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In late June, the Swiss government announced public and private events of up to 1,000 people could take place with strict contact tracing measures in place at all times.

Bettina Mumenthaler, UK and Ireland manager for meetings and incentives at the Switzerland Convention and Incentive Bureau explains that “event organisers must ensure that the maximum number of people that may need to be contacted does not exceed 300.”

The relaxation of regulations was made possible by the standardised ‘Clean & Safe’ label - a government-approved security concept that lays out strict hygiene guidelines to create safe environments for delegates and instil planner confidence.

A pinch of Basel and a dash of Bern

Switzerland’s efforts in limiting the spread of Covid-19 have enabled it to ease lockdown restrictions – a huge positive for the Swiss events industry. Holly Patrick reports.

Basel

 Basel has a conference history dating back nearly 130 years when the first Zionist Congress took place there. Today it’s better known for its medical sector. With Hoffmann-La Roche and Novartis, two of the top pharmaceutical companies in the world headquartered in the pocket-sized metropolis, the city is undisputedly a global leader in the life sciences sector.

But not only in this sector, as Ramona Debus, head of Basel Convention Bureau, explains. “Related industries, too, such as nanotechnology, medtech, precision medicine, healthcare, medical informatics, cosmetics and nutraceuticals, there is a growing number of interesting clusters of successful companies in the Basel region.”

Living up to its medicinal reputation, the city, with the help of the Basel Convention Bureau has issued a set of initiatives which encourage safe meetings to recommence. In addition to the national “Clean & Safe” label, Basel also requires hotels, and restaurants to implement the “More hygienic for your protection” label.

Switzerland’s largest congress facility, the 141,000 sqm Congress Center Basel, has considered event planner’s needs in the current climate and is offering discounts, safer alternatives and flexible contracts for 2021 events, all subject to special terms and conditions.

Basel’s central European location, on the cusp of both Germany and France, provides a wealth of cross-border options for...
Meetings in the mountains

Switzerland’s capital city of Bern and the Interlaken Region are just one hour apart and offer a myriad of meeting, incentive and adventure possibilities for events in fresh Alpine air.

BERN

Switzerland’s historic and charming capital city is ideal for meetings. Compact with a range of excellent venues, nightlife and activities, it abounds with outdoor options and that famed Swiss efficiency. It also offers the congress centre Kursaal Bern.

Swissôtel Kursaal Bern

The four-star Swissôtel Kursaal Bern is a landmark in the city alongside the Parliament Building, the Münster Cathedral and the Aare river. With the largest culture and congress centre in the Greater Region of the cantons of Bern, Fribourg, Solothurn, Vaud and Jura, it offers everything under one roof: a central location, breathtaking views of Bern’s old town and the Alps, a superior hotel, 30 event and conference rooms for up to 1,500 persons, three restaurants, two bars and the Grand Casino Bern.

Hünigen Castle Bern

Hünigen Castle Bern and its surroundings combine a stunning historical heritage with modernity – from the knight’s cellar to the fantastic fairytale castle. Surrounded by an extensive park with old trees and rose terraces, it has a glass pavilion and ten magnificent halls and conference rooms. Travel into the past and develop ideas for the future.

Chillfood

And for a fun and bonding activity, Chillfood offers an extraordinary team cooking experience in unusual places. Whether as a small team or with large groups, cooking together on an open fire involves everyone and is an authentic and memorable outdoor adventure. Held in quarries, industrial halls, on a river bank or in an Alpine hut, with no electricity, just fire, embers, team spirit and fine regional ingredients. With this event you will once again remind your team that less is often more.

More information at: www.bern.com/business
Sponsored content

INTERLAKEN

Known as the adventure capital of Europe, Interlaken offers activities, magnificent mountain scenery and excellent venues including Congress Centre Kursaal Interlaken together with an array of hotels from charming to contemporary.

Congress Hotel Seepark Thun
Located directly on Lake Thun with views of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau, the leading design hotel Congress Hotel Seepark Thun has won numerous awards as a venue for seminars and conferences. There are 17 plenary, seminar and group rooms with plenty of natural light, offering ideal settings for conferences, meetings, workshops or seminars. It also provides special gourmet moments and relaxation with its ‘inBalance’ wellness zone.

James Bond 007 on the Schilthorn
Explore the world of the glamorous spy and the impressive panorama of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau. Nowhere else does the grandiose mountain world of the Bernese Oberland present itself so impressively as on the 2,970m high Schilthorn. Experience the extraordinary cable car ride with stops in Gimmelwald, Mürren and Birg, passing thunderous waterfalls and rugged cliffs. Bond World, the interactive multi-media exhibition, takes you into the world of James Bond to learn more about how the film In Her Majesty's Secret Service was made. Enjoy a meal in the 360° revolving restaurant Piz Gloria and take in the amazing views of the Swiss skyline. At Birg you can walk along the Thrill Walk, a 200m long pathway attached to the cliff, pure adrenaline and a memorable mountain experience.

Lasting experiences with Outdoor Interlaken
Interlaken is known as the adventure capital of Europe, and with good reason. Situated between mountains and lakes, it is the perfect outdoor playground. Strengthen the team spirit with river rafting, canyoning or at an adventure park. Adventure specialist Outdoor Interlaken offers a variety of outdoor activities that will motivate the team, bring dynamism to the company, inspire customers and leave lasting impressions. The perfect team adventure under the safe guidance of experienced guides.

More information at: www.interlaken-congress.ch
incentive planners who can impress clients with day trips to discover the cuckoo clocks of Germany’s fairy tale Black Forest, sip wine in France’s medieval Eguisheim village and then back to Basel for a sunset cruise along the river Rhine.

BERN

Bern, Switzerland’s capital city and political centre, is also a UNESCO World Heritage site, boasting a wealth of wonders for event planners. Politics and life sciences are major industries in Bern and are home to renowned institutes such as the University of Bern and its Center for Regional Economic Development as well as the University Hospital “Insel” which ranks among the top 100 universities in the world in the medical sector.

To further its meetings appeal, Bern Convention Bureau has been running a small but successful ambassador programme for several years. “This consists primarily of university professors who have already organised a congress in Bern or are planning one in the near future,” explains Berhard Rhyn, head of meetings at Bern Convention Bureau. “Our plan is to extend the Ambassadors Program to other circles and to link it with representatives from business, politics and other educational institutions.”

Once in Bern, event delegates are also entitled to the Free Bern Ticket, providing access to free public transport around the city, which isn’t huge but has plenty to discover, including the number of event venues.

“The largest conference centre in the Mittelland, the Kursaal Bern, offers a fantastic view of the UNESCO-accredited Old Town and the Alps, a gala dinner can be held in the historic Kornhauskeller in a medieval setting, and in the Zentrum Paul Klee every group will be creatively inspired – to name but a few,” says Rhyn.

BASEL & BERN

Basel is such a popular location for our courses and conferences, not only because of the many Pharmaceutical companies based in the city but also because of its fantastic travel connections within Europe. Access into the city from the airport is very stress-free via an airport bus and so cheap.

Once in the city, you are dropped by the SBB Train Station and the extensive city tram network. Even for me who can be easily confused with directions, the tram system is so easy to navigate and free! As most hotels when you check-in offer you a free tram pass to use during your stay, this I think is such a great present from the city and encourages you to explore and enjoy the city more. We always find the hotels, staff and locals so friendly and accommodating which only adds to the charm of beautiful Basel.