

European Health Forum GASTEIN

Evaluation Report

17th EHFG
Electing Health -
The Europe We Want!

1st to 3rd October 2014
Bad Hofgastein, Salzburg, Austria

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1. General introduction

The European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) was founded in 1998 as a European health policy conference with the aim of providing a platform for discussion for the various stakeholders in the field of public health and health care. The EHFG has become a unique annual event, bringing together experts, interest groups, politicians and decision-makers representing government, business, civil society, academia and the media to debate key health issues.

Integrating various national, regional and European perspectives the Forum facilitates the exchange of views and experience amongst key actors and experts from the 28 EU members, the EU candidate and EEA countries, but also from the rest of the 53 countries of the WHO European region.

Launched in 1997 as a joint initiative of Prof. Günther Leiner, Member of the Austrian Parliament and EU Commissioner Pdraig Flynn, the unique mix of participants is an integral element for the success of the project. The EHFG guarantees that all stakeholders in the European health arena: (1) advocates of citizen's and patients concerns; (2) politicians and public servants; (3) representatives of business and industry; (4) scientists and members of the academic community can discuss key health issues on a level playing field. It supports to establish a broad basis for health policies, and to lay out a framework for European health policy in the 21st century.

Launched with major financial support from the European Commission, subsequent events have grown with the continued and extended cooperation of Commission services. In this regard, the Forum can be considered as a pilot project and benchmark for any Commission civil society consultation process.

Amongst others, the EHFG is co-organised and supported by the Austrian Ministry of Health; the European Commission Directorate General Health and Consumers, Land Salzburg, Forum der forschenden pharmazeutischen Industrie FOPI, Roche and the Österreichische Ärztekammer.

Over its sixteen years, the EHFG has focused on a broad range of topics. Within this framework, the EHFG always tries to be on the front foot of health policy developments and to support finding solutions across Europe.

Main themes of the European Health Forum Gastein 1998–2013

- 1998 Creating a better future for health systems in Europe
- 1999 Health & social security
- 2000 Information & communication in health
- 2001 Integrating health across policies
- 2002 Common challenges for health & care
- 2003 Health & wealth
- 2004 Global health challenges
- 2005 Partnerships for health
- 2006 Health sans frontiers
- 2007 Shaping the future of health
- 2008 Values in health – from vision to reality
- 2009 Financial Crisis and Health Policy
- 2010 Health in Europe – ready for the future?
- 2011 Innovation & Wellbeing – Europe’s Health in 2020 and beyond
- 2012 Crisis and Opportunity. Health in an Age of Austerity
- 2013 Resilient and Innovative Health Systems for Europe
- 2014 Electing Health – The Europe We Want!

2. Summary

The annual European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) was attended by 573 delegates from 53 countries this year. The EHFG 2014 survey was sent out to all delegates via email and was posted on our social media outlets and was open for eight weeks. The survey was completed by 117 respondents.

The survey was divided into six parts, in which respondents were asked general questions (1), questions concerning the different sessions (2) and workshops they attended (3). They were also asked to express their opinion about the registration and organisational elements (4). Respondents were asked questions about their social media activities during the congress and in general (5). In the last part of the survey, there were thematical questions and questions to the overall impression (6).

In most of the survey's questions the respondents were asked to choose one answer, they find most applicable. However, to some questions they were allowed to give multiple answers and express their personal suggestions or point of criticism.

General rating scheme used in this survey:

1 = no influence, 3 = mediocre influence, 5 = high influence

1 = total disagreement, 3 = neutral, 5 = total agreement

1 = poor (knowledge), 3 = mediocre (knowledge), 5 = excellent (knowledge)

General statistics

51% of the participants who completed the survey were female, 49% – male, almost two third of them identified themselves as regular participants, 25% as speakers and 7% as journalists.

Nearly three-quarter of the respondents identified health policy as one qualification of their field. Over half of them chose health care and health research. More than one-fourth chose health promotion, 13% the pharma sector.

Medical technology, support group, IT and insurance were also chosen.

Nearly 60% of the respondents were representing public institutions during the 17th EHFG, followed by representatives of teaching and research (23%) and politics (18%). NGOs were represented by 17% survey respondents, while press and industry by nearly 7% each.

Half of the participants were invited to the conference, over 23% were made aware of the EHFG 2014 through word of mouth, 8% by social media platforms. In general, nearly half of respondents participated in a previous conference.

The main factors of influence on the decision to attend the EHFG 2014 were networking opportunities and potential for learning. For 80% attending the conference was influenced by networking opportunities, over two-third attended because of potential for learning and nearly two-third attended because of topic choice and calibre of speakers. 48% considered the influence on European health policy as a factor to attend the conference.

Evaluation of the Sessions

The congress offered 2 Plenary Sessions, 12 Parallel Forum Sessions, 11 different Workshop Sessions, 4 Parallel Lunch Workshops and 1 Breakfast Workshop.

Overall, the Opening Plenary Session was rated 3,92 out of 5 being the highest possible rating. With 4,12 average rating, the quality of moderation of Josep Figueras received the highest rating, followed by the quality of the keynote speech of George Papandreou (3,90). The Closing Plenary Session received an overall rating of 3,98. Also here, the quality of the moderation by Armin Fidler received the highest rating (4,13), followed by the quality of the conference film (4,08) and the quality of the closing plenary address from Vytenis Andriukaitis (3,89).

Parallel Forum Sessions were arranged in four blocks, one starting on Wednesday (Forum 1, Forum 2, Forum 3), the second starting/continuing on Thursday morning (Forum 1, Forum 2, Forum 4), the third starting on Thursday afternoon (Forum 5, Forum 6, Forum 7) and the fourth starting/continuing on Friday morning (Forum 5, Forum 6, Forum 8) - therefore we also received four sets of results.

Forum 1 and Forum 3 were equally attended, by over 18% of respondents (each), while Forum 2 was attended by nearly 34%. In the first block all fora received good average ratings, with Forum 3 scoring the highest (4,10) followed by Forum 1 (3,94) and 3 with 3,31 average rating.

Forum 4 was attended by nearly 22% of respondents, Forum 1 on Thursday by 17% and Forum 2 on Thursday by nearly 30% of all participants who completed the survey. In the second block, Forum 4 got an 3,83 average rating, followed by Forum 1 on Thursday (3,61) and Forum 2 on Thursday (3,48).

Forum 6 on Thursday was attend by nearly 42% while Forum 7 was attended by over 18% and Forum 5 on Thursday by over 14%. In the third block all fora received good average ratings, with Forum 6 on Thursday receiving the highest with 4,09. Forum 5 on Thursday scored 3,73 and Forum 7 3,42.

In the last block on Friday most respondents of the survey attended Forum 6 (30,8%), followed by Forum 5 on Friday (18,3%) and Forum 8 (11,5%). Also in the fourth block, all fora got a good average rating. Forum 6 received a rating of 3,90, Forum 8 3,83 and Forum 5 an overall rating of 3,58.

Comparing all different Parallel Forum Sessions, the number of presentations of the fora were considered throughout as good. Only in Forum 5 on Thursday and Friday over 44% of the respondents who participated criticised that there were too many presentations. Nearly one-fourth of respondents in Forum 4 considered the number of presentations as too many.

The assessment of the length of presentations of the fora was throughout positive. The presentations in Forum 5 on Friday (47%) and Forum 2 on Wednesday (37%) and Thursday (28%) were criticised for being too long.

Consequently, Forum 5 on Friday (42%) and Forum 2 on Wednesday (27%) did not offer enough time for interactive discussions, the same was criticised by 28% of respondents who participated in Forum 7. Overall, there is the tendency that people would like to have more time allocated to interactive discussions. In half of the fora, over one-fifth of the respondents considered the time allocated to interactive discussions as too short.

Evaluation of the Workshop Sessions

The average ratings for the 11 Workshops, 4 Parallel Lunch Workshops and 1 Breakfast Workshop were all over 3. The best rating was given to Lunch Workshop 1 (4,42), followed by Workshop 1 (4,4), Lunch Workshop 4 (4,28) and Workshop 6 (4,22). Workshop 11 received a rating of 4,2. The respondents gave their lowest overall rating to Workshop 2 (3).

Social Media

The EHFG is actively present on various social media channels not only during the conference but also throughout the entire year. The respondents were asked about their opinion on social media usage. Over three-quarter of them consider the importance of social media to the EHFG conference as important (50%) or very important (27,1%).

Nearly half of the participants, who completed the survey have used our Twitter platform, nearly one-fourth used LinkedIn and over one-fifth of them were following us on Facebook. Over half followed the Twitter hash tag #ehfg2014. Nearly two-third of the respondents intend to use at least one of our social media channels between the conferences.

Thematic evaluation, registration, organisation and overall impression

When ask about the most interesting/relevant topics at the EHFG 2014 over half of the respondents named Healthcare resources/financing and organisation, followed by 31% naming Health accessibility and equity. Both, health literacy/education and tools for measuring health were named nearly by a quarter of the participants of the survey. Over a fifth considered health services, cross-border health, personalized medicine, lifestyle choices (alcohol, tobacco, physical activity, diet...) as interesting and relevant topics.

We also wanted to know if participants feel better informed about EU health programmes after the EHFG 2014. Over half of the respondents feel better informed about the current EU health programme "Health for Growth" 2014-2020. 44% feel better informed about the former EU health programme "Together for Health" 2008-2013.

We also asked questions concerning the registration and organisational elements. The vast majority considered the online registration as fast and simple (69%), for 54% the payment options were clear and fair and for 85% of the respondents staff were responsive to enquiries. Organisational elements such as the on-site registration, shuttle service, accommodation, lunch catering and the networking events were also rated very positive throughout.

When asked about the conference organisation, responses were as follows:

Communication in the run-up to the EHFG was rated by 83% as excellent or good. Also the assistance given by the conference staff was very positive with 67% choosing excellent, 18% choosing good. For 86% the quality and clarity of the conference materials was excellent or good. Over 80% considered the event signage as excellent or good. The choice of topics was rated by over three-quarter as excellent or good. The most positive feedback was given to the overall conference atmosphere with nearly 90% of respondents rating it as excellent or good.

Also considering the rating of conference networking, the feedback was very positive throughout (overall average rating of 4,37). The network facilities such as the lounge and breakout areas were given an average rating of nearly 4. Also the opportunities to progress international health work received an average rating of nearly 4. The opportunities to engage with key decision makers and the opportunities to make new contacts were both given an above 4 average rating (4,15 and 4,33).

Consequently, networking opportunities were considered the most rewarding activity at the conference (29%). For over 23% of respondents Workshops were considered most rewarding, Short Fora for over 18%, Plenary Sessions for over 15% and Long Fora for over 8%. Evening Events have been considered by 5,4% as most rewarding activity at the EHFG 2014.

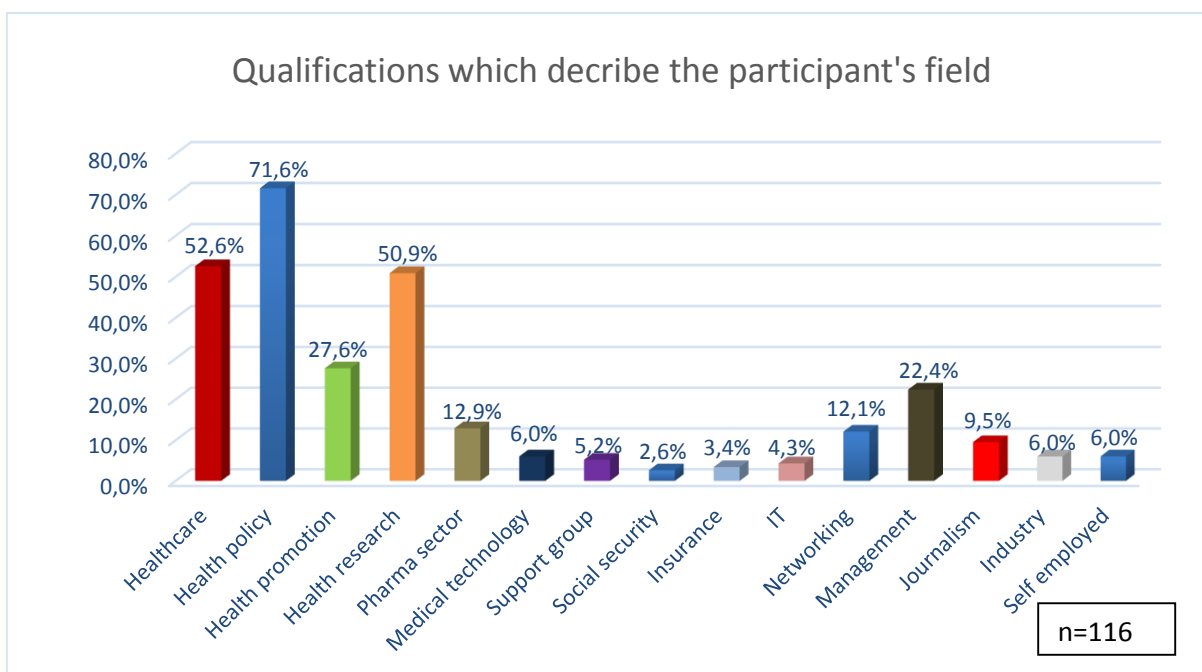
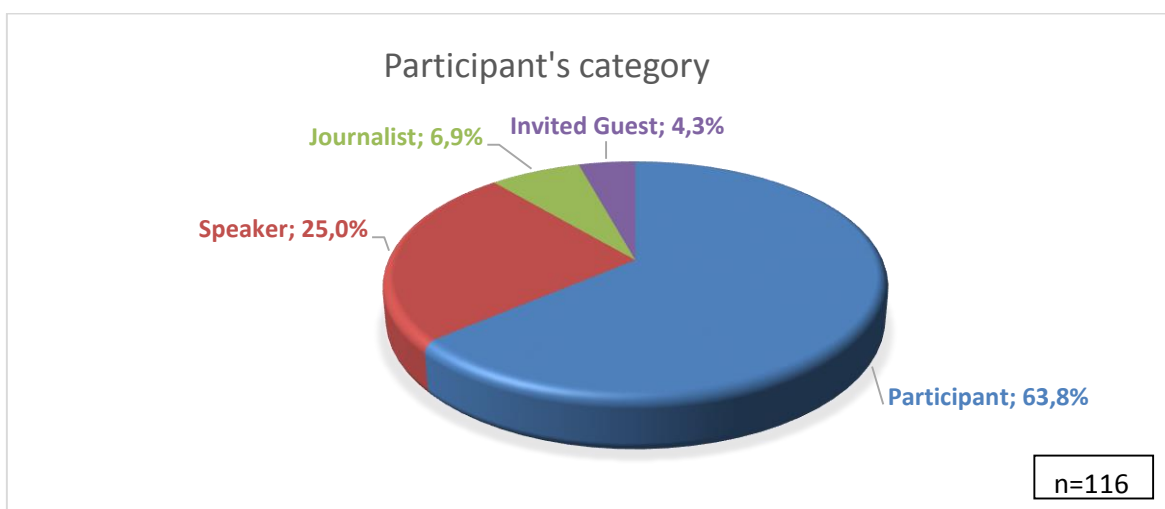
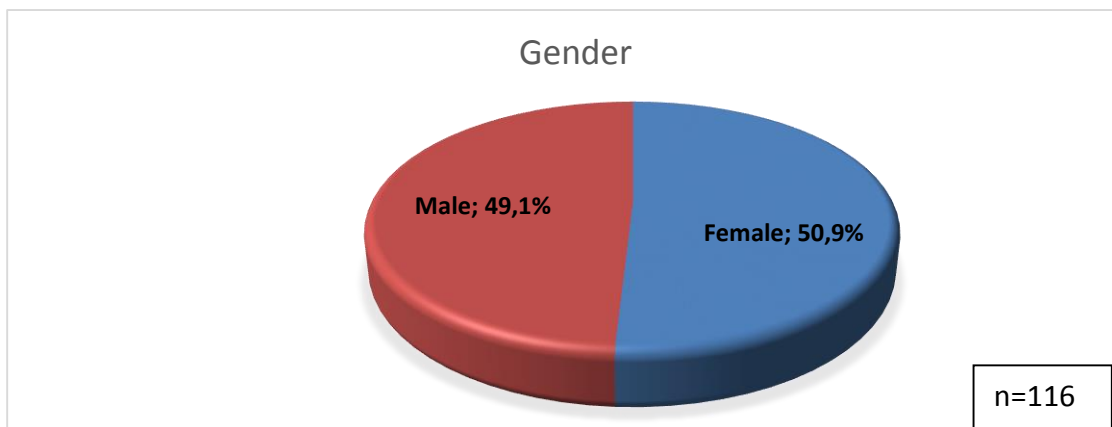
Compared to other EHFG conferences, 63,5% rated the EHFG 2014 as better as previous conferences. For 34,6% of respondents there was no change to previous conferences and only 1,9% considered the EHFG 2014 worse than the conferences in the years before. When asked about future attendance, nearly 95% plan to participate again and over 76% prefer the current schedule of the conference.

Open Questions

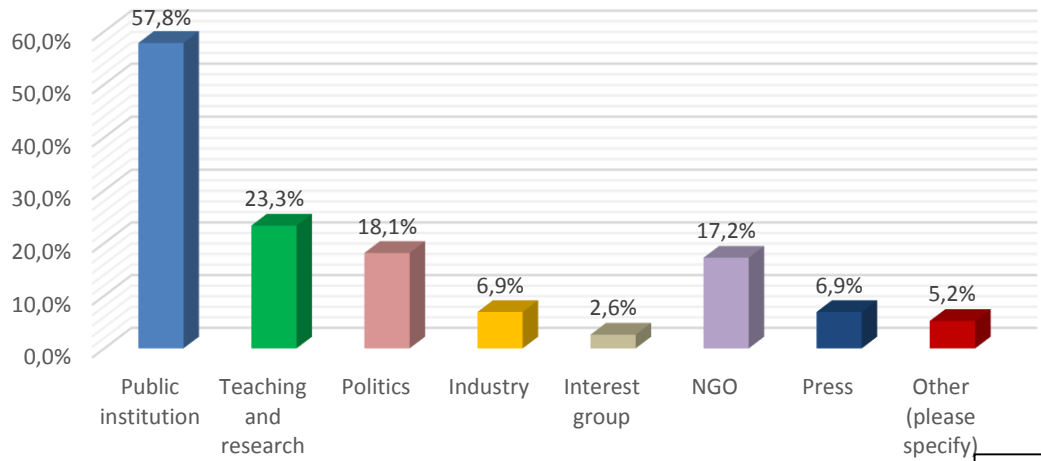
Finally, analysing open questions, one can state that respondents clearly wish for more time to discuss during the sessions. Some respondents suggested fewer and shorter presentations in order to ensure more time for interactive discussion. Points of criticism were referring especially to the poor WIFI internet connection. In general, there was a very positive feedback given to the congress staff and the overall organisation of the conference.

For a more detailed analysis of the evaluation see the following pages. If anyone needs more information on this report i.e. comments or raw data, or questions, please feel free to contact Josef Wenninger (Josef.Wenninger@ehfg.org)

3. General statistics

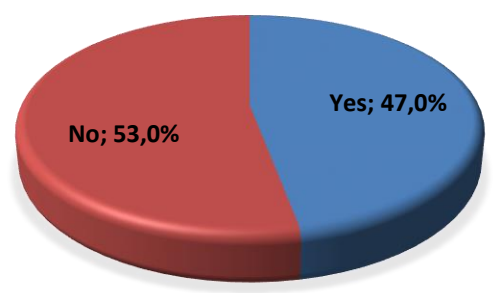


Qualifications which describe the participant's organisation



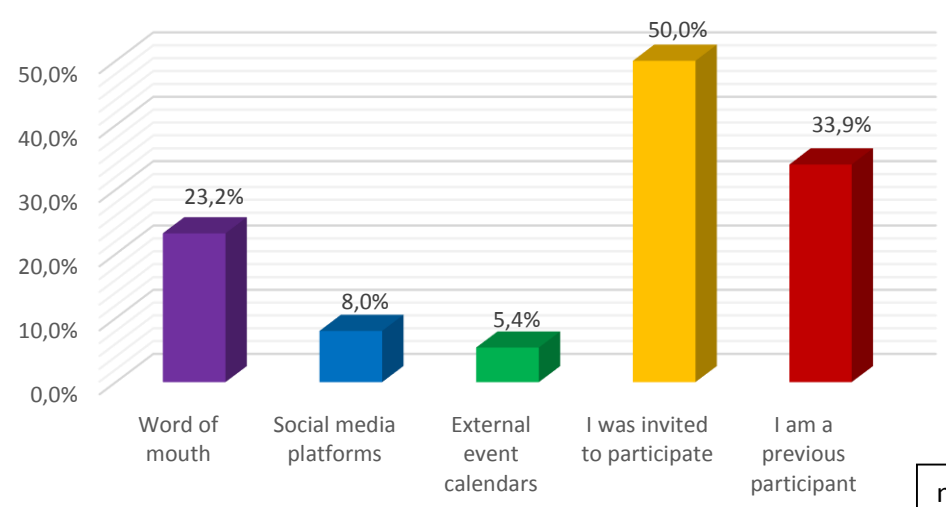
n=116

Participation in a previous conference



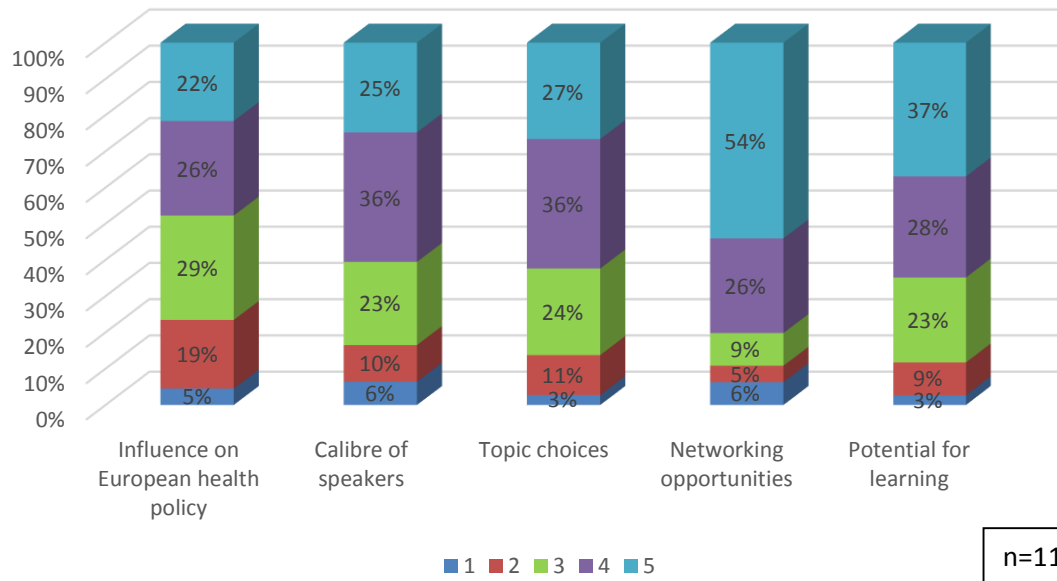
n=115

In what way(s) were you made aware of the EHFG 2014?

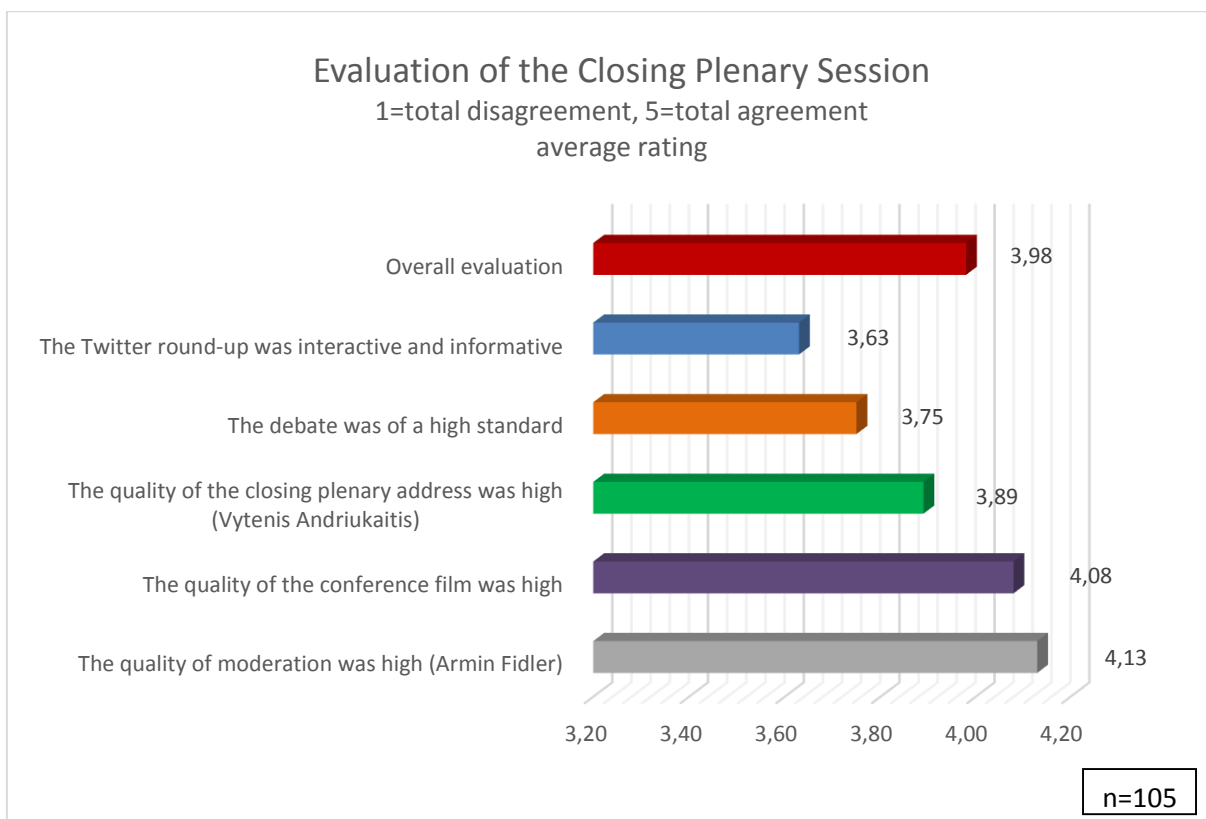
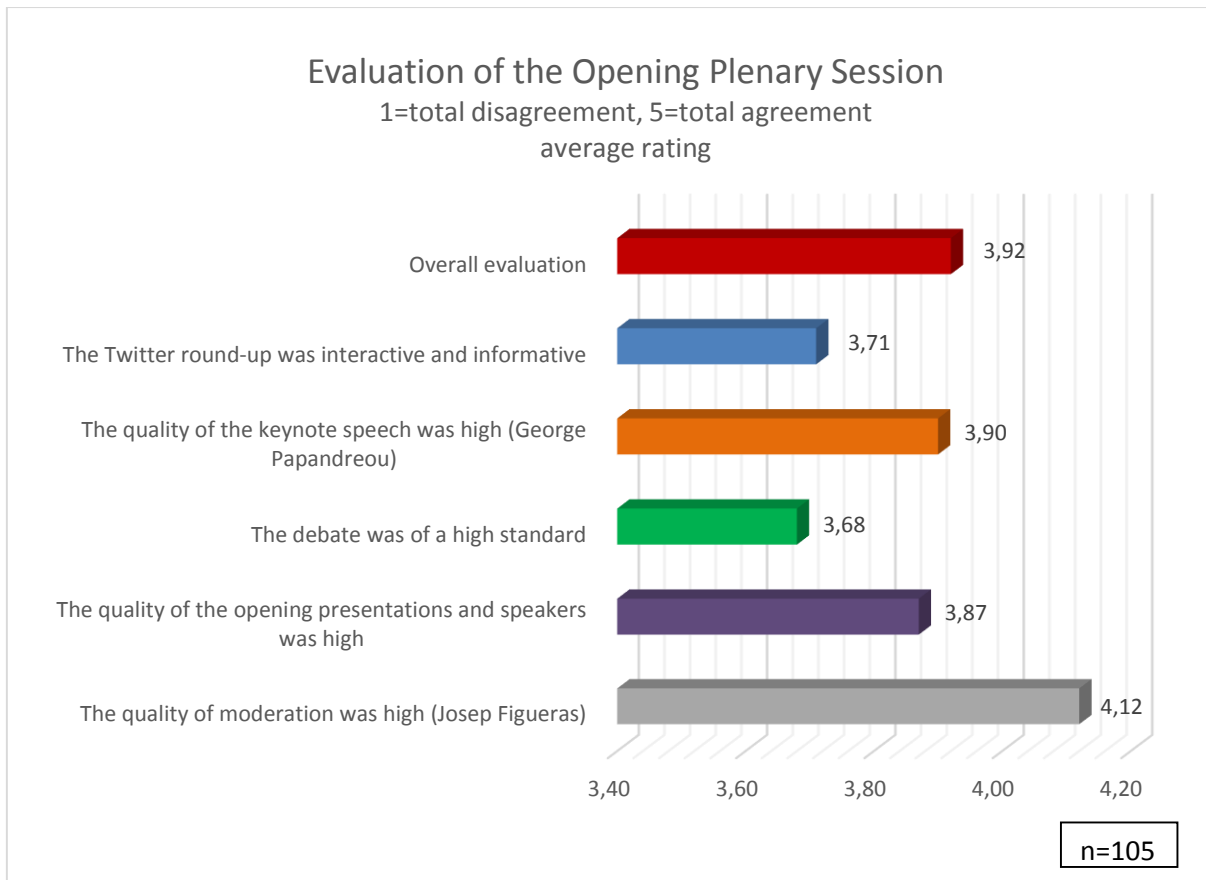


n=112

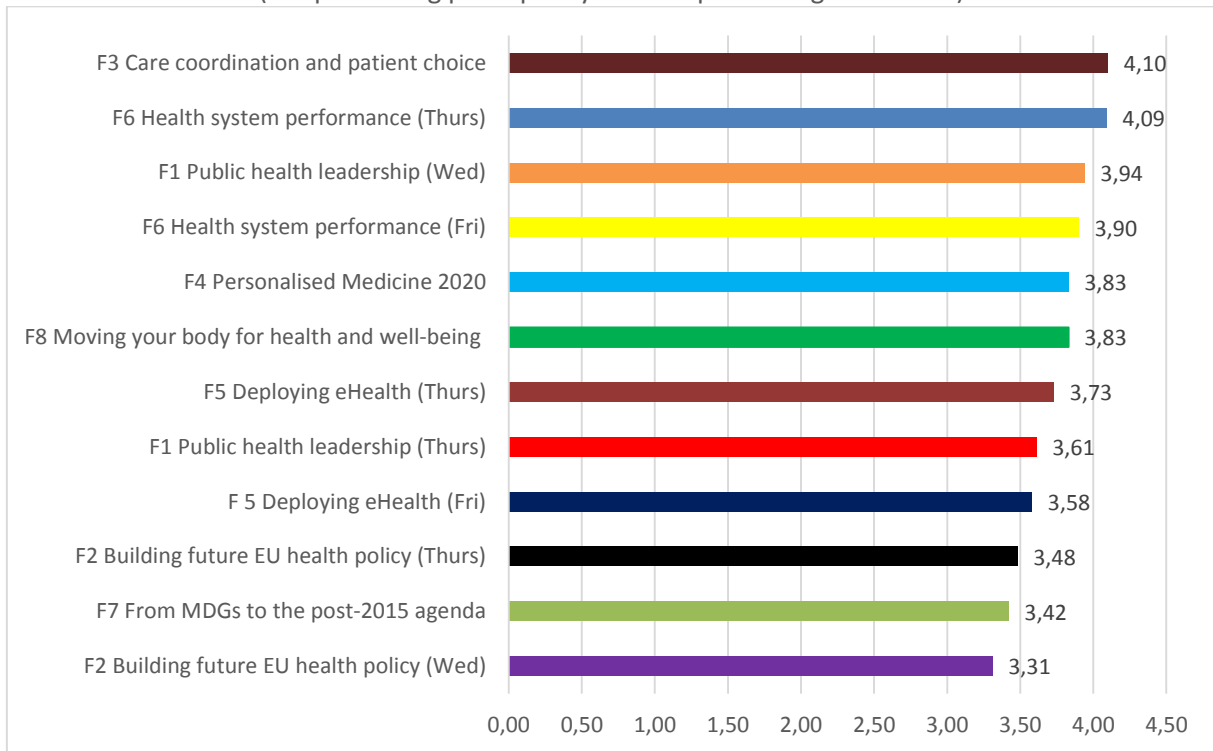
Factors of influence on decision to attend the EHFG 2014 1=no influence, 5=high influence



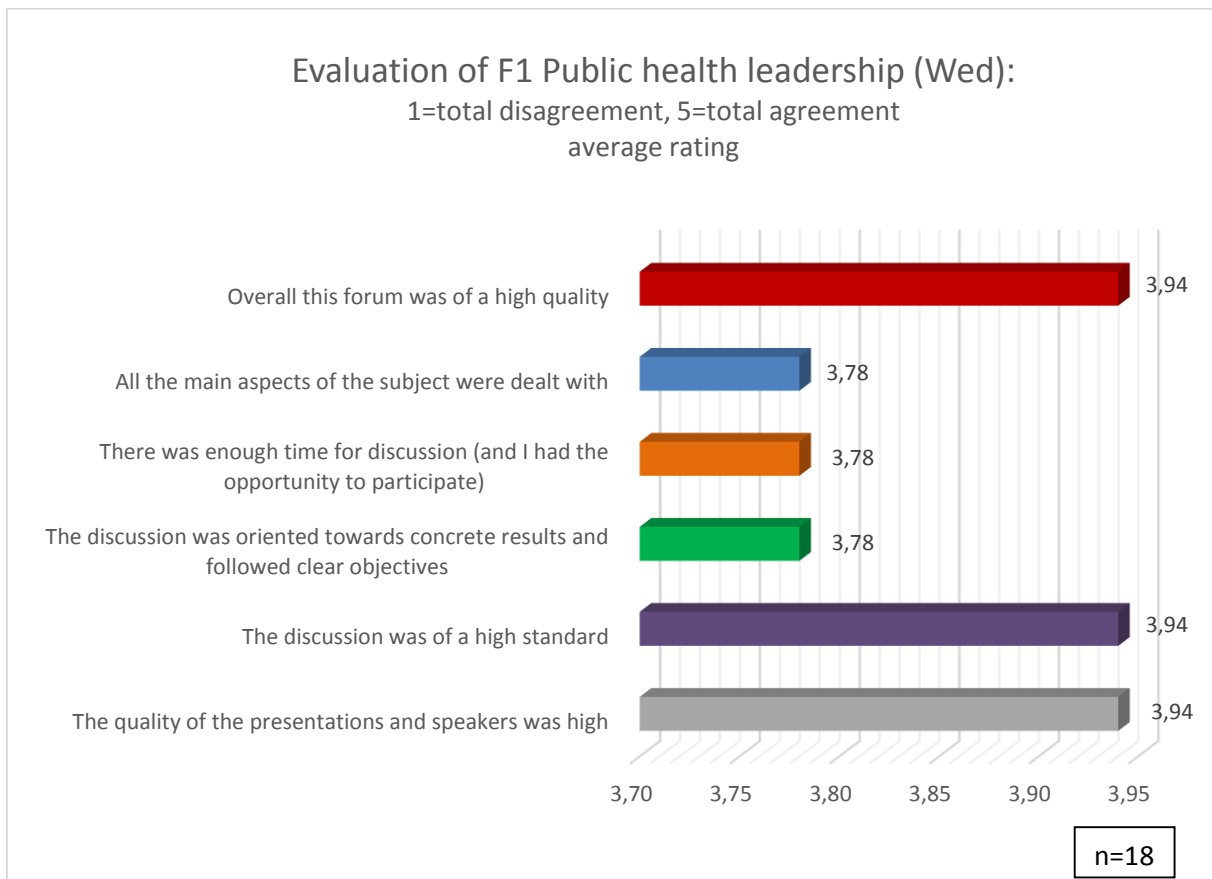
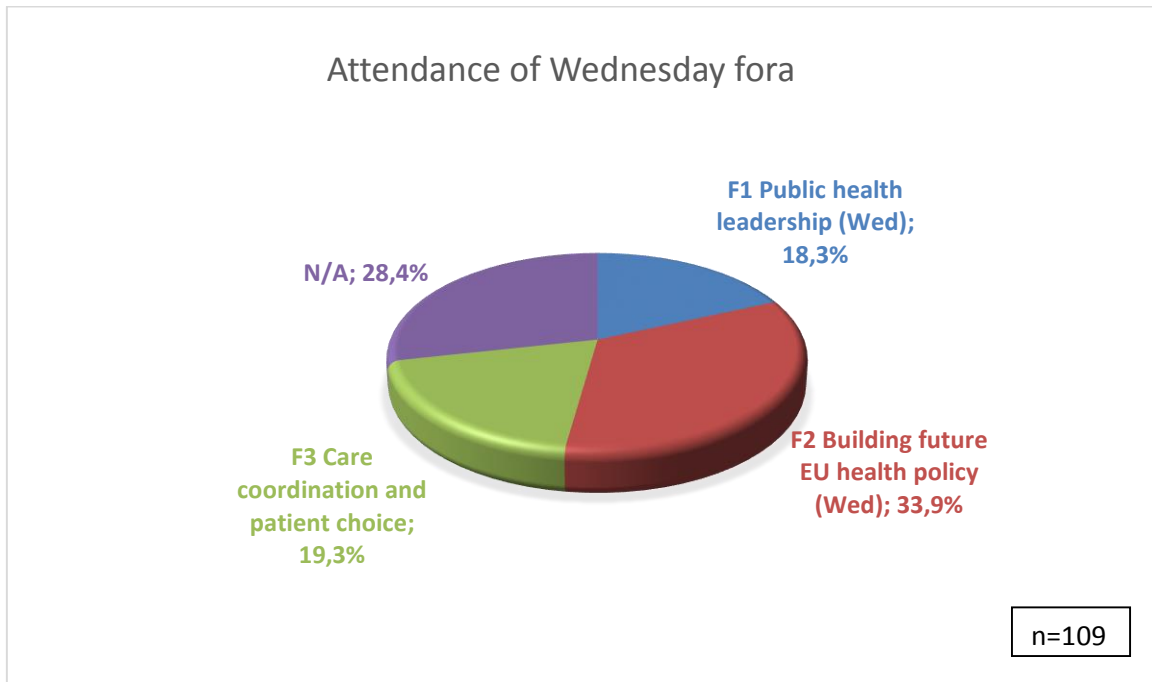
4. Evaluation of the Sessions – detailed analysis



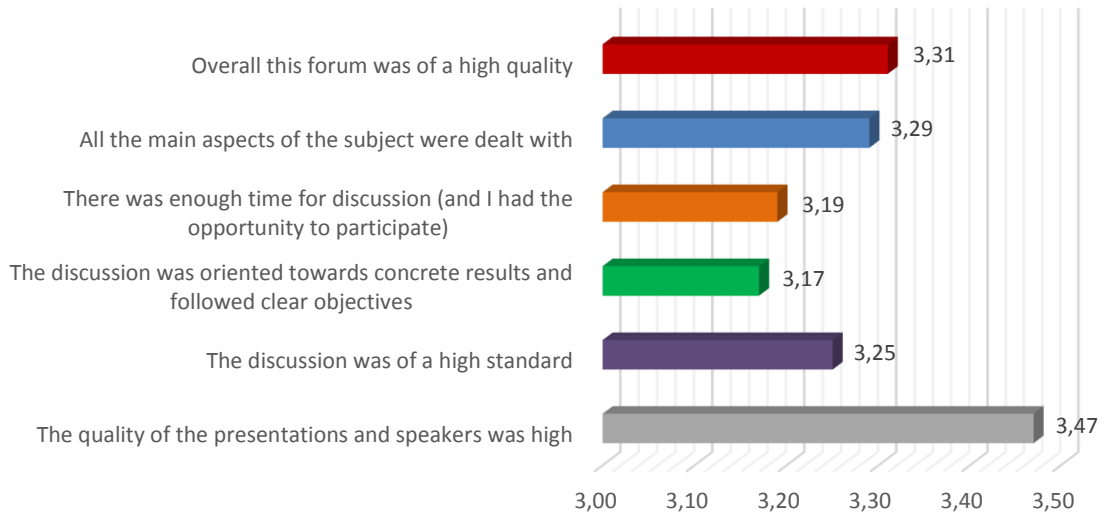
Average quality of the fora
(1 representing poor quality and 5 representing excellence)



4.1. Comparison between Forum 1 (Wed) – Forum 2 (Wed) – Forum 3

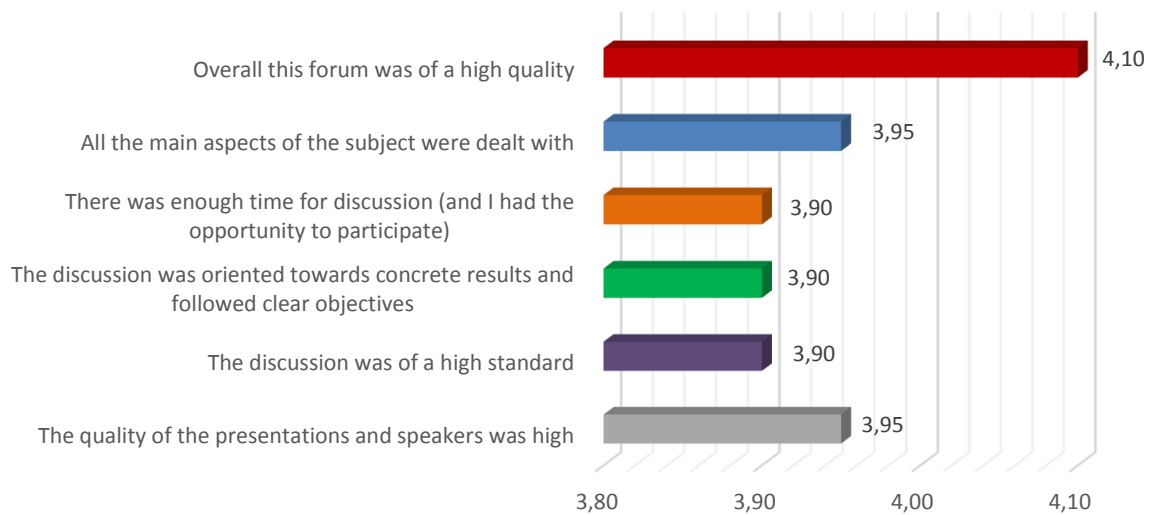


Evaluation of F2 Building future EU health policy (Wed):
 1=total disagreement, 5=total agreement
 average rating



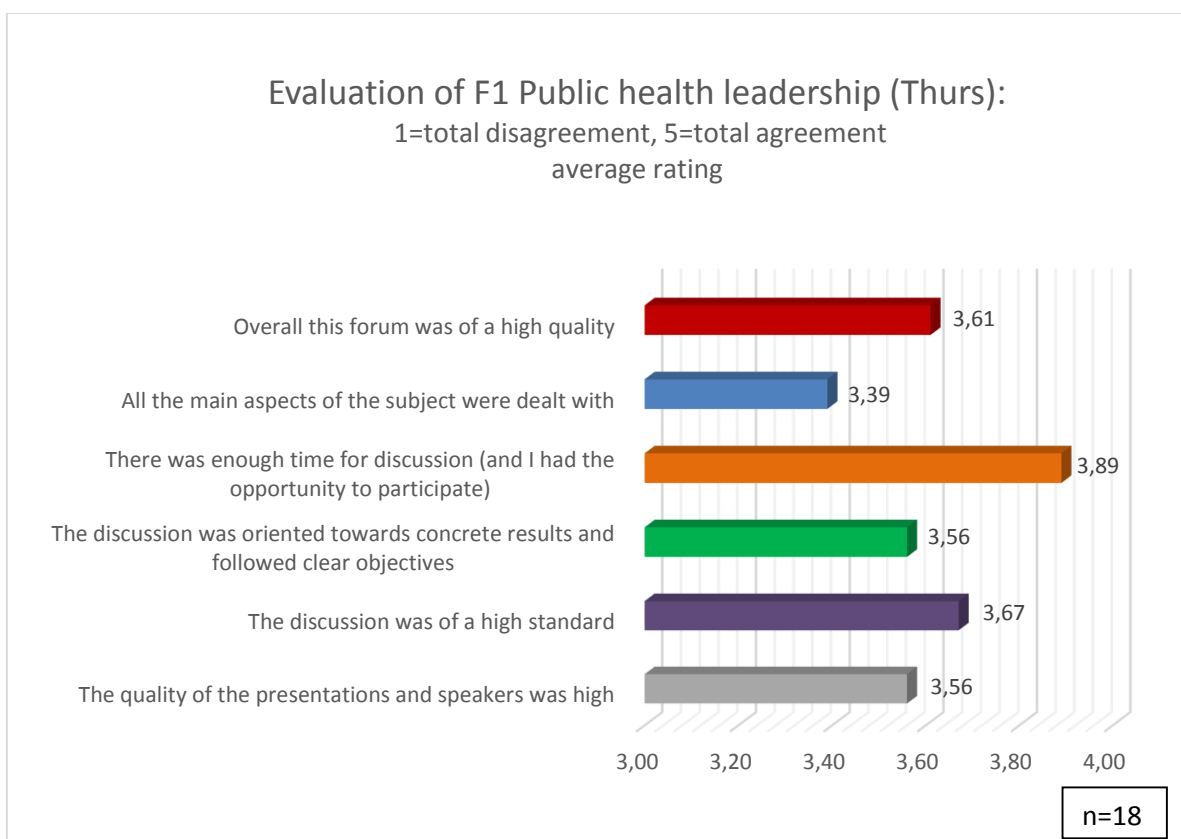
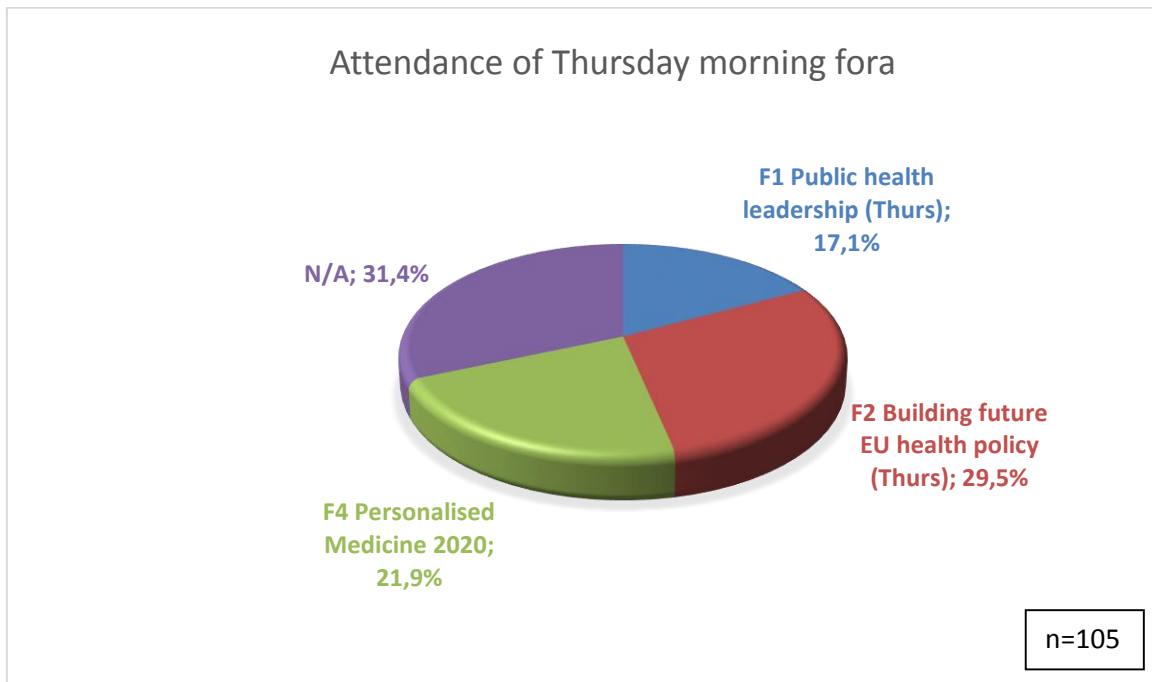
n=36

Evaluation of F3 Care coordination and patient choice:
 1=total disagreement, 5=total agreement
 average rating



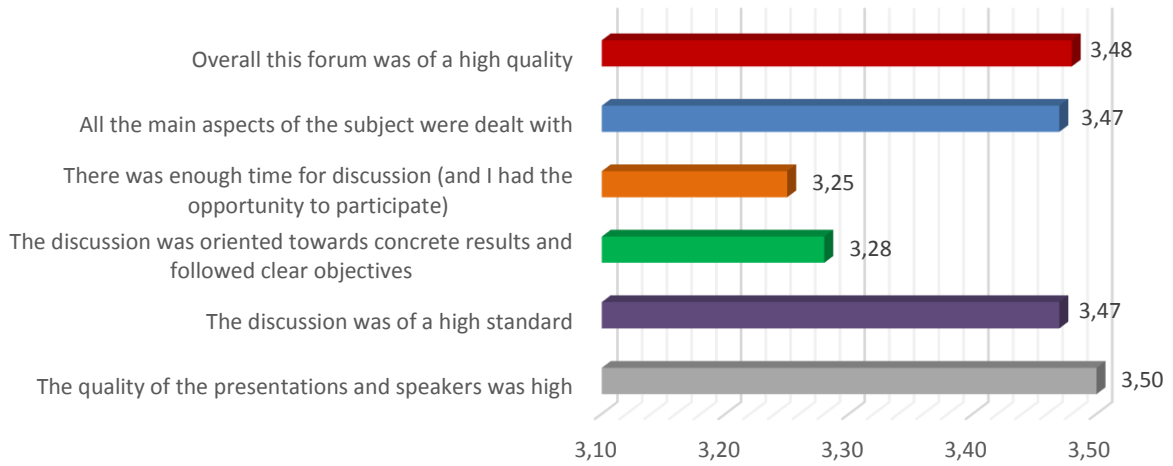
n=21

4.2. Comparison between Forum 1 (Thurs) – Forum 2 (Thurs) – Forum 4



Evaluation of F2 Building future EU health policy (Thurs):

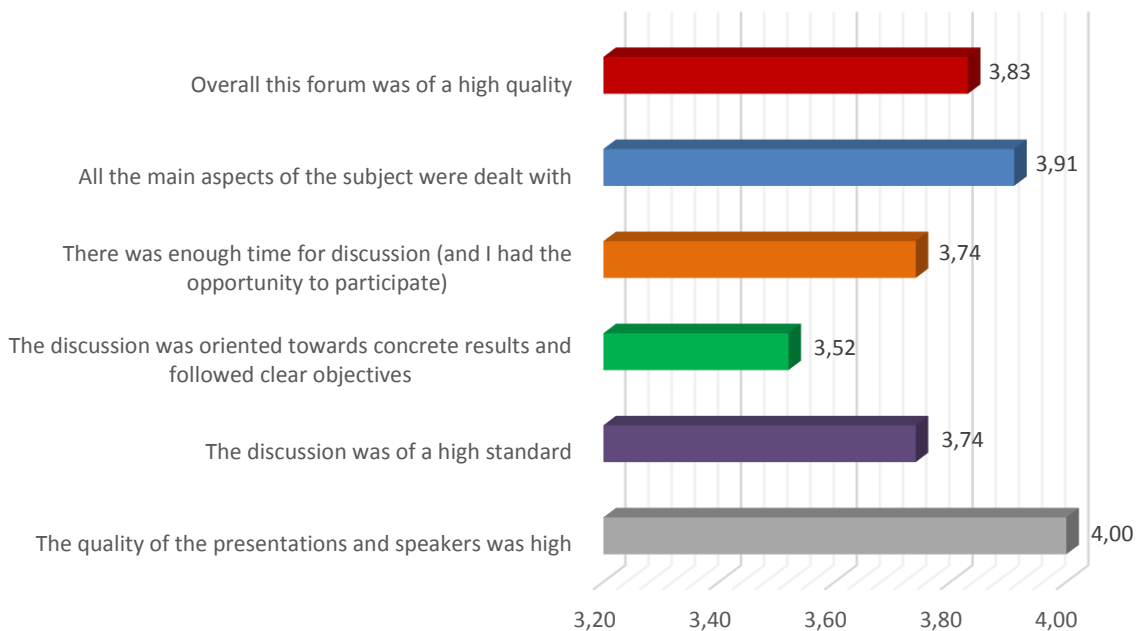
1=total disagreement, 5=total agreement
average rating



n=32

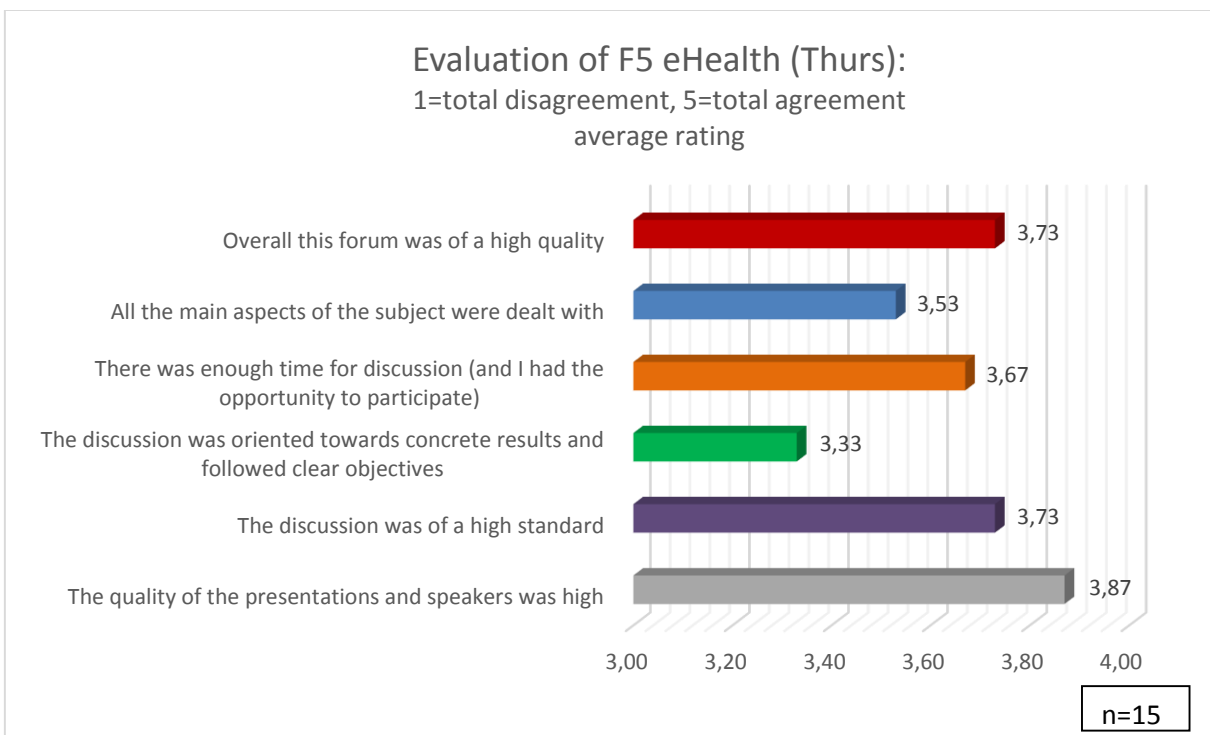
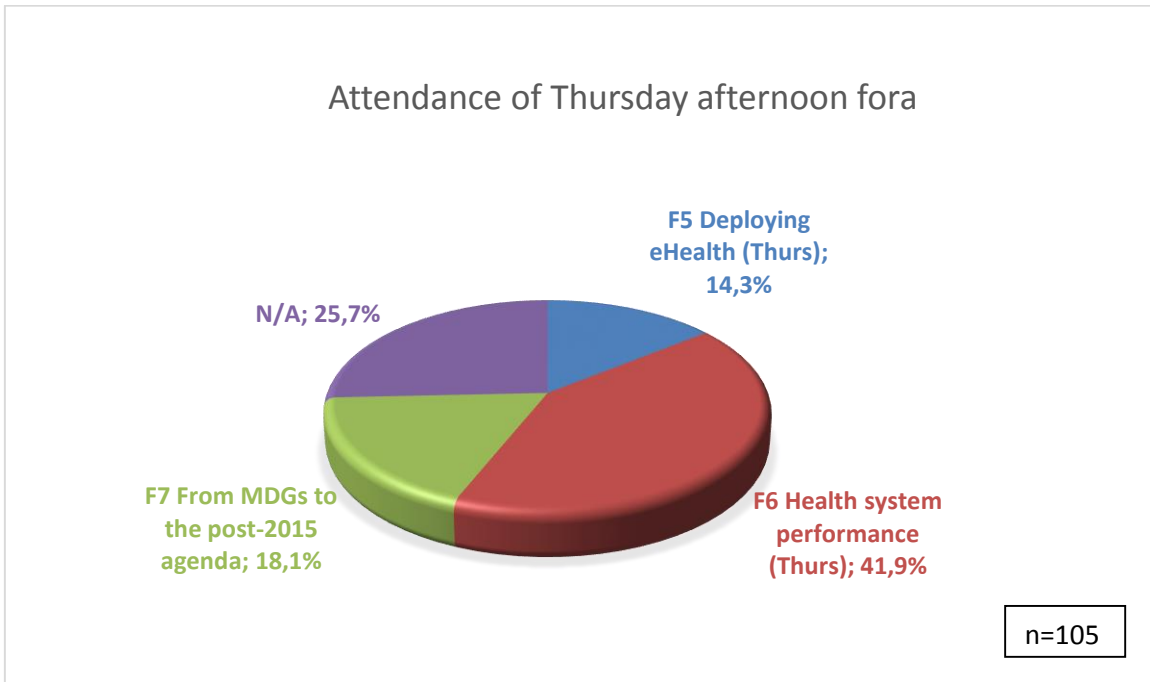
Evaluation of F4 Personalised Medicine 2020

1=total disagreement, 5=total agreement
average rating



n=23

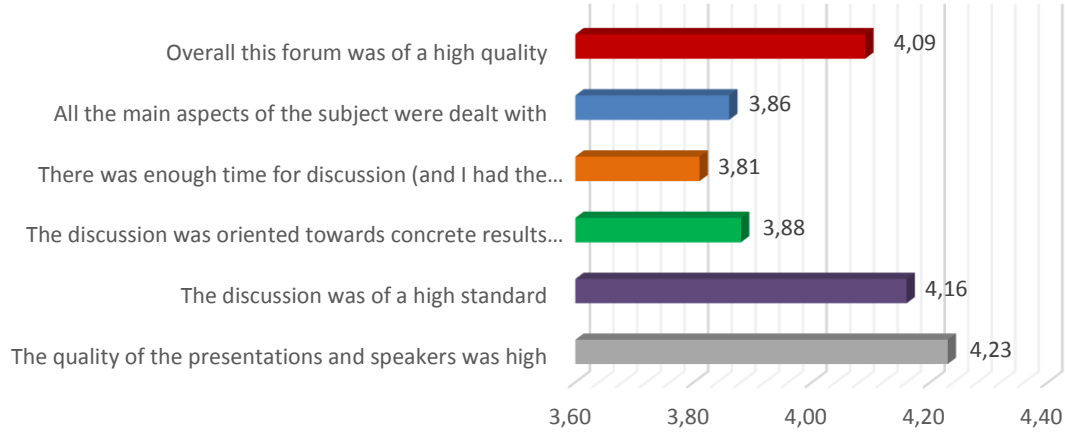
4.3. Comparison between Forum 5 (Thurs) – Forum 6 (Thurs) – Forum 7



Evaluation of F6 Health system performance (Thurs):

1=total disagreement, 5=total agreement

average rating

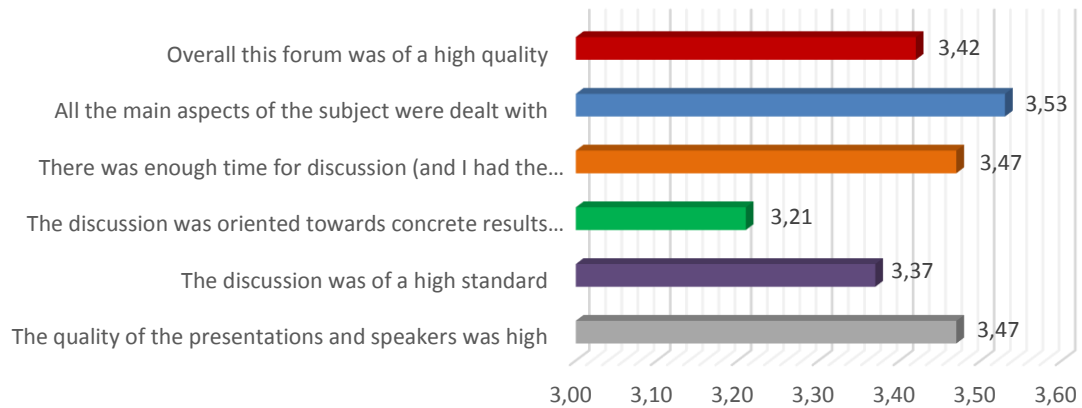


n=43

Evaluation of F7 From MDGs to the post-2015 agenda:

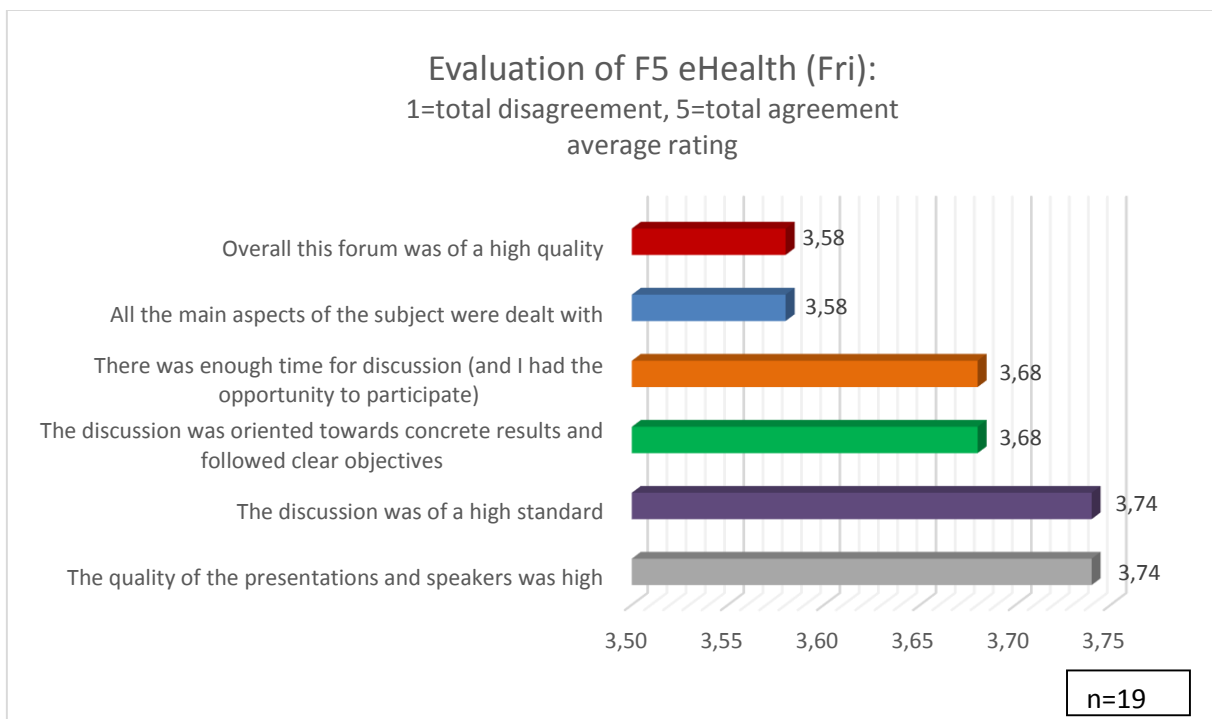
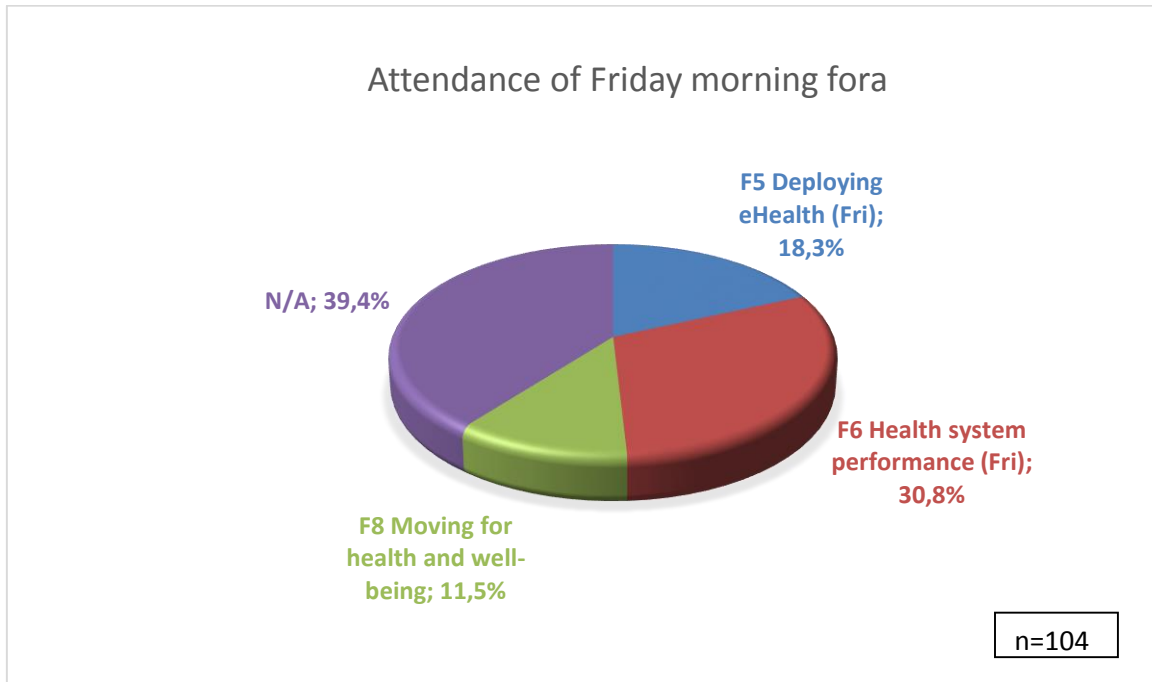
1=total disagreement, 5=total agreement

average rating



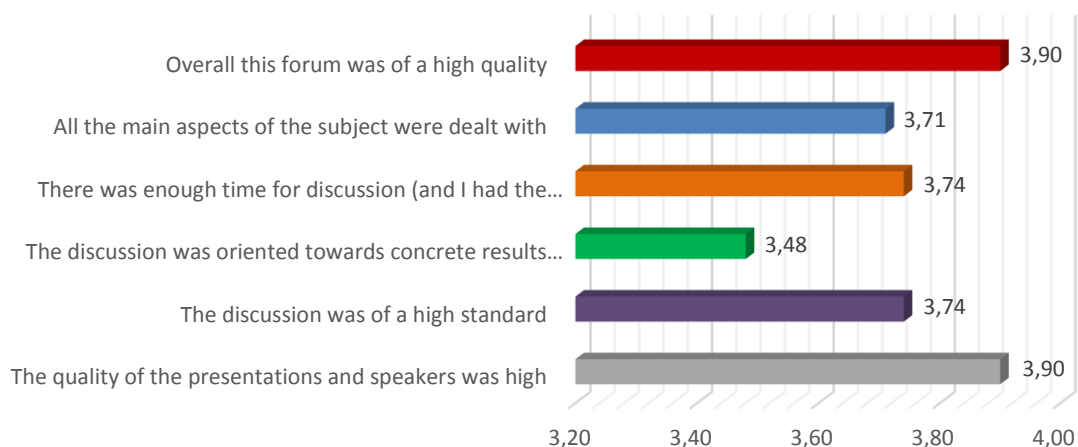
n=19

4.4. Comparison between Forum 5 (Fri) – Forum 6 (Fri) – Forum 8



Evaluation of F6 Health system performance (Fri):

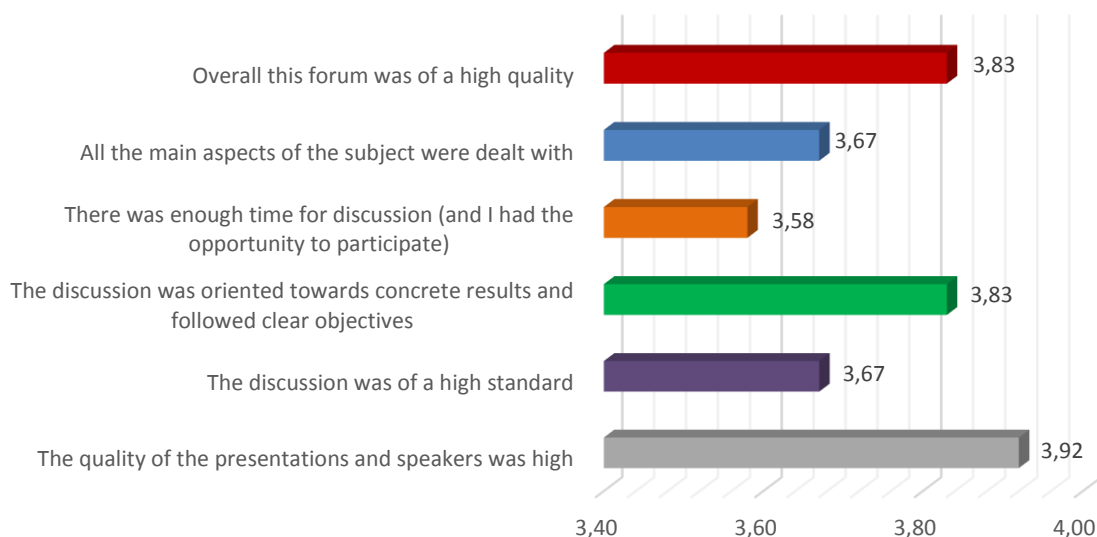
1=total disagreement, 5=total agreement
average rating



n=31

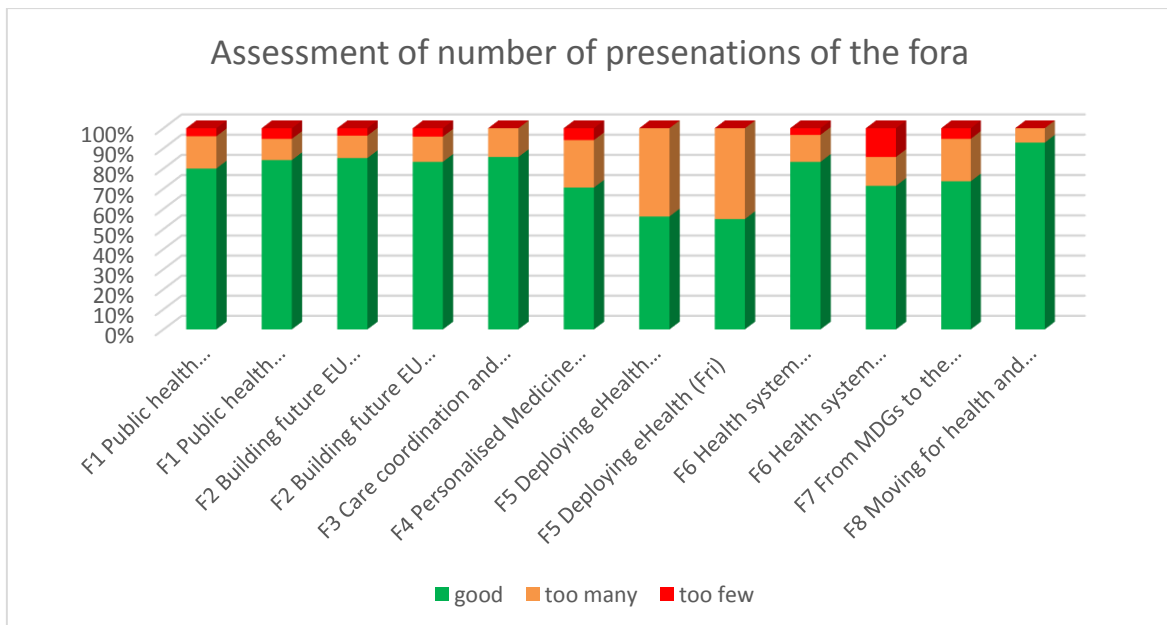
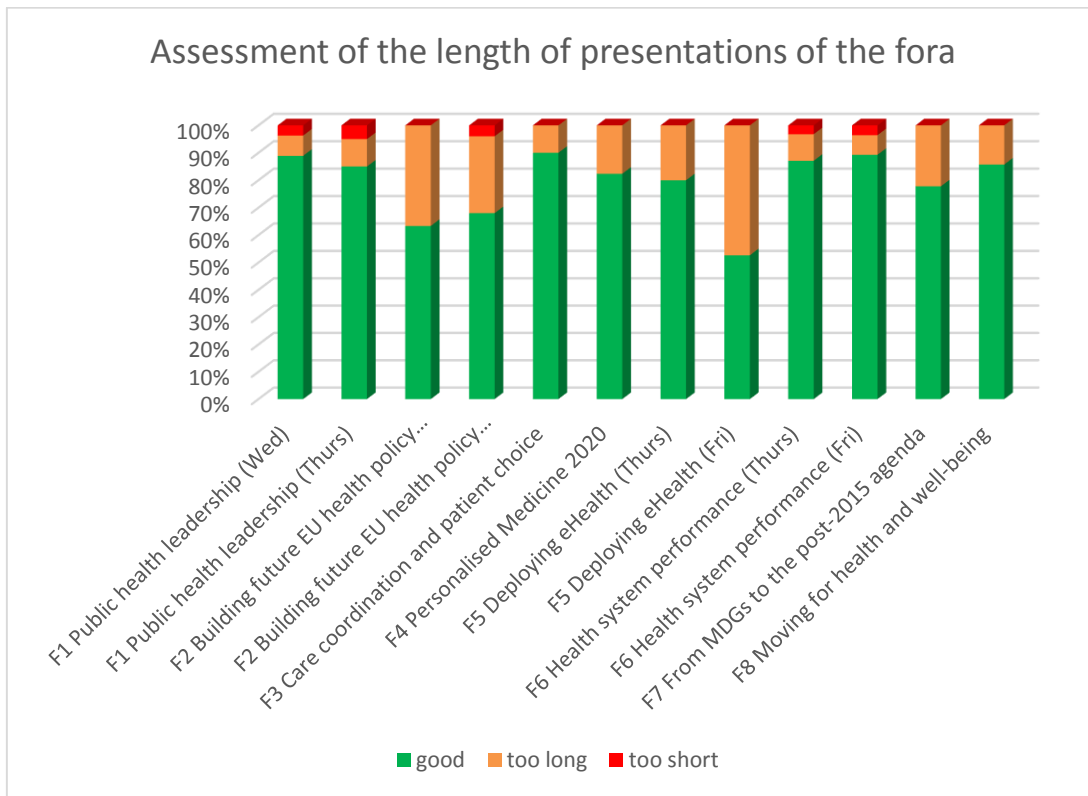
Evaluation of F8 Moving for health:

1=total disagreement, 5=total agreement
average rating

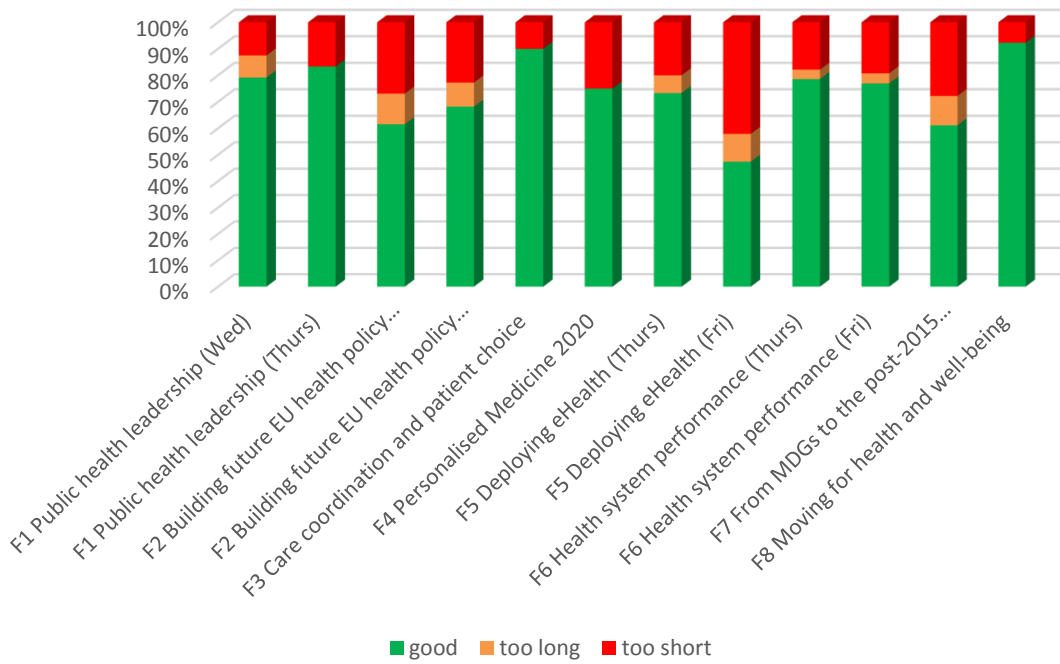


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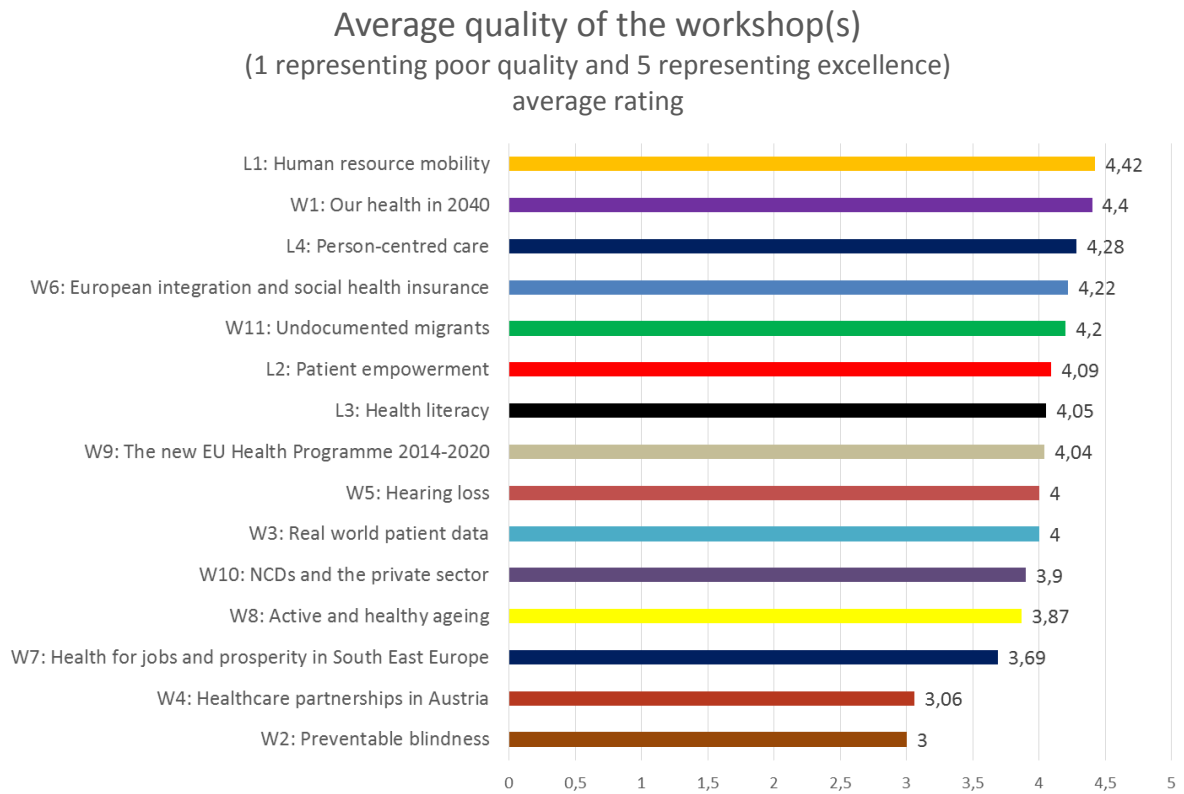
4.5. Comparison between all fora



Assessment of the time allocated for interactive discussion of the fora

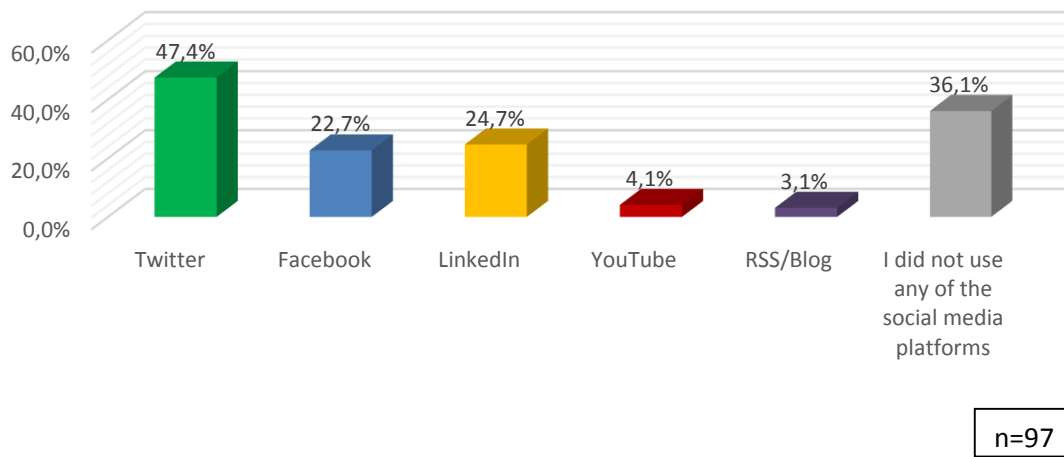


5. Evaluation of the Workshop Sessions

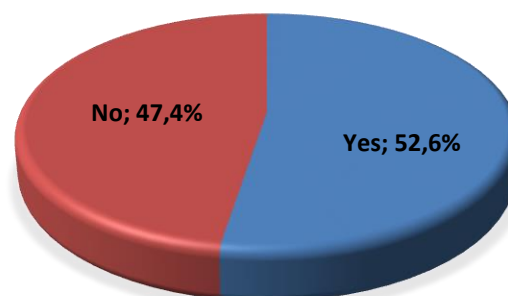


6. Social Media

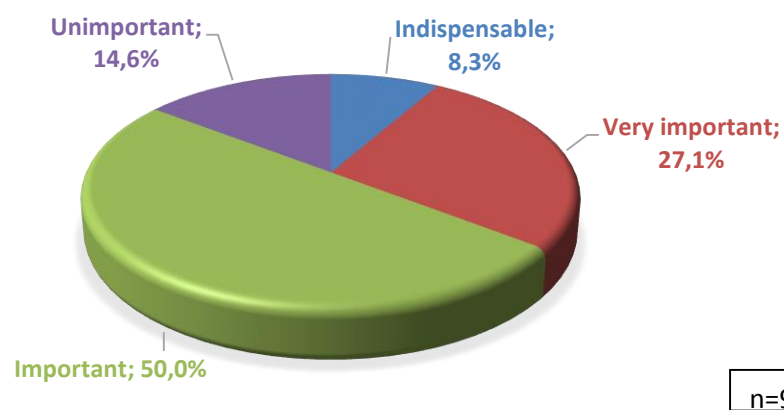
Usage of social media platforms at EHFG 2014



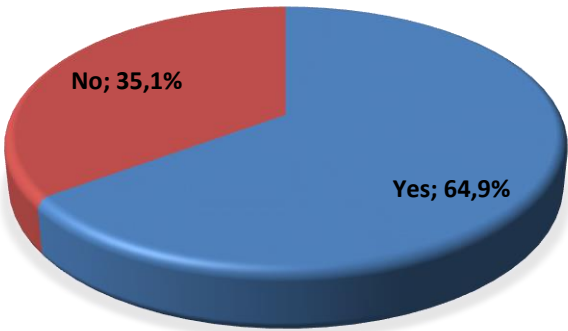
Followed the Twitter hashtag #ehfg2014?



Importance of social media to the EHFG conference

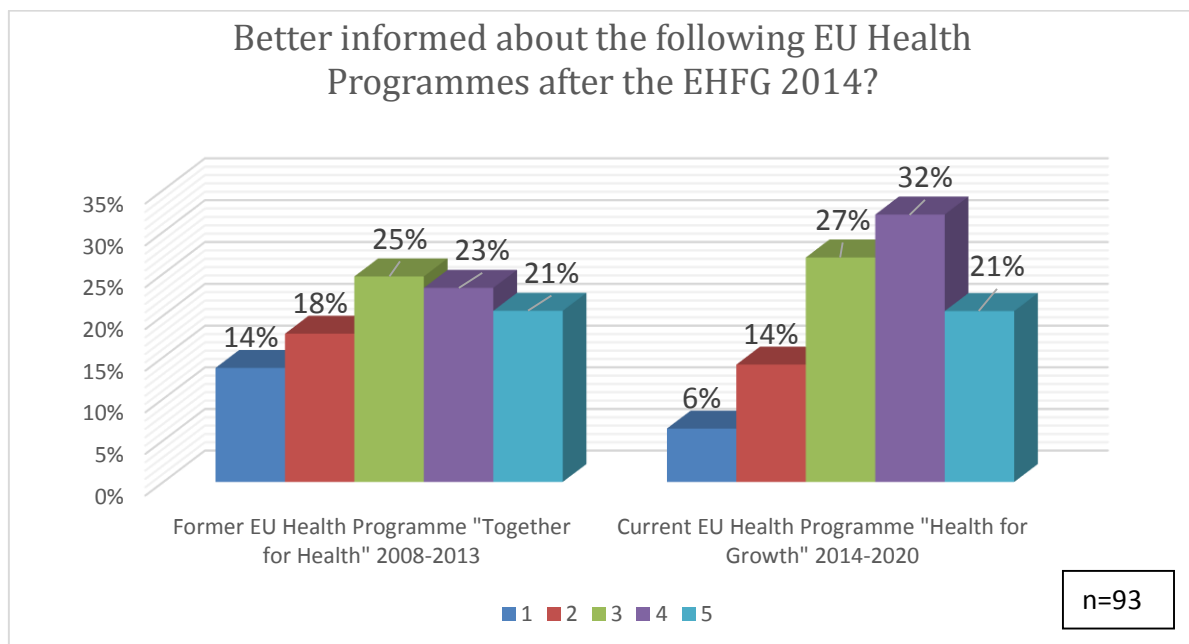
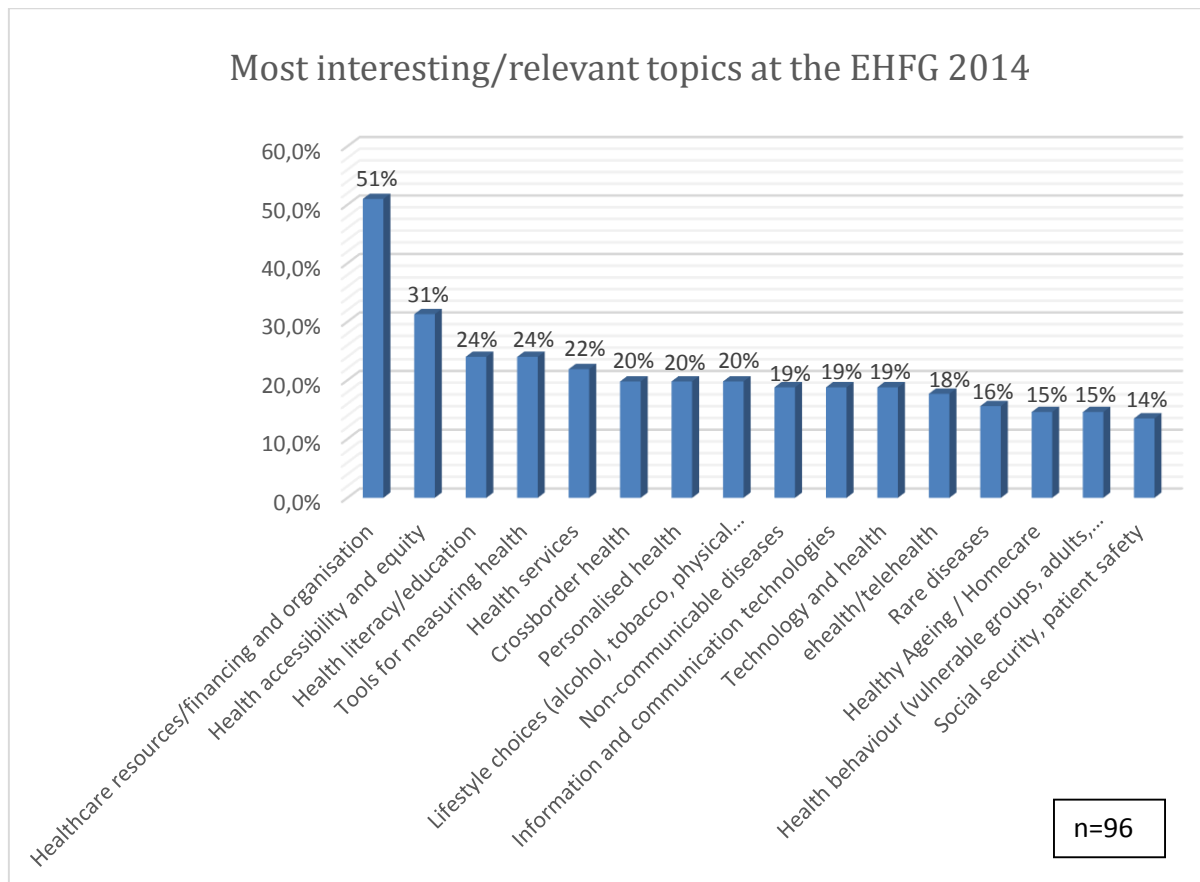


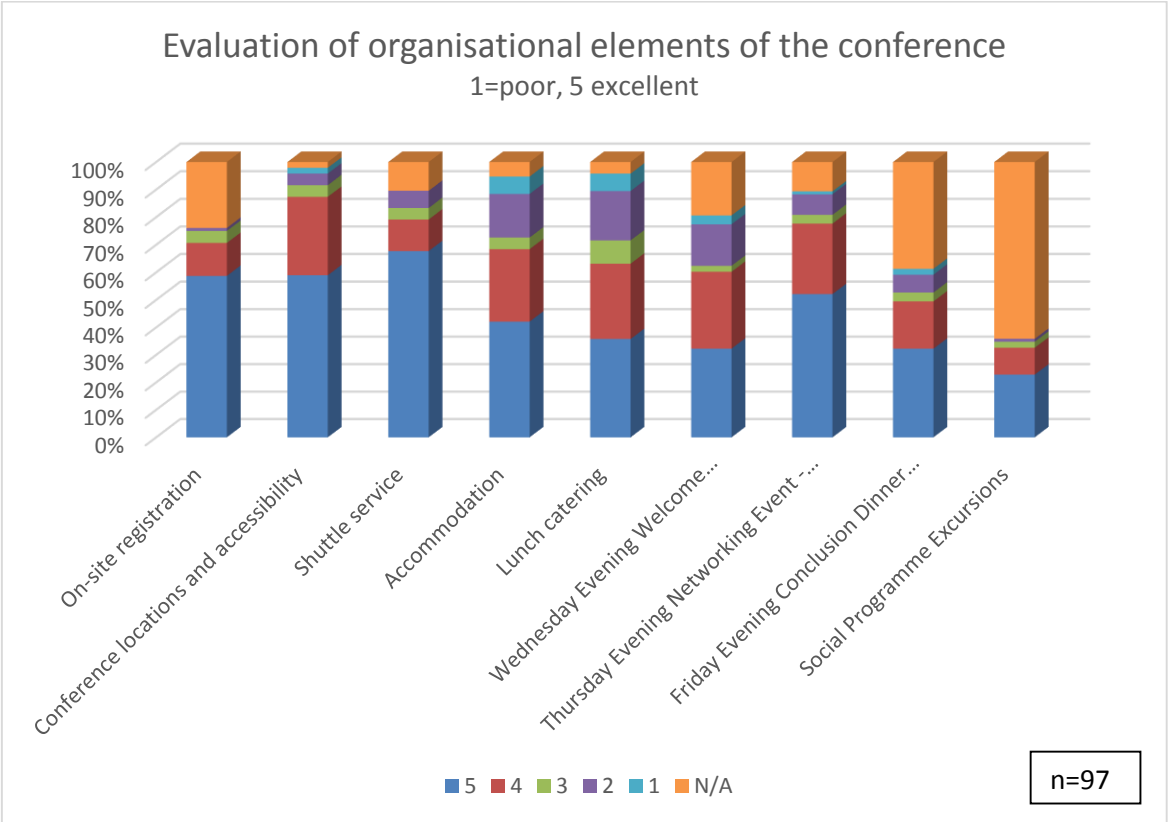
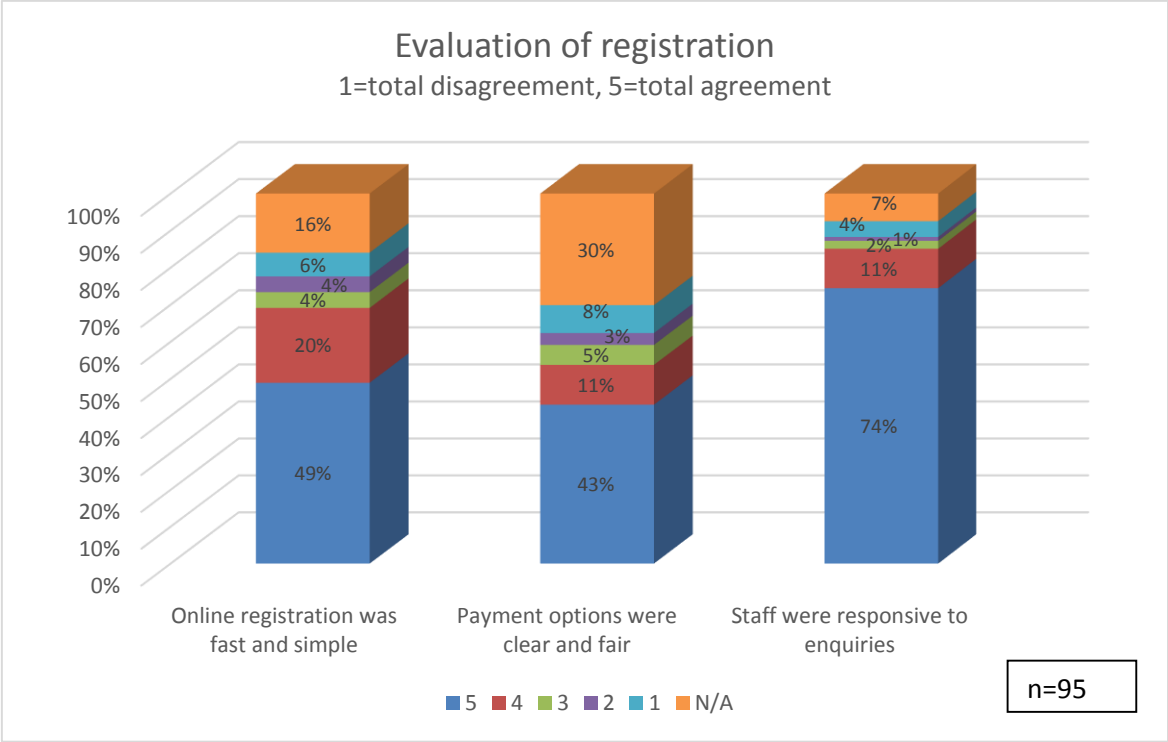
Intention to use any of EHFG social media between EHFG conferences



n=96

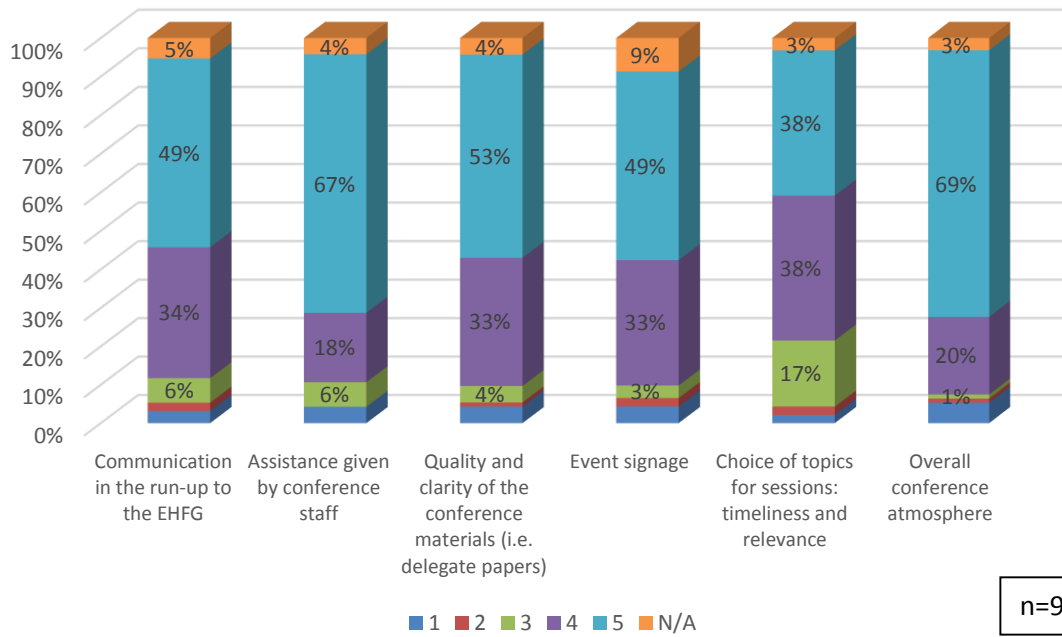
7. Thematic evaluation, registration, organisation and overall impression





Rating of conference organisation

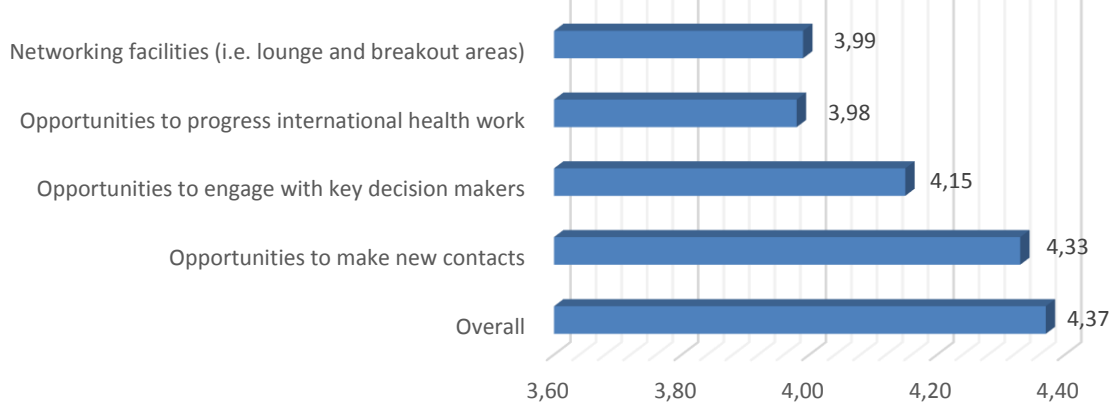
1=poor, 5=excellent



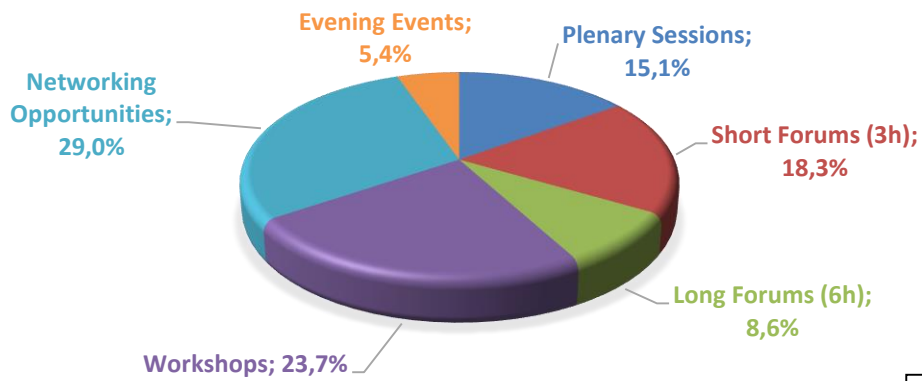
Rating of conference networking

1=poor, 5=excellent

average rating

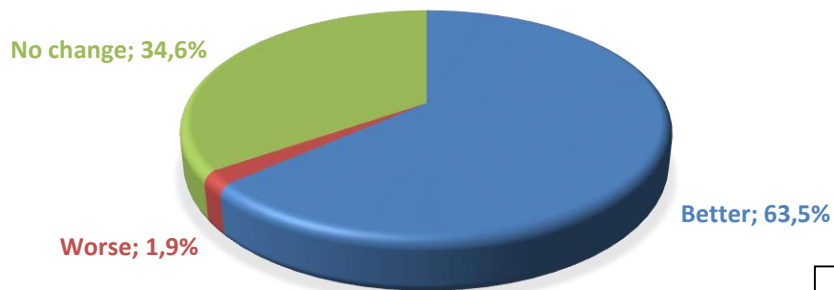


Most rewarding activities at the conference



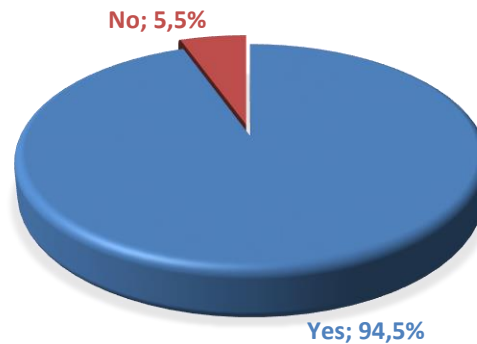
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Comparison to other EHFG conferences



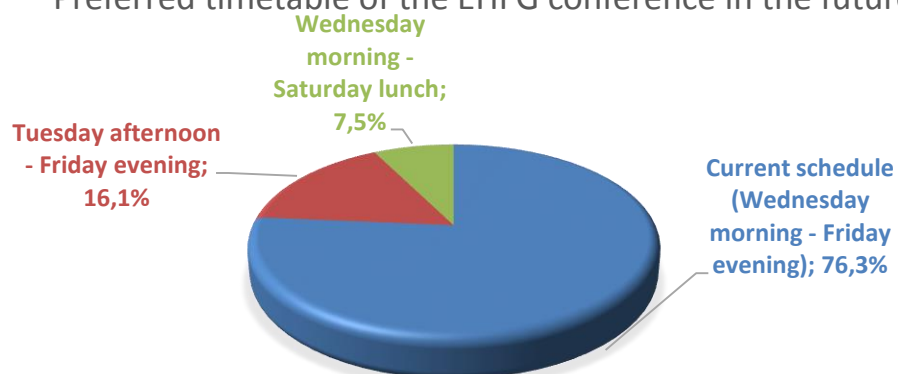
n=52

Would you participate in the conference again?



n=91

Preferred timetable of the EHFG conference in the future



n=93

8. Open Questions

Respondents were asked to give recommendations for how to improve the organisational aspects of next year's conference.

This question has been answered by 15 respondents. In conclusion several comments referred to the time management in the sessions. Speakers presented too long and breaks were too short. A main point of criticism was the poor quality of the WIFI internet connection. One person recommended to invite more speakers from outside the health sector i.e. from social NGOs, finance ministries or European Commission DG ECFIN and have more speaking slots for representatives of civil society and Young Gasteiners. Another recommendation was to view the names of the speakers/panellists on the screens. One respondent recommended to change the setting in conference room 2 because it gave a chaotic impression.

Regarding the content of the sessions, one person recommended to be clearer about the topic in advance to avoid mismatch between titles and actual presentation.

Respondents were asked what aspects of the conference exceeded their expectations.

This question has been answered by 29 respondents. Several comments were made concerning the very positive networking opportunities and the very positive atmosphere. Several comments were also made concerning satisfaction with different sessions/workshops such as the Plenary Session, the Young Forum Gastein Workshop on Wednesday and also the interactivity within the sessions/workshops (Forum 3). The provided written material as well as the contribution of participants in the debate were considered as positive aspects.

Very positive comments were given to the overall organisation and the conference staff such as the consideration of booking hotels close to the congress centre for participants with physical problems.

Respondents were asked what aspects of the conference did not meet their expectations.

This question has been answered by 28 respondents. Several comments were made regarding the bad WIFI internet connections. For some the sessions were too long and not innovative enough. In general, the time management was mentioned negatively (too little time for discussion, poor time management within the session) Furthermore, one person criticised that the content of the sessions he or she attended did not meet the information in the written material about the session. Another comment was that discussions were not “deep” enough and “too vague”. For one person, there was a lack of debate and critical analysis (“no room for opposing views”).

Two comments referred to the meals. For one person the catering was considered poor this year. For one person there was not enough vegetarian options and for another person there

was a lack of coffee and lunch. Additionally, one person commented that there was too little opportunity to sit while eating lunch and in the breakout areas in general. One comment referred to the accommodation. Breakfast should be excluded from the accommodation price.

Respondents were asked to share any final thoughts on their experience at EHFG 2014.

This question has been answered by 21 respondents. There were several very positive comments concerning the friendly staff, the flawless organisation, the cartoonist and the big importance of the conference to the health community.

However, there were also some negative comments. Here again, the bad internet connection was criticised by several people. Furthermore, one person commented that the travel to the venue was considered as too difficult. One person recommended to start later on Wednesday, so people do not have to travel to Gastein on Tuesday already and to save one extra night. One person would like to see more representatives from grassroots organisation and that they should be given a chance to speak at the conference. One comment referred to extending the age limit of 35 of the Young Forum Gastein. One person considered the moderation at this year's EHFG as much better, but would nonetheless like to see more interaction and debate "to move it from talking to actions".