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Wednesday 11 March 2026  
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# The best reason to come to Cannes: Cologne



*Cologne & partners:  
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## Belgian architect shares vision of flexible future for buildings

FREDÉRIC Haevoets, founder of Belgium-based architecture firm AAFH, is passionate about finding flexible solutions for short-term, medium-term and long-term living. This week at MIPIM, he will share insights from one of his most recent pro-

jects, an innovative redevelopment in the city of Namur, Belgium. "The most interesting thing for me right now is working with existing buildings, re-developing sites that were not intended to be housing from the beginning. In the case of the Namur Ryckmans pro-

ject, for example, we have converted an old swimming pool into a location where there is a hotel, an apartment and student housing — while also keeping the pool."

The project will be presented to MIPIM delegates today by a variety of stakeholders involved in the project, Haevoets said. "We want to present the projects from different points of view, not just that of the architect."

Haevoets believes that the Namur project is a powerful indicator of the way the living sector must move. "I think the issue today is creating buildings where there is a mix of different ways of living, and where elements can be adapted between short-term and longer-term living if the market demands it. For example, hotel units could be transformed into student housing if there is a request for that."

Most of Haevoets' work is in Belgium, but he believes the issues his work addresses are relevant across

territories. "We worked on a similar project in the 15th arrondissement of Paris. Here the task was to transform offices into quality housing."

In addition to presenting his work, Haevoets said MIPIM was a great opportunity to connect with other industry stakeholders and share ideas across borders. "There is a large community of Belgians here, so it is a great platform for building a shared vision. At the same time, it is really interesting to see how different countries are approaching the issues that we all face. Every country has its own local challenges but I am always intrigued about whether it is possible to integrate other people's solutions in my country."

Haevoets is also a university teacher and in this role he brings a student with him to MIPIM — not simply to learn but to "share their point of view as an architect of the future."

This year, he is in Cannes with Drissia Zouak, a student from the University of Liege, whose trip is supported by the Wallonia Export & Investment Agency. She said: "It's my first time and it is a great opportunity to understand what matters to everyone in the real estate business, not just those of us in architecture."



From Left: Frédéric Haevoets and Drissia Zouak.

## Big role for smart AI application

COMPETITIVE financing conditions and more investment in technology and AI are high on the agenda for 2026, according to Arvi Luoma, chief investment officer of London-based Cain (formerly Cain International).

Luoma was appointed CIO earlier in the year and will serve on the global investment committee, working alongside Jonathan Goldstein, co-founder and chief executive of Cain, to help shape the company's investment strategy, oversee capital allocation, and guide portfolio development.

"Financing conditions should remain competitive supporting renewed investment activity," he said. "But capital will continue to concentrate around assets with reliable income, operational efficiency and genuine occupier demand, while weaker assets fall further behind."

He also gave a qualification on AI and



Cain's Arvi Luoma

related investment. "I think we will also see more grounded views on technology and AI, focused on how they will be used in practice to shape how assets are designed, built and operated. "We expect to see more investment in technology and AI, but access alone will not set anyone apart. Everyone has that now. What will matter is who actually implements it well, embedding it into how assets are operated, decisions are made and experiences are delivered." Luoma brings to his new role 20 years' experience in global real estate investment, acquiring more than \$10bn of assets in 20-plus countries and diverse sectors including living, office, retail, industrial and logistics, and hospitality. He remains cautiously positive about prospects for the industry in Europe. "Commercial real estate recovery will be led by the strongest markets and asset classes. Real estate is likely to become increasingly attractive on

a relative basis, encouraging greater capital allocation to the sector — assuming the continued easing of interest rates and a steadier level of stability in Europe."

At MIPIM, he expects a lot of discussion about risk and where capital can genuinely be put to work. "Living and living-adjacent assets, alongside industrial & logistics, selective hospitality and income-driven net lease strategies, are likely to feature heavily," he said.

MIPIM remains central to those discussions, he added. "No matter how advanced technology becomes, it cannot replace the value of face-to-face interaction, and that has become even clearer in recent years."

"MIPIM's in-person, cross-border format makes it highly efficient, allowing our team to hold more than 200 meetings over the course of the week. It also provides a valuable read on market sentiment, offering a clear sense of where confidence is returning and where caution remains."