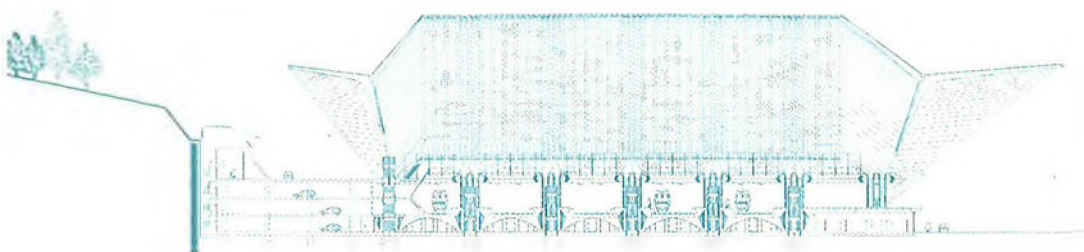
A REFINED AND DARING ARCHITECTURE

The new Liège Guillemins station, which was designed by Santiago Calatrava, will be built from 1999 until 2002. This architect, who was selected on the basis of an international contest, has already designed 6 stations, namely Zürich, Lyon-Satolas and Lisbon.

The future station, which is the result of a totally new design, is a gigantic steel-and-glass vault elegantly bestirring the tracks to link the district of the Cointe hill to the Guillemins district. In front of the station, a new pedestrian square will be partially crowned by a porch roof.

On the city side, the station is organised on three levels : the station square, the platforms and a number of walkways bestirring the platforms and linked together by escalators and lifts. Behind the station, these walkways directly lead to the road hub and the kiss-and-ride area. On the hill side, the station is organised on five levels : the parking lots (3 levels), the road hub and the roof of the passenger building in the form of a pergola.

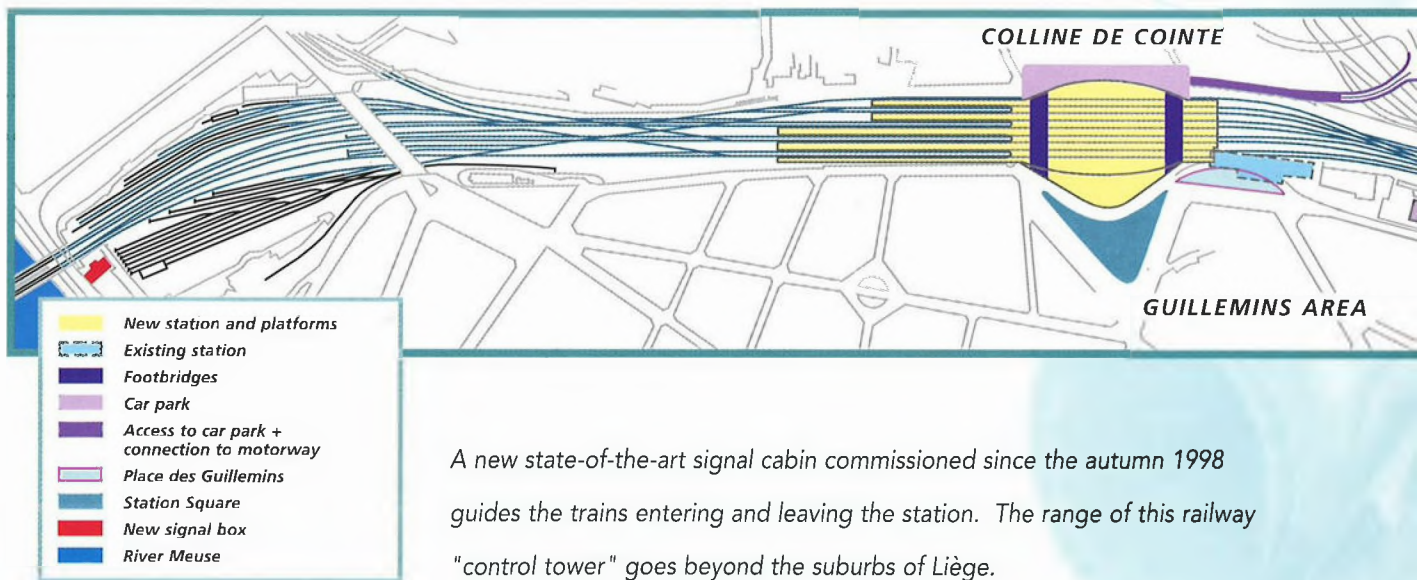
Platforms are also accessible through a central underground passage under the tracks, which continues the main corridor and is situated at the square level.





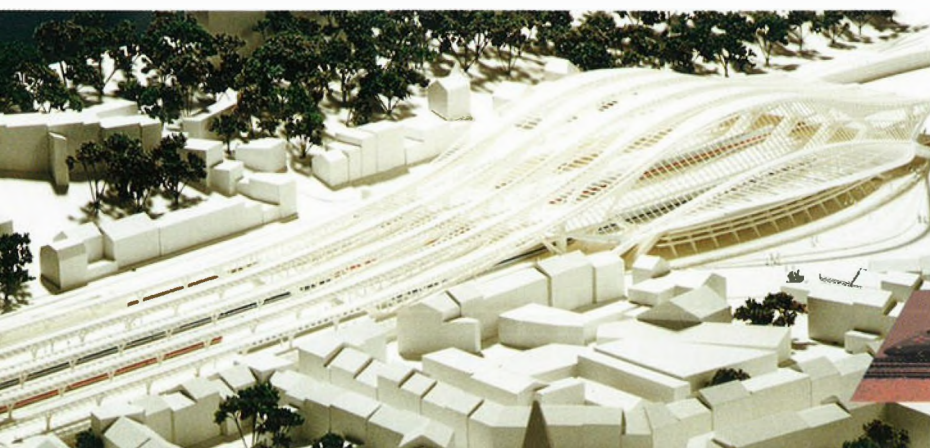
COMPLETE REFURBISHMENT OF TRACKS AND MORE FLUID TRAFFIC

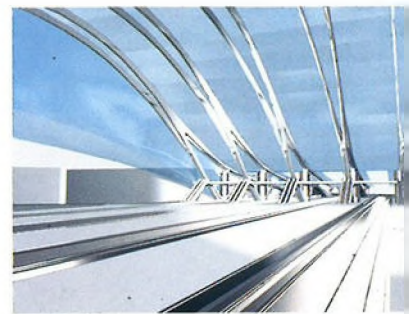
The future Guillemins station will be built 150 metres away from the existing station (towards Angleur), so as to allow the construction of rectilinear platforms. The whole fan of sidings, which spreads over more than 2 km, will be completely reorganised. In this framework, important works have already started uphill from the station. These new track installations will allow to simplify and rationalise the crossing of trains. It will improve the traffic fluidity and allow faster and safer train operation. Trains will enter the station at 100 km/h instead of the current 40 km/h.



A new state-of-the-art signal cabin commissioned since the autumn 1998 guides the trains entering and leaving the station. The range of this railway "control tower" goes beyond the suburbs of Liège.

The future station will include five platforms and nine tracks. The platforms will be wider : eight metres instead of six metres today. Three of them will be 450 metres long to receive the double TGV trainsets.



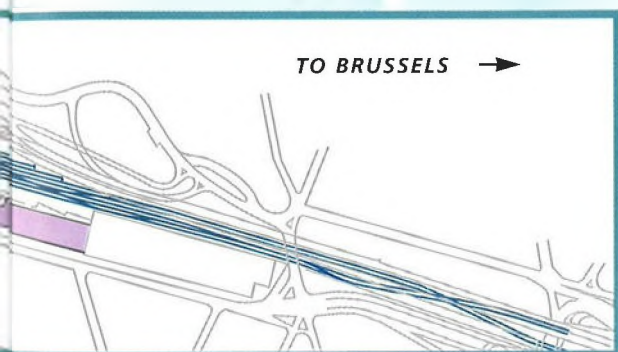


Accessibility

A DOUBLE ACCESS

Thanks to its access on the hill side, the station will have an asset almost unique in Europe : a direct link with the motorway network.

It will be particularly easy to reach the station by car; the kiss-and-ride area and the underground parking for 800 cars on the site itself will make these access conditions even more convenient for the travellers.



On the city side, the reduction of the traffic flow coming from the back access to the station will improve the traffic fluidity, increase the mobility of public transports and facilitate the movements of pedestrians in the immediate surroundings of the station. All these elements and the new square in front of the station will increase the friendliness of the area.



This important project is studied and overseen by Euro Liège TGV, a subsidiary company of NMBS/SNCB. Other local actors are also involved in the company. Indeed, Euro Liège TGV was also assigned to participate in the modernisation of the surrounding area.



AND TOMORROW?

The TGV entered the Belgian railway scene in 1994.

Three years later, thanks to the commissioning of the first high-speed line built in our country, Eurostar, Thalys and TGVs link Brussels to the French border in 29 minutes. Then they head towards London, Paris or the Mediterranean regions at 300 km/h.

By the year 2005 or so, the project of a high-speed network in Belgium will be completely achieved. The high-speed trains will then rejoin Germany and the Netherlands even so fast.



For more information, please write or phone us

- **"NMBS/SNCB"**

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except tariffs, timetable and
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- **TELEPHONE EXCHANGE FOR INFORMATION**

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THALYS, EUROSTAR AND

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The completely refurbished stations of Brussels South, Antwerpen-Centraal and Liège-Guillemins will offer a state-of-the-art reception to passengers of the international and national services.

Investments in the TGV project and the complete upgrading of the domestic network allow NMBS/SNCB to contemplate the 21st century with optimism.

Fast and highly convenient journeys : that's the promise made by NMBS/SNCB to customers of today and tomorrow.