

CALL FOR ACTION

HELP, I CAN'T BREATHE!

MAXIMUM NITROGEN DIOXIDE LIMIT OF 20 μ G/M³ IN ALL SCHOOLS!

Dear parents,

On Wednesday 14th March 2018 a PANO documentary was broadcast on VRT-*één* showing the results of a large scale study on air quality using 2 schools as examples – one in Brussels, a large city environment, and the other in Opwijk, a small town.

In a staggering 60 % of the Belgian schools, air quality is alarming to illegally bad. The European maximum limit of 40 μ g/m³ of nitrogen dioxide, which is a reference value for air pollution, is the result of a trade-off between air quality and economic activity, but it is becoming clear that medically speaking a limit of 20 μ g/m³ would be safer. Since children are much more sensitive to the effects of air pollution, this is very worrying.

A group of concerned parents from the school in the documentary wanted to sound the alarm and hastily organised the closing of the street in front of their school the day after the documentary was shown. Politicians from all the parties, other nearby schools and the national press were all invited.

It was a resounding success! Our action reached a large number of people. Politicians came and we were in all the major newspapers, as well as on radio 1's morning show, the TV news (1 pm, 6 pm and 7 pm), *Karrewiet*, *BRUZZ*, *Knack*,...

Now we want to go further.

The message is quite simple. Our cities, our region and our country must be pleasant, healthy places to live in. This means that car traffic must give way to better public transport and make space for pedestrians and cyclists. Politicians have to understand that mobility needs to be managed differently. There are plenty of good examples in other countries (Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Vienna, Montreal...). However, people in cities also need to make the shift and limit their use of cars as much as possible.

The action that we would like to promote is as simple as this message. Close off the street where your school is to traffic every Friday morning before school starts. Have a cup of coffee together and let the children play in the car-free street. Invite local politicians to come and join you for a coffee. Take photos and post them on the <https://www.facebook.com/filtercafefiltre/>. Do it every Friday morning until the elections.

Our aim is to get our point across to as many people as possible for as long as it takes.

Our action is not linked to any political party or existing organisations. The idea is that all parents launch their own initiative and activities to raise awareness amongst other parents, children, teachers and so on (eg. evening debates, facts and figures on air pollution, action weeks at school, measuring air quality and follow-up, making playgrounds greener, planting and sponsoring trees, ...).

We hope you can join us and together we can push the quality of life in our city further up the political agenda!

GOOD LUCK!

www.filer-café-filtré.be