

The EU's de facto capital is already attracting start-ups thanks to its low property prices and high quality of life

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bw nd ow by: [Hannah Roberts](#)

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For decades Brussels has been talked down as a drab, soulless city, populated by humourless bureaucrats. It may not have the majestic landmarks of other European cities such as Paris and Rome, or Berlin's edginess. Yet thanks to its relatively low-cost property prices and high quality of life, Brussels is attracting more creative types and start-ups, and beginning to shake off its reputation as the grey man of Europe.

As the dust from the UK's [Brexit referendum](#) continues to swirl, the de facto capital of the EU is one of several cities hoping to benefit, as institutions shift employees from London to cities with a future inside the union. The city is in a strong position to attract talent, according to Silvia Galli, founder of co-working space Bon Jour Bruxelles.

She

says

“Housing is affordable, and [Brussels] is not that big so you can get

almost everywhere by foot or bicycle,” she says. “It’s got a lot to offer

culturally and everything you would expect from a capital city. Some

people

come for three months and stay forever.”

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