



## **BEFUTURE Signature Event**

### ***Shaping the Future of Europe's Business Events***

**Monday, 23 February 2026**

**Wintercircus, Ghent, Belgium**

**10:00-17:00 (Drinks reception 16:00-17:00)**

## **PROGRAMME**

**09:00 – 10:00 | Welcome & Registration Coffee**

**10:00 – 10:15 | Start – Opening Remarks**

*Welcome by moderator: **Magali Minet***

*Opening by European Commission representative:*

**Apostolos Tzitzikostas** (tbc)

**10:15 – 10:30 | Setting the Stage for Europe's BE Future**

*Welcome by Consortium Lead – **Sònia Serracarbassa** (Head of Convention Bureau Catalunya, Spain)*

*Welcome by Local Host – **Evelyne Bardyn** (Head of Visit Flanders Convention Bureau, Belgium)*

- *Setting the tone: “From Vision to Legacy – The BEFuture Journey”*
- *Highlights: BEFuture milestones, data, and partner highlights from 2023 to 2026*

**10:30 – 11:00 | Panel on how policy makers and institutions can support and co-shape the future of Business Events:** Reflections on Europe's role in shaping a resilient and innovative BE industry.

*Moderator:* Magali Minet

- **Patrick Torrent** (Chair, UN Tourism Affiliate Members Board and Vice President NECSTouR)
- **Bruno Castro**, Policy Officer for Tourism (DG Move)
- **Gema Fernández** (Project Officer, EC)
- **Dr. Senthil Gopinath**, CEO, International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA)

**11:00 – 11:30 | Keynote Peter Verbiest from Hotel Bonka:** *Moonshot project: What is needed to keep Business Events flourish through digital and sustainable innovation*

**11:30-12:00 | Fun and interactive Introduction to the Marketplace**

**Discover the [Innovative projects - BEFuture](#)**

**12:00 – 12:45 | Networking Lunch** Buffet with local, sustainable catering

**[12:30 parallel programme: Wellness walk – Tiny tour through Ghent]**

**12:45-13:15 | Marketplace for all**

**13:30-15:00 | Deep dive: choose one of the following sessions:**

<b>2 Co-creative sessions</b>	<b>TEDtalks</b>	<b>On invitation only: strategic discussion: <i>Beyond BEFuture</i></b>
<b>Grand EXPO</b>	<b>The Club</b>	<b>Boardroom</b>
<b>MOONSHOT – TOWARDS LEGACY</b>  How to build a more futureproof Business Events industry after March 2026  By Peter Verbiest	4x 20 min TEDTalks	<b>Moderated</b> by Consortium Partners BEFuture
<b>TALENT</b>  Accelerating Talent: Futureproofing our business events industry  By <u>Amber Herrewijn</u> (European Tourism Futures Institute) and <u>Maarten Schram</u> (IDEA)		If you would like to join, please apply by sending an email to <u><a href="mailto:Gemmeke.dejongh@visitflanders.com">Gemmeke.dejongh@visitflanders.com</a></u>

**15:00-15:15 | All back to the Club**

**15:15-15:45 | Closing:** by Magali Minet, Sonia Serracarbasa and Evelyne Bardyn

=> Key messages from the afternoon sessions

=> Future Steps: What comes next for Europe's Business Events ecosystem: Launch of the **“BEFuture Legacy Declaration”**: a celebration of collaboration and innovation

**16:00-17:00 | Networking Drink**