



## PRESSE RELEASE

Brussels, 29 July 2019 – **The 106<sup>th</sup> Tour de France ended this Sunday after making history in Brussels! Watched by our iconic champion Eddy Merckx, the Brussels Grand Départ brought Tour fever to the heart of Belgium's capital from 4 to 7 July 2019, creating unforgettable memories across the country.**

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The culmination of three weeks of incredible sporting performances, the 2019 Tour de France was won by **Egan Bernal**. And yet the biggest winner was Brussels!

The City of Brussels and Brussels-Capital Region are proud to have worked hand in hand to make the Brussels Grand Départ a resounding success.

As the Alderwoman of Culture, Tourism and Big Events Delphine Houba explains, *"The event followed two years of preparation by Brussels Major Events, the nonprofit tasked with organizing it in close collaboration with Visit.Brussels, the police, Brussels Mobility and all our local and regional teams. Its launch came after a wide range of initiatives by the 35 areas along the route (inside and outside Brussels) with a number of highlights worth mentioning:"*

- **29 July 2018:** Grand Départ trophy presented to the City of Brussels by the Vendée département;
- **25 October 2018:** full 2019 Tour de France route revealed to an audience of 4,000 fans and 300 journalists from around the world in Paris;
- **28 March 2019:** to mark 100 days until the event, a Thalys train was decorated in Tour colours and Square Eddy Merckx and the Maison du Tour were opened;
- **50 days ahead of the Grand Départ,** the Brussels in Yellow campaign unveiled various promotional features such as the arch on Mont des Arts, the giant sticker on one of the Atomium's spheres and decorations on several city-centre streets;
- **2 June 2019:** World Bicycle Day within the Environment Festival;
- **16 June 2019:** BXL TOUR, a dry run for the team time trial.

*"This hugely ambitious project united the people of Brussels and Belgians. The world's third biggest sports event provides a spectacular showcase, clearly boosting the city's appeal,"* says Philippe Close, Mayor of the City of Brussels.

*"The Tour de France is a major global celebration and it's proved once again that sport can bring together spectators of all backgrounds. Like the BXL TOUR, it's an opportunity to show that Brussels is a cycle city that encourages locals to get on their bike and inspires young athletes to join the big boys,"* adds Benoit Hellings, First Alderman, Alderman of Climate and Sports.

Key figures illustrate its success:

- 1 million visitors to the Brussels-Capital Region, including 778,000 along the route over the two stages (59% locals, 20% internationals and 21% Belgians from outside Brussels);
- 75,000 people during the Meet the Teams on Grand-Place on 4 July;
- 80,000 people in the Fan Park on Place De Brouckère from Thursday 4 to Sunday 7 July;
- 84.4% hotel occupancy rate the night of Saturday 6 to Sunday 7 July;
- 93,000 overnight stays recorded on Thursday 4, Friday 5 and Saturday 6 July;
- 370,000 additional public transport users on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 July (+62% compared to a typical weekend);
- 2,000 accredited journalists and photographers, 604 media and 46 countries;
- broadcast in 190 countries;
- 1,300 articles or mentions in the Belgian media, giving a total cumulative audience of 200 million people (01 > 09.07);
- approximately 200,000 visits to the Grand Départ website, giving a total of nearly 500,000 pages seen (01 > 07.07);
- Grand Départ Facebook page: 1,753,000 impressions, 104,000 likes, comments or shares, 519,000 people reached, 12,500 views of the posted videos (01 > 07.07);
- 2,362 volunteers, marshals or temporary staff during the final 100 days;
- 18,000 crowd-control barriers placed along the route in Brussels between 4 and 7 July.

Special thanks also go to the many partners that contributed to delivering this memorable experience.

*"All nineteen municipalities in the region dazzled the world with their attractions, hospitality, generosity and rich diversity,"* concludes Rudi Vervoort, Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region.

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