

Hess AG illuminates the Praça do Comércio in Lisbon | Majestic architecture and now majestic lighting

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Hess AG

The Praça do Comércio is one of Lisbon's most impressive architectural sites, and with the completion of its recent refurbishment, it virtually glows with fresh exuberance. Where once bustling traffic prevailed, pedestrians can now stroll and relax. Thanks to the new lighting, the plaza's unique character maintains its presence even in the evening hours.

Praça do Comércio's majestic appearance is by no means solely attributable to its colossal proportions. To the south, it opens spaciously to the river Tejo, which, during Portugal's period of glory, was the site where prestigious foreign guests first set foot on Portuguese soil. Government buildings with arcades enclose the other three sides of the plaza. Through a triumphal arch, embellished with statues of key figures in Portuguese history, pedestrians access one of the city's most popular retail districts from the plaza's north side. An equestrian statue of King JosÈ I of Portugal is at the centre of the plaza.

The initiative for upgrading the Praça do Comércio came in conjunction with maintenance work performed on the city's waste water system. Bruno Soares, a reputable architect and urban designer, was entrusted with the refurbishment project. Professor MJ Pinto-Coelho and his lighting design firm, **Lightmotif, Arquitectura Lda**, created the lighting design. The designers and architect were assigned with the task by the city council to emphasize the plaza's unique character, while creating an atmosphere in line with today's idea of a contemporary, attractive urban plaza. Another key goal was the achievement of significant energy savings with efficient lighting. The plaza's previous lighting system consisted of chiefly period lanterns with sodium vapour lamps, which had been installed in the nineties. Today, the plaza belongs to pedestrians. Where once motor vehicles travelled back and forth on the plaza's east and west sides, there are now spacious pedestrian zones with much space for outdoor cafes and restaurants. Trams pass only along the north side of the plaza and motor vehicles are restricted to travel on the south side along the bank of the Tejo River.

Key design elements lending structure and integrating the various other elements of the plaza are the pavement and the luminaires in the horizontal and vertical planes, respectively. In tribute to the Portuguese seamen and discoverers, the pavement, like old nautical charts, has lines throughout. At the centre of the plaza, ochre coloured pavement limits the reflection of the sun. A walkway paved with lighter coloured stone intersects the ochre area, indicating the direct axis from the triumphal arch to the old stone stairs that lead down to the river.

Hess AG's 5.7- and 7.2-metre City Elements illuminating columns light the plaza, creating a

very appealing atmosphere. Their multifunctionality and elegant design made them the ideal choice for the plaza. Positioned on the three sides of the plaza where buildings enclose the square, the City Elements columns uniformly illuminate the entire plaza with pleasant glare-free light. Additional floodlights integrated in the columns illuminate the building facades, transforming the plaza into a place of splendid magnificence every evening. Precision-engineered by Hess, the high-efficiency reflectors together with the HIT lamps deliver a noticeably improved quality of lighting while requiring relatively fewer lighting units. Moreover, the luminaires meet the project specification for energy-saving operation. Besides the 18 illuminating columns, Hess also provided the lighting for the roadway running along the bank of the river. Mounted at 9.8 and 10.6 metres above grade the two Tanella and six Vela luminaires were specially fit for the specific requirements of their installation's location, permitting increased between-unit spacing for an optimum view of the shore on the opposite side of the river.

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Downloads†

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