



## Dance Again 2021

*Reopening the nightlife sector with the help of  
air disinfection technology*

CASE STUDY  
Brussels, Belgium

Belgium was one of the worst-hit countries in Europe by the COVID-19 pandemic, with 2,100 deaths per million people<sup>1</sup>. However, the tide began to turn in 2021 as the Belgian government implemented a successful vaccination programme, with almost 13.5 million doses administered to date<sup>2</sup>. The swift vaccine rollout, along with the marked reduction in infection rates, increasingly led to calls for the reopening of hospitality venues, including the nightlife sector.

1. Reuters, <https://graphics.reuters.com/world-coronavirus-tracker-and-maps/countries-and-territories/belgium/>

2. Corona Commissariaat - Taskforce Vaccination, <https://observablehq.com/@tf-vaccination/belvax>

The City of Brussels government responded by organising *Dance Again*, a test event for the nightlife sector in association with the Brussels by Night Federation. The event, held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2021, was one of the first of its kind in Belgium, in a sector that has largely remained closed since early 2020. The event was organised by the cabinet of Delphine Houba, the Brussels Minister for Culture, Tourism and Major Events, in conjunction with Brussels Expo and Brussels Major Events, CHU Saint Pierre and Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), as well as the Brussels by Night Federation.

Professor Olivier Vandenberg of the ULB led the scientific aspect of the test event and contacted Analis, an exclusive distributor of Novaerus air disinfection devices in Belgium, regarding the provision of technology for the event. NanoStrike™ is the unique, patented technology at the core of Novaerus devices. This nanotechnology inactivates all airborne microorganisms on contact providing the first line of protection against viruses and bacteria.

## ***NanoStrike Technology Helps Open the Dance Floor***

Prior to the event, a testing regime of all 350 volunteers using a new rapid antigen testing system was carried out. Those who tested negative were sent an email verifying their results to gain entry to the venue; those who tested positive, a total of 10 people, were not granted access. Once inside, the volunteers were not subject to social distancing measures and mask-wearing. Dancing together and consuming drinks were permitted.



Novaerus devices were part of the comprehensive infection prevention strategy put in place at *Dance Again*, providing medical-grade protection against airborne disease.



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The event took place in a nightclub in Brussels city centre, where four Novaerus Defend 1050 devices stood guard at the venue, in strategic locations on the mezzanine level, just above the area where participants were congregating. The Defend 1050 is an FDA-cleared, Class II Medical Device to inactivate and filter out microorganisms, including viruses and bacteria, for medical purposes. The device has been tested against live SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing COVID-19, showing a reduction of 99.997% in 30 minutes. The Defend 1050 devices were in operation throughout the event, which lasted for approximately 4 hours, providing an extra layer of safety and peace of mind for participants and organizers alike.

The venue was approximately 1800m<sup>3</sup> of space. A single Defend 1050 can change the air up to four times per hour in a room up to 92 square metres in size. As per Belgian national regulations, CO<sub>2</sub> monitors were also in operation throughout the night.

## The Outcome

Overall, the event was considered a success. Following the morning's rapid antigen testing, all samples from participants were analysed again via PCR testing. Among the positive antigen samples, there was one positive PCR result. Due to their positive antigen test, this person had already been prevented from entering the venue. The highly controlled environment of *Dance Again* provided a positive contrast to the more open nightclub events in neighbouring Netherlands, which saw significant outbreaks amongst participants and was subject to a much weaker testing control system which allowed for falsification of test results.



Defend 1050

## *A Protocol for Re-opening*

Following the event, members of the nightlife industry have proposed a set of infection control measures they deem vital for the sector to reopen its doors. The proposed protocol calls for the provision of government funding to cover the cost of improved ventilation and air disinfection devices. “It is purification that seems to us to be the best solution,” says Lorenzo Serra, spokesperson for the Brussels by Night Federation. The proposed protocol also contains measures such as the use of the COVID-safe ticket and rapid antigen testing. The protocol has been approved by Nathan Clumeck, Infectious Disease Specialist at the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

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