

## **Nearly half of the Belgian population consumes less meat than the year before**

This was the result of new data by EVA vzw and iVOX.

On the 14th of February, EVA launched its new campaign together with BE Vegan: Try Vegan. More than 5,000 people subscribed, including some Belgian celebrities like Wannas Cappelle, An Lemmens, Ella-June Henrard and Clara Cleymans. This campaign is a response to the growing demand for plant-based food. New research shows that vegan and vegetarian diets are on the rise, especially in bigger cities such as Brussels, where this change is currently the most present.

Nearly half of the Belgian population (44%) consumes less meat today compared to one year ago, continuing the trend. 7% of Belgians never eat any meat at all and 9% are flexitarian (people eating vegetarian at least three times a week), which adds to 16% of Belgians eating vegetarian on a regular basis.

A remarkable rise is noted in the number of vegetarians and vegans in Wallonia. Whereas Wallonia was still behind Flanders in 2016, that difference is now entirely gone. 1% is vegan, 9% is vegetarian, and 9% is flexitarian, compared to 0%, 2%, and 5% in 2016 and 1%, 3%, and 8% in Flanders.

### Brussels follows in the footsteps of other European capitals

When we look at the cities, we notice especially high numbers in Brussels, as well as in Antwerp, and Ghent.

Brussels holds 4% vegans and 7% vegetarians. Especially when it comes to vegans, the number is significantly higher than in other Belgian cities, and compared to 2016 (0,1% vegans). Brussels subsequently follows the evolution we've noticed the past few years in other capitals as well, such as Berlin, London, and New York. Only 74% of Brussels' residents identify as omnivores, compared to 84% of Belgians.

When it comes to Antwerp, the number of vegetarians and flexitarians stands out. The respective 7% and 19% are a significant rise compared to the 4% and 10% of 2011.

In Ghent, 1% identify as vegan, 6% as vegetarian and 15% as flexitarian. 77% of Ghentians consider themselves omnivorous.

### Mostly young Belgians

Remarkable is the greater number of people under the age of 34 among vegetarians: 7% as opposed to 3,5% in the age group of 35 to 54, and 2% among Belgians aged 55 and older. These numbers are promising for the future, especially since 43% of Belgians would agree to eat the same meals their vegetarian or vegan family member would, if ever they would become one.

### Growing importance of animal welfare

The most important reason for vegetarians and vegans to skip on meat or animal products is animal welfare. In the second place comes the environment and in third place health. Surprisingly, animal welfare is also becoming more important for non-vegetarians and

non-vegans compared to two years ago, whereas health stays in first place. Within this group, animal welfare also takes the second place, whereas the environment has dropped to the third place.

### Belgians mostly positive towards vegans and vegetarians

Almost half of the people (47%) always keeps vegetarians and vegans in mind when cooking for others. 4 out of 5 Belgians (74%) think every restaurant should have a vegetarian option and 48% think they should have a vegan option as well.

### The impressive effect of Donderdag Veggiedag (the equivalent of Meatless Monday)

43% of Belgians say they started eating less meat thanks to Donderdag Veggiedag, 40% indicate they eat vegetarian on other days as well after joining the Donderdag Veggiedag movement, and 28% now identify as a vegetarian after joining.

### Resolutions for the future

63% of Belgians think more and more people will become vegetarian in the future and 62% feel this will be a necessity. When it comes to veganism, 43% of Belgians think more and more people will become vegan, 40% plan to eat less meat and fish in the future.

### Try Vegan

To motivate all of these people, the Try Vegan campaign was launched. It's a free coaching program for anyone who would want to make his or her meals plant-based, a perfect support system to change the world one meal at a time. Online coaching is provided for free, through mail and Facebook, which EVA teamed up for with experts and professionals such as dieticians.

### Who's in already?

More than 5,000 Flemish people joined the campaign, including some celebrity ambassadors such as Clara Cleymans, Wannes Cappelle, Ella-June Henrard, Dimitri Leue and An Lemmens.

Ella-June Henrard: "We've reached a time where everyone knows a day without beef is a month's worth of showers, so what on earth are we waiting for?"

Wannes Cappelle: "A plant-based diet is not only beneficent for animals, it's also beneficent for the planet and ourselves."