

# Circus a safe(r) space for danger

April 2024

- Nightlife hospitality and event safety
- Mood stewarding: making so that you can go out care free

Since 2007 during Ghent Festival (10 days of open-air concerts and parties) on a volunteer basis  
Since 2020 as a commercial organisation

## CASE STUDY: Ghent Festival

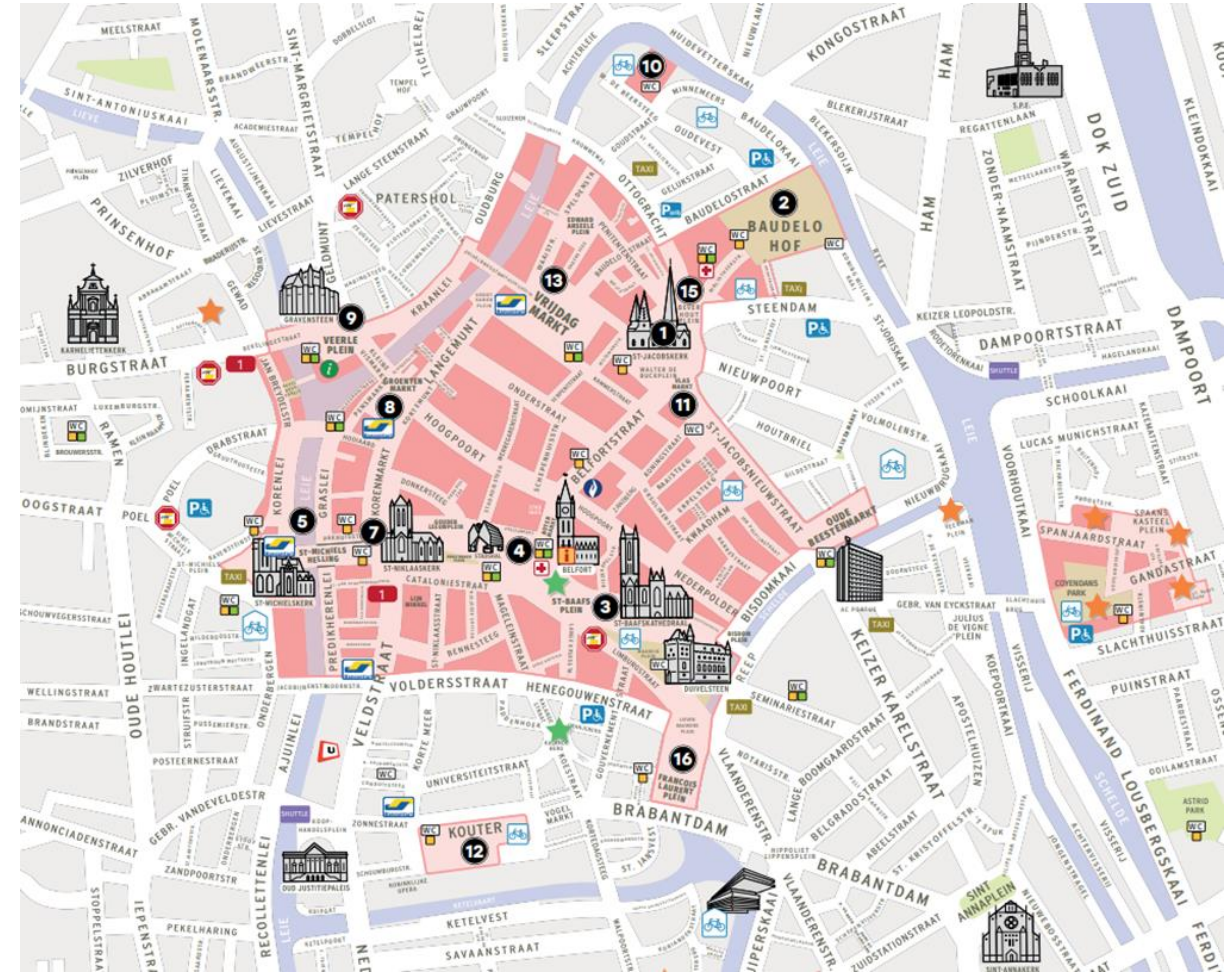
# Ghent Festivities: a (very) short introduction

- Yearly festival in the historical city of Ghent
- Mid July
- Public domain
- 10 days from 10am until 8am
- 13 cost-free music squares
- 100+ organisers
- Visitors from all over the world, age 0-99
  
- Edition 2023: 1.6 million visitors



# Ghent Festivities: a (very) short introduction

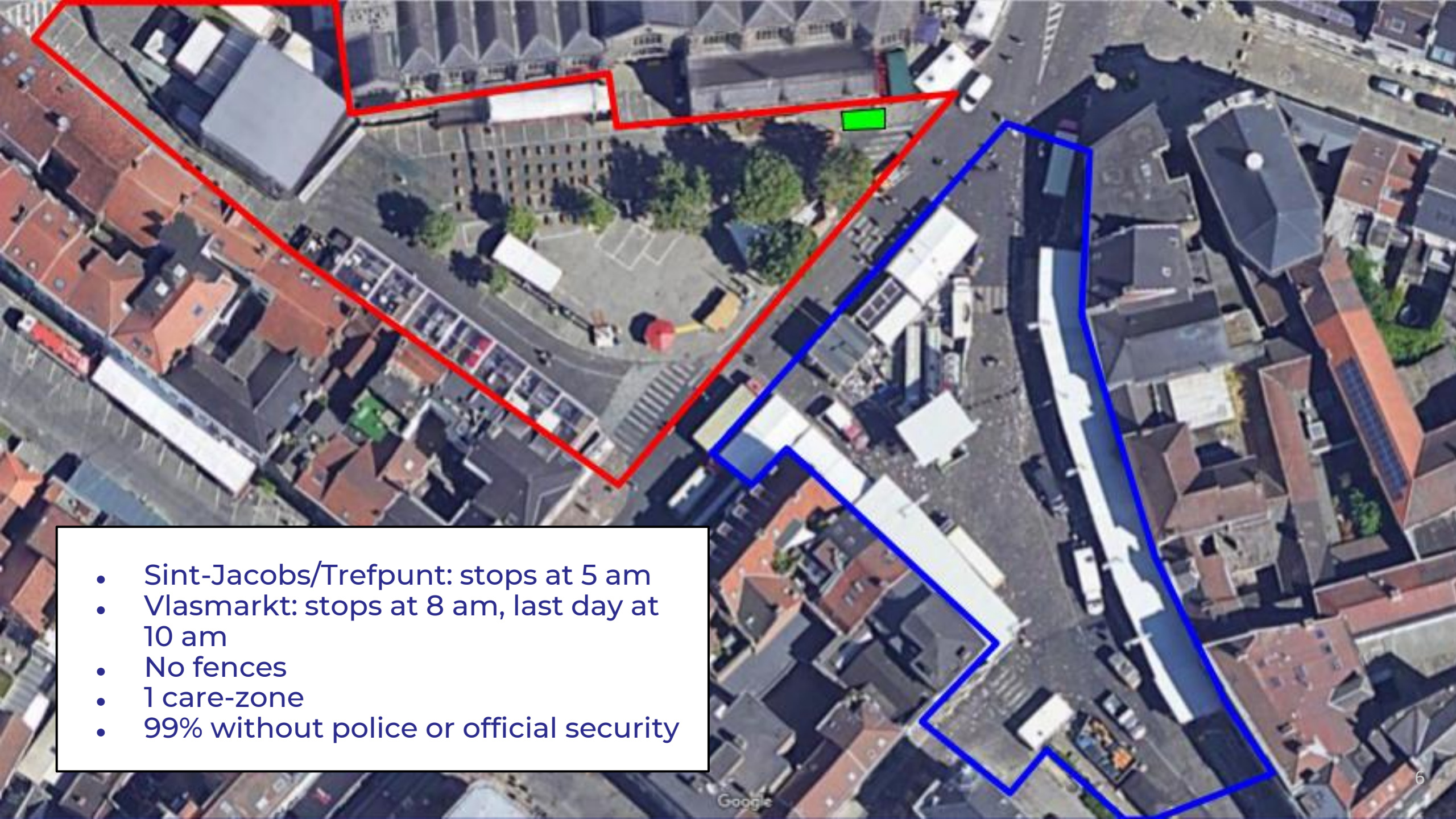
- Open to everyone
- No barriers (with one exception)
- 13 music squares
  - 11 close at 2am
  - 1 closes at 5am (8am on the last day)
  - 1 closes at 8am (10am on the last day)





...flow→

Nightlife hospitality  
Event Safety



- Sint-Jacobs/Trefpunt: stops at 5 am
- Vlasmarkt: stops at 8 am, last day at 10 am
- No fences
- 1 care-zone
- 99% without police or official security

## Vlasmarkt

- a lot of happy people
- Irish coffee, Beer, drugs



3 a.m.

**Saint Jacobs**  
concerts + DJ

3 a.m.

TRE  
PUNT







5 AM



7 AM



9 AM

How to control this chaos?



Mood Stewards!





- Peers
- Selected and trained in harm reduction, first aid, conflict handling and how to counter sexual harassment
- Passion

gent:

**I'm Mica, I work at the Ghent Festivities as a Mood Steward.**

- “Are you ok? Can we help?”
- Prevention with a smile
- Only 1% of cases go to police

en ik knuffel vooral veel mensen.



# MELDPUNT

- CARE ZONE
- Sexual harassment, Harm reduction, resting area





## Challenges

1. Growing responsibilities → Sexual harassment & discrimination
2. Harm reduction in combination with prevention
3. Bystander
4. Cooperation with police
5. Legal framework

## Lessons Learned

1. Prevention through presence
2. Peers & diversity
3. Professionalism

→ We stay sober so you don't have to!

