



Local & collaborative manufacturing of anti-droplet masks 1,500 Brussels volunteers help out on a community production line

Wednesday 1 April 2020 – In response to the shortage of masks, the TRAVIE-ECORES-MAD consortium has established a production line supported by the Brussels Region. In the course of just a few days, 1,500 volunteers have come forward to sew masks at home. This decentralised, agile, scalable production line, driven by community spirit, aims to produce more than 100,000 masks. www.masques-coronavirus.brussels

These face masks are being made with the help of a team of volunteers to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic and meet the needs of the healthcare and personal care sector. The collaborative style and agility of the system ensure compliance with the sanitary measures put in place by the government while maximising the number of people who are able to produce masks. The masks will be made in two stages:

- Sheltered workshop TRAVIE pre-cuts the materials.
- Kits are delivered by Urbike to a network of approved volunteers who do the sewing from their homes.

Once the masks have been sewn, Urbike collects them from the volunteers. The masks will then be brought back to TRAVIE to undergo a quality control, before being made available to the government of Brussels, which will distribute them, for instance via Iriscare, to institutions and services that have been designated as first in line to receive these scarce goods.

A resilient and sustainable project

The consortium has established a collaborative and circular production chain, which has numerous advantages:

- It is a **collaborative** project, led by a consortium of non-profit, institutional and entrepreneurial actors.
- Production is **decentralised**, relies on the work of local residents, and is **socially responsible** (pre-production, including the cutting of fabric and elastic, is carried out at TRAVIE by disabled workers).
- Production is **distributed** across a large number of production sites (1,500). The masks are produced **by the people for the people**, in a spirit of **care for the community**.
- The project is **circular** (the masks are reusable) and deliveries are made by cargo bike with Urbike (**soft mobility**).

Moreover, the production process can be adapted to **varying output levels**, and can be **reproduced** in other cities. It is an **open-source** concept, available for use in other initiatives in Belgium or internationally.

The project shows that sustainable and local economies must now more than ever be developed to improve our society's resilience in times of crisis, especially for those products most essential to life and health care.

Alain Maron, Minister of Health: 'As is known, we are in dire need of masks, in hospitals and for all frontline staff, but also for all those who are exposed from having to stay in contact with others at work or those are sick. The masks produced here will be used primarily in nursing homes, the homeless sector and home support and care services to protect asymptomatic people and reduce transmission.'

Barbara Trachte: 'By supporting this initiative, we are responding to the need for masks, but we are also sending a powerful message about the sort of economic redeployment that it will be necessary to implement as soon as the crisis is over. Producing locally for local needs is not only essential for the environment and the economy, but it is also vital in a crisis, when we can suddenly no longer rely on massive production workshops on the other side of the planet to meet our basic needs.'

Important note: the masks being produced are anti-droplet masks. They do not protect the wearer from infection, but protect individuals in the vicinity of an infected wearer from airborne droplets (NON-CERTIFIED PPE DEVICE).

The Masques-coronavirus.brussels project is an initiative of a consortium of community-minded businesses and citizens, supported by Ministers Trachte and Maron. The project is led by the TRAVIE-EcoREs-MAD consortium of businesses. In partnership with Institut Jeanne Toussaint - Arts & Métiers, Dutra, Urbike, MolenBike, Dioxyde-de-gambettes and Be Connected.



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