



European Documentation Centres

Annual Activity Report 2018

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1. Introduction

This document reports on the activity of European Documentation Centre (EDC) members in 2018. It is based on the findings of the online TE Activity Survey, which ran from 14 January to 21 January 2019. During this period, email invitations and follow-up reminders were sent to encourage users to complete the survey.

All EU Member States except Lithuania and Luxembourg have EDCs. A total of 217 EDCs took part in the 2018 survey. This year's response rate (63 %) was much higher compared to last year's (49 %).

In this document, 'EDCs' refers to the EDCs of survey respondents.

2. Executive summary

Most EDCs (83 %) were set up more than 10 years ago. While 60 % of respondents' EDCs have signed the new Partnership Agreement, 18 % of the total intend to do so in the near future.

In 2018, the majority of EDCs (74 %) operated more than 30 hours per week and were staffed during these hours, while 97 % of EDC premises were also open to the public. During the same period, 62 % of the respondents' EDCs used their privileged access to the EU Bookshop to order large quantities of printed publications from the bulk order catalogue; 53 % did so fewer than four times a month.

A total 37 % of respondents reported that their EDC users sought information chiefly on economic/financial affairs, and 37 % also mentioned migration and home affairs. In terms of interest in the European Commission's political priorities, 51 % of respondents noted that their EDC users sought information on justice and fundamental rights. For the most part, the public submitted queries on EU issues at weekly or longer intervals.

In 2018, EDCs held training courses or events on European documentation and websites. About 15 % of respondents' EDCs organised an event on the 2019 European Parliamentary elections, while 18 % organised a Citizens' Dialogue in cooperation with the European Commission. Printed information material was the most useful support tool for Citizens' Dialogues, according to 35 % of respondents. In addition, 72 % of respondents indicated that their EDC would be prepared to organise Citizens' Dialogues if the European Commission were to provide the necessary logistics.

The support provided by their European Commission Representation was deemed sufficient by 91 % of survey respondents.

The findings also show that 70 % of respondents' EDCs participated in a meeting with other EDCs in their country, while 51 % participated in a regional event with Europe Direct Information Centres.

Also, 64 % of respondents' EDCs used social media platforms in 2018. The dissemination of promotional material was the most popular activity, undertaken by 46 % of respondents' EDCs.

3. Respondents

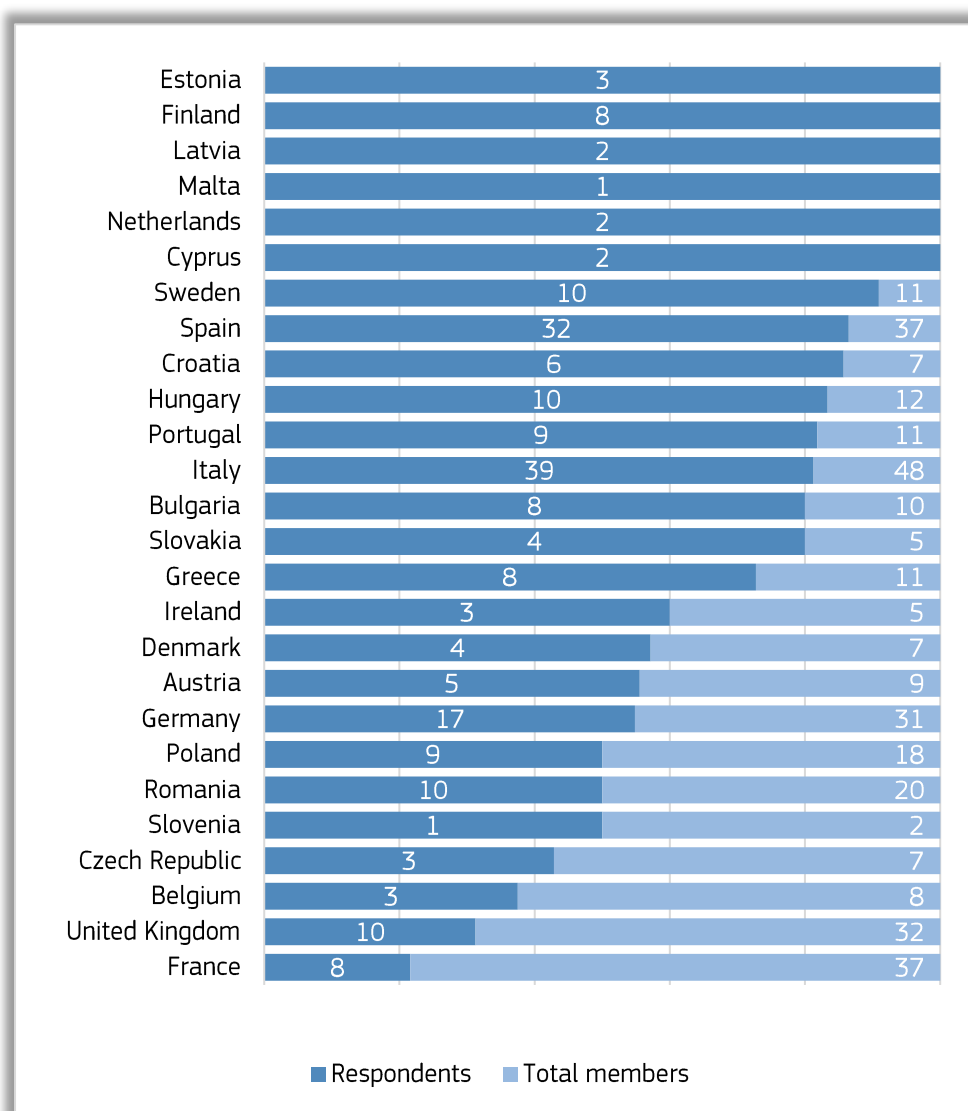


Figure 1: Survey response rate

The overall response rate of the survey was 63 %, with all network countries being represented in the results. Response rates per country range from 22 % (France) to 100 % (Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands and Cyprus).

4. Premises and staff

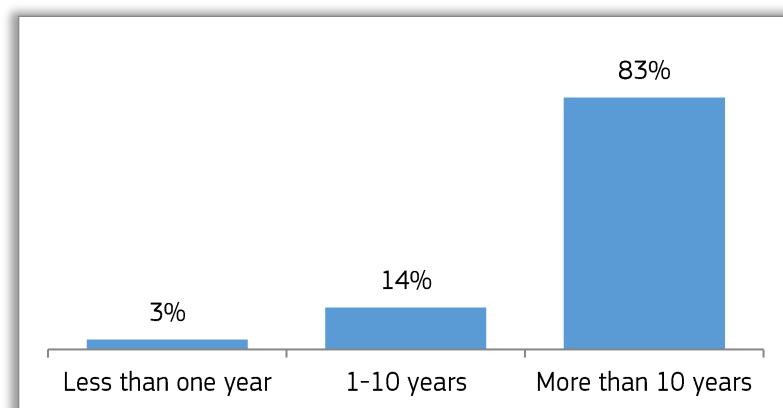


Figure 2: Years of existence

A large majority of respondents' EDCs (83 %) have been up and running for more than 10 years. About 60 % of the total have signed the new Partnership Agreement. 40 % of total respondents have not signed it, while 18 % intend to do so in the near future.

Limited capacity in terms of staff and resources was the principal reason given by this group for not signing up to the new Partnership Agreement. The impending withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (i.e. Brexit) follows as the principal reason for UK EDCs for not ratifying the agreement.

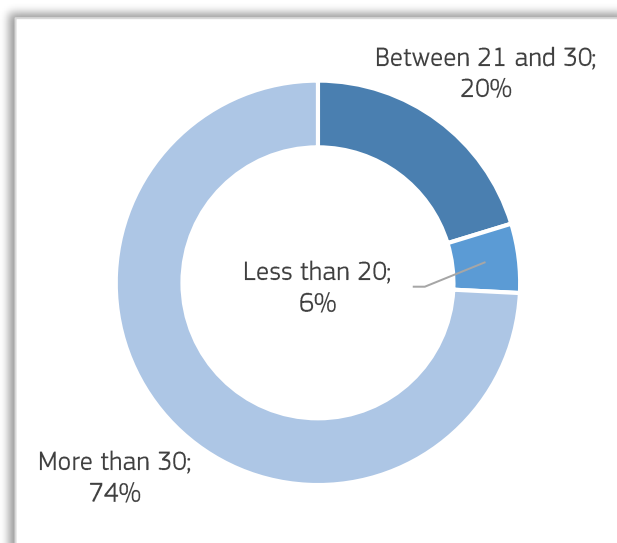


Figure 3: Number of hours per week the EDC was open

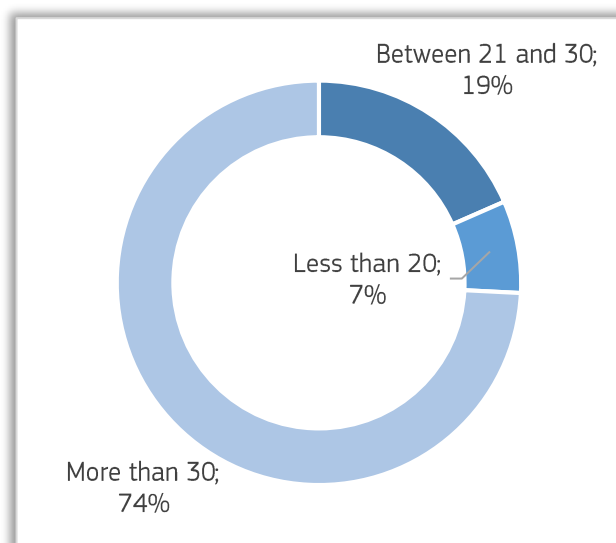


Figure 4: Number of hours per week EDC staff were present

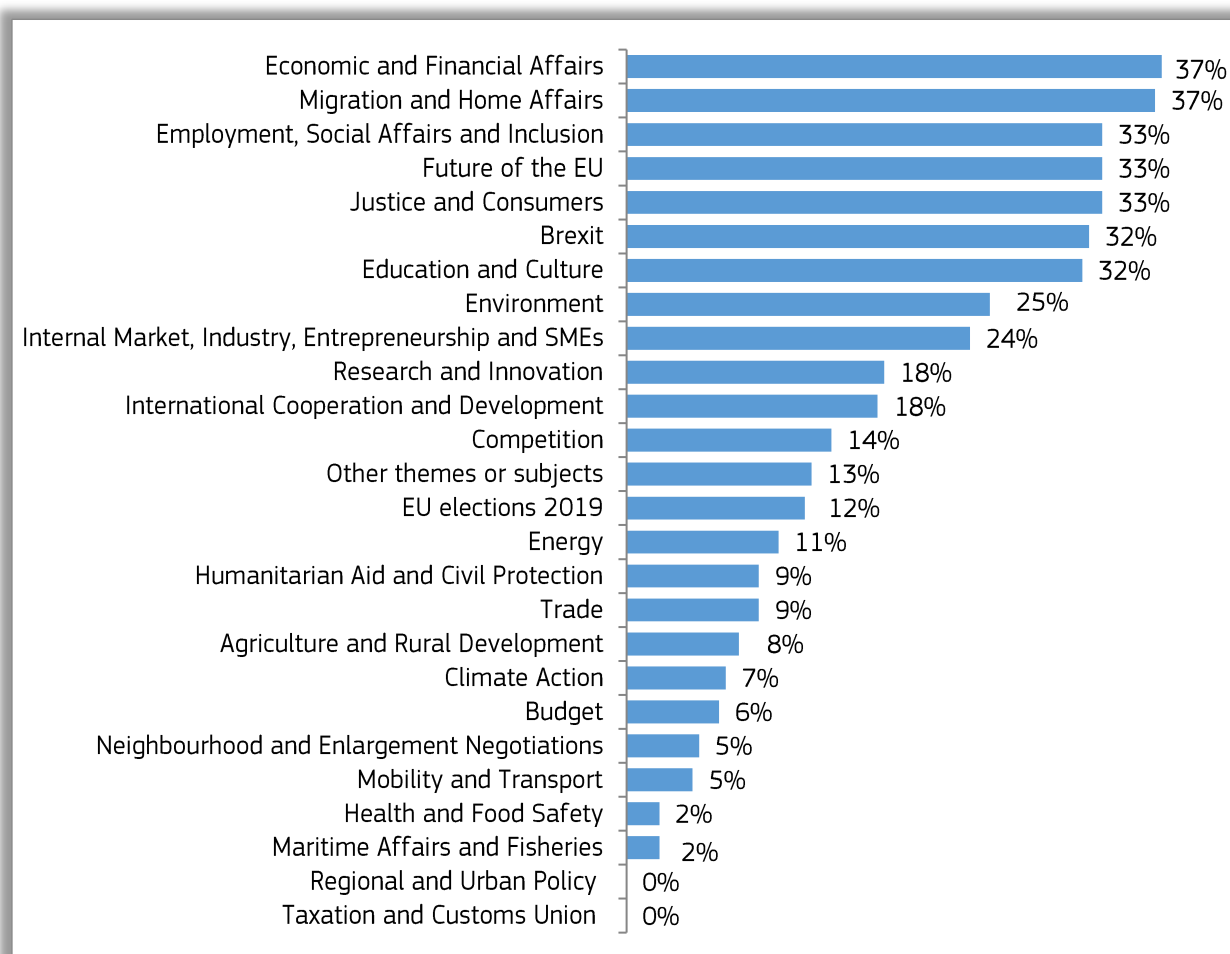
An equal percentage (74 %) of respondents' EDCs were open more than 30 hours per week and had staff present during this time. Most EDC premises (97 %) were accessible to the public.

Table 1: EDCs' use of privileged access to the EU Bookshop

Number of times EDCs use their EU Bookshop privileged access	No of responses	% of total
Less than four times per month	114	53 %
Four or more times per month	20	9 %
None	83	38 %

The findings show 62 % of the respondents' EDCs used their privileged access to the EU Bookshop to order large quantities of printed publications from the bulk order catalogue. The frequency with which they did so is shown in Table 1.

5. Studies/research assistance

**Figure 5: Areas in which users of the respondents' EDCs sought information**

In 2018, the areas in which the largest percentage of EDC users sought information (37 % for each area) were:

- a) economic and financial affairs
- b) migration and home affairs.

Some 13 % of survey respondents also mentioned other areas. European law was the most common (6 % of the total respondents).

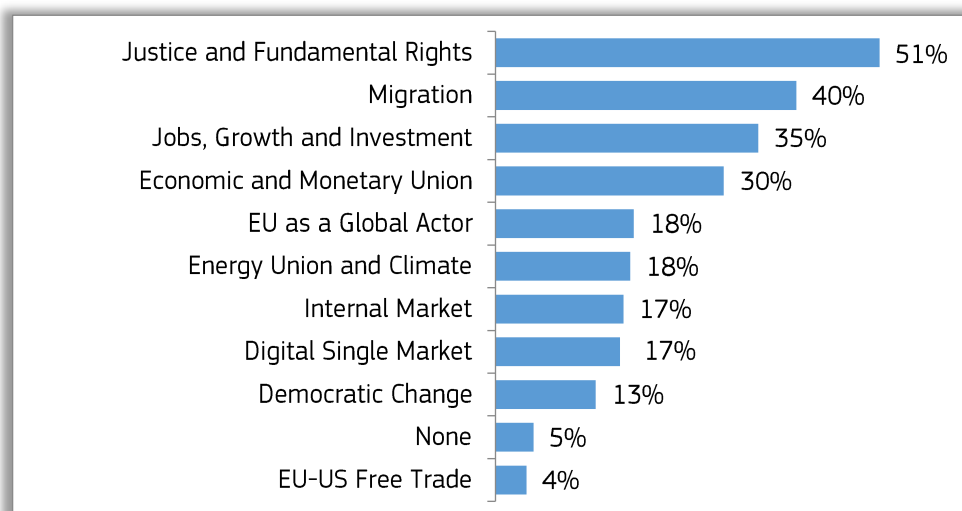


Figure 6: European Commission political priorities that EDC users enquired about

As regards interest expressed in the European Commission's political priorities, 51 % of respondents said most EDC users sought information about justice and fundamental rights, followed by migration (as per 40 % of respondents).

6. Training, outreach events and collaboration with other networks

The training courses or events that respondents' EDCs organised in 2018 focused on European documentation and websites. In fact, this was the case for 100 % of respondents' EDCs. No other topic was mentioned in this context.

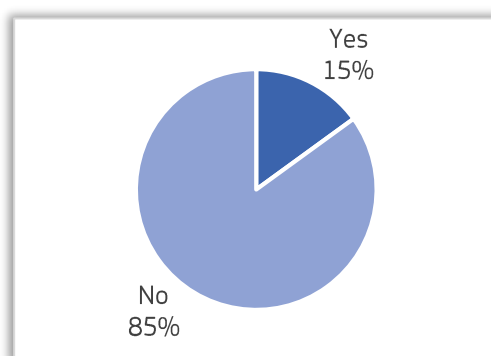


Figure 7: In 2018, have you organised any event on the 2019 European Elections?

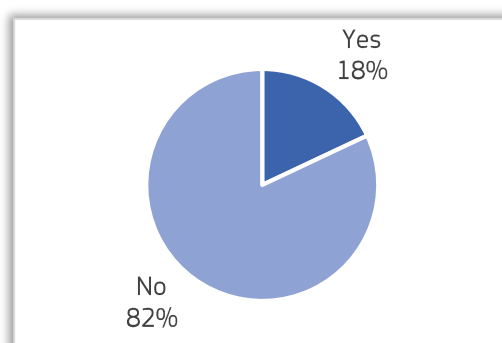


Figure 8: In 2018, have you organised a Citizens' Dialogue in cooperation with the European Commission?

About 15 % of respondents' EDCs organised an event on the 2019 European Parliamentary elections (as shown in Figure 7), while 18 % organised a Citizens' Dialogue in cooperation with the European Commission (as shown in Figure 8). Citizens' Dialogues took various forms, as evidenced in the (unedited) answers provided on page 8.

'5-7 April 2018, "European Youth Debate" organised by European Generation, a Bocconi student association: it was an international meeting of students discussing about different European topics with the participation of experts on EU institutions and fields.'

'Citizen's Dialogue, with the Director-Generals Ms Themis Christophidou and Mr Timo Pesonen, at the university. The primary focus of the event was the European elections 2019 and on Erasmus mobility.'

Different types of events were organised on the 2019 European Parliamentary elections, as described in the (unedited) answers below:

'Activities with first time voters to discuss the importance of vote and a discussion on the future of Europe and the expectations of the young people.'

'EDC Malta participated in two transnational dialogues on the upcoming European elections between Malta and Italy, one of which (in Malta) it was a co-host. This project is about putting together a trans-national audience of about 150 citizens who agree to participate in three successive events: the first took place in Palermo in July 2018, the second in October 2018 in Malta and the third will be held in Trapani in March 2019.'

'CDE_SNSPA was involved in organizing the event related to the launch of the „A New Narrative for EU Elections and Beyond: How to Engage Youth” project, financed by the European Commission within ERASMUS+ project. The project takes place between September 2018 – November 2019. The participants of the launching event visited the CDE_SNSPA and received information regarding the collections, the services offered, and the activities.'

'[We] are going to carry out a joint campaign based on the institutional campaign #ThisTimeImVoting. During the month of February/March, the different campuses of the Universities of Girona will place this material (15,000 placemats). An Afterwork will be held where, in addition to the European institutions, the UdG Youth Association Debate League will be involved, and the central theme will be the 2019 elections.'

'-EU elections website.

-Debate in collaboration with other European Information Centre

- Information for young students of University.'

Overall, the respondents' EDCs that have signed the new Partnership Agreement organised more events in 2018. They also appeared more willing to organise Citizens' Dialogues in the future, provided they receive support from the European Commission. Moreover, respondents' EDCs that have signed the agreement tended to have more systematic working relations with other Europe Direct networks in 2018.

The most useful support tool for a Citizens' Dialogue was mainly printed information material (35 %), followed by social media (29 % of respondents).

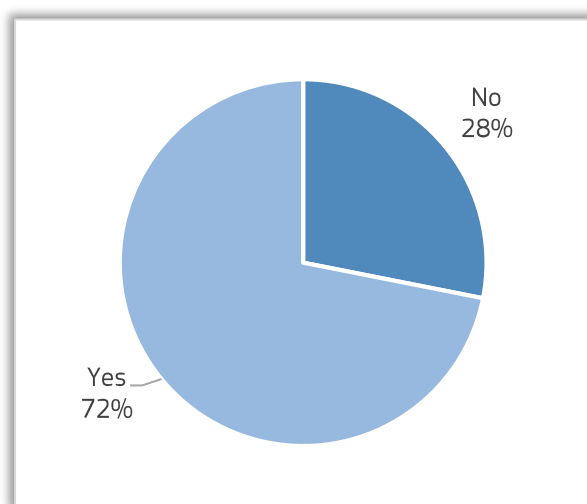


Figure 9: Would respondents' EDCs be prepared to organise Citizens' Dialogues if the European Commission supports them in terms of logistics?

A majority (72 %) of the total respondents indicated that their EDC would be prepared to organise Citizens' Dialogues if the European Commission supports them in terms of logistics.

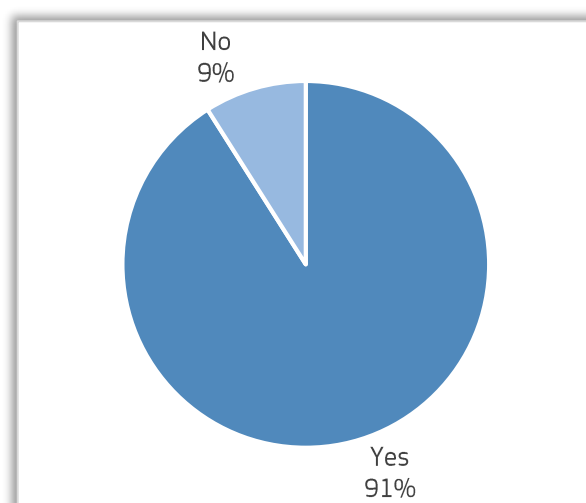


Figure 10: Do respondents feel the European Commission Representation in their country sufficiently supported their work as an EDC and sufficiently promoted the network?

An overwhelming majority of survey respondents (91 %) found that the European Commission Representation in their country sufficiently supported their work and the network. Respondents who stated the opposite (9 % of the total) noted that they would have appreciated national and international meetings for EDCs (this was a point raised mostly in this context, by 3 % of respondents). Additionally, they would have liked their country's European Commission Representation to help enhance the visibility of the EDC network.

Overall, 70 % of respondents' EDCs participated in a meeting with other EDCs in their country, organised by the local European Commission Representation. Also, 51 % participated in an event with Europe Direct Information Centres in their region.

Table 2: Ways of promoting the EDC within the host structure, city or region

Promotional activities	% of total
Dissemination of EDC promotional materials (newsletters, posters, etc.) to host structure departments	46 %
Organisation of events within the academic community of the host structure (if applicable)	32 %
Information on EDC activities included in host structure publications	30 %
At least one meeting a year with the management authority of the host structure	22 %
Organisation of outreach events for the public	16 %
Regular meetings with and provision of information on EU issues to host structure colleagues	12 %
Invitation to/involvement of host structure colleagues in EDC events	0 %
Promotion of EDC website or EDC web pages within the host structure	0 %

According to the survey findings, 64 % of respondents' EDCs used social media platforms in 2018. EDC promotion within the host structure, city or region took many forms, with the dissemination of promotional material being the most popular in 2018 (chosen by 46 % of total respondents). Table 2 lists the various promotional activities.

Table 3: Frequency of queries received by respondents' EDCs on EU issues from the public

Frequency	% of total
A few times a year	38 %
Daily	7 %
Monthly	25 %
Weekly	25 %
Never	5 %

Overall, EDCs received queries from the public only a few times a year, rather than on a daily basis.

7. Conclusion

The EDCs participating in the survey were, for the most part, senior members of the network (active for more than 10 years). In 2018, most of them were open and staffed for more than 30 hours a week. A majority of EDCs also participated in an EDC network meeting and used social media platforms.

The survey analysis and the input of the 91 % of respondents who consider the support of the European Commission Representation sufficient clearly indicate that an established network is in place. The data also suggest a widespread willingness to do more in terms of organising Citizens' Dialogues, provided the European Commission offers the necessary logistics support.

