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PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, Thursday 18 November 2021 - **The Christmas tree arrived at the Grand Place in Brussels in the early hours of Thursday 18 November, where it will be displayed until 10 January next to the traditional life-size nativity scene. It will be decorated during the night of 20 November and will be lit up for the first time on Friday 26 November at 6 pm, before the first sound and light show. This will be the official opening of Winter Wonders, which will have opened its doors at 12 noon on the same day.**

Once again, the search for the desired specimen was long and painstaking. The result was a majestic 18-metre-high specimen in the garden of a resident of Dilbeek, who was keen to present it to the City of Brussels.

The tree dates from the late 1970s, when houses were scarce in this beautiful neighbourhood at the gateway to Pajottenland. It was planted by the previous owner after having served as a Christmas tree for a few years, and it grew up along with the neighbourhood.

After being cut down on Wednesday 18 November, the spruce tree was transported with great care in a special convoy to the Grand Place, where it was erected this morning. It will be on display until 10 January next to the traditional life-size nativity scene.

Factsheet:

Species: Spruce

Age: about 50 years old

Height: 18 metres

Origin: Dilbeek (at the gateway to Pajottenland)

The felling and transport were performed by Inter-Arbo, a tree nursery specialised in large trees for four generations, since 1915.

Like MB Manutention, (in charge of the erection of the tree), all these specialists responsible for such delicate operations have once again demonstrated their indisputable expertise and mastery.

It will be decorated during the night of Saturday 20 November. For about eight hours, eight professionals using three bucket trucks will decorate the spruce tree with 20 pearls of backlit red lights, 40 light rods creating a falling snow effect, 40 red balls, 60 wooden balls with a wind rose and 60 wooden stars in the shape of an old-fashioned locomotive pilot. Not to mention the 1.3 km of red tinsel! All lighting will be LED.

"The City of Brussels integrates social, environmental and economic sustainability into its events. Ten trees will therefore be replanted by the company which cut down the mature tree. I also took the initiative to ensure the recycling of our beautiful Christmas tree at the end of the event. Last year's tree was transformed into a trophy for this summer's BXL TOUR and into street furniture for this edition of Winter Wonders. The second life of the 2021 tree is currently being considered," declares Delphine Houba, Alderwoman for Culture, Tourism and Major Events of the City of Brussels

"Here we go! The arrival of the traditional Christmas tree officially launches the festive season in Brussels. We're delighted that young and old alike will come to see it taking centre stage on the Grand Place," concludes Philippe Close, Mayor of the City of Brussels.

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