

Visiting events with a mouth mask? “Yes, please”, says 1 in 2 visitors. “We are ready”, says the sector.

KdG centre of expertise Public Impact monitors the impact of the corona crisis

After almost four months of the corona crisis, there is a great need to restart the sector. Not only for event organisers and suppliers: Belgians are also missing their events and are gradually getting ready to come together again. Everyone agrees that it must be safe. The centre of expertise Public Impact of KdG University of Applied Sciences and Arts figured out what that means. They surveyed both the event sector and the visitors of events in Belgium. Organisers are working hard to make their events as corona proof as possible and are even developing new types of events for this purpose. The visitors are aware of the need for measures and the necessary caution. But for many, this does not stand in the way of the pleasure of being together.

Marriages and culture? Yes! Fairs? Not necessarily

Belgium is an event country. Six out of ten Belgians who visited at least one event last year, miss they cannot go to events. One fifth of the visitors would go immediately when they are safely organised again. Within a month, that is already half. "But it is not the same for all events", explains Jolien Vangeel, researcher at the centre of expertise Public Impact. "The data show that visitors would go more quickly to a wedding or a cultural event than to a fair."

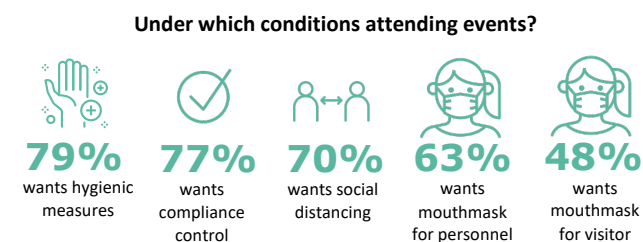
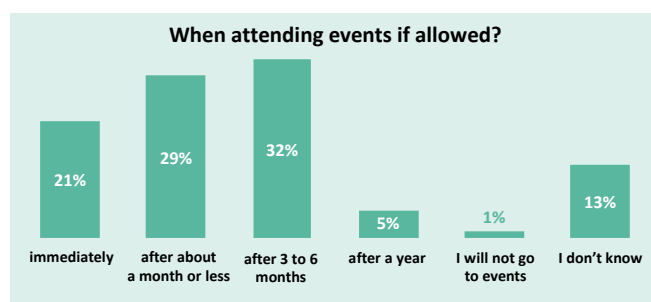
The visitors are confident, the sector is ready

Two out of three visitors are confident that the organisers will make their events as corona proof as possible. And this is rightly so: as many as seven out of ten organisers are creative in finding ways to organise their events as corona proof as possible. Joris Verhulst, researcher at the centre of expertise Public Impact, explains: "the data show a flexible sector that continues to adapt to a new reality in a creative and sustainable way. That creativity and flexibility is also needed to survive these difficult times. Many organisations are very active. Although it is worrying that four out of ten suppliers currently have no activities."

Mouth masks as the new standard?

Event visitors want to attend events again, but under certain conditions: eight out of ten visitors claim that hygienic measures must be provided, such as disinfecting hand sanitisers or the possibility to wash hands. Six out of ten feel that it would be better to make it compulsory for staff to wear mouth masks.

The event visitor in Belgium



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In mid-June, 1,000 Belgians completed the survey. This sample is representative by gender, age, educational level, migration background and family size. Of those 1,000, 706 people indicated that they attended one or more events in 2019. The results are based on this group of 706 people. The survey ran from 16 to 23 June 2020.

A research by the centre of expertise Public Impact of Karel de Grote Hogeschool in association with Experience Magazine, the Alliance of Belgian Event Federations, FMIV, VISITFLANDERS and EventFlanders.

Also, 77% of the visitors want organisers as well as visitors to check whether everyone complies with the measures. And 70% advocate social distancing. "Mouth masks do not scare the visitors", says Jolien Vangeel. "One visitor in two even says that mouth masks should be made compulsory for visitors. Only a quarter of the visitors claim that mouth masks would be a reason not to go."

Who bears the cost? Visitors and organisers meet each other

Organisers are relieved with these figures. After all, income is needed. Joris Verhulst explains: "the event sector can and wants to live with a maximum of a third fewer visitors. Fewer visitors mean less income. Moreover, they expect 25% more costs to provide an average event. These include costs and investments to guarantee safety and hygiene."

Event visitors are understanding. They are prepared to pay a little extra for a ticket, drinks and food to cover the costs of the extra safety measures. Five euros extra for a ticket of 25 euros, or 10 euros extra for a 100 euro ticket: these turn out to be reasonable price increases according to the visitors. At free events, one visitor in three also wants to pay more for drinks and food to help bear the costs. "Supply and demand at events will certainly meet this summer", concludes Jolien Vangeel.

The surveys

Both the national sector survey and the national visitor survey were carried out in June. More than 12% of all event professionals in Belgium completed the sector survey. These organisations are for more than 50% of their turnover professionally involved or active in the organisation of events, conferences, fairs, festivals, incentives and/or meetings. The visitor survey was completed by 1,000 Belgians representative by gender, age, educational level, migration background and family size. 706 of these 1,000 Belgians indicated that they attended one or more events in 2019. The results are based on this group of 706 event visitors.

These surveys are part of a series of surveys carried out by the KdG centre of expertise in association with VISITFLANDERS, EventFlanders, the Alliance of Belgian Event Federations, FMIv and Experience Magazine. The aim is to monitor the impact of the corona crisis, now and in the future, both among the event professionals as among event visitors. After all, insight into the attitude of visitors towards events, their opinions and general feelings about the current and future situation also has a major public and sectoral impact.

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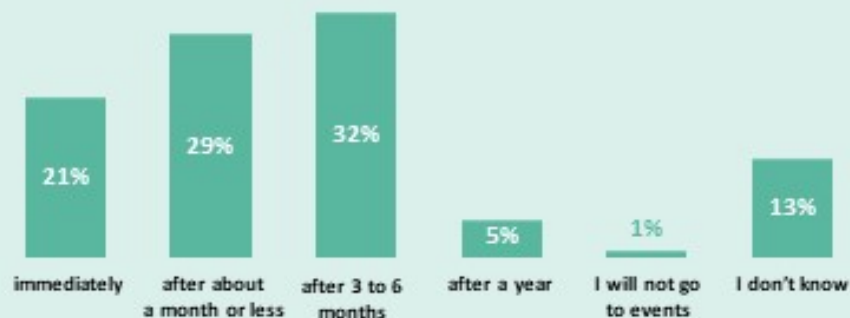
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Centre of expertise Public Impact

Public Impact is a centre of expertise of KdG University of Applied Sciences and Arts. It conducts applied scientific research, the aim of which is to 'improve' events and cities. Having better events and cities will generate more public impact which, in turn, will bring about more effective use of resources, people and materials. The researchers develop knowledge and expertise which they translate into tools and guidelines tailored to the sector. Together with a network of coaches and consultants, the centre of expertise also guides and trains (future) event professionals, both for the public sector and the (non-)profit sector.

The event visitor in Belgium

When attending events if allowed?



Under which conditions attending events?



How much willing to pay extra for a ticket?



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