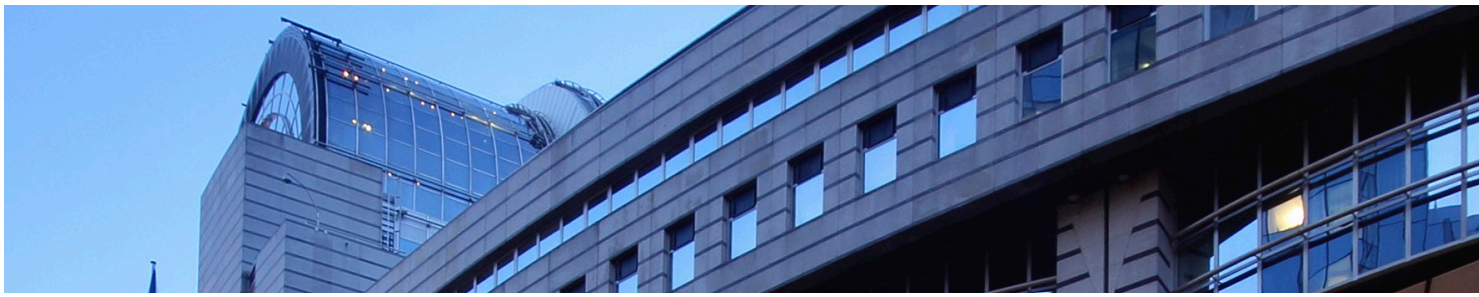
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Brussels Government Policy Declaration 2026-2029: key measures impacting the real estate sector



A new Brussels government means new measures impacting the real estate sector

Following more than 600 days of negotiations post the 9 June 2024 elections, seven political parties reached a coalition agreement for the Brussels government on 12 February 2026. The Brussels government policy declaration 2026-2029 sets out measures with significant implications for the real estate sector.

Below is a concise overview of the primary announced measures impacting real estate, covering aspects of administrative simplification, urban planning and housing, economic attractiveness, and environmental policy.

Real estate measures

The policy declaration sets out a broad housing and urban planning agenda aimed at making the regional real estate market more accessible, efficient and socially inclusive. A key priority is ensuring access to decent and affordable housing for all Brussels residents. On the urban planning side, the ongoing revision of the Regional Town Planning Regulation ("*Réglement Régional d'Urbanisme/Gewestelijke Stedenbouwkundige Verordening*") will continue, and the Brussels Town Planning Code ("*Code Bruxellois de l'Aménagement du Territoire /Brussels Wetboek van Ruimtelijke Ordening*") will be reformed, particularly regarding permit procedures. The key priorities include:

- **Access to decent and affordable housing**. The government reaffirms the constitutional right to housing and recognises the structural shortage of affordable, quality homes in Brussels. Tackling substandard housing is a key priority. The region plans to better target public subsidies – for example by supporting social housing, rent allowances, socialisation of rent levels, and innovative tools that promote social mobility, such as the splitting of property rights. The government also commits to support the conversion of office buildings into housing and taking targeted measures to reduce vacancy.
- **More accessible rental and owner occupier markets**. This includes removing barriers that limit housing supply, such as administrative burdens and long permitting timelines. For rental housing, the government plans to work with tenant and landlord representatives to develop a system of voluntary agreements based on reference rents, backed by new incentives for owners who opt into the scheme, as well as strengthened enforcement against substandard and exploitative letting practices.
- **Transparency of rent levels and tackling substandard housing**. The region will further develop instruments to obtain transparent statistical data on median rent levels by neighbourhood and establish reference frameworks to identify rents that do not align with market conditions. The goal is to combat excessive rent levels. The existing rent grid will also be evaluated.
- **Accelerated and simplified permitting**. A central objective is to cut the average processing time for building permits in half by the end of the term, aiming for an average of six months. To achieve this, the government will launch an immediate simplification plan to "unlock" the Brussels real estate market, focused on operational efficiency. Measures include:
  - expanding permit exemptions (including for certain road works without structural changes) and assessing whether certain cases can be exempted from complying with the Regional Town Planning Regulation;
  - speeding up filing and completeness checks via MyPermit, reducing the completeness review from 45 to 20 days (or 30 days for integrated permits or those requiring an environmental impact assessment), limiting completeness checks to a single request for missing documents, and reducing applicant response times;
  - integrating the advice of the fire safety authority more efficiently into the permitting workflow;
  - streamlining public inquiries and consultation by ending suspensions during school holidays, replacing the Consultation Commission ("*Commission de concertation/Overlegcommissie*") with a single inquiry for simple permits and limiting the number of files referred to the Commission; and
  - clarifying what constitutes a significant modification to avoid unnecessary additional public inquiries and opinions.

- **Legal certainty and clearer allocation of competences**. The reform aims to secure projects early in the process by redesigning project meetings to include binding timelines and clear, coherent positions from administrations. Some projects will require mandatory public consultations before applications are filed to identify concerns early and support faster approval. New regulatory instruments on land use and volumetry will replace the subdivision permit and are intended to become the preferred planning tool. The distribution of competences will also be clarified: municipalities will handle primarily smaller projects, and the region will oversee major or cross municipal projects.
- **Integrated permitting and environmental assessment**. Where appropriate, building and environmental permits will be merged into a single integrated permit, and the competent regional services will be grouped to improve efficiency. Environmental impact assessment mechanisms will be updated to increase relevance, avoid overlaps and ensure compliance with European law, with particular attention to preserving and leveraging existing expertise within the administrations.
- **One off regularisation mechanism**. The government will introduce a one off liberating urban planning declaration, significantly expanding the simplified regularisation system for acts and works that are exempt from a building permit. A list of deviations will be drawn up, including certain planning infringements that remain compatible with proper spatial planning. Through a simplified file and payment of a flat fee, these infringements can be regularised within 30 days. This regime will apply only until 2029.
- **Strategic vision for territorial development**. The government will develop a new 2030 strategic vision to better align housing needs, environmental goals and economic objectives. This includes reforming the Regional Town Planning Regulation and the Regional Land Use Plan ("*Plan Régional d'Affectation du Sol/Gewestelijk Bestemmingsplan*"), based on a shared vision of environmental justice that balances climate challenges with affordable housing. In that context, a development freeze will apply to the Josaphat, Meylemeersch, Keyenbempt and Bois du Calevoet sites for the first 18 months following the launch of these reforms. Afterwards, these files will be re-examined. The government will also adopt a circular interpreting the scope of 'the relevant court judgment' to continue processing permit applications and may extend or suspend permit decision deadlines for the affected sites (*note that it is not expressly stated whether this refers to the judgment of 29 October 2025 of the Brussels Court of First Instance*).

  In addition, various urban renewal schemes will be merged into two main instruments: the Sustainable Neighbourhood Contracts ("*Contrats de Quartiers Durables/Duurzaam Wijkcontract*") and the Urban Renewal Contracts ("*Contrat de Rénovation Urbaine/ Stadsvernieuwingscontracten*"). These will identify priority neighbourhoods requiring strengthened intervention and will integrate safety and public cleanliness considerations alongside urban renewal and social policy. Railway station areas will be priority zones for this new approach.
- **Audi Forest site**. The government will reassign the Audi Forest site and operationalise the free zone as quickly as possible, maintaining its industrial vocation and transforming it into a flagship sustainable economic hub that generates quality jobs, in coordination with social partners, local operators and regional administrations.

Measures related to environmental matters

Brussels will resolutely contribute to the objectives of the Green Deal, the Paris Climate Agreement and the European regulation establishing a framework for achieving climate neutrality. The government plans to involve residents regularly in its climate policy, mainly through the Citizens' Council for Climate. Key measures affecting real estate stakeholders include:

- **Building insulation and energy performance**. Approximately 60% of total CO2 emissions in the Brussels-Capital Region come from poorly insulated buildings. The government will therefore implement an intensive insulation plan with concrete measures and clear financing. A collective and large-scale approach is required to insulate buildings and produce green energy in Brussels neighbourhoods, particularly in urban renewal areas. Property owners should anticipate mandatory insulation upgrades and explore available public financing mechanisms.
- **Green energy production**. The government will promote local green energy production through energy communities, heating networks and biogas production. Developers should assess how these systems can be integrated into projects, particularly in mixed-use and residential developments.
- **Spatial planning and air quality**. Air quality and biodiversity conservation will be integrated into spatial planning frameworks. This will impact building densities, green space requirements and parking provisions. Building permit applications will need to demonstrate compliance with evolving soil permeability standards and biodiversity-enhancing measures.
- **Waste management**. Waste collection will evolve towards voluntary collection points using modern methods, and sanctions for illegal dumping will be significantly tightened. Construction projects must establish clear waste management contracts and on-site waste separation protocols to avoid penalties.

Making Brussels more attractive for businesses

The government is putting the attractiveness of Brussels for businesses at the centre of its policy agenda. Its goal is to identify all obstacles to entrepreneurship and remove them through a simplification plan and targeted measures – for example, improving permit procedures and reducing administrative and tax complexity.

In particular, to support the establishment of new businesses, the government will introduce an "Urban Enterprise Zone" status focused on the Port area and the Audi Forest site. This strategy to revive and strengthen industrial activity is built on three main pillars:

1. **Tax incentives**. Targeted reductions in property taxes and registration duties.
2. **Administrative acceleration**. Creation of a one-stop shop that brings together all key procedures, including permits, environmental matters, mobility, and financial support.
3. **Employment**. A partnership with Actiris to organise training programmes that prepare people directly for the industrial jobs created.

Administrative and institutional simplification

The Brussels-Capital Region plans to reorganise its administrative structure to improve efficiency. The reform is built around four main pillars:

1. **"Regional Support Service"**. This pillar will bring together and optimise essential support functions that serve all other pillars.
2. **"Brussels Regional Public Service (core statutory missions)"**. This pillar consists of various directorates within the Brussels Regional Public Service, which will take over core statutory tasks currently spread across different entities. In particular, it will include:
   - Brussels Housing ("*Bruxelles Logement/Brussel Huisvesting*"), which will incorporate homegrade.Brussels;
   - Brussels Environment, which will keep its administration but without park and green space operations, and will take over the agricultural component of the former Economy & Employment directorate; and
   - Brussels Urban Planning, a new entity created by merging perspective.brussels (planning) and urban.brussels, which will take responsibility for environmental permits currently handled by Brussels Environment.
3. **"Infrastructure.Brussels"**. A new autonomous entity to bring together operational public services within a new public-law limited company responsible for public infrastructure.
4. **"Coordination between entities"**. This pillar will coordinate land management through a platform designed to facilitate synergies between various bodies.

The priority for 2026 is to implement pillars 1 and 2. Reform of pillar 3 will begin in 2027.

Conclusion

The new Brussels government policy declaration introduces wide-ranging reforms that will significantly reshape the region's real estate landscape. By simplifying procedures, strengthening environmental ambitions and improving the business climate, the government aims to create a more efficient, sustainable and attractive Brussels. Stakeholders across the sector should closely follow these developments and prepare for both the new opportunities and obligations that will arise in the coming years.

For more information, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Belgian Real Estate team.

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