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Soapbox Science Brussels: A Growing Outreach Platform for the Promotion of Women in Sciences in Belgium

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Soapbox Science is an outreach platform dedicated to the promotion of women and non-binary people in science through the organisation of events mimicking Hide Park's famous Speaker's Corner. This platform was created in London in 2011, spread gradually worldwide and finally started in Belgium in 2019, where it was initiated by a group of researchers and science communicators from two Belgian Federal Scientific Institutes. It came to life as Soapbox Science Brussels, for the events were to take place in the capital.

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. 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, and the campaign for the recruitment of speakers has been launched early 2022.

In this presentation, on the basis of different indicators and of feedback from the public, we will show how Soapbox Science Brussels gradually finds its place in the Belgian scientific communication community and in the promotion of women and non-binary people in science, in a context where the promotion of gender equality encounters a growing importance in scientific research institutions.

Links:

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

Twitter account: @SoapboxscienceB

References:

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

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