



## **Ecsite Annual Conference 2014 Evaluation and Recommendations**

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## 1. Introduction

### The Ecsite Annual Conference 2014

Dear Ecsite Annual Conference participants,

The 25<sup>th</sup> Ecsite Annual Conference 2014 was held from **22 to 24 May in The Hague, The Netherlands**. The conference was hosted by **Museon** under the "**People, Planet, Peace**" theme. **954 delegates from 50 countries** participated in the Ecsite AC2014.

It consisted of two days of pre-conference meetings and training courses followed by three days of main conference with **88 sessions**. The 88 programme sessions were **selected from 208 proposals** Ecsite received by October 2013. A new session format, the "Gaming Space", was successfully introduced. 26% of the people who completed a feedback form had visited it.

Ecsite and the Annual Conference Programme Committee (ACPC) would like to thank all of you for your contribution to the success of this event. We are particularly grateful to those who took the time to give us their valuable feedback and recommendations for improvement of future conferences. This document gives an overview of the Ecsite Annual Conference 2014 as seen by its delegates.

It is a summary report drawn from the 178 conference feedback forms gathered from delegates after the conference via an online questionnaire and from the session feedback forms gathered after every session. As some of the questionnaire's questions were open-ended, individuals' comments are included in this report.

From your feedback the following key points should be improved:

- Improve lunches and coffee breaks, and provide water at all times
- Assure quality of sessions, speakers and their coherent announcement
- Reduce panels, dare to offer more and new and interactive formats
- Suggestions about the Gala Dinner: add a host, renew it, add entertainment or a keynote, add a reception to mingle more
- Have a faster WiFi and more daylight (mentioned a few times)

These results are analyzed and used by the Annual Conference Programme Committee (ACPC) and the Ecsite Executive office while speakers and convenors receive individual emails regarding their sessions. Both results (from session feedback forms and conference feedback forms) are important and are taken into consideration when the next Annual Conference is organized and sessions are being selected.

The ACPC, the Executive Office, the Ecsite Board and the next host will carefully look at your comments to improve the most significant annual gathering of the network.

Thanks again for your contribution,

**The Ecsite Annual Conference Programme Committee (ACPC)**

## 2. Results

Out of the 954 participants of the conference, 178 forms were gathered (19% of participants, 2% less than in 2013). Results were received from an anonymous questionnaire that was put online and sent to all participants once the AC2014 ended.

### 2.1. Characterize the conference with three words

People gave 440 words for characterizing the conference. 92% of the words given were positive and 8% were negative (5% more than in 2013). The number in front of each word corresponds to the number of people who selected this word as one of their keywords.

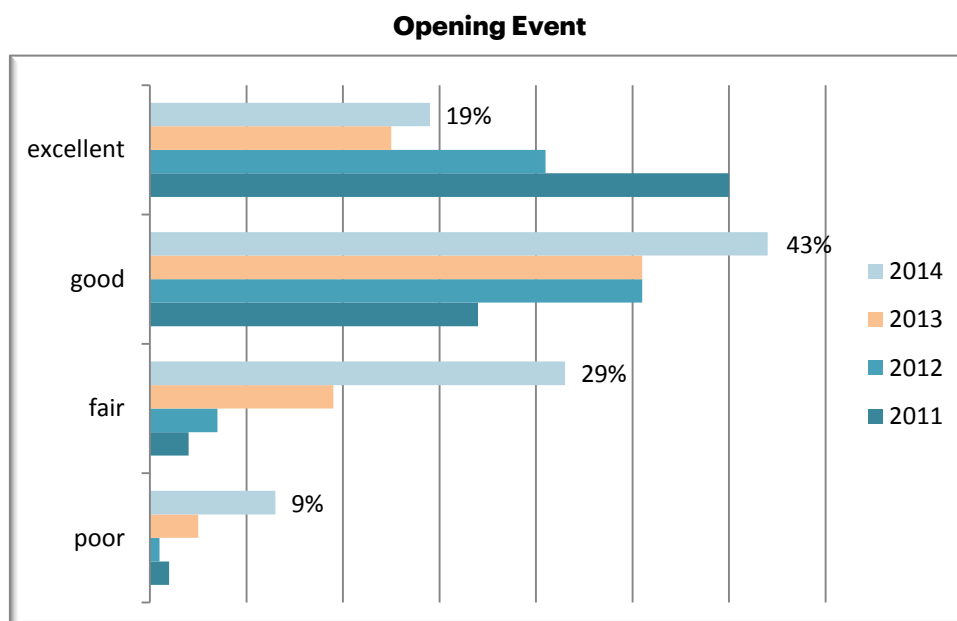
Here are the most popular words used:

**61 networking, 23 inspiring, 19 interesting/informative, 17 friendly, 16 fun, 8 new ideas, 7 well organized, 6 nice atmosphere**

> Roughly 50% of the words are about people and relationships, 25% about the content and 25% about the infrastructure and social events.

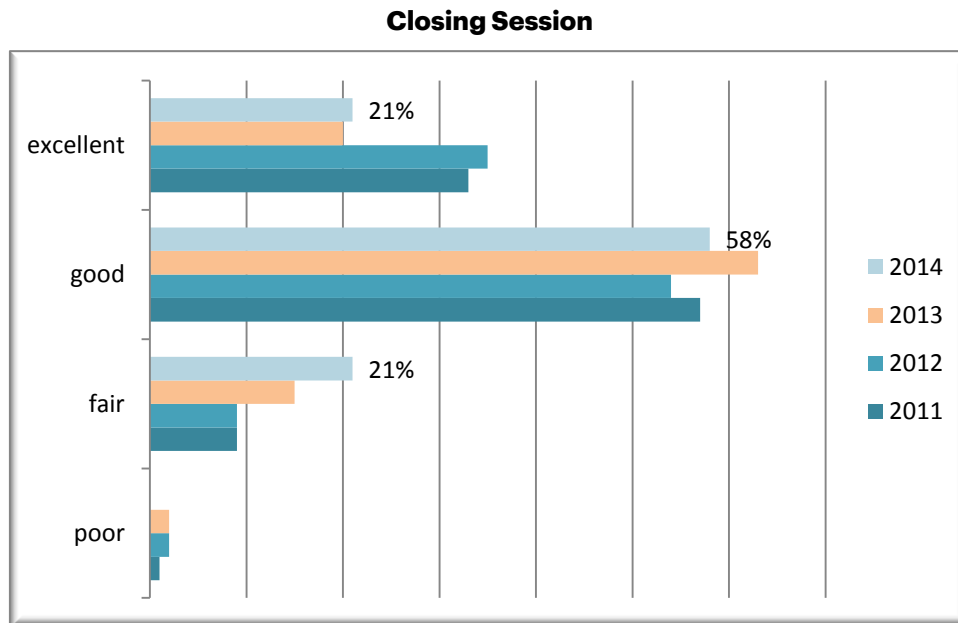
#### 2.2.1 The Opening Event

The Opening ceremony took place in the World Forum theater, The Hague's largest Congress Centre. The ceremony was chaired by Marie Christine Van der Sman, Director of Museon and consisted of three parts. The welcoming of Her Majesty, Máxima the Queen of Netherlands, the welcoming speeches of the Ecsite representatives, Rosalia Vargas and Catherine Franche and the speech of UNESCO representative Qunli HAN, Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences and Secretary of the Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB). In addition, a girls choir presented their award-winning song about the Peace Palace before a performing a symbolic opening act with Queen Máxima's participation.



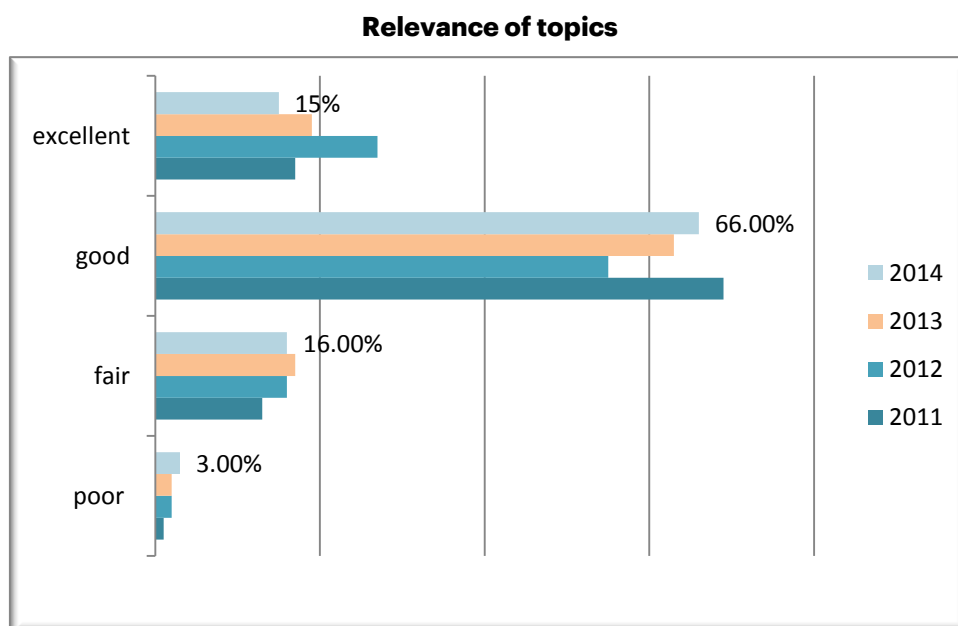
### 2.2.2 The Closing Event

The closing event was attended by approximately 400 participants. 107 people answered this question. It consisted of short speeches from Marie Christine Van der Sman, Director of the host institution for the Ecsite AC2014 and Ecsite President, Rosalia Vargas. Camille Pisani, Chairperson of the Annual Conference Programme Committee for 2014 also thanked the participants in her speech. Last but not least, following to the speech of Michele Lanzinger, Director of MUSE in Trento, Italy (Host of the AC2015) the team of MUSE presented a movie taking the audience into the stunning setting of next year's conference and performed an act referring to next year's theme: "Food for curious minds".

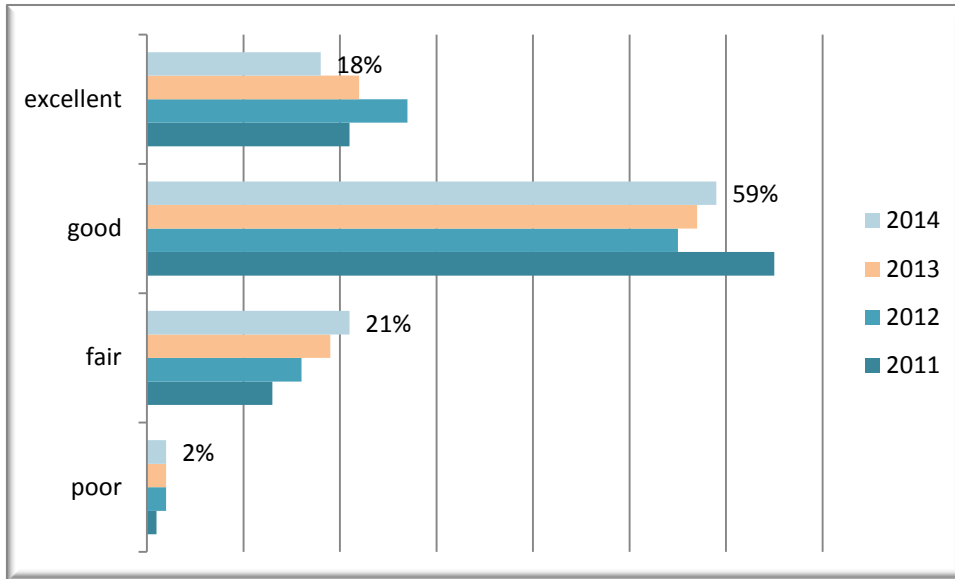


### 2.2.3 Overall quality of sessions

The delegates were asked to rate sessions on the following aspects: relevance of topics, diversity of topics and quality of the keynote speakers. Here are their views:



### Variety of topics



### Quality of keynote speeches – Ian Goldin 23 May

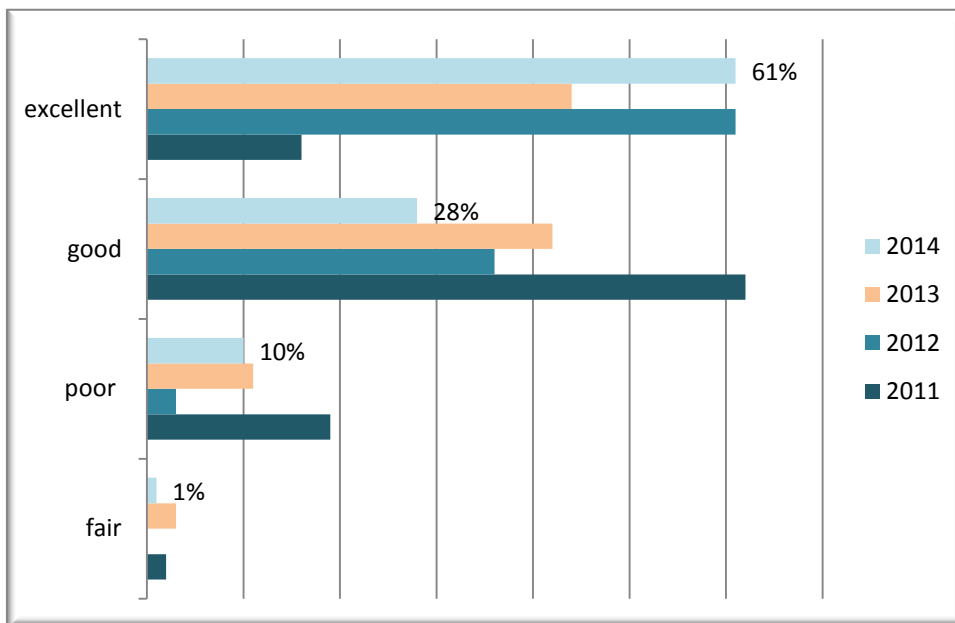


Figure for previous years: average rating keynote speeches.

### Quality of keynote speeches – Ahmet Üzümcü 24 May

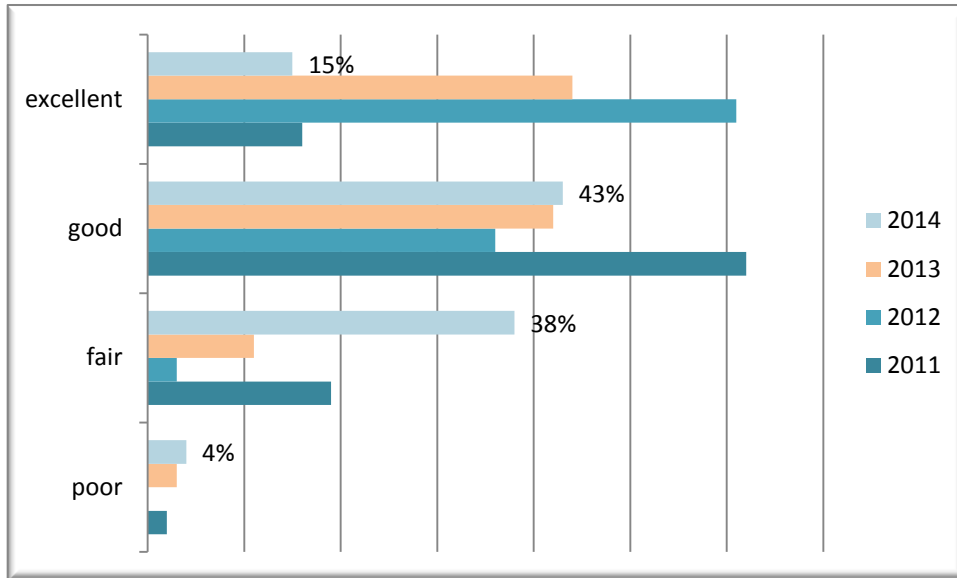


Figure for previous years: average rating keynote speeches.

#### **Maker Space**

53% of participants visited it. Out of those, 100% would like to have the Maker Space again in 2015.

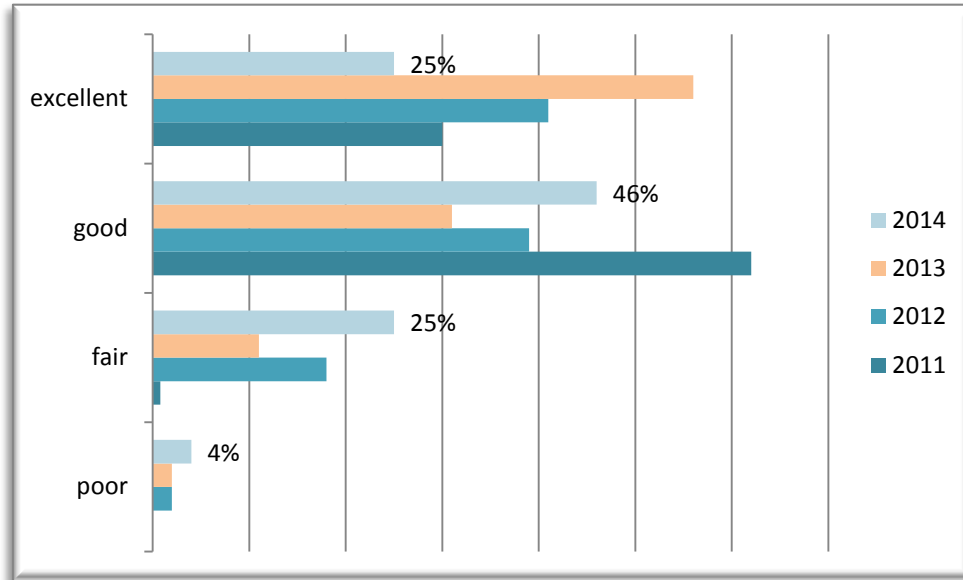
#### **Gaming Space (on 2 days only)**

27% of participants visited it. Out of those, 100% would like to have the Gaming Space again in 2015.

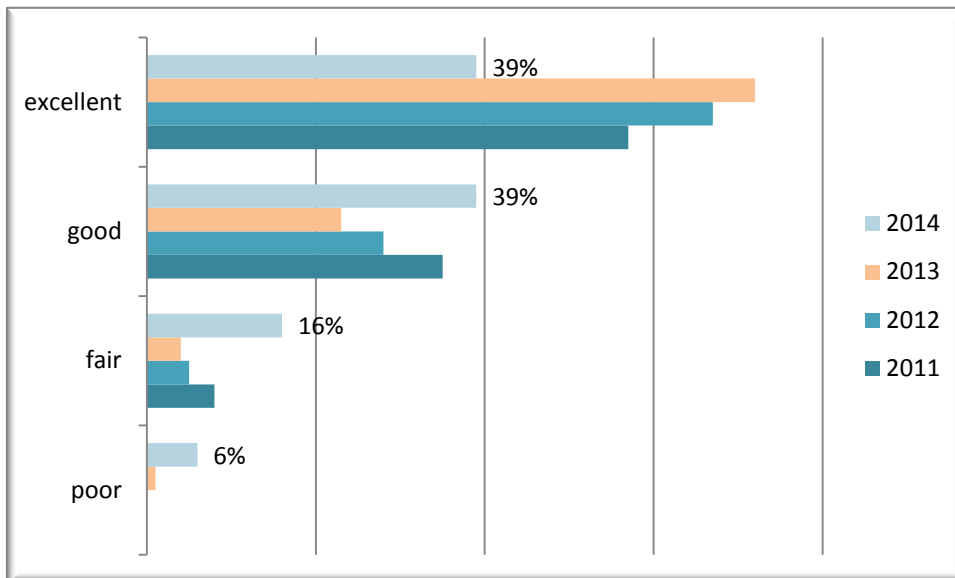
### 2.3 Social programme

The 225 online respondents also shared their opinion on the social events and Business Bistro.

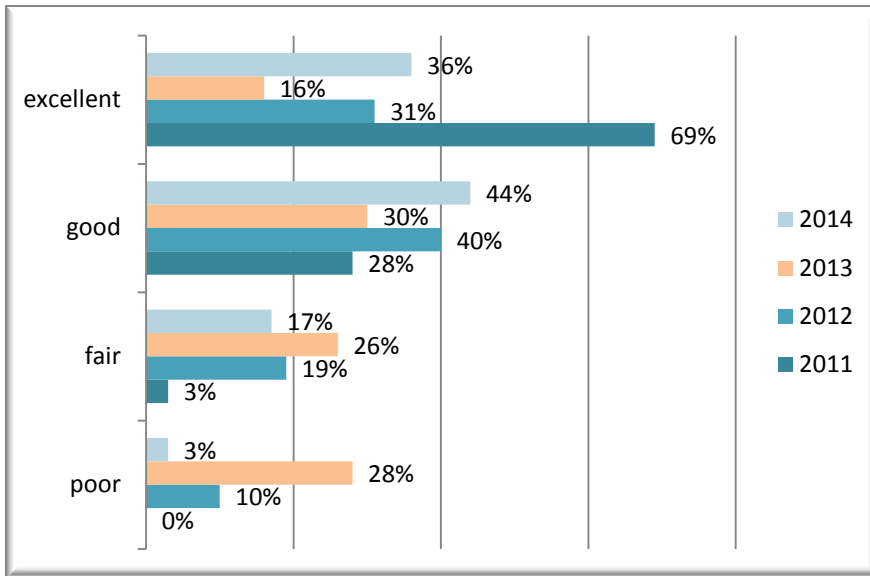
#### Gala Dinner



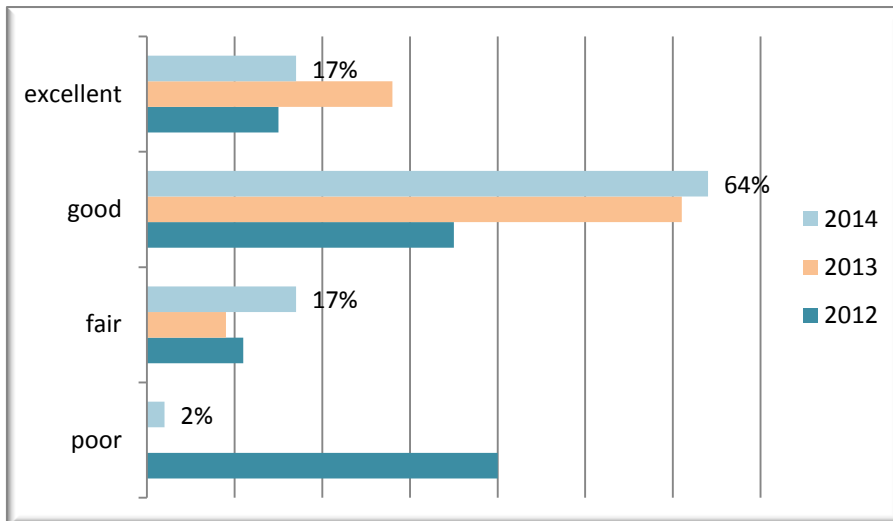
#### Nocturne



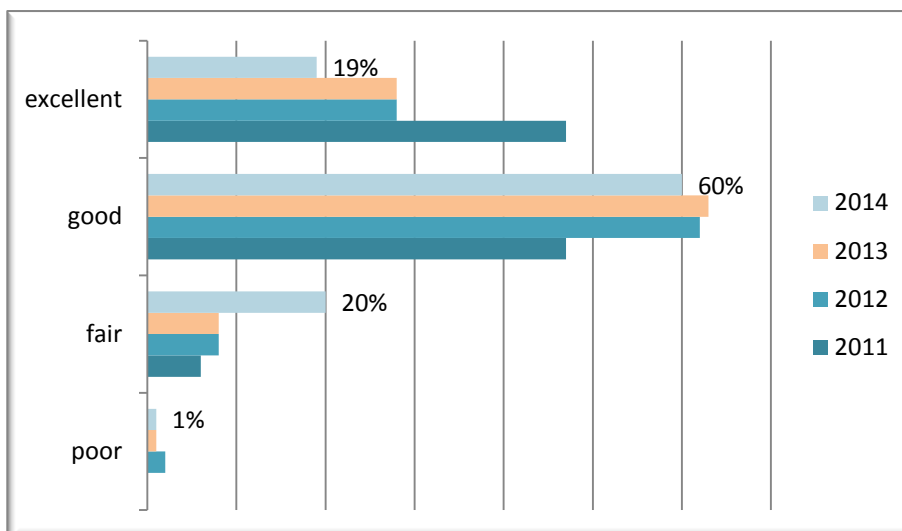
### Farewell Party



### Newcomers breakfast



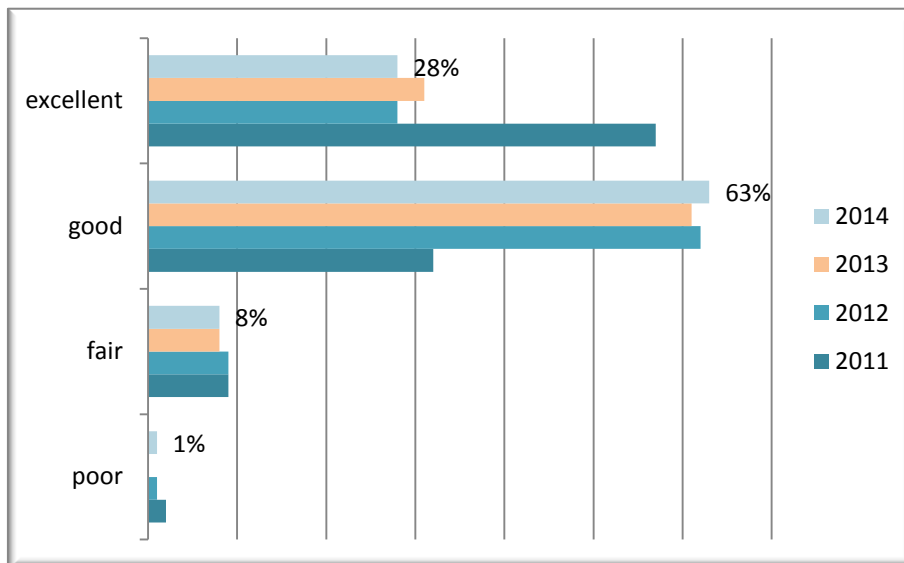
### Business Bistro



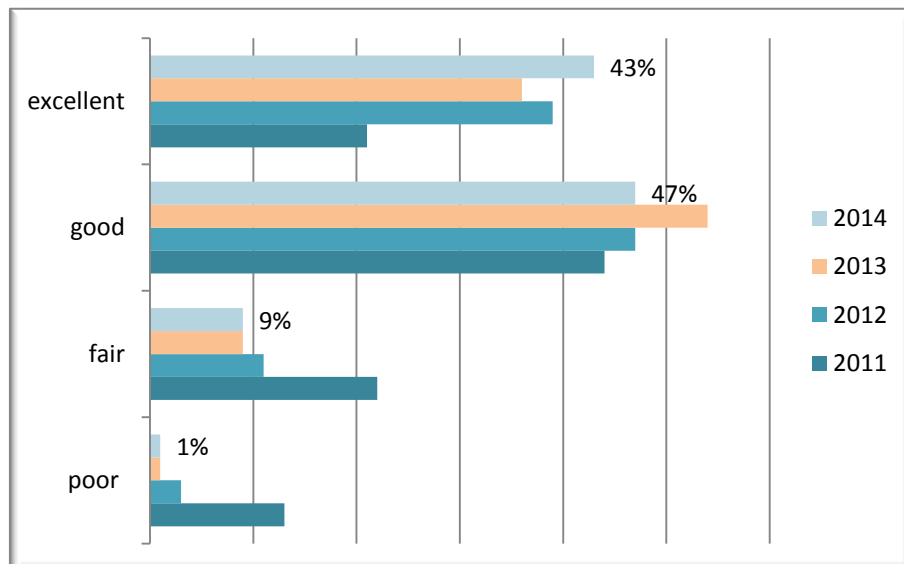


## 2.4 Organisation

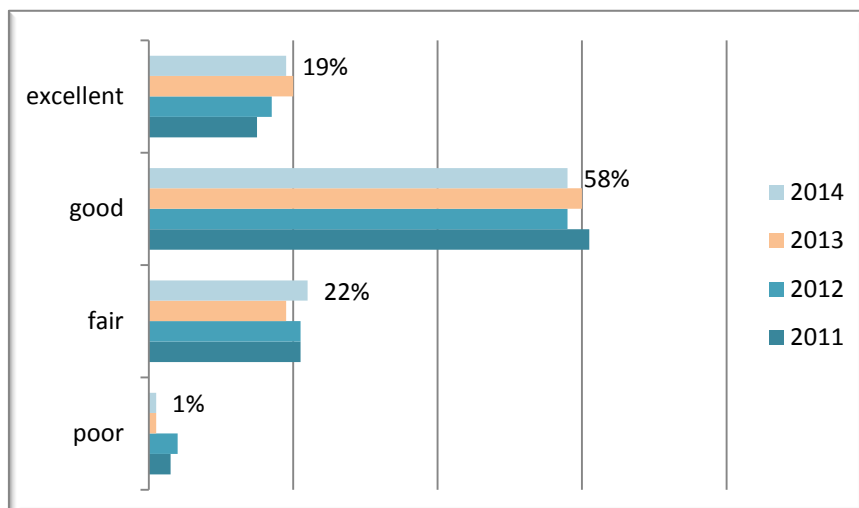
### Conference announcements



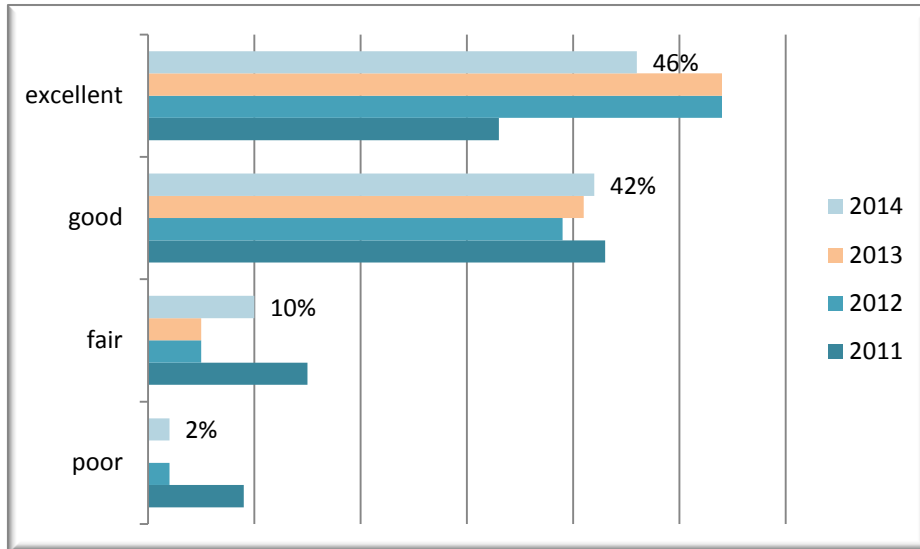
### Online registration & follow up



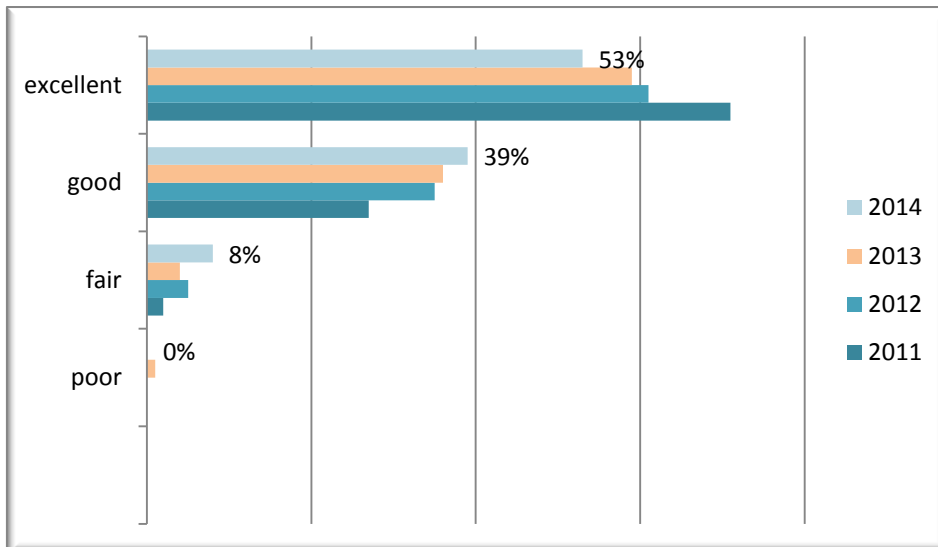
### Conference website



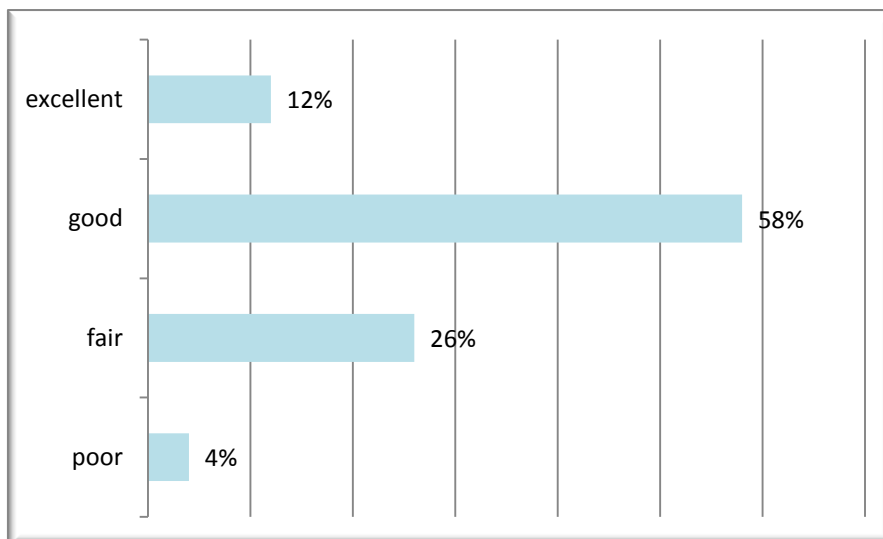
### Registration desk



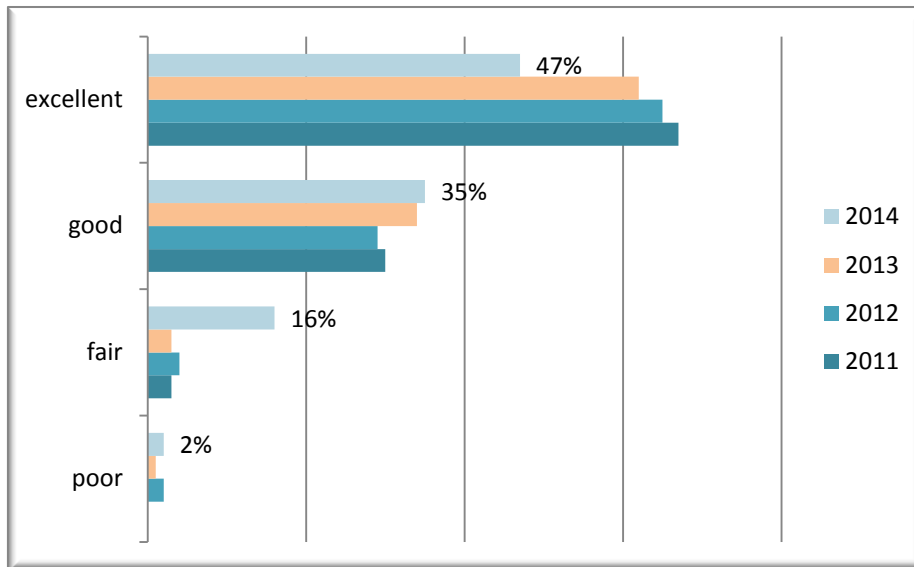
### Printed programme



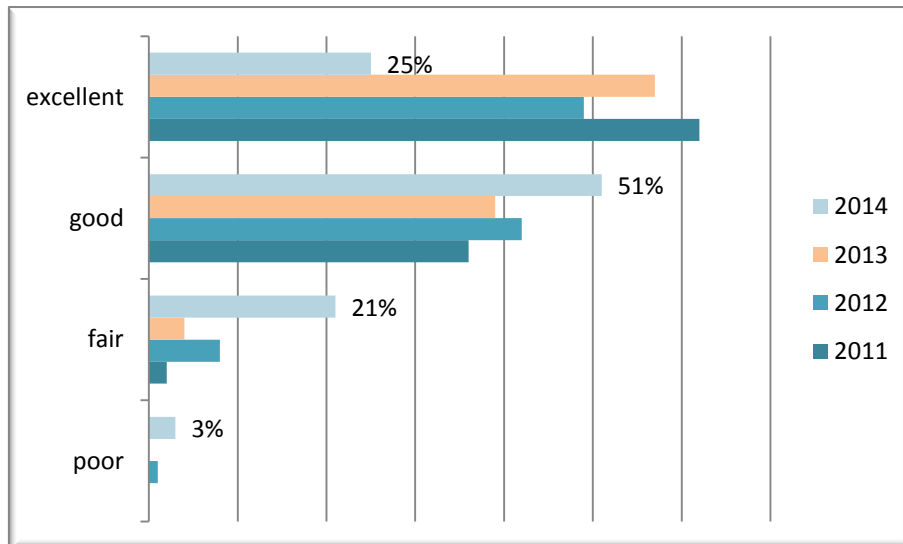
### Coverage on Social Media



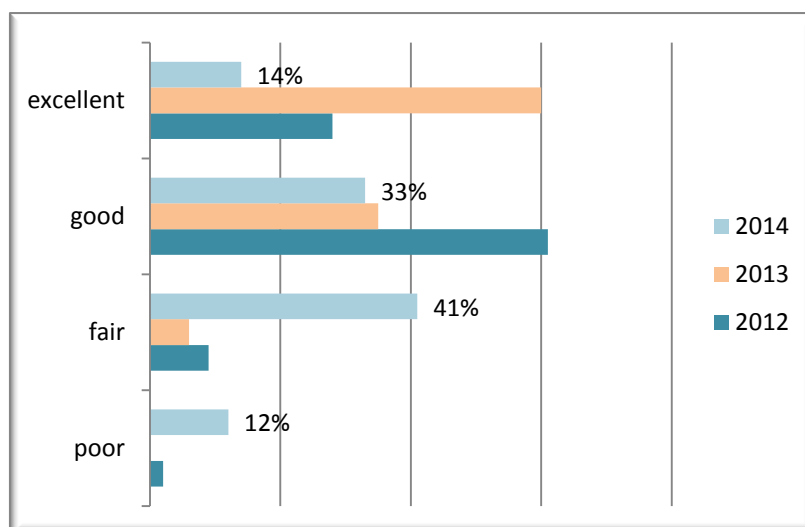
### Helpers on-site



### Facilities of the conference venue



### Lunches

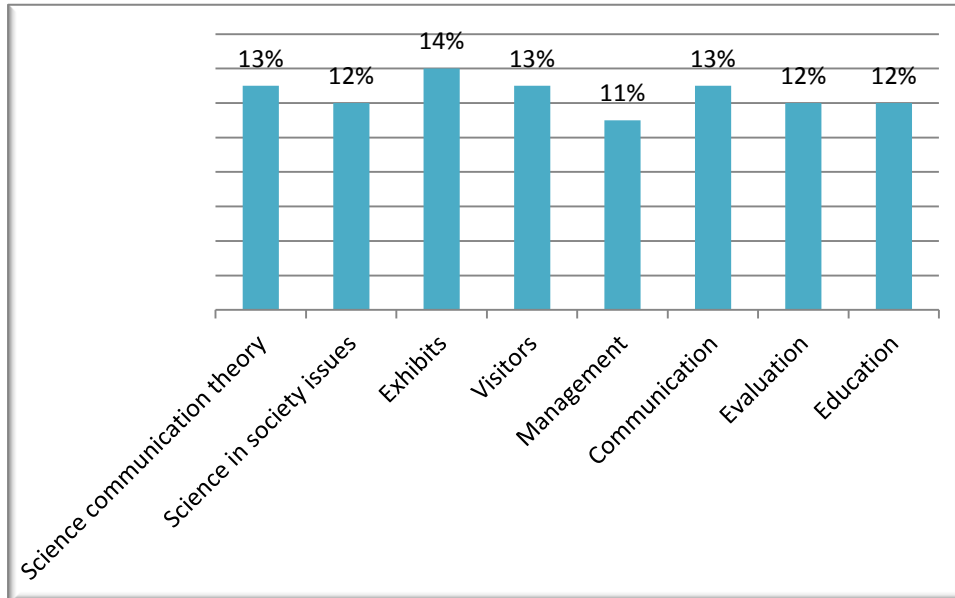


## 2.5 Participants' recommendations for future conferences

### 2.5.1 Proposed topics for next year's conference

What topics would you like to have covered more?

(Participants could select 8 topics and selected 3.2 on average)



### 2.5.2 Recommendations for different aspects of the conference

Delegates were able to answer an open-ended question on sessions and speakers. 99 people posted a comment – the following comments were mentioned more than twice:

#### Sessions

- ⇒ Try to have more interactive formats, the panel sessions are often not well focused and too often just showcasing work an institution did, with no learning points
- ⇒ Some of the large institutions are represented too many times in the sessions
- ⇒ The scheduling of the sessions should be improved (same topics at same time)
- ⇒ More ground breaking sessions > what big things will come next?
- ⇒ There should be movable microphones, so the speaker can walk around

#### Speakers

- ⇒ Many speakers are not well prepared. They talk for too long and content is not in line with session topic
- ⇒ There should be more real scientists as speakers
- ⇒ Overlap of similar speeches

## **Organization**

- ⇒ Water was missing, too long queues for coffees
- ⇒ The food offer was not as satisfying as in past years but is considered as very important
- ⇒ WiFi should be stronger
- ⇒ The Nocturne programme did not have as much content as in previous years
- ⇒ A host at the gala Dinner was missed

## **Other Inputs**

- ⇒ The Business Bistro should be livened up
- ⇒ A feeling about the country and city was missed
- ⇒ Twitter could be improved
- ⇒ The participants list should be made available before the conference
- ⇒ Meeting people in those large venues is difficult, more networking opportunities should be created
- ⇒ The learning from the sessions should be documented somewhere