



**Switzerland.**

# Market situation France.

Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau (SCIB).

[MySwitzerland.com/meetings](http://MySwitzerland.com/meetings)

# 1 MARKET SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

## 1.1 Economic situation

With the coronavirus crisis ongoing for more than a year now, economists know that several scenarios must be considered for the next two to five years.

While GDP in 2020 dropped by 8.2% due to the severe lockdown in spring (first wave), economic growth is expected for 2021 overall. Lockdown measures were not as strict during the second and third waves in France and recovery is in sight. According to the Direction Générale du Trésor Public (general directorate of public finances) global demand for French goods and services is expected to grow by 7% in 2021 and 5.5% in 2022. As vaccinating the population continues to progress (84% of eligible persons by end of September), most sectors went back to normal. Actual GDP growth in France is 5.8% (source FMI)

Another important factor is household consumption. A lot of households have gained purchasing power thanks to financial government support during the crisis but didn't have the opportunity to spend their money because of a second and third lockdown. The big question was whether they would or would not spend this extra money once they could travel again, go to restaurants and go shopping – during summer we have seen that they did, despite the introduction of the Sanitary Pass and the 4<sup>th</sup> wave (due to variant Delta).

The unemployment rate has continued to decrease despite Covid-19 and was at 7% at the end of June 2020, but it increased again to 9% during the third quarter of 2020 and then fell to 8% at the end of the year. In early 2021 it was around 8.5%, but is expected to be around 8.2% by the end of the year (which is close to pre-pandemic rates).  
(Source: Insee)

## 1.2 Meetings industry situation & trends

The situation for the meetings industry in France has evolved tremendously since summer 21. The pressure of the government to make population getting vaccinated with the introduction of the Sanitary Pass (=CoVid certificate) which is needed for cinema, theatre, sports activities, restaurants, long-distance trains etc., also allows in person events to take place again. Therefore, the demand exploded as from June when first sanitary restrictions got (partially) lifted. Corporates organized mainly small events to gather teams and re-create team spirit or they gathered their board of directors – all this mainly in France. But there are also bigger events which take place again, including some congresses; and agencies are busy organising the rescheduled postponed events.

There are still a lot of questions around hybrid formats and digital events vs physical events. The future will show if the crisis has massively increased the use of digital platforms. For the time being, it seems that many are eager to meet each other IRL again – finally!

We observe a lot of changes within the Event Agencies in France. Some small agencies have ceased their activity and many event professionals have left the Meetings industry. Today, agencies are hiring again (to be able to answer incoming RFPs) – but struggle to find new employees.

Some of the bigger agencies have merged to be able to offer a 360° experience and to survive on the global market.

### Trends

As already mentioned, **digitalisation in the event industry** is a topic more current than ever. The true value of face-to-face meetings became clear after many months of meetings on Zoom and other platforms, especially for strategic meetings and brainstorming. But of course, the power of online meetings avoiding unnecessary travelling or giving the opportunity to enlarge one's public cannot be neglected either. So, it seems the future will see a demand for small live meetings (<50 pax) without having to travel too far on the one hand and new hybrid formats for bigger (?) meetings on the other.

In any case, we recommend **venues to update and increase their use of technology**, with high-speed internet, secure Wi-Fi and in-house broadcasting studios.

**CSR and sustainability** is another topic that is still gaining in importance

Green Événement, who pushed the meetings industry into CSR, is at the root of the creation of ISO Certification 20121.

LEVENEMENT, the French association of event agencies, has decided that all their members should be certified ISO 20121. It seems that awareness is coming in the first instance from younger employees (aged 20-35) who want to be more responsible and sustainable and do not want to create events with so much waste (food waste, carpets, print material, etc.) and are looking for ways to reduce and recycle wherever possible. We are all responsible for the health of planet Earth.

France has the biggest number of ISO 20121 certified suppliers and events and will increase its number in the upcoming months. The French government has been involved in this process as well.

We highly recommend all players in the Swiss meetings industry wishing to show their commitment towards CSR to take a look at this label.

## 1.3 RFP situation in France

With the second wave lockdown in October 2020 and quarantine requirements in Switzerland for travellers from red-list countries, it has been impossible to organise a meeting in Switzerland out of France since autumn 2020. We were therefore not able to push meetings to Switzerland and received - if any - mainly requests for digital or hybrid meetings.

Since June 21 meetings within Europe are facilitated again and we started to get some requests either for winter 21/22 or for very short-term meetings in Sept-Oct 21. The short-term one's took place, whereas the one's for winter are still pending, as corporates observe closely the sanitary situation these upcoming weeks.

Unfortunately, a lot of corporates still have travel policies which don't allow them to leave domestic territory, but we are optimistic that this will evolve positively for 2022.

## 2 TARGETS

- We keep our strong market presence and our quality approach towards buyers (agencies, corporates, and venue finders) of the meetings sector in France, even in these difficult times with few RFPs; we want to stay in their mind and make them consider Switzerland when travel is allowed again.
- The inbound marketing strategy we have developed over the past few years, through content production (blog) and our presence on social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Slideshare, etc) will help us achieve our targets. We generate awareness for Switzerland with empathy.
- We will put emphasis on venues for smaller groups (>50/100 pax) and target corporates (especially "assistantes de direction") in border regions.
- We will also put emphasis on the association market by evaluating association meeting leads.
- Ongoing updates and hopefully boosting our client database again.
- Presence online and offline through KMM and participation in Meeting Industry Associations

## 3 CURRENT DATABASE SITUATION

Kind	Contacts
Agencies	1,554
Corporates	1,118
Association	146
Media	21

## 4 DETAILED MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Further details of past, present and future marketing activities can be found on [www.stnet](http://www.stnet), which can be accessed by using your personal username and password.