



ESU-Information

Review of the 2025 fairground season in Europe



Overall, the European fairground industry is satisfied with how the fairground season has gone. After the turbulent years of the pandemic and the subsequent restarts, business has stabilised again in many places. Visitor numbers in numerous regions were on a par with the previous year, which is a positive sign given the sometimes-difficult conditions.

In the first two years after the coronavirus pandemic, fairgrounds experienced a real sense of optimism: in many places, visitor numbers were above average, with the public seeking community, entertainment, and carefree fun. Since then, the level has normalised, with visitor numbers declining slightly. However, this is no cause for concern, but rather an expression of a certain market stabilisation after the extraordinary post-coronavirus phase.

As always, the weather played a decisive role in 2025. Many fairgrounds suffered from an unusual number of rainy days, while others had to contend with heat waves. The weather remains one of the most important factors influencing the success of the season – and a risk that the fairground industry cannot avoid.

Despite all the challenges, the industry is looking to the future with confidence. Particularly encouraging is that the next generation is ready to continue the fairground tradition. Many young entrepreneurs are investing in new rides, modern technology, and creative concepts to keep the fairground attractive for today's and tomorrow's audiences. This spirit of innovation shows that the fairground industry remains vibrant and is constantly evolving.

At the same time, the existing problems must not be overlooked. The bureaucratic burden on fairground operators in many European countries remains very high. Approval procedures, safety requirements, and tax obligations pose major challenges, especially for smaller family businesses. In addition, rising costs – such as higher stand fees, energy prices, and personnel expenses – cannot simply be passed on to visitors.

It is our common goal to convince politicians and administrators that visiting the fairground must remain affordable for everyone. Fairgrounds are a part of living European culture – a cultural asset for all! Everyone is welcome at the fairground, regardless of their origin, age, or social background. This principle must not be jeopardised by economic pressure.

For this to succeed, the right conditions must be in place – especially in times when economic and political crises are shaking the world. We need understanding and support from politicians to secure the future of fairgrounds. Only when the social and cultural significance of our industry is recognised will we be able to continue offering places of joy, encounter, and tradition in the future.

The European Showmen's Union will continue to work hard to ensure that the voice of showmen is heard in Brussels, Strasbourg, and the Member States – so that fairgrounds can remain what they have been for centuries: a piece of living European culture for everyone.

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