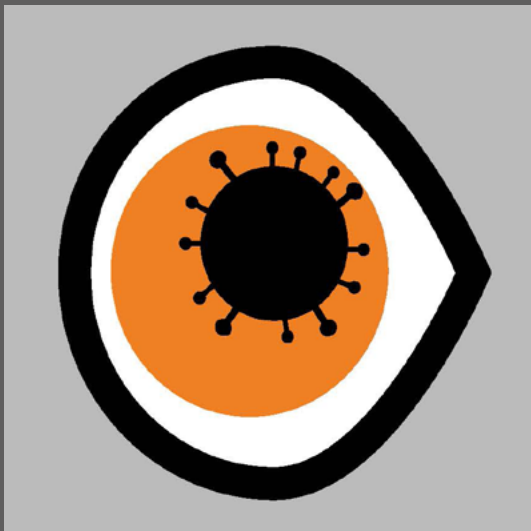




December 2020

#restartmice – Events

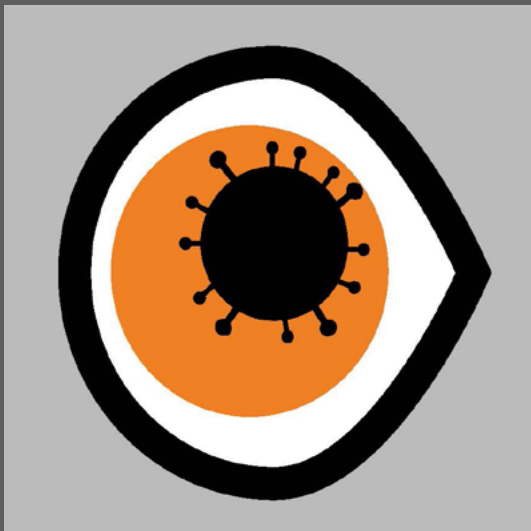


It is undeniable that, in Belgium as in many other European countries, the events sector is very little known or unknown and poorly understood by decision-makers. In fact, **'organising an event'** still means, invariably and without further understanding:

- Mass gathering
- Party, relaxation, leisure, ...

It is, therefore, essential to specify what we are talking about when we approach the events sector. The events sector is divided into numerous event activities, each of which is very different from the other, both in terms of the type of event itself and in terms of the possible keys to risk management. It seems quite obvious and full of common sense that a **«festival»** type event will not have the same COVID-19 risk management tools as a congress or seminar. Indeed, in one case, it will be important to understand that the festival is organised for the pleasure and well-being of the participants; where the seminar participant will be motivated by a professional reason. Alcohol consumption will have to be taken into account in the case of a **«leisure»** event, where this parameter is not present in the framework of a MICE event!

Today, it is a pity to note that this simple common sense is not appropriate ... An event remains a **«mass gathering»**, without more details on the principles and methodology that are essential for an efficient and coherent management of the risk of accidental contamination of the virus. We limit ourselves to imagining only **«ON»** or **«OFF»** scenarios for any event activity, taking into account only the admitted gauge ... Whether it is a congress, a festival, a show or a seminar, the gauge is **THE** unique key that determines what is/is not possible as an event! This



logic is on the one hand completely biased by the fact that the activity itself is not taken into account ... but also by the fact that little account is taken of the available space. Let's remember these gauges, which were the only management key from June to September: 200 indoors and 400 outdoors... The final point is that it is the only tool that is put on the table to authorise/refuse the holding of an event. Oh no, sorry ... there were also exceptions that could be considered, one municipality by one! How can you expect an event to be organised (budget, development, necessary resources, etc.) on the basis of exceptions to be requested from local authorities on a case-by-case basis? Just a blatant lack of knowledge of what a MICE (**M**eeting, **I**ncentive, **C**ongress, **E**xhibition) event is!

What does MICE event activity represent for the Brussels region and for Belgium itself, in terms of economic importance? Is it possible ... is it possible to envisage treating this activity as nothing other than a «mass gathering»? It is simply impossible for both the sector and the authorities themselves to do without one more year of these events, which generate business tourism that is indispensable to many economic sectors in our country:

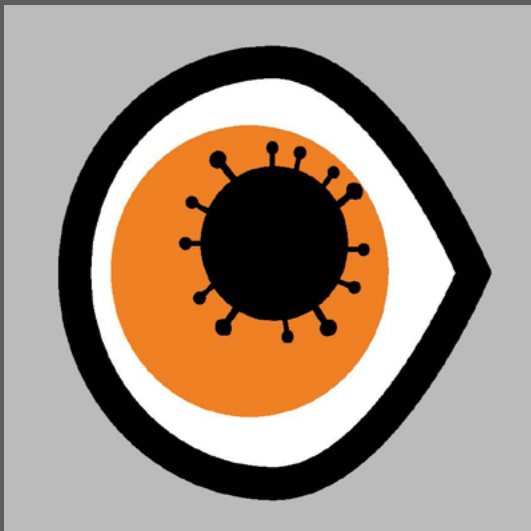
- M.I.C.E. has been the main provider of business tourism in Brussels for many years: 850 events in 2018, in Brussels ... More than 2.5 MICE events, every day of the year, in Brussels! ¹
- M.I.C.E. is also ... 400€ spent, per day, in the capital of Europe, per participant in a MICE event ... Taxi, hotel, restaurants, museums, shops, ...²
- M.I.C.E. means 4.1 million overnight stays in the capital's hotels in 2019! More than 13,000 overnight stays per day of the year ... ³
- M.I.C.E. is also ... 632M€ of income for the Brussels Region in 2015! ⁴

¹ [MICE Market Expanding in the Brussels Region | .TR \(tourism-review.com\)](https://www.tourism-review.com/mice-market-expanding-in-the-brussels-region)

² <https://www.lesoir.be/146717/article/2018-03-21/bruxelles-tourisme-et-affaires-font-la-paire>

³ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1098758/number-of-business-meetings-in-brussels-capital-region-by-association/>

⁴ <https://www.tourism-review.com/mice-market-in-brussels-is-flourishing-news10527>



We have therefore decided, with the teams who accompanied us in the drafting of the operational report, which very clearly demonstrates that the risk is quite manageable for a number of M.I.C.E. events, to launch an awareness-raising campaign aimed at :

- Make people understand the importance of this event activity, for all sectors impacted by the fact that it is not authorised!
- Make people understand that it is unconscious to stop everything simply because of an inability to understand how the organisers are able to control the risk!
- Make people understand that only a concrete recovery plan can limit the enormous impact that this stoppage will have on many of our country's economic sectors!
- Make people understand, in a very concrete way and on the basis of scientific validation, that the COVID-19 risk can be effectively controlled for many MICE events!
- It is no longer a question of «*choice*» ... **it is an essential activity, both for the events sector itself and for our country!**

From 1st January 2021, we will therefore launch our **#restartmice** campaign, which will be present through :

- A web page, explaining why the urgency is there ... and why MICE is indispensable for another year!
- A Facebook page and a LinkedIn page which, day by day, will demonstrate that it is possible, urgent and indispensable to develop a concrete plan to relaunch this event activity!

If you wish to join us, do not hesitate to come understand and support our project ... we will not be an team of 11 ... but a strong and close-knit team that will allow us to raise the awareness of decision-makers on the importance of working now, with the sector, on a concrete plan to relaunch these essential activities for the country and the sector!

We will keep you informed, via our OPSMAN Consulting page, of the launch of the site and the web pages ... Unity makes strength 😊

[More information](#)