



VISITBRUSSELS

SIZED FOR MEETINGS



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PRESS KIT

Brussels: Event organisers' favourite city

BRUSSELS IN FIGURES

- 1 million inhabitants
- 19 districts
- 162 km²
- Bi-lingual French/Dutch with English and other languages widely spoken
- More than 150 nationalities, 45 of which have populations of more than 1000
- 27 EU countries represented, with 23 languages
- 60,000 civil servants from the EU
- 1,000 international press correspondents
- 2,000 international associations
- 15,000 lobbyists
- More than 190 hotels
- 12***** / 56**** / 76*** / 41** / 11*
- 5.8 million overnight stays, 53% for professional reasons
- More than 19,000 hotel rooms
- 317 meeting rooms
- Europe's N° 1 destination for UIA association conferences
- 17th in ICCA rankings
- In the European top 5 for multimodal access
- Main airport is just 20 minutes by train from the city centre
- Bikes for rent all over town
- 27m² of green space per habitant
- 20 protected nature zones



BRUSSELS, THE MEETING CAPITAL OF EUROPE

Brussels is number one in Europe and number two in the world when it comes to hosting the meetings of international associations. And it is the unrivalled top host city for the offices of international associations. So says the Union of International Associations (UIA), an independent research institute that has been observing and documenting international civil society for over one hundred years. And it is located in Brussels.

It does, of course, depend on what is meant by “international associations”. According to the UIA’s Yearbook of International Organizations there are over 3,300 international organizations with offices in Brussels. The UIA’s classification codes help us sort out what is commonly acceptable and gives us (at the moment) 2,041 international associations. The same necessity for definition applies to the meetings of associations: according to the UIA’s criteria, there were 464 such meetings in Brussels in 2011, attended by over 180,000 people coming from around the world.

If these numbers do not sound impressive, consider this: the international associations located in Belgium (80% of them are in Brussels) had a total budget of 1.4 billion euros in Belgium in 2009, and they employed 11,000 people. Add to this the services required by their more than 2,000 offices and it is clear that the total impact of international associations on the economic life of Brussels is substantial.

Brussels hosts more international associations than any other city in the world, whether we’re talking about intergovernmental or non-governmental bodies. Worldwide, it is second only to Singapore. Ten years ago, Paris was number one in Europe and in the world, while Singapore wasn’t even in the top ten.

Why do international associations choose to locate their offices in Brussels? Why do they hold their meetings in Brussels? “The presence of the European Union, NATO, the offices of more than 2,000 international associations, 15,000 lobbyists, more than 1,000 press correspondents, regular summits of the 27 heads of state, as well as the many facilities such as the AISBL status, good universities and hospitals, its central geographical position and accessibility, the professional services and the presence of the FAIB contribute to the attraction of Brussels” says Hervé Bosquet from the Brussels Convention Bureau.



POWER CITIES ALLIANCE

Supported by their local governments, the two tourism offices of VISITBRUSSELS and Destination DC have signed a Power Cities Alliance aimed at sharing their expertise in hosting congresses and meetings, an economic sector of growing importance for both cities. Through this alliance, VISITBRUSSELS and Destination DC agree to support one and other in the promotion of their respective destinations and to share good practice in order to attract large conventions to their cities. Being situated in two different continents, Brussels and Washington have everything to gain by collaborating in their effort to build loyalty with a common clientele.

The alliance chose the name “Power Cities”, with the slogan “A Capital-to-Capital Connection”, referring to the power reflected in the number of international institutions, corporate headquarters and press correspondents and lobbyists in their cities. As centres of important decision-making for their continents, both Brussels and Washington share significant advantages in the meeting industry.

VISITBRUSSELS FACILITATES CONGRESSES

VISITBRUSSELS Convention Bureau

The Brussels Convention Bureau helps every organiser – whether it is an association, a company or an intermediary agency – by providing information about potential local suppliers. This includes the selection of the venue, an introduction to PCOs and DMCs, and other services before and after the event.

What’s more, in order to help increase the number of requests, VISITBRUSSELS attends professional fairs and shows in Europe and beyond.

VISITBRUSSELS promotes the destination exclusively to congresses whose criteria meet the Brussels offer precisely.

The staff of the Convention Bureau works on several dozen applications a week, providing details on the capacities of venues and hotels, and information on possible visits.

The Convention Bureau uses various strategies to increase the attendance of congresses in Brussels. Specific actions are undertaken, such as:

- Personalised welcome for the participants at the airport and in Brussels railway stations
- Visibility of the congress on the VISITBRUSSELS website
- Mention of the congress in the electronic newsletters
- Accommodation solutions for congresses with a large number of delegates offered by the Brussels Booking Desk. It can also obtain competitive prices when hotels are booked.

More information: http://visitbrussels.be/bitc/BE_en/content/1061/welcoming-your-convention-in-brussels.do



Brussels Booking Desk

The Brussels Booking Desk helps congress organisers and participants in the reservation of hotel rooms in Brussels.

More information: www.brusselsbookingdesk.be

Brussels Fund for Scientific Congresses

Every year some 870 scientific conferences of more than 50 delegates are organised in Belgium by academic organisations, 255 of them by Brussels-based organisations.

This fund has a triple objective: to promote scientific research in Brussels; to develop the city's reputation as a centre of innovation; and to increase the number of congresses held in the capital.

VISITBRUSSELS lacked two essential tools for providing organisers with optimum support in the organization of their congresses and leading them through the complicated maze of the meetings industry, thereby increasing the number of scientific congresses held in Brussels.

The Brussels Fund for Scientific Congresses fulfils this double mission:

- offering the possibility of pre-financing to scientific congresses which do not have access to credit;
- and providing scientific congresses organised in Brussels with subsidies for each international delegate.

More information: http://visitbrussels.be/bitc/BE_en/meeting/scientific-congress-fund.do

Meeting Card

VISITBRUSSELS has developed the Meeting Card exclusively for congress delegates. It is packed with attractive deals so that conference participants and the organiser(s) can enjoy the many tourism pleasures of Brussels. This card offers various reductions in around 30 of Brussels' top attractions.



Key sites

Brussels offers the vital element that conference organisers search for: a wide choice of venues. Indeed organisers can choose from a vast selection of venues specifically for conferences ranging from large, modern well-equipped sites to architectural masterpieces and museums adapted to the latest requirements of the meeting industry.

This great variety of meeting venues and infrastructures provides capacities of between 10 and 10,000 persons.

Brussels offers a large number of conference hotels, a congress centre, an exhibition park and a vast choice of reception rooms of all styles from the most classical to ultra modern. There is also a wide selection of ancient museums, private historical houses, ballrooms, art nouveau buildings, even castles and cellars, guaranteed to meet any individual requirement.

In total Brussels can offer 317 meeting rooms, broken down as follows:

- meeting rooms in hotels-102
- meeting rooms in historical sites-45
- conference rooms-42
- meeting rooms in museums-25
- exhibition and show rooms-24
- “Brussels Special Venues” associations-26 (see next page)
- meeting rooms in cultural centres-18
- meeting rooms in theatres-16
- meeting rooms in youth centres-5
- meeting rooms in chateaux/castles-3
- other meeting rooms-11

Some examples:

- **Brussels Expo**
The architectural façade features a unique mix of innovative 21st-century technologies. Brussels Expo is just 20 minutes from the city centre and covers approximately 115,000m² of space divided into 12 imposing halls, 5 of which date from the Universal Exposition of 1935. The other halls were constructed between 1958, the date of the second Universal Exposition, and 1998. All the halls are equipped with the latest technology. Brussels Expo also has an auditorium that can accommodate 1,800 people.

More information: http://visitbrussels.be/bitc/BE_en/venue/153/brussels-expo.do



- **Brussels Special Venues**

Brussels also offers an enormous number of special venues – sites partially or wholly dedicated to the organization of meals, evenings, meetings, etc.

Styles vary from totally classical to very contemporary: from underground sites to renovated warehouses, museums to studios, ancient breweries to bourgeois ballrooms...in all sizes and tastes, with capacities from 10 to 10,000 people.

More information: <http://www.venues.be>

- **SQUARE**

SQUARE-Brussels Meeting Centre opened in September 2009. It offers a generous 13,000m² in the heart of the city centre with the latest high-tech equipment.

SQUARE occupies the entire site of the former Palais des Congrès, which was built for the International Exposition of 1958. Many original attributes such as the enormous wall paintings by Paul Delvaux, René Magritte and Louis van Lint have been restored and now accompany the contemporary setting created by a European team of designers. SQUARE provides 3,600m² of exhibition space and its main auditorium can accommodate 2,100 persons. Situated next to BOZAR (Centre for Fine Arts) with its 2,200-seat concert hall, combinations can be organised for larger congresses.

More information: http://visitbrussels.be/bitc/BE_en/venue/251/square-brussels-meeting-centre.do

- **Tour & Taxis “The Royal Warehouse”**

The four giant sheds of Tour & Taxis represent an area of 17,400m² and were initially used for transit goods at the beginning of the 19th century. Today Tour & Taxis has become a venue benchmark.

Tour & Taxis consists of a vast private car park with several thousand places, large halls that can be divided into numerous configurations accommodating up to 5,000 persons, loading jetties and a glazed metallic saw tooth roof. The Brussels Antiques & Fine Arts Fair, the Book Fair, the Brussels International Fantastic Film Festival and the European Business Summit are just some of the major events organised on the site every year.

More information: http://visitbrussels.be/bitc/BE_en/venue/182/tour-taxis.do



NEW IN BRUSSELS

- In 2012, the Thon Hotel EU also opened its doors in the European Quarter of Brussels. This 4-star hotel has 405 comfortable, modern and functional rooms, and 10 conference rooms with technical equipment and facilities for video conferences.
- The Pullman Brussels Centre Gare Du Midi Hotel will open in June 2013. This 4-star hotel located next to the Brussels South railway station will offer 237 rooms and a modular convention centre of 10 meeting rooms equipped with the latest technology.
- In the summer of 2013, a new hall will open at Brussels Expo. Hall 12 will soon be Brussels' biggest congress and entertainment hall. When it opens in mid-2013, this state-of-the-art modular facility will welcome up to 15,000 spectators for international congresses, concerts and sports events. Hall 12 is also a key component of the ongoing NEO project, designed to rejuvenate the area around Brussels Expo.
- Complete renovation of The Hotel (ex-Hilton) to be completed in autumn 2013.

MORE INFORMATION:

General: www.visitbrussels.be/meetings

Meetings agenda: http://visitbrussels.be/bitc/BE_en/meeting/meetings-agenda.do

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