

European Rural Parliament

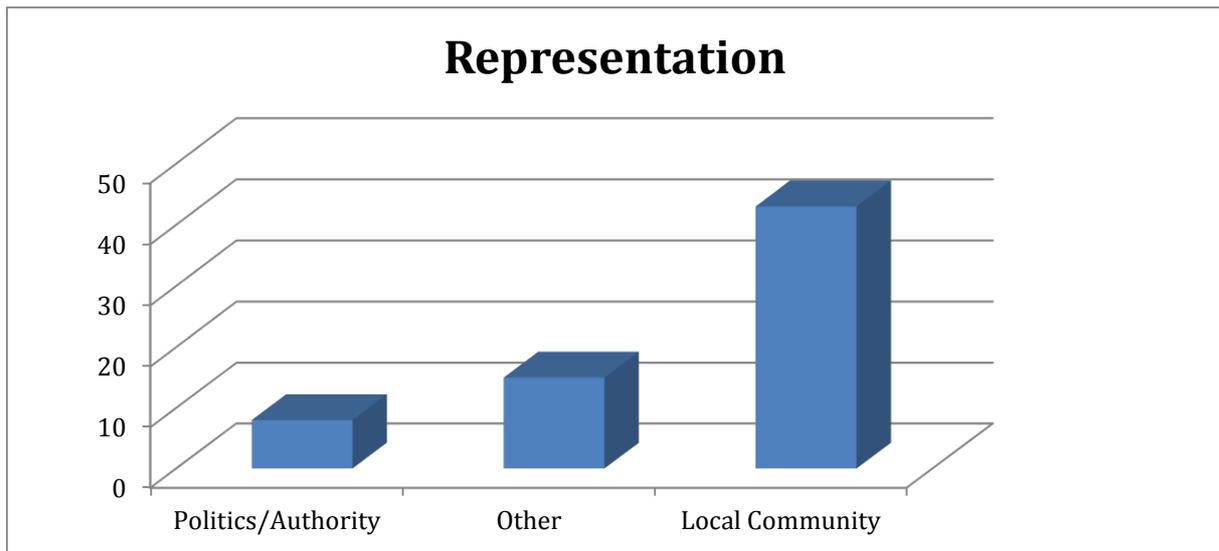
Brussels 13 November 2013

Evaluation of the First European Rural Parliament

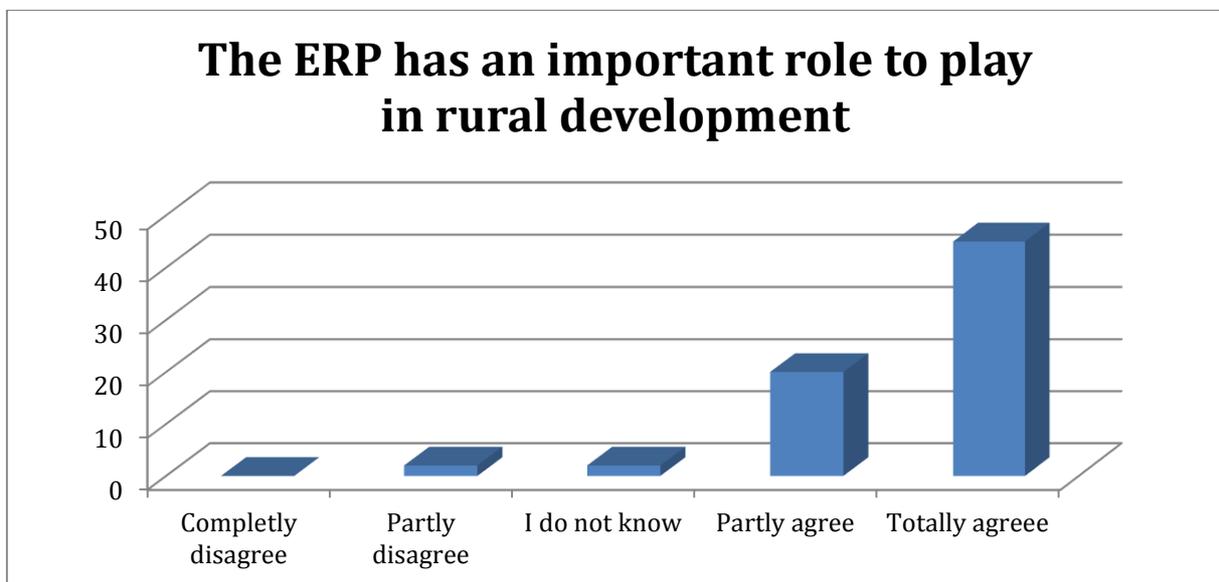
According to the Participants

Brussels
13 November 2013





Number of respondents.

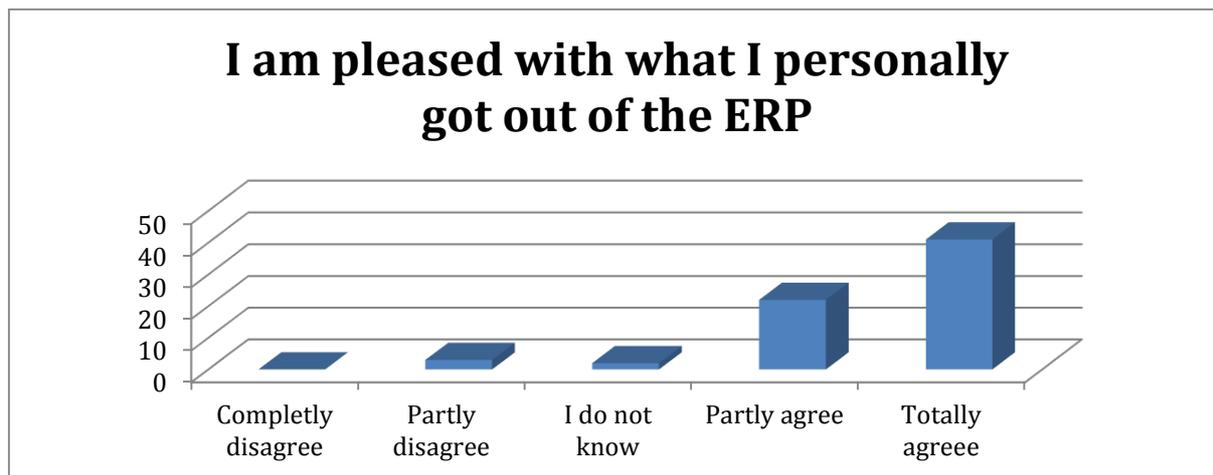


Number of respondents.

Does the ERP have an important role to play in rural development?

- ERP is important as a platform for exchange of experiences, but also for making rural development issues more visible and recognised as important. EESC could, together with rural networks, put ERP as an own initiative and organise meetings every two years.
- ERP is a tool to make us all more noticeable and able to influence. It has a future!
- There is a long way to go before we can say a rural parliament is concrete.
- I hope it does but it needs to be well recognised and supported and show its worth.
- It is very refreshing to hear NGOs at European level.
- It is a necessary level of democracy.
- It is very inspiring to meet face to face and more importantly, it makes a statement to the parliaments.

- Two-way communication.
- EESC or other networks should not have exclusive rights! ERP should be a common property.
- It's hard to say after the first time. The people who participate can influence the local level rural development with new ideas and experiences.
- It is very important to create a common European rural voice and to make it heard at European level by politic and authorities.
- If connected with existing structures, using strengthening synergies.
- If the constellations of rural people and NGOs come together they may shine more and increase visibility.
- To get more experiences and for networking
- If it is held each year it will be more and more important. It's very important to work with proposals and suggestions and to communicate these things to "everyone"
- Provided it becomes the focal point of an effective cyclical process with really clear democratic evolution of draft, inputs and resolutions in advance and clear determined follow-through afterwards.
- A great place to meet people to connect and start networks with a place where we can make it happen.
- Rural communities are stronger together – we can learn from and help each other.
- Yes, I think we should see the very important measures which are now different to implement, but when address them we have proper notifications.
- No objection – this statement will stand up.
- Good to have people together. I like the concept of proposals that where sent in and that we discussed to get a common outcome. Good idea to give this back to the ERP.
- If it is constructed in a way that is dialogical.
- Positive role in promoting rural development but not so "positive" if the ERP operates as a new "lobby" at EU level.
- Maybe too early to say right now?
- Let us know what the results of the first ERP will be.
- It can be an important integrating platform for the various rural organisations. Its role should be defined more clearly and especially what it aims to do!
- It's important to bring together organisations from across Europe that all have a common focus on rural development.
- Very pleased to hear that the European Commission wants to be more involved in rural development
- I think it is important for participatory democracy and for making the rural voice stronger. But I'm very confused about how it should work!!! I felt the proposals were unprepared (on different levels, too wide or too detailed, etc). It was hard to focus on how and why to discuss the proposals and whether these are the "right ones" to propose. We have to make a way (create a method) of how we will discuss the overall "hot topics" in rural development. Maybe the questions, issues, should also come from the committees (for example EESC), then we could discuss these questions in our countries and in our rural parliaments where they are happening. Then we will come together to discuss and give real proposals. We have to do our homework, otherwise it will stay very abstract.



Number of respondents.

I am pleased with what I personally got out of the ERP

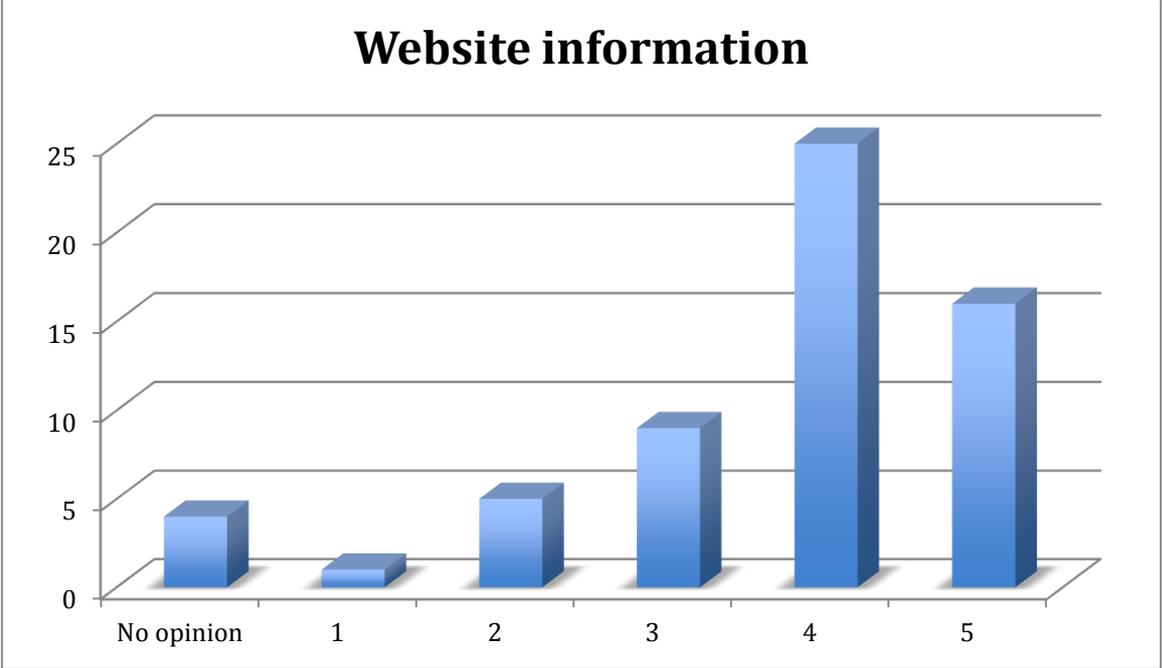
- I got new ideas and information that I will disseminate in my country.
- I've listened to and learned from others.
- Educational and networking opportunity.
- I would have liked to be able to contribute more but that was not possible because of where I was sitting.
- Very inspiring and valuable as a networking participant.
- This was useful exchange of information
- I think I should have chosen a different group.
- More time was needed.
- I got inspiration and learned things and met new people. Useful and fun!
- Connect with people.
- Getting new ideas and encouragement.
- Are these real problems, not only topic models/hypes?
- Contacts – putting people together, feeling less isolated in the work on rural development.
- The participatory process could have been better.
- The networking is always very useful.
- I got new ideas and different viewpoints about issues I'm interested in.
- I revived contact with an old friend and the making of new contacts.
- The participants were not aware about the goals with the content in the workshop. Yet, it ended up in a good way.
- I've learned new things and met new people.
- New subjects, new views, new friends, old acquaintances.
- Good to see what lives in Europe concerning rural development.
- There is a need to work away from expert input – all delegates here are experts. I agree with ERP support to EU, Leader and CLLD. But too wide diversity of rural areas to reach a common role.
- In combination with other meetings held at the same time in Brussels – very good!
- A great opportunity to meet old and new friends. But the ability to impact the discussions and outcomes was very low: too little time or wrong process for the products.

- It was good for making new contacts and for getting new knowledge and understanding how EU, other countries and other organisations work and the bureaucracy behind.
- This is the first ERP. I can evaluate it after two years.
- Many common themes.
- I got new contacts, this was good. But I have to confess I was disappointed about the discussions. I am sorry – I know it has been huge work behind it. But I believe we still have to think about HOW TO DO the ERP. After that we can discuss if it is important – though *I strongly believe it is!*

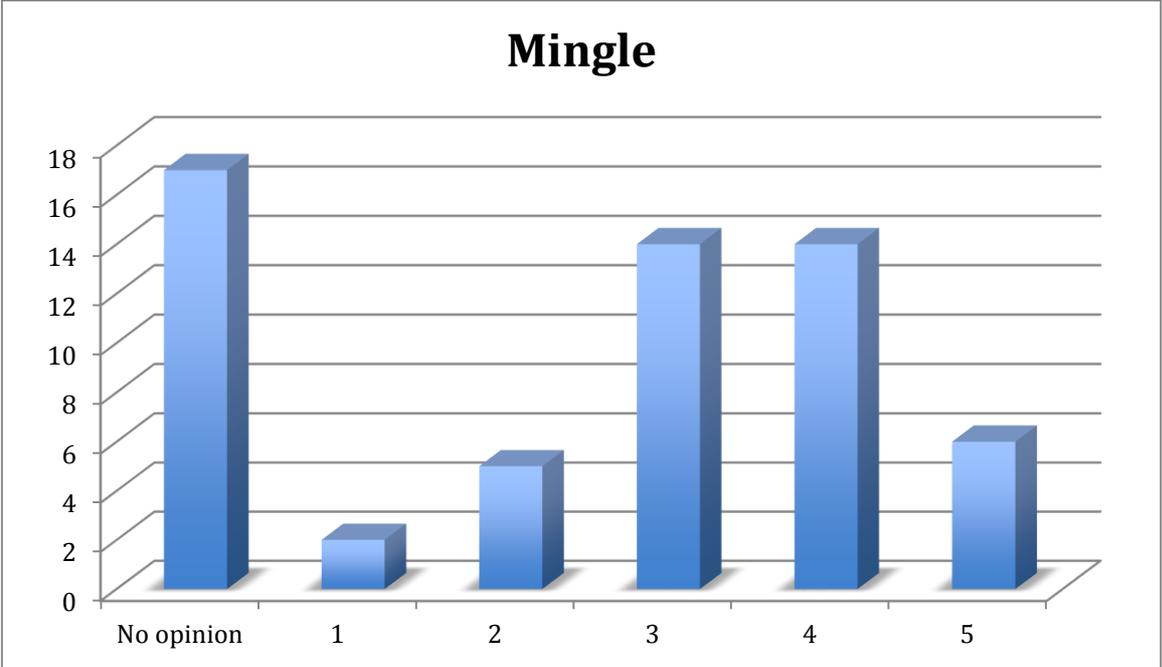


Most of the delegates found the first European Rural Parliament to be an exciting structure for strengthening the voice of rural people. The form of using workshops to debate proposals was seen as potentially useful, but needed more time and clearer management to be more effective.

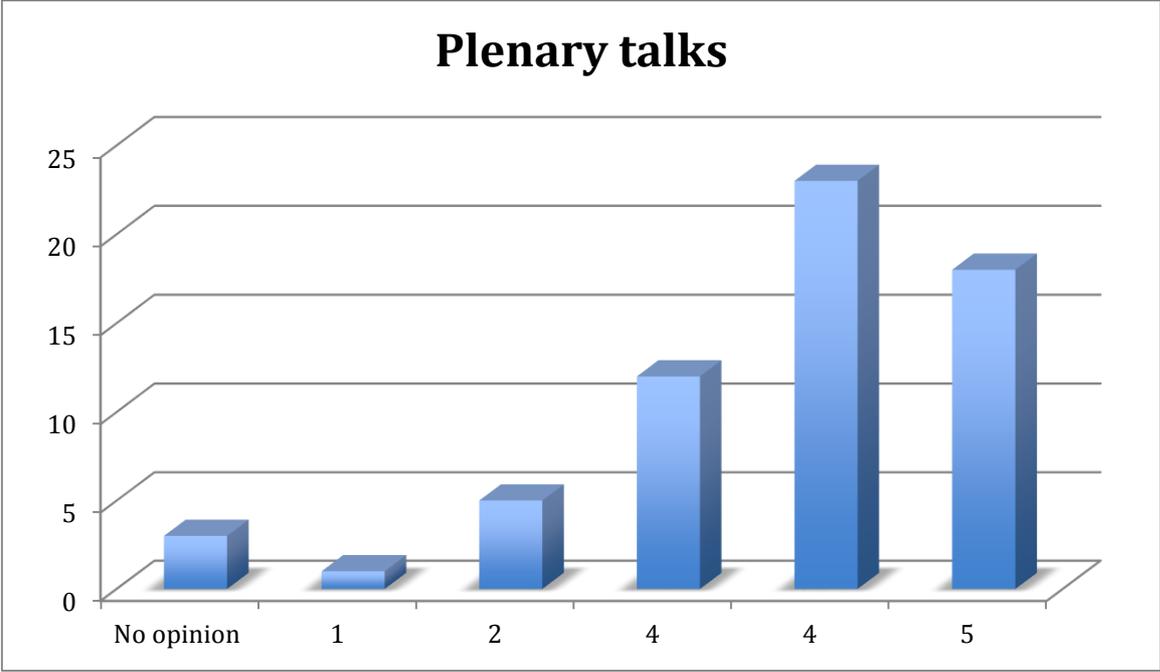
**Rank the success of the different aspects of the ERP:
1 = poor 5 = good**



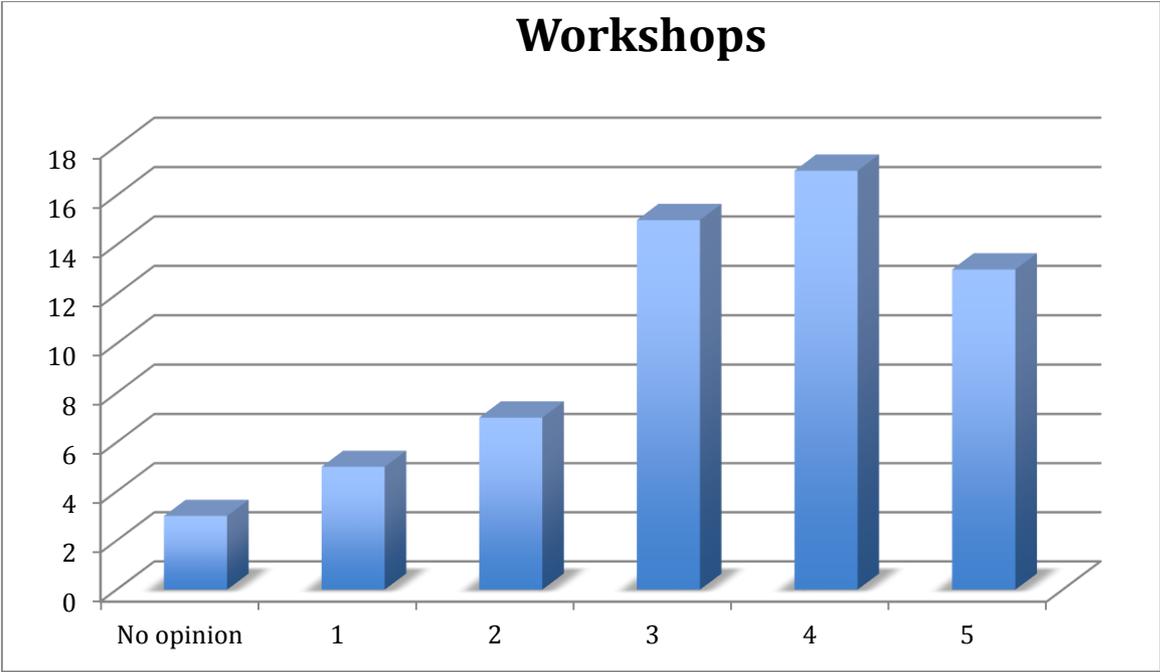
Number of respondents.



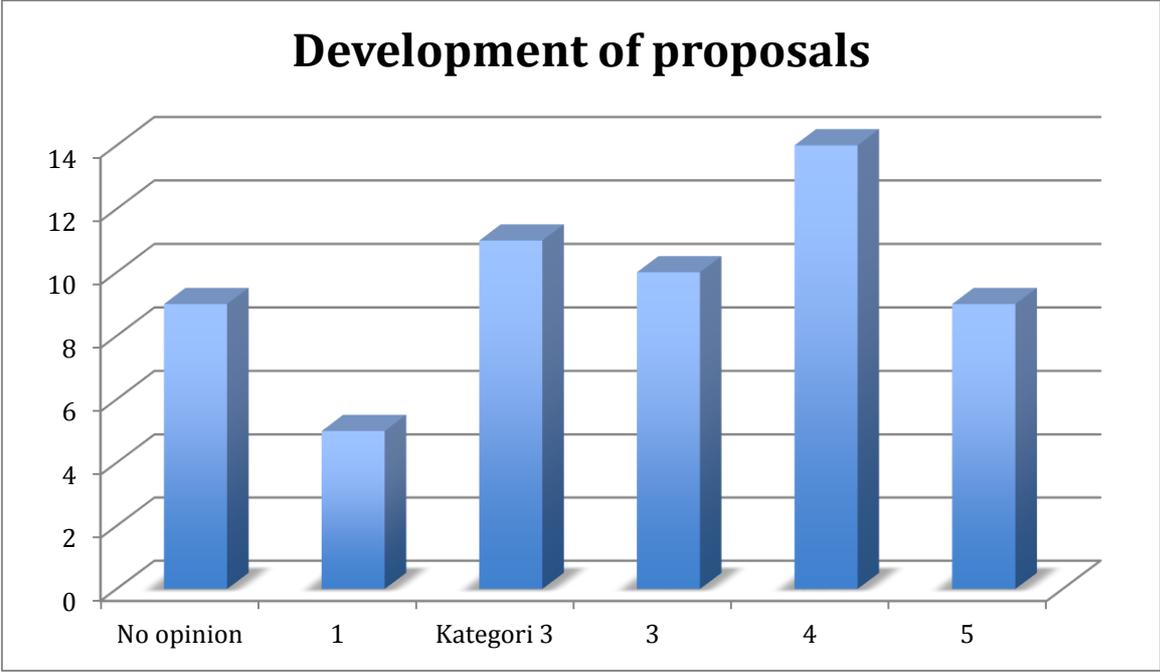
Number of respondents.



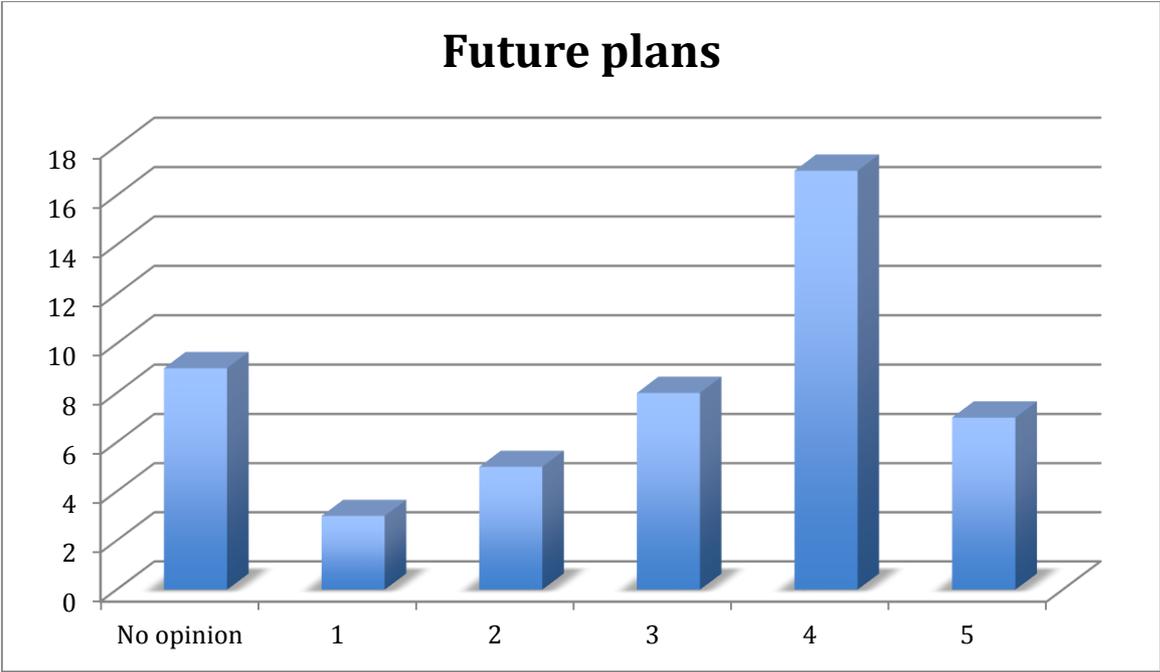
Number of respondents.



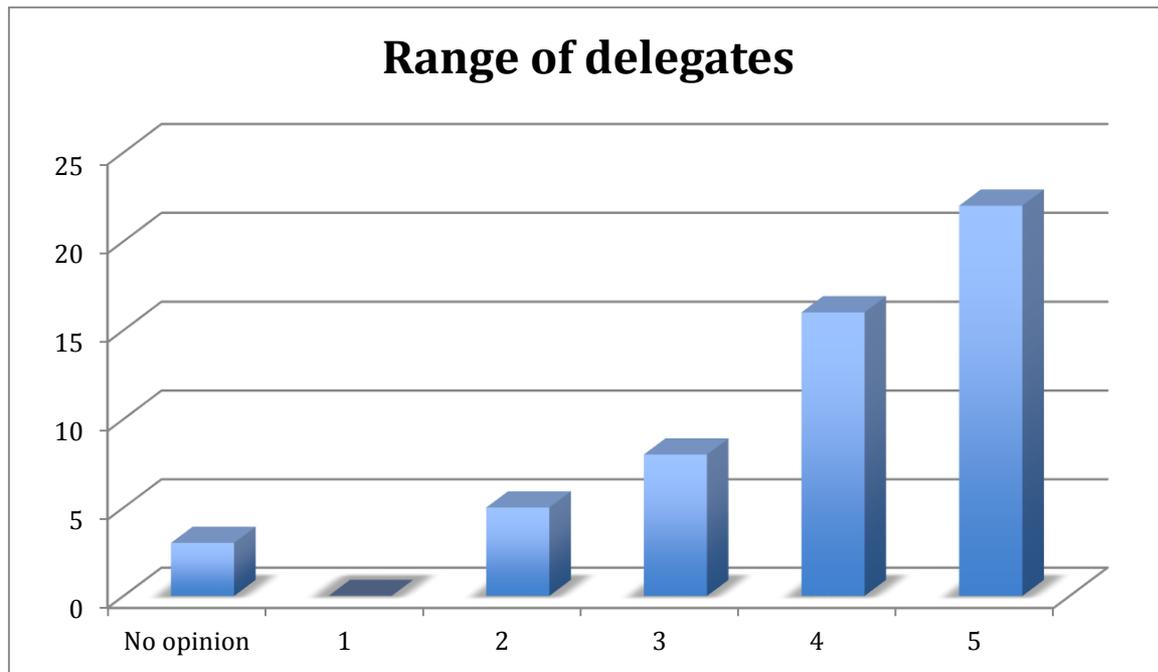
Number of respondents.



Number of respondents.



Number of respondents.



Number of respondents.

What were the most successful aspects of the ERP?

- Networking and exchange of knowledge and gaining new experiences.
- The meeting itself with the participants.
- Meeting people and talk.
- Additional motivation to organise national rural parliaments.
- Local development.
- Meeting people and making new acquaintances, opportunity to share views, ask questions etc.
- Inspiration and motivation to organise a national RP.
- Experience exchange.
- To have common efforts and understanding – ONE VOICE.
- All the meetings and sharing of experiences, most of the programmes, with other interested in rural development.
- Network opportunities.
- None, The workshops could have been but the discussion was limited and the use of the open method to come to conclusions was very crude.
- Policy workshops.
- Morning plenary session.
- Michael Dower.
- The networking.
- That it has started to exist!
- Changing the best practises in a big group.
- Plenary presentations.
- Some working groups.
- The workshops.
- Workshops and sharing experiences between participants. Brilliant organisation.

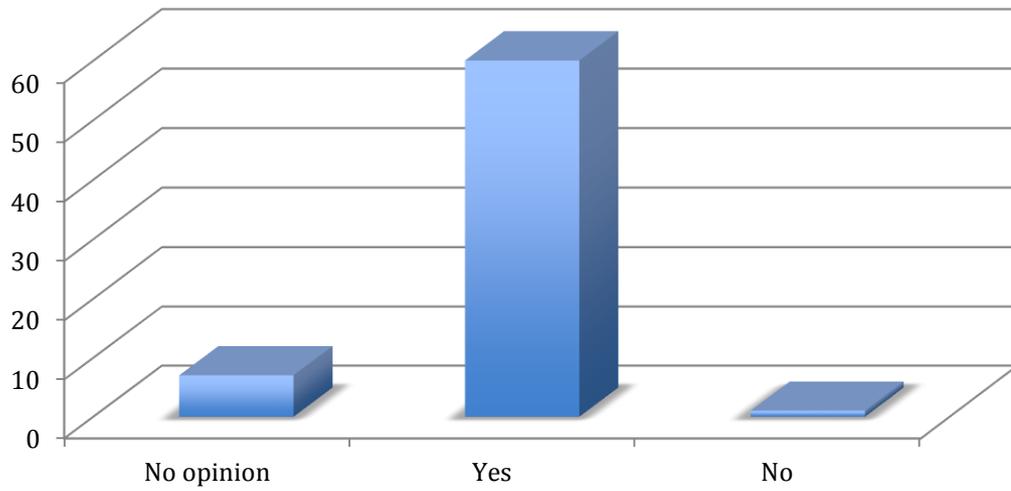
- Dialogue/exchange of experiences.
- Meeting people in same field of action.
- Connect and network people, share experiences and information. Inspire!
- Networking, contacts, sharing of information.
- Meeting people.
- Organising the ERP in this place!
- Bringing together people so that you can feel the numbers and the variety and unity.
- Having a lot of people I needed to talk to in one place!
- Participants/democracy.
- Workshops.
- That it took place. Then that the discussion led forward towards contacts with EU and com.
- Networking, encouragement from seeing how national rural parliaments operate.
- Several important issues and the diversity of the participants.
- A sense of solidarity and a timely discussion as we move into the new programme period for European and national development programmes.
- Exchange, networking, taking part in workshops.
- Networking, updating, ideas.
- Meeting like minded people. Learning about the different practices of EU countries in rural development.
- Statement of Michael Dower.
- Think tank.
- Work group – good organisation.
- Discussion, workshop, meeting people.
- Discussions in the workshops.
- The come together.
- The problem solving element of the programme – not the lecture format.
- Make connection with people from other countries with same problems.
- All the organisations in place. Great work, really!
- Promoting local development, bottom-up approaches.
- Encourage civil society/democratic participation.
- Promote partnership, cooperation, local initiatives, integrated approvals, capacity building and capacity release.
- Networking.
- To meet other people and listen to Vanessa Halhead and Michael Dower.
- That it happened.
- As always, meeting people.
- Meeting ERPs (that happened to be “my” MEP:s).
- Working groups.
- Started well in advance and good timing.
- Good location and links with the EESC.
- That it is held, that the different European movements have come so far that we are working together towards the same goals.
- Meeting people, exchanging ideas.
- Good to hear examples and experiences from colleagues across Europe.
- Meeting people from so many different European countries with many different backgrounds.
- The support from the EESC.
- The energy between people.

What could have been better?

- Exchange of knowledge through workshops.
- Less topics should be handled during the whole day.
- All workshops were not prepared with the same quality, that should be improved next time, more structured – like number Four.
- Ministers should hear why rural development is important and how to support it
- All DG:s should be present.
- The statement should be communicated early enough.
- More time.
- Diversities are richness on the European level as well. I'd suggest more room for them next time – we are not the same (level, background, starting position). Workshops – a weak point – not enough time to reach consensus, not all views were heard.
- Some, most things, must be discussed on national level not EU level, for example taxes.
- There should be a reception with organised short presentations.
- Better use of open space technology to develop issues ideas and arrive to conclusions.
- Time should have been prioritised to design parliament, facilities were poor, many people could not speak because they have no microphones. The tea brake was terrible.
- Better elaboration in the workshops and no information about policies and process towards approving/amending/endorsing proposals.
- Visibility of “WHO” is behind the ERP.
- Smaller workshops, better workshops methods and the common language should be English all the time.
- Moderating of the morning plenary part.
- Time for the workshops.
- More time for proposals discussion/workshops – less time for the rest. Is it a bottom up organisation or not?
- More time – of course.
- The preparation of workshops: At first what kind of proposals organisers wanted. Proposals for ERP or EU Commission or? During the workshop there was a misunderstanding to whom we make the proposals. Just discussions leading the conclusions: countries are so different and there are lot of things that are not understandable to others.
- Lunch!
- Because of the interesting subjects of the seminars, a two or three days' event could be needed.
- Process of the workshops and the time for it.
- Improve structure and organisation of discussions in the workshop. Report through post it cards, flip charts, and make it more dynamic. A part of the discussion was not taken up.
- Directions to entrance.
- More practical discussions.
- The lunch was surprisingly sparse, some warm dishes had been fine.
- More time and exchange of best practise event may have proven useful.
- Organisation of workshops. More active and better defined issues (of course I'm only able to comment our workshop).
- Easy access to conference facilities and workshop rooms. I hope that future rural parliaments can be held in convenient rural places with meeting spaces and accommodation all under one roof.

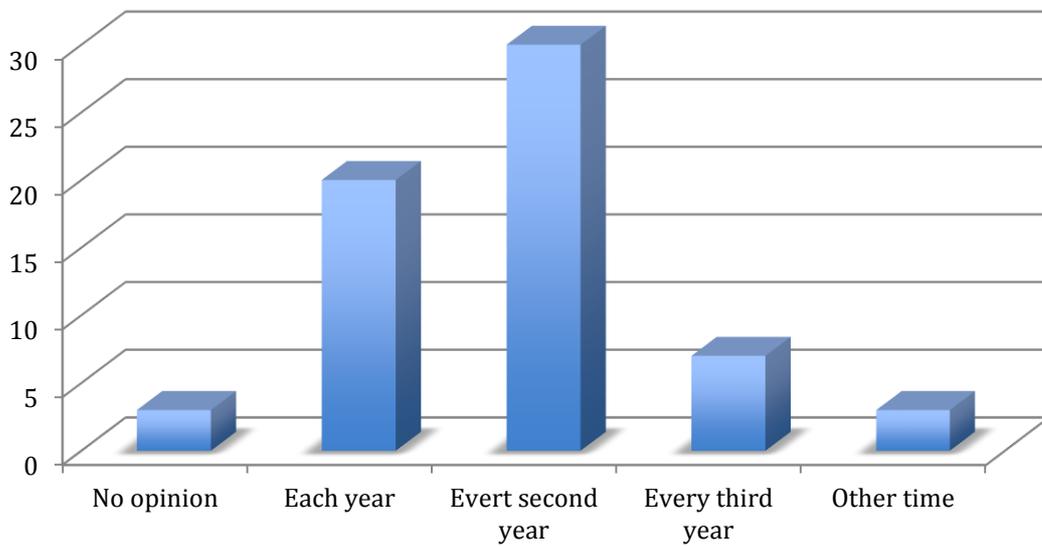
- More workshops, more background in the decision working process.
- Material for the workshops should have been printed out as it was difficult to read of the screen.
- The final debate.
- Agenda, more reports from countries, more anecdotes.
- More food...
- More time, more balanced participation.
- Guidance during workshop.
- The workshops need to develop. It was hard to make suggestions on a text that you hadn't seen. (The information about the text on the internet didn't reach me and many others.) But the form was good! Too little time, better to just discuss one or two questions.
- Much was in between delegates. Very often the delegates were experts with more experience than the facilitators.
- Representation of MEPs at the ERP, were they invited?
- The getting together was too short.
- We did not know from which country the others were. It would be better to mingle if you knew where they were from.
- Information about transportation, maybe. Some kind of a map with a route from central station to RP available on the site.
- Feeling of a gap between "those who live and work" and those who "decide"... but are elected by the former, not very productive in terms of expected public, private partnership.
- Explanation of context of workshops could have been better. A five minute introduction might would have saved arguments in the workshops.
- Better preparation and more days. A lot of words I never heard before. A glossary?
- The workshops. Total lack of proper introduction in the beginning. People understood very late what was expected of them. Language problems.
- Very bad promotion and information.
- Too many speeches, not enough focused discussion.
- Trying to come to meaningful conclusions on too many points with too little preparation in too short time.
- Lunch! Small sandwiches is nothing when working/thinking for a long day. And snacks/fruit with the coffee.
- To get the proposals and texts sent out in advance, instead of reading difficult text on a board and only allowed a short time to both understand and contribute from the seat. (About the workshop.)
- Lunch!
- Security check into the buildings were too slow.
- The workshop was out of time.
- It would have been better to have a longer time to mingle on the evening of the 12th.
- I would have liked to see the participants list in advance.
- A printed paper of the proposals, debated in the workshop.

Do you think the ERP should take place on regular basis?



Number of respondents.

How often should the ERP be held?



Number of respondents.

Convening the ERP on a regular basis

- The issues being discussed are often the same for the different European regions.
- Task of common importance for a number of countries.
- Every second year, need for dialogue and experience exchange, especially to see development of CLLD.
- The EESC could organise it, together with EU Networks.
- To work development and progress – dialogue on RD, CLLD implementation etc. Regularly have the most important issues discussed.
- Yes, to develop the concept but with a timeframe of two years.
- At least it is a forum to measure European rural community thinking.
- Annually to keep up momentum.
- Represent the level of rural democracy is now U.E!
- To see we are all on the same page.
- Better understanding and knowledge – better administration.
- To meet.
- To influence policy makers.
- For mutual inspiration and follow-up. Put organisation and country on name-tags.
- Theme of rural development so complex and an ERP organised each year could help in this issue of supporting.
- To make a voice of rural people to be heard.
- It's just a start and that is good possibility to bring together different representatives of rural development.
- It gives and supports importance of European rural voice which has to be heard!
- Getting continuity in moving political times.
- To make contact/networking.
- To formulate policy influence.
- The rural people need a voice into the com. and parliament. The ERP should be coordinated with the elections to the parliament.
- It's the possibility to look on important issues and to discuss them. Experience exchange how to solve different problems.
- To build a tradition and actually motivate people to take part.
- Rural development is a continuing process.
- The rural development landscape is constantly changing so regular meetings are needed to discuss emerging issues and to keep rural development on the agenda.
- Because we need to exchange good practises.
- It's only by regular communication that we can keep up to date and progress.
- The greater the exchange – EU – and rural collaboration the better.
- To make political impact a regular event that the EU has to relate to.
- This is bottom-up approach. Connection from top to bottom is as parents ordering children how and what to do.
- Because! We can meet and share experiences – there is no better way to start any kind of partnership.
- Integrate the (national) rural parliament into a rural “contact point”.
- ERP to be represented within e-rural network.
- Promote “on-line” exchanges on rural development.
- Good networking and information opportunity.
- At least prior to EU elections.
- Let's try to meet next year to see what has happened to the proposals.

- If only to do better next time! To ensure we continue to develop a common understanding of rural areas and communities. But I agree that next one should be in 2014, after that every two years would be enough.
- To speak about the results from the previous ERP.
- So that we can learn from each other, spread best practise and strengthen rural communities.

General comments

- Ideas need to be developed at national and regional rural parliament levels before being tabled at the ERP. Structures need to be put in place to enable this to happen. Proposals should be supported by research.
- Ideas and proposals need greater development before discussion at this event.
- Also include formal feedback from the country level parliaments.
- The statement is only the organisers' statement.
- Thank you for all!
- Congratulations to the organising team.
- The final statement should have been distributed beforehand and be subjected to a democratic process.
- We have to remember that there are countries in Europe that are not part of EU, but have the same problems and opportunities as the countries of EU. They have to have a voice in ERP and be part of Europe's future!
- I am appalled by the final statement.
- It is meaningful to organise the ERP every second year, because the preparation takes time.
- The ERP is an amazing initiative for the development of rural Europe.
- Thanks for all!
- Each year initially to gain momentum, maybe two years after a while.
- It would have been a good help with national flags on the name tags.
- Thanks for organising.
- It's always difficult to answer one evaluation directly after a one day event. I do think we all need some days to think about our first ERP to understand and "land" in the "event". Thank you for arranging the ERP for us!
- An excellent event. Inspiring and energising.
- Well done overall!
- An undemocratic process about the statement. The presidium was running over the participants.
- It is too expensive to hold it every year but the connection is not good enough if it is every third year.
- Yearly basis is hard to manage, but it is the most fruitful for the participants, in my opinion. Thanks to you!
- Very enjoyable but the "statement" was not inclusive.
- Statement not discussed at all!
- Thank you!
- But possibly have one ERP next year! As this is the beginning.
- Maybe the ERP should be between the periods with the aim also to help people prepare for the new period giving feedback/ideas about the on-going period

Thank you all for a fantastic time and brilliant inputs!



<http://europeanruralparliament.com>