



POSITION PAPER

Brussels, 23rd Sept. 2020

Creating perspectives for the exhibitions and events industry by

- **Harmonising EU travel regulations**
- **Implementing targeted measures to enable international travel to business events like exhibitions, trade fairs and congresses**
- **Incentivising exhibitors, visitors and delegates**

Harmonising EU travel regulations – pledge for a balanced approach

Fragmented and quickly changing travel restrictions and quarantine/test requirements within the EU remain a major barrier for international exhibitions and professional events to resume business. Insecurity on both organisers' and attendees' side make planning impossible, lead to frustration and hesitation and finally cancellation of events.

EEIA and all co-signing associations representing different players in the business events ecosystem **welcome the efforts of the European Commission and the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union to improve the coordination of cross-border travel in Europe** and to reopen the Schengen area. It is vital that travel within the EU and the European Economic Area be quickly restored while continuing COVID-19 control. It is crucial to keep the Internal Market functioning smoothly. Travel, free movement of labour and cross-border provision of services are vital for business.

To that aim, **common criteria** should be established and **equal measures** put in place for departure and return from risk areas. Travel warnings and quarantine measures should be **proportionate** and **not be changed frequently at short notice** to avoid negative effects on trade and general economic activity in Europe. Besides, quarantine days for business travellers have a major impact on single business and economic activity in general. Instead, **targeted, intelligent and cost-effective testing and tracing solutions** at the appropriate scale for travellers should reduce or prevent quarantine. It would foster both the protection of health and economic activity

while at the same time reducing the need for imposing travel restrictions and quarantine measures.

Implementing targeted measures to enable international travel to exhibitions, trade fairs and business events in Europe

In addition, **worldwide coordination** of criteria for risk and measures to re-establish transatlantic travel should be pushed by all **supranational organisation and EU Member States** with the same approach and standards.

There are two prominent examples for such a step: the latest communication by the **German** Ministry of the Interior¹ that **defines as “essential travel” the purpose of attending trade fairs**, thus permitting business travellers from non-EU countries to enter the country for that aim. Exhibition attendees must carry documentation from the trade fair organiser and proofs of business appointments at the exhibition; and the **Italian** decree of the President of the Council of Ministers² that also qualifies as “essential travel” the participation in international trade fairs. The attendees must submit a demand and present a negative test result not older than 72h.

Exhibitions and business events business still flat – exhibitions cancelled

Even though a number of exhibitions have been implemented successfully respecting strict health and safety measures – mostly B2C fairs and rather regional or national events, this second semester 2020 will be very difficult for the European events and exhibition industry. Most of the **international shows and congresses have been cancelled** as exhibitors and delegates hesitate to confirm their participation in the autumn events. Based on the **uncertainties** listed above, they anticipate they will not meet the number and quality of international buyers they expect and need for making business. Events held digitally or in a hybrid format can help bridging this phase and may even reach out to more digital attendees but are no long term solution to replace the physical experience. Latest surveys show that exhibitors claim “virtual trade fairs” only deliver a fraction of value compared to physical on site events. The outlook 2021 for these large international events is not clear yet, either. Selling has started months ago for next years’ events but is very difficult due to the incalculable situation.

Agreeing and implementing a **EU-wide common solution** for enabling international business travel will give a clear perspective to the exhibition and business events industry, especially for the **sales for 2021**. Empowering exhibitions and business events means empowering every industry, every sector, as it gives them back their market places and platforms for innovations, knowledge transfers and scientific exchange. On top, it boosts economic activity and trade in general and generates considerable benefits for the travel and tourism sector.

In order to rebuild Europe’s economy, push the transition towards digital as well as sustainable technologies and practices and achieve the long term goal of a carbon neutral Europe, exhibitions and business events play a mission-critical role. The business events industry offers safe environments at all times for customers, contractors and employees and thus create trust and confidence among the clients to start business again.

¹<https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/faqs/DE/themen/bevoelkerungsschutz/coronavirus/reisebeschraenkungen-grenzkontrollen/welche-fachkraefte-und-hoch-qualifizierte-arbeitnehmer-duerfen-einreisen.html>

² <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2020/09/07/20A04814/sg>

Incentivising exhibitors and visitors

Many companies, mostly SMEs, are in difficult economic conditions, too. They had to cut budgets and therefore struggle to fund their priority investments into exhibiting in trade fairs or attending a conference at this crucial moment when they need a marketing and selling platform most.

We suggest immediate action:

- A flat rate support for all SME exhibitors of 5.000 EUR across the whole EU for one year
- Lump sum support for exhibition organisers to implement Hosted Buyers Programmes for visitors
- Lump sum for conference or congress organisers to attract delegates from the EU and overseas markets
- For the supplier industry subsidies of 2 % of their yearly turnover for each month without business.
- Immediate support for necessary investments by venues and organisers for Health & Safety measures and digital tools to enhance the physical events.
- Marketing campaign for “Business events destination Europe” in conjunction with the travel and tourism industry’s organisations

Furthermore, **direct subsidies** for the business events and exhibition industry must be included in the **EU and national recovery plans**. **Many companies in the exhibition and business events ecosystem, especially the smaller service providers, cannot survive with no revenue and no perspective.** Short time work schemes and loans are not sufficient anymore to buffer the Covid-19 losses. We now need focussed and robust subsidies to allow the preparation of meaningful and successful exhibitions and events to boost economic activity Europe. Investments need to be done now, during a period when turnover is far from back to earlier levels.

Exhibitions and business events are key to rebuilding economies – international business travel for the purpose of attending such events is vital

We urge the EU’s institutions and governments to agree on harmonised rules, reciprocity and embrace common intelligent measures enabling free movement and a maximum of travel under the best health conditions within the EU and worldwide.



EUROPEAN
EXHIBITION
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Background Information

About EEIA

The European Exhibition Industry Alliance represents nearly 400 European exhibition organisers and venue operators in Brussels to the European institutions and stakeholders. These trade fairs and exhibition players are organised in UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry and the European Major Exhibition Centres Association EMECA. For more information please visit:

www.exhibition-alliance.eu www.ufi.org www.emeca.eu

About EMECA

The European Major Exhibition Centres Association EMECA unites 24 large and leading exhibition venues in Europe. These venues are an important economic factor. EMECA venues host and organise over 1.800 trade fairs a year globally, out of which more than 1.500 in Europe on a gross rented space of more than 38 mio sqm. They welcome more than 360.000 exhibitors and over 37,7 mio visitors in Europe.

www.emeca.eu

About UFI

UFI is the global trade association of the world's tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI's main goal is to represent, promote and support the

business interests of its members and the exhibition industry. UFI directly represents more than 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 60 national and regional association members. More than 800 member organisations in 89 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Around 1,000 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label, a quality guarantee for visitors and exhibitors alike. UFI members continue to provide the international business community with a unique marketing media aimed at developing outstanding face-to-face business opportunities.

www.ufi.org

About EVVC

The European Association of Event Centres represents about 750 event centres of all kinds and sizes in Germany and Europe. Event organisers and supply companies supplement the association's broad range, thus making the EVVC the most versatile communications network within the sector.

www.evvc.org

About IELA

The International Exhibition Logistics Association is the global industry network enhancing the professionalism of the transportation logistics and freight handling segments of the exhibition & event industry. IELA works with venue owners, organisers and national associations educating, training and sharing expertise for safe and secure operations around the world. The quality brand IELA is currently represented by 173 members and 31 affiliates in 56 countries.

www.iela.org

About IFES

IFES stands for the International Federation of Exhibition and Event Services. It is the international federation of national associations and companies active in the fields of design, conception, production and services for exhibitions, trade fairs and events. IFES offers a platform for international cooperation, which is achieved through networking and knowledge exchange. Founded in 1984 - IFES represents more than 280 companies from all over the globe. Each of these companies has signed the IFES Code of Conduct - a kind of constitution which secures the quality and professionalism of each member. The industry as a whole represents annual sales of EUR 9.3bn within Europe. And with all suppliers, such as assembly companies, freelancers, technical service providers, this EUR 9.3 bn represents almost 250,000 jobs.

www.ifesnet.com

About LiveCom Alliance

LiveCom Alliance is the independent European institute for live communication. We believe that live encounters do build a stronger future in all societies and industries, especially in this digital day and age. LiveCom Alliance unites national boards of associations, each representing local member agencies and companies in the live communication and event domain. Goal of the Alliance is to unite, learn and inspire. Currently serving 11 national organizations (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, , Italy, Macedonia, Portugal, Spain, , Switzerland, The Netherlands and Turkey) and affecting 700 leading agencies and companies around Europe.

www.livecomalliance.eu

We look forward to receiving any queries and your positive reply.

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