



# 16<sup>th</sup> EMN ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

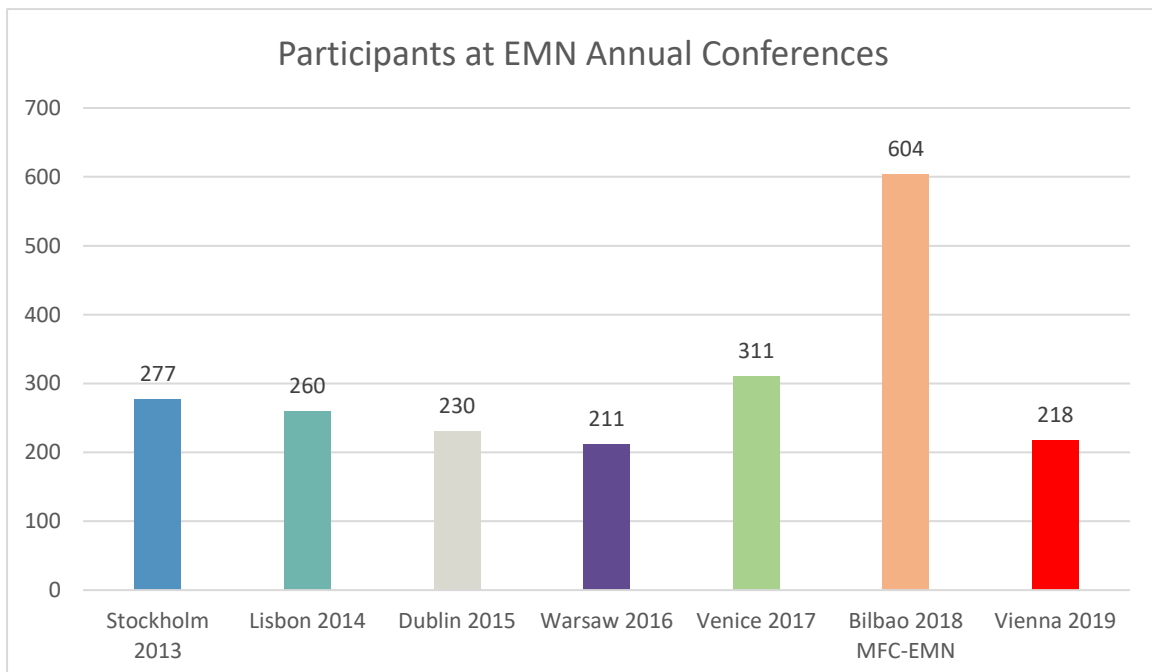
## EVALUATION REPORT

On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019, the European Microfinance Network (EMN) held its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Vienna, Austria.

Every year, the EMN secretariat surveys the participants who took part in the conference to collect feedback on the level of satisfaction. The aim is to be able to improve the services and organisation of the next editions. This year, the information was gathered in two ways: during the conference, participants were asked to provide feedback via the polling app Sli.do; following the conference, participants were asked to provide feedback via a google form sent in the Thank You email.

The secretariat only received 29 completed feedback forms (13.3%). Given the very low number of responses, this report will not only look at this feedback but also feedback from individual sessions during the conference, the profiles of the participants from information provided at registration, as well as feedback from the Conference app Swapcard.

This year, a total of **218 people\*** attended the Conference, including organisers, sponsors, investors and more.



\* This number excludes keynote speakers, facilitators and local organisers whose roles in the conference were more of a facilitative nature than participative (15 people).

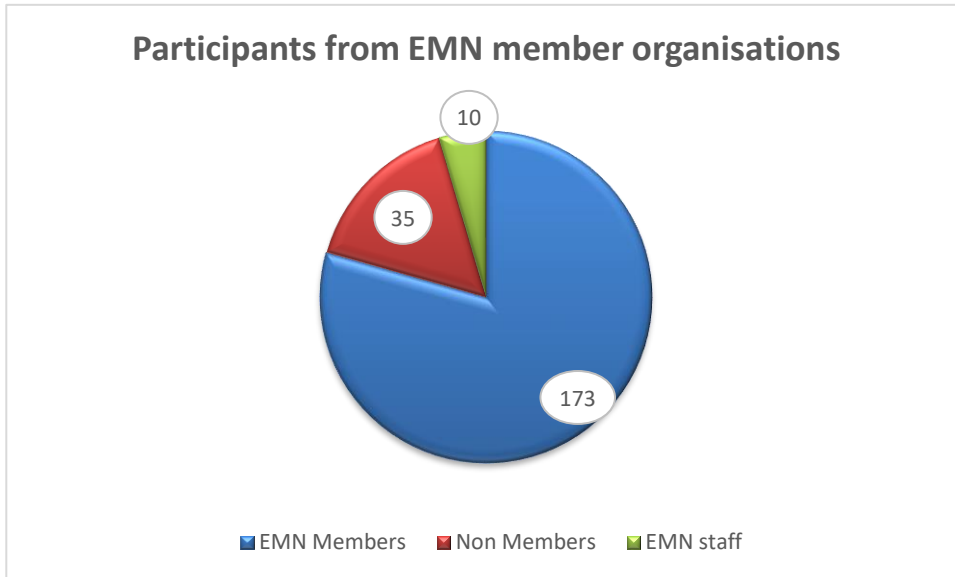
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## Participant Profile

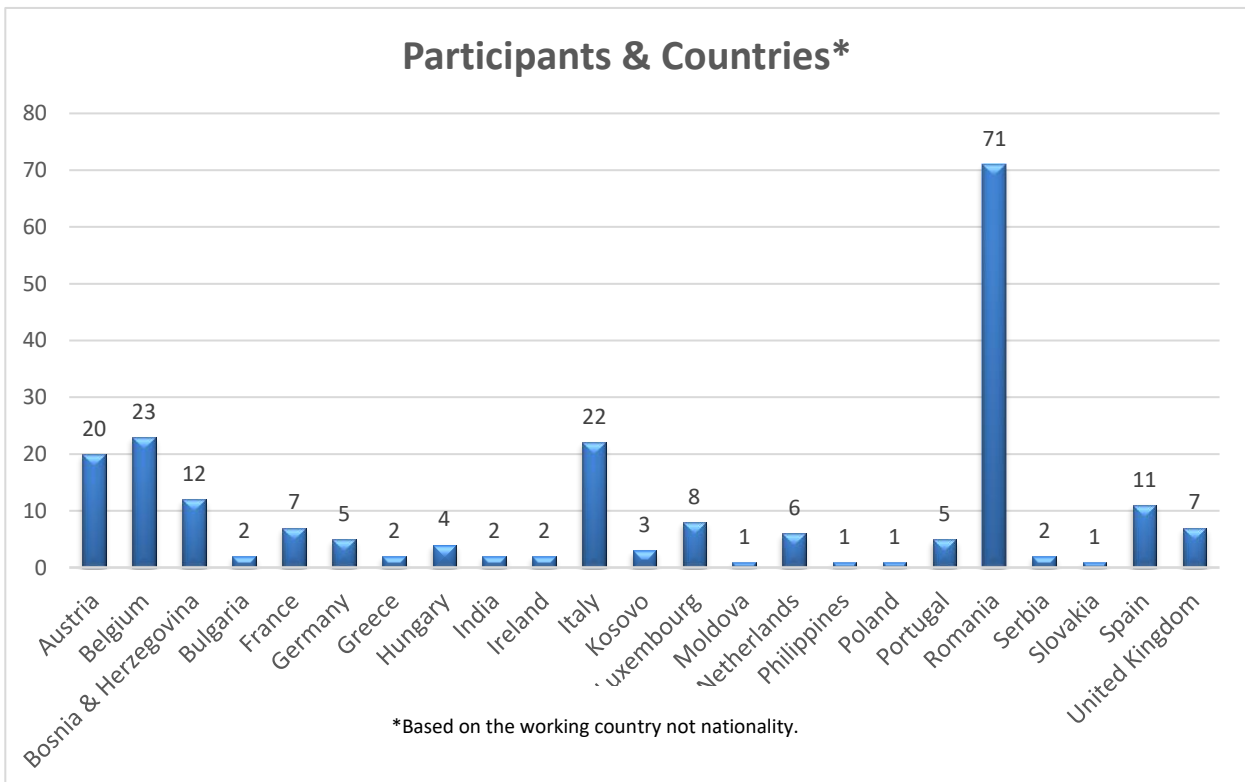
### EMN Members

During the registration process, participants were asked to state if they were EMN Members. Of 218 participants, 173 (79.4%) were representatives of EMN-Member organisations. 39 (17.6%) represented Non-Member organisations, and 10 (4.5%) were EMN staff.



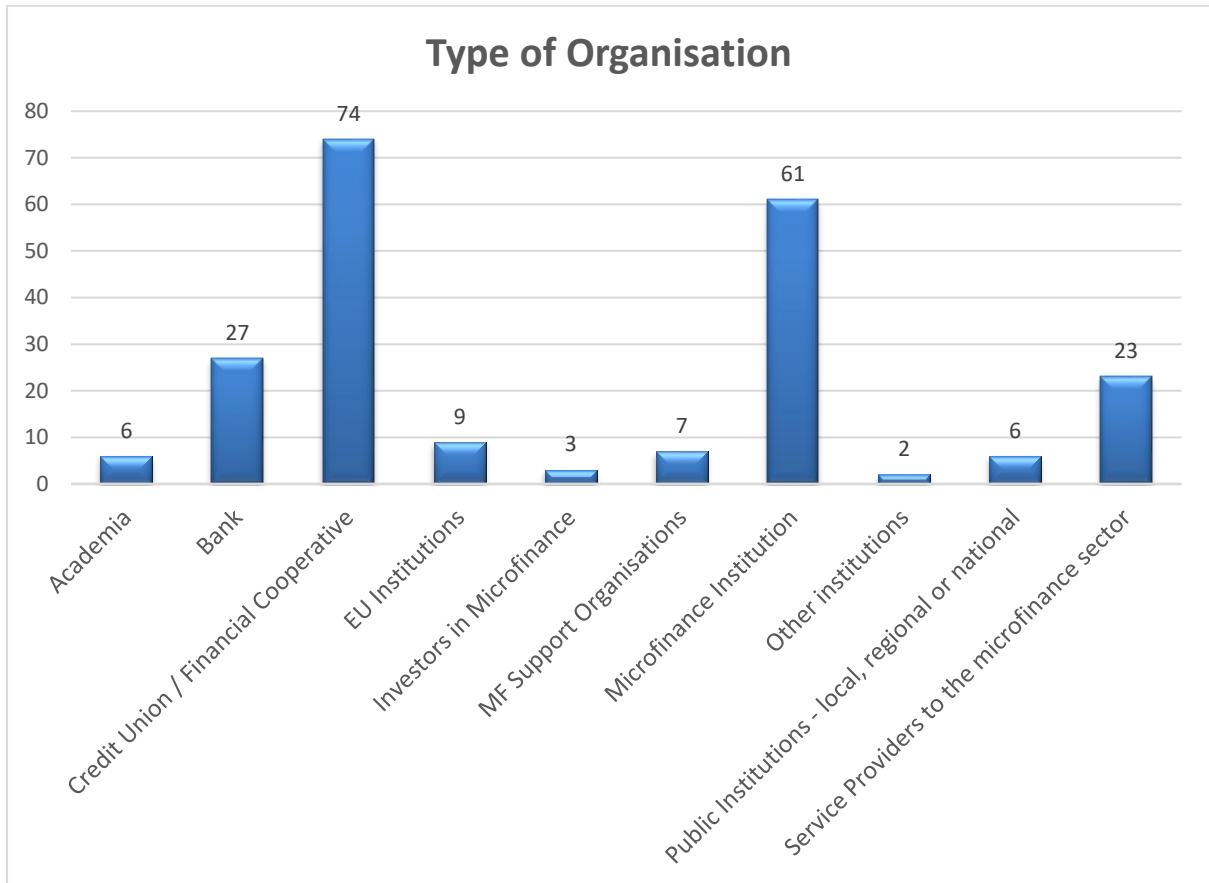
### Geographic Scope

Participants at the conference came from a total of 23 different countries. The vast majority of participants came from European countries, with the highest number of participants coming from Romania. The highest total number of participants came from organisations based in the EU-28.



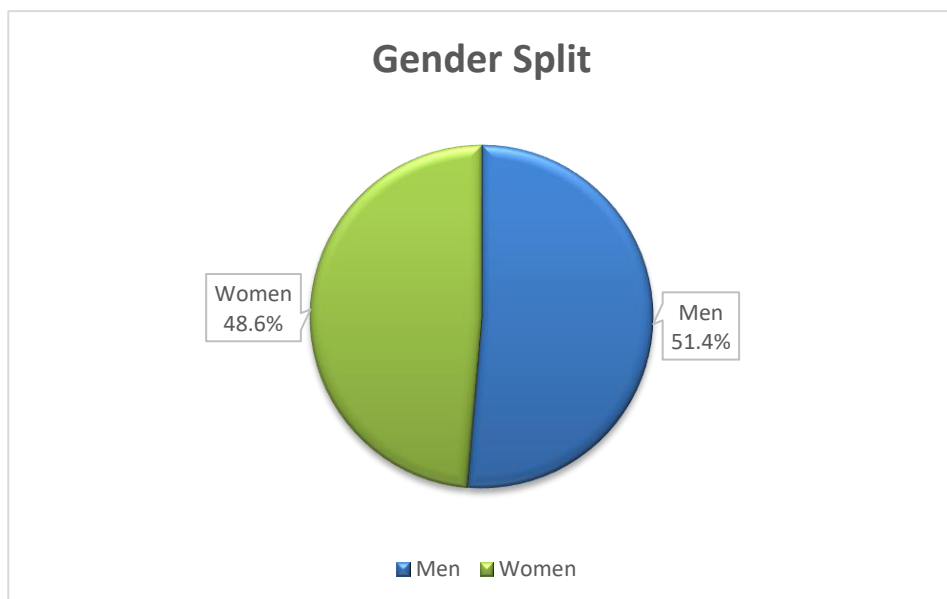
### Type of Organisation

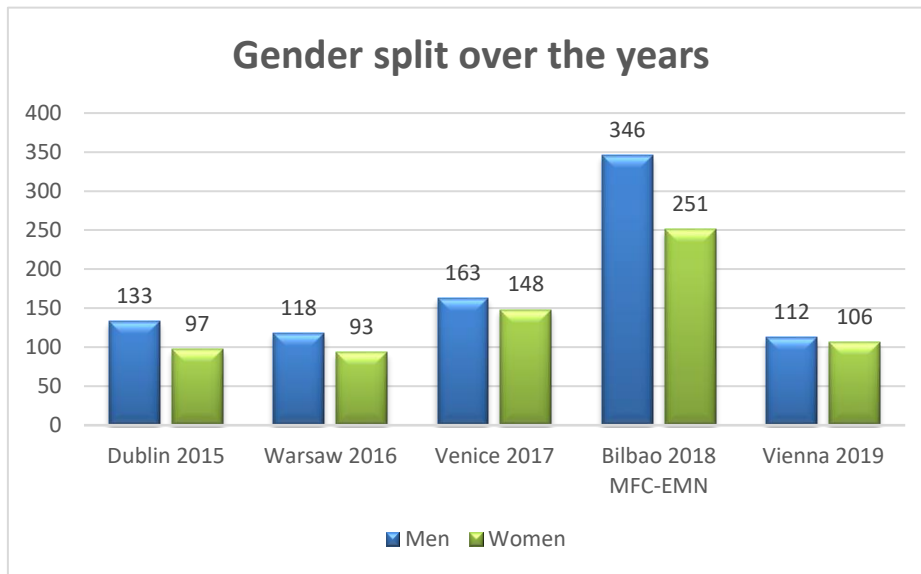
The organisations that participants represented at the conference can be grouped according to different types. Just over 74% of the total participants were representing some type of *Financial Intermediary* (e.g. Bank, MFI, Credit Union). The remaining 26% is spread among support organisations to the sector.



### Gender Split

Participants were asked to indicate their gender upon registration for the conference. 51.4% (112) of the total participants were men and 48.6% (106) were women.





The gender split of the Vienna 2019 conference is in line with the split from other EMN Annual Conference.

## Participant Feedback

### Total returned feedback forms

Participants were asked to fill in an evaluation form about their experience as a whole at the conference. They were asked to either complete the form via Sli.do or via a google form which was sent to them after the conference.

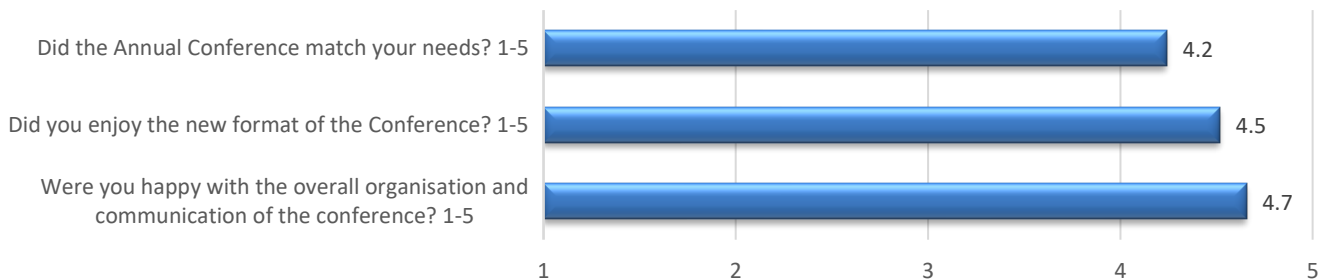
Unfortunately, as in previous years, the total number of completed evaluations was very low. Only 29 (13.3%) participants took the time to complete the feedback form.

Participants were asked to rate three different statements on a sliding scale:

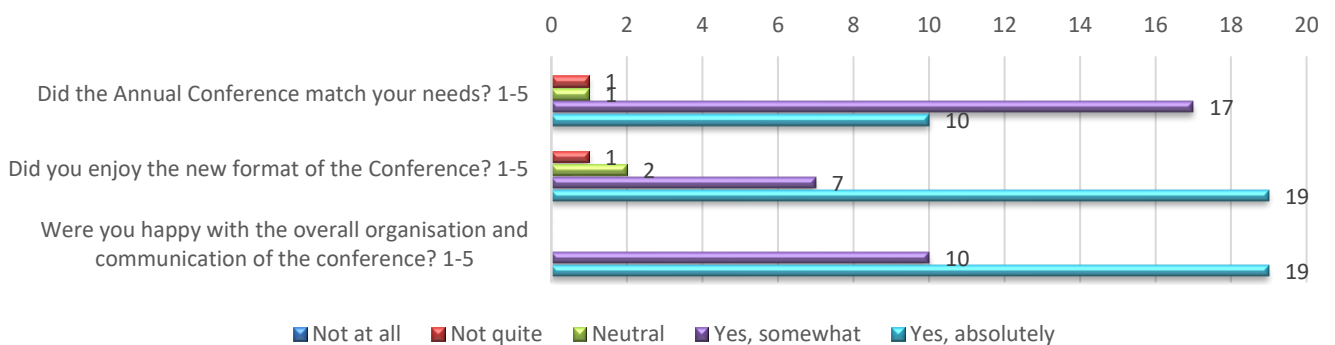
- 1 – Not at all
- 2 – Not quite
- 3 – Neutral
- 4 – Yes, somewhat
- 5 – Yes, absolutely

The low number of returned feedback forms makes it difficult to fully analyse the results, but we can still glean some information from them.

### Participant feedback - overall score



### Participant Feedback Forms Analysis



### Did the Annual Conference match your needs?

Looking at the overall scores, respondents agreed that the conference *somewhat* matched their needs with an average score of 4.2 out of 5. It is a shame to note that in two cases, the conference did not quite match the needs of the respondents.

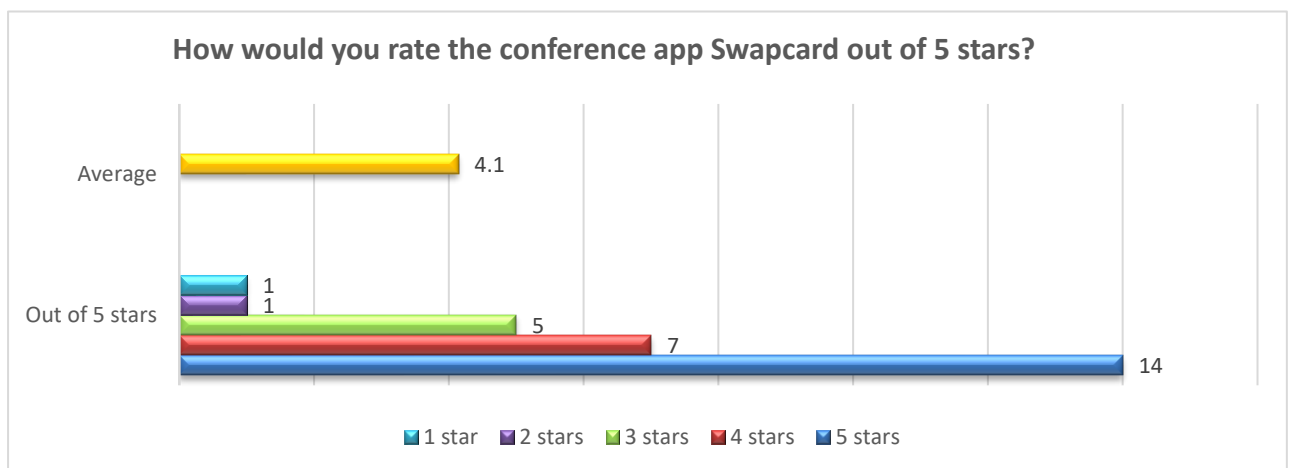
### Did you enjoy the new format of the conference?

In 2019, EMN decided to organise a different sort of conference. The focus was to offer participants an event that really focused on the networking aspects and opportunities. Looking at the feedback, respondents more than somewhat agreed that they enjoyed the new format of the conference. Indeed, looking at the feedback analysis above 19 of 29 respondents answered that they “loved” the new format.

### Were you happy with the overall organisation and communication of the conference?

Participants were seemingly more than happy with the overall organisation and communication of the event. Of the 29 respondents, all of them returned a 4 or 5 out of 5, showing that satisfaction was high.

### How would you rate the conference app Swapcard?



This year, EMN took the decision to launch a dedicated conference app to facilitate stronger networking opportunities. Respondents were asked to rate the conference app out of 5 stars, and more than half of the respondents (72%) rated it 4 or 5 stars. Indeed, 14 of the 29 respondents rated the app as “excellent”. There were admittedly some glitches with the app during the conference day and so for some participants, the app did not work as well as EMN would have liked.

### What did you like the most?

Respondents were asked to state what they liked the most about the conference. Among the various comments, we can highlight:

- “Opening keynote speech by Christian Gansch was astonishing”
- “Keynote Speech Gansch & Closing remarks Branch/Groenevelt”
- “The key speakers were amazing!”
- “Location and staff”



- “The keynote speaker Christian Gansch: he delivered the best speech I ever listened to in 4 years of attended Conferences. We need more inspired Keynote Speakers like him, not necessarily related to microfinance.”
- “Opening speech of the music conductor”
- “The networking sessions were helpful”
- “The soft skills sessions were great”
- “The new format that involved almost all participants”
- “Tour of FLIP, inspirational speeches, networking”
- “World Cafe workshop was the best event”

It is interesting to note that of the total number of comments, 11 related to the inspirational keynote speeches.

### Where could we improve?

Participants were also asked to highlight what could have been done better. Among the various comments, we can highlight:

- “Gala Dinner”
- “Gender balance, the app wouldn't work on my phone, a delegate list would have helped with networking”
- “I would not replicate the use of the app Swapcard as it did not work on the very day, we needed it to work.”
- “More time for sessions” & “Too many networking and parallel (repeated) sessions”.
- “Some [more] info on tendencies in Fintech/Technology”
- “The agenda was quite packed, and the timing was not enough for some sessions. The regulated speed networking was not very successful I think as people normally connect anyways in the breaks and not everyone shows up to the set session. Otherwise great opening speakers. The event was also quite long, but I understand that you tried to fit everything in one day only. Also, the whole conference was quite "local" - would have been good to have some best cases from antlers outside of Europe. “
- “The facilitation of mutual learning and peer to peer assessment”
- “Too few participants in the workshops”.

### Any other comments?

Respondents were invited to share any other comments they had.

- “I like the idea of organising a tour of the venue (the campus on this occasion) but I would not put it simultaneously with the other activities where we want people to attend. Maybe I would put it as an optional thing in the 2 empty hours we had between the Final Remarks and the Social Event.”
- “Spread content workshops over the 1st and 2nd day”
- “This one was perfect, the key speakers were amazing, the workshops very useful...all in all, great! Maybe Bilbao and Venice were more attractive as venues, but, when it comes to content and organisation, the 2019 one was great.”
- “Whilst the two speakers were interesting, they were not specifically Micro finance. To travel that distance for a micro finance conference I would want micro finance topics and learning and development”.



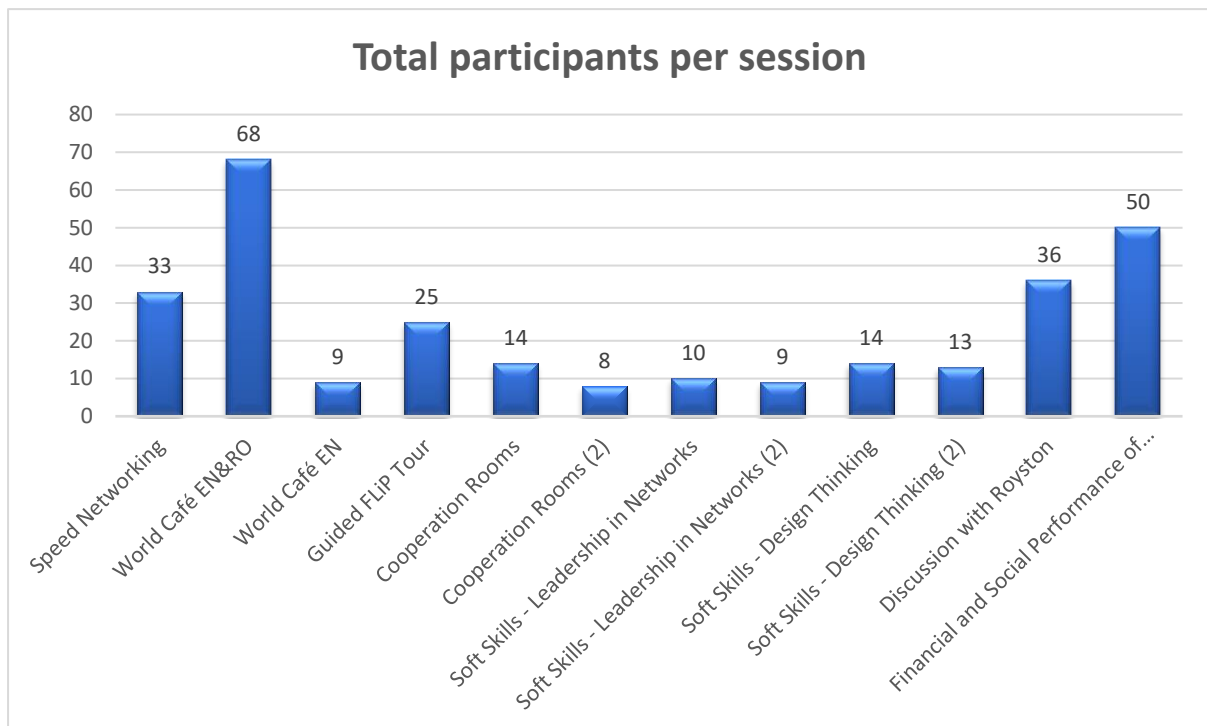
## Session Feedback

The structure of the conference enabled participants to choose among 12 different parallel sessions between morning and afternoon. EMN wanted to gather feedback about the various sessions during the conference so as to understand participants' satisfaction for each activity.

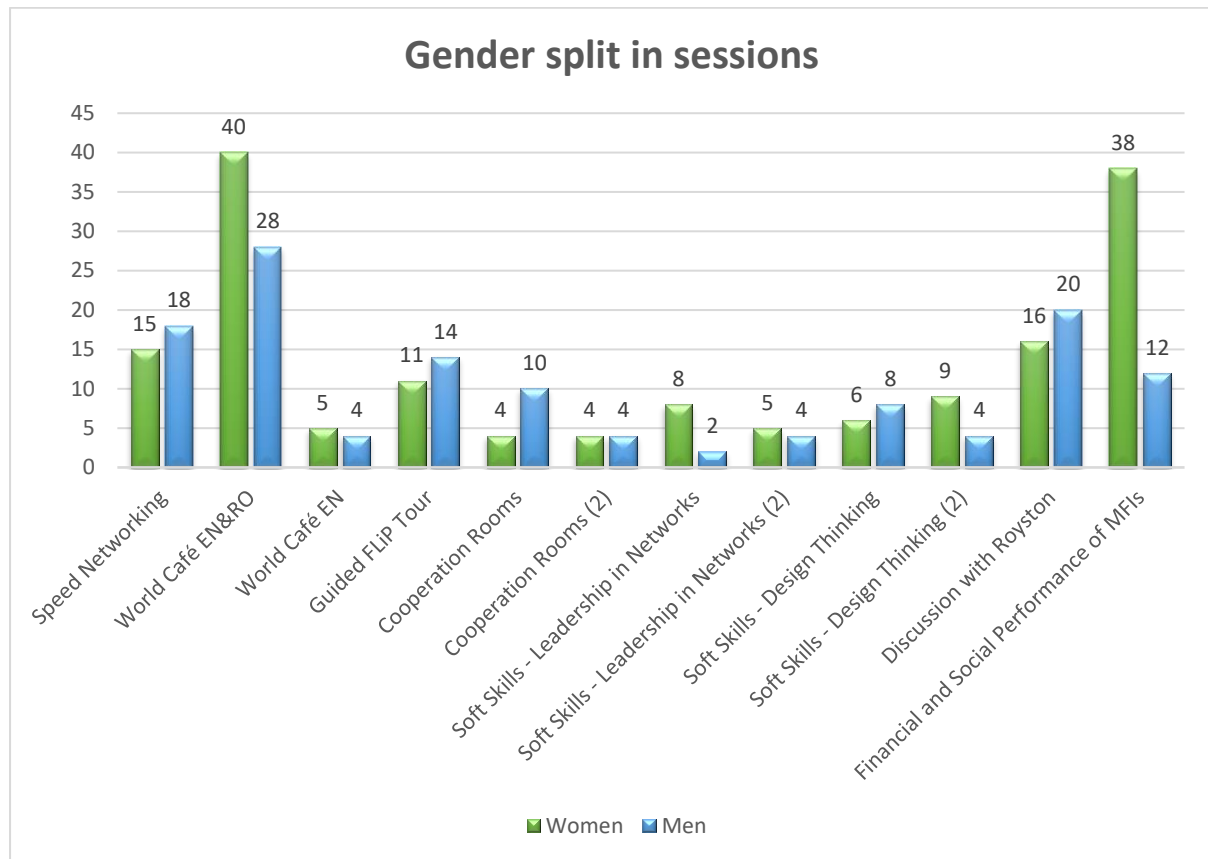
For some sessions, participants were asked to fill in a feedback form at the end of the activity. Part of the feedback was also collected thanks to the conference application Swapcard, which was used by a total of 171 participants. Once users had created their own personalised agenda by booking the sessions they were interested in, they were able to then give an evaluation between 1 to 5 directly through the app, and to add comments.

It is important to note that, while the collected information provides a useful depiction of attendees' sentiment towards the different activities of the conference, it should not be regarded as a comprehensive evaluation as, in some cases, only a small portion of participants decided to provide feedback.

### Total number of participants per session



## Gender split per session



## Feedback from particular sessions

### Plenaries

Participants that had booked plenary sessions through the conference app Swapcard had the possibility to evaluate it directly on the application and leave a comment.

According to the information gathered in this way, the **Opening Keynote Speech by Christian Gansch, *From Solo to Symphony***, was very successful among the participants. The data collected from 16 participants on Swapcard gives it a rate of 4.8 out of 5. Two participants described it as “amazing” and “very inspiring”.

The information gathered also shows that the **Welcoming Addresses** were also highly appreciated, receiving an evaluation of 4.6 out of 5 from 13 respondents on Swapcard. One participant commented: “Great speech from the Erste CEO”.

The second plenary, a **Keynote Speech by Ali Mahlodji**, was also very successful, averaging at 4.6 out of 5 on Swapcard (7 respondents). However, one participant commented: “The key message was rather quite generic and not quite related to the audience and the MF sector.”

Finally, the **Closing Remarks** were rated by 8 Swapcard users, with an evaluation of 4.6 out of 5. However, one participant noted that the session was “too long”.

## Speed Networking



At the end of their Speed Networking appointment, both participants and speed networkers were provided with a feedback form and invited to leave their opinion of the activity.

A total 7 participants responded to the participant satisfaction survey distributed during the session, 3 participants and 4 speed networkers. According to this information, the session received an average evaluation of 4.2 out of 5. The organisation received the highest rating with 4.6, followed by the venue and setting at 4.3. Following closely, whether the session matched participants' expectations received a score of 4.1, while the application and the opportunity to establish contact were both rated 4 out of 5.

Networkers appreciated the quiet environment and the opportunity to meet potential investors, saying that the session represented an additional possibility for networking. When asked what could have been better, they said: "I wish I could have met more people", "Too many parallel sessions, thus demand was lower than in Venice". One networker commented that he liked the session as it was, as it was "very well organised".

Participants appreciated the opportunity to trade experiences and the informality of the session. However, one participant wished there was more time in each round.

## World Café

The World Café represents a new addition to the offer of activities available during the EMN Annual Conference. For this reason, it was important to collect feedback from the participants, in order to better understand their impression of the new format. This was done through an online evaluation on Slido and through the conference app, Swapcard.

On Slido, the session received an evaluation of 4 out of 5 (6 total votes). One attendee appreciated the most that it "involved in discussions all those that are usually quiet and absent due to lack of communication skills or just shy to stand up and present their opinion". Finally, participants were asked: Did you find the exchange with peers useful/relevant for your institution? 4 of them replied "Yes, absolutely!" one "more or less" and one "interesting but not too practical".

On Swapcard, the morning session received an evaluation of 4.3 out of 5 from 10 participants. Unfortunately, we were unable to gather feedback for the afternoon session.

## Cooperation Rooms

The feedback for this session was gathered by distributing feedback forms at the end of the activity. They were filled in by 59% of attendees, thus representing a partial representation of participants' sentiment towards this session.

The information gathered resulted in an average evaluation of 4.3 out of 5. The feedback shows that the attendees thought that the session was effectively designed to provoke exchanges with other participants, rated 4.6. Whether the overall session matched participants' expectations was rated 4.1. All attendees completely (11) or partially (2) agree that they found opportunities to learn from others during this session. Finally, when asked: Were the interactions useful to consider new forms of cooperation in the real working environment? Most participants replied YES (9), 3 PARTIALLY and 1 NO.

## Soft Skills

The feedback for the Soft Skills workshops was collected through feedback forms and Swapcard. It is important to note that, while only a few participants decided to leave an evaluation through the conference app, the feedback forms can provide a more comprehensive overview.

On Swapcard, 3 participants gave to the morning session of Soft Skills Workshop **Leadership in Networks: System Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Stakeholder Facilitation** an evaluation of 4 out of 5. One participant appreciated that it was "interactive, worked well even with small group." Another participant commented that "the time allocated was not enough."

According to the information collected through feedback forms, filled in by 100% of participants, the morning session received an average rating of 5.6 out of 6.

Through feedback forms, the participants were asked: What was most valuable for you? Here some answers:

- Perspective
- Well presented, new way of thinking
- Thinking outside the box
- Putting theory into practice through practical examples, good presentation, clear
- Interactive way of showing the different life situations
- Great approach, very handy for daily work

Here some answers to the question: What to improve?

- The understanding of the framework
- Doing the exercise with my team

Unfortunately, no feedback was gathered during the morning session of this activity.

On Swapcard, the Soft Skills Workshop **Design Thinking** received an evaluation of 3.3 for the morning session (2 respondents) and 4 out of 5 for the afternoon session (4 respondents). Participants described the sessions as "very useful and inspiring" and "okay but rather short and the examples used were not related to the sector".

According to the information collected through feedback forms, filled in by 89% of participants, the activity received an average rating of 5.1 (morning session) and 4.6 out of 6 (afternoon session) from participants through feedback forms.



Through feedback forms, the participants were asked: What was most valuable for you? Here some answers:

- I found the concept of design thinking very interesting through the provided examples
- Practical exercises/examples, clarity of speaker
- Understanding what design thinking was and what the methodology is
- Dynamic and exercises, optimal balance between theory and samples
- To learn about new approach in design thinking and problem solving
- Clear and clean structure, easy to follow, nice hacks
- The idea of focusing on empathy and not relying on personal beliefs / being flexible

To the question “What to improve?” most respondent mentioned the length, with some even feeling that the workshop could have been extended to a whole day. Attendees also felt the need to have more practical examples, preferably from their own field of experience.