

## Newsletter # 2 / July-October 2014



### 1. Introduction by the coordinator

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the second SEFIRA newsletter! Since the last newsletter in January 2014 we have made important steps forward to achieve our objectives. In particular, we laid down the basis for piloting a very innovative approach for understanding individual behaviours and choices using Discrete Choice Models in analysing the results of some choice experiments.

Deliverables 4.1 and 4.2 that were published some weeks ago required some investigation of the complexities of using these sophisticated models in behavioural research. We feel strongly that their use will open up new avenues of research and debate also on policy acceptability. We look forward to sharing the first results with you in 2015, when we will assess their compatibility with existing Integrated Assessment Models.

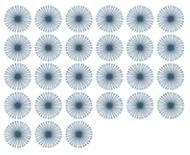
We are currently finalizing our review of the state of the art of European, national and local air quality policies which will be available soon. Interviews, focus groups and document analysis carried out in Milan (IT), Warsaw (PL), Antwerp (BE) and Malmö (SE), under the leadership of our Belgian partner, will be the main source of information. What emerges as crucial is the necessity for acquiring awareness of the complexity of the environmental challenges ahead of us. A small step in this direction is also made with the preparation of an Interdisciplinary common glossary, integrating definitions from a natural science, social science, economic and policy viewpoint.

The External Advisory Board – recently established – brings to the project the valuable expertise of André Zuber of DG Environment of the European Commission, Maria Luisa Volta, an engineer specialized in air quality modelling and with a wide experience of European Projects Management at the University of Brescia, and Luigi Pellizzoni, an environmental sociologist at the University of Trieste and a member of the Executive Committee of the European Sociological Association.

As well as these achievements, we have decided to dedicate each newsletter to a thematic focus. This second Newsletter will tell you the story of the first national stakeholder meeting that took place in Antwerp on October 2nd. It was the first of a series of meetings that are going to be organized by SEFIRA Project partners during the next six months in Milan, Warsaw, London and Malmö.

We hope that our efforts will bring new food for thought and action leading to better air quality.

*Yuri Kazepov*



## 2. Antwerp Case study (by Anneleen Kenis and Maarten Loopmans, K.U. Leuven)

### 2.1. Second General Assembly and First Stakeholder Meeting Antwerp (Belgium)

From 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014, the second General Assembly of SEFIRA was held in Antwerp (Belgium), in combination with the first national stakeholder meeting.

This combination turned the stakeholder meeting into a major air quality event, facilitating an exchange between national, regional and local stakeholders, as well as international experts. The finale of the stakeholder meeting was a public lecture evening on traffic and air quality, with keynote talks by SEFIRA scholars and the public launch of SEFIRA in Belgium (see figure 1).

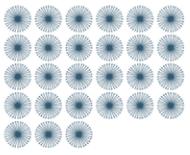
The lecture evening was co-organized by Antwerp grassroots movements StRaten-generaal and Ademloos as part of their Horta-lecture series, the main public forum for dissemination of air quality research. At the occasion of the 15th Horta-lecture, SEFIRA scholars were given the opportunity to address an audience of more than 300 citizens and stakeholder representatives in the beautiful Horta lecture hall in Antwerp, and were given considerable airplay in regional media and on social network sites.

With Antwerp selected as one of the four cases under scrutiny (next to Milan (Italy), Malmö (Sweden) and Warsaw (Poland), the events also gave us access to a broad range of air quality actors.

The formal and informal exchanges with these actors at the event provided us with insights which will feed back into the research process and allow us to triangulate with data from document analyses, interviews with key stakeholders and focus groups with citizens living in the city of Antwerp and its surroundings.



1. Pictures of the stakeholder meeting and Horta event



## 2.2. The case of Antwerp

The case studies are aimed at generating an in-depth insight both in the processes of translation of European legislation and policies onto the national, regional and local level, and in the way citizens relate to these air quality policies. The Antwerp case shows that citizen involvement does not only (or even primarily) include individual behaviour change, but also, and sometimes even more importantly, the active participation of citizens in policy development to realise the implementation of European legislation at the national, regional and local level.

Antwerp is one of the pollution hotspots of Europe (see figure 2). The daily limit values for PM<sub>10</sub> and yearly limit values for NO<sub>2</sub> are recurrently exceeded. But also the presence of PM<sub>2.5</sub> is much higher than the European average. As a result Antwerp citizens are confronted with major health problems and a significant loss of life expectancy. These pollution levels are on the one hand due to the high traffic density in the city itself, and on the other hand to the presence of the port of Antwerp, which is an area with a lot of industry, and related traffic.

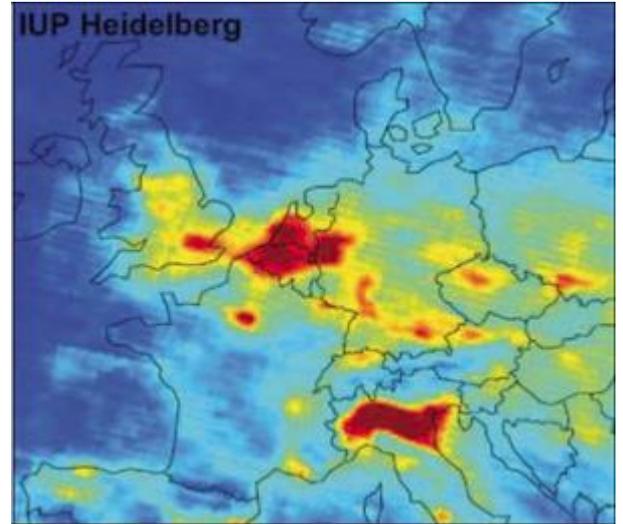


Figure 2: Map of Europe situating the city of Antwerp  
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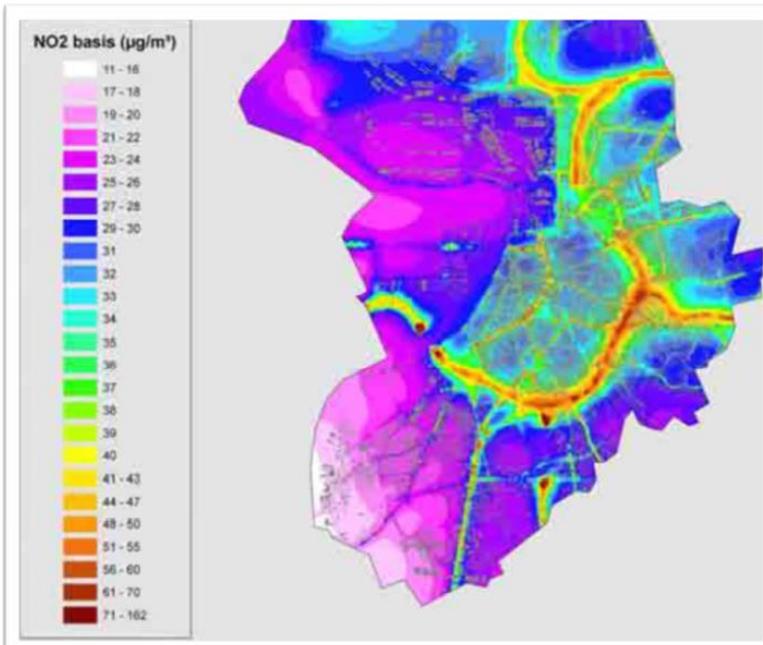
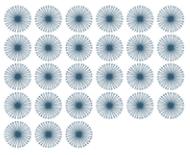


Figure 3. Map which illustrates the exposure of citizens to elevated levels of air pollution.

The historical location of road infrastructure in the city increases these negative effects of air pollution on health. The Antwerp ring road concentrates both local and through traffic, with on average 300,000 vehicles per day, but runs through the most densely populated areas of the city. Population densities near the ring road peak above 11000 inh/km<sup>2</sup> and 35,000 people live within 1500m distance from the ring road (see figure 3).

The Antwerp debate on (the lack of) air quality policies sparked off 10 years ago when plans for the expansion of the ring road were made public. The debate is of utmost interest in understanding the dynamics of awareness raising on air quality issues both at the level of (local and regional) politics and at the level of individuals. The struggle over the ring road has put air quality high on the political agenda not only in Antwerp, but also in Flanders and



Belgium. It has caused widespread awareness and knowledge about air quality amongst Belgian citizens, stimulating similar movements in neighbouring cities such as Ghent and Brussels. In May 2000, the Flemish government decided to expand the Antwerp 'Ring road' by developing a third crossing over the river Scheldt: the so-called Oosterweel connection. In 2005, when the plans were made public, it became clear that this new connection would be constructed close to the 'Islet', a major urban redevelopment area, while maintaining high traffic intensities on the existing ring road (see figure 5). Calling for alternative locations for road infrastructure and/or alternative mobility models, the grassroots movements Straten-Generaal and Ademloos actively sought to raise awareness and knowledge amongst the wider public. By reaching out to national and international experts, they introduced new arguments to the debate. Most importantly, the participation of medical experts brought the topic of air quality and noise pollution to the political agenda. By consciously seeking to popularize scientific and expert knowledge on air quality and mobility, grassroots movements have been able to raise the debate to high levels and created a well-informed audience at the local, as well as the national level.

The history of this process is rich and complex, but one element is of particular interest for the SEFIRA project: in their claims, active citizens increasingly refer to and even use legislation at the European level to challenge national, regional and local authorities. Referring to European air quality standards, regional or local government decisions are questioned and improved air quality measures are demanded. The Antwerp case reveals how the translation of European air quality directives to lower policy levels is not a simple, linear process. The way these levels interact is much more complicated and interesting, requiring a detailed analysis of political dynamics at different scales and cross-cutting them.

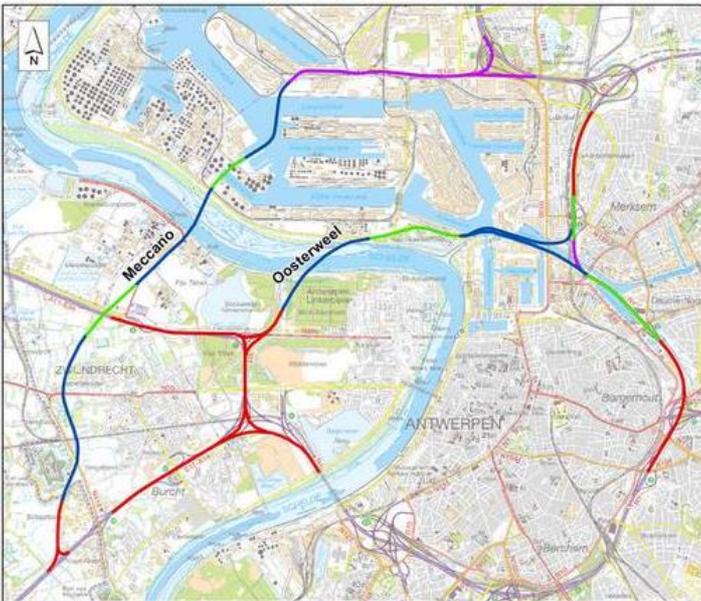
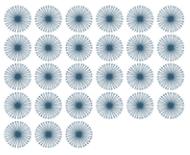


Figure 4. Map of highways of Antwerp, including the Oosterweel connection



## Links and resources (specific to the Antwerp case)

### On air quality in Antwerp:

- Actieplan fijn stof en NO<sub>2</sub> in de Antwerpse haven en de stad Antwerpen (2014 – 2018) <http://www.lne.be/themas/luchtverontreiniging/nieuwactieplanantwerpen-2014-2018-goedgekeurd.pdf>
- EEA (2013). Air Implementation Pilot. Lessons learnt from the implementation of air quality legislation at urban level. Luxembourg, European Environment Agency.
- Stranger, M., Potgieter-Vermaak, S. S., & Van Grieken, R. (2008). Characterization of indoor air quality in primary schools in Antwerp, Belgium. *Indoor air*, 18(6), 454-463.

### On Antwerp air quality debates:

- <http://forabetterworld.net/projects/clean-air-flanders>
- <http://www.ademloos.be/>
- <http://stratengeneraal.wordpress.com/>
- Loopmans, M. (2014). David tegen Lange Wapper. *Agora*, 30 (3), 16-19. See also [http://www.agora-magazine.nl/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014-3\\_Thema\\_Loopmans.pdf](http://www.agora-magazine.nl/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014-3_Thema_Loopmans.pdf)
- Claeys, M. (2013). *Stilstand. Het Oosterweeldossier*. Leuven: Van Halewyck.