

Speaking Out – April Fooled & BEEFed?

Our news about the birth of BEEF, Belgium's Events Federation, turned out to be a great scoop for BBT Online's **Take 5** on 1 April. There were a lot of laughs and quite a few people took the news seriously.

Readers' reactions ranged from "Excellent" to "Very good indeed 😊"

"Congratulations on an EXCELLENT APRIL FOOLS almost fooled in Bruges", replied one popular industry association President.

And there were lots of other comments including

"I have just seen Take5 and it is just ludicrous. If you read this in the morning before having had coffee, you cannot but register...When is BEEF holding its annual convention?"

Some telephones indeed got pretty hot, especially chez BAPCO President, Sam van de Kerckhof who was besieged with enquiries and dragged out of an important meeting (Sam, our sincere apologies). And may we state categorically that any similarity between SvdK and HvR is purely coincidental. Both are skilful negotiators and consummate Belgian peacemakers. If BEEF were ever to materialise, SvdK would make the perfect 1st Mr. President.

Underneath the rumour and the humour was indeed a serious issue. We have so many acronyms which even people in our own industry find difficult to keep up with. But spare a thought for those on the outside – the politicians with their traditional short attention spans, the general business media and above all the poor man-woman-on-the-street. They just haven't a clue where to start.

It is also incredible how many different professions make up this fascinating and potentially much more powerful industry which certainly does need to speak with a SINGLE voice, not just in one city for one week, but throughout the year in the whole of Belgium/Europe. If there was ever the need for a Federation within the Belgian Meetings & Events Industry, it is NOWYes, there's of course the JMIC (Joint Meeting Industry Council) at international level, but it has recently lacked a certain charisma and leadership, and you don't hear much from or about them anymore. Each country, and in particular Europe, should mirror at the local level whatever JMIC is doing globally.

So why don't we try to simplify our industry and make it more approachable and entertaining to those on the outside? It's not just a question of economics and employment, but also of branding. And we need to get over the strong message that meetings are NOT boring

Any reactions? Mail us at info@bbtonline.eu