



# European Documentation Centres

## Annual Activity Report 2019



## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Executive summary .....	3
3. EDC members.....	4
4. Activities .....	8
5. Cooperation with others .....	11
6. Conclusions .....	12
7. Annex 1. EDCs & the Conference on the Future of the EU .....	14

## 1. Introduction

This document reports on the activity of European Documentation Centre (EDC) members in 2019. It is based on the findings of the online EDC Activity Survey<sup>1</sup>, which ran from 6 to 20 March 2020. The 2019 survey included a new set of questions to reflect the EDC cooperation with other EU networks and organisations. It also included questions on the possible role of EDCs in the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe.

EDCs exist in all EU Member States except Lithuania and Luxembourg. 180 out of the 284 EDCs took part in the 2019 survey. The response rate was thus relatively high (63 %), on par with last year's report in spite of the COVID-19 situation.

## 2. Executive summary

Most EDCs managers have been managing their EDC for more than 5 years. While 73% of EDCs have already signed the new Partnership Agreement, 8% more intend to do so in 2020.

In 2019, EDCs actively involved their host structures in many of their activities, in particular via sharing its promotional material (81%); promoting the website on the host structures' website (72%), and inviting host structure colleagues to EDC activities (67%).

The most frequent topic for 52% of EDCs were about Brexit, closely followed by the related topic on the Future of the EU (48%).

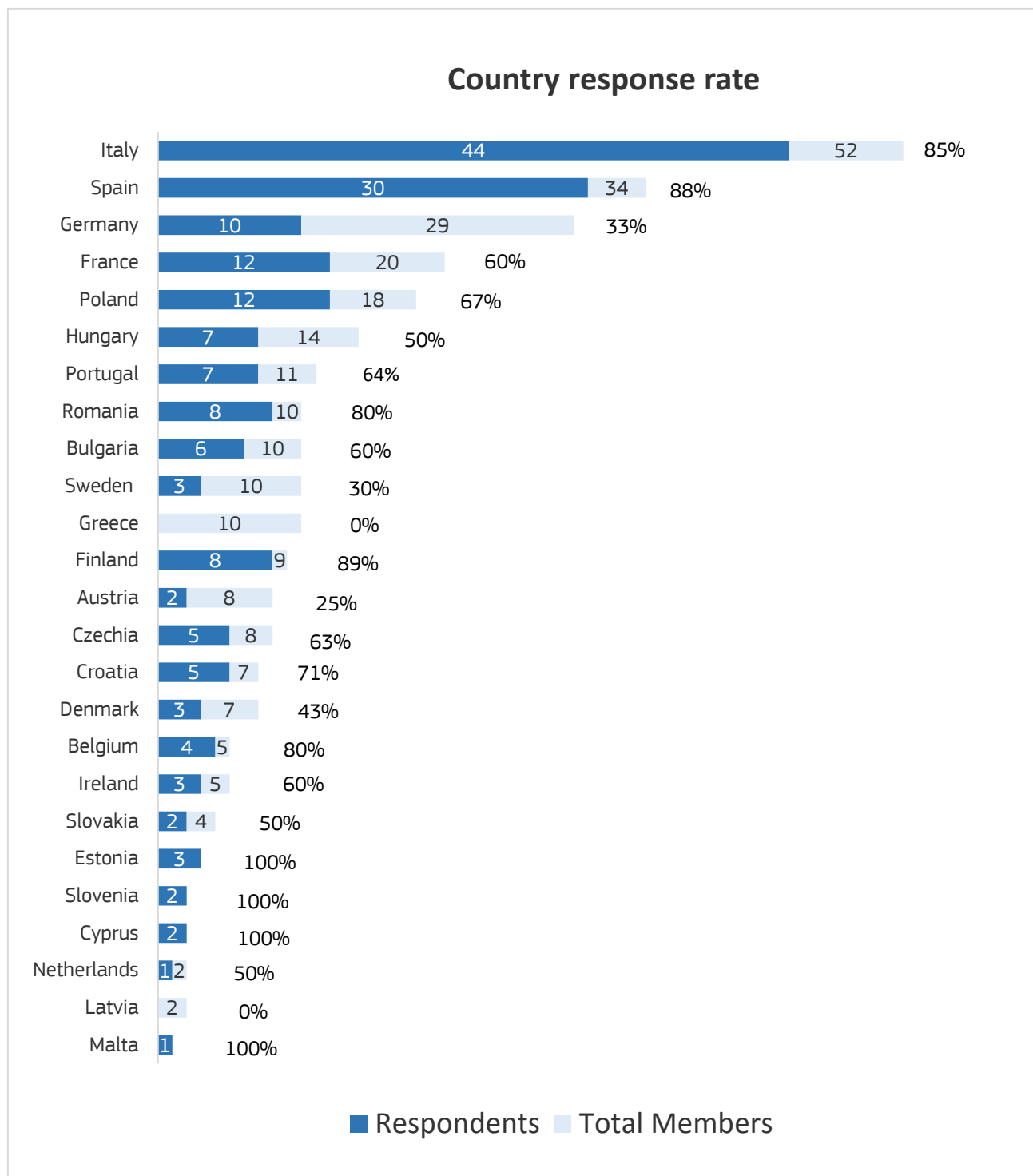
Most EDCs organised activities about the European elections, favouring the format of workshops and debates (62%) As regards collaboration with other European networks, EDCs had a stronger relation to the Europe Direct family, in terms of frequency of common events, than with other EU networks.

The Conclusions elaborate ways in which EDCs could contribute to the Conference on the future of Europe.

---

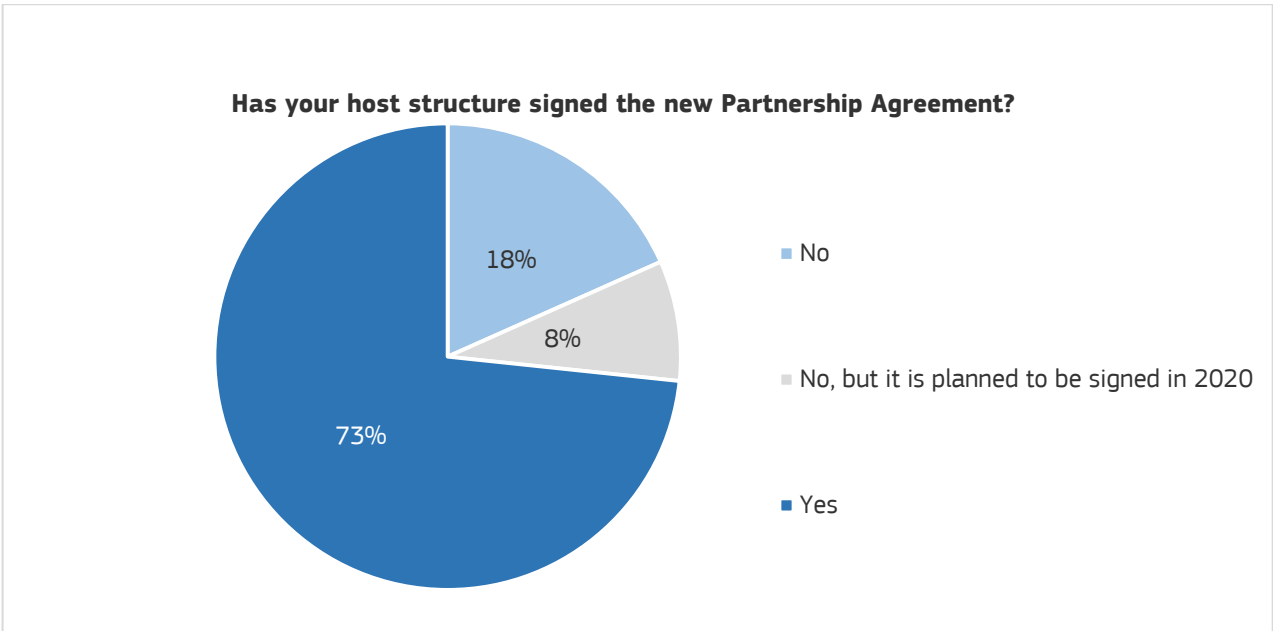
<sup>1</sup> In this document, 'EDCs' refers to the EDCs of survey respondents.

### 3. EDC members



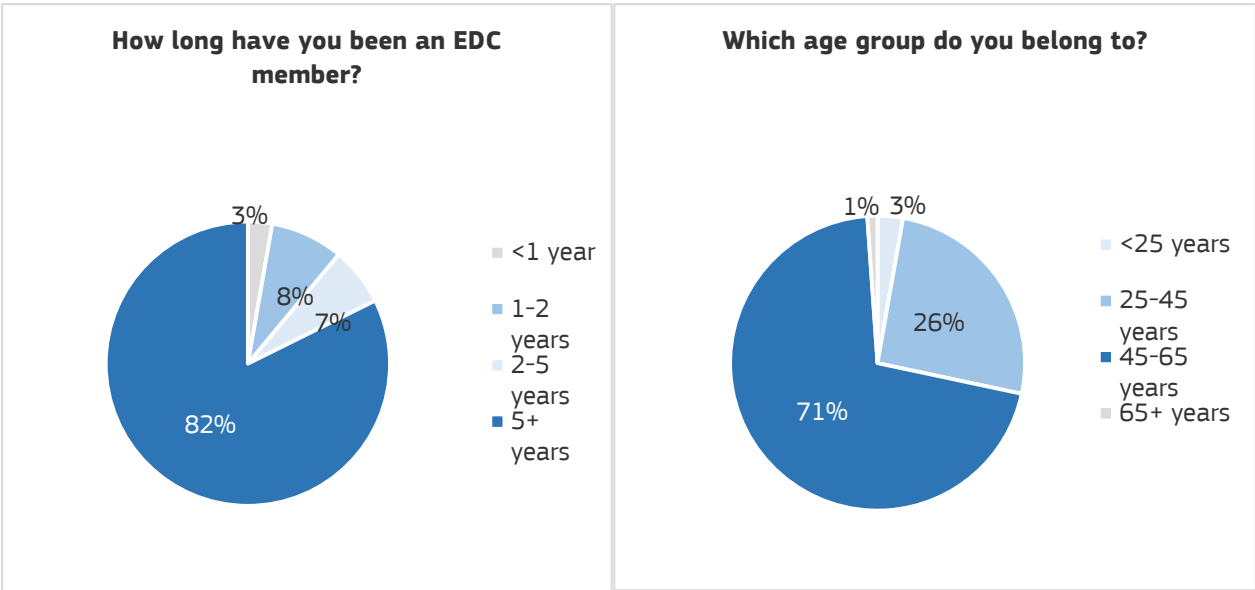
**Figure 1: Survey response rate per country**

The overall **response rate** of the survey was **63 %**, in line with last year's survey even if COVID-19 hampered the activities of some EDCs following lockdowns of universities in some countries.



**Figure 2: Share of respondents that signed the new Partnership Agreement**

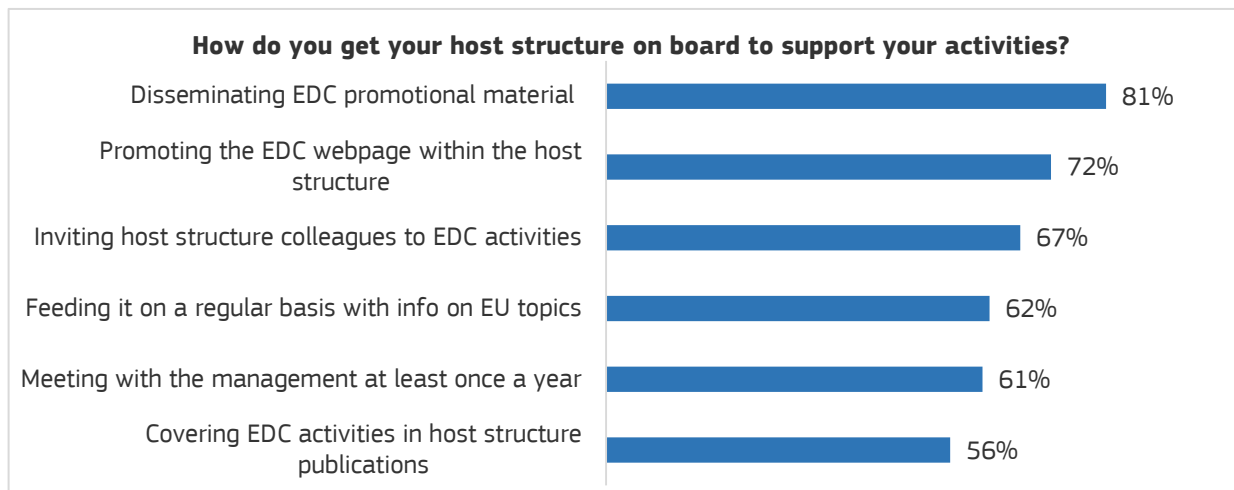
The survey shows that an **overwhelming majority (73%)** of respondents had **signed** the new **Partnership Agreement**, and another **8%** of respondents were **planning to sign** it before the end of 2020. Thus, the tendency identified in last year’s survey for more EDCs to sign up to the Partnership Agreement, remains on track.



**Figure 3: Years of experience as EDC manager**

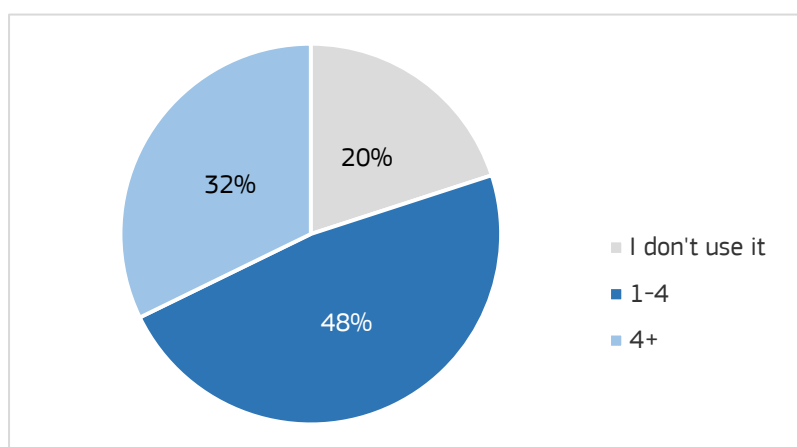
**Figure 4: Age groups of EDC managers**

The **overwhelming majority** of respondents were senior members of Europe Direct with at least **5 years of experience as managers**, aged between 45 and 65 years, and active in a host structure that have signed the new Partnership Agreement.



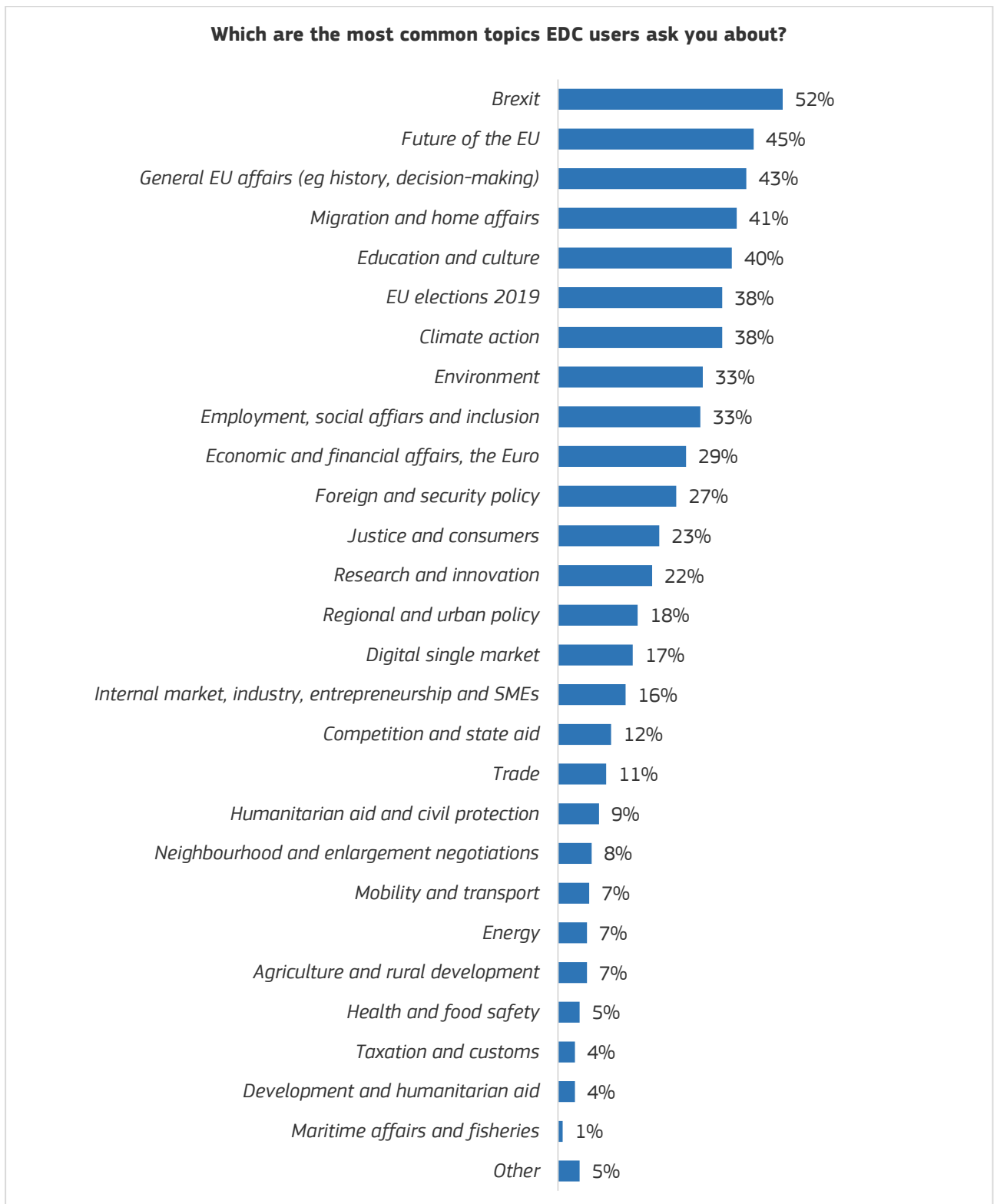
**Figure 5: Getting host structures on-board to support EDCs' activities**

Figure 5 shows that EDCs were quite **active in advertising their promotional material** (81%), and webpage (72%), and inviting host structure colleagues to its activities (67%). For the future, in particular with regard to the Conference on the future of Europe, it would be crucial to continue to invite host structures to EDC activities and feeding them with info on EU topics, and in so doing, keeping them involved and supportive of EDC activities. Finally, 6 in 10 respondents met with their host structure's management on a yearly basis.



**Figure 6: EDCs' use of privileged access to the EU Bookshop**

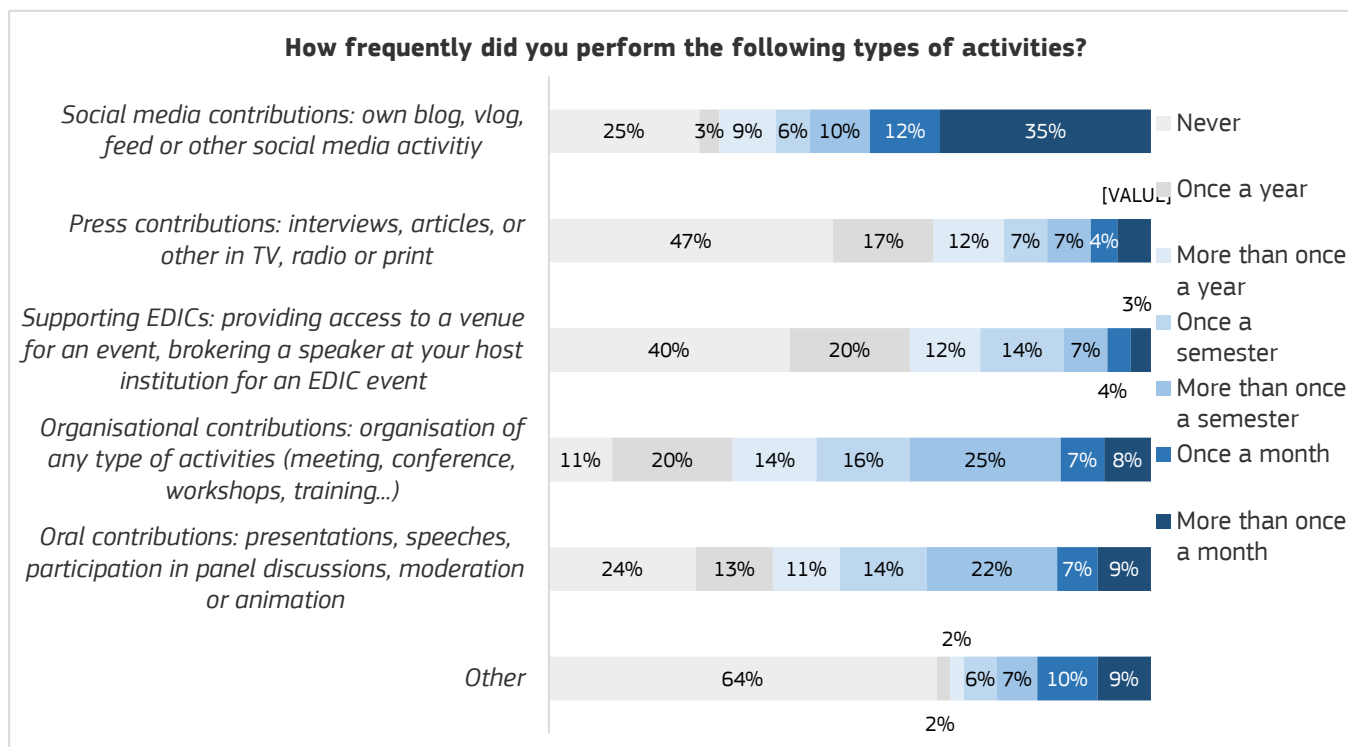
An overwhelming majority of respondents, 80%, use the EU bookshop. This confirms earlier surveys' results that the privileged access to the **EU bookshop** to order large quantities of printed publications is an **appreciated service**.



**Figure 7: Topics of interest to EDC users in 2019**

**More than half of the EDCs** mentioned **Brexit** as one of the most common topics in 2019. The topic *future of the Union* (45%) came in second place. The latter calls for more action by the European Commission to feed EDCs with timely and relevant information on the **Conference on the future of Europe (CoFE)**. The CoFE is expected to be a new public forum for an open, inclusive, transparent and structured debate with citizens around a number of key priorities and challenges, such as the EU Green Deal. The role of EDCs in CoFE will be discussed in the conclusions.

## 4. Activities



**Figure 8: Frequency of activities**

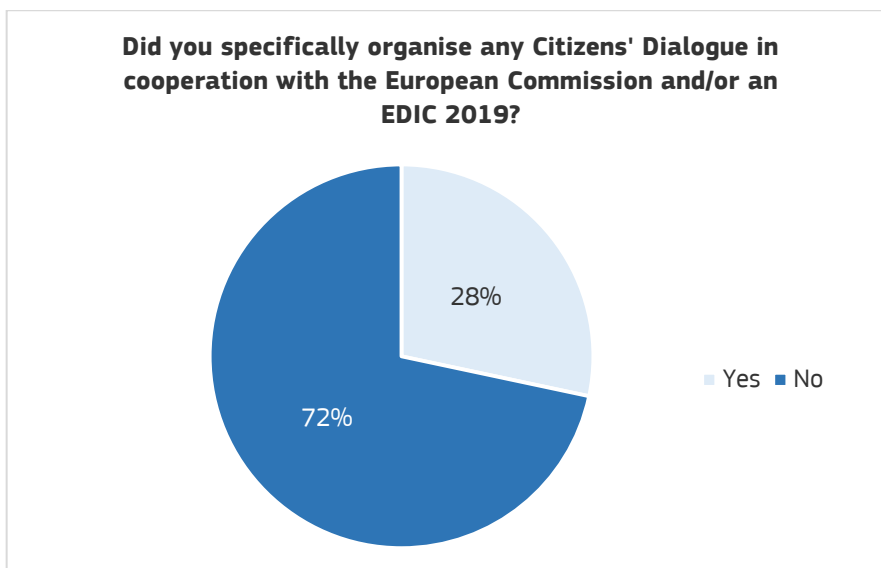
Among all activities carried out in 2019, EDCs have been most frequently active on **social media**, 3 out of 4 have to a varying degree posted online and more than 1/3 were active more than once a month.

Moreover, more than half of respondents made press contributions in 2019 and a similar share (**60%**) supported EDICs. 9 out of 10 EDCs made **organisational contributions** to various activities. An overwhelming majority of EDCs also made **presentations or speeches**. The frequency of organisational contributions, presentations and speeches could increase further, as these are important building blocks of the new Partnership Agreement.

Examples of **other activities** carried out at least once a month:

- Exhibition about the EU elections 2019;
- Training students in information research;
- Publication of info bulletins on the EU;
- Supporting schools with material for students.

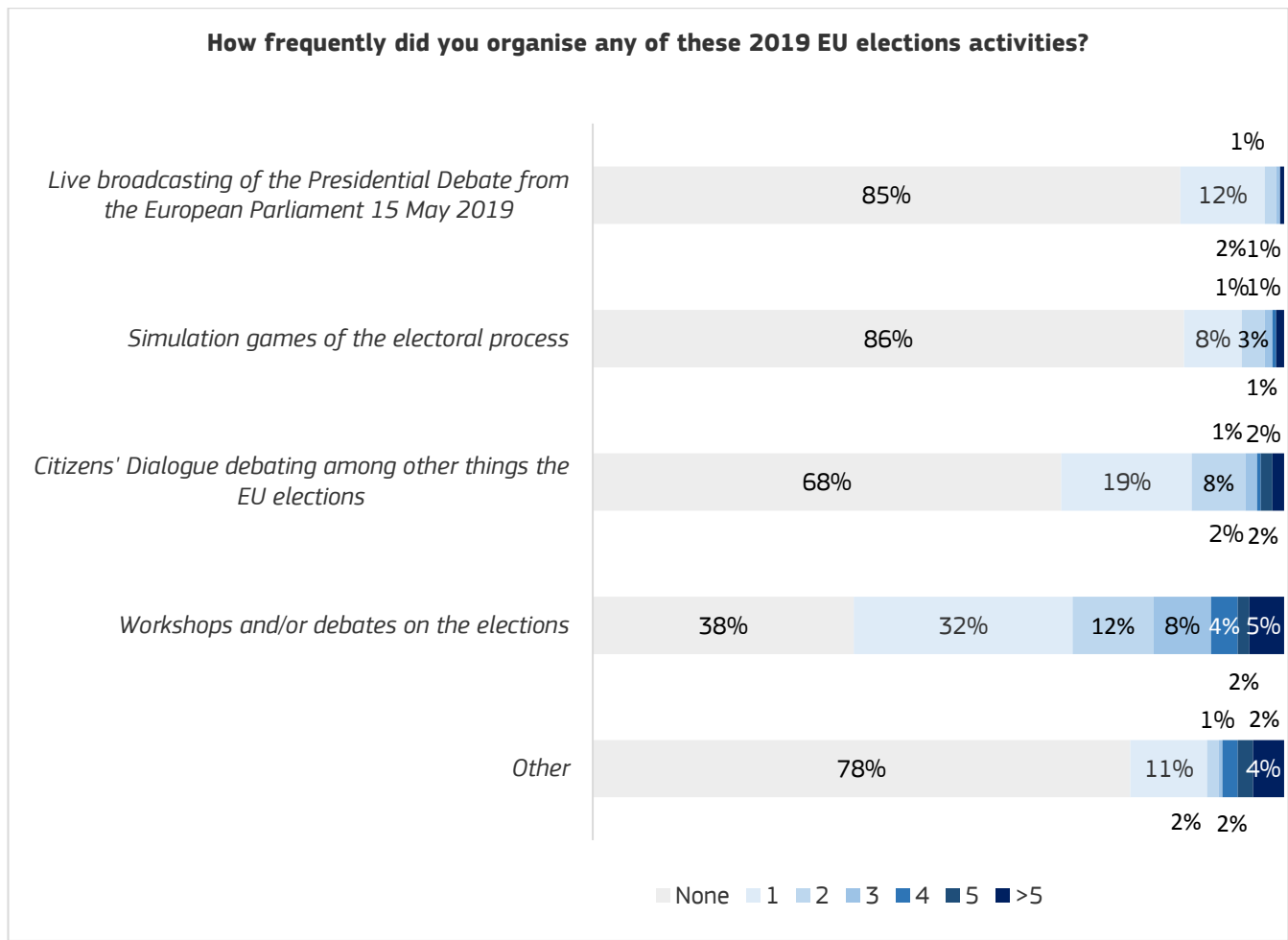




**Figure 9: Organisation of Citizens' Dialogue**

**Less than a third of EDCs organised** one or more **Citizens' Dialogues** in 2019. Those active EDCs may draw on this experience in organizing similar events around the **CoFE**, a major pan-European democratic exercise.

EDCs hosted by universities could play an important role in **engaging** students and **academic community** at large in **CoFe debates**, also via the **Back2University** initiative by helping European Institution staff to organise their visits. Colleagues going Back2University will be encouraged to explain CoFe modalities and participation rules to students, professors and researches. They could also use this occasion for organising a CoFE debate at the university.



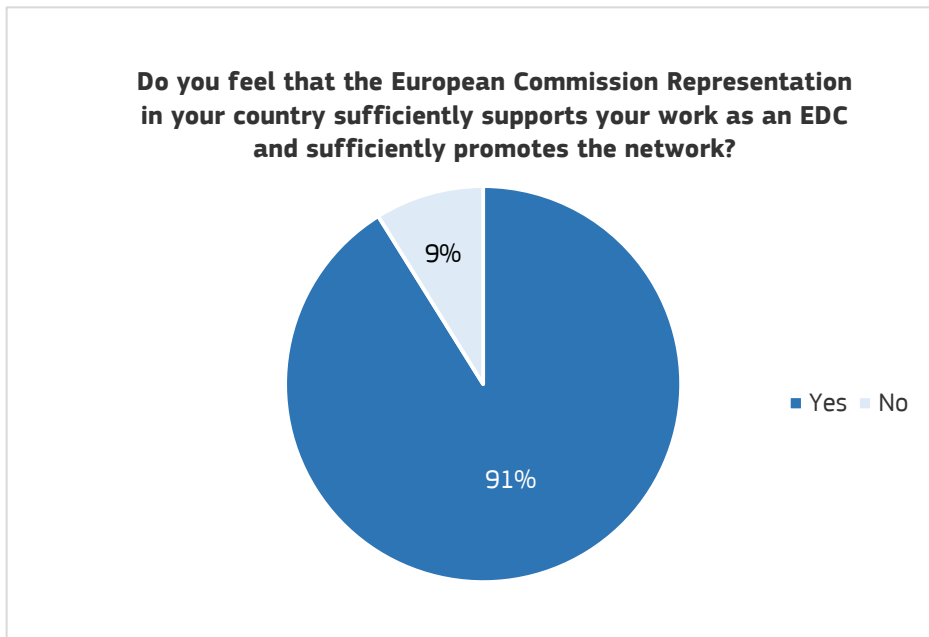
**Figure 10: Organisation of 2019 EU elections activities**

The results in figure 10 show that **EDCs favoured organising workshops and debates on the 2019 EU elections (62%** organised at least one activity), over live broadcasting of the Presidential debate or simulation games of the electoral process, both of which were rather infrequently carried out (15 and 14 % respectively). Besides this, one third of EDCs organised a Citizens' Dialogue covering the topic of the EU elections.

Examples of **other activities** organized in 2019:

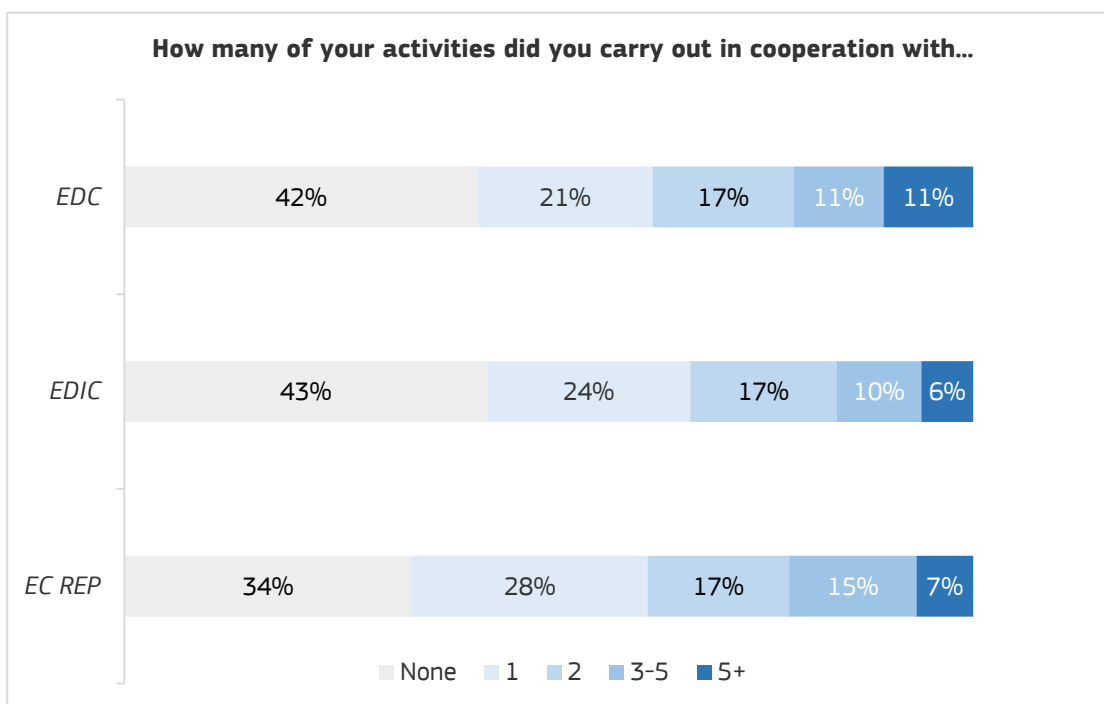
- educational activities for secondary schools;
- guiding people to find information, periodical and data bases;
- providing information material for first-time voters.

## 5. Cooperation with others



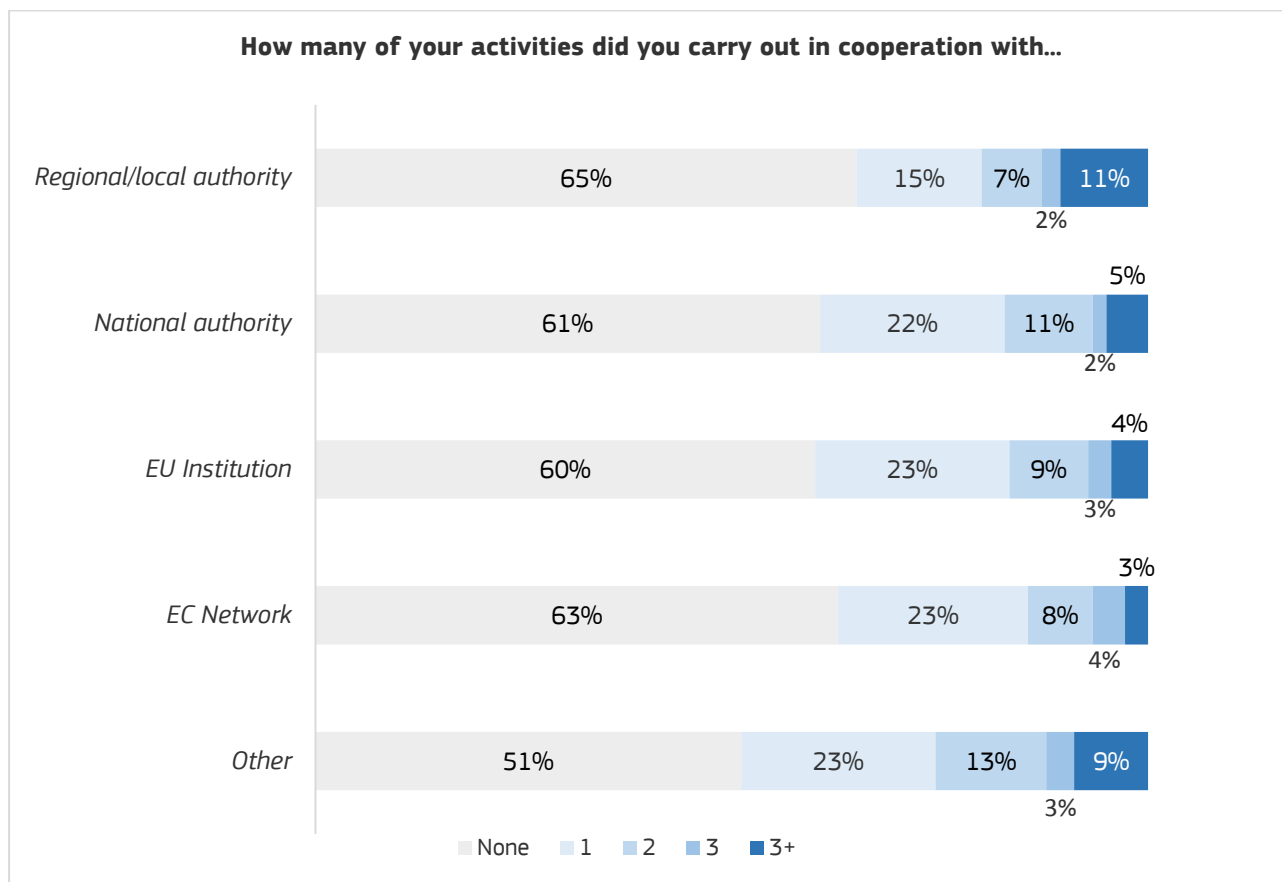
**Figure 11: European Commission Representation's support role**

The chart overwhelmingly confirms previous years' findings: the European Commission Representations provide adequate support to EDCs.



**Figure 12: Cooperation with Europe Direct Networks and the European Commission's Representation**

**More than half** of respondents **joined forces** with another **EDC** or an **EDIC** in 2019. The survey also shows that there is an even stronger cooperation, almost 2/3, between the EDC and the EC Representation in the respective country.



**Figure 13: Cooperation with other EC networks and organisations**

The survey shows that EDCs cooperated more loosely with organisations not belonging to the Europe Direct family. However, almost **4 out of 10** responding EDCs **cooperated with another EC network**, EU institution, national/regional or local authority. Under *other* organisations respondents mentioned for example non-profit organizations, national associations, research institutes and Jean Monnet Chairs.

This report shows that there is scope for further enhancing the cooperation between EDCs and other EU networks. Joining forces with other networks is precisely what the European Commission is currently supporting in 11 macro-regional pilot projects. These pilot projects aim at fostering systematic collaboration between European networks, the endgame being to create **EU in my region**. “EU in my region” is about establishing mutual signposting, and local and regional cooperation on communicating Europe, with the ultimate goal of facilitating citizens’ access to EU information and services.

## 6. Conclusions

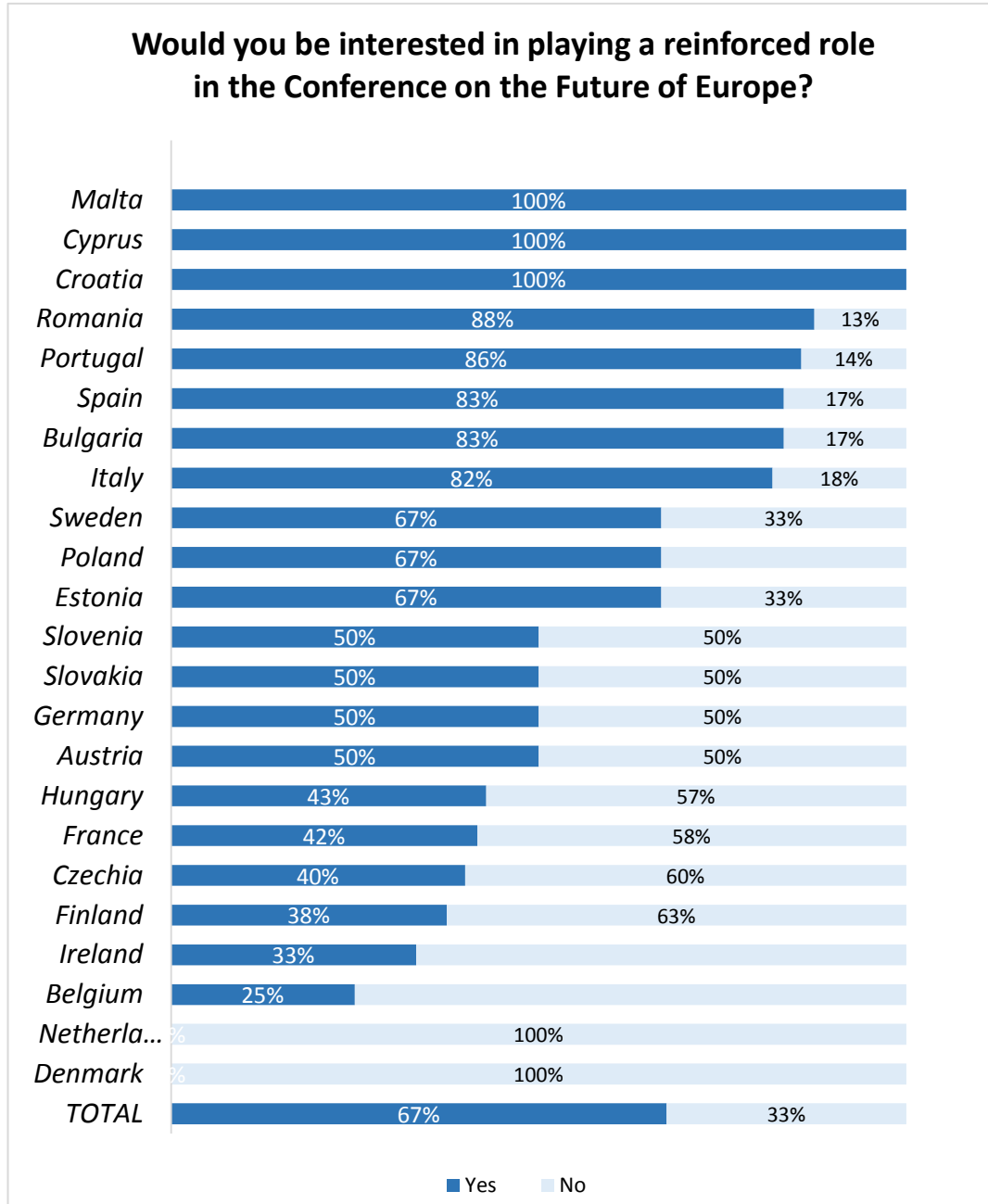
63% of all 282 EDCs responded to the EDC annual activity survey (AAS). Out of those, 73% had signed the new Partnership Agreement (PA). In 2019, 9 out of 10 EDCs made organisational contributions to meetings, conferences, workshops and trainings. Whilst 15%

were quite active, organising one or more events per month, 41% said to be active once or more than once a semester. 76% of EDCs performed an oral contribution (presentation, speeches, participation in panel discussion, moderation or animation), with similar frequency as for the above-mentioned percentages for events. Finally, less than one third of EDCs organised one or more Citizens' Dialogues.

The 2019 activity survey also included a couple of forward looking questions on the CoFE. The results were encouraging; EDCs indicated a strong commitment to contribute in various ways to make CoFE a success (see Annex 1).

In practice, willing and able EDCs could play a supportive role of EDICs. Thus, **Hub EDICs** will be in lead, and cooperate with both Team Europe members and the EDCs to engage citizens and civil society in regional CoFE debates. In this **“triangle cooperation framework”**, EDCs could **promote documents**, prepared centrally, on which to build a structured dialogue. It could be described as a **progressive disclosure** i.e. a gradual offer of information material, prior to the event, to facilitate an informed dialogue, bringing on-board the academic community in this endeavour.

## 7. Annex 1. EDCs & the Conference on the Future of the EU



### What type of activity would you be preparing on the Conference on the future of Europe?

