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Program National Holiday Ceremony 2021

This year again, the ceremony for the National Holiday on the Place des Palais in Brussels will take a new twist. In order to honor all those who have given it their very best since the beginning of the pandemic, the military and civilian parade will be dedicated to them. It will also be elevated with artistic performances from five unique locations in Belgium.

July 21st is traditionally the occasion to pay tribute to and thank the men and women who, on a daily basis and often anonymously, work for the safety of our fellow citizens. This year, the federal government also wanted to honor all those who, during the pandemic, devoted themselves to the benefit of the community. These people are ordinary citizens or are part of the Defense Department, civilian security agencies (Federal Police and Local Police districts) and rescue services. As you can see, this year's theme focuses on the Heroes of the COVID-19 crisis.

The FPS Interior, Defense and the FPS Chancery of the Prime Minister have worked hand in hand, in close cooperation with the Royal Palace and other partners, to offer the people a National Holiday ceremony that combines both tradition and modernity. The ceremony will take place in the Place des Palais and will be an attractive contemporary celebration, including an artistic component and concerts in various provinces across the country.

A new concept and plenty of innovations

The traditional military and civilian parade will be given a face-lift. More compact and modern, it will nevertheless retain certain essential aspects such as the duty of remembrance: the veterans of the Korean War will be honored and the different components of the army will march. Her Royal Highness, Princess Elisabeth, will be present in the parade, within the detachment on foot of the Royal Military Academy.

For the first time, the Defense Department will organize a dynamic demonstration on the Place des Palais, with the support of the Federal Police. During this demonstration, our soldiers will show all their know-how. The military parade will start at 2 pm. The demonstration of the Defense Department is scheduled for 2:30 pm.

Starting at 2:40 pm, the parade of the civilian rescue services will take over. This year, it will pay special tribute to the Heroes of the COVID-19 crisis who have distinguished themselves in four particular areas:

1. Education and youth;
2. Vaccines;
3. Health care;
4. Logistics.

Each of these four themes will be a specific component of the civilian parade. The Heroes of the COVID-19 crisis will be honored in the parade itself, but also through video testimonies and artistic performances in

unusual places across the country.

This will sound familiar to you...

The parade on the Place des Palais will be accompanied by the Royal Symphonic Orchestra of the Belgian Guides (Defense Department) who will perform some classics from Belgian artists. The ceremony itself will be interspersed with musical and poetic interludes, from symbolic and breathtaking locations in Brussels and in the provinces of Namur, Limburg, Hainaut and Flemish Brabant. All chosen locations share a history with one or several themes being celebrated. Each time, some of the Heroes of the COVID-19 crisis will be present during the live artistic performances. This year's line-up is 100% Belgian : Esohe Weyden and Felix Radu, Loïc Nottet, Joost Zweegers (Novastar) and Portland, Iliona, Bazart, Zwangere Guy and Roméo Elvis.

Students and Be Heroes

In the stands, 50 Be Heroes will take their seats next to the people who nominated them. At the request of His Majesty the King and with the support of the Minister of the Interior, the citizens' initiative Be Heroes shines a light on everyday heroes who, in the past few years, have given it their all to help others, far from the spotlights. In the past few weeks, more than 1,000 people have nominated their hero(e)s on www.beheroes.be. In the first weeks of September, the King will meet seven heroes and their nominators during an audience at the Royal Palace.

On the occasion of the National Holiday, the Minister of the Interior also wishes to express her gratitude to the students for the courage they have shown during this long period of struggle against the pandemic. The Minister has therefore invited students from various universities and colleges (including art schools) from all communities across the country to attend the ceremony from the stands.

All sanitary measures will be observed to ensure the safety of the guests and participants. However, for obvious reasons, the Party at Brussels Park and the fireworks, usually organized by the Syndicat d'Initiative Bruxelles-Promotion, will be cancelled this year. It will also not be possible for the general public to attend either the ceremony or the concerts on site. Only invited guests with an invitation will have access to the various sites. However, people will be able to follow the entire ceremony on the television channels of La Une (RTBF - French-speaking) and Eén (VRT - Dutch-speaking).

We hope to see you there for a unique ceremony of our National Holiday !

The press kit « 21 July » of the federal government is available on this website : www.2107.be.

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