



The Extinction Rebellion¹ movement invites all inhabitants of Belgium to occupy the garden of the Royal Palace of Brussels on Saturday 12th October 2019 in order to hold popular assemblies and debate solutions to the Climate and Ecological Emergency.

NO NEUTRAL ZONE ON A DEAD PLANET

All citizens of Belgium are invited to bring a chair and to peacefully occupy the Royal Palace of Brussels by participating in people's assemblies on Saturday 12th October. These assemblies will be held in the garden at the entrance to the Royal Palace (Place des Palais 6, between the gates overlooking the square and the palace itself).

This is the first in a series of large-scale non-violent civil disobedience actions in Brussels organised by Extinction Rebellion Belgium through spring 2020. These actions follow the example set by Extinction Rebellion UK in April 2019 in the city of London.

Since the garden is located inside the palace grounds in the so-called "neutral" zone, where all demonstrations are prohibited, participating in these popular assemblies constitutes an important twofold political act.

Firstly, it is **an act of deliberate civil disobedience** which directly addresses the King, thereby condemning the failure of the Belgian political authorities to confront the climate and ecological emergency.

Secondly, it is **an act of civic duty**, through which citizens undertake without delay to remedy the obvious shortcomings of their governments and to demonstrate the existence of a political alternative: one which could effectively tackle the crisis without undermining our democratic and human rights.

Throughout the occupation, some twenty assemblies will be held in parallel, each welcoming between 30 and 50 people. Each assembly will discuss a particular aspect of what should be done in Belgium to address the climate and ecological emergency. The meetings will last as long as necessary to discuss all these issues in depth, continuing until the next day if necessary. The topics of discussion and schedules will be published in the coming weeks.

Anyone who wishes to join the action is invited to fill out this [registration form](#) and to bring a chair to the Royal Palace in Brussels on Saturday 12th October.

TO DISOBEY IS OUR CIVIC DUTY

Article 23 of the Belgian Constitution guarantees the right of everyone to lead a life in accordance with human dignity, which includes "the right to the protection of a healthy environment".

At this historic time, when the effects of global heating and species extinction are impacting the daily lives of people throughout the world, it is obvious that successive governments have utterly failed to uphold this fundamental right for their citizens. Belgium is jeopardizing not only the well-being of its citizens, but the well-being of people and wildlife all over our planet.

Our governments have demonstrated that they are unable to manage the climate and ecological emergency: they ignore the conclusions of the world's leading scientific panels and renege on their international commitments (Paris agreements, European standards). Likewise, Belgian political parties are entangled in domestic quarrels and electoral affairs. Our current democratic institutions are not up to the task of addressing the critical emergency that we are facing.

In recognition of these facts, Extinction Rebellion calls for citizen mobilization and non-violent civil disobedience to ensure that we change course as quickly as possible. It is our civic duty to interrupt the normal course of our lives in response to this unprecedented crisis and to refrain from engaging in "business as usual", the root of our collective distress.

In view of the scale of the current climate, ecological, and social crisis, any claim to neutrality is irresponsible. For this reason, on Saturday 12th October Extinction Rebellion calls on all inhabitants of Belgium to defy the ban on demonstrations in the so-called "neutral" zone established around federal political institutions, and to occupy the garden at the entrance of the Royal Palace of Brussels. In doing so, they will exercise their responsibility as citizens and demonstrate their determination and their ability to overcome the harmful failures of their political institutions.

AN APPEAL TO THE SOVEREIGN

By inviting citizens to exercise their sovereign democratic power in the garden of the Royal Palace, this non-violent action repudiates elected political powers, who have failed in their duties, and addresses the King directly. This action is a call for a new democratic system capable of responding to the crisis.

Aware of the extraordinary nature of this request, we call on the King to step out of His constitutional reserve, to publicly acknowledge the true gravity of the situation, and to declare a state of climate and ecological emergency in Belgium. With this bold and exceptional act the King can set in motion the implementation of a climate, ecological, and social action plan that is genuinely commensurate to the urgency of the moment.

Extinction Rebellion's objective is a mass mobilization of the population demanding that our governments:

- 1- Formally acknowledge the true gravity of the situation by declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency
- 2- Enact as soon as possible a national emergency plan compatible with our social and planetary boundaries.
- 3- Establish and guarantee the authority of Citizen's Assemblies chosen by sortition, which will determine the contents of the emergency plan and specify the terms of its implementation.

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¹Launched in January 2019, Extinction Rebellion Belgium consists of nearly 2,000 active members and ten local groups, established in cities in all parts of the country.. Internationally, Extinction Rebellion consists of more than 350 groups in 60 countries.

Call to the media: you have an essential role to play in the battle we must all fight during this climate and ecological emergency. You have a duty to convey the true extent of the crisis to the public. This crisis urgently requires a mass mobilization, beyond political or ideological divides. Please give it the priority it requires and kindly disseminate this call as widely as possible!