

# Business Events – Belgium MICE Market

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Bristol International Balloon Fiesta, England



VisitEngland

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# Country profile

- Population of more than 11 million.
- The country has distinctive regions including Dutch-speaking Flanders to the north, French-speaking Wallonia to the south and a German-speaking community to the east. The majority of those working in business events speak excellent English.
- Most of the Belgian population lives in the Northern parts of the country and the Southeast tends to be more thinly populated. The country is considered to have one of the densest populations in the world.
- Belgium boasts a GDP of approximately \$580 billion, making it one of the wealthiest nations in Europe per capita.
- Belgians have an above-average propensity to consider aspects of sustainability and environmentally friendly measures when making their destination choice.
- Major Industries: Key sectors include chemicals, pharmaceuticals, automotive, food & beverages and technology.
- Business Environment: Belgium is home to numerous multinational corporations and hosts various EU institutions, making it a hub for international business activities.
- International Rail: There are around 10 trains per day running between Brussels and London on this 197-mile route. Typically, the train journey from Brussels to London takes 2 hours.

# Doing business with Belgium

## Top tips working with Belgium event buyers and organisers

- Belgians do not particularly enjoy conducting business over the phone; personal contact is much more preferred.
- Appointments are mandatory and should be made one month in advance and reconfirmed the day before. Be punctual and allow for flexibility around the duration of the meeting. Preferred times for meetings are mid-morning and mid-afternoon.
- Avoid scheduling appointments in July or August, as most people are on vacation during these months.
- Belgians are often very reserved, especially when it comes to important decisions.
- It is often best to speak English in Belgium, even if reasonably fluent in French (or Flemish), as this maintains neutrality.
- It is not necessary to translate your sales material into Flemish or French but make sure that you use the metric system when describing meeting spaces alongside capacities.
- The Belgian market is a European hub for International Associations. Most are based in Brussels near the European parliament.
- Location and Accessibility remain key to destination choice for either Associations or Corporate business event organisers.

# Our experience – Meeting & Incentive trends 2024

## Top trends in Belgium from VisitBritain enquires / meetings

- Sustainability and legacy have become factors of decision-making for Associations.
- Corporate MICE bookings from Belgium tend to come from agencies specialised in this market or directly from corporates. They mainly book meetings and incentives and include a teambuilding element.
- Belgian corporate buyers tend to book short trips with 2-3 day duration in Europe. Direct flight routes/train and air capacity strongly influence destination choice – particularly where not all air routes have been re-established following the pandemic.
- Belgium agencies book both with suppliers directly and through DMCs.
- Corporate group sizes tend to be less than 100 passengers due to airline capacity limits for group bookings on European airlines. Having the Eurostar travelling from Brussels to London is an advantage as its capacity is more flexible for group bookings.
- Events are generally booked year-round, except for July and August. Peak months are from September to November.
- Corporate buyers consider the attractiveness of the region / city when choosing a destination for their event. They also consider potential business reasons to travel to a region, e.g. visiting a branch office, access to local customers.

Source : ESAE/Conferli

# MICE Media

Publication	Magazine frequency/ circulation	Readership	Website visitors	Newsletter frequency/ no. of recipients	Countries covered
MICE Benelux	4 issues annually 8k average circulation	65% corporate 20% agencies 15% travel managers	5.1k average monthly visitors to <a href="http://www.micebenelux.com">www.micebenelux.com</a>	Weekly to 4.6k subscribers	Benelux
Headquarters Magazine	5 print issues annually 6 digital issues annually 12.5 average circulation	83% associations 10% agencies/PCOs/DMCs 17% other	18.5k average monthly visitors to <a href="http://www.meetingmediagroup.com">www.meetingmediagroup.com</a>	Twice monthly to 17k subscribers	Worldwide, based in Belgium
Boardroom	4 issues annually 6k average circulation	92% associations 8% other	11k average monthly visitors to <a href="http://www.boardroom.global">www.boardroom.global</a>	Twice monthly to 10k subscribers	Europe, based in Belgium
MICE Magazine	Daily news articles published online	Info unavailable	10k average monthly visitors to <a href="http://www.mice-magazine.com">www.mice-magazine.com</a>	Once monthly	Belgium, Netherlands

# Business Event Associations

Below is a list of 4 organisations that work closely with Associations. Many of their members or their colleagues are involved in booking international events.

These organisations offer opportunities to network with Belgium based Associations:

UIA: <https://uia.org/>

FAIB: <https://faib.org/home/>

ESAE: <https://www.esae.eu/>

Association World: <https://www.associationworld.eu/>

# 15 MICE Agencies:

Agencies are mainly based in Brussels & Antwerp. Associations tend to be mainly based in Brussels.

Company	City	Website
Event Masters NV	Willebroek	<a href="https://eventmasters.eu/">https://eventmasters.eu/</a>
OFCORES	Brussels	<a href="https://ofcores.events/">https://ofcores.events/</a>
MCI group Europe	Brussels	<a href="https://www.wearemci.com">https://www.wearemci.com</a>
BCD Meetings & Events - Europe	Antwerpen	<a href="https://www.bcdtravel.com/country/belgium/">https://www.bcdtravel.com/country/belgium/</a>
Act-Wise	Gent	<a href="https://act-wise.be/">https://act-wise.be/</a>
UNIGLOBE B&L Travel	Aartselaar	<a href="http://www.uniglobebeltravel.be">www.uniglobebeltravel.be</a>
BCD Meetings & Events - Europe	Antwerpen	<a href="http://www.bcdtravel.be">www.bcdtravel.be</a>
Seauton International	Brussels	<a href="http://www.seauton-international.com">www.seauton-international.com</a>
Amex Meetings & Events	Sint Stevens Woluwe	<a href="https://www.amexglobalbusinesstravel.com">https://www.amexglobalbusinesstravel.com</a>
BTS Travel	Antwerp	<a href="https://www.btsincentives.be/">https://www.btsincentives.be/</a>
Latitude Corporate Events	Zaventem	<a href="http://www.latitude-events.com/">http://www.latitude-events.com/</a>
ATPI Belgium	Antwerp	<a href="https://www.atpi.com/">https://www.atpi.com/</a>
Creative Star Incentives & Events	Antwerp	<a href="https://www.creativestar.be/">https://www.creativestar.be/</a>
Way2Events	Hasselt	<a href="https://www.way2events.be/">https://www.way2events.be/</a>
Fame Travel	Mechelen	<a href="https://www.fame-travel.be/">https://www.fame-travel.be/</a>



# Non-stop flight connectivity from Belgium to the UK

Based on capacity data from April 2024 – September 2024

## From Antwerp-Brussels North to

- **London City** with Luxair

## From Brussels National to

- **Edinburgh** with Brussels Airlines
- **London Heathrow** with British Airways or Brussels Airlines
- **Manchester International** with Brussels Airlines

## From Brussels South Charleroi to

- **Edinburgh** with Ryanair
- **Glasgow** with Ryanair (from April 2024)
- **Manchester International** with Ryanair



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