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THE BELGIAN & EUROPEAN PRIDE

PRESS RELEASE
Brussels, 21 March 2023

Brussels Pride returns on Saturday 20 May

Brussels Pride - The Belgian & European Pride will, once again, be putting the LGBTQIA+ community in the spotlight and decorating the streets of Brussels in rainbow colours. This year, the theme will be "Protect the Protest". It's an appeal to respect the fundamental right to protest that is still too often denied in many countries around the world.

Brussels opens European Pride season. The organisers expect no fewer than 150,000 people marching through the streets of Brussels to defend their rights and celebrate diversity. This year, Brussels Pride is keener than ever to highlight this protest as essential for maintaining the fundamental rights of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The theme chosen for Brussels Pride this year is "**Protect the Protest**". Protesting is a fundamental human right. Unfortunately, this right is too often sorely tested in many countries, even in Europe and Belgium. The Belgian LGBTQIA+ movement is aware of how **crucial the freedoms of association and expression** are in the pursuit of progress. **These rights must, therefore, be granted or upheld in Belgium, Europe and all over the world.**

This year, the event has slightly changed its name, to highlight its Brussels roots and confirm its attachment to Belgium and the European Union as a whole.

On Saturday 20 May, **the Pride Parade** will take place in the capital's streets and the **Pride Village** will welcome numerous associations. LGBTQIA+ artists will perform on **several stages spread throughout the city centre**. Around a hundred partners, associations and artists will work together to ensure it's an unforgettable day.

The Rainbow Village and the LGBTQIA+ establishments of the Saint-Jacques district, in the heart of the capital, will once again be partnering the event to ensure that the city's streets are filled with life all weekend long.

Brussels Pride is an inclusive event open to all. **SAFER Pride spaces** will be present in several strategic places to make sure everyone is safe. These spaces will allow everyone to feel safe and report any inappropriate or offensive behaviour based on their gender and/or identity.

In reality, Brussels Pride will be starting well before 20 May. **The traditional Mini-Pride is taking place on Wednesday 10 May 2023** and marks the beginning of **Pride Week**. The procession will travel through the streets of the Saint-Jacques district. It will hail the Manneken Pis, who'll be dressed in a costume designed especially for the occasion.

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The cultural sector will also be joining the event with LGBTQIA+ artists and projects planned, in collaboration with Brussels Pride - The Belgian & European Pride. The Design Museum Brussels, among others, presents the Brussels Queer Graphics exhibition produced in collaboration with STRIGES - the Structure for Interdisciplinary Research on Gender, Equality and Sexuality. The exhibition highlights the visual language of the LGBTQIA+ communities in Brussels from the 1950s to the present day.

Last but not least, in the week leading up to Brussels Pride, many buildings across the Brussels-Capital Region will be illuminated and decorated in the colours of the rainbow flag.

Brussels Pride - The Belgian & European Pride is a chance to celebrate diversity but also to defend and demand LGBTQIA+ rights, with a view to making society more inclusive and equal. Beyond its festive dimension, Brussels Pride is an opportunity to promote the rights and demands of the community and initiate policy ideas, now more than ever.

More information on <https://brusselspride.eu/>

Protect the Protest is an Amnesty International campaign

More info: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/petition/protect-the-protest/>

Brussels Pride is proud to support this global campaign, by focusing on LGBTQIA+ protests around the globe.

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