

Press Release

## STIB and RATP Dev inaugurate the first fully electric Hop-on Hop-off tourist bus service in Brussels

**Brussels, December 8 - In 2020, STIB—the inter-municipal transport operator for Brussels—entrusted TootBus, RATP Dev’s Sightseeing subsidiary, with the management of the Hop-on Hop-off tourist buses in Brussels for a launch in 2021. After having been shut down for a year, the Brussels tourist buses have now resumed their activity. To mark the occasion, RATP Dev and STIB are inaugurating the world’s first fleet of fully electric tourist buses.**

### **A response to tourism and ecological issues**

After more than a year’s interruption of its sightseeing activities, STIB (which stands for Société des transports intercommunaux de Bruxelles) relaunched its tourist bus service on 26 November. It had entrusted the operation of these buses in 2020 to TootBus Brussels, a subsidiary of RATP Dev, with a view to launching operations in 2021.

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**Rudi Vervoort, Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region** is delighted. *"The return of the tourist buses to the streets of Brussels underlines the Region's desire to once again welcome national and international tourists. This new offer, which is also environmentally friendly, completes a wide and diversified range of activities in Brussels and will allow visitors to discover the whole of our beautiful Capital region through its various districts."*

*"The people of Brussels are immensely proud to be the first city to welcome the fully electric version of the iconic Hop-On Hop-Off buses. It's with great joy that everyone will now be able to visit and revisit our beautiful region in a cleaner and quieter bus",* explains **the Minister of Mobility, Elke Van den Brandt.**

*"The challenge of this service resumption is twofold. On the one hand, to ensure the return of tourists to Brussels after the pandemic. On the other hand, we are making further progress in our commitment to the environment, as we are inaugurating the world's first 100% electric fleet of sightseeing buses,"* explains **Brieuc de Meeûs, STIB CEO.**

The return of the tourist buses to the streets of Brussels coincides with the opening day of the traditional and as ever eagerly awaited Winter Wonders festival, underlining the Brussels-Capital Region’s desire to once again welcome tourists from home and abroad. *"We are*

*pleased with the redeployment of a more sustainable bus system that focuses on the discovery of the different districts of Brussels. We have set ourselves the goal of getting tourists to discover the entire Brussels-Capital Region. TootBus is an excellent way of doing so.”* said **Patrick Bontinck, visit.brussels’ CEO.**

For this winter season, two electric buses will run on two routes to show visitors the city’s main sights. Eventually, health conditions permitting, six buses will be up and running in the 2022 summer season. Depending on the demand, the service can be increased.

### **A new impetus for Brussels sightseeing**

*“We like to think of ourselves as more than just a ‘carrier of passengers’. We create unforgettable experiences for our guests. Our unique offer has been designed to provide an immersive and emotional approach to the city. “Let the city take you by surprise” is the ambition that Coralie Triadou, Director of Tootbus Brussels, and her teams will strive to implement on a daily basis for visitors and residents of Brussels,”* explained **Arnaud Masson, Executive Director Sightseeing for RATP Dev.**

That desire to instil a new dynamic in tourism is illustrated, for example, by the introduction of new audio guides that include targeted content for children. The content has been redesigned to discover Brussels as presented by adopted residents, as if you were exploring the city with friends. Progressively expanded to 6 and 10 languages, the texts written and recorded by native speakers of each language provide a unique cultural perspective for each nationality.

Tootbus is also a new web, mobile, and app platform that lets visitors to the city get an enriched experience with real-time tracking of the location of the buses, commentary that can be downloaded and listened to as podcasts, and a wealth of information about all the sights. Your Tootbus journey to discover Brussels meets the standard of a seamless digital experience and lets you manage everything from your smartphone, from ordering to e-ticketing to the app that takes care of you when you are on board.

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**About STIB**

*The Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles (STIB) is the leading Belgian urban public transport company. It operates in the 19 municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region as well as in 11 municipalities in the periphery. It covers an area of 241.5 km<sup>2</sup>. The company provides transport for a population of more than 1,100,000 inhabitants, in addition to thousands of commuters. The STIB network includes 4 metro lines, 17 streetcar lines, 54 bus lines and 11 night bus lines. Its 10,000 employees, whose expertise covers more than 300 different activities, are engaged every day to promote a more sustainable mobility in Brussels. To find out more: [www.stib.brussels](http://www.stib.brussels)*

**About RATP Dev**

Founded in 2002, RATP Dev operates and maintains urban transportation systems in 14 countries on four continents (Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Switzerland, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, China, the Philippines, and the United States of America). With more than 1.5 billion passengers travelling on its networks every year, RATP Dev demonstrates every day its extensive and renowned expertise in a wide range of mobility services, ranging from rail, regional express rail, tramway, to bus, cable car and sightseeing activities. RATP Dev leverages in France, outside of Paris, and across international markets the technical expertise and experience of the RATP group, the leader in driverless and tramway operations and operator of the Paris network, one of the largest public transportation networks in the world. More information: [www.ratpdev.com](http://www.ratpdev.com)

A subsidiary of RATP Dev, Tootbus offers its tourist bus experience in Brussels, Paris, London, Windsor, Bath, Bristol, and Cardiff.