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Soapbox Science Brussels: an outreach platform for the promotion of Women in Sciences in Belgium

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On 25 June 2022, the third edition of Soapbox Science takes place in Brussels. Soapbox Science is a public outreach platform that was initiated in London, UK in 2011 to promote women in science, and that was spread worldwide since then. Between 2011 and 2018, 40 cities hosted the initiative in not less than 8 countries over 4 continents, and in 2020, despite the pandemic, 56 events were organized in 14 countries around the world.

While the start of Soapbox Science Brussels was challenged by the COVID pandemic, a first virtual event was organised in the fall of 2020 via the YouTube and Facebook platforms [1]. Despite the difficulties related to the sanitary conditions, the first real-life edition of Soapbox Science Brussels finally took place in the heart of the Belgian capital in June 2021, following the standard format prescribed by the international Soapbox Science initiative. This event was a success, both with respect to the response of the scientific community and with regard to the interest of the public during the event. The third edition of Soapbox Science Brussels is currently in preparation, the list of selected speakers is already available and we just launched the campaign for the recruitment of volunteers.

In this communication, we present the development of the Soapbox Science initiative in Belgium. We describe the motivations, challenges, issues and opportunities encountered throughout the process, and how Soapbox Science is gradually taking its place in the Belgian context for the promotion of women in sciences.

Links:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SoapboxScienceBrussels>

Twitter account: @SoapboxscienceB

References:

[1] Pham, L. B. S., et al., *Soapbox Brussels, une première en Belgique*, Science connection nr. 65, August-september 2021;

in French: http://www.belspo.be/belspo/organisation/publ/pub_ostc/sciencecon/65sci_fr.pdf;

in Dutch: http://www.belspo.be/belspo/organisation/publ/pub_ostc/sciencecon/65sci_nl.pdf

