

Dubai is Open

By Messe Frankfurt Middle East

August 2020

Introduction

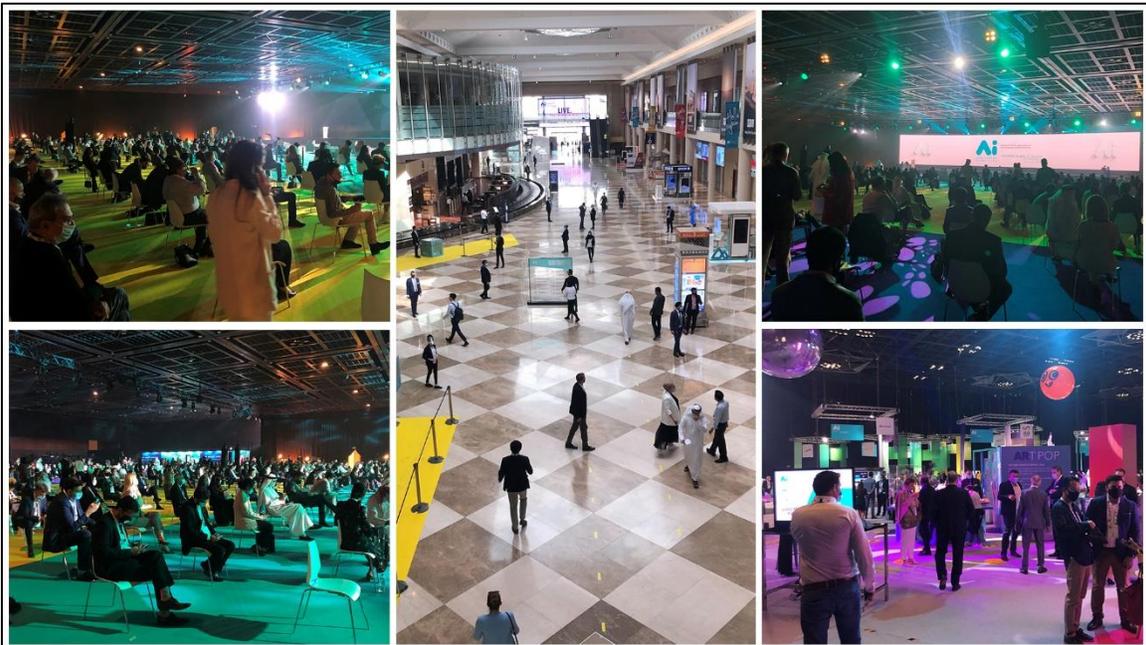
As with many business sectors, the trade fair industry felt the impact of the covid-19 pandemic, particularly in Dubai, which has a thriving exhibition sector at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

In July 2020, the UAE welcomed international tourists and business travellers to the country for the first time after months of international lockdown, and visitors from across the globe now have permission to travel to the commerce hub of the Middle East.

With health and safety the highest priority, there is a need for reassurance. As the MICE sector 'restarts' in Dubai, attendees need to be informed of the latest developments that help ensure their safety when they visit their next show in the UAE.

This document provides the latest updates on the UAE's positive pandemic response, the lifting of travel restrictions, the health measures in place to help ensure the safety of residents and visitors, guidelines for travelling to the UAE, and developments of the events sector restarting in Dubai.

It also provides the findings of a July 2020 study conducted by Messe Frankfurt Middle East which explores the impact of covid-19 on the global exhibitions industry.

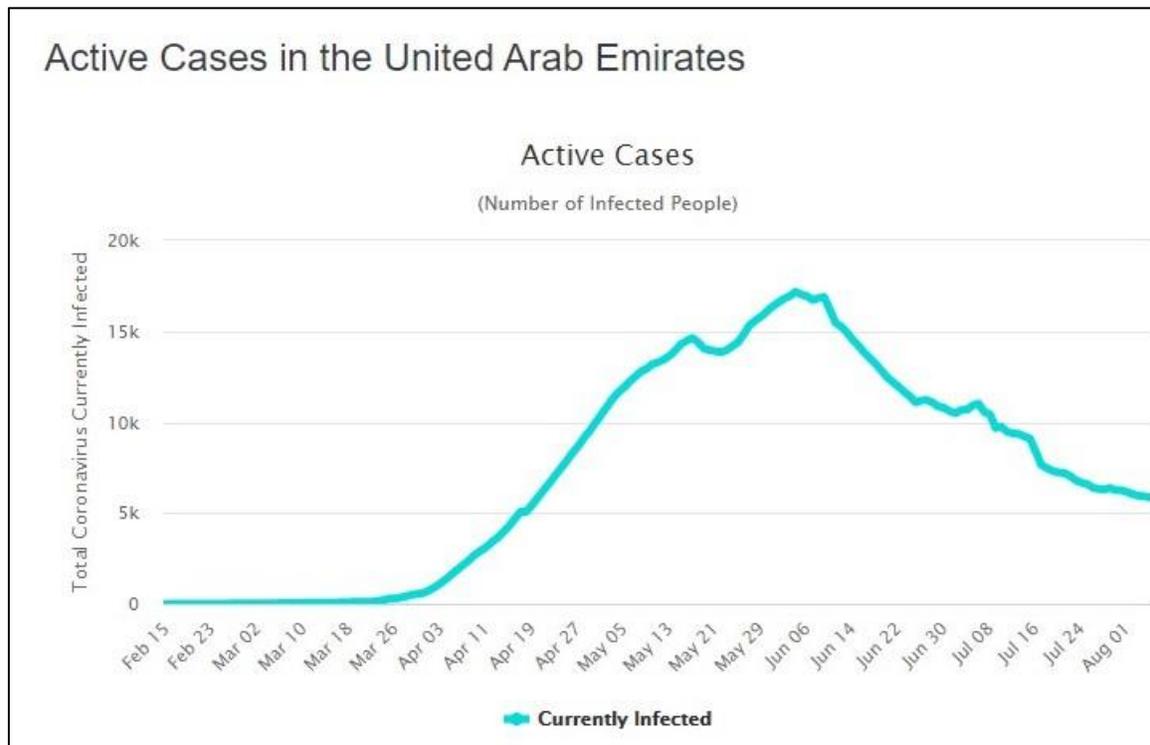


Covid-19 on the decline

Daily cases in the UAE of covid-19 continue to decline, while more than 90 percent of confirmed cases have now fully recovered from the virus.

The R0, or reproduction number of covid-19 in the UAE is now 0.74 according the country's National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority.

An R0 rate of 1 means an epidemic is stable – one person infects one other. An R0 of 0.74 in the UAE, would indicate that covid-19 will eventually peter out and die because not enough people are passing the infection on.



Active covid-19 cases in the UAE continue to trend downwards

The UAE has been at the forefront of the global response to covid-19. Not only has the country played a critical role in supplying thousands of tons of PPE to frontline workers across the world, but it has aided in the development of vaccines.

The country has to date (12 August 2020) tested more than half (5.3 million people) its entire population for the virus while closely monitoring and communicating the appropriate health and safety guideline protocols to keep the virus at bay.

The swift response to covid-19 and clear plans moving forward are key reasons why the UAE announced it would re-open its borders to international travel from 7 July 2020 after nearly four months of lockdown.

UAE increases city network for air travel

As international travel ramps up, the UAE's airlines are continuously expanding their networks. Dubai's Emirates Airlines, the world's largest long haul airline, has restored over half of its pre-pandemic passenger network to more [than 70 destinations](#), connecting Dubai to cities in the Americas, Europe, South East Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East and Africa.

Dubai's low cost carrier Flydubai is also servicing more than 24 cities, with plans to increase this to 66 in the coming months, while in the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi, Etihad will operate flights to 58 destinations this summer.

Emirates and AXA offer to covid-19 insurance for travellers to the UAE

Emirates Airline is the first global airline to cover its customers' covid-19 related medical expenses should they contract the virus having flown with the airline.



The move is aimed at enhancing passengers' confidence to travel again, according to Sheikh Ahmed.

“Emirates will cover its passengers for Covid-19 related medical expenses and quarantine costs when they travel on board Emirates, to and from the UAE and around the world, free of charge,” the emirate's media office said in a statement in July 2020.

The move is aimed at boosting travel confidence, with passengers claiming up to 150,000 euros (\$173,600) in medical expenses and up to 100 euros per day for 14 days in quarantine costs, should they be diagnosed with the disease.

“We know people are yearning to fly as borders around the world gradually re-open, but they are seeking flexibility and assurances should something unforeseen happen during their travel,” Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Emirates group chairman and chief executive, was quoted.

The cover for Covid-19 related medical expenses and quarantine costs is offered to all customers regardless of class of travel or destination, and remains valid for 31 days from the moment customers fly the first sector of their journey. Impacted customers diagnosed with Covid-19 during their travel are to contact a dedicated hotline, details of which are available on the [carrier’s website](#).

AXA Gulf, an insurance company, also announced it will reimburse policyholders up to US\$5,000 for irrecoverable travel costs related to covid-19 for travellers to the UAE.

Should customers find themselves having to be placed in quarantine whilst overseas, the insurer will pay up to US\$100 per day for a maximum of 15 days if they cannot isolate themselves safely in their booked accommodation.

“With the UAE leading the way in opening up to international travel, we recognised the need to ensure that our customers could travel safely, secure in the knowledge that AXA Gulf was there to help them,” said Franck Heimburger, chief personal lines officer at AXA Gulf.

Negative PCR test mandatory

To help ensure the safety of all residents and visitors, all passengers travelling to the UAE from August 2020 must now carry with them a printed negative covid-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test prior to boarding the flight. The test must be taken a maximum of 96 hours before departure. Passengers without a valid PCR test will not be permitted to board.

Full details of of Emirates' travel guidance, including where to obtain PCR tests, for tourists travelling to, from, and through Dubai is available [here](#).

Dubai welcomes travellers to their ‘second home’

In line with the clear message that Dubai is open for business, the emirate’s General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs (GDRFA-Dubai) has offered a heartfelt welcome message.

In a Twitter post by the Dubai Media Office, a new sticker visitors receive upon arrival in the emirate on their passports was unveiled reading, “A warm welcome to your second home. Speaking on borders reopening to visitors, Major General Mohammad Ahmad Al Marri, Director General of GDRFA-Dubai, said tourists were *“always welcome”*.

“We welcome all tourists and visitors to the country through Dubai Airports,” he said. “They are always welcome in their second country and we are ready to facilitate their procedures based on the highest levels of safety.”



Industry-leading safety standards

The health and safety for both residents and visitors is the main priority for UAE government, as it continues a charm offensive to entice travellers to the emirates’ warm shores over the coming months.

While more than 100 vaccines are under development globally, a viable inoculation might only be available in 2021, meaning the best defence against covid-19’s spread is following basic hygiene practices, wearing masks, and practising social distancing.

Since it gradually resumed operations in May 2020, Dubai’s Emirates Airline has been at the forefront of unveiling multi-faceted measures for employee and customer care at every step of the travel journey, from check-in, boarding, on-board, and in transit.

Upon check-in on flights to Dubai, all passengers receive complimentary hygiene kits comprising masks, gloves, antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer.

On arrival at the airport, thermal scanners at various areas monitor the temperatures of all passengers and employees, while physical distancing indicators have been placed on the ground and at waiting areas to help travellers maintain the necessary distance at check-in, immigration, boarding and transfer areas.

On-board, all cabin crew on board are fully kitted out in PPEs, while lavatories are cleaned at frequent intervals of every 45 minutes. Each lavatory has been equipped with sanitising soap and hand washing instructions.

To minimise the risk of infection by touch, magazines and print reading material have been removed from the aircraft, while comfort items such as mattresses, pillows, blankets, headphones and toys are hygienically sealed.



HEPA air filters and disinfection after each flight

Emirates' modern aircraft cabins have been fitted with advanced HEPA air filters which remove 99.97% of viruses and eliminate dust, allergens and germs from cabin air for a healthier and safer on-board environment. After its journey and on landing in Dubai, each aircraft goes through enhanced cleaning and disinfection processes to ensure safety and proper sanitation.

The Dubai assured safety stamp

Residents, tourists, and business travellers visiting Dubai restaurants, hotels, shops or attractions will also notice a new stamp and sticker that reads "Dubai Assured."

The new safety stamp is designed to assure visitors that an establishment has implemented all the necessary public health protocols for the prevention and management of Covid-19.

A verification and validation process has been put in place by Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism), Department of Economic Development (Dubai Economy) and Dubai Municipality, after which an establishment will be issued a Dubai Assured stamp.

It is a visual mark reassuring guests that safety and hygiene measures prescribed by the authorities have been complied with across hotels, attractions, shops, malls, restaurants, bars and leisure and entertainment destinations. The establishments can feature this stamp of assurance in their communications with customers.



Free of charge, and renewable every two weeks, this initiative in line with Dubai's gradual easing of restrictions, which has resulted in the reopening of public and private facilities such as beaches, shopping malls, restaurants, swimming pools and golf courses, and the resumption of activities including water sports and camping. It is likewise part of efforts to reassure travellers of safety, as the emirate continues to welcome international arrivals.

Dubai restarts events industry at DWTC

Dubai's MICE industry also passed a significant milestone in July 2020, with the restarting of 'real life' events at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) – the first in more than four months.

More than 1,000 business professionals attended the AI Everything conference on 15 July at the DWTC, with rows of chairs spaced far apart under social distancing guidelines.

The five hour conference took place just a week after Dubai officially re-opened its doors to international travellers, and ten days after the DWTC's temporary field hospital discharged its last covid-19 patient before closing permanently, and placing yet another important marker in the fight against covid-19.



AI Everything was the first 'real life' event held at the Dubai World Trade Centre in nearly four months

The AI Everything conference was an important step in a roadmap established by the Dubai World Trade Centre, along with leading event organisers, to re-launch its hugely important MICE sector in the second half of 2020 and beyond.

Messe Frankfurt back to business

Messe Frankfurt also held its first trade fairs since the multi-month global lockdown – with great success. From 15-17 July 2020, the Intertextile Shenzhen Apparel Fabrics and the Yarn Expo demonstrated just how important personal encounters are, highlighting the increased need for face-to-face meetings in the current situation.



Intertextile Shenzhen Apparel Fabrics and the Yarn Expo 2020 in Shenzhen China

The two events combined featured more than 1,000 exhibitors, and drew in more than 42,000 visitors, highlighting that major event gatherings can be undertaken under strict compliance with hygiene and safety standards.

Exhibitions critical in post-covid world

Dubai is also seen as the safest location to host international exhibitions and conferences in the coming months, while trade fairs will play a critical role in a post-covid 'restart', according to new research by Messe Frankfurt Middle East.

A July 2020 market survey of more than 4,000 professionals from 130 countries explored the impact of covid-19 on the global exhibitions industry, delving into key areas such as travel, budgets, and the importance of exhibitions and trade fairs in a post-pandemic world.

The study covered a wide range of industry sectors from the auto aftermarket and commercial security to beauty and cosmetics, showing that 77 percent of respondents viewed Dubai as the safest destination to attend an exhibition post covid-19, followed by Germany (41 percent), Saudi Arabia (19 percent), France (17 percent), and Italy (15 percent).



Exhibitions will play a critical role in post-covid world, according to a MFME survey

Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) agreed that as the novel coronavirus recedes and a semblance of normality returns, exhibitions will be more important for business (31 percent), or just as important (38 percent), compared to the past. A further 64 percent plan to attend exhibitions in the next eight months, while 36 percent have been given the green light to do so before the end of this year.

While 77 percent of respondents indicated they may travel abroad for business by the end of 2020, much of this figure (50 percent) depends on the lifting of international travel restrictions. Half who said they could travel abroad before the end of the year, pending government rules and recommendations, said they would do so by airplane.

Encouragingly, nearly 62 percent would attend exhibitions at their 'home country' and abroad, however 25 percent would only attend an event 'at home', perceiving reduced travel as better for their health and safety.

The full survey and findings can be found below

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GRS Research & Strategy – 15th July 2020

Business intelligence
Business strategy
Buyer personas
Competitor analysis

Consultancy
Customer journey
Customer satisfaction
Data analysis

Data collection
Data mining
Market outlook
Neuromarketing

The Effects of Covid-19

About the project

 The goal of this project was to investigate **how Covid-19 affected businesses** and the **behaviour** of the stakeholders of Messe Frankfurt Middle East

 The research was addressed to all former **visitors and exhibitors** of exhibitions organized by Messe Frankfurt Middle East (last two editions of each show)

 A total of **4,036 professionals from 130+** countries took part in this research

 Data were collected between 22-30 June 2020 via CAWI methodology (online survey distributed via email)



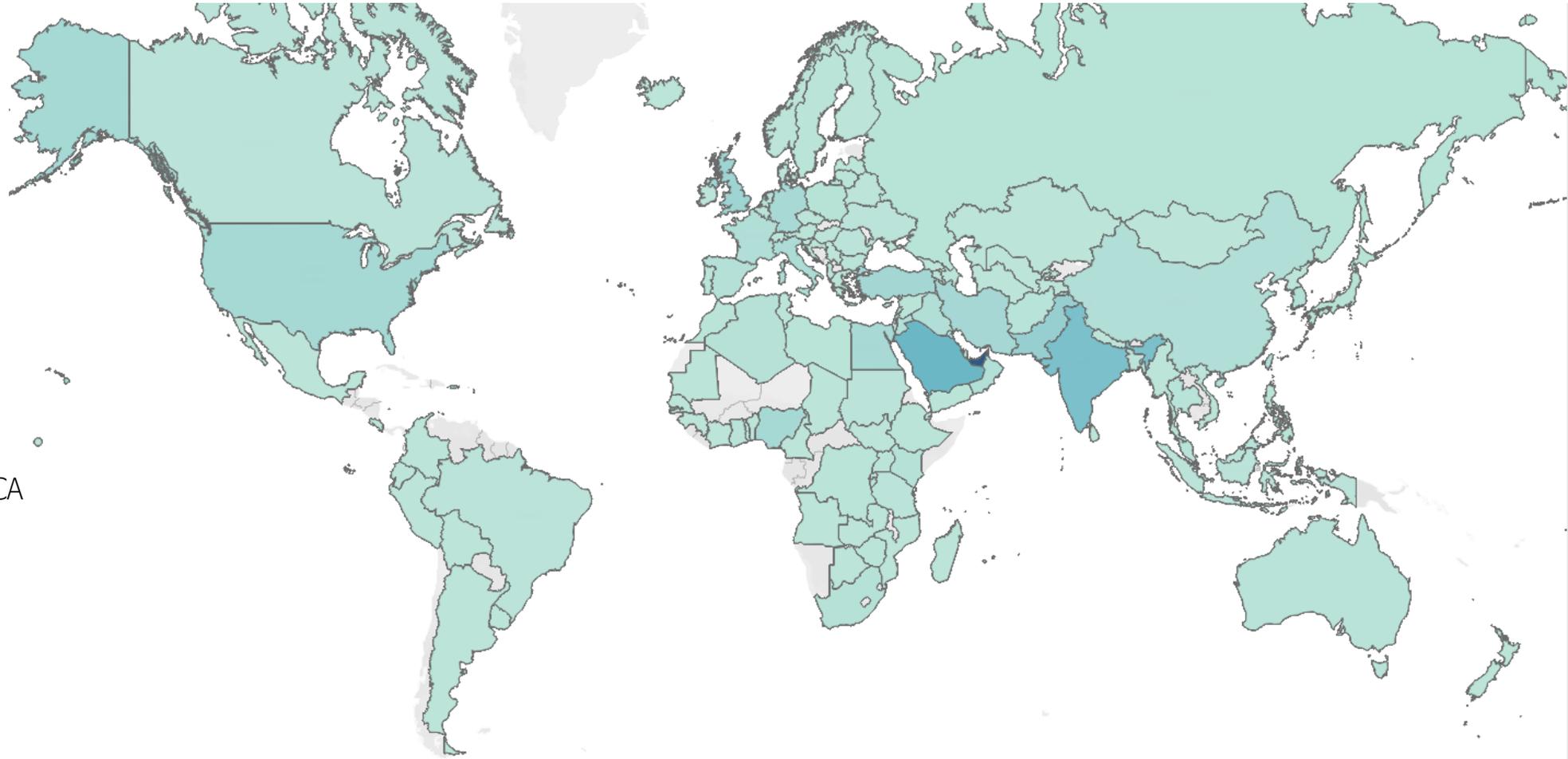
The panel



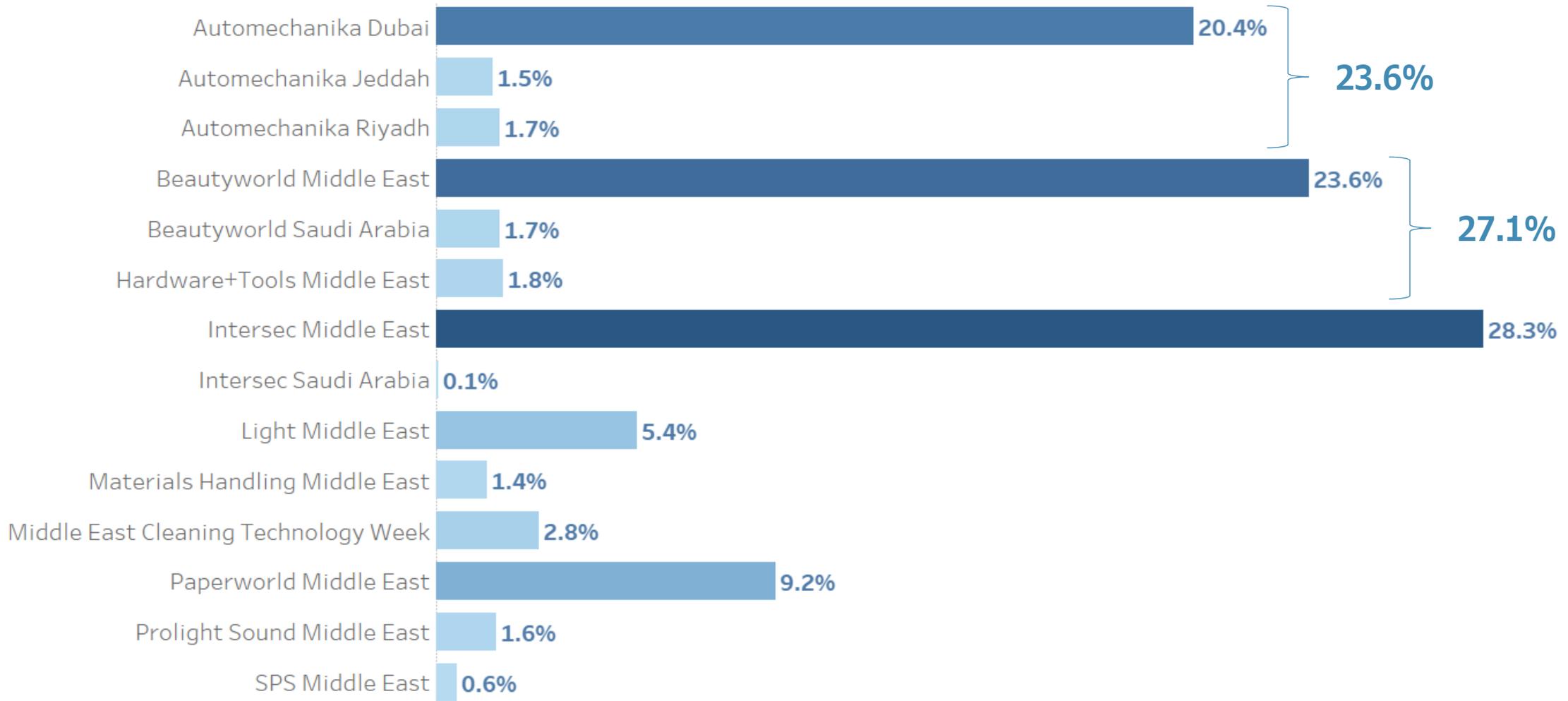
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Top 15 countries

1. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
2. SAUDI ARABIA
3. INDIA
4. PAKISTAN
5. UNITED KINGDOM
6. TURKEY
7. IRAN
8. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
9. NIGERIA
10. EGYPT
11. GERMANY
12. ITALY
13. KUWAIT
14. FRANCE
15. CHINA

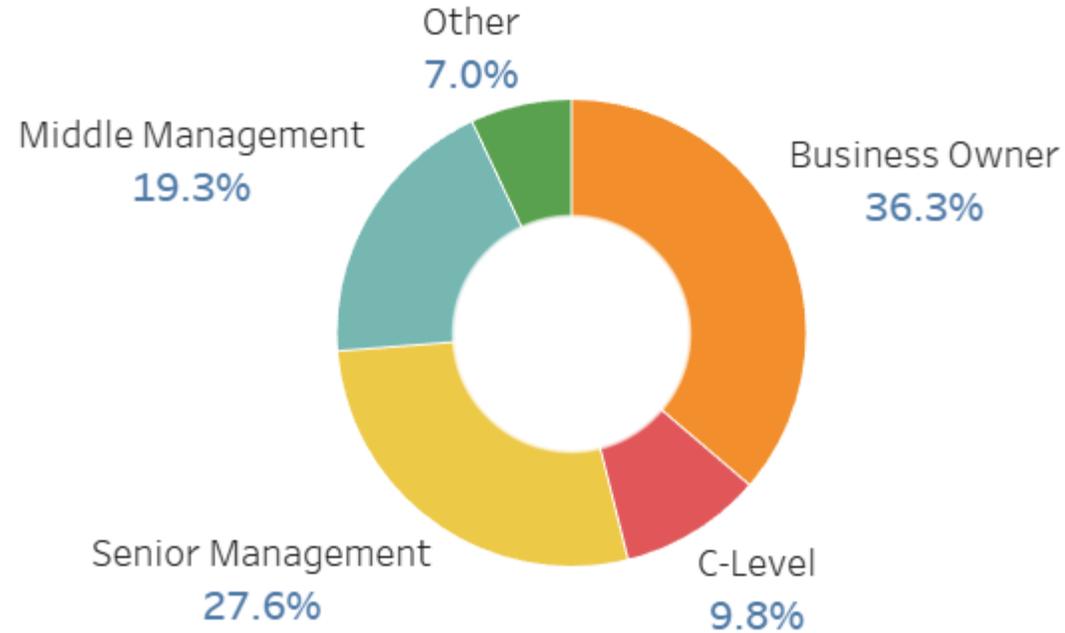


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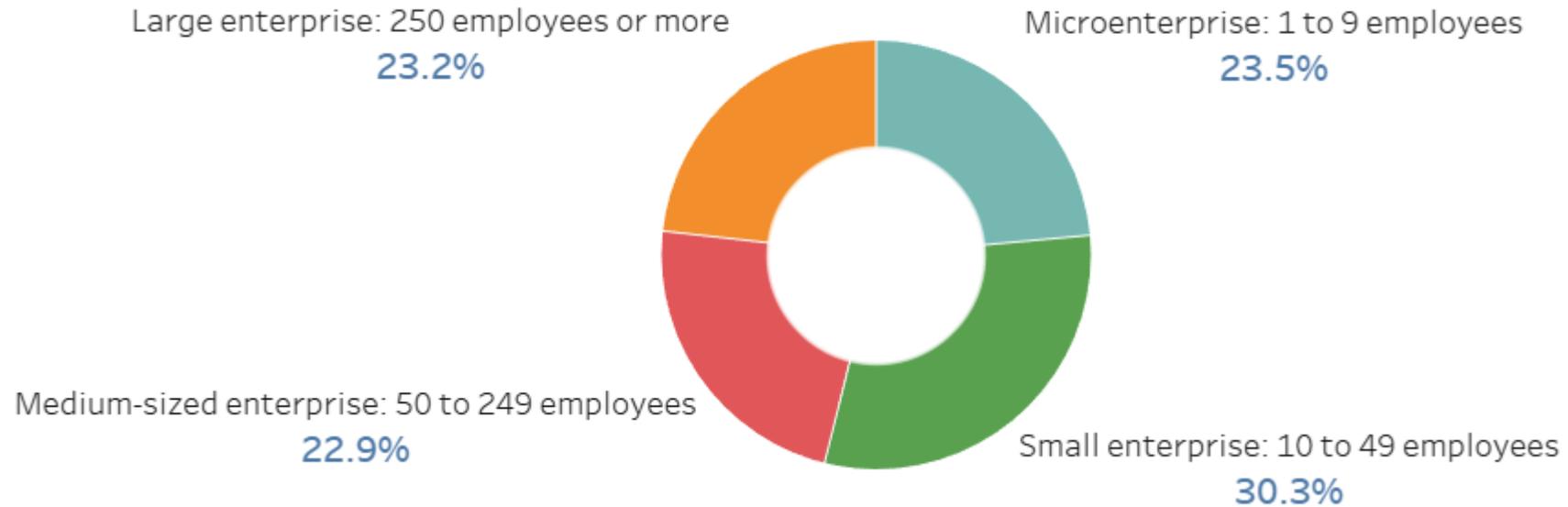
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Seniority of respondents



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Company size (number of employees)





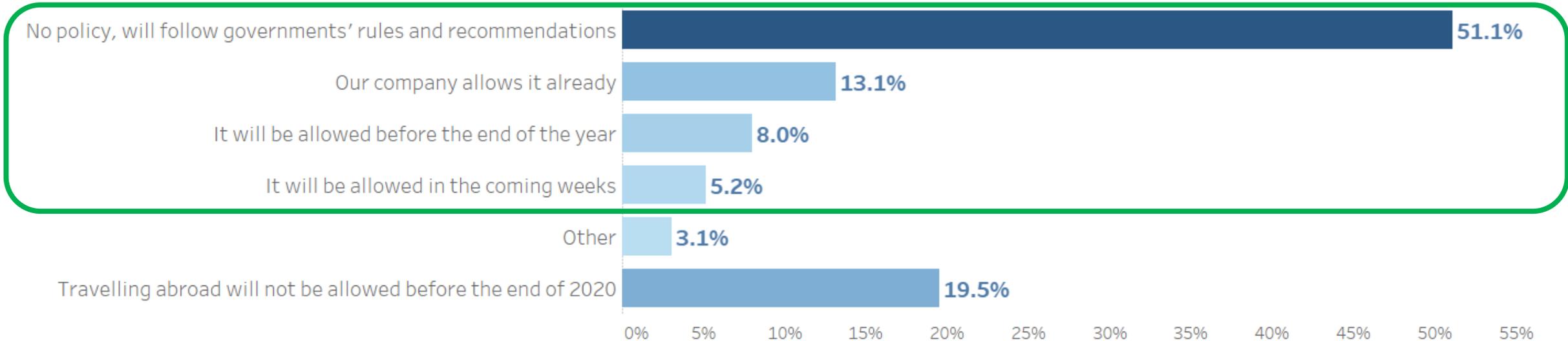
Traveling



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Company's travel policy

What's your company's policy about travelling abroad for business?



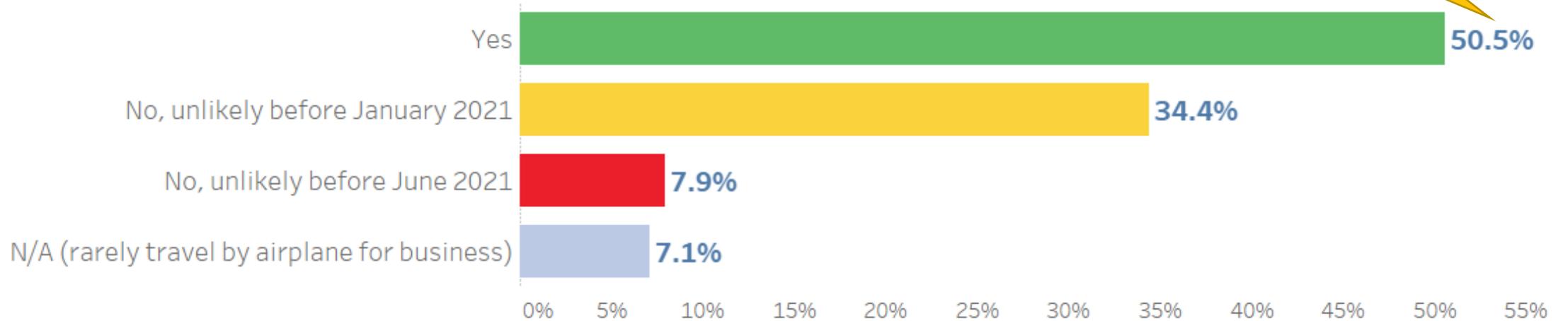
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Likelihood to travel by airplane in 2020

Are you planning to travel by airplane for business this year?

(this question was not asked to those who said that travelling for business will not be allowed before the end of 2020 in the previous question)

**But only 50% of those
"allowed" to travel abroad
for business plan to do so
by airplane in 2020**

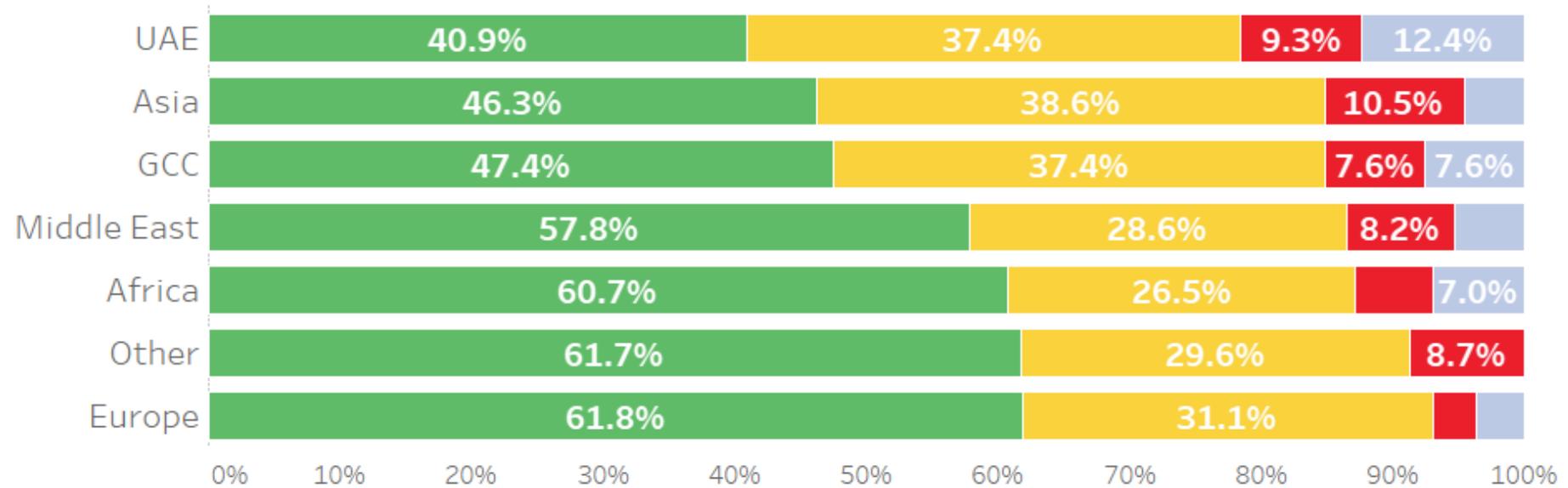


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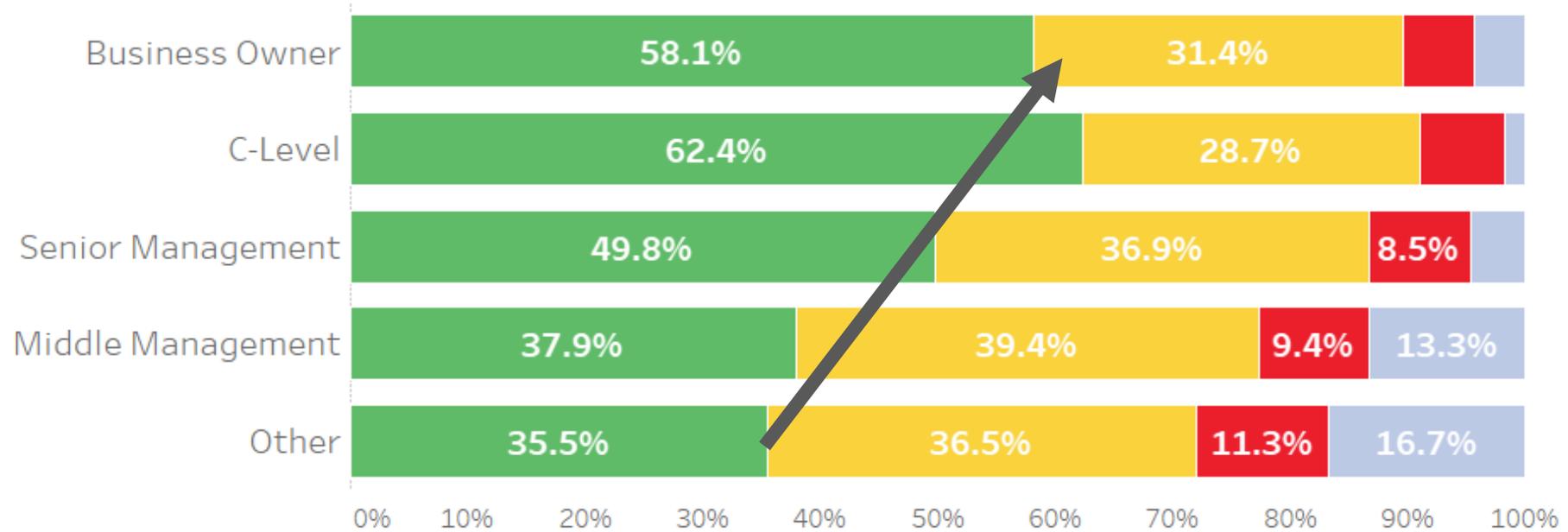
- Yes
- No, unlikely before January 2021
- No, unlikely before June 2021
- N/A (rarely travel by airplane for business)

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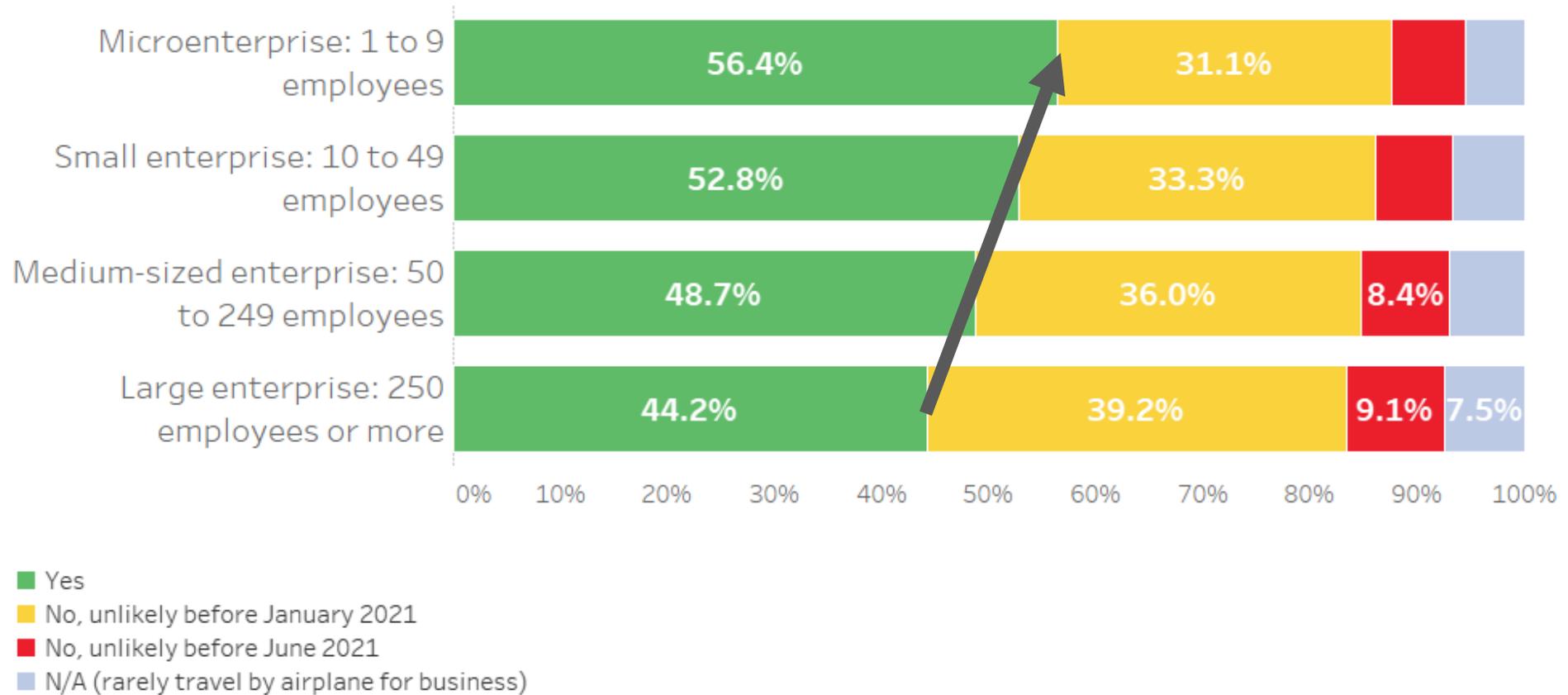
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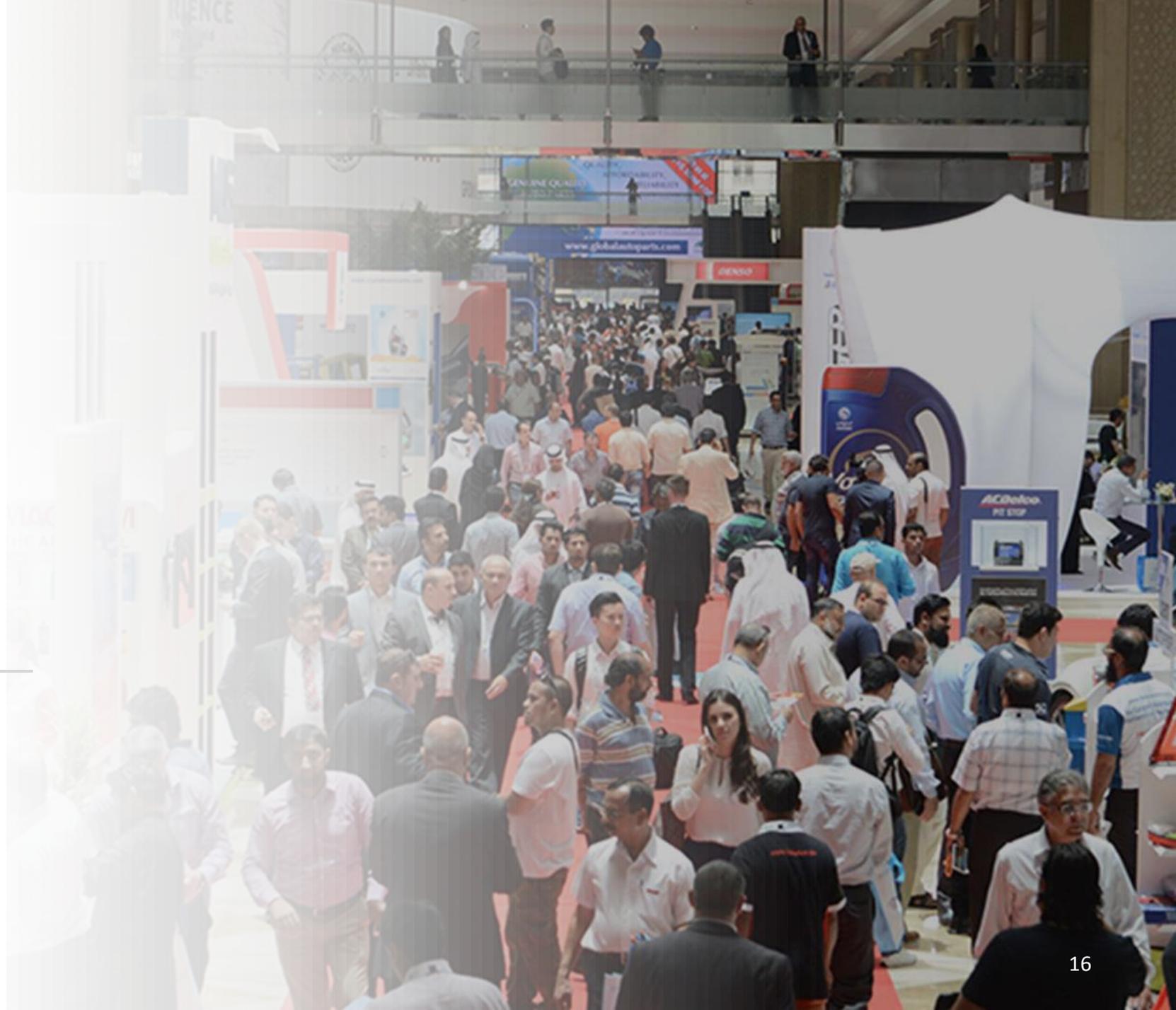
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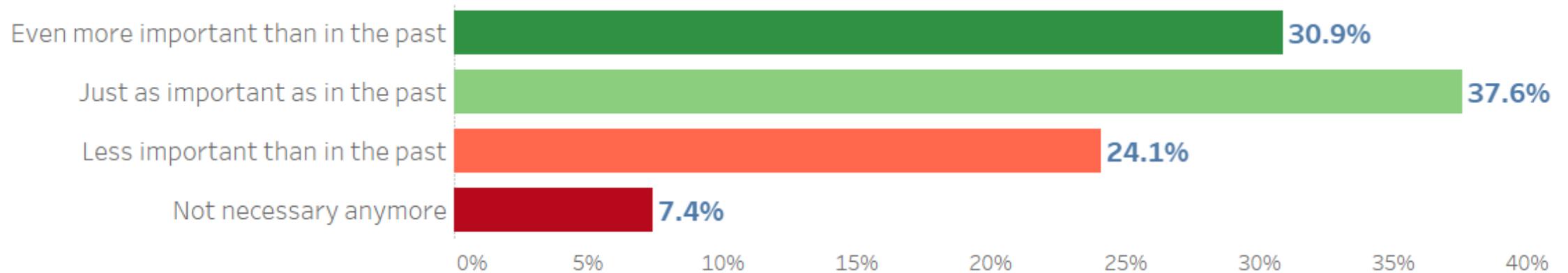
Importance of exhibitions



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Importance of exhibitions post Covid-19

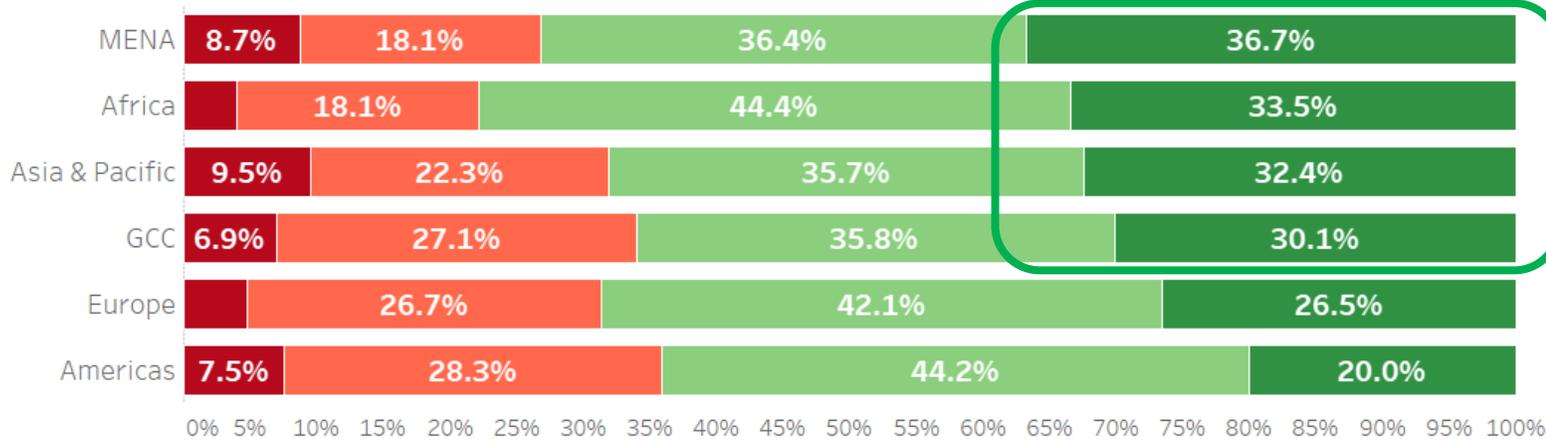
Having experienced lockdown and travel restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, exhibitions moving forward will be:



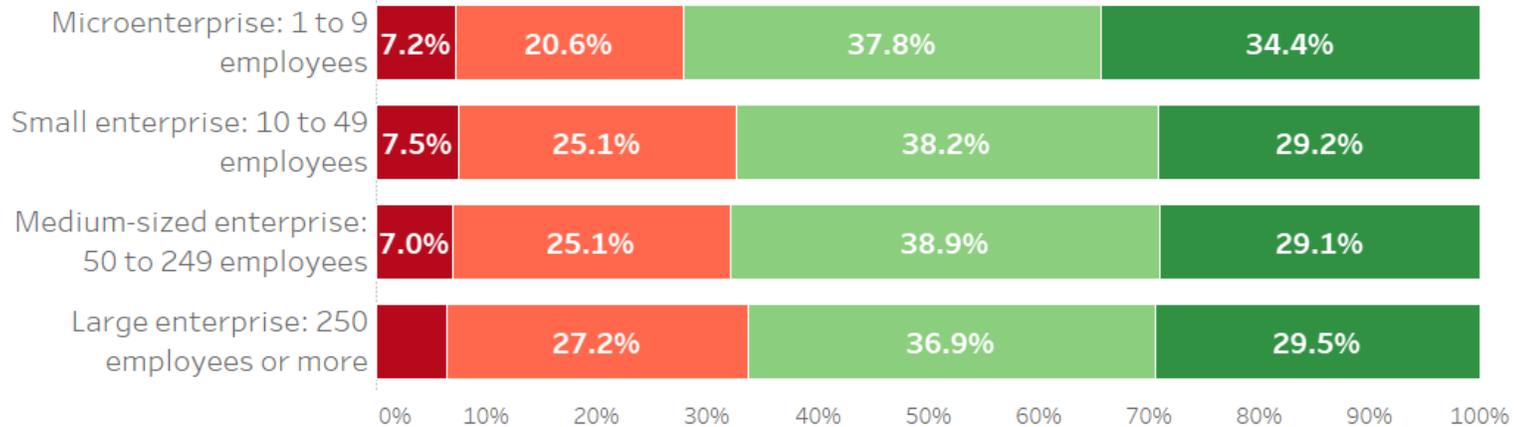
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Importance of exhibitions post Covid-19

Having experienced lockdown and travel restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, exhibitions moving forward will be:



- Even more important than in the past
- Just as important as in the past
- Less important than in the past
- Not necessary anymore

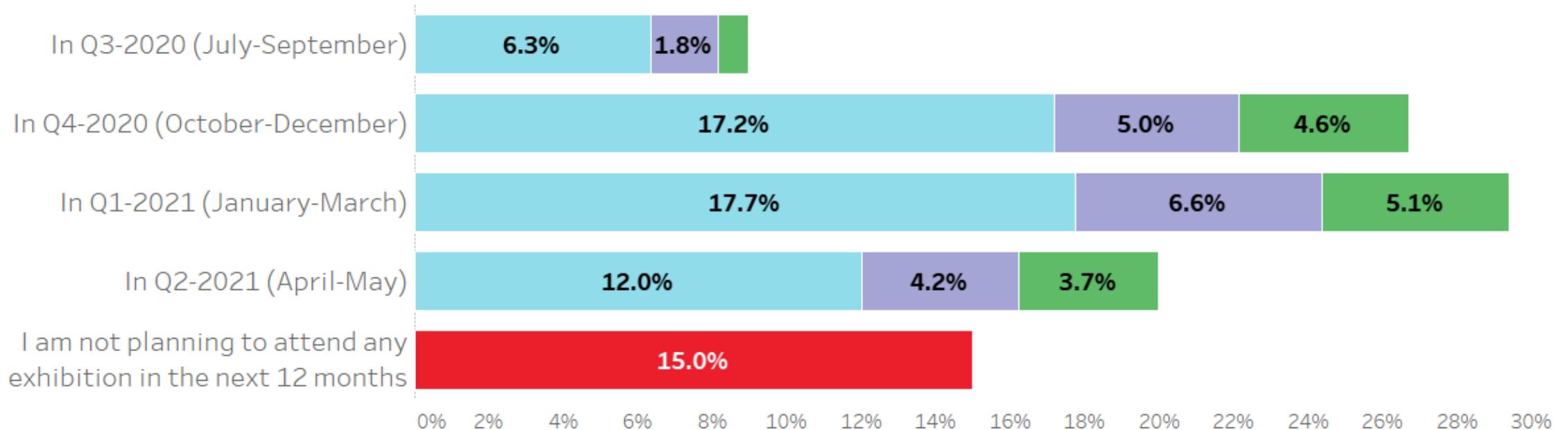


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When back to exhibitions

a) When are you planning to attend an exhibition next?

b) Will you participate as a Visitor or as an Exhibitor?



- As an Exhibitor
- Both as a Visitor as well as an Exhibitor
- As a Visitor
- I am not planning to attend any exhibition in the next 12 months

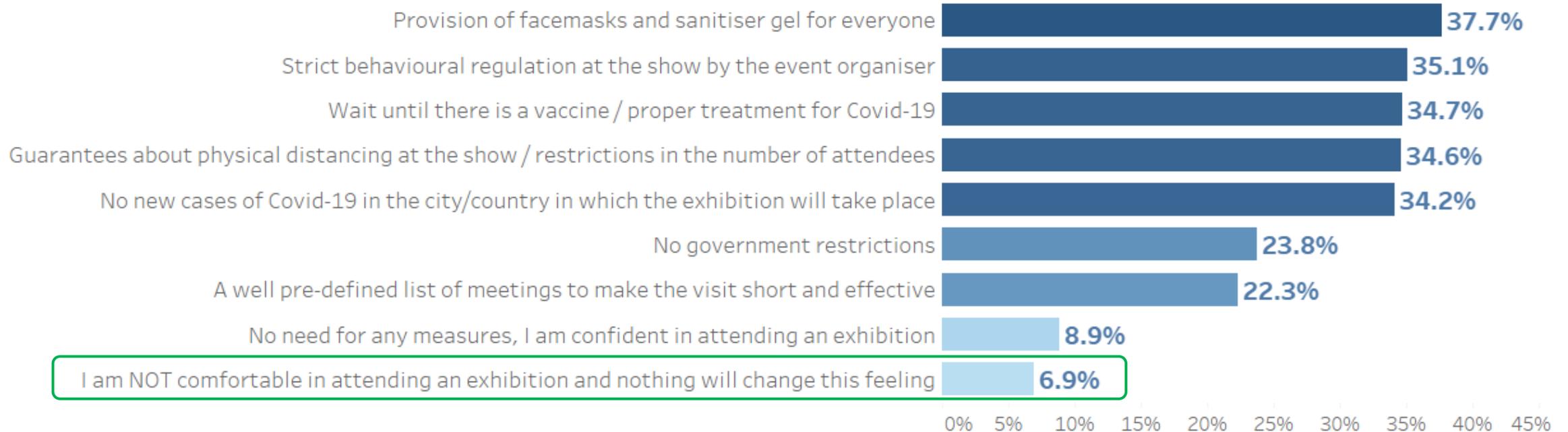
Attendance to exhibitions



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What will increase confidence towards exhibitions

What measures will make you more confident in attending an exhibition?



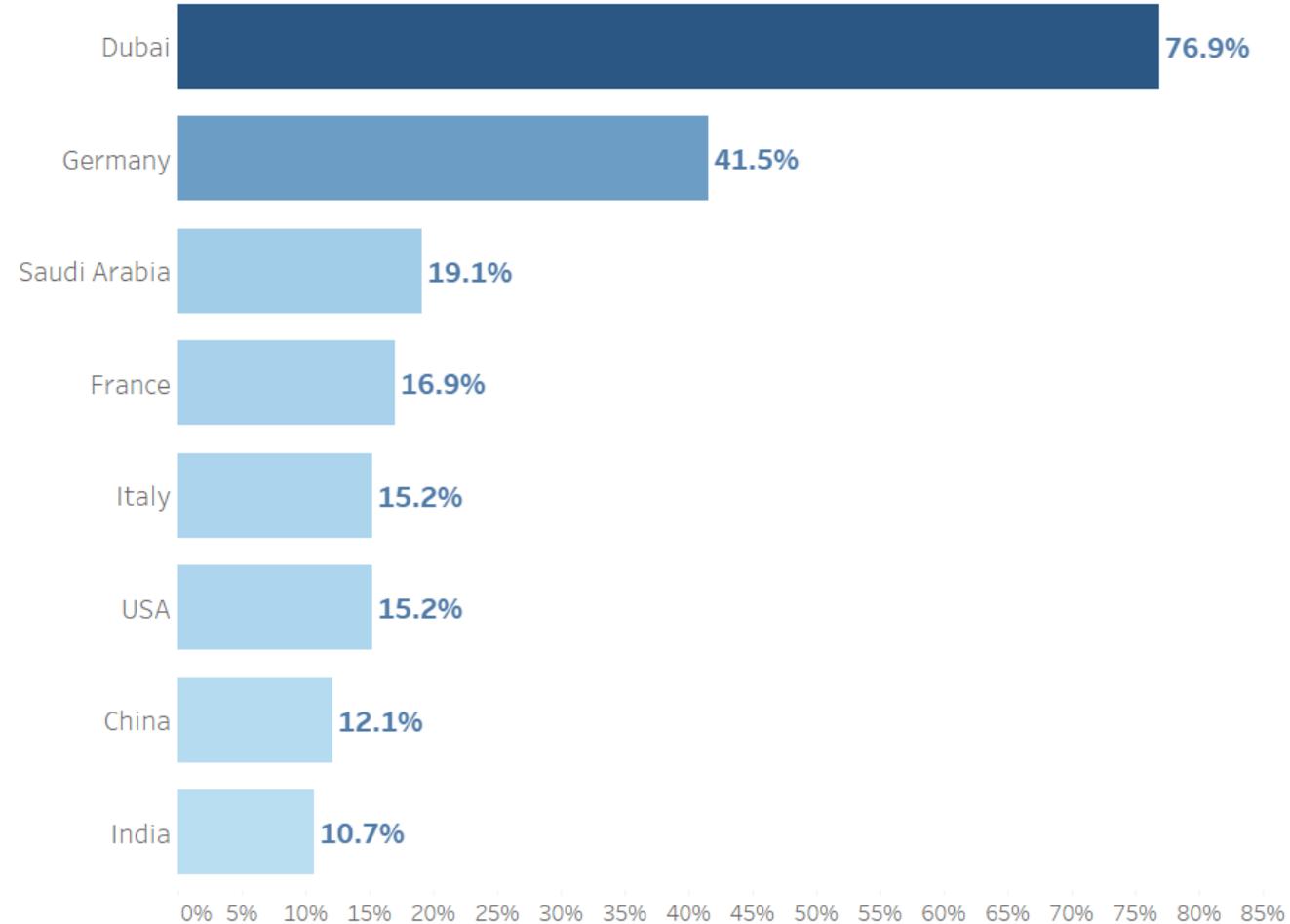
Confidence about countries



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Confidence about countries

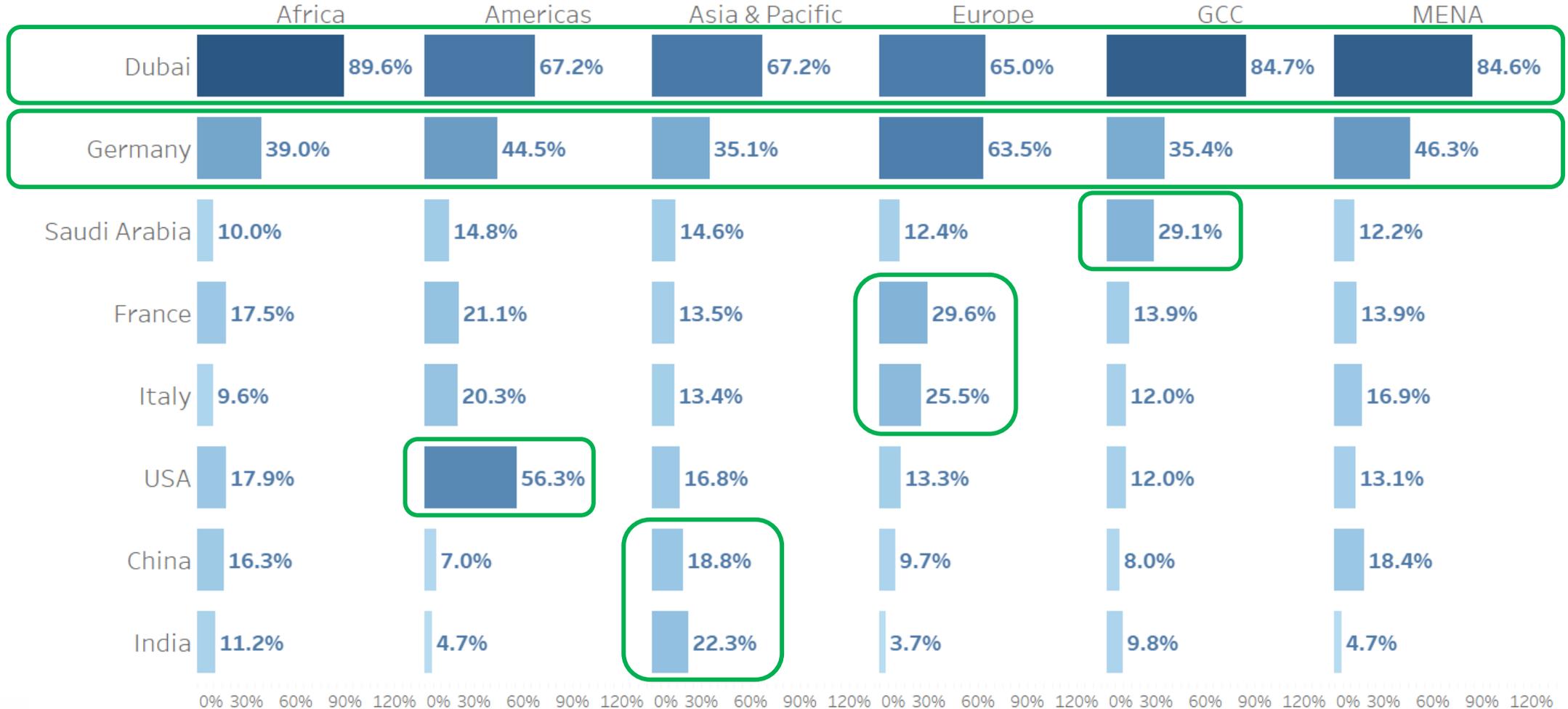
Which of the following countries/regions you feel comfortable in attending exhibition?



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