

We are the commune
Our municipality deserves better

A breath of fresh air for Ixelles

Our priorities

More than an institution, a commune is a community of women, men and children – every one of us. It is where we live, where we work, go to school, have fun, rest, grow old and meet each other. It is also the public space we share with others and which we are happy to call home, a valuable and safe environment.

For us, the Greens, the primary mission of a communal institution is to ensure that each of these functions is guaranteed: better food, better air quality, better mobility, better housing, better communities... The commune has an important role as a facilitator in supporting citizens' projects and in their relationship with public institutions.

The commune must also be exemplary and embody a set of robust values: environmental responsibility, solidarity, gender equality, openness and tolerance, and – above all – ethics. The Greens have always placed ethics at the very heart of all political action: one (wo)man, one public mandate with a reasonable compensation; transparency in all decision-making; a constant effort to make democracy an ever more direct process.

Ixelles is home to a wealth of diversity, at the intersection of numerous personal and collective skills. This leaflet presents our candidates but also and above all, our key proposals to boost your commune's potential and allow it to flourish.

Convinced that resolute action is needed to bring about change, we propose for Ixelles a candidate mayor capable of embodying the project and values of ECOLO-GROEN in the person of Christos Doulkeridis. Together with Christos, Audrey Lhoest, Zakia Khattabi and all our candidates – but above all with you – we propose to activate all the available levers at the communal level in order to make Ixelles a forward-looking commune to the benefit of its citizens and to put the Green agenda firmly at the heart of its policies.

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GROEN

1. Halve air pollution

Protecting our environment, an irreplaceable resource, is fundamental to the Green movement. ECOLO-GROEN's objective for Ixelles is to become the most ambitious municipality in the Brussels area in efforts to improve air quality. The felling of trees, some of them more than 40 years of age, is unacceptable; the fight against climate change begins at the local level. Our objective is to reduce air pollution by half in Ixelles. We take example on the city of Ghent, which, partly thanks to the Greens, has succeeded in curbing air pollution levels by 18% in a single year by implementing an ambitious and coherent traffic-management plan.

Effectively combating pollution and its health consequences requires a strategy that reaches far and wide, from mobility to boosting plant life in public spaces and throughout the commune's territory. This will promote biodiversity and ensure sufficient humidity levels in the air when it gets really hot.

ECOLO GROEN advocates: maintaining existing green spaces, including vegetable gardens / planting trees / creating green spaces / protecting the green islands set between buildings / decorating facades with flowers / collective composting facilities / orchards and collective vegetable gardens / re-greening of plazas such as Flagey / integrating environmental aspects into all public procurement decisions / saving energy in public buildings / halving accepted pollution thresholds / multiplying drinking water fountains / creating shaded areas and better managing floodwaters during heavy rainfall.

2. Create a community centre in each neighbourhood

To support and strengthen the dynamism and richness of social life in Brussels, we propose to create community centres (*maisons de quartier*) in each Ixelles neighbourhood. These are places where people can meet and develop new projects together, such as collective vegetable gardens; limiting traffic to certain hours to better enjoy their neighbourhood; any other cultural, civic or economic programme; but also to have a coffee; meet the neighbourhood liaison official (*agent de quartier*); or organise meetings with municipal authorities.

The community centre proposal is a reflection of our dual commitment to co-construct with residents any decisions in which they have a stake and to improve conviviality in our neighbourhoods as an antidote to problems of loneliness, exclusion and insecurity.

ECOLO GROEN wants to: devote part of the communal budget to participatory budgets / support the dynamism of the associative sector / organise a public debate on the urban density in each neighbourhood / support car sharing plans / extend the hours of playgrounds and parks that allow people to recharge their batteries and meet each other / set up a "night council" as in Paris to restore dialogue and social peace between the night sector and local residents and to find solutions while maintaining the festive, alternative and welcoming character of our commune / provide for regular meetings between the commune and its administration and neighbourhood committees / facilitate projects which enable inhabitants and citizen collectives to temporarily

occupy streets or public spaces / systematically set up a dedicated team to support local shops and businesses affected by public works.

3. An attitude driven by results and accountability. Ditch the excuse: "It's not us, it's the Region"

Brussels is a complex region and capital city where many responsibilities are shared. One can moan and resort to inaction and sterile political conflict. When it is dirty, too often the alderman will refer to the Regional Minister, who in turn will refer to the STIB, who will refer back to the alderman – and nothing gets solved. ECOLO-GROEN's approach is pragmatic. For any key locations (such as Place Flagey, Rue Gray, or Chaussée de Wavre) where cleanliness, safety or maintenance is a problem and where responsibility is shared by several levels of power, we will introduce a dedicated management contract whereby a single person will ensure overall coordination and define the objectives, roles, cost sharing and arbitration procedures between the different authorities. We will test the approach at Flagey, which is a "perfect" example of dispersal of responsibilities, before extending it to other locations. A "communal facilitator" service will be put in charge of handling complaints about regional services provided in Ixelles, in good agreement with the Region.

4. Make Ixelles the Belgian capital of citizen innovation

Freiburg, Copenhagen and Ghent are cities that have learned to co-construct with their inhabitants and put genuine Green and social ambitions at work. With its universities, international institutions, associations, artists, companies, residents, Ixelles has the potential to become THE Belgian capital of civic innovation... provided that the municipality plays its part by actively encouraging and supporting positive and innovative projects.

ECOLO-GROEN plans to set up a laboratory for local projects and grassroots initiatives that will provide collective solutions to economic, cultural and social issues. The laboratory will aim to facilitate relations between project leaders and public administration; help lift regulatory constraints; provide resources and expertise to co-construct these projects; support the networking of complementary projects; encourage collaborative approaches and their taking root in neighbourhoods; and facilitate the exchange of good practices and tools.

We also advocate: establish an inventory of unused or underutilised resources in Ixelles (premises, land, reusable materials, municipal vehicles, empty shops etc.) / fight waste by promoting the circular economy (recover, recycle, repair, process, give or sell) / bring together producers, processors and consumers of quality foods / transform the CIVA architectural foundation in Ixelles into a Brussels centre for urban innovation.

5. Open up communal schools to innovative teaching methods

In collaboration with educational teams, we would like to inspire innovative education approaches, drawing on success stories elsewhere, and enable all our children to one day become active and responsible citizens.

ECOLO-GROEN also advocates: measures to ensure that school attendance is effectively cost-free / an inclusive strategy for all children, including those with disabilities / school meals with organic products; short, farm-to-fork, supply chains; and alternative vegetarian menus / projects for vegetable gardens, orchards and henhouses in schools / an educational project to discover the environment on the Ernotte vegetable gardens site / green mobility plans in collaboration with parents (bicycles, walking buses) / opening schools to the neighbourhood and the wider world / collaboration with neighbourhood associations (extracurricular activities, culture at school) / support for intergenerational projects / special attention to air quality in and around schools (zone 30) / awareness-raising of educational teams and children about gender issues / special attention to premises so that children learn in a healthy environment / support for regular sports practice / the creation of a Dutch-language school in Ixelles.

6. Double the budget for artistic creation and events

Ixelles has an amazingly dense network of cultural assets. There are theatres, cinemas (general public and arthouse), museums, art galleries, music and film festivals, and many book stores. There schools teaching the arts, photography, architecture and graphic design. Ixelles is home to about 4,000 artists and to a cluster of creative businesses in the fields of media, design, gaming, theatre, etc. Ixelles is also an open-air museum with prime architecture from medieval to post-modernist.

With people of 160 different nationalities, world-class universities and their foreign students, the presence of the European Parliament and lively cosmopolitan cafés, Ixelles is undoubtedly one of the most multicultural municipalities in the world! But aside from the resources allocated to the Musée d'Ixelles and to the Flagey Centre, the budget devoted to supporting the arts and artistic events is woefully small. Our proposal is to double it.

ECOLO-GROEN advocates: support for the many artists of all origins and disciplines present in Ixelles through exhibitions and programming in communal spaces; *parcours d'artistes* events, soundproofed premises for rehearsals or exhibitions; facilities for co-working and co-creation; workshops for visual artists; initiatives introducing school pupils to the arts, etc.

7. Access to property with Community Land Trusts

A range of measures are needed to counter the negative effects of high rental and property prices which are driving families away from Ixelles. Community land trusts, which had been set up by Christos Doukeridis when he was the Brussels Region's Secretary of State for Housing, make it

easier for households to become homeowners by buying only the building on top and not the underlying land.

ECOLO-GROEN also advocates: increase the amount of housing managed by Social Real Estate Agencies (AIS) / strengthen the fight against abandoned or dilapidated buildings / integrate accessible housing for lower incomes into all major private real-estate projects / ensure housing is accessible to people with reduced mobility / increase the share of public social housing (one of the lowest in the Region at present) / promote the renovation of empty housing above shops / support the construction of student rooms / help young households to stay or settle in Ixelles / support new forms of housing (solidarity, intergenerational, roommates, etc.).

8. A cleanliness and safety plan for each neighbourhood

For ECOLO-GROEN, public space must allow everyone to feel at ease, to move about or relax in complete peace of mind. A welcoming public space is clean, tidy and lively and everyone – woman or man, young or old – feels safe. It is a place that provides mixed toilets accessible to any gender, where streets are adapted to people with reduced mobility, where there are enough bins, ashtrays and dedicated, regularly maintained pooping spots for the local dogs; where premises are well-lit at night, etc. Our proposal is to develop a cleanliness and safety plan for each neighbourhood, in consultation with the residents.

ECOLO-GROEN also proposes: organizing safety audits by district, together with local residents, identify trouble spots and make recommendations regarding cleanliness and safety / generalise the use of reusable cups for all festive events / raising awareness and take action to limit the use of plastics and other non-reusable containers (bags, straws, cans, etc.) / twice a year, organise the collection of litter by residents for educational purposes / effectively sanction the incivilities observed / return of “*agents de quartier*” to the streets, on foot and on bicycle, and the reopening of certain local police branches.

9. Ixelles, Zone 30

For ECOLO-GROEN, Ixelles must gradually become a generalized zone where speed is limited to 30km/h. The improvements made on certain major streets (such as the revamped and semi-pedestrian *Chaussée d’Ixelles*”) should not lead to pushing out traffic to nearby streets. Instead, it should lead to an overall reduction in car traffic. The use of public space must also be better balanced between motorised vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. And no further investments should be carried out without special attention to people with reduced mobility.

ECOLO-GROEN also stands for: more frequent public transport during the evenings and weekends on the STIB and rail networks / supporting bicycle and cargo-bike use by adding, improving and securing cycling routes and multiplying secure outdoor parking boxes and arches / a diesel-free municipal vehicle fleet / vehicle sharing between the municipality and residents / scaling down car traffic and, together with local residents, promoting “quiet” streets such as on *Rue*

Keyenveld or by marking out certain streets in colour to clearly indicate their local character (as in Ghent) / increasing urban spaces and facilities that allow children, older people or those with reduced mobility to be effectively included in society.

10. Ixelles, a commune of solidarity and welcoming

A society is also to be evaluated by its resolve to allow everyone to live a decent life, regardless of the difficulties encountered. By this measure, things are not getting any better. ECOLO-GROEN believes that the commune must take on its responsibility and use all its available instruments, together with the other levels of power above it, in order to participate fully in an overall solidarity effort.

ECOLO-GROEN advocates: access to decent housing at an affordable price / education that is free for all / intensifying efforts to further integration into the job market / supporting lifelong learning associations and those working with people in difficulty (those facing problems such as homelessness, mental health, drug addiction, domestic violence, etc.) / embody the principles of a welcoming commune for refugees / stimulate citizen solidarity initiatives / restore the Ixelles CPAS to transparent functioning and ensure that it and its workers have sufficient means to pursue a policy of social assistance, support and access to care that leaves no one by the wayside / simplify procedures for accessing the medical card / combat inequalities and discrimination suffered by some of our citizens (the young, the elderly, women, foreigners, etc.) / restore the CPAS Social Action Advisory Commission.