



Switzerland.

Market situation France.

Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau (SCIB).

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1 MARKET SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

1.1 Economic situation

French GDP came to a standstill in Q1 2022, mainly due to the Omicron wave and the war in Ukraine.

The beginning of Q2 has seen a significant improvement in the health situation in European countries, but a deterioration in China, with the "zero COVID" strategy directly impacting Chinese production (source Insee "Economic outlook 9/5/2022).

Despite the strong economic uncertainties also due to the war in Ukraine and the return of inflation, France saw a 0.5% growth in its GDP in the second quarter of 2022 (source "Banque de France Point de conjuncture" 09/08/2022).

The outlook depends on the sector. The negative supply-side shocks and speculation of energy prizes continue to fuel inflation which is expected to reach 7% in September. French Government has put in place a "price shield" for electricity and gas and a "discount at the pump" measure for gasoline in order to decrease the acceleration of prizes and help the households pay the bills and continue to drive to work.

The unemployment rate is quite low since the pandemic; it stayed stable during Q2 2022 at 7.4%; some sectors have a lot of difficulties to find employees for their jobs. This concerns particularly service jobs like hospitality, transport, cleaning, etc.

(Source: Insee)

1.2 Meetings industry situation & trends

The situation for the Meetings Industry in France has greatly improved since this spring. After the end of "Omicron Wave" in the beginning of the year, sanitary situation evolved in a good direction and - the President's Election helping – the Sanitary Pass (=CoVid certificate) got abolished. This opened the way for a massif return of "in person meetings".

As a result, our Event Agencies were completely overbooked from April to July. A lot of meetings took place in France, but also on an international level. The requests for new meetings in the future took also up.

Corporates still organize a lot of small events to gather teams and re-create team spirit. But there are also bigger events which take place and get planned. Despite all these positive signs, nobody quite knows what the future will be like, and everybody is worried about the upcoming winter months. Will CoVid-19 prevent corporates from organising meetings again? What impact the economic situation with inflation and high costs will have on the budget of Meeting Planners? Uncertainty has definitively become a daily challenge for the Meetings Industry.

One of the other major challenges at the moment is the lack of employees. During CoVid lockdown a lot of persons have changed activity. They left Paris to go live in a smaller town or at the countryside. We estimate the loss of qualified workers in the Tourism and Event Business Industry to around 25-30%.

We continue to observe changes within the Event Agencies in France: more of the bigger agencies have merged to be able to offer a 360° experience and to survive on the global market.

Trends

Despite the pick-up of in person meetings, **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 an increase of new hybrid formats for all kinds of meetings.

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 gaining on importance

Green Événement, who pushes the meetings industry into CSR, has initiated the creation of ISO Certification 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.

But pressure is also coming from CAC40 corporates who need to show their CSR engagement and actions. They will increasingly choose venues who are committed to CSR...

LEVENEMENT, the French association of event agencies, has decided that all their members should be certified ISO 20121 asap. Thus, 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.

Tools to easily measure and evaluate the carbon impact of a meeting are developed and promoted in France and the LEAD-label has been launched.

We highly recommend all players in the Swiss meetings industry wishing to show their commitment towards CSR to take a look at these tools and labels, but also to communicate on their efforts (whatever they are) in sustainability more clearly and proactively.

1.3 RFP situation in France

First encouraging signs came since mid-January with RFPs picking up. Our advantage was and still is the proximity to France with easy access by TGV. It continued steadily every month with at first RFPs quite short notice and evolved towards RFPs for 2023 for (surprisingly) big groups.

We handled 74 requests from January to August which is only 15 less than in 2019 at the same period! 17 meetings were carried-out until the end of August.

Our advantage is clearly the proximity to France with easy access by TGV.
Our weakness is the strong Swiss Franc which makes us a lot more expensive than the EURO countries.

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; we want to stay in their mind and make them consider Switzerland when travel and live events are possible.
- The inbound marketing strategy we have developed over the past years, through content production (blog) and our presence on social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Slideshare, etc) help us achieve our targets. We generate awareness for Switzerland with empathy.
- We put emphasis on venues for smaller groups (>50/100 pax), on sustainability and target corporates (especially “assistantes de direction”) in border regions.
- We also put emphasis on the association market by evaluating association meeting leads.
- Ongoing updates (there is a lot to do with all the changes in the industry) of our client database.
- Presence online and offline through KMM and participation in Meeting Industry Associations

3 CURRENT DATABASE SITUATION

Kind	Contacts
Agencies	1585
Corporates	1022
Association	170
Media	21

4 DETAILED MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Further details of past, present and future marketing activities can be found on stnet.ch, which can be accessed by using your personal username and password.