



Press release

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## **Belgian Health Tech start-up MOONBIRD raises 1.5 million euros to help adults and young people breathe again**

### **Investment funds AKILES and ScaleFund II lead investment round for commercial scale-up of moonbird worldwide**

*40% of people globally suffer from stress, anxiety and sleep disorders. This number has been growing every year, long before the Covid-19 outbreak, and is reinforced by the increasing number of impulses we are exposed to every hour. Meditation and mindfulness have exploded in parallel. Breathing exercises are essential to many of these techniques. Moonbird guides people in their breathing exercises, both with a digital coach and with a tactile device that fits in the palm of your hand.*

**Brussels, 18 June 2021** – Moonbird, the Brussels-based breathing support start-up, has received a total investment of 1.5 million euros in a round led by AKILES and ScaleFund. The existing investors imec.start, Buysse&Partners and some private investors also provided additional financial backing.

The startup was founded in 2019 by brother and sister Michael and Stefanie Broes. They came up with an intuitive, tactile handheld device to make people aware of their breathing and allow them to find the right breathing rhythm and train it daily. In doing so, they aim to reduce the number of burn-outs and insomnia.

During stress, our sympathetic or 'fight or flight' nervous system is overactive. This increases blood pressure and heart rate, and reduces our heart rate variability. The latter is the natural variation between successive heartbeats, and the higher, the healthier. The moonbird device guides you to breathe at a slow rhythm, which has been scientifically proven to activate the body's natural relaxation response. This restores the healthy balance in your nervous system and increases heart rate variability.

In close cooperation with breathing coaches, psychologists and renowned neurologists such as Prof. Steven Laureys, extensive research was carried out into how moonbird can optimally assist its users. The device, the app and the algorithms help with better breathing, reducing stress and anxiety as well as improving focus and meditation.

Moonbird will use the growth capital to strengthen the team, offer additional guidance to consumers, pioneer with companies that want to use the moonbird to improve wellbeing at work and roll out commercialization worldwide.



*« As founders of Moonbird, we were pleased with the proactive and entrepreneurial approach of AKILES and the complementarity with ScaleFund. The cooperation has allowed us to quickly raise the necessary growth capital and to meet the increasing number of orders and collaborations with respiratory coaches»”, say **Stefanie Broes** and **Michael Broes**, founders of moonbird.*

*« It is striking to see how many people struggle with stress, anxiety, sleep problems and burn-out. Breathing techniques are simultaneously found in many curative and preventive therapies such as mindfulness. Moonbird combines data with an innovative device that allows you to find peace in the most intuitive way possible. » continues **Christophe Rousseaux**, Founder and Managing Partner of AKILES.*

*« We were immediately attracted to Stefanie and Michael's approach to solving these global societal problems of increased anxiety, stress and sleep disorders. Finally, a device that is intuitive, easy to use and does not require you to be connected to your phone over and over again! Our ambition is to help the company achieve its international development goals so that moonbird becomes a global standard for helping people reconnect with themselves. » completes **Alexandre DUTOIT**, Investment Partner at ScaleFund.*



### **About Moonbird :**

Stefanie Broes (PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences, ex-Cowboy) and Michael Broes (economist, ex-DegroofPetercam) founded moonbird in 2019. Moonbird develops a device that helps people to perform breathing exercises correctly. The young Belgian start-up thus wants to make these techniques more widely accessible, to improve people's general well-being. The first product, moonbird, is a compact device based on scientifically proven principles and helps people to relax, become calmer and fall asleep faster.

### **About AKILES :**

Christophe Rousseaux founded AKILES, a Belgian 'evergreen' investment fund, in 2019, supported by several investment professionals. Backed with his experience as the founder and CEO of Immoweb, through AKILES, he wants to support other successful managers and entrepreneurs in the long run to develop the growth of their companies. AKILES mainly focuses its investments on 'Growth Capital' and centres its attention on companies characterized by a strong growth potential and solid competitive positions.



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