



European Week of Regions and Cities



EVALUATION REPORT



European Week of Regions and Cities
Opening Session
Brussels
10 – 13 October 2005

organised jointly by



with the cooperation of the
European Parliaments' Regional
Development Committee

This report was prepared by Gruppo SOGES S.p.A. as part of a framework contract with the European Commission's Regional Policy Directorate-General. Neither the report as a whole nor parts of it express the views of the European Commission.

The 20th of November 2005



OPEN DAYS 2005: The Facts

The biggest ever event on the theme of EU regional policy

An event at forefront of EU regional policy

Europe's biggest partnership

OPEN DAYS in figures

Indicators of activity:

No. of workshops, seminars and sessions: 70

No. of speakers: 380

No. of regions involved in the partnership with DG REGIO: 106

Indicators of results:

No. of participants: 2500 (1800 travelled to Brussels)

No. of nationalities represented: 31

No. of journalists registered for the press conference: 70

No. of press articles covering OPEN DAYS 2005: 89

No. of respondents to the online evaluation questionnaire: 548

No. of people interviewed: 85

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part 1 : Methodology and production.....	p.6
1) Methodology.....	p.6
2) Production.....	p.6
Part 2 : Presentation of the participants and the respondents (online questionnaire).....	p.7
1) Presentation of the participants of the workshops organised by DG REGIO.....	p.7
2) Presentation of the online evaluation respondents.....	p.8
Part 3 : The extent to which participants expectations of OPEN DAYS 2005 were satisfied.....	p.9
Part 4 : Organisation and content of the OPEN DAYS 2005.....	p.11
1) The online registration.....	p.11
2) Organisation of OPEN DAYS 2005.....	p.11
3) Content of OPEN DAYS 2005.....	p.12
Part 5 : Comparison between OPEN DAYS 2004 and OPEN DAYS 2005.....	p.13
1) Strengths and weaknesses of OPEN DAYS 2005.....	p.13
2) Results of comparison between the OPEN DAYS 2004 and the OPEN DAYS 2005.....	p.14
2.1) The overall organisation of the event.....	p.14
2.2) The actions in direction to the journalists.....	p.15
Part 6 : The future of OPEN DAYS 2005.....	p.17
1) The raisons.....	p.17
2) Proposal for improvements.....	p.17

Part 7 : Recommendations.....	p.20
1) The registration process.....	p.20
2) The theme of the event.....	p.21
3) The programme.....	p.21
4) The press.....	p.21
5) Distribution of documentation.....	p.21
6) Overall organisation.....	p.21
7) After the event.....	p.22
 Annexes.....	 p.23
Questionnaire for the online evaluation.....	p.24
Interview grid.....	p.27

Part 1: Methodology and production

1) Methodology

An evaluation of OPEN DAYS 2005 was carried out by SOGES SpA in the framework of order form n°6 of the general contract for the "Evaluation of the communications policy of DG Regional Policy."

To facilitate the gathering of information for the evaluation, SOGES S.p.A drew up two questionnaires, which were validated by DG REGIO (one online questionnaire and a specific questionnaire for personal interviews), and, between the 10th and 13th of October 2005, employed the services of 8 experts, proficient in all the languages of the EU.

The online questionnaire included 17 questions and the questionnaire for the personal interviews included 16 questions. The two questionnaires are presented in annex of this document. The completed personal interviews are presented in a second report also annexed to this report.

⇒ **548 responses**, in five different languages (English, German, Italian, French, Polish, Spanish) were collected and analysed from the online survey. In general, the response rate for an evaluation of this kind of event is around 10%. However, in this case, with a total of around 2500 participants, the response rate was approximately 22%. This represents a very high level of engagement of the participants.

⇒ **85 interviews** were carried out and analysed. It should be noted that the dispersion of the workshops made it more difficult to carry out the interviews, as participants had had very little free time between the workshops. However, this difficulty was overcome and the information gathered during the interviews supplemented the information collected from the online questionnaires.

The net result is the emergence of an overall perspective that can be considered to be representative of the views and opinions of the OPEN DAYS 2005 participants.

2) Production

Two draft reports were written immediately after OPEN DAYS. The first report gave the initial results of the interviews and provided DG REGIO with information for the debriefing of the OPEN DAYS conglomerates a few days after the event. The second report took account of the first results of the interviews and the online questionnaire and provided information for a DG REGIO note to Commissioner Danuta Hübner.

This final report takes account of the final results of the questionnaires and the interviews and the following DG REGIO documents: a note from the debriefing meeting with regional offices/conglomerates on 20 October 2005 and a note for the attention of Commissioner Hübner¹.

¹ This note includes information from:

- A message circulated by DG REGIO to the European Commission representatives who contributed to OPEN DAYS 2005 as speakers or chairpersons
- a document written by the Conference Secretariat outlining their experience in relation to organisational aspects of the event

Part 2 : Presentation of the participants and the respondents (online questionnaire)

1) Presentation of the participants of the workshops organised by DG REGIO

The comments below are based on information provided by DG REGIO on October 4th, 2005 and relate only to the workshops organised by DG REGIO. By this date, the majority of the workshops being organised by DG REGIO were already full.

With 1180 registrations, the theme, "Managing Structural Funds and Instruments" was the most popular. However, of the 4 themes proposed, there were more workshops (13 in total) based on this particular theme. This provided participants with greater choice and, therefore, at least partly accounts for the higher number of registrations.

The table below presents the most popular workshops from the themes proposed. This takes account of the number of places available per workshop, the demand for these places and the number of requests for inclusion on a waiting list after the workshop was fully booked:

THEME	SUCCESSFULL WORKSHOPS
Convergence	"Infrastructure, accessibility and public private partnerships"
Regional Competitiveness and Employment	"Sustainable urban and local development" "The urban dimension and the future of cohesion policy" "From Objective 2 to Regional Competitiveness and Employment" "Investing in integrated rural development poles"
European Territorial Cooperation	"New perspectives for cross-border cooperation 2007-2013" "European Territorial Cooperation in a transnational perspective"
Managing Structural Funds and Instruments	"Decentralising the Structural Funds" "Preparing Structural Funds programmes for the period 2007-2013"

The various sessions proposed all proved very popular. Nevertheless, it might be advisable not to have too many of these sessions. OPEN DAYS is a four day event which requires a considerable commitment on the part of participants and it is to be expected that there would be a fall off in participation as the event progresses. In particular, by the time it reaches the plenary session.

The "opening session" is invariably appreciated because it provides an overview of the objectives of the event, as well as up to date information on regional policy in general. Interest in the closing session is mainly due to the fact that the conclusions of the event are presented. It also provides an opportunity to learn more about the future of EU regional policy.

There is a danger however, that too many of these bigger, public events during OPEN DAYS might actually undermine the OPEN DAYS concept, which is characterised by smaller, more interactive workshops.

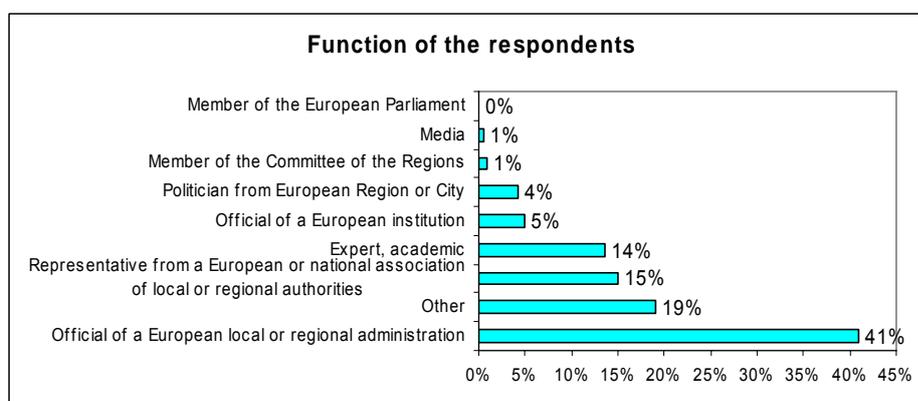
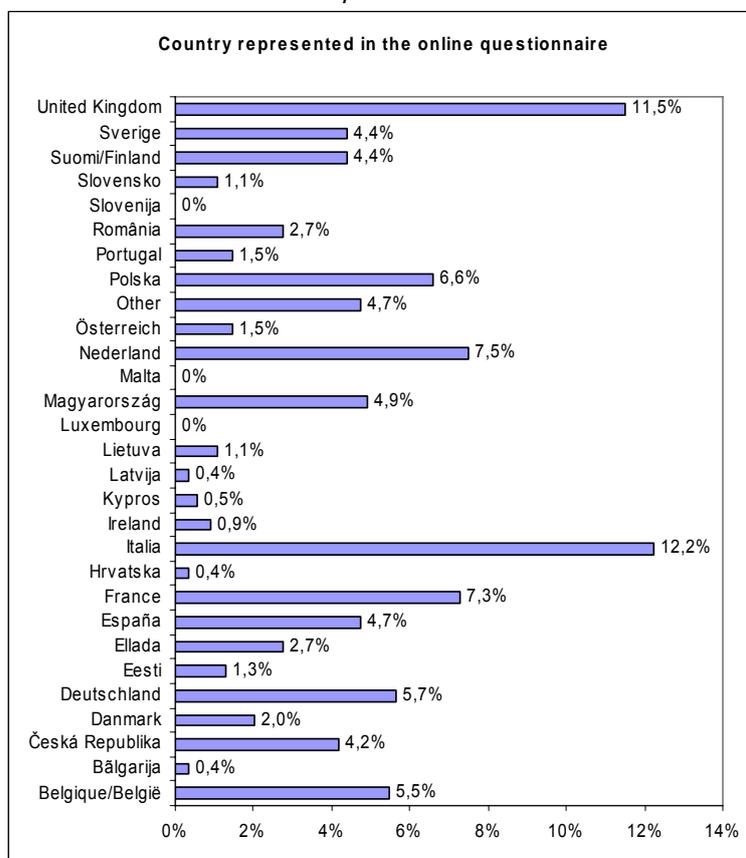
2) Presentation of the online evaluation respondents

Results from the online questionnaire

List of participants:

The countries with the highest number of participants were:

- Belgium (29%)
- Italy (9%)
- Poland (8%)
- Czech Republic (6%)
- United Kingdom (6)



The majority of the respondents were people from the audience (84%). The rest were made up of speakers (13%) and chairpersons (3%).

The respondents participated in workshops on the following thematic areas:

Regional competitiveness and employment	37%
Managing the Structural Funds and instruments	25%
European Territorial cooperation	25%
Convergence	13%

This is based on the totality of the workshops and therefore gives a more general indication of the popularity of the different themes.

Part 3: The extent to which participants expectations of OPEN DAYS 2005 were satisfied

☞ For most of the respondents (63%) OPEN DAYS 2005 lived up to their expectations

The following grid highlights how OPEN DAYS responded to the interests and expectations of the people interviewed:

Interests and expectations in relation to this event	Contribution of OPEN DAYS (strong, medium, weak)
Proposed topics	<p>STRONG</p> <p>The proposed topics directly related to the current situation with regard to the Structural Funds and to the areas of interest of the people interviewed. In the current transitory phase people are inclined to seek out information on the next programming period in different ways (seminars, publications, websites...). The high number of registrations confirms this assessment.</p> <p><i>Remark: Most of the people interviewed participated in one or two workshops on topics directly related to their field of interest (66%).</i></p>
Getting information which is of direct use in their job Getting information on the next programming period	<p>WEAK</p> <p>For 30% of the people interviewed, OPEN DAYS did not meet their expectations. In particular regarding the possibility to collect concrete information which would be of direct use in their job and which they would not be able to get elsewhere. Similarly, only one person in two indicated that OPEN DAYS provided them with new information on the next programming period (2007-2013). In fact, the information presented during OPEN DAYS was already known to most participants thanks to their other information channels - internet, networks (personal and professional relations), direct contacts with the EC, other seminars and workshops at national level, publications of the regions and of the EC, newsletters, etc....</p>
Networking, contacts, and research on new cooperation and partnership opportunities	<p>MEDIUM</p> <p>This kind of event, organised on the basis of workshops and bringing together actors from the 25 Member States, is generally appreciated. In fact, it encourages networking and facilitates cooperation and partnership opportunities. The strong interest in the workshops on European territorial cooperation (indicated by the high number of registrations) would seem to confirm this. However, the geographical dispersion of the workshops and the difficulty experienced in identifying the « Meeting Points » (even though this was indicated in the programme) may have had a negative impact on networking and contact between participants.</p>

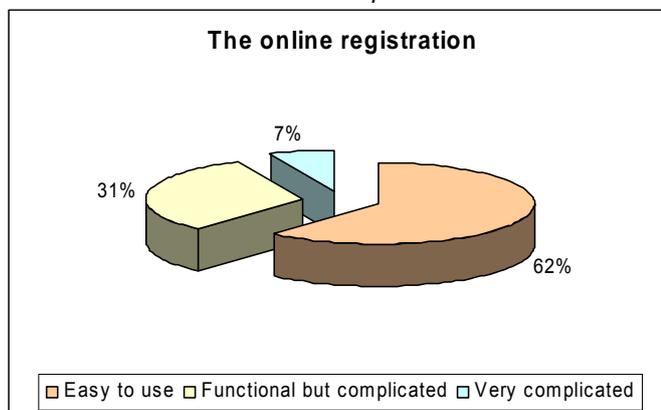
To have a global view of the current situation in relation to the Structural Funds (current and past experience, current practises, future prospects)	<p>STRONG</p> <p>The content of the project presentations and the quality of speakers are strengths which were regularly mentioned</p>
Updating of information received from elsewhere (internet, publications, newsletters, studies, seminars...)	
Learning about the experiences of others through the presentation of case studies	
Information coming directly from European Commission representatives	<p>STRONG</p> <p>The presence of official representatives of the European Commission and their participation in debates was strongly appreciated</p>
The provision of information not available elsewhere	<p>MIDDLE</p> <p>Documentation made available during OPEN DAYS is not always judged to be sufficient (e.g. the Powerpoint presentations and the analytical documents concerning orientations for the new programming period were not always available ...)</p>

Part 4: Organisation and content of OPEN DAYS 2005

1) Online registration

Respondents referred to two main sources of information on OPEN DAYS: "the Internet" and personal invitations. During the interviews, people also highlighted written sources of information: newsletters from the regional offices in Brussels, Inforegio Panorama, etc....

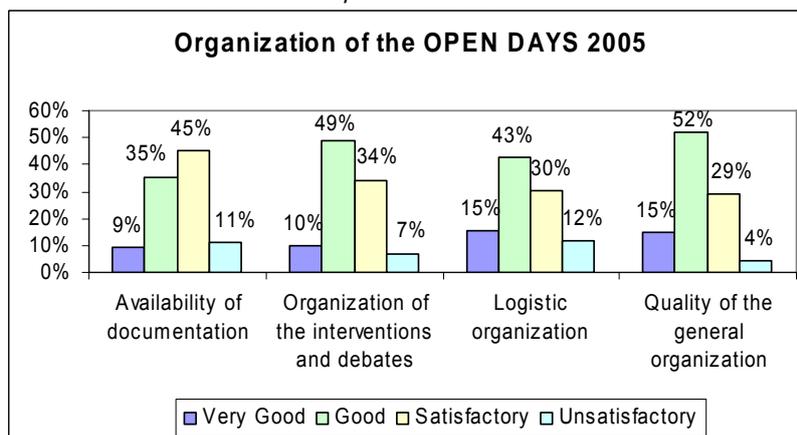
Results from the online questionnaire



For the majority of respondents, the online registration process was easy to follow. However, the numerous e-mails transmitted by the OPEN DAYS Secretariat to notify recipients of modest modifications to the programme meant people were inundated with minor details and, therefore, risked overlooking more important or essential information (such as the confirmation of registrations - see below in relation to weaknesses)

2) Organisation of OPEN DAYS 2005

Results from the online questionnaire



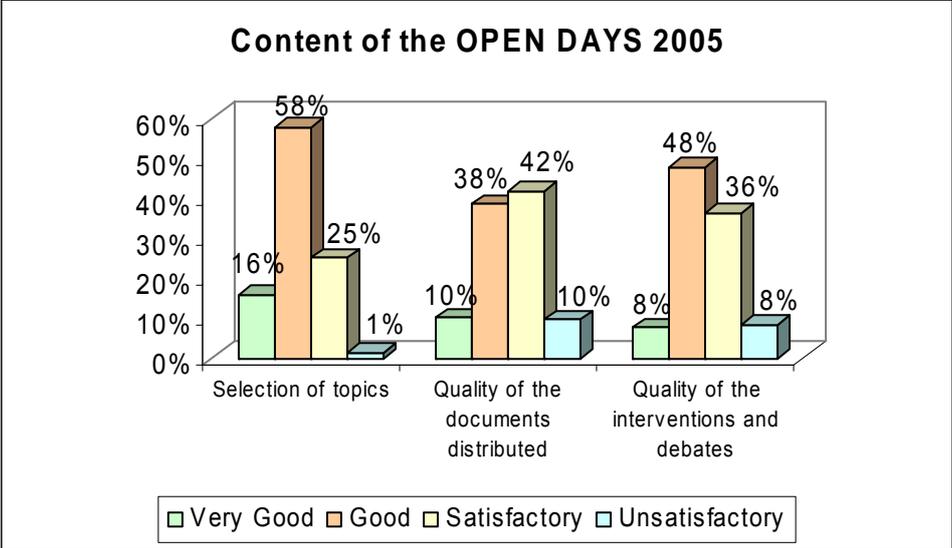
67% of respondents considered the general organisation of the workshops and seminars to be good or very good. Respondents particularly appreciated the organisation of the interventions and debates. This positive assessment also extends to the duration of the workshops: 91 % of respondents felt the duration was appropriate as it allowed time for the presentation of projects and an exchange of views with the participants.

However, the results concerning the "availability of the documentation" highlight the lack of availability of printed versions of the presentations in several workshops. This problem underlines the importance of informing all participants, in the official programme and by e-mail, of the availability of all the presentations on the DG REGIO website.

With regard to the logistical aspects of the organisation, the main criticisms were related to the distances between venues, the lack of refreshments, and the workshop facilities, which were sometimes considered to be too small.

3) Content of OPEN DAYS 2005

Results from the online questionnaire



In relation to the selection of topics, the results of the online questionnaire confirm the results of the interviews: one of the reasons for the success of OPEN DAYS 2005 (high number of registrations) is certainly related to the level of interest in the themes, which were seen as very relevant. In the current transitional stage between programmes, participants have a particular interest in the themes chosen and are actively seeking information which can help them to better prepare for the next programming period.

The finding from the interviews in relation to the quality of the documents distributed during OPEN DAYS can be explained by the absence, in several workshops, of printed versions of the Powerpoint presentations of the speakers and the detailed list of participants. It also seems that the distribution of CDs and the availability of speeches and presentations on the website was insufficient or not well publicised.

In general, however, despite differences between the workshops, most of the respondents considered the quality of the interventions and debates to be "good" or "very good".



Part 5: Comparison between OPEN DAYS 2004 and OPEN DAYS 2005

1) Strengths and weaknesses of OPEN DAYS 2005²

All of the strengths and weaknesses referred to during the interviews and identified by the respondents to the online questionnaire are listed below, in descending order (starting with the most quoted)

OPEN DAYS 2005	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1-Quality of the speakers and interventions 2-Networking and contacts 3-Debates/interactivity 4-Proposed topics 5-Participation of EC representatives in the presentations and debates 6-Participation of the regional offices in the organisation of OPEN DAYS 7-Reception at the museum 8-Respect of timing 9-Number of proposed workshops	1-Dispersion and distances between the different workshops 2-Logistic in certain places (reception capacity too small considering the number of participants, no refreshments, acoustics, ...) 3-Large number of e-mails from the OPEN DAYS Secretariat concerning very minor modifications to the programme 4-The registration process 5-Lack of a common meeting point for networking 6-Absence of the list of participants and of printed versions of most of the presentations (Powerpoint) 7-Absence of maps indicating the metro and bus stations linking the workshop 8-Difficulty in finding some workshops 9-Too many participants in certain workshops, thus reducing the time available for debate and questions 10-Information content of the workshops and the sessions was too general 11-The content of the plenary session 12-Quality and content of the debates 13-The poor relationship between the workshop titles and their content 14-Absence of translation services 15-Legibility of the programme 16-Too little time for lunch

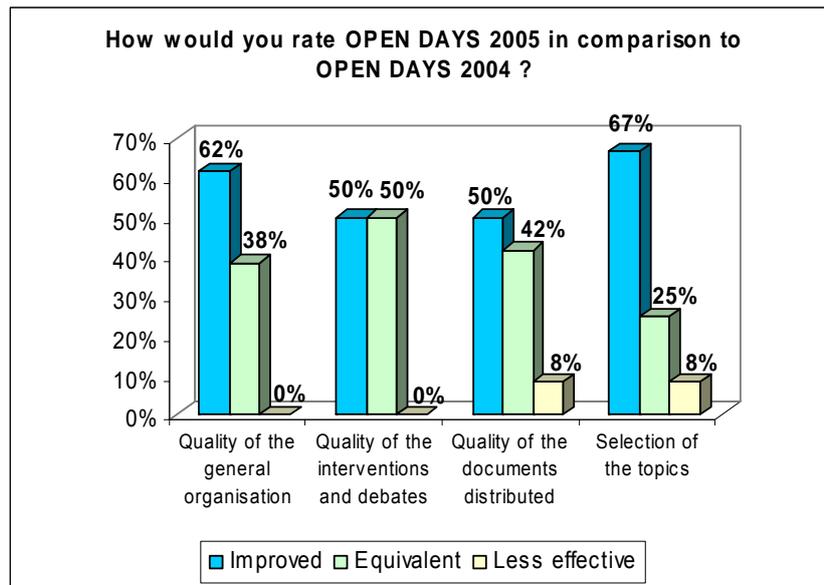
² Based on the interviews and on the online questionnaire

2) Results of the comparison between the OPEN DAYS 2004 and OPEN DAYS 2005

↳ **Preliminary remark: only 15% of those interviewed during OPEN DAYS 2005 actually took part in OPEN DAYS 2004.**

2.1) The overall organisation of the event

Results from the interviews



In comparison with OPEN DAYS 2004, it is clear that the themes chosen for OPEN DAYS 2005 were more concrete, more pertinent and more focused. The quality of the interventions also improved, despite the fact that the information provided was sometimes seen as superficial.

On this latter point, the question could be asked: was the information superficial because of a lack of direction by the organisers or because of the limited time available for each speaker (some workshops may have had too many speakers and therefore did not have time for a more in depth analysis or debate)? In any event it would appear that it was not the fault of the moderators, which on the whole were seen as more efficient this year.



The choice of topical subjects by the organisers generated greater enthusiasm among participants. The online availability of the presentations was also seen as a very positive development as it responded to a demand which was strongly expressed by the respondents.

The co-organisation of workshops with several European regions (conglomerates) was also perceived as original and as portraying a positive image of interregional co-operation.

Contrary to OPEN DAYS 2004, very few respondents, to either the online questionnaire or those participating in the interviews indicated they had been inconvenienced by the fact that the workshops were organised in only one language. This is probably partly explained by the strong representation of participants from the new Member States and also by the fact that certain workshops also provided interpretation into a language other than English.

However, similar to OPEN DAYS 2005, it would seem that the audience was not very active in the debates, which could be a problem relating to language.

Finally, active engagement with the partner institutions (European Regions, European Parliament and the CoR) in the preparations is also identified as a positive development. The technical meetings helped to ensure a good information flow between the partners involved.

2.2) The actions in direction to the journalists



The number and the diversity of the participants in OPEN DAYS 2005 (as well as their profile and nationalities) and the range of activities proposed (number of workshops, sessions...) combine to make this event an ideal opportunity to launch a major communications campaign directed at national and regional media and conveying the positive aspects and achievements of European regional policy.

DG REGIO therefore decided on a much bigger and more focused media campaign for OPEN DAYS 2005 than for OPEN DAYS 2004. A specific programme was developed in order to target regional journalists, around fifty of whom subsequently covered the event. 70 journalists also took part in the OPEN DAYS 2005 press conference, which was organised by DG REGIO. Journalists were also invited to participate in the workshops and seminars and to meet and interview Commissioner Hübner, President Straub, MEPs and other regional representatives.

The interest in mobilising the regional media stems from the possibility it offers of bringing "Brussels" closer to EU citizens and of engendering a European culture. The image of the Structural Funds in the media is not always positive. Questions relating to the Structural Funds are often regarded as complex and messages from Europe too often come to the citizen second hand. Furthermore, the media has a tendency to focus only on political speeches, both at local and EU level.

OPEN DAYS provides an opportunity to highlight certain concrete activities which contribute to improving understanding of European regional policy and which address the portrayals of the complexity of the Structural Funds. This event constitutes an excellent opportunity to present a positive image of European funds, and therefore to enhance the visibility and understanding of the role of the European Commission. In mobilising the regional press, DG REGIO brought (introduced) the event out into the regions and closer to the citizens.

Mobilising the regional media for this event also makes it possible for journalists to learn more about the European institutions and about issues relating to the Structural Funds. This can only contribute to improving understanding and to promoting better analysis and ultimately better treatment of the information on the part of journalists.

Activities targeting the national and regional media should be continued and even expanded (increase the number of invitations). A system for evaluating the media coverage before and after the OPEN DAYS should also be set up, in order to better target future media actions. And finally, links with the invited journalists should be maintained in order to fully exploit the benefits of the media actions carried out within the framework of OPEN DAYS (dissemination of information via e-mails, disseminating of publications, press releases, etc....)

Part 6: The future of OPEN DAYS

↳ 96% of respondents (online questionnaire and interviews) believe OPEN DAYS should be continued.

1) The reasons



The interviews highlight the importance of an event like OPEN DAYS for actors directly involved in the Structural Funds, as well as for people seeking information in order to identify opportunities. OPEN DAYS is seen as providing a very useful opportunity for dialogue and reflection.

This high profile event, which attracts participants from across Europe also promotes networking and provides an opportunity for professionals to access informal information channels which are not normally accessible. It also of course facilitates access to official information provided directly by the European Commission. OPEN DAYS provides an opportunity for practitioners to compare notes, to benchmark and to draw on the expertise of a wide range of contributors.

The views of the 85 interviewees clearly demonstrate how much participants appreciate the intimate nature of the event (based around small workshops), which facilitates greater personal contact and is also more conducive to addressing practical issues. OPEN DAYS 2005 responded well to the expectations of the participants by mixing bigger events (sessions) with the smaller more intimate events (workshops). This met the needs of those who prefer to work in restricted groups in order to share experience and to listen to presentations focused on projects, and it also met the needs of those who prefer to take part in events with more of a "political" objective, providing a more global and strategic perspective.

Many people come to OPEN DAYS to find examples of good practices, ideas for projects, and opportunities of co-operation. It is also for this reason that nearly all of those interviewed and nearly all of the respondents to the online questionnaire would like to see this event being continued on an annual basis.

2) Proposals for improvements:

The table below summarizes the various proposals put forward by the interviewees, the respondents to the online questionnaire and by the representatives of the European Commission who participated as speakers or chairpersons on how to improve OPEN DAYS. For ease of understanding, the responses have been organised into various categories:

PROPOSALS COLLECTED THROUGH PERSONAL INTERVIEWS AND THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRES	
Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To extend the registration period ▪ To simplify the registration process ▪ To circulate an e-mail the week before OPEN DAYS to all those who registered outlining the workshops and sessions, with the precise addresses, and providing details of the bus, tram and metro stations nearest to the workshop venues.
Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To describe more clearly in the programme the objective of the workshops, so that people can make a better selection ▪ To specify the target groups of the workshops and to suggest criteria for the profile of those who should participate in the seminars and workshops ▪ To mention in the programme the level of detail and depth of the topics being addressed by the seminars ▪ To reduce the number of e-mail messages updating participants of changes to the programme. ▪ To include in the printed programme, and in the separate book introducing the participating regions ("Facts and Figures"), maps showing where these regions are situated
Location of OPEN DAYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To concentrate the workshops in one location with different rooms or, at least, in a smaller number of buildings ▪ Allow more time to move from one workshop to another ▪ Simplify the network of venues
Organisation of the interventions and debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When signing up for an event, members of the audience could be encouraged to submit a question about the topic ▪ To limit the number of speakers to 1-2 in order to get more indepth information from specialists in their fields. ▪ To plan more time for debates ▪ To organise some seminars where there is only a discussion based on experiences and questions on issues put forward by the audience, without any presentations (except to introduce the debate) ▪ To increase the number of interventions by the Commission and CoR ▪ To allow a maximum of 30 minutes for (max. 2) speakers, 1 hour for discussion and 1 hour between sessions ▪ To have in each workshop at least one representative of European Commission that is familiar with the topic ▪ To choose speakers with a range of different or opposing opinions in each workshop in order to provide a more balanced contribution ▪ To select better English speakers ▪ To select more women speakers ▪ Concerning the Opening session : to organise a different formula where, for example, a journalist animates a round table
Content of the presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More guidance to the speakers beforehand in order to achieve a more comprehensive approach during the sessions ▪ To request that presentations focus more on advice and lessons learned from best practices ▪ To focus some workshops on the lessons learned and others on future expectations ▪ To dedicate a specific workshop to the links between the

	<p>managing authority, the paying authority and the certifying authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To increase the number of sessions on the theme of “Managing Structural Funds” (a session on financial control, for example) ▪ To formulate recommendations or to suggest possible projects for the future, in parallel of the Commission proposals ▪ To let participants suggest specific fields for specific debates
Overall organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To organise more workshops where there is a large demand (for example : a double session for the same workshop) ▪ To have a central display area for the regions involved, where people could go between the different meetings. This would create a meeting space, thus facilitating networking and the development of new partnerships ▪ To organise another event in parallel with OPEN DAYS: Directoria ▪ To have a single area where projects are showcased ▪ To set up a central site for registration on arrival : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to pick up a “delegate pass” for the week of OPEN DAYS - to get copies of all presentations, the list of participants, the event programme (only one per participant) - to centralise information on the availability of places for the different workshops ▪ To reduce the number of sessions and to impose limits on the number of participants : <i>“OPEN DAYS shouldn’t become a big event with the risk of losing its interest and originality”</i> ▪ Less regional offices per conglomerate ▪ A longer break between the workshops ▪ Interpretation into English for all the workshops ▪ To target the final reception better towards attendees interested in trans-national project development ▪ A longer lunch break ▪ To propose less workshops but with better quality content ▪ Shorter sessions ▪ To have more seating for the opening and closing sessions, which are the only way to get an overall picture of OPEN DAYS ▪ To organise separate events per thematic area ▪ To avoid getting bigger every year: it could be interesting to develop stronger links between “Brussels events” and similar events, in the same week, in the regions involved ▪ To promote this DG REGIO/COR partnership to other DGs/EU policies
Publicity and communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide of participants with more information about the consortiums of regions which organised the workshops with the EC and CoR (these are examples of useful interregional cooperation in practise) ▪ To increase the visibility of the partner regions ▪ To use some local / regional intermediary organisations to better publicise the events ▪ To publish online the contact details for the people who contributed in the events (speakers, chairs, etc..) ▪ To provide better information about where the different stands are ▪ To consider how to attract people other than the “usual clients” of DG REGIO, such as the business community, social partners, NGOs and the education community.
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To distribute a map showing the nearest metro, tram, bus stations

	<p>for each venue, with directions and the time taken to walk between the stations and the venues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To distribute printed versions of the speeches just before the workshops ▪ To make printed versions of the Powerpoint presentations available to the participants in all workshops ▪ To provide speakers with a list of participants in advance so that they know to whom they are speaking. ▪ To make a list of attendees with contact details available in every workshops
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To make refreshments available at all venues ▪ To set up a shuttle service between the OPEN DAYS venues
After OPEN DAYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To set up networks based around certain topics in order to add-value to existing networks and to facilitate a deeper reflection during OPEN DAYS ▪ To circulate by e-mail to all the participants the link to download the different presentations

Part 7: Recommendations

1) The registration process:

- The registration process appears to work well and it is recommended that this system is retained. However, the number of emails updating participants of changes to the programme should be reduced: some updates seem to be of minor importance and it may be the case that one e-mail at the end of each week would be enough to keep participants informed.
- It is also recommended that one week before the beginning of the event each participant should be sent a summary table including: the dates, times and names of the workshops and the sessions, the addresses of the venues, and the metro and bus stations nearest to the venues. The e-mail sent before the beginning of the OPEN DAYS 2005 was not very clear in this regard.
- A map should be included on the OPEN DAYS website, where participants could click on the venue and have the different elements (address, metro and bus stations) displayed. A facility should also be provided which, based on data entered (date, address, name of session) works out how participants can get from one workshop to another, suggests the different transport options (metro stops, bus numbers, etc..) and the time required. This facility could use a similar format to the "mappy" website.
- During the registration process, participants could be invited to submit questions for the workshops in order to provide direction for the debates. This would also give speakers the opportunity to prepare more elaborated answers. However, it should be left to the moderators to animate the debates, using the questions only as a tool to stimulate discussion.

2) The theme of the event

- In selecting a theme the organisers of the event must ensure that the right balance is found between the presentation of examples of good practices (lessons learnt from the past) and the political agenda.

3) The programme:

- It is recommended that two kinds of programmes are produced: one general programme and one more detailed programme. The detailed programme could provide the following information for each workshop:
 - The precise objectives
 - The specific target groups (profile)
 - The level of detail and depth to which topics will be addressed in the workshop

4) The press

- More journalists from the regional media should be invited to OPEN DAYS. OPEN DAYS is an excellent opportunities to demonstrate the benefits of EU membership (concrete projects, meeting and networking between people from all over Europe, etc...) and to deliver practical and positive messages.
- An evaluation should be carried out of articles and images related to OPEN DAYS (published/broadcast before and after the event) in order to better understand media expectations. This is one of the best ways of improving communications with the national and regional media and of ensuring that future media actions better respond to their expectations.

5) Distribution of documentation

- It is important that participants continue to have the possibility of downloading the speakers' presentations from the DG REGIO website and also that the printed version of the speakers' presentations are available during the workshops

6) Overall organisation

- As already underlined for OPEN DAYS 2004, the long distances between some of the workshops is a real problem. A new solution must be found which takes account of both the need to involve the regions and also the difficulties experienced by the participants in trying to move quickly from one workshop to another and their expectations in terms of networking and the exchange of experiences. The workshops should be organised in a single venue with different rooms/sections where the participating regional office can put their stands. It would also be useful to establish a "matching/meeting point" in order to facilitate contacts, networking and exchanges of experience. Such opportunities are actively sought by the participants to such an event.
- Another suggestion for how to respond to participants' expectations is to organise an event such as "Directoria" in parallel with OPEN DAYS

- If there is a similar dispersion of workshops next year, a central registration desk should be set up, creating a common focal point:
 - to pick up "delegate passes" for the week of OPEN DAYS,
 - to distribute one programme to each participant,
 - to distribute maps with transport and other logistical information,
 - to distribute copies of all presentations and a list of all participants,
 - to provide details of the number of places available in the different workshops.
- In parallel with the OPEN DAYS event in Brussels, smaller events should also be encouraged in the regions involved in order to demonstrate the link between Brussels and the regions
- The number of speakers should be reduced to 2-3 speakers per workshops in order to allow more time for analysis and debate. Each speaker should follow a standard format (for example, presentations shouldn't be longer than a certain number of slides). In relation to the sequence of speakers an attempt should be made to alternate between practitioners and academics
- A certain number of seminars should be organised to facilitate discussion based on experiences and on questions put forward by the audience, with no presentations, except for an introduction to the debate
- As in 2005, there should continue to be some workshops where there is interpretation into languages other than English. In such cases, however, it is important that English interpretation is still available.
- For OPEN DAYS 2006 collaboration and co-organisation between DG REGIO and European regions should be further promoted. This type of collaboration gives OPEN DAYS its uniqueness and should remain a core aspect of the event. However, it might be interesting to enlarge the cooperation to include other organisations, such as NGOs, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, etc... without increasing the overall number of partnerships in the conglomerate structure.
- The number of plenary sessions should be reduced (2 instead of 3). For most of those interviewed the plenary session seemed to have less added value than the other sessions.

7) After the event :

- The e-mail message sent to all the participants in order to ask them to complete the online evaluation questionnaire should also inform them that they can download the different presentations on the Inforegio website.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Questionnaire for the online evaluation

PROPOSAL FOR AN EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

“WORKING TOGETHER FOR REGIONAL GROWTH AND JOBS” OPEN DAYS 2005

Brussels, 10-13 October 2005

PRESENTATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

1/ Which country do you represent:

2/ What's your fonction?

- Member of the Committee of the Regions,
- Member of the European Parliament
- Politician from a European Region or city
- Representative from a European or national association of local or regional authorities
- Official of a European institution
- Official of a European local or regional administration
- Expert, academic
- Media
- Other

3/ Kind of participant:

- Chairperson
- Speaker
- Audience

4/You participated to the seminars and workshops in the following areas:

- Convergence
- Regional competitiveness and employment
- European Territorial cooperation
- Managing the Structural Funds and instruments

ORGANISATION OF THE OPEN DAYS 2005

5/New: How did you hear about the event?

- Internet
- I was personally invited
- Written press
- Orally
- Other sources

6/What do you think about the online registration process?

- Easy to use
- Functional but complicated
- Very complicated

7/ The duration of the seminars and workshops seems to be:

- Too short
- Appropriate
- Too long

	Unsatisfactory	satisfactory	good	very good
8/ Availability of documentation	1	2	3	4
9/ Organisation of the interventions and debates	1	2	3	4
10/ Logistic organisation	1	2	3	4
11/ Quality of the general organisation	1	2	3	4

CONTENT OF OPEN DAYS 2005

	Unsatisfactory	satisfactory	good	very good
11/ Selection of topics	1	2	3	4
12/ Quality of the documents distributed	1	2	3	4
13/ Quality of the interventions and the debates	1	2	3	4
14/ Overall evaluation (organisation and content)	1	2	3	4

15) Do you think that this kind of event should be repeated?

- Yes
- No

16) Do you have any suggestions for how this event could be improved?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify:

.....

.....

OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS:

.....

.....

ANNEX 2: Interview grid

**“WORKING TOGETHER FOR REGIONAL GROWTH AND JOBS”
OPEN DAYS 2005**

Brussels, 10-13 October 2005

Date the questionnaire was completed:
Event organised by: DG REGIO / conglomerate
Which heading: Convergence / Regional competitiveness+employment / European territorial cooperation / Programme management
Interview conducted by:
Name of interviewee:
The organisation they work for?
Their function:
Their phone number:
Their e-mail:

CONTENT AND ORGANISATION OF THE SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

1) How did you hear about the event?

- Internet
- I was personally invited
- Written press
- Orally
- Other sources

2) Why were you interested in this event? (topics, possibility to get contacts, networking, possibility to find information directly useful for your job.....)

3) Was the standard of the up to your expectations?

Yes No

Please, specify :

4) In which of the following seminars and workshop' areas did you participate:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Convergence <input type="checkbox"/> Regional competitiveness and employment <input type="checkbox"/> European Territorial cooperation <input type="checkbox"/> Managing the Structural Funds and instruments			
5) Did you participate in OPEN DAYS 2004?			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, in comparison with OPEN DAYS 2004, how would you rate OPEN DAYS 2005 :			
	Improved	Equivalent	Less effective
<u>6/ Quality of the general organisation</u>			
<u>7/ Quality of the interventions and debates</u>			
<u>8/ Quality of the documents distributed</u>			
<u>9/ Selection of the topics</u>			
10) In particular, did this event provide you with new information on the perspectives for 2007-2013?			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If not, where do you get this kind of information? (Please cite the information sources : publication, website, network, other workshops and seminars, professional relations....)			
11) Did the different themes selected for the workshops & seminars seem appropriate to you?			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Please, specify :			
POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS			
12) Cite three strong points of the seminars and workshops:			

13) Cite three weak points of the seminars and workshops:
14) Do you think that this type of event should be repeated?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please, specify :
15) Do you have any suggestion for how the event could be improved?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please specify: subjects covered, target audience, final production, organisation of a follow up, organisation of working sessions, development of partnerships with the European Commission and the participants, development of the dissemination and exchange of good practices...
16) Do you have other observations or comments?

The European Commission would like to thank you for replying to this questionnaire