

# DÉLICE NETWORK

THE CITY NETWORK ON  
**FOOD & GASTRONOMY**



**LOOKING BACK 2020**  
THE **EXCEPTIONAL** ACTIVITY REPORT

DÉLICE

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## AN EXCEPTIONAL ACTIVITY REPORT

If anyone had to predict what 2020 had in store for us last year, they would have been wrong. This year was, for all of us, an unexpected and prolonged questioning of all our assets, all our habits. We have all lived through this pandemic by continually having to question ourselves, sweep away our certainties and reinvent new ways of operating.

The same goes for Délice, the City Network on Food & Gastronomy. We expected two exciting meetings in Lyon and Mérida, multiplied collaborations between members, learning and sharing more and more. We have had to rebuild an entire program without ever having long-term visibility of how the world's situation would evolve. It was not all perfect. We probably made some mistakes. But above all, we took care to preserve the soul of our Network. We tried not to lose any member along the way. We maintained the connections between us and continued to provide content to allow each of our members to get the maximum benefit from their participation in the Network.

This insatiable need to continue to bring you knowledge indeed responds to the observation that we have all made during these twelve months of crisis: the themes specific to Délice are more crucial than ever in managing our cities and destinations. With many restrictions worldwide, the situation has severely affected the food and gastronomy sector, including tourism and MICE, which had to find quick fixes to keep their business going. Therefore, it was vital to keep in operation this magnificent tool that is Délice for its members, to be able to learn, share, & connect, especially during this challenging year.

Now is the time to take stock of 2020. This "exceptional" activity report reflects on what was planned and celebrates what we did manage to achieve. It also includes a more in-depth look at how the pandemic has positioned food and gastronomy as a strategic topic in global discussions.

Despite the complex context, we have identified several positive factors. The Network has proved its capacity for resilience. The Délice family remains united. The 2021 program is full of enticing promises. And we see new cities knocking on our doors to join us.

I would like to personally thank Camille Benoist and all the executive committee members for their decisive commitment and involvement within the Délice network during this crucial year.

We wish you all a great year in 2021, which will hopefully mark the return to the normalization of our local and global activities, and we look forward to seeing you in person very soon.



**Olivier MARETTE**  
President of Délice Network,  
Gastronomy Expert, Visit.Brussels

# DÉLICE NETWORK IN A NUTSHELL

## WHO WE ARE

Délice Network is a tool for worldwide cities that consider food and gastronomy as a boost for economic development, city attractiveness, and urban sustainability. It brings together city representatives involved in implementing food-related projects and initiatives. Thanks to the Network, they learn, share, and connect.



## WHAT WE DO

- OFFER** a platform to capitalize on each city's strategy
- ORGANIZE** knowledge transmission and create intelligence
- FACILITATE** partnerships and collaborative projects
- COORDINATE** global advocacy on various food-related topics

## OUR SHARED VALUES

- Preserve and raise awareness on the importance of **local food cultures and culinary heritage**
- Respect for natural resources and protection of **the environment**
- Involve all **food value-chain actors** in one same general project
- Universal access to **good and healthy food** for all citizens
- Food and gastronomy as part of a **local lifestyle and social bond**
- Food and gastronomy as a way to create **local employment and entrepreneurship**
- Food and gastronomy as a way to promote **sustainable and quality tourism**
- Invest in research on food and Gastronomy to ensure **proper education and transmission of values**



## WHAT WE WORK ON

- FOOD CULTURE** as part of a city identity
- FOOD SECTOR** as a boost for economic development
- FOOD SCENE** as a tool for global recognition and attractiveness
- FOOD POLICIES** to enhance urban livability and sustainability

## THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE ORGANIZATION

The Executive Committee of Délice Network is in charge of defining the organizations' main orientations and ensuring its actions' efficiency and relevancy.



## MAIN OFFICE

The Main Office of Délice Network is based in Lyon and manages the organization's daily operations, in direct contact with the Executive Committee members.



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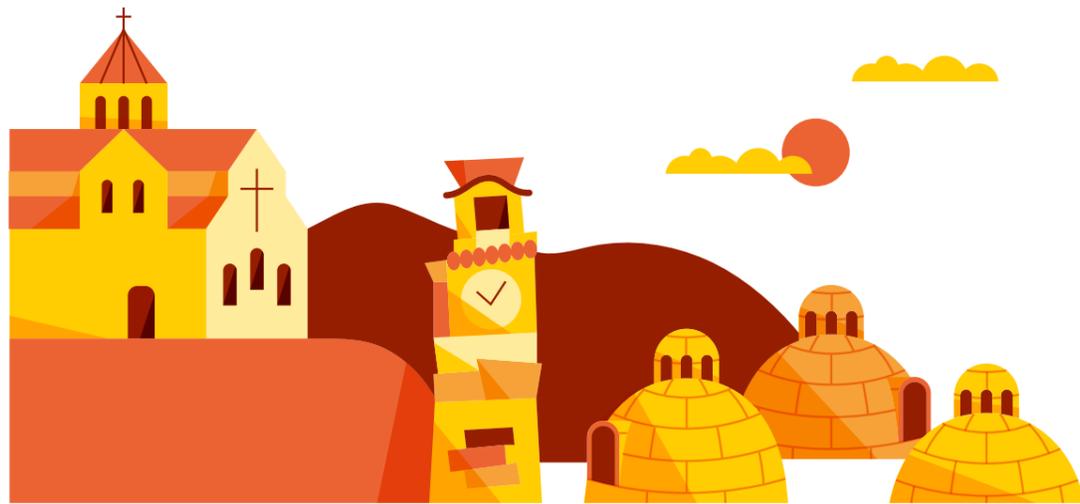
# Délice Network Members

32  
Members,  
04  
Continents

1 new member: **Tbilisi**



## NEW MEMBER CITY: TBILISI, GEORGIA



The Network had the great honor and pride to integrate Georgia's Capital City as the 32<sup>nd</sup> member city in May 2020. Tbilisi has been on the rise for some years as one of the trendiest travel destinations. The city's unique and ancient food culture, still strongly preserved, has contributed to its cosmopolitan reputation and attractiveness. While the city welcomes more and more newcomers, the challenge is now to ensure its uniqueness' preservation. Through the Délice Network, the city intends to learn from other global food cities and build strong partnerships to promote Georgia and Tbilisi through its cuisine.

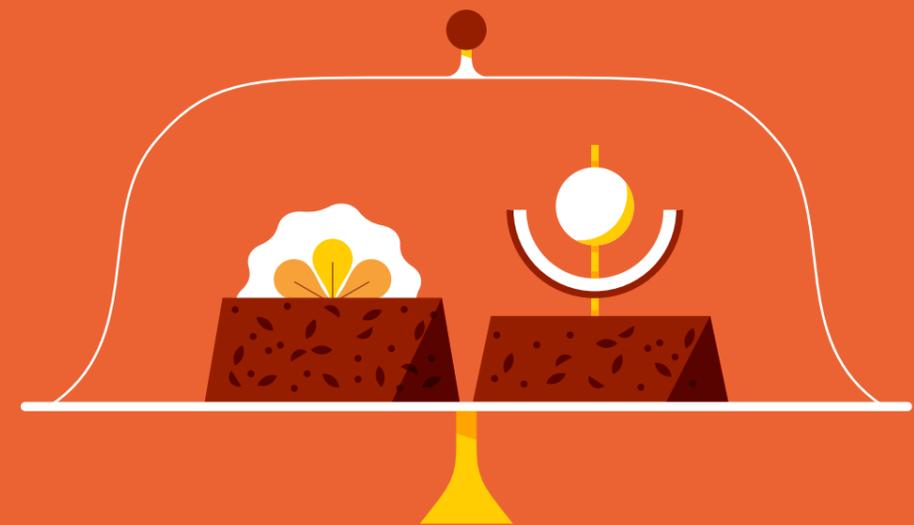
« *With its alluring traditional taverns, upscale fusion eateries, and hip beaneries, Tbilisi is today a diverse and creative food destination.*

*We are thrilled to be part of the community, bringing together like-minded cities focused on food development. We believe that the Network will support us to promote our gastro culture worldwide as well as help us to implement food-related projects along with other city members.* »

**NATA KURKHULI**  
Chief Specialist at Tourism  
Development Department  
Economic Development Office  
Tbilisi City Hall

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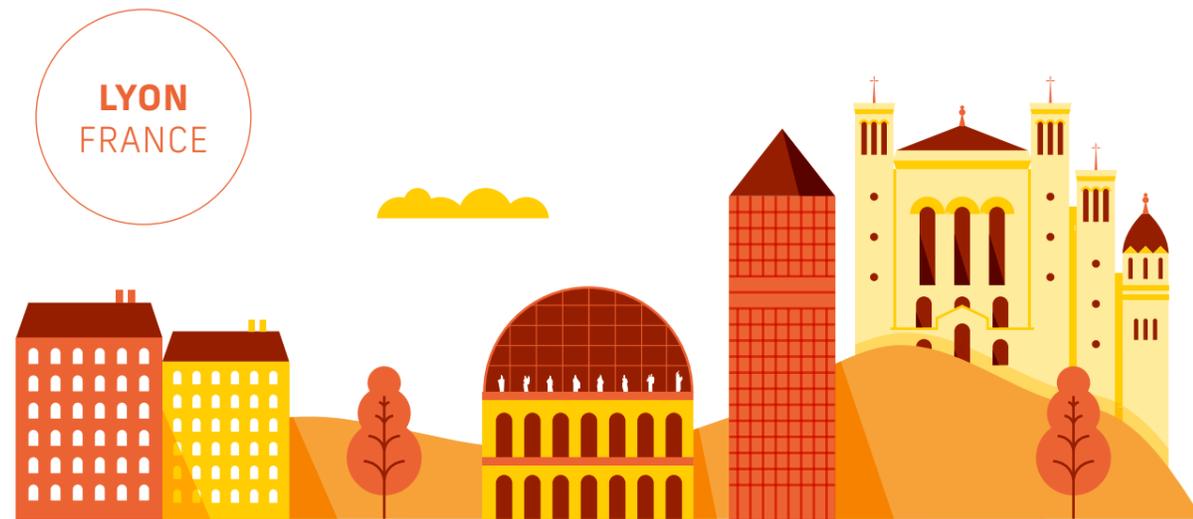
## WHAT WE EXPECTED IN 2020



2020 was set to be a remarkable year for the growing organization. While most of the activities had to be either postponed or canceled, the work led by the Délice Cities would have strongly contributed to the global discussions around food and gastronomy. Here is a tribute to this work.

# DÉLICE NETWORK GATHERINGS

The Network's flagship events usually allow member cities to consolidate connections, share experiences and knowledge and connect with the host city around a selected topic.



## URBAN EATING CULTURE: CO-ORGANIZING THE TRANSITION

The Network's founding city had planned to host a gathering on May 1-3, following the Metropolitan Food Strategy publication in late 2019.

Through this gathering, the City of Lyon and the Metropolitan Area looked to present how they are organizing a transition toward more local and sustainable eating habits, in concert with the local food sector and the civil society.

The question of governance was an essential matter to cover, with the challenge to succeed in this shift for sustainability while preserving the local food culture and food scene. Considering the vibrant food sector, the local authorities count on the partners' substantial involvement to collectively achieve this transformation.

The 3-day program intended to show the new face of the City of Gastronomy through some relevant partners and projects:

### INSTITUT PAUL BOCUSE

International students were to present their vision of sustainable food, preparing dishes inspired by their own food culture, using locally sourced products.

### HEAT FOOD COURT

In one of the city's newest trendy food courts, a "Délice Week" was scheduled, having local chefs prepare 8 dishes and 4 cocktails based on recipes provided by chefs from Délice Cities.

### VAVILOV STATION

A field trip was organized to visit the experience center set-up in Lyon's outskirts to introduce forgotten seeds back in the ecosystem, in partnership with producers and top chefs willing to put them on the menu.

### CITÉ INTERNATIONALE DE LA GASTRONOMIE

Part of the program was to take place in the new visitor center dedicated to gastronomy opened in late 2019 in City Center. This iconic venue was the first to open in France, celebrating the UNESCO recognition of the French Meal.



## THE SOCIAL POWER OF FOOD: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES AND BUILDING CAPACITY

The Capital City of Yucatán was to be the host for the 2020 Annual General Meeting of Délice Network on October 26-29. The Municipality of Mérida planned to host the 2020 Annual Summit of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and the General Assembly of the National Association for Mexican Gastronomy, proving the importance of food and gastronomy in the city's development. The 3-day gathering intended to have the Délice cities discuss and learn how food can be used to trigger awareness of different social challenges they are facing: community inclusion, economic development, minority integration, and more.

### FOOD & SOCIAL INCLUSION

The Municipality and its partners sought to promote work done over the past years on social inclusion around food. Gastronomy has been identified as an efficient way to develop income-generating activities in Mayan communities while recognizing the importance of their

specific culture and the need to preserve it. By helping the community members to reconnect with their food culture, the local authorities also hoped to highlight some crucial public health issues linked to the unhealthy food habits that are developing at high speed.

### INTERNATIONAL CHEFS IN THE MAYAN COMMUNITY

To raise awareness of the Mayan community's unique food culture, Mérida intended to invite chefs from the Délice Network cities for a side project to the AGM. Five chefs from around the world were to live an immersive experience with food experts from the Mayan community: understanding the culinary techniques, discovering the products, learning the culture. They were then to prepare some Mayan meals for the Délice delegates, the press, and other local partners to draw attention to the need to preserve this unique heritage and improve these communities' economic and social conditions.

## NETWORK, PROJECTS & PARTNERSHIPS

The core purpose of Délice Network is to connect member cities and allow them to collaborate on various food-related projects. Here is an overview of some of the collaborations that were in the pipeline for 2020.

### **Lyon/Gothenburg** **A STUDY TOUR AROUND BREAD**

The Chamber of Artisans of Lyon started collaborating with Göteborg & Co to organize a study tour for Lyonnais bakers. The objective was to visit a Northern European city member of Délice with a strong bread culture to learn about other working techniques and business models outside France.

### **Brussels/Lausanne** **SPECIAL GUESTS AT FOOD EVENTS**

Both Brussels and Lausanne are known for organizing memorable food events. A partnership had been sealed to showcase Brussels during the Lausanne MIAM Festival, with chefs, brewers, and journalists. The Lausanne à Table Association was then to make its way to Brussels during the EAT Festival, where a fantastic program was planned around some iconic Swiss food.

### **Lyon/Torino/Barcelona** **QUAIS DU POLAR FESTIVAL**

The 2020 edition of this book festival dedicated to the Polar genre focused on gastronomy to highlight the importance that many authors give to food within their books. Two chefs from Torino and Barcelona were programmed to pair with a Lyonnais chef to cook a meal inspired by an author of their city. For the audience, a unique evening was planned with the author and the two chefs discussing food and literature.

### **Torino** **TERRA MADRE, SALONE DEL GUSTO**

Slow food's flagship event was to take place in Torino in October 2020. For the first time, the Festival intended to highlight cities within the important food ecosystems. The Délice Network cities were to be invited to promote their food culture and their commitment to more sustainable eating practices through chefs' and food producers' participation.

### **Brussels/Mérida** **LYON STREET FOOD FESTIVAL**

For the fourth consecutive year, Délice Network Cities were invited to participate in the Lyon Street Food Festival in October. Brussels and Mérida were scheduled for this edition, bringing along their chefs, music, and energy to showcase their food culture and city to the public. Discussions were also underway with Buenos Aires and Portland, two of Délice's newest member cities.

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## WHAT WE MANAGED TO ACHIEVE



While the year surely did not go as planned, some accomplishments can be celebrated. As a solid organization, Délice learned to adapt to the new reality and find its purpose within the pandemic crisis, promising a bright future for the Network.

## A CONNECTED NETWORK

Despite the gatherings' cancellations, the Network managed to stay united throughout the year. Regular contact and connections among the city representatives demonstrated the strong attachment member cities have for the organization. The relationships and the active participation of most members in the activities proposed are a crucial indicator that Délice Network will recover from this exceptional year and resume the projects and activities as soon as possible.

## INTENSIVE EXPERIENCE SHARING

Sharing best practices has always been a critical value for the members. When the entire world was facing the same crisis, with a massive impact on the food supply and the gastronomy sector, cities were more than ever in need of good ideas and tips.

One positive outcome of this global crisis is the widespread use of video conferences as new forms of meetings. Online meetings allowed members to stay in touch and connect directly with each other.

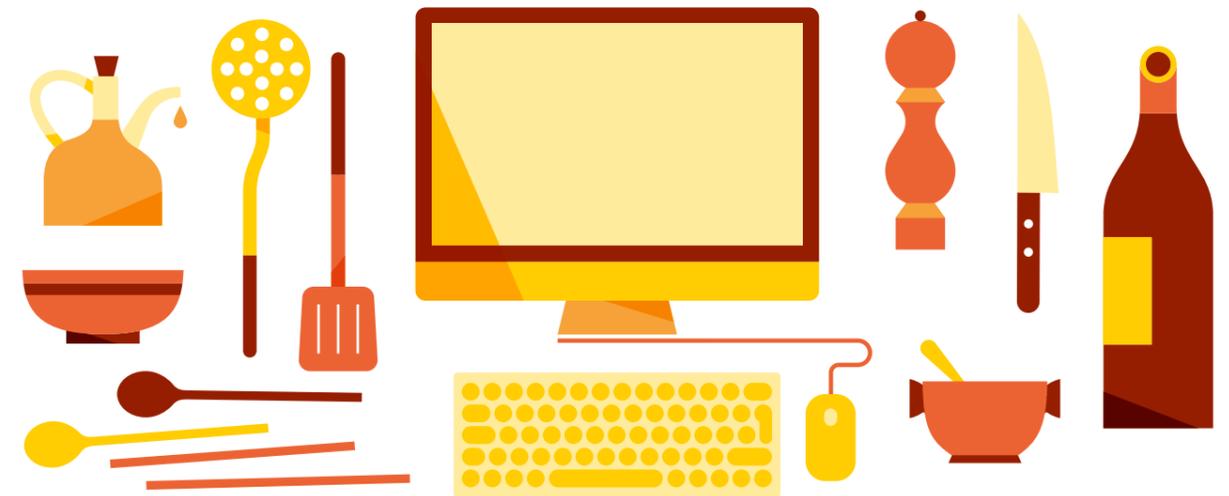
In 2020, Délice organized virtual sessions for members to share about the ongoing situation:

### MONTHLY TREATS

As a new initiative launched in 2020, the "Monthly Treat" provides Délice Members, all year long, with relevant information from their peers, such as a project proposal, a best practice, or an internal meeting. These 60-minute sessions maintained the link between members when physical meetings were impossible.

### SPECIAL COVID-19 CALLS

Two sessions were proposed to the members in the early stages of global lockdowns to share the different measures taken on the national and local levels to avoid food shortages and support the food industry. These calls gathered 18 cities throughout the world, followed by a report of all support initiatives worldwide.



### PUEBLA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

On World Tourism Day in September, the Municipality of Puebla set up a 2-day virtual conference dedicated to rural tourism as a growing trend in the Covid-19 context. Experts from Gothenburg, Tucson, and Lausanne shared their experiences and projects. Furthermore, President Olivier Marette proposed a keynote on food strategies in tourism. The audience was composed of tourism professionals and students in and around the Puebla province.

### FOOD EVENTS BENCHMARK

At the initiative of the Denmark Food Organization's partners in Aarhus, a series of interviews were led with Délice partners in charge of organizing food events. The purpose was to collect information on how food events can adapt to the sanitary restrictions imposed by Covid-19 while keeping their core DNA. It was a strategic topic as most cities saw their events postponed or canceled in 2020 and are looking to maintain them in 2021 with the necessary measures.

## DÉLICE ONLINE SESSIONS

In the Spring, part of the content initially programmed in Lyon's gathering was proposed through five online sessions of 60-minutes, targeting the Délice Members and their local partners. Through keynote experts, partner presentations, an internal meeting, and a best practice session, the participants were offered diverse content, in line with the ongoing crisis, and tools to enable them to support their industry:

### THE CHEF'S MANIFESTO

An international collective of chefs involved in shifting their industry for more sustainable working practices.

### FOOD SYSTEM DIALOGUES

A global initiative curated by UN Special Envoy David Nabarro, aiming to bring political leaders to initiate local consultations with all food-related partners to rethink food systems worldwide.



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### ANALYZING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS ON OUR FOOD CITIES.

A 3-day virtual program was proposed to Délice Network members during the AGM in October. Workshops, city presentations, keynote speakers, and social meetings were organized virtually for member cities and their partners. The General Assembly allowed discussing the organization's ongoing activities and future orientations. Over 60 people from 27 member cities and two guest cities participated in the sessions.

### KEYNOTE BY CAROLYN STEEL

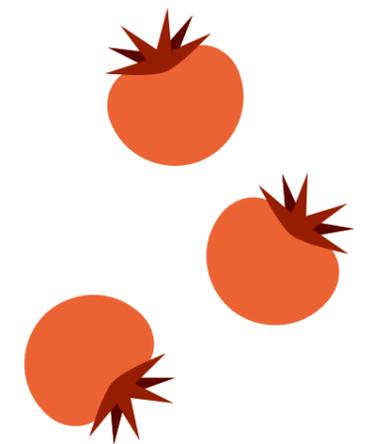
The author and architect specializing in food and cities proposed a keynote on "How food can save the world?" Carolyn Steel explained through a journey back in history how food cities were built and how the connection of urban people with what they eat has been lost over time. This time machine described the challenges our food systems face today and the urgent need to act. The Covid-19 crisis has not only shown the limits of the current system but has also enabled citizens from around the world to take some time to reconnect with what they eat.

### FOCUS ON MÉRIDA

The Yucatan Capital, the initial host city for this gathering, was under the spotlight, allowing them to present their approach to food and their involvement in food-driven social programs. Also, a treat box was sent to Délice members with some delicacies from Mérida.

### KEYNOTE BY HANS STEENBERGEN

The trendwatcher on food and co-founder of the Food Inspiration Magazine proposed "Disruption and Evolution", his vision of the industry's "Big Reset". The Covid-19 crisis has undoubtedly brought massive disruption in the way people approach food service. The heavy restrictions and sanitary measures set up in restaurants worldwide have forced professionals to adapt. But behind the short-term impacts of the crisis lies the long-term evolutions that the sector is experiencing.



## BUILDING A FOOD STRATEGY METHODOLOGY

**Strategic planning around food is particularly challenging because of the broad scope that food and gastronomy cover.**

The project “Building a food strategy” was initially designed as a working group, gathering seven municipalities engaged in a strategic process around food within their cities. The project’s purpose was for the teams involved in designing a food strategy to share their approach and method with a senior consultant’s support on strategic planning.

The cancellation of the scheduled workshop altered the project’s initial plans. Ultimately, methodology support in three steps was made available to all members and adapted to food strategies’ specificities.

## A RISING RECOGNITION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

**Over the past few years, cities have been given much more responsibility in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.**

Experts believe that the shift for greater sustainability is more decisive at a local level. While Délice Network, in 2007, was the first organization to link cities to food and gastronomy, many organizations have flourished over the past years to support the cities in their plans for sustainable food systems.

Délice Network has developed a unique approach to this issue linking the need for more sustainable food systems with the importance of preserving and promoting local food cultures and supporting the private food sectors. This holistic approach has brought the organization increased attention and recognition from many global institutions. It resulted in nurturing connections that have planted the seeds for ambitious projects to be developed in the future.

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## WHAT WE LEARNED FROM 2020



This year has been a challenging one but rich in lessons worldwide.

In all times of crisis, people tend to focus on the basics. Food is one of them, and 2020 has brought to light the particular relationship we have to gastronomy and the food sector.

## A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON FOOD IN GLOBAL CITIES

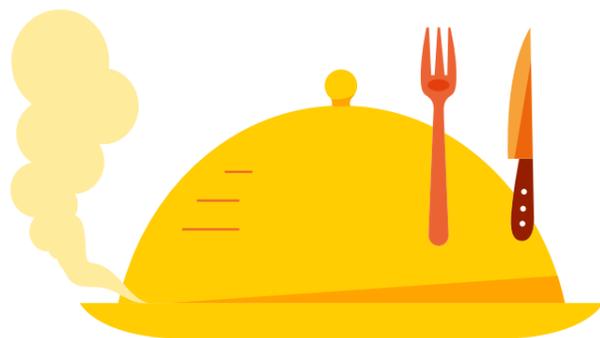
The Covid-19 pandemic has offered fascinating lessons about how people consider food worldwide. This extra attention on food has helped add value to the work done by Délice Network. While climate change has already pushed cities to rethink their food systems, Covid-19 has accelerated this process. The global crisis highlighted the strong attachments people have to their local restaurants and the profound social impact closing restaurants can have on the population.

### FOOD...

The Maslow Pyramid presents food in the bottom layer. Food is foremost an essential need for all populations. In February and March, when the pandemic started spreading outside of China, people all over the world rushed into supermarkets, fearing a food shortage that never occurred. There was then no consideration for the quality or origin of food. It was all about making sure there would be enough. However, the crisis set the light on the food system's state worldwide. As borders were closing one after the other, people realized they had become dependent on foreign countries to eat, a situation that suddenly seemed wrong.

When governments and municipalities had to decide the essential services to maintain and those to shut down, quality made its way back into many food discussions. Why let supermarkets open, and close local grocery shops or fresh food markets? How can local food producers keep selling their products within the cities, although restaurants and food markets were closed?

In many countries, new systems were set up to connect producers to end-users, with rising demand from people who were not usual buyers of local food. A solidarity intention that hopefully becomes a new regular habit for some households.



### ... AND GASTRONOMY

In parallel to the need to supply food to households with enough quantity and quality food, the Covid-19 crisis uncovered another crucial aspect within global cities: the importance of preserving the local food scene.

Around the world, restaurants, cafes, and bars were the first to be shut down, considered non-essential, and at-risk for the virus spread. The industry was quickly divided into two sorts: the chefs and restaurateurs who adapted to the take-away and delivery industry to maintain some activity, and those who decided that this concept did not fit their business model and decided to close.

Not all governments and local administrations supported their restaurants the same way. In some countries, bankruptcies were quickly declared in the industry. The crisis shed light on the rough financial conditions some restaurants work in, with rising prices of supplies and a constant pressure to keep menu prices down.

For many citizens, the extended closing period of restaurants developed a feeling of solid attachment towards these establishments. People realized how essential they were in everyday life and how they participated in a city's charm and beauty. A business lunch, a date, a

family birthday celebration, a friend's night out, or a working session in a café suddenly became a fantasy. The social bonds created when sharing a meal or a drink have become sacralized and missed by many.

The threat is on different levels for municipalities: the food sector being a significant employment sector, many people are left with no jobs. The closing also affects producers and other suppliers, depending strongly on the restaurant business. Tourism is affected by people reluctant to travel, even locally, if they have no possibility of eating out. And finally, for cities with a robust local food scene, the risk of seeing establishments disappear or change their concept to adapt to take-away and delivery brings an extra threat to preserving the local food cultures.

Indeed, the food sector is among the industry that has suffered the most in 2020 from the crisis. But as hard as the situation is, it also brought the men and women of food and gastronomy in the front of the scene and finally gave them the global recognition they deserve. While food remains an essential need, it has become a core aspect of all our cultures and societies that must be protected now more than ever.

## WHAT ABOUT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION?

When borders started to shut down and first travel restrictions were set up, all international projects and events were canceled. Global organizations worldwide feared a lasting pandemic that would unravel the ties among partners from the world.

International connections are often complicated to set up and maintain because of cultural differences in working methods, distance, and programming complexity. For global networks such as Délice Network, the key to maintaining efficient collaborations among the member cities is the possibility to gather regularly. The Covid-19 crisis presented a risk of seeing all countries retreat on themselves and reduce their international outreach.

However, quite the opposite occurred. Because the world was suddenly shut and all countries were going through the same crisis, the need to connect with peers worldwide grew. Unique forms of solidarity were set up, and existing connections were strengthened.

The development of the technology and the quick appropriation of Teams Zoom and other Visio- and video-conferencing devices have helped bring the world closer together. From their homes worldwide, men and women were eager to engage with the world and share experiences about the ongoing crisis. For the first time, via technology, we were all equal.

All Délice Network members are hoping to meet again as soon as possible. But safe to say that global City Networks still have much to give to their members and that international cooperation is still powerfully relevant.



## WHAT WE ARE PLANNING FOR 2021

While the pandemic is still at a high level in early 2021 and uncertainties remain for many industries in the new year, Délice Network is looking to keep up with the dynamic of 2020. As the focus on food remains crucial, it is essential to continue the actions initiated over the past years and keep positioning Délice as a leading organization globally.

### CONTENT & VALUE TO MEMBERS

Through online content and, hopefully, a gathering in Izmir (Turkey) in October 2021, the organization intends to keep supporting the cities by providing relevant content and data. The knowledge shared should allow the Délice members' decision-makers to support their food industry better and improve their local food systems.

### POSITIONING DÉLICE IN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

The specificity and added value of Délice Network is to consider food with a holistic approach. Food system transformation can only succeed if the food culture and food industry are considered in the process. This specificity brings real legitimacy to the organization to participate in international cooperation programs such as the EU Commission's Farm-to-Fork Strategy. Thanks to the support of a hired Program Developer, Délice intends to propose its expertise as a global City Network within various European and non-European programs.



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# DÉLICE

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## **DÉLICE NETWORK**

The City Network on  
Food & Gastronomy

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*Design graphique : Carole Barraud*