



GENERAL RESULTS

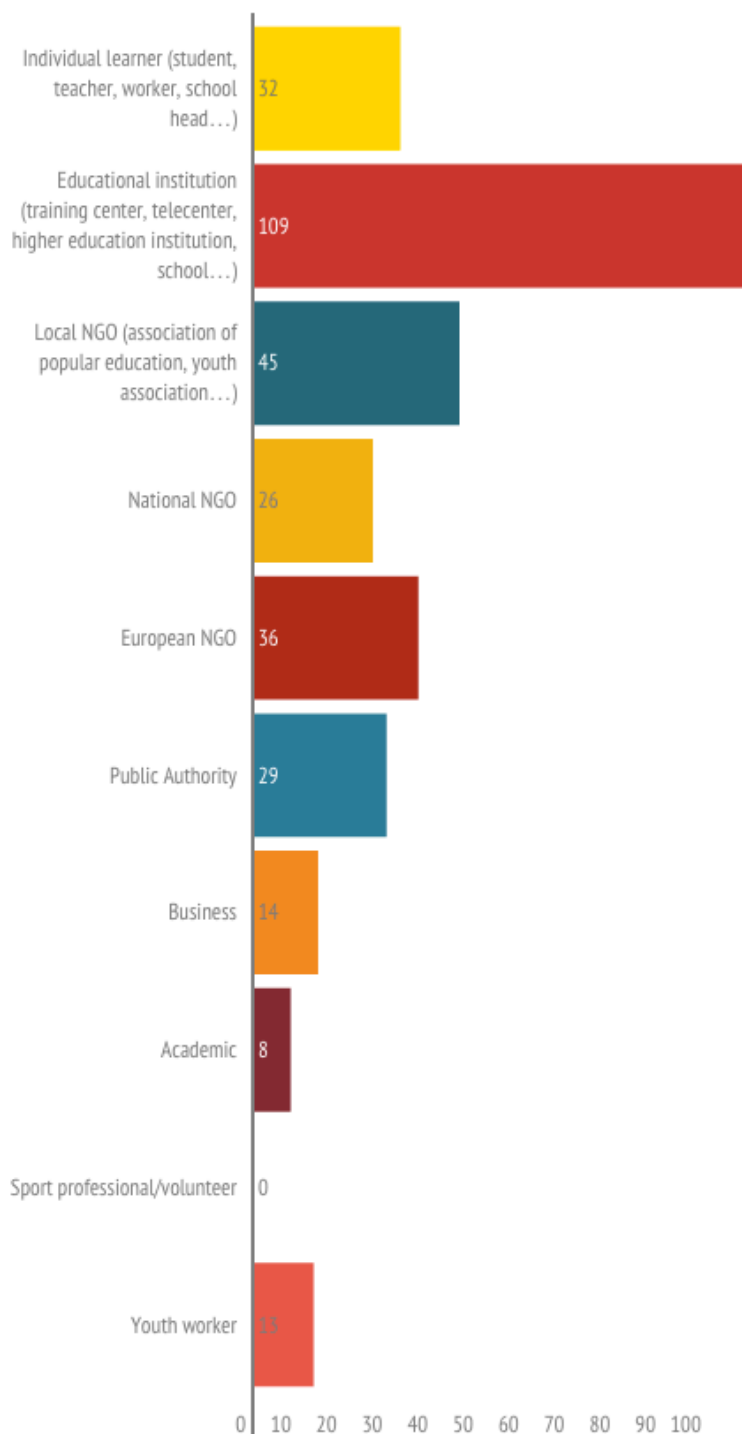
Erasmus+ Implementation Survey 2015 Have your say!

*After the success of its 2014 broad public consultation, the Lifelong Learning Platform launched its 2015 Erasmus+ implementation survey on the 3rd of July. The purpose of this year's survey was to evaluate how beneficiaries experienced the 2nd round of applications of the Erasmus+ programme. The consultation was closed on the 15th of September after having received **275 answers**. This year the survey was published in **four languages** (English, German, French and Spanish) in order to target the widest audience as possible. The following report presents an exhaustive review of the respondents' assessment of Erasmus+ Programme implementation in 2015.*

*The results show how beneficiaries of the Programme **value the Erasmus+** as a great opportunity to work with their peers' across Europe. The Survey aims to **provide decision-makers an evaluation, from its direct beneficiaries, on what works and what could be improved**. The beneficiaries particularly appreciate that the objectives and selection criteria of the Programme are relevant, the simplified architecture of the Programme and the use of lump sums. However some figures are striking such as the fact that only 6% of respondents believe that the rules are applied in a harmonised ways across National Agencies, that the Programme Guide lacks clarity on important aspects such as the Intellectual Outputs or that the calculation of flat rates appears for many as insufficient and even unjust. The Lifelong Learning Platform hopes these results will guide decision-makers in finding solutions to improve a programme that is considered for many of our citizens as a success story of the European construction.*

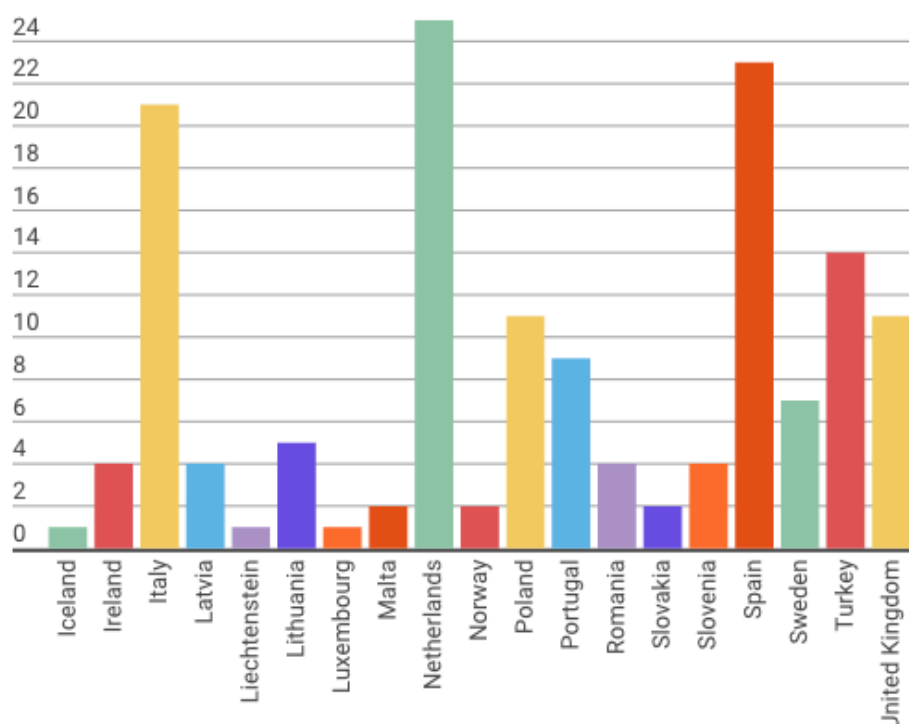
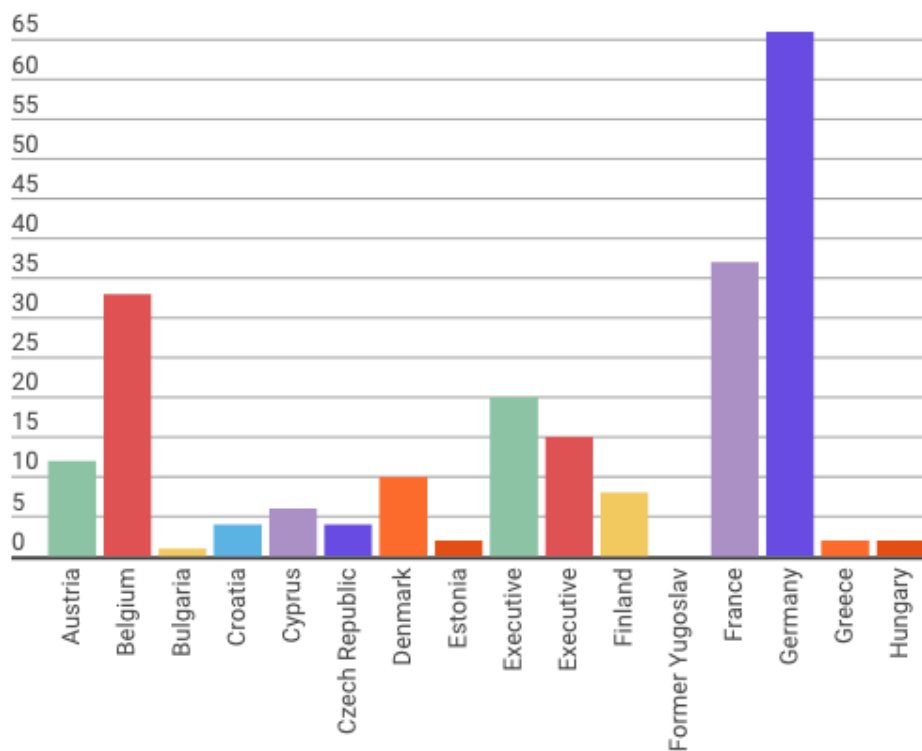
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Q1: On whose behalf did you apply for an Erasmus+ action?



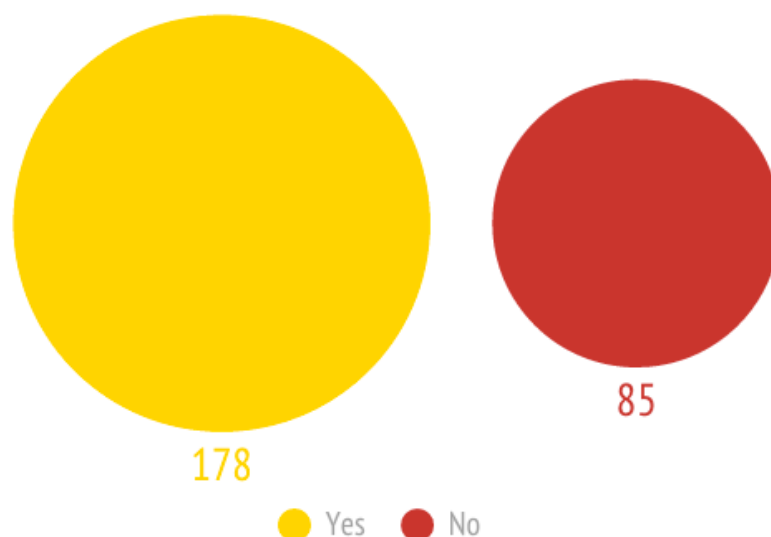
Out of the 263 respondents, more than a third applied on behalf of an **educational institution** (35%) and less than a third on behalf of an **NGO** (14% local, 12% European, and 8% national). The last third is composed of individual learners (10,5%), public authorities (9%), and to a lesser extent of the business (5,4%) and the academic worlds' (3%) and of youth workers (4%). No replies have been received for sport professionals and volunteers.

Q2: In which country did you apply for Erasmus+?



The respondents have mostly applied for Erasmus+ in Germany (18%), France (10%), Belgium (9%), the Netherlands (7%), Spain (6%) and Italy (6%). Then, the survey gathers responses from respondents from **all the EU countries as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey**. 9% of the respondents submitted their application to the Executive Agency for centralised calls (mainly Key Activity 3 calls).

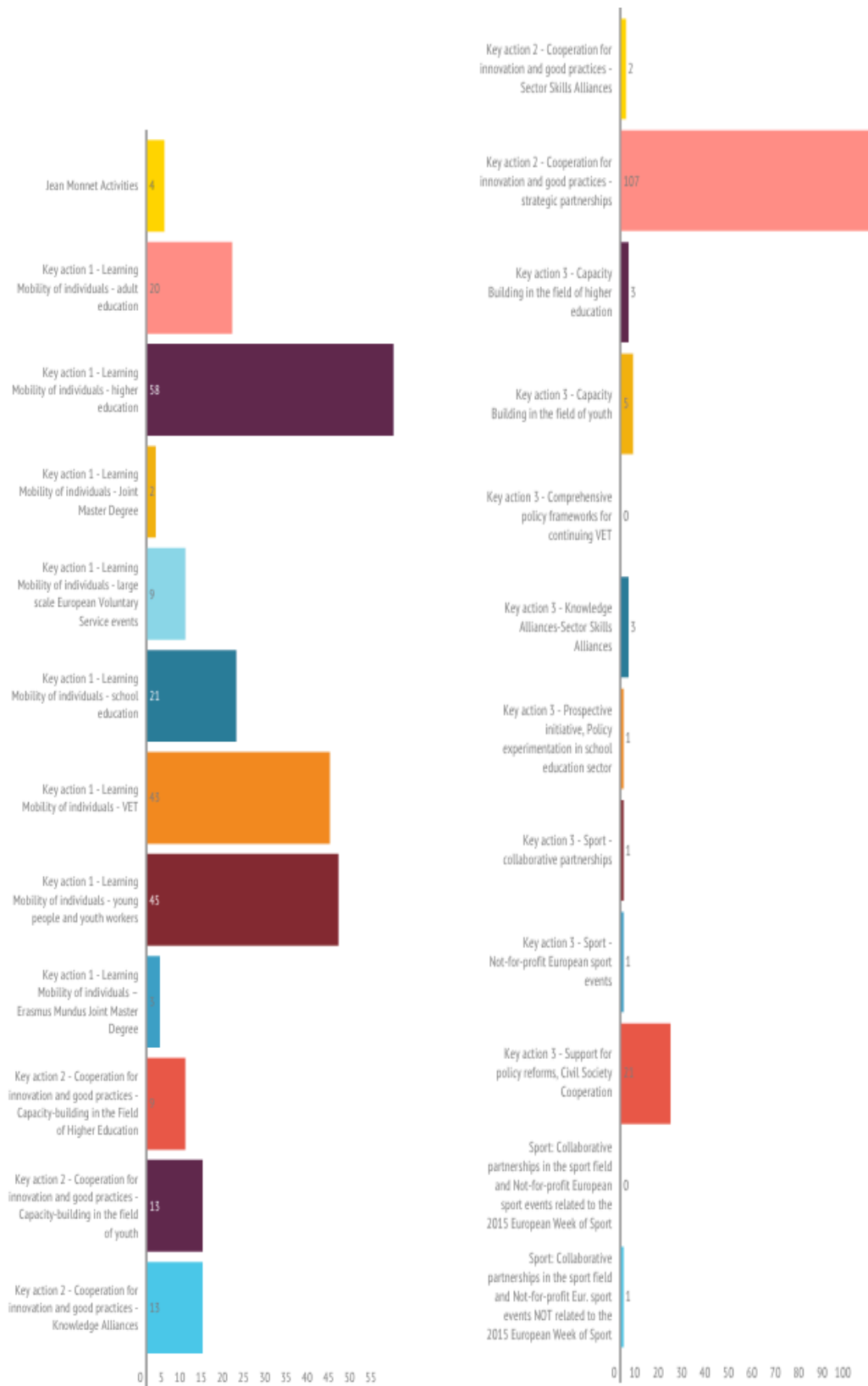
Q3: Did you involve partners from partner countries?



Out of 263 respondents for this question, **68% of them involved partners** from partner countries and 32% did not. On top of the respondents who applied for actions for which involving a partner from a partner country is not an option, some respondents did not take the opportunity to do so because they considered it “risky”. On the whole, these results reflect a **strong willingness to partner beyond EU Member States**.

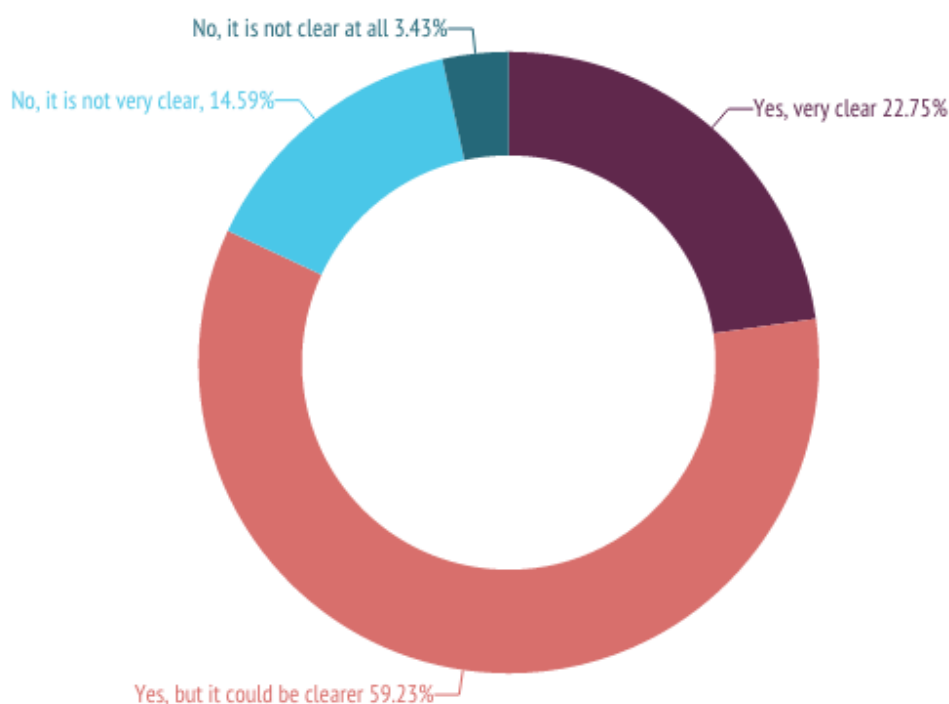
Q4: For which Erasmus+ action did you apply?

The participants in the consultation applied for a wide range of Erasmus+ actions. The most popular action in the responses is the Key Action 2 – Cooperation for Innovation and Good Practices for **Strategic Partnerships** with 27%, followed by Key Action 1 – **Learning mobility of individuals for Higher education** (15%), for young people and youth workers (11%) and for Vocational Education and Training (11%). Participants in all the Erasmus+ actions are represented in the survey except for Collaborative partnerships in the sport field for not-for-profit European sport events not related to the 2015 European Week of Sport.



WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE PROGRAMME?

Q5: Is the Erasmus+ programme guide user-friendly and clear enough?



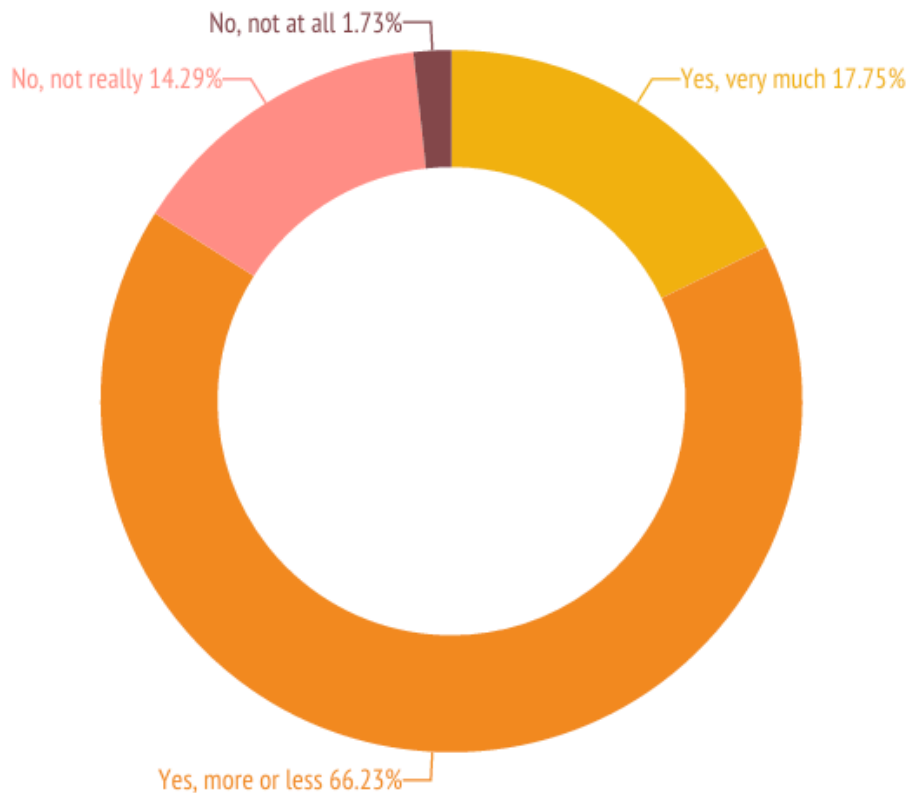
A large majority of respondents are **not entirely satisfied** with the clarity of the Erasmus+ programme guide (77%). Only 22,75% of respondents think that the programme guide is user-friendly and clear while 18,02% think that is not very clear or not clear at all. The most current criticism is the **length and technicality** of the document. It is considered to be repetitive, and more difficult to understand than its predecessor.

At the same time, some respondents consider that the programme guide suffers from an **uneven level of detail**. If some sections are very developed, some concrete and practical information is lacking such as the mechanism for the calculation of travel and activity days. A clearer explanation of **what an intellectual output is and what it is not** has been particularly highlighted; the interpretation varying from one Agency to another. Moreover, some respondents insisted on how implicit some criteria were; further stressing that the **implicit weight of some criteria can be different** from one country to another.

Applicants often **rely on National Agencies' effectiveness** to overcome this lack of clarity. The respondents widely insisted on how they overcame the complexity of the programme guide thanks to helpful and available National Agencies. However, in some cases National Agencies did not fulfil this role. Some respondents mentioned that there was **sometimes a contradiction between what the National Agency told them and what the programme guide said** and one respondent believes that, although they were trying to be helpful, the National Agency itself did not have the information.

The respondents therefore **suggest improving the effectiveness of the National Agencies** in their guidance and support activities. More **information sessions** on the Erasmus+ programme should be organised and clear **guidelines should be harmonised** across National Agencies in order to avoid diverging interpretations of the Guide. In parallel, respondents insist that in order to lose less time asking for advice to the national agencies, the **Programme Guide should be made user-friendlier**. This would involve summary forms in several languages, infographics, concrete examples and the use of a user-friendly language.

Q6: Are the objectives and important features of the Erasmus+ programme adapted to your reality?



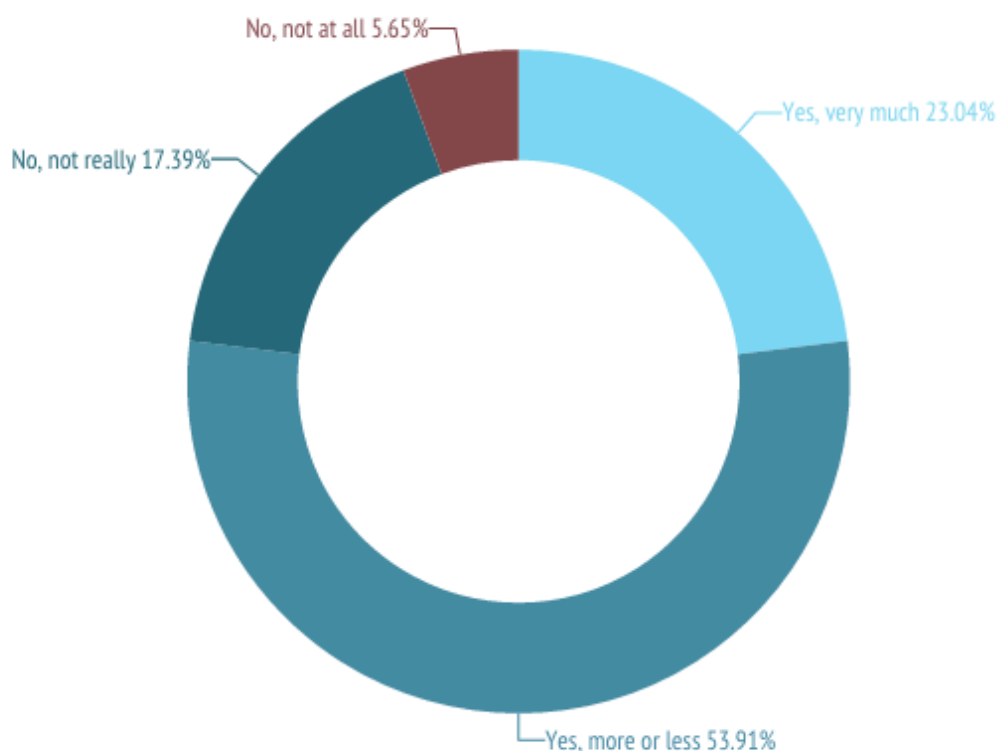
86% of the respondents believe that the objectives and important features of the Erasmus+ programme are very much or more or less **adapted to their reality**. This result is very similar to the 2014 survey that recorded 89% such answers.

However, many respondents also **criticised the priorities for being too general** while at the same time **lacking flexibility**. Hence, projects dealing with local everyday life issues and that are “out of the box” are neither eligible nor supported because they do not fit into the categories imposed by the programme.

The respondents also **regret the strong focus of the programme priorities on self-employment**, entrepreneurial skills and skills to enter the labour market. This “instrumental” use of the programme hinders the success of projects that deal with **intercultural competences, non-formal education, EU values and European solidarity**.

Also, respondents commented on the **difficulties of using the programme for social inclusion**, and especially for engaging disadvantaged learners. For example, European Voluntary Service beneficiaries need to have an easy access to the Internet and to speak English in order to apply. Finally, a respondent that works on education in prisons regretted that the Erasmus+ programme does not support projects that aim to create tools without making mobility compulsory.

Q7: Are you satisfied with the simplified architecture of Erasmus+?



77% of respondents are very much or more or less **satisfied with the new architecture of Erasmus+**. This is a slight improvement compared to our 2014 survey in which 71% of the respondents were satisfied.

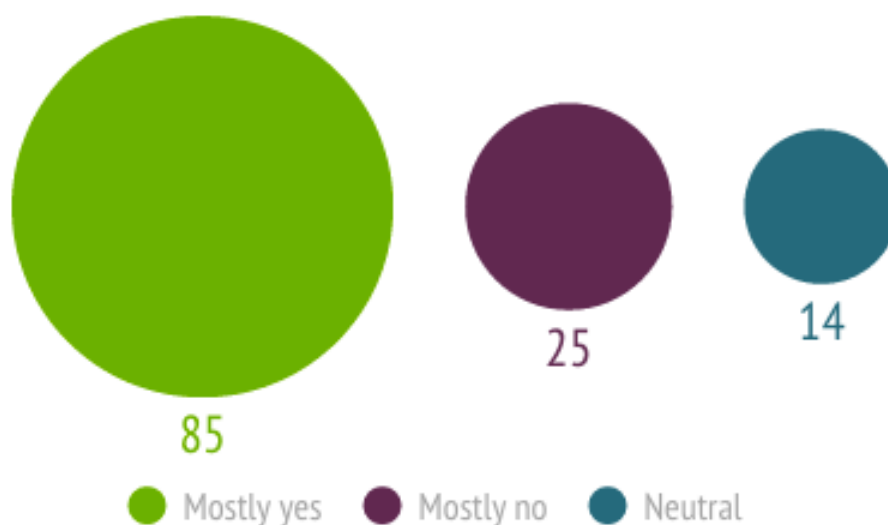
Nevertheless, many respondents question the value gained from the new Erasmus+ architecture. First, although the name of the programme has changed, the new architecture is quite similar to the old one in the sense that it **does not encourage cross-sectorial engagement** more than it did before. The possibility to apply as a “cross-sector” project is no longer possible under the Key Activity 2 Strategic Partnerships (applicants have to select one sector). The respondents also stress evaluators’ lack of understanding of cross-sector partnerships. The lifelong learning approach is thus not enough reflected in the Erasmus+ programme implementation.

The supposed **simplification** is also put into question. Respondents highlight the fact that in spite of a common name, **the set of rules still varies** from one sector to another (for mobility for example). Furthermore, the fact that Erasmus+ is **managed by several agencies** in some countries is considered to be in contradiction with the simplification objective of the new architecture.

Some respondents also feel that **some sectors have suffered** from the new architecture. For example, the Key Action 1 is very focused on students/higher education and is much less oriented towards adult education than the Lifelong Learning Programme used to be.

Finally, the **loss of the brand names** (Comenius, Leonardo, etc.) is perceived like a marketing error for some respondents.

Q8: Are the differences between Key Actions clear enough to you?



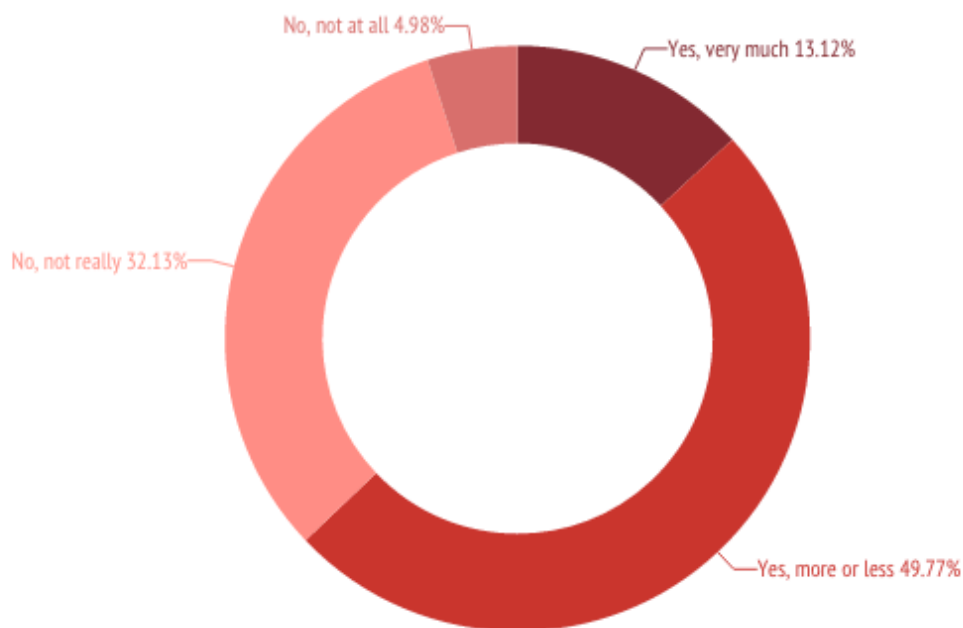
69% of the 124 respondents to this question believe that the **differences between the Erasmus+ Key Actions are rather clear** while it remains unclear for almost one fifth of applicants (e.g. a respondent wonders what is the difference between strategic partnerships (KA2) and forward-looking cooperation projects (KA3)).

Many respondents comment that although the differences between the Key Actions (KAs) are clear enough, the **differences between the sub-actions are definitely not clear**. For example some respondents regret that two different sub-actions such as KA1 mobility for VET and KA2 school partnerships have very different rules even though they support very similar type of projects.

According to the respondents, the difficulty to understand the differences between the different sub-actions and sectors has a **direct consequence on the evaluation of the projects** by the National Agencies because they are themselves confused. For example, one respondent who coordinated a project on teacher training applied for adult education but saw his project rejected by the National Agency that considered it was a secondary education project; another commented that his National Agency expected all projects with youth workers to be presented as youth exchanges.

Q9: Compared to the previous Lifelong Learning Programme, do you think Erasmus+ is innovative?

Although almost 50% of the respondents think Erasmus+ to be more or less **innovative compared to the Lifelong Learning Programme**, only 13% of the respondents believe it is very much the case. These results are very similar to our results from 2014 when 14% of the respondents found the Erasmus+ programme very innovative and 47% more or less innovative compared to the Lifelong Learning programme. The respondents tend to argue that the Erasmus+ programme **is very similar** to the previous Lifelong Learning Programme with minor alterations.



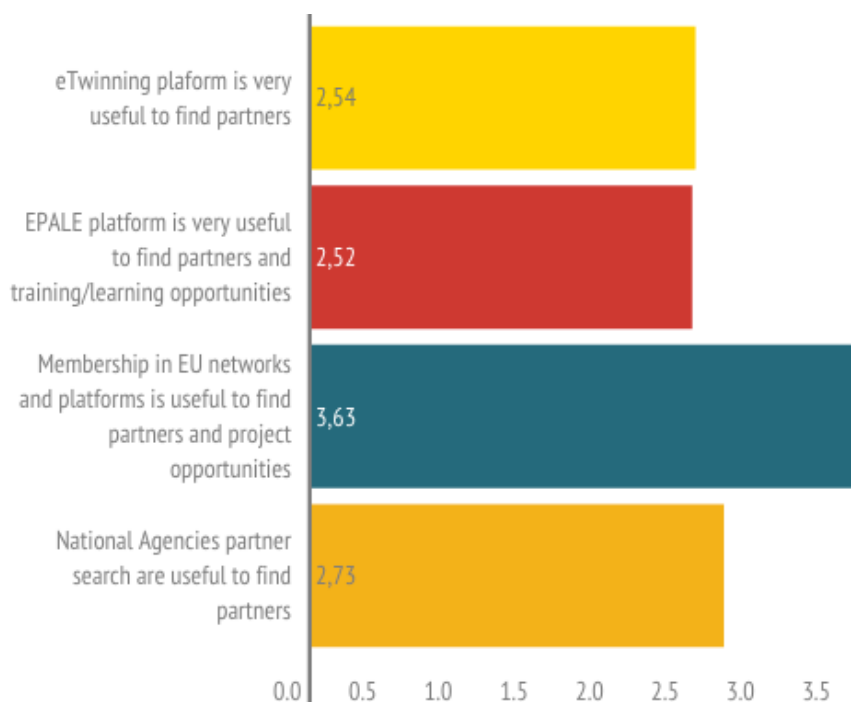
Many respondents focus on how **some actions have been downsized** (Grundtvig, Leonardo, etc.), and others focus on the new actions, which are often **new without being innovative**. The respondents further argue that the new actions, which actually are innovative such as the Master degree loan system **have not been implemented yet**. Furthermore, it is widely considered that **Key Action 3 lacks concrete budget** for its actions to be effective.

The respondents also focus their comments on the innovative aspect of the new Erasmus+ programme on the **changes in procedure**. If some comments are positive (the use of a flat rate system for example), the respondents mainly **regret the increase in bureaucracy**. Many respondents feel that the new programme focuses more on reports than on learning and that the heavy administrative burden **favours bigger institutions** and makes smaller scale partnerships impossible in practice.

In terms of change in procedures, respondents also regret **the replacement of individual applications by institutional applications**. This greatly hinders teacher mobility for example because institutions often do not take the time to participate in the calls.

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS

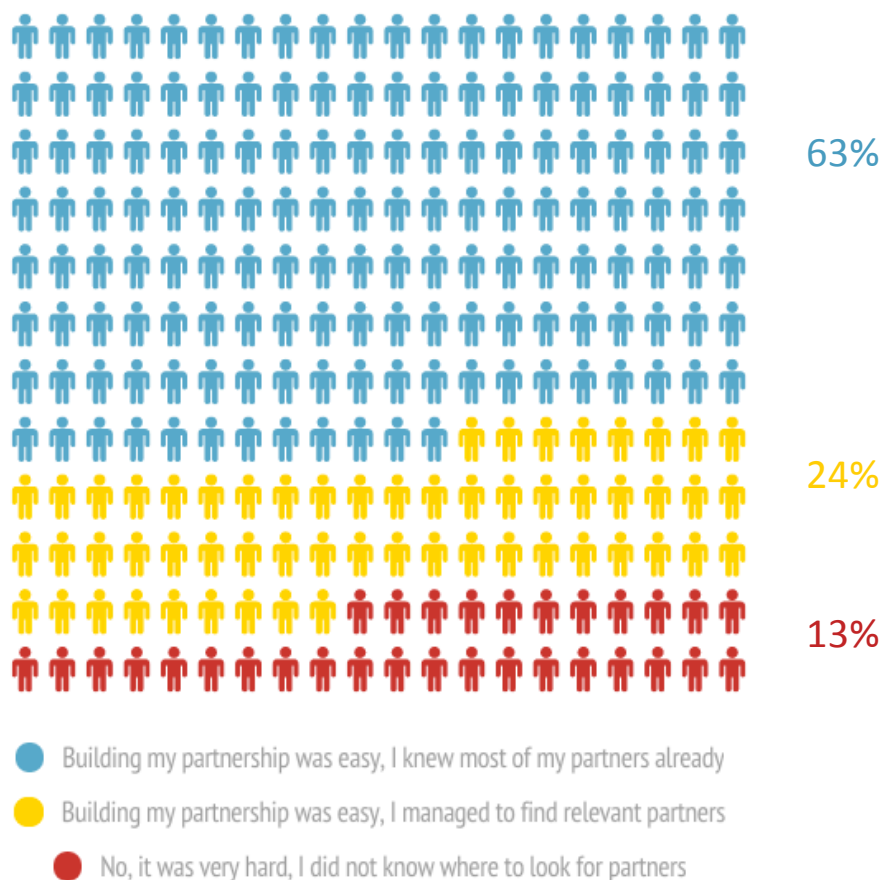
Q10: In terms of partner search: please evaluate the following sentence (1 = I don't agree at all and 5 = I totally agree).



According to the 198 answers to this question, the most useful way to find partners and project opportunities is one's **membership in EU networks and platforms** (weighted average of 3,65/5), followed by National Agencies partner searches (2,74/5) and the eTwinning (2,54/5) and the EPALE (2,52/5) platforms. All of the tools suggested are considered rather positively than negatively. Besides, respondents insist on how the **Internet plays an important role** in the search for project partners. Apart from mass mailings, many respondents use social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) to find partners and specialised websites such as Eurodesk and Salto-Youth.

Although **online platforms such as EPALE are a very popular** mean to find partners, some respondents **do not use them to avoid the risk of cooperating with an unknown partner that could have a negative impact on the project**. Hence, many alternative tools are used to find project partners. Many **favour personal contacts**, others use the old **Grundtvig and Comenius catalogues** of the Lifelong Learning Programme and some take advantage of their **institutions' partnerships** (especially in the case of schools). Also, even though National Agencies are positively rated in the survey, some respondents regret that some that **some Agencies consider it is not their task to help with partner searches**.

Q11: Did you easily manage to build your project consortium?



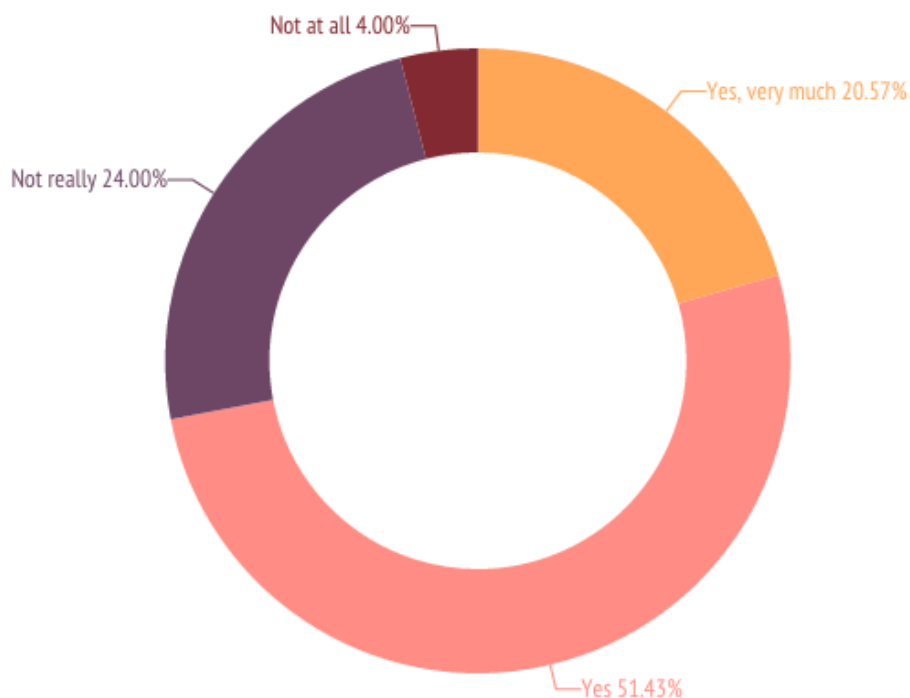
87% of the respondents found **building partnership easy** within which a large majority (63% of the respondents) already knew most of their partners and 24% of the respondents managed to find relevant partners easily.

Respondents insist on the **amount of effort, time and money it takes for a project initiator to build a solid consortium**, key to the implementation of a successful project. Large thematic platforms such as EPALE and eTwinning are considered to be too anonymous. For this reason, many partners **favour personal contacts** (see question 10) and keep partners from previous successful experiences. This creates an **important obstacle for new organisations** that are confronted with partners who only work with organisations they know.

In order to facilitate partner searches and to make organisations more willing to create partnerships with organisations they do not know yet many respondents **suggest creating a platform with a reputation system for the partners**. Such a mechanism would encourage new organisations to contribute efficiently to the projects and would allow established organisations to open-up their partnership possibilities.

APPLYING FOR ERASMUS+ PROJECTS

Q12: What do you think of the eligibility criteria for participants? Are they adapted to your reality?



72% of respondents consider that the **Erasmus+ eligibility criteria are adapted to their reality while less than a third consider they are not really (24%) or not at all (4%) adapted.** Many appreciate that the programme is open to a diversity of stakeholders.

The **end of individual applications is considered problematic** because it makes individuals (teachers for example) not eligible and they now have to go through the bureaucracy of their institutions in order to apply (see question 9). The consequence is that many potential projects are not launched and many projects miss out on the knowledge and experience of the individuals who cannot participate.

Another main complaint on the eligibility criteria is that **small institutions**, such as NGOs, that have a small turnover are much **less likely to see their projects funded** than large institutions. Also, **new organisations are not eligible** since the applicant has, in some cases, to submit annual accounts for the last three years. In practice, this greatly **favours larger institutions such as formal education institutions**; some respondents wonder if favouring such institutions was an intended aim of the Erasmus+ Programme.

The **clarity of the criteria could also be improved** according to many respondents. For example, one respondent wonders if a EU citizen who lives temporarily outside of the EU is eligible for Erasmus+ projects or if it is only her/his travel costs that cannot be covered. Some respondents also regret the **complexity of the criteria** that greatly vary from one Key Action to another and render the application process very costly and time-consuming.

Q13: Do you have any comments on mobility practicalities? Do you have concrete suggestions to improve them?

There is a general **satisfaction in the responses concerning the duration of the projects** and the fact that the participants can **choose the period of their mobility** according to their needs and possibilities. This is considered as a significant improvement.

However, the respondents have the feeling that the European Commission has **favoured quantity over quality** in Erasmus+. The direct consequence of this strategy is the **reduced grants**, which **obliges smaller entities to opt for cheap subsistence options** (e.g. one applicant mentioned “camping”) to compensate for low travel coverage. The **co-funding** level with the current flat rate system is indeed considered to be higher than it was under the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Also, the Erasmus+ programme **favours short stays** for VET learners and staff by granting higher daily allowances to short mobility periods.

Furthermore, many respondents regret that in practice there are **no real preparation and follow-up phases** since the programme does not support them even though they would greatly improve the project outcomes. The replacement of a two-week **linguistic and intercultural competences** support by an online platform (that was one year behind schedule) is also vividly criticised by the respondents who regret the negative incidence on learning outcomes.

The respondents also made more specific comments on **the time frame of mobility actions of Erasmus+**. If the opportunity to have learning/training/teaching mobility in Key Action 2 is warmly welcomed; a respondent comments that they **should not be limited to a minimum of 5 days because** it is difficult for teachers to leave their institutions for so long. In the same way the two-year time frame for vocational training mobility is considered to be too long to ensure the interest of students who are also occupied by their courses and extra-curricular activities.

Others consider that the travel lump sum system should be reviewed. Respondents regret that **travel costs are not consistent with reality**. Indeed, many flights costs in Europe do not depend on distances and participants of some countries (Malta for example) are dependent on air travel that has a higher cost. Also, when the distance is inferior to 99km, the travel cost is not covered even if the participant needs to change country (for example between Vienna and Bratislava).

Furthermore this new system is very advantageous for participants who live in **capital cities** (close to an airport) and much less for participants from **rural areas** who do not receive extra travel funding. It is also **advantageous for countries close to each other** since the same lump sum pays for travel costs covering distances from 500 to 1999 km. Since this sum is too small to entirely cover travels of more than 1000 km, coordinators look for project partners around 500-700 km away.

Finally, some respondents suggest **improving the Mobility Tool** since it is not compatible with the Europass, and that it is very slow and often crashes.

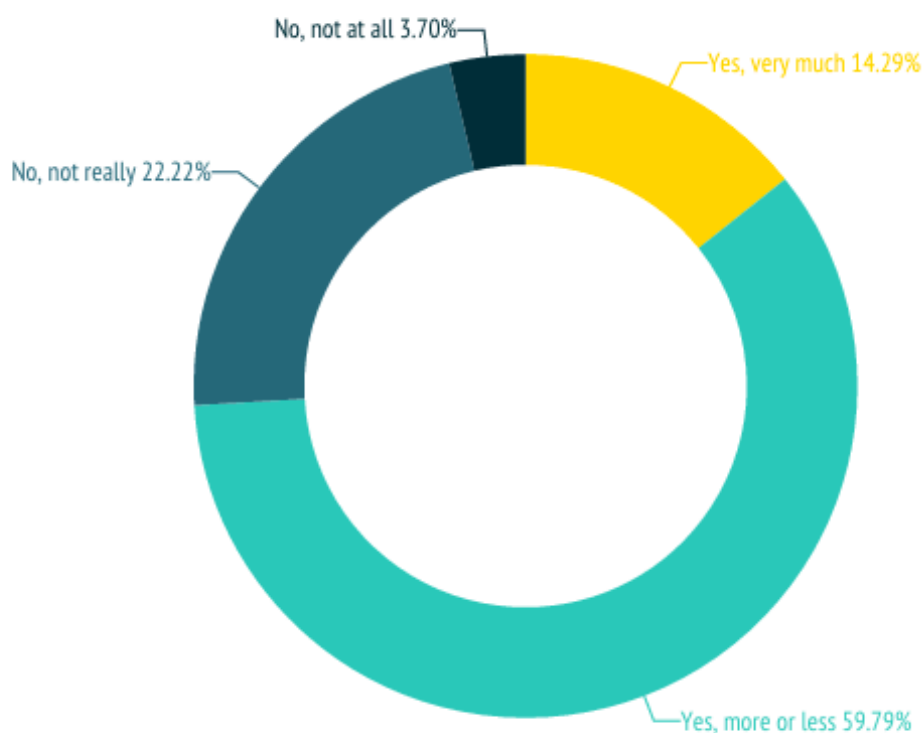
Q14: Do you have comments on the Erasmus+ deadlines in 2015?

The respondents warmly **welcome the fact that the deadline in most actions has been set during the second half of the academic year** and before the exam period. They also welcome the fact that the 3 deadlines in the youth field have been kept and that the first deadline is not at the same time as the other Erasmus+ deadlines.

Nevertheless, respondents consider that **one deadline per year in some actions is not enough** and that they should be several. They also insist on the importance of a **better repartition of the deadlines**. Having two deadlines in February then April is too close. Respondents would appreciate the results to be published at least one month before the next deadline in order to improve their application and submit it again. Respondents further consider that action deadlines should be set in function of the other deadlines in the other actions of the Erasmus+ programme but also of other community programmes such as Europe for Citizens in order to space them out as much as possible. Also, they **suggest advertising more the calls** on platforms such as EPALE.

Concerning the deadlines, **National Agencies have a large margin for improvement** according to the respondents. Indeed, on top of delays in the translation of the calls, National Agencies were late in releasing the correct application forms (sometimes two weeks before the deadline), in selecting the projects (in one country a decision for September 2014 was made in 2015) and in granting the final 20% of the grant. Respondents also regret that National Agencies changed the deadlines after having launched the KA2 Strategic Partnership call for proposals.

Q15: Were the application forms user-friendly and coherent enough?



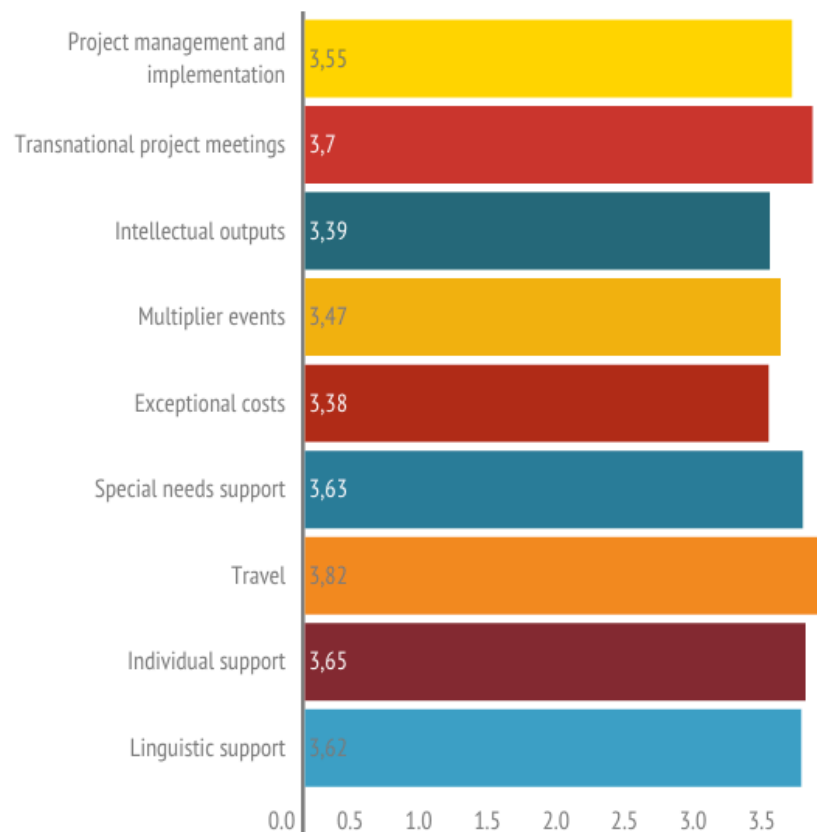
About three quarters of the respondents find the application form very much or more or less **user-friendly and coherent enough**. This is a clear improvement compared to the 2014 results where only 7,5% found the application forms very user-friendly and only 50% found them more or less user-friendly.

Nevertheless many respondents argue that although the application form is clear and coherent enough it is **still very redundant and heavy**, especially on some topics such as dissemination and exploitation that are covered by many questions. Although some respondents see some improvement for the Key Action 1, the improvement compared to the Lifelong Learning Programme is questioned. One respondent argues that the Erasmus+ application form is a “throw-back to early applications” (such as in the 1990’s).

The respondents also regret the **lack of a budgetary overview and of an intermediary view** to indicate where the applicant is in his/her application. The use of **a PDF file to build a budget** is particularly highlighted as being problematic; it is reported to be **very long to fill in** and comes with a lot of **risks of making errors**. One applicant reports that she reduced the staff costs per activity in order to lightened up the eForm and to reduce the overall budget; but the evaluators believed that it meant that partners were not involved in the activities.

On a more **technical** level, the respondents point out a series of **difficulties** that hinder the application process. For instance it is not possible to insert an Excel table in the document and the file does not work on Windows 10, Linux or Google Chrome. Some respondents also regret the lack of possibility to provide some files (annual budgets for example) digitally and the important disparities between National Agencies on this matter.

Q16: Funding rules of strategic partnerships (KA2): are these budget items clear to you (1 = not at all – 5 = very clear)?



The **clarity of the funding rules** of strategic partnerships is judged **relatively positively (3,58/5)**. **Intellectual outputs (3,39/5) and exceptional costs (3,38/5) seem to be the less clear** aspects of these funding rules. Indeed, many respondents insist on the need to clarify what they entail. Some ask what the difference between the two is and how to define when a cost is exceptional. Many technical questions come up concerning these two budget items as well: how to calculate the staff days for intellectual outputs? Can the staff be paid for intellectual outputs created during transnational meetings?

Respondents add that **National Agencies are also not clear on what intellectual outputs and exceptional costs are** and that there are very important disparities between the Agencies on this matter (some are much more likely to cut out intellectual outputs and exceptional costs than others). These issues lead many respondents to consider the funding rules more complicated than in the Lifelong Learning Programme and this led some respondents not to submit an application. Finally, some respondents state that their Agency asked them to produce the same intellectual outputs while cutting their staff costs and budget by 50%.

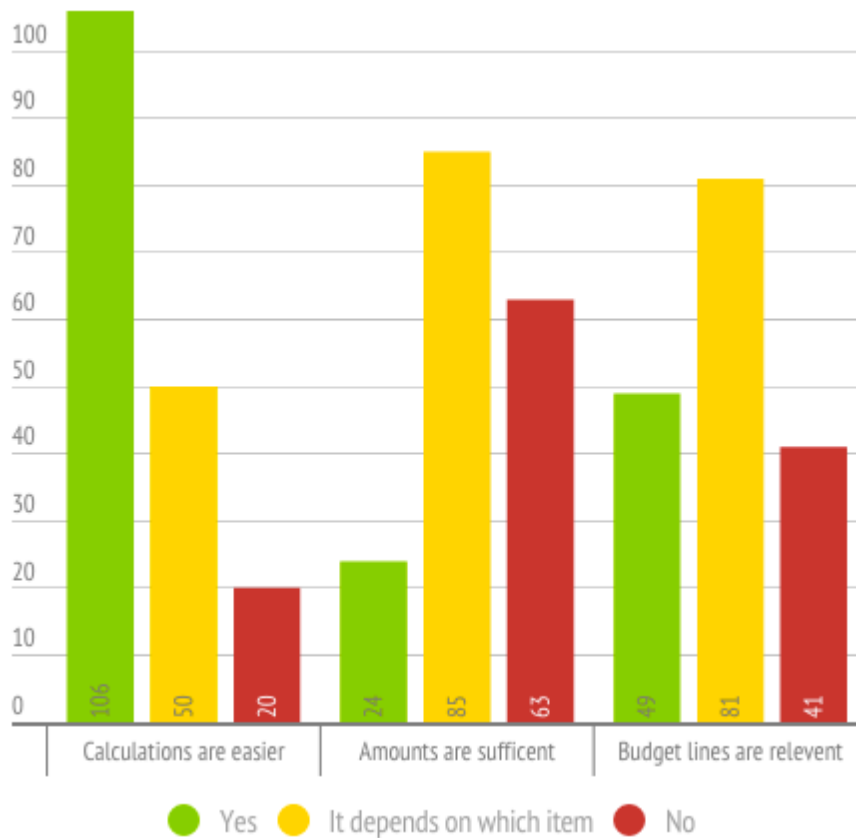
Moreover, many respondents argue that the **level of funding is not sufficient**. The most problematic budget line is **travel costs** (see question 13) but the level of **management costs** is also criticised. Indeed, respondents regret having a unique level of funding when salaries greatly vary from one European country to another. One respondent argues that while 500 EUR might be enough in Romania or Turkey it is not the case in Belgium or in the Nordic countries.

Q17: Budget-wise: what do you think of the new lump sum system?

The respondents of the survey strongly **agree that the lump sum system has served its purpose**: it has made calculations and therefore projects' preparation easier. Respondents appreciate how the new system permits to **reduce the administrative burden**, which should make it easier for small organisations to apply for Erasmus+ grants.

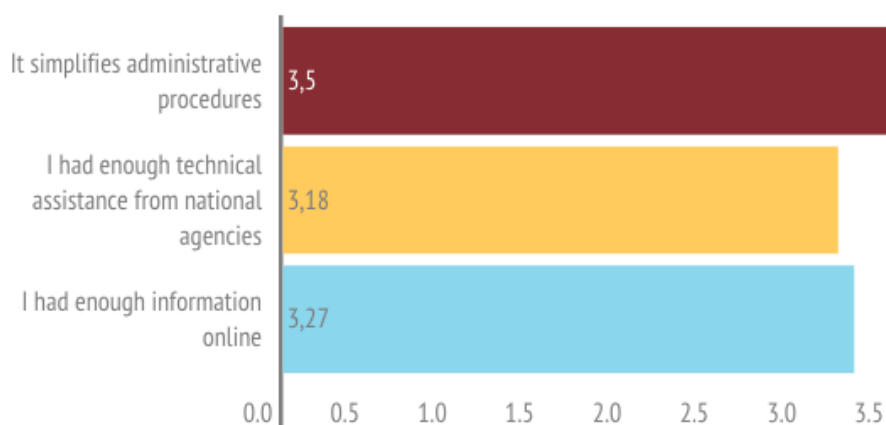
However, **only 14% of the respondents believe that amounts are sufficient** in the Erasmus+ programme and **only 24% believe that budget lines are relevant**. The flat rates are especially considered to be too small for project management and trainings, which are less covered than transnational meetings.

The strongest and most common criticism that is made against the new lump sum system is that it is a **discriminatory practice**. Respondents have difficulty understanding why a Dutch would receive 240 Euros for the same work a Lithuanian would receive 74 Euros for. Respondents argue that this system **deters experimented experts/staff** whose work could greatly benefit the project. A same analysis is made for students who receive 3 times in the UK what they receive in Hungary.



The new system is further considered discriminatory in respect to the way travel is reimbursed. It is very advantageous for participants who live in **capital cities** (close to an airport) and much less for participants from **rural areas** who do not receive extra travel funding. It is also **advantageous for countries close to each other** since the same lump sum pays for travel costs covering distances from 500 to 1999 km. Since this sum is too small to entirely cover travels of more than 1000 km, coordinators look for project partners around 500-700 km away. Some respondents are thus questioning the inclusive character of the Erasmus+ programme.

Q18: What do you think of the new PIC number system (1 = I don't agree and 5 = fully agree)?

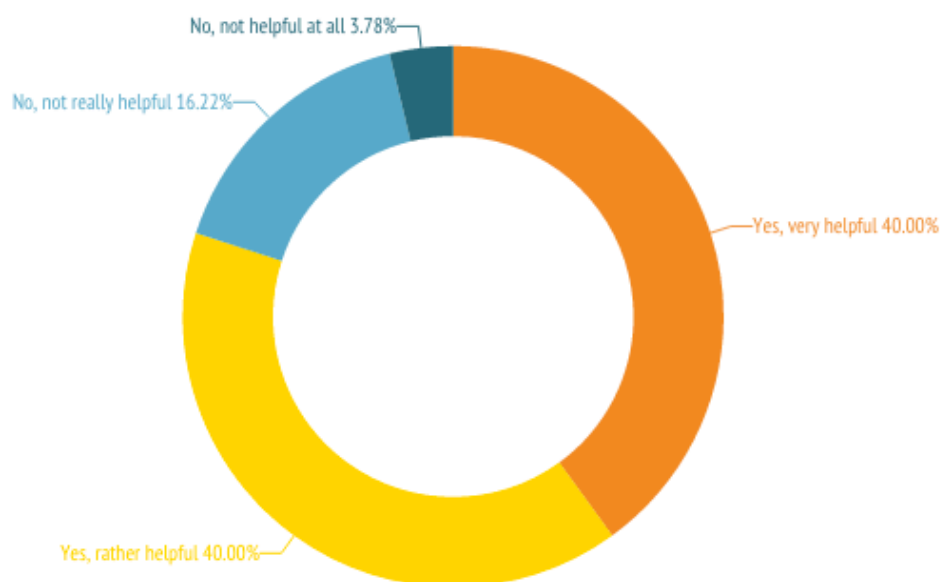


The PIC number system is **overall appreciated by the respondents**. In average, they agree that it simplifies administrative procedures and that they had enough assistance from National Agencies and information online. They also appreciate the new system because of the **transparency** it confers to the programme and they consider it especially useful when one applies to several EU projects.

Nevertheless, respondents find the new system quite **complicated** for the first application and that **National Agencies can be quite slow in delivering the needed technical assistance**. Respondents suggest clarifying the new PIC number system for both the applicants and the National Agencies that could potentially receive supplementary training.

RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL AGENCIES & THE EACEA

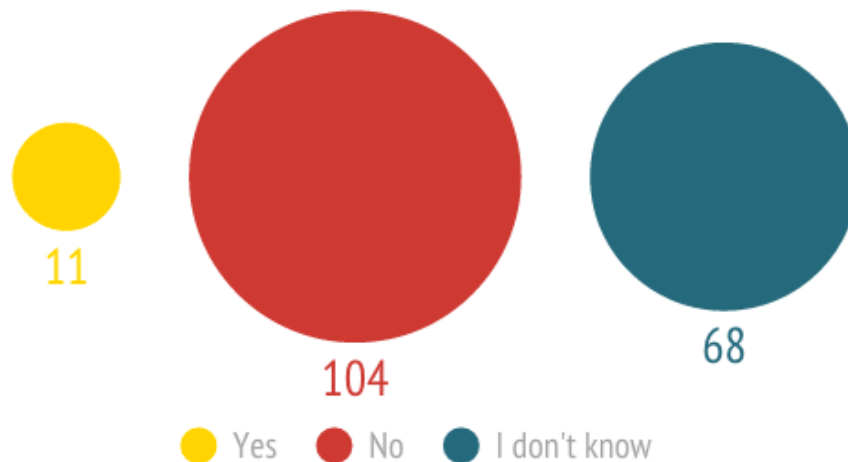
Q19: In general, do you feel National Agencies were available and helpful?



A large majority of the respondents (80%) find **National Agencies to be very or rather available and helpful**. Comparing with our 2014 survey results (62%), this year's survey reflects a very positive progress in the respondents' attitude towards National Agencies. Many respondents insist on how interested and open to the project proposal their Agency was.

However, **answers widely depend on the National Agency** the respondent dealt with, and the issues of availability and of how well informed the Agencies are, are frequently raised. Some respondents regret the unwillingness of the Agencies to communicate by phone, which would greatly help them with understanding the programme. Some agencies are criticised for not answering questions by email either. A redundant comment is also the impression that Agencies change the rules depending on the days and the mood of the staff... One respondent notes that he contacted many different staff members in the Agency in order to obtain a complete answer.

Q20: Do you think the rules are applied the same way by different National Agencies?



Only 6% of the 183 respondents consider that the rules are applied the same way by different National Agencies. 57% of the respondents consider they are not.

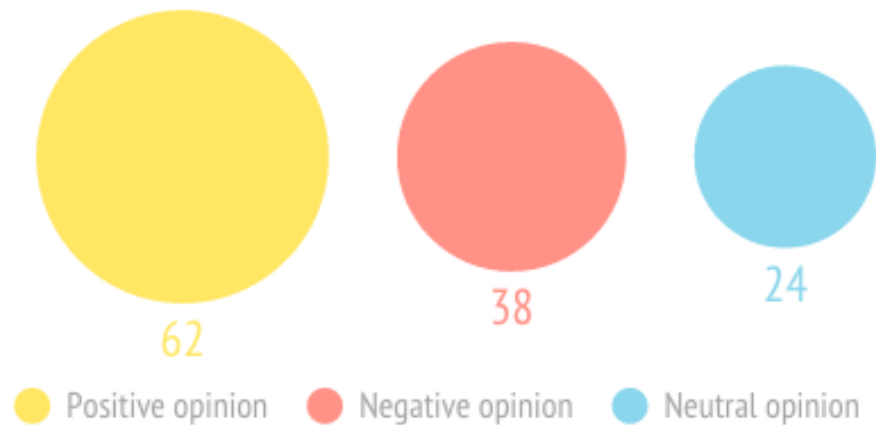
Respondents comment on many **divergences** between National Agencies starting with **the way they provide information** to the general public. Whereas the British National Agency is said to be great in that area, many other Agencies are criticised for delivering their own interpretation of the Programme guide. Some are said to use the rules of the Lifelong Learning Programme for example. Also, respondents received varied answers according to the Agency concerning **the way the staff is determined** (does it need to be employed? can volunteers be included in time sheets? etc.) and **the language of the application** depends on the National Agency (i.e. national language in Italy but project language in France).

National agencies have **different approaches concerning costs and budget**. For example it is reported that in France dissemination costs can be considered as an exceptional cost whereas it is impossible in Belgium. Furthermore some National Agencies determine lower budget ceilings than the maximum budget allowed and there are important differences in the pre-financing of projects (80%, 70%, 65%, etc.).

The documents Agencies enquire for can also vary greatly: boarding passes or just invoices of travel, original partner mandates or copies, etc. Then, not only **deadlines can diverge** according to national calls, but also the timeframe to change the submitted project (e.g. due to participant cancellations) before the deadline, it is of two weeks for some National Agencies and of more than one month for others.

The combination of different interpretation of the rules and different technical approaches lead to a **great variety in the evaluation of projects**. The evaluation procedure itself diverges greatly from one National Agency to another. In some Agencies extensive feedback is provided whereas in others applicants just receive their results. The consequence of these divergences is a **strong feeling of injustice** as well as a very confusing and difficult application procedure. One respondent comments that being aware of the system; he works with the divergences and takes advantage of them...

Q21: What do you think of the decentralisation of the Executive Agency to the National Agencies?



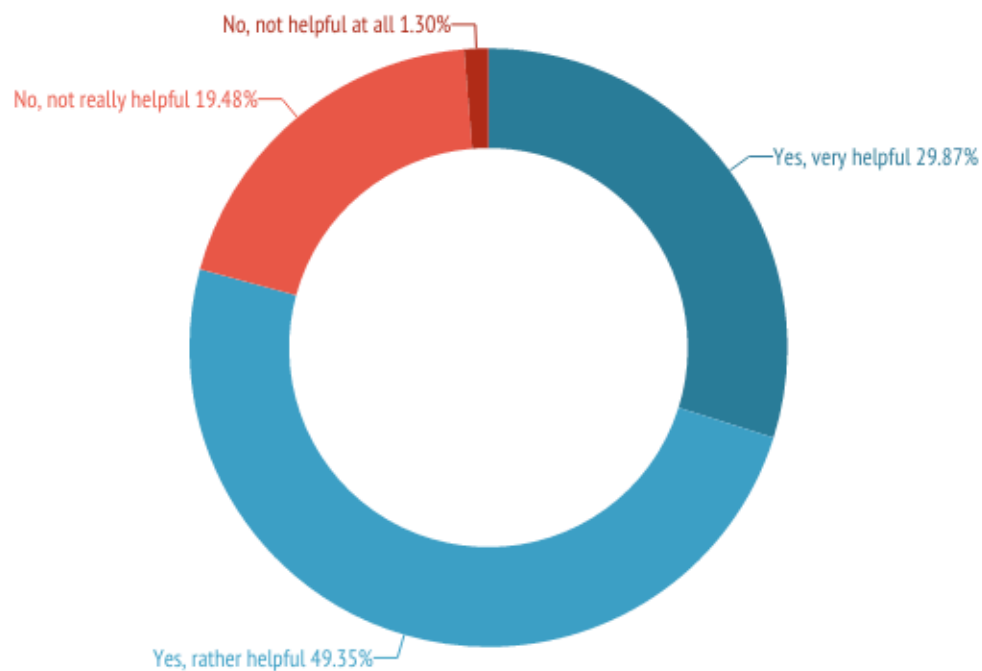
One respondent out of two has a **positive opinion on the decentralisation** of the Executive Agency to the National Agencies. Indeed, half of the respondents argue that decentralisation is a good evolution because they have **better contact** with National Agencies that are **more available** for them and speak the **same language**. Moreover, they value the National Agencies' **help in finding new partners**. They also believe that decentralisation permits more appropriate responses to national contexts.

Although many welcome decentralisation in theory, they have also encountered many of its **limits in practice**. First of all, some respondents feel that National Agencies still very much **depend on Brussels** and that decentralisation only leads to **insufficient funds for larger projects** (KA2) per country.

Also, respondents point out that National Agencies are less experienced and not enough prepared. This leads to **different interpretations of the programme guide rules** and therefore a strong variety in the evaluation procedures throughout Europe (see question 20). On top of this, respondents regret that National Agencies have now the **dual role of evaluator and coach** and that in small countries where everyone knows each other this can lead to favouritism.

Respondents also regret the fact that the **European added value of projects is not considered to be as important anymore**. Indeed, National Agencies favour national priorities but also, because of the lack of monitoring and coordination, overlapping projects can be funded in different countries at the same time. Many respondents find the **lack of competition at EU level** to greatly hinder the quality and innovative aspects of the projects.

Q22: If you applied for the EACEA (centralised calls) was the Agency available and helpful?



Almost 80% of the respondents find the **EACEA very or rather available and helpful**. A large majority of respondents welcome the work and the help of the Executive Agency. One respondent only regrets that the heavy bureaucracy of a large institution such as EACEA is imposed on small local organisations and that this cooperation is not enough directed towards problem-solving and concrete actions.

SUCCESS RATES AND REPORTING MODALITIES (2014)

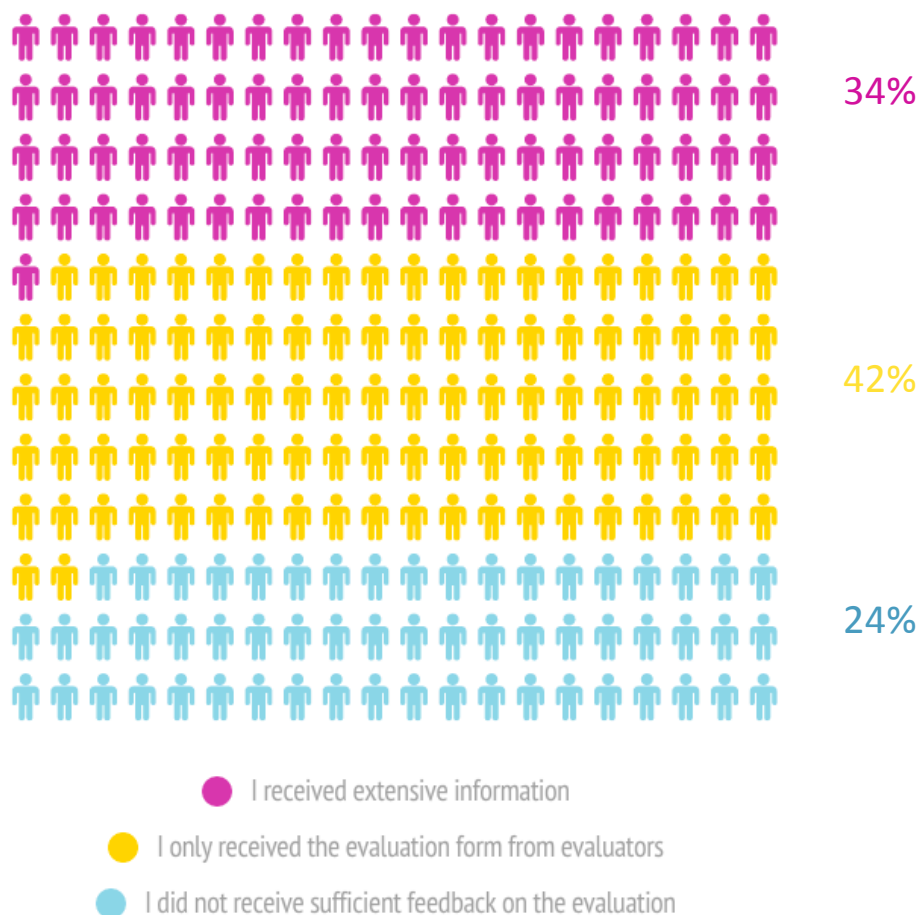
This section aims to assess the success rate of the respondents in 2014 as well as their experience of the reporting rules for those who were successful in their applications.

Q23, Q24, Q25: Did you apply for the 2014 Erasmus+ calls for proposals? Was your project(s) selected? How many projects did you submit in 2014 (as coordinator)?

Out of the 193 respondents who applied for the 2014 Erasmus+ calls, 50% of them applied for KA1 calls, 41% for KA2 calls and 9% for KA3 calls. While 49% of the respondents submitted only one project, 47% of them submitted between 2 and 5 projects and 72% of the respondents had at least 1 project selected. This very **high success rate**, combined with the fact the majority of respondents who applied for the Erasmus+ calls submitted **more**

than one project, shows that the respondents of our survey are on the whole experienced users of the Erasmus+ programme.

Q26: Did you receive sufficient feedback on your project evaluation?

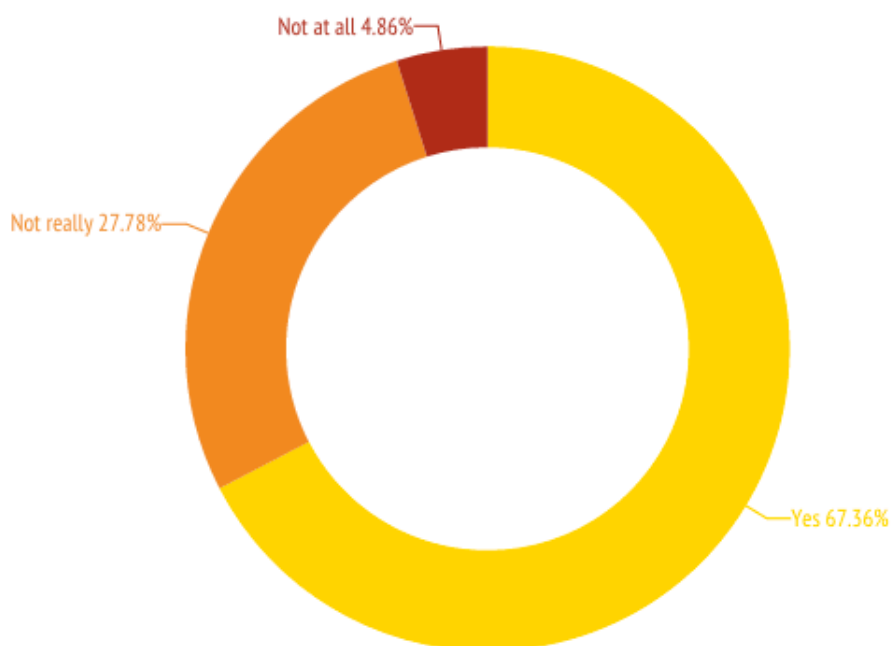


Although only 24% of the respondents say that they did not receive sufficient feedback on the evaluation, **only 34% of the respondents are satisfied with the feedback they received.** Indeed, if some respondents state that they received feedback in form of an interview, many consider that the comments they received were not clear or coherent and some regret not receiving any feedback apart from the evaluation sheet written by the experts.

Also, many respondents consider that one and even two evaluators for one project is not enough since if one of the two does not like/understand the project it will be automatically rejected.

Many answers reflect a **lack of trust amongst the respondents** who consider that the evaluators do not understand the values of learning and teaching and drastically lack knowledge in their particular sector of activity. Respondents argue that evaluations should systematically contain comprehensive feedback and hints for future applications.

Q27: Do you understand the reporting rules?



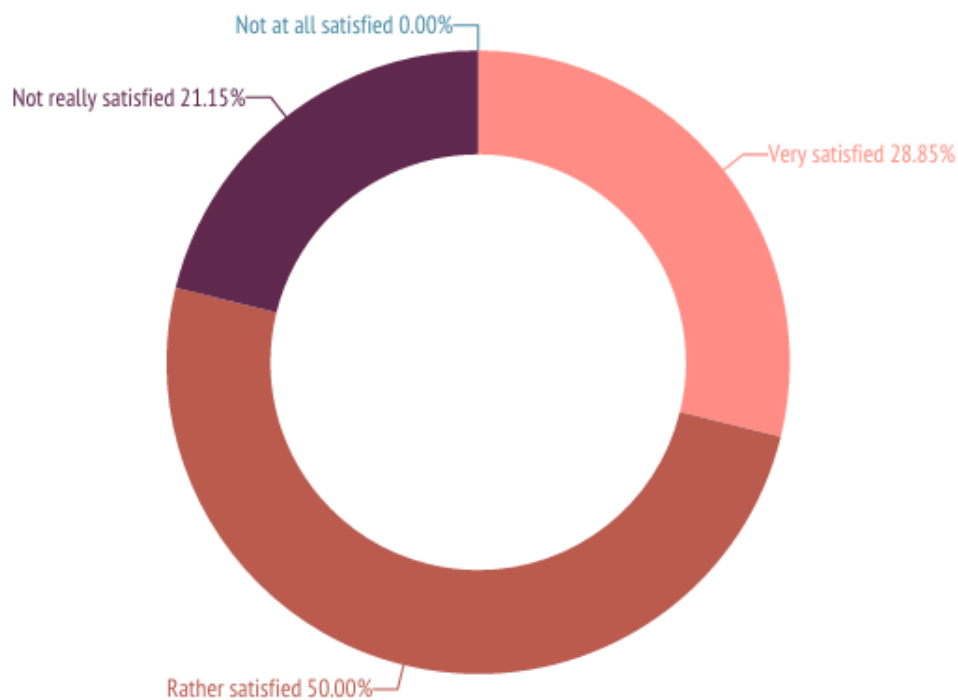
67% of the respondents understand the reporting rules. However, they also insist on how **confusing** these rules are. If most of the confusion focuses on the Mobility Tool (should it be used for KA2 for example?), respondents were also not clear on technicalities such as the differences between the interim and the progress report or on what proof of travel should be submitted. This leads them to find the reporting rules too complicated and the submission of so many online documents and hard copies to be an **administrative burden**. This confusion was only enhanced by the **lack of availability of many tools**, which led National Agencies to create their own tools in their own language.

One respondent suggests that all the participants should fill in the Mobility Tool. Indeed, if only the leader does so and if (s)he is the only one unsatisfied by the project, the opinion of all the other participants will not be taken into account.

EUROPEAN NGOs AND ERASMUS+

This section concerns exclusively European Belgium-based civil society organisations and their experience with the Erasmus+ programme. Indeed, most of these European organisations are established under Belgium law and have to apply in Belgium Agencies' competitions.

Q28: Overall, how would you describe your relation to Belgian Agencies? Were you satisfied with the cooperation with them?



79% of the respondents are very or rather **satisfied by their relationships with the Belgian Agencies**. This is a slight increase compared to our 2014 survey results (73%). Although they have a general impression that Belgian agencies were at the beginning sceptical about European NGOs and not aware of the EU context as much, they state that with time the **Belgium NGOs have grown used to EU NGOs and more helpful**.

The **Flemish agencies** (JINT for youth and EPOS for education and training) **are much more appreciated than the French-speaking ones** (BIJ for youth and AEF-Europe for education and training). The Flemish agencies are considered to be very helpful, understanding and communicative whereas the French-speaking counterparts are less approachable and often do not answer to emails. Respondents only regret that once the project is selected the correspondence from the Flemish agency is sent only in Flemish.

Several respondents complain that, because many European and International organisations are based in Belgium to benefit from the AISBL statute, they have to **compete for very limited grants** (1-2 projects being supported per NA per sector per year). Some respondents suggest that the Belgian agencies should have extra funding to cover the costs of the European Brussels-based NGO applications (the 10% being not enough).

Other respondents propose to dedicate a **special percentage specifically reserved for European and International NGOs to finance truly European projects and consortia**. That way Belgium projects with local aims will not have to compete with European projects and the vice versa.

Q29: Did you apply to another National Agency than the Belgium one for your project? Why? Do you plan to remain the managing coordinator of the project?

On top of the EU NGOs that are not based in Brussels and therefore applied to another National Agency (such as the Dutch one), Brussels-based EU NGOs developed several strategies to avoid the strong competition in Belgium. Some applied as co-managing partner but others had their national members apply in order to increase their success rate. In these cases they are often still the coordinator in practice but formally they are only “supporting national organisations in their coordination tasks”.

ERASMUS+ OPERATING GRANTS – KA3

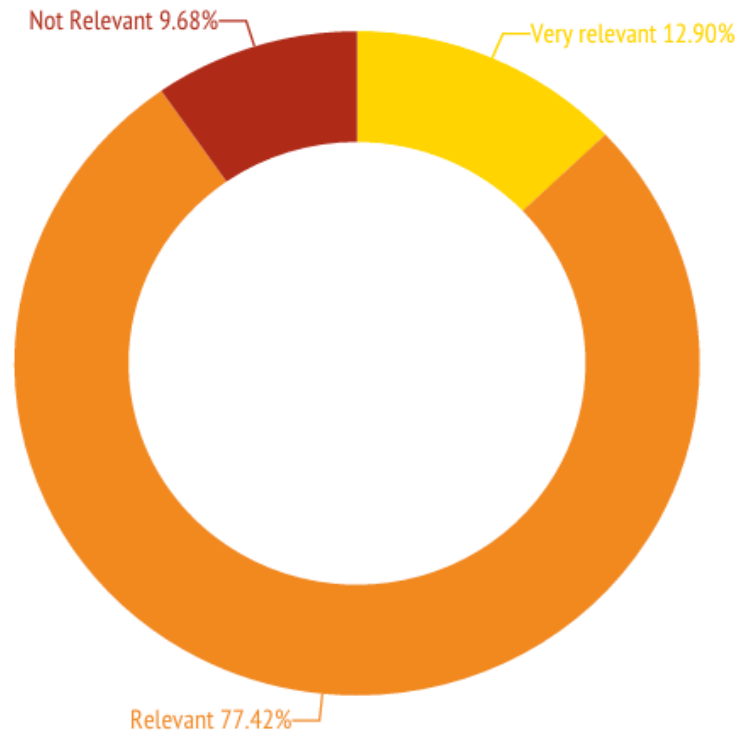
This section concerns European NGOs that applied for an Erasmus+ operating grant this year under KA3 – Policy Support Action.

Q30: What do you think of the timeline for operating grants this year? What would you improve next year?

Respondents strongly **regret the important delays** (often more than 6 months) with the selection, the contract and the payments. They consider that it is better than in 2014 but still **too late to ensure the good preparation** of the work programme. Respondents suggest for the contracts to be signed at the end of the preceding year and for payments to be done by February/March at the latest. Indeed, some consider the **current system to favour bigger NGOs** that have the funds to start their work programme before they receive the payment of the Executive Agency. Respondents **appreciate the long-term three-years contracts** that permit to have visibility and to plan actions in time and some suggest additionally having one-year and two-year grants too. Respondents also suggest simplifying the reporting stage whose rules are disproportionate with the financial means allocated by the operating grant.

Q31: How relevant are the general and specific objectives this year?

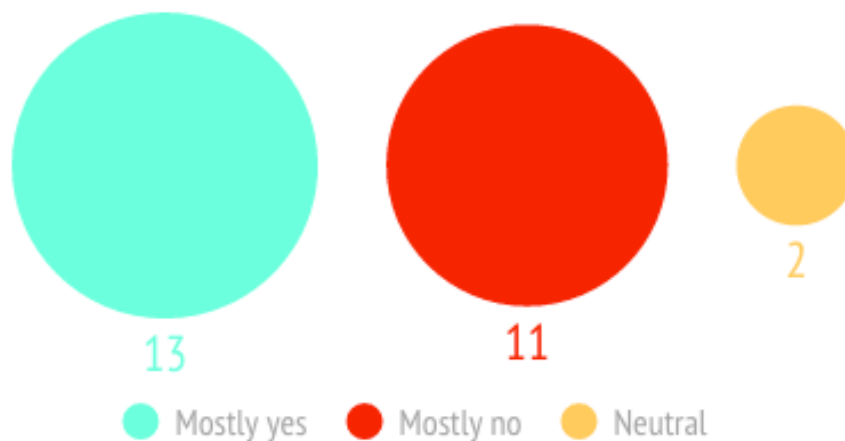
90% of the respondents find the general and specific **objectives of the Erasmus+ operating grant for KA3 Policy Support in 2015 relevant**. Nevertheless, respondents state that although these objectives are aligned with the European Union objectives, they are maybe **too vague**. Despite the fact that some respondents feel that they are not strongly connected to the preoccupations of their members, they still manage to align them because the Erasmus+ objectives are not too specific.



Q32: What do you think of the eligibility criteria for activities and beneficiaries?

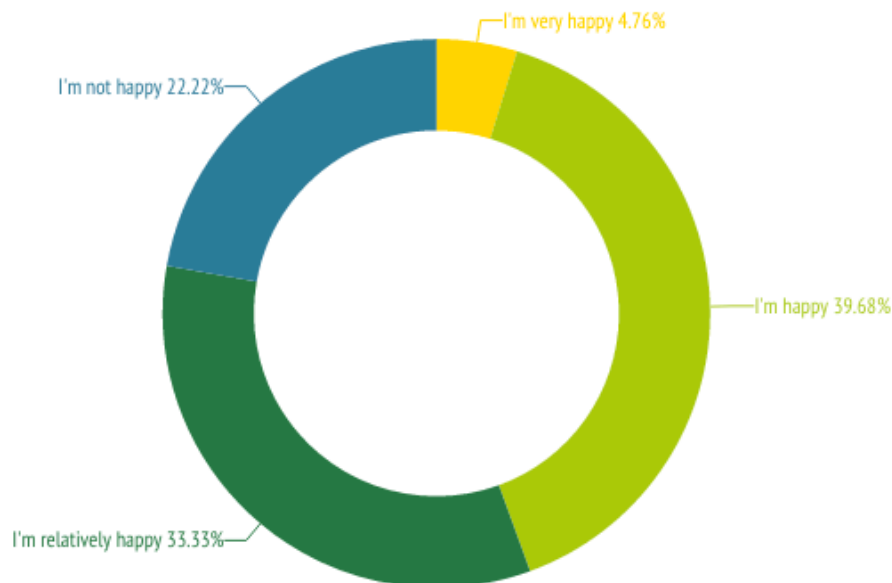
On the whole respondents find **eligibility criteria for activities and beneficiaries fine and reasonable**. One respondent regrets having to drop out Russia, Moldova and Switzerland and to become a non-formal network in order to fit the criteria.

Q33: Was the application form user-friendly enough? What would you suggest for next year?



One respondent out of two consider the form user-friendly enough while 42% of the respondents do not. They say that the e-form is worse than the previous forms. It lacks clear structure, navigation tools and clear budget tables and it often crashes. It also is too long and time-consuming.

Q34: Budget-wise are you satisfied with the lump-sum system?



Only 45% of the respondents are satisfied with the lump-sum system. A majority of the respondents are only relatively happy or not happy with it. The lump-sum system is overall preferred to the budget system because it **allows organisations to spend less time producing financial reports** and to spend their budgets on real operational needs. However respondents regret that the **sums are too low**.

Respondents also regret the way the lump sum is calculated. For example basing the lump sum on the number of statutory meetings seems outdated at a time when organisations try to develop innovative systems of governance and favour online meetings.

The Lifelong Learning Platform is an umbrella association that gathers 39 European organisations active in the field of education and training, coming from all EU Member States and beyond. Currently these networks represent more than 50 000 educational institutions (schools, universities, adult education and youth centres, etc.) or associations (involving students, teachers and trainers, parents, HRD professionals, etc.) covering all sectors of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Their members reach out to several millions of beneficiaries.

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