

# Brussels demands Clean air

How cycling movements can start a clean air  
(r)evolution?

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Session 5A - Air Quality and Congestion

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: @GRACQ



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# Who are we?



# Who are we?

- Groupe de Recherche et d'Action des Cyclistes Quotidiens
- We represent and defend the interests of cyclists in French-speaking Belgium since 1975.
- Members organization
- 8 staff team
- > 500 volunteers



**12793 PERSONNES**  
SOUTIENNENT DÉJÀ LE MOUVEMENT CYCLISTE

JE SOUTIENS LE GRACIQ >

# Basics air pollution facts

# Air Pollution

- « Air pollution is the single biggest environmental health risk in the world » (WHO, 2018).
- **9 million premature deaths/year** in the world. 3 times more than the combined deaths linked to AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, 15 times more than war or violence-related deaths (WHO, 2018).
- In 2012, **97,8% of the EU population** was exposed to concentrations above the WHO recommendations (EEA, 2015).
- In Belgium, it has been linked to **12.000 premature deaths/year**, and this without accounting for the widespread non-lethal health impacts such as asthma, bronchitis... (EEA, 2018).
- **In EU and Belgian cities, air pollution is strongly correlated to the transport sector, and in particular to car use.**



# Air Pollution

You can't stop breathing, but you can move differently.



Crédit Jimmy Kets

# What did we do?

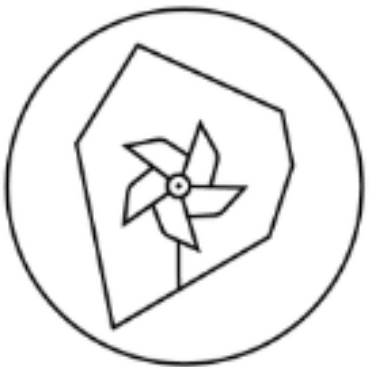


**In the beginning...**



# How to start a citizen movement?

- Mobilizing & supporting our members to address air pollution issues
- Creation of the **Bruxsel'air** collective, with 3 mains objectives:
  1. **Raise awareness** among Brussels residents of the impacts of poor air quality on health and the environment
  2. **Draw media attention** to this issue.
  3. **Lobby politicians**, through citizen action, to take concrete and ambitious action in this area.



# How to start a citizen movement?

The GRACQ support them :

- human resources
- small financial grant
- conference room
- mobilization through its communication channels
- ...



**First initiatives...**

# Be informed

Measurement of air pollution « in my backyard » through scientific and citizen devices



# Understand and discuss

Conferences with academics and doctors, to better understand what we measured.





# Raise awareness among our policy-makers

Measurements with our policy-makers. Are they aware that they, too, breathe this toxic air?



**Minister Smet (Transport)**



**EU Commissioner Vella (ENVI)**



**BE Minister Fremault (ENVI)**







**Citizens ACTIONS**



Let Brussels  
Breathe!

  BruxelAIR

# Make our voice heard

## The « statues » action

Air pollution masks on **more than 100 statues** in Brussels.

Massive impact in both the media and public opinion.



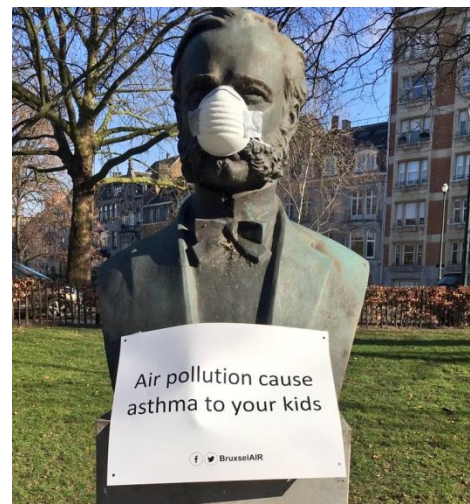
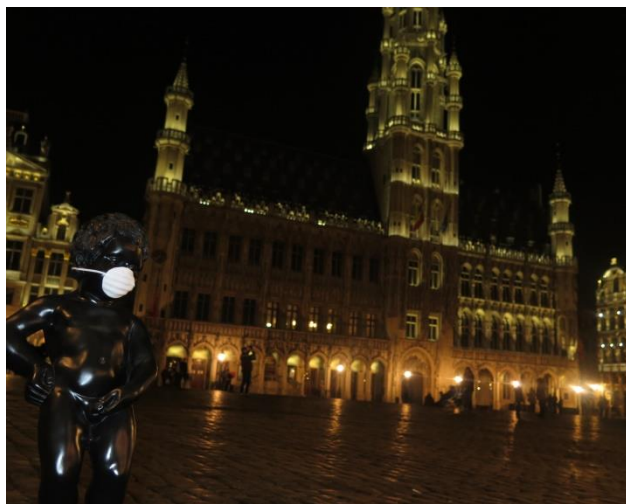
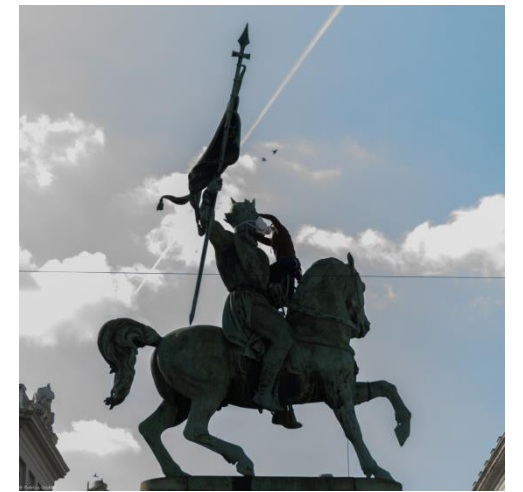


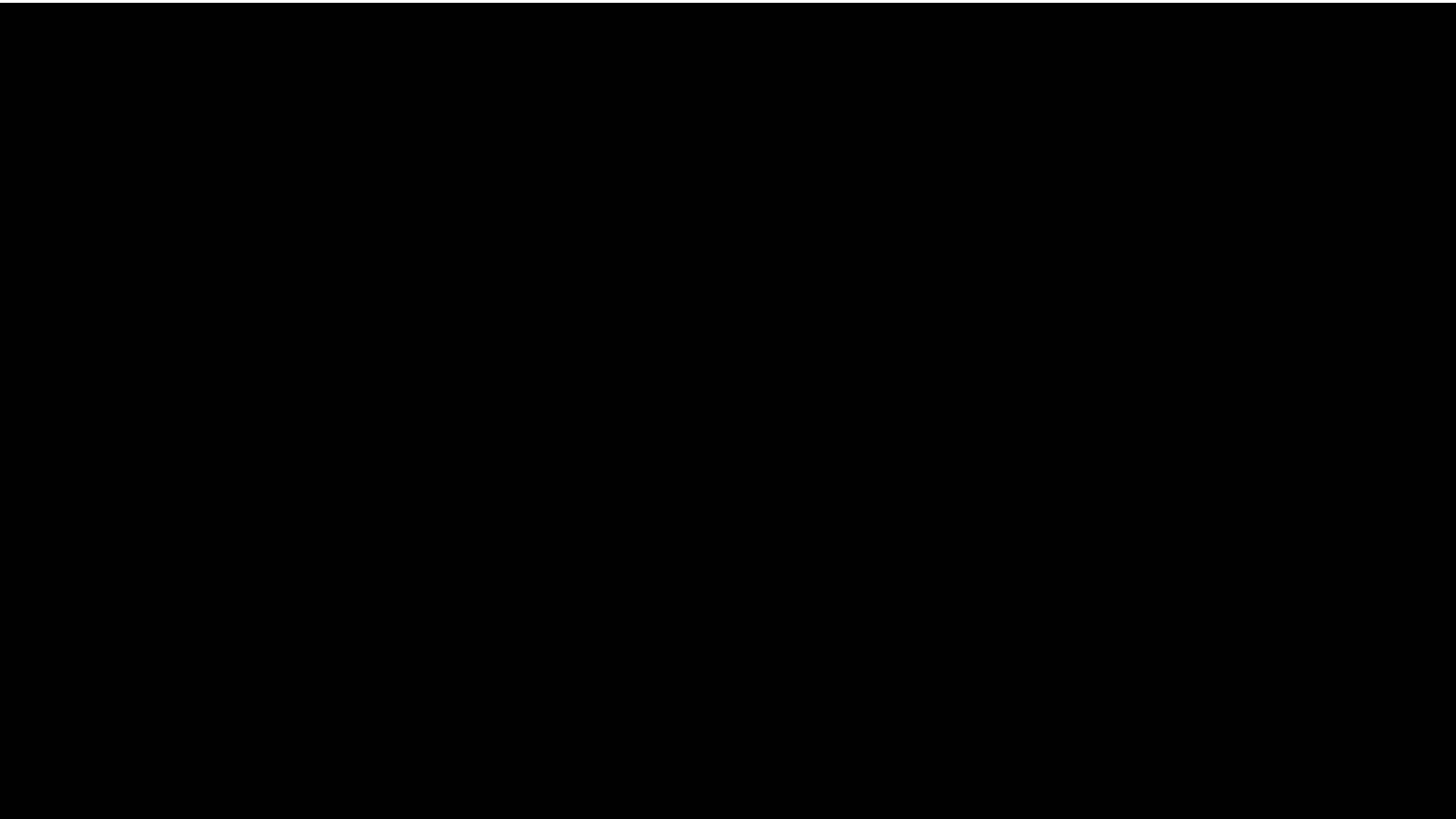


Thank you for  
smogging

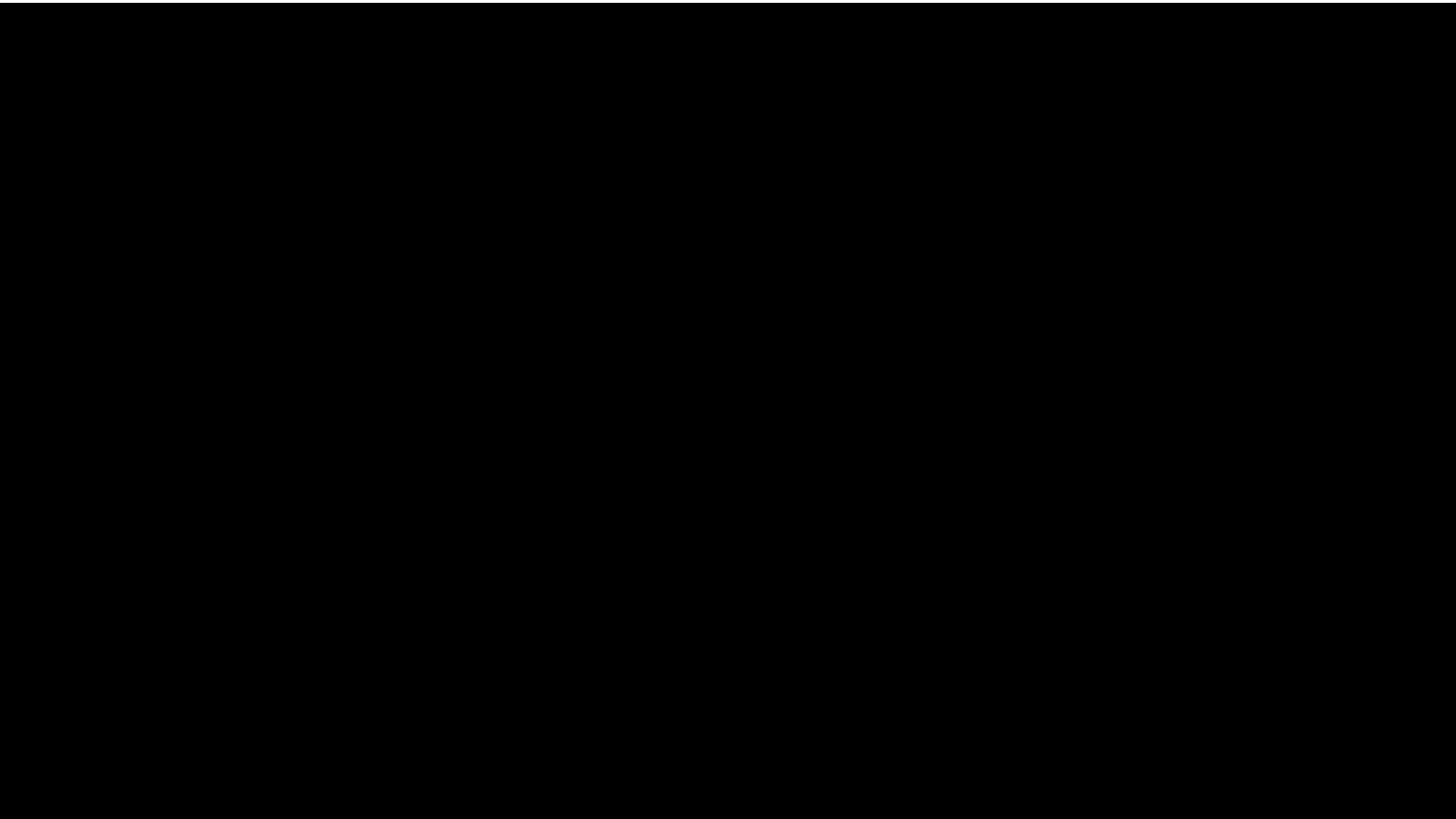
f @BUKSHABE



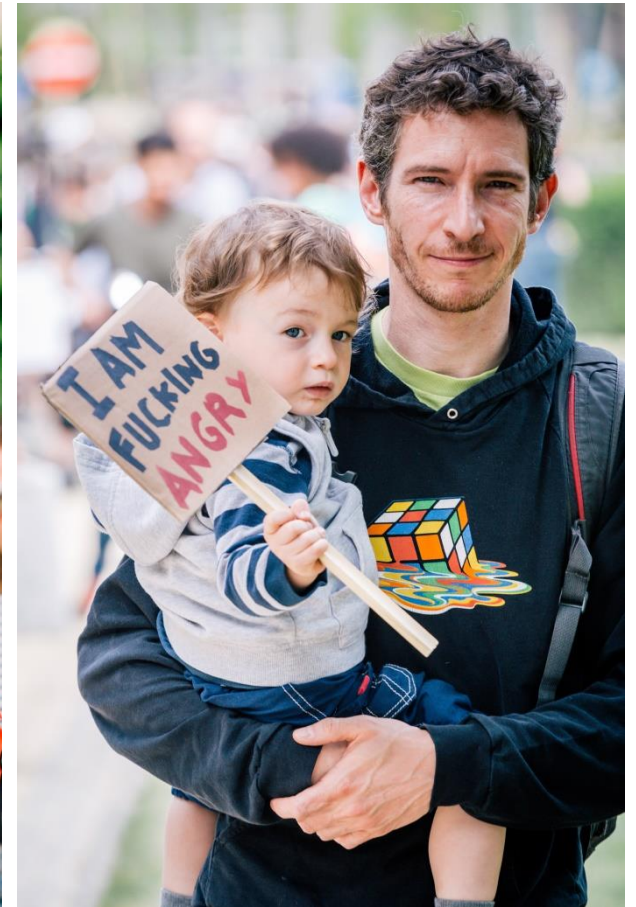








# The « stroller parade »













# Clean Air For Brussels

- Another flash mob
- To support five citizens who have sued the Belgian state for failing to comply with the EU Commission's air quality standards and requirements.





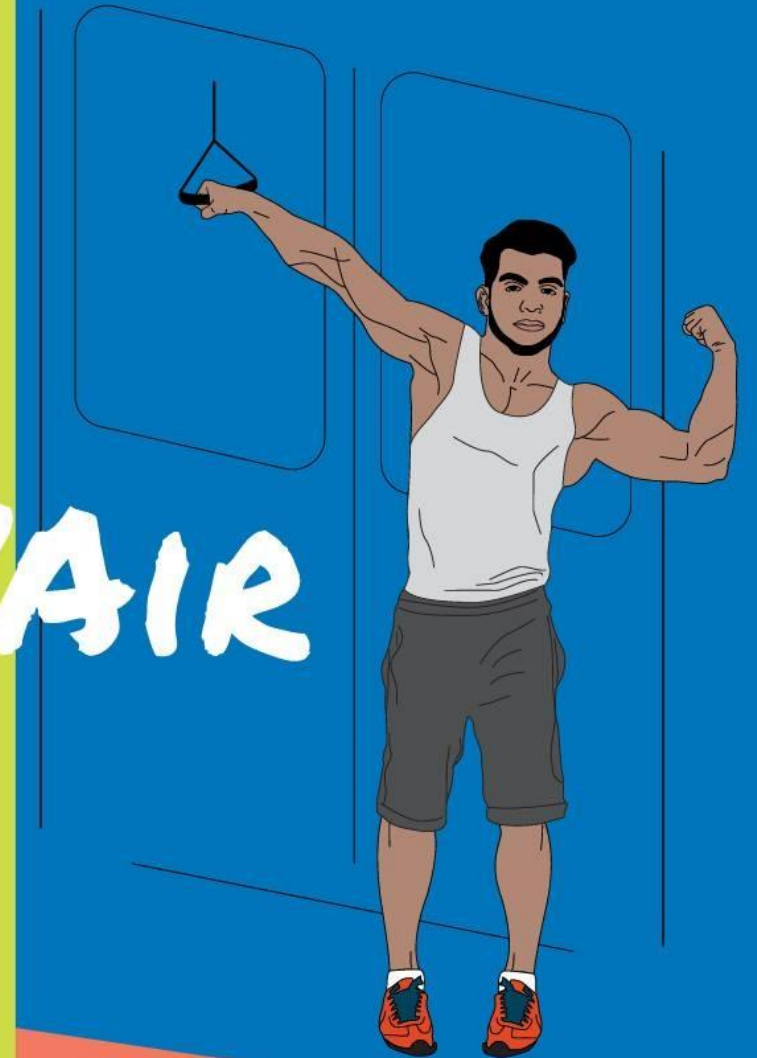




#DAILYHEROES



RÉVOLUTION'AIR



[bruxselair.org](http://bruxselair.org)







An increase in the number of citizens' initiatives!





# What did we get?

# Result n°1: school streets

- Temporarily closed to motorized vehicle traffic (at the time of entry and exit of classes).
- No cars or motorcycles are allowed (only on foot or by bicycle).
- **1 million € for their implementation !**



# Result n°2 : less cars

- Air quality = key issue during the 2019 elections
- No political party dared to question the necessity to decrease the number of cars in Brussels (a huge improvement!)
- Large covering by the media

## Brussels aims to reduce numbers of cars entering and leaving the city

Wednesday, 05 June 2019



© Belga





# Result n°3 : Low emission zone & ban on diesel vehicles by 2030



# Result n°4 : acknowledgment







**Conclusion & lessons learned**

# Conclusions

**Air quality = a good entry point to promote active mobility**

**Supporting the development of citizens movements is good :**

- **high legitimacy**
- **limited investments / massive impacts**
- **reinforce our demands**
- **the knowledge developed is useful**

**Direct actions attract large crowds / Videos & photos 😊**







A bronze bust of a man, likely a historical figure, is shown wearing a white surgical mask. The bust is set against a background of a stone wall and some foliage. The text "Thank you!" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Thank  
you!



 : @GRACQ / @Bruxselair

 : @GRACQ and @GRACQBruxelles