



Evaluation of the EU Participation in World Expo Milano 2015

Final Report

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Evaluation of the EU Participation in World Expo Milano 2015

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List of acronyms

ANAC	Italian Anti-Corruption Authority
B2B	Business-to-Business
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
DG AGRI	European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
DG COMM	European Commission Directorate General for Communication
DG ECHO	European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
DG ENER	European Commission Directorate-General for Energy
DG GROW	European Commission Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
DG JRC	European Commission Directorate-General Joint Research Centre
DG RTD	European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
DG SANTE	European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety
DOM	Duty Operation Manager
EC	European Commission
EEN	Enterprise Europe Network
EP	European Parliament
EPIO	European Parliament Information Office
ETF	EU Expo Task Force
EU	European Union
ISWG	Inter-service Working Group
MEP	Member of Parliament
MS	Member State
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
STC	Save The Children
STOA	Science and Technology Options Assessment
TOR	Terms of Reference

Coffey International Development

The evaluation of the EU participation in World Expo Milano 2015 was carried out by Coffey International Development on behalf of the European Commission.



Coffey's Evaluation and Research practice provides high quality evaluation and research services related to policies, plans, programmes, projects, information and communication, organisations and managerial practice. It has undertaken more than 200 engagements for the European Commission over the last two decades and has therefore a **broad experience of the European institutions context and a detailed understanding of the EU policy environment.**

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Coffey's Evaluation and Research Practice is active in the following areas:

- **interim and ex post evaluation** of public policies and programmes;
- **impact assessment and ex ante evaluation** of public policies and EU and other international organisations' projects and programmes;
- **evaluation of information and communication strategies**, plans and activities;
- **feasibility studies** for projects and programmes.

Initially developed by the acquisition of The Evaluation Partnership (TEP) in December 2009, Coffey has joined Tetra Tech in 2016, and is now part of a much larger global network of experts than ever before. Tetra Tech brings a wealth of expertise in consulting, engineering, and technical services worldwide.

0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

0.1. EU participation in World Expo Milano 2015

World Expo 2015 took place in Milan, Italy from 1 May to 31 October 2015, attracting **21.5 million visitors** from around the world. It brought together 147 countries and international organisations, including the European Union (EU).

The EU participation in World Expo Milano was confirmed by the Commission in May 2013 on the basis of key considerations related to the importance of the Expo theme **'Feeding the planet, Energy for Life'** for the EU, the central role played by the EU in food and sustainability policies, and the opportunity to foster cooperation with political and economic actors within the EU and globally. The Commission issued a formal communication where these are further explained.¹ The European Parliament (EP) also adopted a resolution on 30 April 2015 setting the political basis for the EU participation in the Expo.²

To make the most of the EU participation, it was established that this would be done in close partnership with the EP and other interested EU institutions such as the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. The Commission set up an EU Expo Task Force (ETF) led by the **European Commission Directorate-General Joint Research Centre (DG JRC)** due to its proximity to the site (DG JRC-Ispra is located 60 km away from the Expo) and because it is the Commission's in-house science service. It also arranged an Inter-service Working Group (ISWG) which involved other European Commission Directorate-Generals (DGs) linked to the Expo theme such as DG Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI), DG Research and Innovation (DG RTD), DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), DG Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), and DG Communication (DG COMM). In addition, the ETF worked collaboratively with the 20 Member States present at the Expo, and other Expo participants such as the United Nations and civil society groups, and the Expo organisers.

The **overall purpose** of the EU participation in World Expo Milano 2015 was to inform and communicate with European and international audiences on the critical topics brought forward by the Expo (i.e. food, nutrition and sustainability). But beyond this communication objective, the EU also sought to establish its role as key player in the global debate and take this as an opportunity to work towards fruitful collaborations with other stakeholders which could eventually impact on EU/global policy developments. It also aimed to facilitate conversations between EU and Third Country businesses for future trade agreements. Therefore, the EU participation in World Expo Milano had three main objectives or dimensions:

- To engage visitors in an emotional experience that talked about the EU and contribute to improving the knowledge and perception of the EU in Europe and overseas (**communication dimension**)
- To contribute to the global food debate by creating opportunities to discuss food policy developments with experts and stakeholders (**scientific/policy dimension**)
- To contribute to the EU's growth and jobs by engaging enterprises and institutions of food related industries in meetings to discuss economic and trade opportunities between the EU and Third Countries (**business dimension**)

¹ COM(2013) 255 final

² [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/document/P8_TA-PROV\(2015\)0184_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/document/P8_TA-PROV(2015)0184_EN.pdf)

Under the theme of “**Growing Europe’s Future Together for a Better World**”, the EU presence in the Expo was characterised by a pavilion of 1,900 square metres distributed over three floors. It was located in a prime spot, as it overlooked the Expo Lake Arena where the night-time events took place. On the ground-floor, the visitors were guided along a ‘narrative path’ that talked about the EU and the importance of cooperation between agriculture and science. On the second floor of the pavilion, a conference and meeting facility served to support the extensive agenda of events and stakeholder meetings planned by the EU during the months of the Expo as part of a broader EU Scientific Programme. The third floor was an open terrace space which contained areas for entertainment and social gatherings.

0.2. Background to the evaluation

The **purpose of this evaluation**, defined in the Terms of Reference produced by the Commission, was to assess the impact of the participation of the EU focusing on results related to the three dimensions of its participation, namely:

- **Communication and perception of the EU**, aimed at demonstrating whether the EU pavilion succeeded in attracting the expected number and profile of visitors, and if it inspired any variation in visitors’ information, views or perceptions regarding the EU in general and, more specifically, its work in the food and sustainability arena.
- **Scientific/Policy impact**, intended to measure the extent of the EU’s contribution to the food policy debate generated around the theme of the Expo via the EU Scientific Programme.
- **Contribution to growth and jobs**, meant to assess the EU’s capacity to leverage partners and induce company partnership agreements in the industrial sectors related to the Expo theme.

The **scope of the evaluation** was to assess the activities performed by the EU in the context of Expo Milano from 1 May to 31 October 2015. The evaluation was conducted in “real time” (from May 2015 to April 2016), which allowed the evaluators to observe and examine the implementation and management of the project on an on-going basis, and adjust the proposed evaluation tools so that they complemented existing monitoring data.

The **evaluation approach** was framed by evidence that was made available to the evaluators during the months of the Expo, which provided valuable information on the inputs, activities and outputs of the project. In addition, primary data was collected through a mix of quantitative and qualitative tools (i.e. desk-based research, surveys, observations and interviews) that were implemented at different stages of the evaluation. Primary data coming from the different tools provided insights into higher-level results or explanations behind the EU’s performance at the Expo. This included the views of a broad range of stakeholders such as visitors to the pavilion, volunteers, VIPs, members of the EU Expo Task Force and Scientific Steering Committee, representatives of the European Commission DGs, European Parliament, Member States’ pavilions, international organisations, and contractors.

Based on the triangulation of the evidence collected, the evaluators assessed the overall value of the EU participation in the Expo - in terms of visitors’ perceptions of the EU, policy impact and contribution to growth and jobs. Drawing from the findings and conclusions of this assessment, detailed recommendations for the future were developed.

0.3.Results

Based on the data collected, the evaluators drew the following overarching conclusions about the EU participation in World Expo Milano 2015.

Relevance

The evaluation found that the aims of the EU participation in World Expo Milano, and activities put in place to achieve them were broadly appropriate, especially in relation to the problems it was supposed to address and the needs/interests of the target groups. The conclusions below demonstrate this in more detail:

- **Putting ordinary citizens in the centre of the communication process proved to be a successful choice.** The EU had a key communication challenge which was to provide a clear message on how the EU affects the lives of ordinary citizens and thereby increase trust in the EU. In doing this, there was a decision to try a different communication approach, focusing on an emotional, simple, and direct narrative that talked of the EU. The high level of satisfaction and appreciation of visitors, especially of families with children, showed that the evolution from an institutional to a citizen-centred communication approach is the right path to follow during the next years.
- **However, the EU could not reach and please everyone.** The vast majority of visitors to the Expo came from Italy (circa 75% of visitors), making it difficult for the EU to reach people from other Member States and Third Countries. Moreover, most visitors to the EU pavilion had positive views of the EU and therefore reaching neutrals and visitors with negative views of the EU proved to be more difficult to achieve in this type of event. This was also the case of young people and adults over 45 years old who found the pavilion relatively less interesting than other age groups given the focus on families with children.
- **Participating in Expo Milano provided an opportunity to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy by engaging high profile experts and stakeholders in fruitful discussions about food and nutrition security.** The EU Scientific Programme complemented well the communication dimension of the EU presence in the Expo by working as a platform for a democratic debate that involved various EU institutions and experts representing a number of sectors.
- **The B2B events organised in the framework of the Expo were highly relevant to the Europe 2020 strategy in that they created growth and jobs opportunities.** The events involved institutions and enterprises from EU and Third Countries in discussions that could potentially result in trade agreements in the food sector. The relevance of the events was evidenced in the high number of participants achieved (1,955) and the number of B2B meetings that took place (4,275).

Effectiveness

As the conclusions below demonstrate, the objectives set for Expo Milano 2015 were achieved with varying degrees. All in all, we argue that (i) the EU was highly effective in engaging visitors in an emotional experience that talked about the EU and that generated positive feelings; however, it had a limited impact on visitors' understanding of EU policies (communication objective); (ii) the EU made a meaningful contribution to the global debate on food and nutrition security, although the concrete impacts at a policy level are not yet evident (scientific/policy objective); and (iii) the EU succeeded in facilitating discussions related to economic and trade policies in terms of future agreements between EU and Third Country businesses;

however there is scope to capitalise more on these results (growth and jobs objective):

Communication impact

- **Diverse profiles of visitors, but in particular parents and children, were overwhelmingly satisfied with their experience at the EU pavilion.** This proved that the strategy of using a creative and immersive film was a successful one. The Alex and Sylvia film was everyone's favourite part of the visit and children were one of the most inspired audiences. The visit conveyed 'warm, fuzzy' feelings about EU and left visitors curious to know more. As a first experience of the EU communicating in a more emotional way, it was very encouraging and was also a learning experience for future communication initiatives.
- **More complex messages and symbols about the EU were nevertheless harder to get across.** Visitors of all ages and countries understood the main messages conveyed at the EU pavilion (i.e. that cooperation between agriculture and science is important for feeding the planet and that Europeans should work together to solve their problems). But the experience did not necessarily provide them with an increased understanding of EU policies and how the EU realises the goals/values promoted during the visit (i.e. cooperation, peace, teamwork, etc.). This was due to some drawbacks identified in the design of the experience, in particular that the information/explanations provided before and after the movie were difficult to 'absorb' in the limited amount of time people spent in the pavilion.
- **The success of the EU presence in World Expo Milano proved the importance of having a prime location in the Expo site and an attractive exterior design.** The EU pavilion's location in front of the Italian pavilion and the Expo Lake Arena, which was the result of the good (and early) cooperation established with the Expo organisers, was key in attracting numerous visitors. The pavilion's terrace made the most of this advantageous location in that it provided a privileged view of the Expo site, as well as a relaxed atmosphere which facilitated conversations and networking of VIPs and event participants. The pavilion's exterior design was delivered by the Expo organisers and had to be improved by the Commission later as it was considered to be not sufficiently attractive, especially in the context of the intense competition for visitors with other pavilions.
- **The EU's digital communication was highly effective in reaching Expo visitors and those who could not attend.** Despite the modest budget, the EU was able to build a digital community of people interested in following / discussing food policy with the EU. Engagement and fellowship on Facebook and Twitter were amongst the highest of all Expo participants, creating a 'buzz' around the EU presence in the Expo. Digital communication also worked as a common platform for EU institutions to communicate with one voice, which was highlighted as a quite unique experience in the Commission's communication tradition.

Scientific/Policy impact

- **Whereas Expo Milano was not a platform for key political decisions, it created a momentum that the EU used for promoting its central role in feeding the planet.** It gathered numerous stakeholders in the pavilion and in various other venues in Milan during six months, who were involved in discussions that could potentially have an impact on EU policy developments, particularly on agriculture and research policy. At global level, the EU issued a powerful recommendation aimed at creating an international forum where to continue discussions. This recommendation has been taken up by central global actors such as the United Nations' Secretary General. All in all, the EU showed that it had an important role to play in discussions on food and nutrition security.
- **The initial heterogeneous opinions within the Commission in relation to the value of Expos as forums for political debate and, therefore, of the role that the EU should play there framed the opportunity to plan concrete follow-up actions on the EU Scientific Programme.** The debate on food and nutrition security is on-going, but the EU will only maximise the impact of the work done in the Expo if the Commission makes plans for sustained follow-up action.

Growth and jobs impact

- **The EU-Third Country events were highly effective in fostering trade relationships and agreements between EU and Third Country businesses in the food sector.** According to evidence collected by an external contractor (PROMOS), the events resulted in a total of 94 fixed cooperation and 765 on-going negotiations or cooperation being considered between EU and Third Country companies. This shows that the EU presence at Expo Milano was not only an important communication initiative, but also a platform for leveraging partners and a catalyst of economic change.³ Nevertheless, until now results of the business dimension have been promoted to a limited extent and there is scope for the Commission to capitalise on what has been achieved.

Coherence

Here we argue that the EU participation in Milan was well aligned with the Europe 2020 strategy and with the Commission's will to restore faith and trust in the EU.

- **The EU presence in World Expo Milano 2015 was coherent with the EU's overarching policy objectives embodied in the Europe 2020 strategy.** The EU contributed to sustainable development goals (food and nutrition security) through the EU Scientific Programme, which created an opportunity for an open, interactive and forward-looking exchange with experts and relevant stakeholders on food policy. Moreover it enhanced growth and jobs by facilitating discussions on potential trade agreements between EU and Third Country businesses.
- **The EU presence in Milan was also coherent with the Commission's aim of restoring trust and faith in the EU.**⁴ Through the decision of targeting

³ Given the timeframe of this evaluation, there is no information available on whether these outcomes are sustainable and will result in effective trade agreements between the companies involved.

⁴ Jean-Claude Juncker, A New Start for Europe: My Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change, Political Guidelines for the next European Commission, 15 July 2014 [online:]
http://ec.europa.eu/about/juncker-commission/docs/pg_en.pdf

citizens with neutral or fairly positive views of the EU and presenting a less distant and bureaucratic EU through an emotionally engaging visitor experience, the EU presence in Milan was well articulated with other communication initiatives of the last years (e.g. "EU Working For You" pilot corporate campaign). These have attempted to show how the EU makes a difference to peoples' lives and thereby increase trust in the EU. The EU presence in Milan was also sufficiently distinct from these other initiatives in that it focused very much on children and young people and appealed to feelings and sentiments instead of being mainly informative; therefore providing a complementary offering.

Efficiency

Here we argue that the EU managed to reach and make a real impression on the targeted audiences, but had to spend more per person than some other countries.

- **The EU presence in Milan had strong effects on strategic audiences, but with a higher cost per visitor than some other countries.** People with fairly positive or neutral views of the EU, as well as children and young people, were more positive of the EU after their visit. But other countries were able to engage larger flows of visitors and as a result had lower costs per visitor. Cost-effectiveness could therefore be improved by, on the one hand, improving the capacity to attract visitors (e.g. with a more attractive exterior design and a restaurant/shop) and, on the other, enhancing the positive outcomes of the visit (e.g. improving the content centre). Also, by re-utilising the communication products that have been produced (e.g. "The Golden Ear" film).
- **The EU Scientific Programme was the element of the project that provided most value for money.** At a relatively low cost, the EU managed to engage numerous experts and international stakeholders in high quality discussions which could potentially impact policy developments. Moreover, the facilities of the EU pavilion for holding events and meetings ensured also high value for money for event organisers including EU institutions, Member States, VIPs and Italian institutions. Finally, it should be noted that the trade impact of the EU and Third Country events has not been established yet, but it is nevertheless a central factor for examining cost-effectiveness of the EU participation in the Expo.
- **The commitment and flexibility of the EU Expo Task Force, as well as strong financial processes, ensured the successful delivery of the project, but some aspects could have been accomplished more cost-effectively.** There were a number of operational challenges which could have been mitigated with the presence of more experienced staff and a clearer management structure. This affected the planning and implementation of the initiative and prevented the EU from maximising the impact of its presence.

EU added value

As the conclusions below show, the EU presence in the Expo complemented that of Member States and created important opportunities in terms of communication, public diplomacy, and B2B affairs. Moreover, the evaluation revealed that there is scope for building on the successful relationship established with Member States in this Expo and creating additional value.

- **The EU was the best positioned actor to communicate to the general public about the Europe.** Significant efforts were made in this respect and this was evident in the way the pavilion talked about the EU, focusing on shared values such as peace, solidarity and friendship. Moreover, the story of Alex and Sylvia featured a competition for the best bread where wheat was

presented as the grain that bound Europe together. There were additional actions initiated by the EU Expo Task Force with the aim of linking the EU pavilion's narrative with Member States, for example, the recipe card and landmark initiative⁵ and the collection of pictures of historic bread-related paintings and bakery photos from each Member State incorporated into the EU pavilion's visitor experience. But the importance of bread as the main unifying concept was not sufficiently taken up by visitors mainly due to the weaknesses identified in the design of the visitor experience (e.g. too much information to absorb in a limited amount of time)

- **The EU Expo Task Force fulfilled a facilitating role in the relationship with EU institutions, Member States and Third Countries and the EU pavilion emerged as a hub for public diplomacy.** The proactivity of the EU Expo Task Force in connecting people and institutions was a central element of the project, helping the EU pavilion to become a 'house' or common venue where high-level representatives could meet, exchange information and knowledge, and hold events and bilateral meetings. This resulted in an enhanced visibility of the EU in the Expo and positive image of the EU in member countries. It also helped to identify a high level of interest of various stakeholders in working together with the EU.
- **The high level of appreciation of the EU's facilitating role by Member States shows that there is scope to further enhance cooperation.** There was agreement among the Member States consulted that that the EU is a global player that has greater capacity than individual Member States to impact on the more political aspects of Expos. Therefore, the EU should continue on the path of being a platform for arriving to consensus and advocating for the development of EU messages in relation to the global problems faced today.
- **The EU presence in World Expo Milano generated opportunities for discussing potential trade agreements with Third Country businesses, also for Member States not present in the Expo.** The eight EU-Third Country Events organised by the Commission counted with the participation of representatives (companies and institutions) from 83 different countries, including eight Member States which were not present in the Expo (i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal and Sweden). From the 4,200 B2B meetings that were organised, nearly two out of ten resulted in trade agreements or on-going negotiations.⁶ This was judged as one of the most important B2B initiatives in the Expo which benefited the EU Member States in a way which could not have been possible without the EU presence in Milan.

0.4.Recommendations

Following on from the conclusions, the recommendations below inform future decision-making with regard to communication initiatives where the EU may have a physical presence and may intend to reach either ordinary citizens or stakeholders:

- **Keep track of upcoming mass / international events and systematically assess the pros and cons of participating:** Early decisions about events in which the EU will participate (recommended to be of at least 3 years in advance in the case of World Expos) will ensure that preparations start on time

⁵ Visitors could take away national bread recipes from the different Member States pavilions and 'The Golden Ear' poster with corresponding national landmarks in the background.

⁶ In the case of B2B meetings organised by the external contractor (PROMOS), five out of ten meetings resulted in positive outcomes.

and will make it easier to formulate and execute a strategy to maximise impact. The Commission could develop procedures for a regular review and decision regarding the calendar of upcoming events (e.g. every two years).

- **Political commitment at the highest level is a necessary condition for ensuring that the EU takes full advantage of its participation in events. Other important aspects to consider include:**
 - **Goals and objectives:** these should be defined clearly and early and understood by all the actors involved, facilitating the design and implementation of the project.
 - **Coherence:** there should be plausible links between EU participation in any specific event and other relevant policies/initiatives (at global or EU level), allowing the EU to identify potential partners and ensure buy-in.
 - **Adaptability:** on-going reflection and flexibility in terms of approaches, planning and delivery should help ensure success despite unforeseen developments.
- **The EU should focus on all areas where it can add value:** Adding to the communication dimension of participating in events, there are also political and economic aspects to consider. The latter can be powerful complementary actions that the EU can undertake in order to maximise the benefits of participation.
- **Build on the approach of talking to ordinary citizens:** We recommend that the Commission adopts a more concrete and focused approach towards communicating to citizens, taking into account the insights generated in this evaluation:
 - People wanted to know more about EU policies and how exactly these affect their everyday life
 - People did not have enough time to read or interact with touch-screens and panels
 - Children were the most interested in listening stories of the EU and were the ones that knew the least about it
 - People appreciated when there was a person available for answering their questions and providing additional information
 - In calling people's attention, design and location are important aspects
- **Young people can be continued to be involved as volunteers, ambassadors or multipliers of the EU's messages;** however, they should not be entitled with the responsibility of talking about EU policies with citizens. This should be the role of Commission officials and/or policy experts present on-site.
- **Show a unified EU to give more force to the message.** Seek this by enhancing inter-institutional collaboration, pooling of resources and expertise, and avoiding the inertia of having the Commission (and its DGs) working separately from other EU institutions. This is useful especially for attracting high level experts and stakeholders to participate in events, ensuring a high number of VIP visits, and communicating unified messages on social media.

- **Continue pursuing a coherent and coordinated presence with Member States.** There is interest in having a closer collaboration between the EU and Member States (e.g. for coordinating scientific/policy events and joint cultural activities) and looking for efficiency gains in sharing/pooling resources.
- **Promote the EU presence beyond the site/venue of the event in order to enhance communication impact and a high flow of visitors and stakeholders:** This can be achieved by using traditional communication material (e.g. banners in buses, airports etc.), as well as social media, ambassadors and public relations. It is also important to disseminate information on the results of the event and any post-event actions.
- **In terms of project management, the evaluation pointed to the following needs:**
 - Consider centralising the organisation of EU presence at events, but giving the relevant DG(s) a central role, allowing that the experience and learning gained remains in the organisation.
 - Set up a task force that involves all relevant actors (including people with experience in similar events) and an integrated management approach with a clear definition of roles and responsibilities and a decision making structure and process.
 - Consider the use of open calls for tender for engaging contractors, which will provide more options for selecting and negotiating with contractors.
- **In terms of evaluating the results of participation,** involve the evaluators early in the implementation phase and establish a strong cooperation with them. Also, develop an evaluation framework to track performance and draw comparisons across Expos/events. Some measures for achieving this include:
 - Putting a system in place to support the generation, storing and sharing of (anonymised) data sets from surveys/interviews of visitors carried out during/after the events.
 - Using a limited and fixed number of variables to measure the success of future events, independently of additional variables that could be proposed in view of the specific objectives of each event.
 - Develop guidelines that specify parameters regarding the definition of variables (and their attributes) and methods for collecting data.

1. INTRODUCTION: EU PARTICIPATION IN WORLD EXPO MILANO 2015

1.1. Context

World Expos are one of the world's oldest international events. Since the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, **over a billion people** have visited a World Expo. Together with the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup, it is one of the events that attract most worldwide attention.

Historically, World Expos have played an important role in communicating nations' industrial innovations, acting as windows into the progress of human ingenuity. By the 20th century, World Expos had evolved into such important and elaborated vehicles for nation branding that they necessitated the development of a convention and the creation of an international governing body to guide their organisation. The **Bureau of International Expositions (BIE)** in Paris is the intergovernmental agency responsible for coordinating World's Expos since 1928. Participation in this institution has increased from 31 countries in 1928 to 168 today.⁷

Currently, these international events are **global meeting points**, serving business, political and cultural purposes. Moreover, national governments are no longer the only legitimate voice and mechanism for organising this type of events. In today's global economy, the private sector, international organisations, and even cities and regions, are centres of decision making and are increasingly making their presence known at Expos.⁸

In the 2015 edition of the Universal Expo, the theme was **'Feeding the planet, Energy for Life'** and aimed to examine and help find shared solutions for global food and sustainability challenges. It took place from 1 May to 31 October 2015 and counted with the participation of 147 countries and international organisations including the European Union (EU).



The success of the Expo was recognised by participants and stakeholders worldwide. It attracted **21.5 million visitors** from different countries, exceeding the forecasted figure of about 20 million.⁹ After a slow start, the Expo gradually increased its momentum. This resulted in a steady growth of visitors particularly during the last two and a half months, with five million visiting the Expo in October only (compared to the 6.1 million visitors of the first two months).

The slow start of the Expo was mainly attributed to an initial negative publicity, due to construction delays and corruption scandals that were resolved with the assistance of the Italian Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC). As the Expo progressed, the domestic audience became more positive and the Expo's success was well-reported in the media, resulting in a steady improvement of visitor numbers.

At the time of this report, no break-down of visitor profiles has been made available by Expo organisers. However, Italian officials have reported to the Commission that the audience was composed of circa **75% Italians and 25% foreigners**. This is a

⁷<http://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/>

⁸ Linden, G. and Creighton P. (2000), Expo-Exchange, in Urban Land Magazine, Urban Land Institute, p. 40-104.

⁹ Expo 2015 S.p.A., Sustainability Report Expo Milano 2015. Available at: <http://www.expo2015.org/cs/Expo/1398464093530/Sustainability+Report13+ENG+-+Expo2015+SpA.pdf>

considerably larger share of foreign visitors compared to previous Expos,¹⁰ but the Expo was still considered an “Italian affair” by many.

Nevertheless, the Expo Milan exposed over 20 million visitors to the topic of food security. It also succeeded in positioning this issue high on the **global political agenda**. In effect, one of the milestones of the Expo was bringing the Charter of Milan¹¹ - a document calling for a universal “right to food” - to the United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki-moon¹². The Charter was signed by about 1 million visitors. Moreover, for the first time in Expos, Milan 2015 involved participants from the civil society and women empowerment organisations.

On the topic of this global challenge, the **European Parliament (EP) adopted a resolution** on 30 April 2015,¹³ setting the political basis for the EU participation in Milan.

In the next section, we describe with greater depth the objectives and activities of the EU presence in the Expo.

1.2. EU participation in World Expo Milano 2015

The EU has a **long history of involvement** in World Expos, with its first participation (as the European Coal and Steel Community) dating back to 1958. Since then, such international events have been used as a platform for ‘soft power’ outreach and communication on EU policies and strategies to the broader public. However, budgetary limitations have resulted in the EU scaling down its presence over the years, particularly in terms of physical space (at Expo Milano 2015, the EU occupied half of the space used in Hannover 2000). In addition, in 2000, the special unit at the Secretariat-General that was in charge of managing that participation was eliminated, together with the specific budget line. Since then, the EU participation in World Expos has been a **matter of debate**, with groups advocating for the benefits of such an EU presence and others against.

The EU participation in World Expo Milano 2015 was confirmed by the Commission in May 2013, after an extensive discussion and investigation into the merits of Expo participation. On the basis of some **key considerations** related to the importance of the Expo theme for the EU (food and sustainability), the central role played by the EU in feeding the planet, and the opportunity to foster cooperation with political and economic actors within the EU and globally, the Commission decided to participate and issued a formal communication on the matter.¹⁴

In order to optimise the EU participation in the Expo, it was established that this would be made in **close partnership with the EP** and other interested EU institutions such as the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. The Commission set up an **EU Expo Task Force** (ETF), led by the Directorate-General of the Joint Research Centre (DG JRC) which was appointed as the overall coordinator due to its proximity to the site (DG JRC Ispra is located 60 km away from the Expo) and because it is the Commission’s in-house science service.

¹⁰ Expo Zaragoza 1998 (though considerable smaller and not a Universal Exhibition) only managed to achieve 3.6% share of foreign visitors. In the last Universal Expo held in Shanghai in 2010, record breaking (official) visitor numbers of over 70 million were reported, with a largely domestic audience as well (5.8% foreigners).

¹¹ <http://carta.milano.it/en/>

¹² This took place on October 16th, 2015

¹³ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/document/P8_TA-PROV\(2015\)0184_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/document/P8_TA-PROV(2015)0184_EN.pdf)

¹⁴ COM(2013) 255 final

To facilitate cooperation and coordination with the EU institutions that participated in the project, DG JRC arranged an **Inter-service Working Group (ISWG)** which involved a number of European Commission Directorate-Generals (DGs) linked to the Expo theme such as DG Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI), DG Research and Innovation (RTD), DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW), DG Health and Food Safety (SANTE), and DG Communication (COMM). The members of the ISWG had monthly meetings to assist with inter-institutional coordination. In addition to coordinating with other EU institutions, the ETF worked collaboratively with the 20 Member States present at the Expo, and other Expo participants such as the United Nations and civil society groups, and the Expo organisers.

Under the theme of **“Growing Europe’s Future Together for a Better World”**, the EU presence in the Expo was characterised by a pavilion of 1,900 square metres¹⁵ distributed over three floors. It was located in a prime spot, as it overlooked the Expo Lake Arena where Expo night-time events took place. On the ground-floor, the visitors were guided along a ‘narrative path’ that talked about the EU and the importance of cooperation between agriculture and science (further details are provided in section 1.2.2). On the second floor of the pavilion, a conference and meeting facility served to support the extensive agenda of events and stakeholder meetings planned by the EU as part of a broader Scientific Programme (presented in section 4.2). The third floor was an open terrace space which contained areas for entertainment and social gatherings.

Despite some initial challenges related to construction delays (which were the responsibility of the Expo organisers - Expo S.p.A), the EU pavilion was **inaugurated on 9 May to mark Europe Day**. The inauguration ceremony and opening events were very successful in the media and included the presence of the European Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, responsible for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, as well as for the DG JRC, on 8 May and Martin Schulz, President of the EP, and Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Vice-President of the European Commission (HRVP). This was followed by a “Citizens’ Dialogue”, a debate between President Schulz and High Representative Mogherini and citizens which took place at the Expo Auditorium, involving citizens and high school students from across Europe.¹⁶

1.2.1. Objectives of EU participation

The overall purpose of the EU participation in World Expo Milano 2015 was to inform and communicate with European and international audiences on the critical topics brought forward by the Expo (i.e. food, nutrition and sustainability). But beyond this communication objective, the EU also sought to establish its role as key player in the global debate and to take this opportunity to work towards productive collaborations with other stakeholders which could eventually impact on EU/global policy developments. It also aimed to facilitate conversations between EU and Third Country businesses for future trade agreements.

Therefore, as illustrated in Figure 1 below, the EU participation in World Expo Milano had three main objectives or dimensions:¹⁷

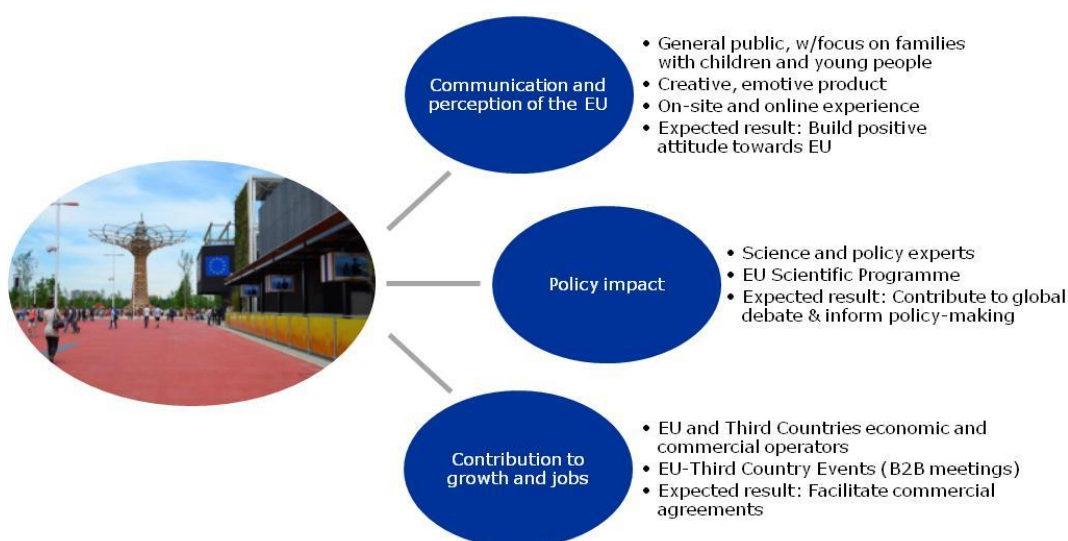
¹⁵ This accounted for 800 m2 of exhibition area plus offices, a conference room and a rooftop social area.

¹⁶ <http://europa.eu/expo2015/node/340>

¹⁷ The stated objectives were developed by Coffey, based on information available in the Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the EU Participation in Expo Milano 2015 (JRC/23/2015 - April 2015) and concept note provided by MCI (EU Exhibition Expo Milano 2015: Phase 2A – Pre-Design Development, 20 March 2014), as

- To engage visitors in an emotional experience that talked about the EU and contribute to improving the knowledge and perception of the EU in Europe and overseas (**communication dimension**)
- To contribute to the global food debate by creating opportunities to discuss food policy developments with experts and stakeholders (**scientific/policy dimension**)
- To contribute to the EU's growth and jobs by engaging enterprises and institutions of food related industries in meetings to discuss economic and trade opportunities between the EU and Third Countries (**business dimension**)

Figure 1: The three dimensions of the EU participation in World Expo Milano 2015



What unified every aspect of the EU participation in the Expo was the pavilion's theme statement "**Growing Europe's Future Together for a Better World**". The key concept was "together", which emphasised the importance of working jointly to ensure a safe and sustainable future for all. As the Expo was about food and sustainability, the EU pavilion presented the idea of agriculture and science working in union.¹⁸

The pavilion was also based on the concept of **bread** as the "DNA of European civilization".¹⁹ This linked the EU pavilion with those of Member States, with visitors being encouraged to collect cards of national bread recipes that together formed a collection. In this way, the EU participation in the Expo intended to add value to the Member States' presence by uniting all countries under a common concept or idea.

Each project dimension expressed these central ideas in different ways, focusing on different types of audiences and proposing different activities targeted to those specific groups. In the next section, we present how the EU planned to realise the different objectives and what results were expected from these actions.

well as on the views of members of the Commission and EU Expo Task Force collected during the familiarisation interviews.

¹⁸ A story of best practices: BRC Imagination Arts and the EU Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015. Available at: <http://europa.eu/expo2015/it/node/269>

¹⁹ MCI Group, Client stories: Lead the global response to food security. Available at: http://mci-group.com/~media/Files/Client_Stories/EU_Exhibition_Expo_Milano_2015_CS.ashx

1.2.2. Target audiences, activities and expected results

We will now present the three dimensions of the EU participation in Milan focusing on the audiences it intended to target, the activities (or communication products) proposed for them and what was expected to be achieved with this.

Communication dimension

The main target group for this dimension was **visitors in general, but with a special focus on families, children and young people**. This included EU (and non-EU citizens) who are normally indifferent towards the EU, have negative views of it and/or take it from granted. During the design phase, it was understood that the Expo presented a unique opportunity to communicate with this type of audiences, showing them the 'friendly' face of the EU.²⁰ Thus, the pavilion's main attraction (**the visitor experience**) was designed to reach all kinds of visitors and engage them in an emotional and entertaining experience about the EU. It was located on pavilion's ground floor where there was the projection of the film "The Golden Ear"²¹ showing the story of **Sylvia and Alex** (a researcher and a farmer) that fall in love under unlikely circumstances.



© European Union, MCI/BRC, 2015
Source: EU web-site for 'Expo Milano 2015'
(<http://europa.eu/expo2015/>)

The film was the core element of the project's communication dimension. But the complete storyline unfolded through a series of experiences. Firstly, at the **pre-show**, which was experienced while waiting to enter the pavilion, visitors met members of Alex and Sylvia's families through a series of exhibits. They also learned how the family stories evolved parallel to the development of the EU after World War II. Visitors could also see a collection of pictures of historic bread-related paintings and bakery photos from each Member State. In addition, visitors could collect national bread recipe cards, which were also made available at the Member States' pavilions.

Subsequently, visitors were arrived at the **main show**, which consisted of the projection of the film. The story was used as a means to convey the message of the importance of cooperation between agriculture and science in Europe, as well as emphasise the values shared by all European countries i.e. peace, solidarity and friendship. It was a high-quality animated film that included special effects which was intended to be **emotionally engaging** for the audience, as well as entertaining. Various techniques were used to produce this, including projection mapping, LCD media screens set in as picture frames, dynamic audio, 3D, vibrating rooms and other special effects such as smell of bread, bursts of heat and rainwater.

Finally, there was the **post-show or content centre** where visitors could learn more about EU policies related to the theme of the Expo and the story around the EU' Nobel Peace Prize. There they could interact and explore through a series of story books in the form of touch-screens that displayed messages on food safety, sustainability, manufacturing, competitiveness in the food market, nutrition security, research, science and innovation. There was also the 'sandwich game' which ended up being very popular especially among children. The content centre was coordinated by the DG

²⁰ EU Exhibition Expo Milano 2015: Phase 2A – Pre-Design Development, 20 March 2014

²¹ <http://europa.eu/expo2015/the-film>

JRC and developed by a number of European Commission DGs EU presence including AGRI, RTD, GROW, DEVCO, SANTE and COMM, as well as the European Parliament.

Two additional elements completed the communication dimension. One was the online experience, which included the promotion of the EU presence in the Expo via a **website** specifically developed for the event (europa.eu/expo2015) and **social media presence** (including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). The other was the display of a collateral exhibition "**Silvia's Lab**" at DG JRC-Ispra, 60 kilometres from the Expo. This exhibition was mainly targeted at school groups.

The expected result of the communication dimension was that people emerged from the visitor experience with a **more positive attitude towards the EU** and a greater understanding of its food-related systems and policies.

Scientific/policy dimension

The EU presence at the Expo also had a scientific and policy dimension which intended to convey the message that **science, technology and innovation** are key factors for addressing the global challenge of feeding the planet. Hence, they should all be part of the political discussions and policy initiatives on the matter. By participating in the Expo, the EU aimed to establish itself as key player in this global debate and influence future policy development.

The main target audience related to this dimension were **experts** on food, nutrition and sustainability issues, including scientists, policy-makers and other public and private stakeholders.

With this objective in view, the EU put forward an ambitious **Scientific Programme** which included publications developed by a Scientific Steering Committee, a calendar of science and policy events, and an online public consultation with citizens. The EU pavilion's second floor was specifically designed for this and housed rooms for conferences, presentations, and meetings. A series of events also took place in the headquarters of the DG JRC in Ispra and at Universities in Milan. Further details on this are provided in section 4.2.

The expected result of the scientific and policy dimension was that the EU participation in the Expo served to **leverage partners and induce policy change** at EU and global level.

Business dimension

The Expo was also seen as an opportunity to contribute to the growth of the EU and support the job market. In line with this, the EU pavilion was conceived as a '**meeting point**' for enterprises and institutions related to the agri-food sector that would like to explore economic and trade opportunities in the EU and Third Countries.

Consequently, the EU participation in the Expo also comprised an agenda of EU-Third Country events which included **B2B meetings** with the Euro-med countries and Turkey, China, Latin America and Caribbean, Japan, Africa, South-East Asia and the United States, as well as an event on Food Tourism. These were organised by DG GROW and the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) with the assistance of a contractor, a consortium led by PROMOS-Milan Chamber of Commerce. The idea of these events was to facilitate the set-up of trade and business agreements. The meetings also counted with the presence of high level political authorities and official business representatives.

The expected result of the business dimension was that the EU participation in the Expo served to **leverage partners and contributed to growth and jobs** through the conclusion (or intention of conclusion) of agreements that increase access of EU companies to Third Country markets.

Before going into the findings of the evaluation, in the next chapter we present the background and methodological aspects.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

2.1. Purpose and scope

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the EU participation in World Expo Milano 2015, focusing on the results related to the three dimensions of its participation, namely:

- **Communication and perception of the EU**, aimed at demonstrating whether the EU pavilion succeeded in attracting the expected number and profile of visitors, and if it inspired any variation in visitors' information, views or perceptions regarding the EU in general and, more specifically, its work in the food and sustainability arena.
- **Policy impact**, intended to measure the extent of the EU's contribution to the food policy debate generated around the theme of the Expo via the EU Scientific Programme.
- **Contribution to growth and jobs**, meant to assess the EU's capacity to leverage partners and induce company partnership agreements in the industrial sectors related to the Expo theme.

In addition, the evaluation also sought to compare the EU participation in the Expo with more traditional means of communicating with the general public, such as advertising and media campaigns.

2.2. Evaluation approach and methodology

Before and over the course of the evaluation, we were provided with large amounts of monitoring data that offered valuable insights on the inputs, activities and outputs of the EU participation in Milan. In effect, one of the advantages of conducting the evaluation in "real time" was that it allowed us to observe and examine the implementation and management of the project on an on-going basis, and adjust the proposed evaluation tools so that they complemented other data and / or filled gaps. For example, once the evaluation was launched, and in view of some initial observations of the size and nature of the volunteer programme, we proposed adding a survey of volunteers to collect feedback from a group that was one of the key audiences of the project (young people), but also played an important role in running the pavilion's visitor experience.

Therefore, the scope and design of the evaluation approach was framed by evidence that was made available during the months of the Expo, which provided valuable information on the inputs, activities and outputs of the project. Primary data was collected through a mix of quantitative and qualitative tools (i.e. desk-based research, surveys, observations and interviews) that were implemented at different stages of the evaluation. The latter provided insights into higher-level results or explanations behind the EU performance at the Expo. Put differently, an important focus of the current assignment was on revising, verifying, completing, and synthesising existing evidence and complementing it with the views of a broad range of stakeholders that were engaged through the implementation of these evaluation tools. This included visitors to the pavilion, volunteers, VIPs, members of the EU Expo Task Force and Scientific Steering Committee, representatives of the European Commission DGs, European Parliament, Member States' pavilions, international organisations, and contractors.

Based on all the evidence collected, we assessed the overall value of the EU participation in the Expo - in terms of visitors' perceptions of the EU, policy impact and

contribution to growth and jobs. Drawing from the findings and conclusions of this assessment, we then provided detailed recommendations for the future. These are presented in chapters 3 to 8.

In the next section, we provide a description of the different methodological tools that were used in this evaluation and were designed to complement one another to allow a robust assessment of the evaluation questions. Adding to this, we included a reflection on the lessons learned during the implementation of the evaluation exercise and the limitations of the methodology.

2.2.1. Desk-based research

A strong **desk-based analysis** of monitoring data collected during the months of the Expo (and after it) was conducted. The data was provided to us by members of the EU Expo Task Force, DGs and EU institutions involved in the project (e.g. EP, DG GROW and COMM), and contractors. The list of monitoring data collected and analysed in this evaluation is presented in Annex 1.

2.2.2. Surveys

A total of **five surveys** were implemented to collect feedback from different types of audiences. These are presented with more detail below.

Survey of visitors

The survey of visitors was a central element of the evaluation. It was aimed at collecting visitors' views and appreciation of the visitor experience, as well as assessing the effects of the experience on their attitudes and beliefs of the EU. Its implementation required an intense coordination effort between the evaluation team, members of the EU Expo Task Force, operation team (Amadeus Holdings AG), and volunteers.

The survey of visitors was conducted in English and Italian and was launched on 1 August 2015, until the end of the Expo. The survey was conducted by volunteers using mobile phones with specialised software provided by the evaluators.

A total of **2,403 valid responses** were collected, which allowed us to explore subgroup responses (e.g. visitors from different age groups, Italian residents vs. residents from other countries etc.) with 2-3% margin of error and 95% confidence for most questions.

Annex 2 of this report presents the results of the different questions in the survey in the form of tables. This evidence was analysed and used for drafting the findings presented in this report.

Survey of children

Children and young people were considered key target groups of the EU presence in Milan. In order to examine their appreciation of the EU pavilion, we developed a version of the visitor survey specifically targeted at children from **8 to 14 years old**. Visitors 15 and over answered the main survey (see above).

The questionnaire for children was launched on 16 September 2015 and lasted until the last day of the Expo. We collected a total of **727 responses**. Volunteers conducting the survey of visitors were also in charge of approaching kids and, given the consent from their parents/teachers, inviting them to participate in a short survey after their visit.

The questionnaire consisted of six closed questions and two open questions. These were phrased in a way accessible to the audience and were aimed at collecting their views on different elements of the pavilion, as well as on the effects of the visit on their understanding of the EU. Annex 3 of this report presents the results of the different questions in the children survey in the form of tables.

Follow-up survey of visitors

Given the importance of examining the effects of the visitor experience on visitors, we included an online follow-up survey of visitors. This was sent to visitors that agreed to provide us with their email addresses during the on-site survey of visitors. The online questionnaire was sent three to four weeks after their visit to the EU pavilion.

The follow-up survey was launched (in English and Italian) on 17 September 2015 and closed in 8 December. We collected a total of **258 responses**. Annex4 of this report presents the results of the different questions in the form of tables.

Survey of event participants

In order to collect evidence in relation to the success and outcomes of the calendar of events held at the EU pavilion, we conducted a survey of event participants. It is important to note though that as the events varied considerably in terms of topics and content, and the survey was the same for all participants, the questions were quite general and focused mainly on examining broad aspects of the content and effects of the events.

The survey was launched on 8 August 2015, but due to the holiday period there were few events organised in the pavilion during August. Consequently, we waited until September to continue with the survey. We collected a total of **152 responses**. Annex 5 of this report presents the results of the different questions in the event survey in the form of tables.

Survey of volunteers

This survey was aimed at collecting feedback on the volunteer programme. The survey was sent to volunteers in waves, starting on 29 September until 8 December 2015. We collected a total of **443 responses**, representing 53% of the total number of volunteers that participated in the programme.

Annex 6 of this report presents the results of the survey in the form of tables.

2.2.3. Interviews with stakeholders

To complement the evidence collected in the surveys, we carried out 40 **stakeholder interviews** with a broad range of groups including members of the EU Expo Task

Force, representatives of the European Parliament, Commission and Member States, contractors, and other external stakeholders such as Expo organisers.

Annex 7 of this report provides further details on the interviews conducted.

2.2.4. Observations of the pavilion

We conducted two **observations** where we examined the functioning of the EU pavilion and the attitudes/behaviours of visitors in relation to the activities proposed. The evidence collected in the two observations is presented in Annex 8 of this report.

2.2.5. Comparative exercises

We carried out a set of **comparative exercises** where we examined the outputs and outcomes of the EU presence in the Expo vis-à-vis what others achieved (i.e. other country pavilions, past Expos and other Commission Communication initiatives). The results of these exercises were integrated to different elements of the evaluation, but were mostly used during the cost-effectiveness and added value analysis presented in chapter 7.

The tables below provide an indication of the cases and elements for comparison selected for the analysis.

Table 1: Pavilions - cases and elements for comparison

Cases for comparison	Elements for comparison (benchmarks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • France • Germany • Spain • United Kingdom • Save the Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of visitors reached - Profile of visitors reached - Level of visitors' satisfaction with pavilion/experience - Organisational set-up and performance - Cost per visitor - (Qualitative) cost-benefit assessment

The information collected from the different pavilions is presented in Annex 9.

Table 2: Past Expos - cases and elements for comparison

Cases for comparison	Elements for comparison (benchmarks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanover 2000 • Shanghai 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of visitors reached - Profile of visitors reached - Level of visitors' satisfaction with pavilion/experience - Pavilion concept and activities for visitors - Organisational set-up and performance - Cost per visitor - (Qualitative) cost-benefit assessment

Table 3: EC communication initiatives - cases and elements for comparison

Cases for comparison	Elements for comparison (benchmarks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015 European Year of Development • "EU Working For You" campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of visitors/citizens reached - Profile of visitors/citizens reached - Level of visitors/citizens' satisfaction with the activity - Effects on visitors/citizens' perceptions and attitudes - Total cost and cost per visitor/citizen reached

2.2.6. Participation in meetings with Member States pavilions and members of the Inter-service Working Group

During the Expo, we were asked to participate in three meetings, two with Member States' pavilions and one with members of the Inter-service Working Group:

- 6th Meeting of EU Member States' pavilions (9 July 2015)
- 7th Meeting of EU Member States' pavilions (28 August 2015)
- 21st Meeting of Inter-service Working Group (21 October 2015)

The objective of our participation in meetings with Member States' pavilions was to present the evaluation methodology and inquire about the possibility of sharing the EU and Member States evaluation findings. We also provided lessons learned of our evaluation with a view to assisting Member States' pavilions in their assessments.

At the Inter-service Working Group meeting we presented preliminary findings of the evaluation. This also provided an opportunity to exchange views and discuss the practical implications of the evaluation's results.

Building on the evidence collected through these methods, we assessed the overall value of the EU participation in the Expo - in terms of communication impact, policy impact, and contribution to growth and jobs, but also in relation to how the project was managed, to what extent it was cost-effective and showed EU added value. The findings of this evaluation are presented in chapters 3 to 7. Drawing from the findings and conclusions of this assessment, in chapter 8 we provide a set of overall conclusions and recommendations aimed at building institutional knowledge.

2.3. Lessons learned in the evaluation process

During the course of the evaluation, we made several observations based on our experience of putting into practice the approach and methodology agreed during the inception phase. These are expressed below, as 'lessons learned' that we suggest considering during the preparation of similar exercises in future.

- **Early start of the evaluation exercise:** while evaluations are often commissioned after an initiative has finished, the current exercise ran throughout (and beyond) the life of the Expo. This allowed us to experience the EU pavilion first-hand and observe key features of its implementation and management. We were also able to collect primary data that would not have been available otherwise, such as the on-the-spot surveys of pavilion visitors and event participants, and develop relationships with key stakeholders that proved valuable later on.

- **Collaboration with and buy-in from evaluation users:** successful evaluations require active engagement and with on-going discussion between researchers and end-users. The strong commitment to the evaluation from the EU Expo Task Force was a key success factor, particularly with regard to talking to the evaluators about any concerns and shifting needs, providing monitoring data and facilitating contact with other stakeholders. Moreover, the strong between the evaluation team and relevant functions of the EU Expo Task Force such as the volunteer programme coordinator, the contractor for the operation of the EU pavilion, and the events function, allowed the implementation of five surveys with visitors, children, volunteers and event participants. In order to define the purpose and scope of an evaluation, and maintain its independence, continuous engagement from external stakeholders, such as officials from a horizontal evaluation unit, is also important.
- **Reliance on a wide variety of primary and secondary sources:** the design of the evaluation drew on a balanced mix of tools to gather both qualitative and quantitative evidence from a broad range of stakeholders. This allowed us to examine the success of the project from different points of view, including not only the views of visitors to the EU pavilion and members of the EU Expo Task Force, but also of representatives of EU institutions (European Commission DGs and European Parliament), Member States, members of the Scientific Steering Committee, and other stakeholders such as Expo organisers and representatives of international organisations. The breadth of sources and perspectives also ensured a balanced assessment of the pavilion and, through triangulation, made up for the inevitable shortcomings in any one evaluation tool.
- **Innovative data collection strategies:** evaluations of communication campaigns frequently face difficulties in engaging with the audience reached. In contrast, the timing of this evaluation allowed us to conduct surveys of audiences in real time, ensuring large and representative samples. The availability of volunteers and application of Coffey's easy-to-use electronic survey tools for gathering the data enabled us to do this within the time and budgetary constraints of the evaluation. While the conditions of each evaluation vary, the lesson here is to think purposefully about how given evaluation questions might be answered, then look for innovative and practical solutions to obtain the necessary data. Importantly, for evaluators this can entail thinking beyond the initially suggested methodology and tools.
- **Presence on the ground:** it is inevitable that evaluations will meet some practical difficulties and unforeseen changes of plan. Good relationships with key stakeholders and continuous engagement with an initiative can make it easier to adapt quickly and find workable solutions. For example, the survey of visitors and event participants faced some practical difficulties stemming from the involvement of volunteers in carrying out these exercises, as well as from the multiple actors participating in the organisation of these tasks (this included project managers, evaluators, coordinator of volunteer programme, contractor operating the visitor experience, and events function). There were moments where the different actors involved had different expectations of the exercises and how these would be conducted. To deal with this, we strengthened coordination and communication with the different actors involved and, in certain occasions, adopted the role of 'mediators' between project managers and contractors. While this was an appropriate approach, it also revealed the need of a closer follow-up and on-site presence of evaluators. In addition to this, there were various occasions in which we were asked to participate in meetings at the EU pavilion which were not foreseen in the evaluation budget. Leading from this, for similar projects in future we suggest emphasising the need for a presence on the ground and considering this in budgetary terms. Even though our team included the presence of an on-site

coordinator, the amount of work and the level of coordination needed surpassed our initial expectations and envisaged resources.

- **Engagement with external stakeholders:** interest in an evaluation extends beyond those responsible for the initiative being evaluating. Engaging with such stakeholders can make relevant data available, increase an evaluation's influence and lead to some economies of scale. In our case, a group of Member States were quite open to share data with evaluation team about their participation in the Expo. This resulted from the strong relationship built between the EU Expo Task Force and representatives of other pavilions. It allowed us to include a comparative element that placed the EU pavilion in context, holding its performance (in general and financial terms) up against the achievements of others. The evaluation also revealed that there is scope for strengthening links more, for example, in terms of pooling resources. This could be taken forward in future initiatives where the EU participates alongside the Member States, in terms of joint evaluations or surveys. Such action could provide economies of scale while also ensuring that results are comparable.

2.4.Limitations of the methodology

The implementation of the current evaluation had a few limitations some of which were identified already during the preparation of the proposal and others which were the result of adjustments that had to be made in face of some unforeseen situations. Below, we provide a brief reflection on this limitations and how they were addressed to provide a robust evaluation of the EU presence in Milan.

- **Neutrals and negatives:** As explained in section 3.2, most visitors had positive or 'fairly' positive views of the EU already before visiting the EU pavilion as this audience is usually more strongly predisposed than neutrals or negatives to notice and be interested in the EU presence. Given the timeframe and budget of this evaluation, it was not possible to include a tool to collect feedback from audiences that did not visit the pavilion and may have more negative views of the EU and its presence in the Expo. An exercise like this one would require, for example, a group of enumerators (volunteers or people contracted specifically for this) that would survey Expo visitors close-by and far away from the EU pavilion.
- **Mid and long term effects:** As the evaluation was implemented on "real time" and finalised a few months after the end of the Expo, it was not possible to examine effects that are normally realised in the mid or longer term and are the result of a myriad of factors, for example, changes on beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Drawing from this, we focused on examining plausible *short-term effects* i.e. whether the visit to the EU pavilion caused any particular *feelings* and/or *reinforced* any previously held beliefs about the EU. Nevertheless, we also made an attempt to collect some feedback on recall of the visit and residual memory by including a follow-up survey of visitors that was sent by email to a sample of visitors one month after they had visited the EU pavilion. The results of this survey were quite similar to the one implemented on site and therefore indicate the persistence of certain views; however they should not be taken as a definite assessment of mid or long term impacts.
- **Event participants:** The survey of event participants served to collect responses from 152 people, which was a smaller sample than planned (300-350) and did not allow us to break-down responses by independent variables such as age, country, etc. The factors that explain the number of responses achieved were mainly shortages of volunteers on certain days (ensuring full

operation of the visitor experience was prioritised over the implementation of the survey); difficulties experienced in engaging participants during or after the events (participants usually had to leave quickly after the event); and late launch of the survey (survey was ready to be launched in August, but there were fewer events during the holiday period and had to be postponed until September). The evidence collected was nevertheless very useful to identify a general trend and, by combining survey results with the views of stakeholders that participated in interviews the evaluation team were able to produce a robust examination of the EU's contribution to the Expo and food policy debate. For the future, it would be important to launch this type of survey earlier and envisage for alternative ways of collecting feedback from participants, for example, arranging for telephone interviews that would take place at a more convenient time.

- **Comparative exercises:** The scope of the comparison with past Expos, other country pavilions and other Commission communication initiatives had to be adapted to the evidence available. More than the amount of information available, the main restriction was that the data could not be easily compared to each other. For example, in the case of past Expos, we had access to the evaluation reports only and not to the raw data from the surveys. This made it difficult to compare results between different age groups for example, as the age ranges used in past Expo evaluations and the current evaluation were different. Also, in the case of Member States' pavilions we did not have enough information on how visitor numbers and satisfaction was measured or the budget composition. This limited the extent to which the EU's cost-effectiveness could be compared with that of other Member States' pavilions. For the future, it would be important to agree on which variables could be measured across Expos and/or other similar events (for examples, those stated in the Terms of Reference of this evaluation), and on how data will be stored and shared from one Expo/event to another. It would also be important to ensure comparability with other Commission communication initiatives.
- **Views and perceptions of stakeholders:** The opinions of people consulted during the evaluation were likely to bring some element of bias to the analysis. In particular, contractors who designed and operated the visitor experience are likely to make a more positive assessment of their work and bring their organisations' interests to play in their responses. Also, the people involved in the implementation of the project are also more likely to have positive opinions of the organisation and management of the project than stakeholders that examine the process from the outside. To address this, we held up self-assessments against each other, and especially against the assessment of 'outsiders' (e.g. VIPs, Expo organisers, Member State, EC or EP representatives, depending on the case) who provided views that balance those of the people more involved in the implementation of the project. We also triangulated the findings from different tools (e.g. interviews, surveys, observations) so that the answer to each evaluation question is supported by different sources of evidence collected.

In the following chapters we present the main findings of the evaluation and answers to the evaluation questions set by the Commission. The answers are provided on a thematic / topical basis with a view to reducing overlap between areas.

3. COMMUNICATION IMPACT

'Communication impact' can be conceptualised as the capacity of a given communication initiative to **reach the target group and produce an 'effect'** on its attitudes, beliefs and/or behaviours. This section examines the extent to which the EU succeeded in reaching the targeted audiences and whether the visitor experience contributed to improving their knowledge and perception of the EU.

As was explained in chapter 1, the EU aimed to use its presence at Expo Milano as an opportunity to communicate with EU (and non-EU) citizens showing them a friendly face of the EU and getting closer to their hearts. This differed from the more 'formal' and 'institutional' participation of the EU in past Expos and in massive communication activities in general. Therefore, the pavilion's main attraction (visitor experience) was designed to reach all kinds of visitors, but especially families with children and young people, and involve them in an **entertaining and emotional experience** that talked about the EU and its food-related policies. The expected result was that people emerged from the visit with a more positive attitude towards the EU and greater awareness of its actions in the food and nutrition realm.

The aim of focusing on families with children and youngsters was grounded in the idea that many of the younger generations **take the EU 'for granted'** and, to some extent, are indifferent towards it. During the preparation phase, it was understood that the Expo offered a unique opportunity to communicate with this type of audiences and show them how the EU is present in their daily lives and what are the values it promotes. This approach was in line with the political guidelines for the Commission 2010-2014, where President Barroso recognised that there was a need to rekindle *"a passion for Europe, a new pride and feeling of connection between the EU and its citizens"*.²² This understanding continued under the next Presidency when Jean-Claude Juncker emphasised that trust in the European project was at a historic low and that it was critical to rebuild bridges in Europe to restore European citizens' confidence.²³

The ensuing sections argue that the EU Expo Task Force had an adequate understanding of this context, and developed a visitor experience that addressed these challenges quite successfully. In effect, it managed to reach the targeted audiences and communicate with them in a way that they welcomed and appreciated, resulting in an **improved perception of the EU**.

Below we examine the communication impact of the EU participation in World Expo Milano, basing ourselves in the Evaluation Questions (EQs) included in the evaluation's Terms of Reference, namely:

EQ 1: To what extent has the EU pavilion been successful in attracting numerous visitors with diverse profiles?

EQ 2: To what extent was the pavilion appreciated by the visitors?

EQ 3: Did the visitors appreciate the design, décor, special effects in the EU pavilion?

EQ 4: Was Sylvia's lab been successful?

²² José Manuel Barroso, Political guidelines for the next Commission, p.11. Available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/archives/commission_2010-2014/president/pdf/press_20090903_en.pdf

²³ Jean-Claude Juncker, A New Start for Europe: My Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change, Political Guidelines for the next European Commission, 15 July 2014. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/about/juncker-commission/docs/pg_en.pdf

EQ 5: Did the EU pavilion receive acknowledgements and prizes?

EQ 6: To what extent were the show and the post-show successful in communicating clear messages on the EU?

EQ 7: To what extent were website, social media and traditional media efficient in reaching the visitors of World Expo 2015 and those who could not attend it?

EQ 8: To what extent was the Europe Day successful?

The findings and answers to these questions were based on data from the following sources:

- Rating of the visitor experience through 'Happy or Not' visitor feedback terminal set at the EU pavilion
- Survey of visitors implemented by Coffey from July to October 2015, which included a specific set of questions for children
- Follow-up survey of visitors implemented by Coffey from October to December 2015 (in average four weeks after visiting the pavilion)
- Survey of volunteers implemented by Coffey from October to December 2015
- Two observations conducted by Coffey in August and October 2015
- Survey and monitoring data received from DG JRC relating to Sylvia's Lab in Ispra

3.1. Number of visitors and visitor profiles

EQ 1: To what extent has the EU pavilion been successful in attracting numerous visitors with diverse profiles?

The first and most evident variable for measuring the impact of the EU participation in World Expo Milano is the number and profile of visitors who visited the pavilion. Hence, in this section we argue that the EU pavilion achieved its communication objective of reaching numerous visitors of diverse profiles, but especially families with children and young people, and those with neutral and fairly positive views of the EU.

Number of visitors and visitor profiles

The EU pavilion's target capacity was estimated at around 70% of maximum throughput (1 million visitors), which was defined as reached if the pavilion was 100% full, 13 hours a day during the 183 days of the Expo. Monitoring data provided by the ETF revealed that the EU pavilion received a total of **657,150 visitors**,²⁴ meaning

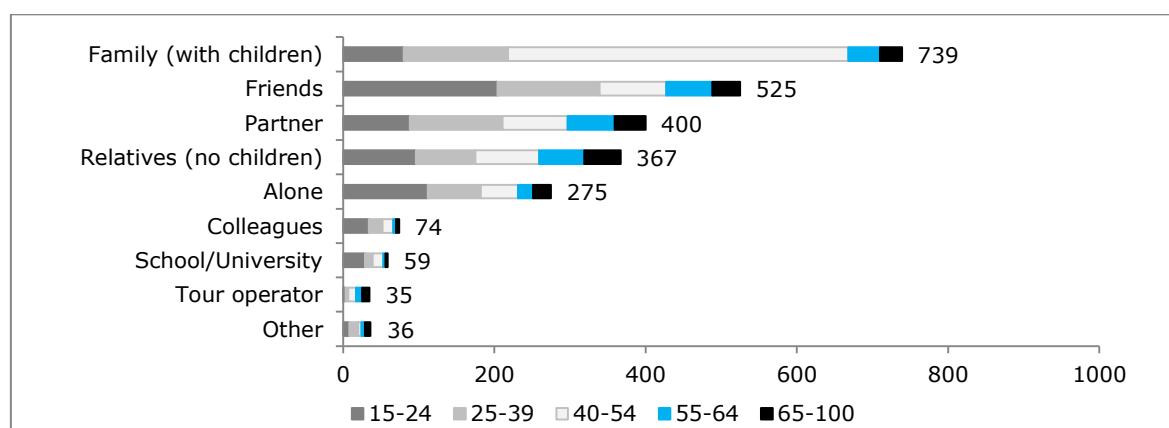
²⁴ An additional 6,500 visitors went to the Sylvia's Lab exhibition located at DG JRC Ispra.

that it reached **66% of the target capacity**, which is very positive considering the competition for visitors with the most popular and stunning pavilions (United Kingdom, Japan and Italy, among others) and also that the pavilion opened eight days later than the Expo (due to construction delays by the Expo organisers). In addition, the construction delays led also to many technical failures until beginning of June, further impacting on the flow of visitors.²⁵

In addition to this, and in line with what happened with Expo visitors' numbers, there was a **slow start and a steady growth of visitors** to the EU pavilion from September 2015 onwards. In effect, in the first three months there were circa 252,000 visitors compared to over 405,000 in the latter three. This experience was similar in other Member States' pavilions (e.g. United Kingdom, France, Germany, The Netherlands and Hungary), as reported by senior officials of these pavilions interviewed in the context of this evaluation. The media also reported on the increase in visitor numbers towards the end of the Expo.²⁶ The EU pavilion was one of the few pavilions promoted as a children-friendly spot in the Expo. Therefore, there were also masses of school groups visiting the pavilion with the start of the school term in September.

In terms of the profile of visitors, the survey revealed that the EU **reached the targeted audiences**. In effect, the largest group of visitors were parents aged 40 to 54 who went to the pavilion with their children, followed by young people visiting with friends (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Visitors' visiting modality by age group²⁷



n = 2,510

But the EU pavilion could not reach everybody. In line with the profile of Expo visitors, the **large majority were from Italy** (eight out of ten visitors), making this an Italian event overall. However, the portion of foreign visitors (non-Italian) who visited the EU pavilion was considerably higher compared to Hanover 2000.²⁸ Non-Italian visitors at the pavilion represented 15% of all visitors and were mainly from France, Switzerland,

²⁵ As explained in the Final Operation Report by Amadeus Holdings AG, the construction delays caused a late initiation of the simulation exercises and testing of technical equipment, which had to take place once the pavilion opened. This meant that the visitor experience was not functioning at its maximum capacity and highest quality until a couple of weeks after the opening.

²⁶ Media reports (see for example, "20 million people visited Milan Expo, a 'huge success'", Euronews: <http://www.euronews.com/2015/10/29/20-million-people-visited-milan-expo-a-huge-success/>), as well as observational data, confirmed this too and highlighted that towards October 2015 there were 'overwhelming' crowds and five hour (or longer) waiting time to gain access to popular pavilions.

²⁷ Age groups used for analysing the profile of visitors are those used by Eurostat.

²⁸ Differences in the ways data were recorded and presented meant only Hanover presented meaningful figures for comparison. In Expo Hanover, nine out of ten visitors to the EU pavilion were from Germany, the host country; whereas in Milan, Italians represented eight in ten.

Germany and Belgium. Among the non-European countries, people coming from China were the most frequent visitors (circa 1%). Moreover, looking into different age groups, the data revealed that non-Italian visitors were usually young people (15 to 24 years old) or adults in the range of 25 to 39 years old, confirming the appeal of the EU pavilion for young audiences coming also from outside Italy.

The visitor survey asked people from Italy to leave their postcode in order to track which region they were visiting from. Not surprisingly, most visitors came from the region of Lombardy (30%), followed by Lazio (including Rome) (20%) and regions surrounding Lombardy such as Emilia Romagna, Veneto and Piemonte.

Visitors to the EU pavilion were **highly educated** in absolute terms. More than half of survey respondents had a university degree, either a bachelor, master or post-graduate degree (51%). Compared to the Italian population in general, 57% have completed upper secondary school,²⁹ whereas at the EU pavilion, at least 90% of visitors had completed secondary school. Similar numbers hold true when looking at results for Italian visitors only (88%).

The EU pavilion showed an important capacity to attract **'spontaneous' visitors** (about two thirds of visitors) i.e. people who had not planned to visit the pavilion in advance, and this was partly due to the promotional actions by **volunteers**. In effect, according to the survey of visitors, almost 15% of total visitors went to the pavilion because of the work of volunteers. In absolute terms, this translates to circa 100,000 visitors of the total of 657,150 visitors to the EU pavilion.

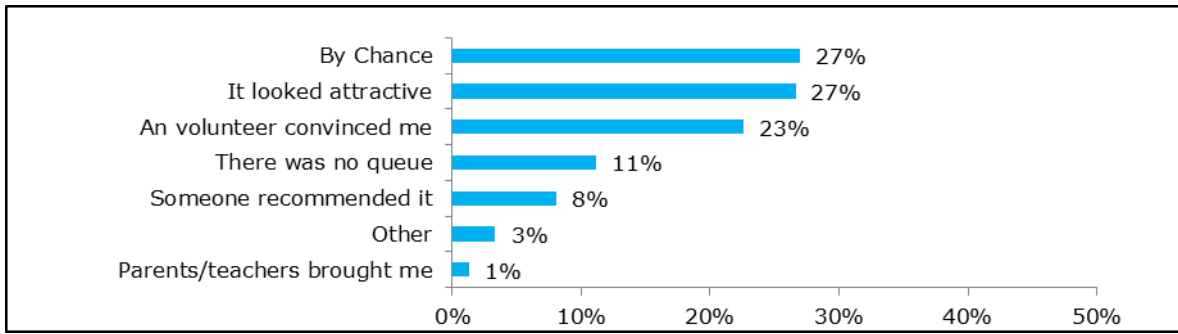
Among the people who had planned to see the EU pavilion during their visit to the Expo (32%), circa four out of ten had learned of the pavilion because **someone recommended it** (39%) or **through the media** (36%). When asked in what media they had heard about the pavilion, four out of ten said it was in the Expo Milano website (44%), followed by the newspaper and TV (15% each) and social media (9%). Looking at young visitors (15 to 24 years old), the share of people who found out about the EU pavilion through the Expo website increased to 54%. Facebook was also a more frequent source of information for this group of visitors than others (16%). TV and the newspaper were a source of information on the pavilion especially for visitors over 55 years old. Based on this data, it is possible to say that actions to promote the EU pavilion through traditional and social media were quite successful too.

Figure 3: Geographical distribution of Italian visitors by administrative region (n=895)



²⁹OECD Better Life Index – Italy. Available at: <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/italy/>

Figure 4: Spontaneous visitors’ motive for visiting the EU pavilion



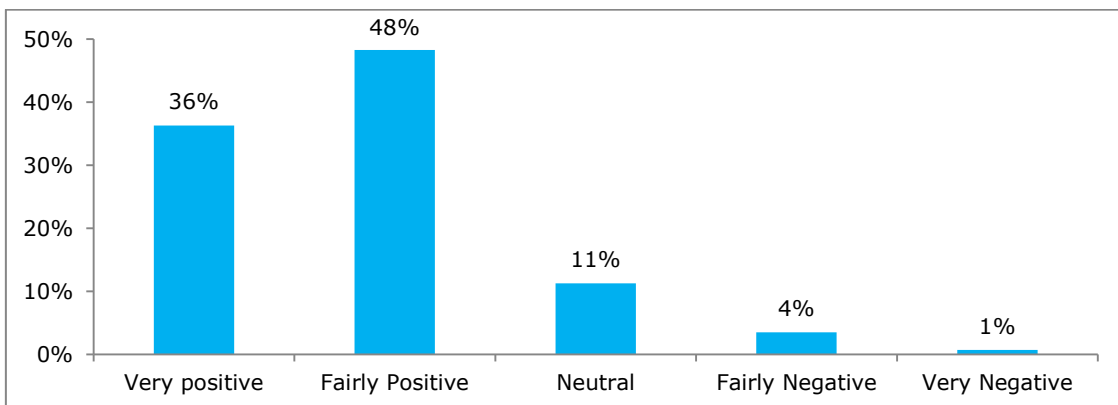
n = 1,626

Views of the EU

As was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, one of the aims of the EU was to increase visitors’ favourability towards the EU. This is a difficult task for any communication initiative, among other things because audiences with pre-existing negative views are unlikely to engage at all. For this reason, a more realistic goal for the EU pavilion was to focus on visitors who were open to EU messaging, but not already active or highly knowledgeable; in other words, those with ‘fairly positive’ and ‘neutral’ views of the EU.

The EU **accomplished this goal** in that nearly six in ten visitors fit this profile, with 48% of survey respondents who said they were fairly positive towards the EU and 11% that they were neutral(Figure 5). This provided the EU with a unique opportunity to make a difference among a large majority of visitors to the pavilion. The remaining visitors were harder to reach, either because they were already ‘very positive’ in their attitudes to the EU (36%) or negative (5%). The impact on visitors’ views is examined in section 3.3.

Figure 5: Visitors’ views of the EU prior to the visit



n = 2,650

Conclusion

Despite construction delays and the furious competition for visitors, the EU pavilion achieved its objective of reaching a high number of visitors (657,150) of diverse profiles. But it especially reached the target audiences i.e. families with children, young people and visitors with ‘fairly positive’ and ‘neutral’ views of the EU. This provided the EU with an opportunity to impact on strategic audiences. It is still worth

noting that the large majority of visitors were from Italy, making this an Italian event overall. Last, survey results also pointed out to the importance of volunteers and media promotion in attracting visitors to the pavilion.

3.2. Visitor satisfaction and expectations

EQ 2: To what extent was the pavilion appreciated by the visitors?

EQ 3: Did the visitors appreciate the design, décor, special effects in the EU pavilion?

EQ 4: Was Sylvia's lab been successful?

EQ5: Did the EU pavilion receive acknowledgements and prizes?

The overall objective of the visitor experience was to engage visitors in an emotional and entertaining experience that talked about the EU in order to convey positive feelings about it. In this section we demonstrate that visitors were very satisfied with the experience and appreciated especially the main show (i.e. the Alex and Sylvia movie, the animations and special effects). The attractiveness of the visitor experience was also evidenced by the acknowledgments and prizes received from the Expo organisers and EU stakeholders who also visited the pavilion.³⁰ Nevertheless, there were some aspects of the visitor experience which could be improved in order to maximise impact.

Overall visitor satisfaction

The results of the surveys of visitors and observations of the pavilion are conclusive in that **visitors were overwhelmingly appreciative** of the EU pavilion as well as of Sylvia's Lab at DG JRC-Ispra.

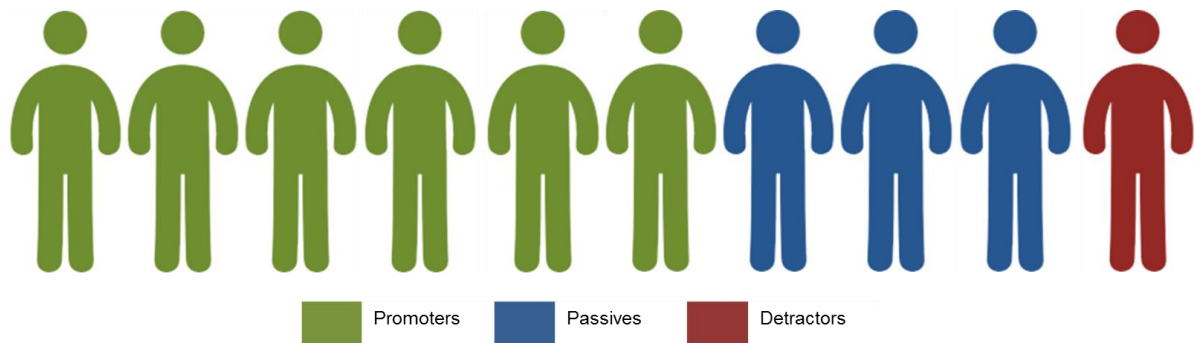
With almost 200,000 responses collected (ca. a third of total visitors), the exit survey at the EU pavilion which asked visitors to rate their experience with a 'smiley face'³¹ reported that nine out of ten were very satisfied with it. The positive appreciation of visitors appears to have **persisted in time** as evidenced in the follow-up survey of visitors which was conducted after the visit. In average, a month after visiting the EU pavilion, nine out of ten visitors were still of the opinion that they had enjoyed their visit. In relation to Sylvia's Lab, an exit survey asked visitors to rate their experience. Around nine out of ten said their visit was either "excellent" or "good". Visitors were also

³⁰The EU pavilion received an Honourable Mention for "Best Presentation" from the Exhibitor Magazine (<http://www.exhibitoronline.com/news/article.asp?ID=15391&email=clachel@brcweb.com&s=3504Stb>). In addition, "The Golden Ear" film was nominated for the Oscar for "Short Animated Film", although it remained out of the top 10 movies that made it to the Oscar's final selection. The EU also received numerous acknowledgements in the pavilion's golden book and through emails sent to different members of the EU Expo Task Force. Finally, the EU Scientific Programme for Expo Milano 2015 (see section 4.2) won the "Euromediterraneo2015" prize for public communication at the national level from Confindustria Assafrica & Mediterraneo (<http://www.assafrica.it/>) and Associazione Italiana della Comunicazione Pubblica e Istituzionale (Italian association of public and institutional communication - www.compubblica.it/).

³¹ A total of 18 weekly reports were provided to us on visitor satisfaction by the EU Expo Task Force (from 7st of June to the 30th of October).

very satisfied with the quality of information and assistance that was provided at the Lab.

Another metric for examining overall appreciation of the EU pavilion was the likelihood that visitors would recommend it to others. In the survey conducted on-site, we asked visitors to say, on a scale from 0-10, how likely they were to recommend the pavilion to family/friends. In marketing, it is general practice to consider “promoters” those who responded 9-10, “passives” those who said 7-8, and “detractors” the ones who responded 0-6. The results were very positive, with **six out of ten visitors who were promoters** and thus were very likely to recommend the pavilion to others. The results are illustrated in the figure below.³² **Figure 6: EU pavilion promoters**



It is worth noting that there were slightly more promoters among visitors who were **visiting the pavilion with children** (seven out of ten), which reinforces the idea that the pavilion was very successful among the targeted audiences. In line with this, there were fewer promoters among young people (15 to 24), with ‘only’ five out of ten. The latter were also more likely than others to think that the pavilion was more for children, as evidenced by the results of the follow-up survey of visitors. Not surprisingly, visitors who already had positive views of the EU were more likely to recommend the pavilion to others (seven out of ten of these were promoters).

In order to gain a deeper understanding of visitors’ thoughts of the EU pavilion, we asked survey respondents to describe their experience by selecting one word among a set of five proposed. A majority thought the pavilion was interesting or entertaining (over 50%), independently of the visitor’s age. Evidence collected during the observations confirmed these findings and signalled that the visit was **especially entertaining for the youngest visitors**. For example, children were seen screaming or laughing with delight and clapping their hands with the special effects of the film (e.g. water sprays and simulated lightning).

Visitors’ appreciation of the pre-show, show, and post-show

The survey of visitors included a set of questions aimed at examining visitors’ satisfaction with specific elements of the pavilion, in particular the pre-show, show and post-show. As was explained in section 1.2.2, the EU pavilion’s visitor experience was made up of three moments happening in three different areas. The first one was the

³² The question of “how likely you are to recommend...” is used in marketing mainly to measure products/services’ Net Promoter Score (NPS). NPS is % promoters - % detractors. The pavilion’s NPS was 51 (58%-7%), which is considered to be very high. But an NPS score in isolation is not very useful and is difficult to compare to external benchmarks. However, it can be used as a metric to track performance over time and compare to other similar events. It is also a metric that can be used to segment audiences, for example, to know the opinions of people who rated it really low on NPS.

pre-show, which served as an introduction of what visitors would see in the pavilion (e.g. they met Alex and Sylvia and saw how their family stories evolved parallel to the development of the EU). Then they were driven to main show where the film “The Golden Ear” was projected. The third moment (post-show) was the visit to the content centre where they could learn more about EU policies linked to the Expo themes.

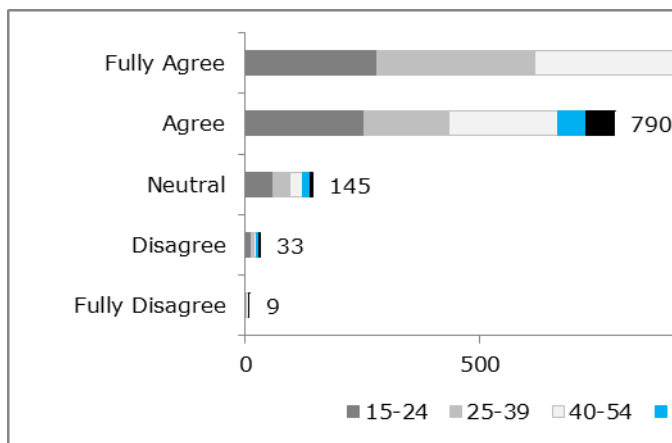
A vast majority of visitors were positive about what they experienced in the three areas. They thought that the story about Alex and Sylvia’s families shown in the queue (pre-show) was interesting, but they were **especially satisfied with the show**, with over 90% who agreed that the movie was entertaining (Figure 7). Among those who appreciated the movie the most (i.e. those who “fully agreed” that it was entertaining), it was possible to find a large share of adults aged 40 to 54 year olds. As explained in section 3.1, a high portion of these were parents visiting the pavilion with their children, indicating that the movie was very well received among one of the key target audiences of the EU pavilion. This is reinforced by the results of the survey of children, with a vast majority (85%) who said it was their favourite thing of the visit (Figure 8).

A central element of the main show was the **animations and special effects** such as images displayed on the walls, the smell of bread, the rain, and the vibrating floor. These were very much appreciated by visitors too, with almost all visitors (96%) agreeing that they made the experience more exciting. Evidence collected during our observations showed that these were **especially popular among children**, who looked captivated by the movie and reacted strongly to the various special effects. In addition, many visitors, especially teachers and parents, asked if the movie was available online, on TV or if it could be shown at schools. A significant number of kids surveyed wanted to see the film again in the future (93%).

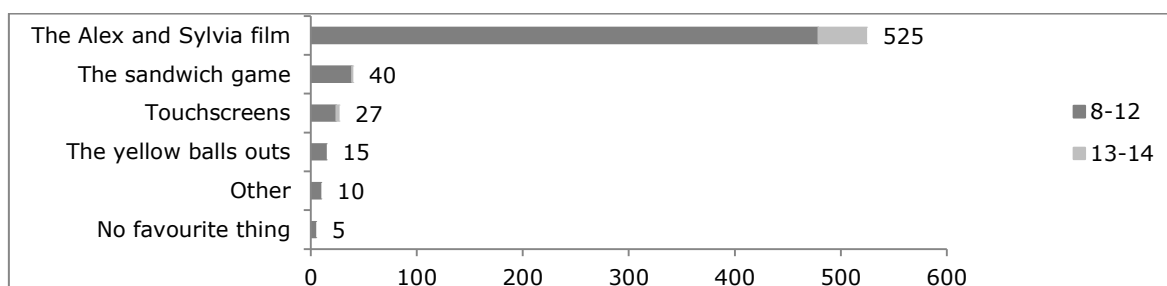


Figure 7: Visitors’ agreement that “The Golden Ear” film was entertaining

© European Union 2015
 Source: EU website for Expo Milano 2015
 (<http://europa.eu/expo2015/>)



n=2,402

Figure 8: Children's favourite thing in the pavilion

n = 612

Despite the positive survey results in relation to the post-show or content centre (eight out of ten visitors agreed that the touch-screens provided interesting information about the EU), the observations conducted indicated that the interactive displays were often approached by younger visitors (especially the sandwich game) and that **adults did not spend much time at the panels**. The latter usually left the pavilion quickly, especially during the last month of the Expo when school groups were busy playing with the screens and there was not much room left for other audiences. In line with this finding, the survey of children showed that the youngest very much enjoyed the touch-screens and, in particular, the sandwich game (Figure 8). The **popularity of the sandwich game among children** was also confirmed during the observations, with children very often gravitating towards it.

Our observations served to point out additional shortcomings in the design of the visitor experience, and especially of the post-show. But these are treated with more detail in section 3.3.

Before going into the next section, we would like to highlight that the EU pavilion received an Honourable Mention for "Best Presentation" at the Exhibitor Magazine 2015 Awards.³³ Moreover, "The Golden Ear" film was nominated for the Oscar for "Short Animated Film", although it remained out of the top 10 movies that made it to the Oscar's final selection. The EU also received numerous acknowledgements in the pavilion's golden book and through emails sent to different members of the ETF by VIPs and stakeholders. This further reinforces the evidence on the high level of appreciation of the EU presence at the Expo overall.

Comments from VIPs left in the EU pavilion's golden book:

"My congratulations to those especially at DG JRC who have made our participation in Milano a communications, branding, and substance success" (High level Commission official)

"Big thanks to the whole team for the excellent presentation of Europe" (Vice-President of the Commission)

"Very good ideas of EU cooperation and image" (Minister of Czech Republic)

Conclusion

The evaluation served to confirm that visitors were overwhelmingly positive about the EU pavilion (and Sylvia's Lab), and were likely to talk positively about it with others. A vast majority, but especially families with children, found the experience interesting and entertaining. This indicated that the pavilion pleased one of its main target audiences. The follow-up survey of visitors also suggested that the positive opinions of the EU pavilion persisted one month after, indicating a positive 'residual' memory of their visit to the EU pavilion. Despite the positive results, it is necessary to point out

³³ Exhibitor Magazine has a prestigious exhibit-design competition dedicated to show exhibits (<http://www.exhibitoronline.com/news/article.asp?ID=15391&email=clachel@brcweb.com&s=3504Stb>).

that the observations revealed some areas for improvement in the visitor experience that could maximise the communication impact on visitors.

3.3. Messages conveyed by the visitor experience

EQ 6: To what extent were the show and the post-show successful in communicating clear messages on the EU?

We defined the passing of a message as a process which goes beyond reaching the target audience and represents the receipt of the message i.e. that the target group registers the messages (awareness) and that it understands it. The medium used also has an impact on the extent that the message is passed to the audience. In this section we show that visitors registered the main messages conveyed; however their understanding of what the EU was trying to show with these messages required additional explanations and information that were not always effectively provided. Despite of these flaws, visitors still emerged from the visit with a positive feeling of the EU, pointing to the power of providing an emotional and immersive 'experience' to visitors.

Visitors' awareness of the pavilion's messages

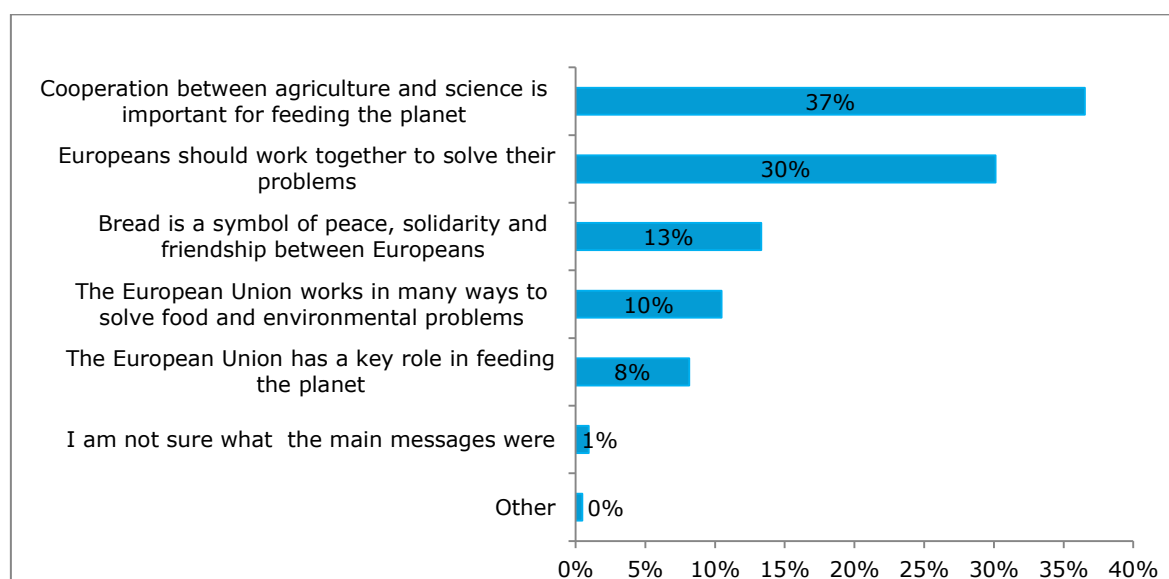
The overall objective of the visitor experience was to engage visitors in an emotional experience that talked about the EU and contribute to improving their perception of it. As we explained in section 1.2.2, the key concept of the EU pavilion was "together", which emphasised the importance of cooperation in ensuring a safe and sustainable future for all. As Expo Milano was about food and sustainability, the EU presented the idea of agriculture and science working together. In order to convey these ideas, visitors were driven through the visitor experience in the following way: (i) in the pre-show, they were lead through a story on the EU using the example of wheat and bread as founding elements of European civilization; (ii) in the show, visitors were engaged in an emotional story of two people (a scientist and a farmer) who fell in love under unlikely circumstances and, through their individual life-stories they learned about EU history, and current food, research and development EU policies; and (iii) in the post-show, they were given the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the policies presented during the show.

Through this narrative, the EU intended to convey the following key messages:

- Europeans should work together to solve their problems
- Cooperation between agriculture and science is important for feeding the planet
- Bread is a symbol of peace, solidarity and friendship between Europeans
- The European Union has a key role in feeding the planet
- The European Union works in many ways to solve food and environmental problems

In order to examine the extent to which visitors registered and heard all or part of these ideas, in the survey we invited them to select up to three main messages from a list of five.³⁴ To assess recall, we tested the messages again in the follow-up survey conducted one month after the visit. Surveys and observations' results showed that the EU successfully **conveyed the messages it aimed to deliver** through the visitor experience. The main messages that visitors took from their visit, regardless of nationality or age group, were those related to 'cooperation' and 'working together'. Around seven out of ten visitors selected the first or second message in Figure 9 during the visitor survey.

Figure 9: Messages taken from the visit (on-the-spot survey of visitors)



n = 3,875

Looking at the results of the follow-up survey, it is possible to say that the great majority of respondents had a **'residual' memory of the messages conveyed** at the pavilion. When asked to describe what first came to their mind when thinking about the EU pavilion, most centred their comments on the messages of 'unity' and 'cooperation'. According to comments left by visitors, the messages of the pavilion were considered 'simple, but effective'.

In order to examine **what children understood of the movie**, in the survey we asked them to describe the film to a friend. The majority of kids recognised the key message as being one of cooperation, friendship, teamwork, peace or love between different countries and people. Several children also spoke of the bread as being a symbol of union and cooperation.

Visitors' understanding of the messages

It is worth examining the effects of the visit with greater depth. The follow-up survey of visitors demonstrated that the film was widely perceived as a **film that talked about the EU**, with more than eight out of ten visitors that agreed to this. But we also asked volunteers working in the EU pavilion about their impressions of the film and uncovered certain aspects of the process of passing the messages to visitors that were not evidenced in the survey of visitors. The opinion of volunteers is quite

³⁴ We also provided two additional options which allowed them to propose a different message or say that they did not know what the main messages were.

relevant here as they would have seen the movie repeatedly and also interacted with visitors while guiding them through the visitor experience.

Many volunteers pointed out that the movie **needed explanations and interpretations** if the messages were to be understood by visitors. The story's connection with the EU was, in the words of one volunteer, 'too subtle'. Several raised the issue of how the post-show should have been clearly linked to the sometimes subtle metaphors and topics developed in the movie. Volunteers described how at times visitors would be a bit confused by the perceived narrative of a 'love story' and its connection to EU policies.

During our observations, we found that the pre-show and post-show were **less effective in conveying more complex messages** to visitors. As was stated before, respondents to the survey conducted on-site were overall positive about the story about Alex and Sylvia shown in the pre-show and the touch-screens in the content centre. But our observations of attitudes and behaviours during these two moments of the visit uncovered that people, especially adults, passed very quickly through both the pre- and post-show areas and that there was limited interaction with the screens in the queue and touch-screens in the content centre. To exemplify this, we included some comments from visitors in the text box on the right.

Comments from visitors that serve as illustration of their experience at the pre-show and post-show areas:

"[There was] not enough time, and too much information to go through" (Female, Italy, 42 years old)

"[It was] interesting, but it would have been nice to taste the bread" (Female, China, 38 years old)

"Nobody explained to us what there was to see or do" (Female, Germany, 27 years old)

This evidence shows the **importance of giving visitors the opportunity to interact or 'do something'** in the pavilion. Visitors usually appreciate more the opportunity to participate actively and experience for themselves, rather than reading (or listening to) information. This was identified as a main success factor by some of the representatives of other pavilions we interviewed such as Hungary and Save The Children. The EU has not been able yet to maximise the effects that an interactive experience can have on visitors. In effect, one of the weaknesses of the EU pavilion that had been already identified in Expo Shanghai 2010 was the limited animation and interactivity of the exhibits. In Expo Hanover 2000, the messages that the EU wanted to convey were also hidden in a mix of entertainment and information. As was suggested in some of the interviews held with members of the EU Expo Task Force, the EU pavilion in Milan could have capitalised on, for example, the presence of staff from different Commission DGs who could interact with people, explain what was in the touch-screens and answer questions on EU food policies.

Effects on visitors' views of the EU

Although there were no evaluation questions related to changes in visitors' perceptions of the EU and/or behaviours, we nevertheless included a question in both the survey of visitors conducted on-site and the follow-up survey sent via email a month after the visit aimed at examining this, as it was one of the central objectives of the EU presence in World Expo Milano.

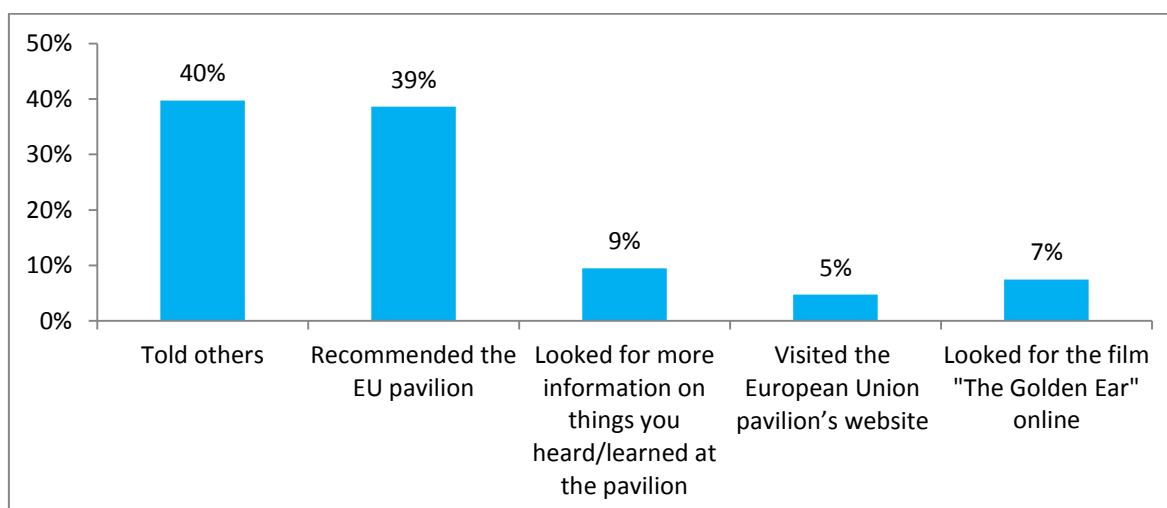
When it comes to changes in beliefs, attitudes or behaviours it is important to note that, due to the limited amount of time people spent in any given pavilion and the fact that the average visitor went to the Expo looking for an entertaining experience overall, it is unrealistic to expect that the visit would have major immediate impacts on visitors' views or behaviours. Taking this into account, we focused on examining whether the visit to the EU pavilion caused any particular **feelings and/or**

reinforced any previously held beliefs about the EU. This means that we focused on plausible short-term effects and we defined these as outcomes that were relatively straightforward to measure and linked directly to the visit. Hence, in the survey we presented a set of possible results and asked visitors to indicate how much they agreed that these had been realised:

- Now I feel I would like to learn more about European Union policies in relation to food and sustainability
- Now I know better what the European Union is doing in relation to food and sustainability
- Now I understand better what the European Union is
- Now I have a more positive view of the European Union

The surveys revealed quite positive results in this sense, but also signalled some areas for improvement. First, the EU achieved what could have realistically hoped to achieve during the Expo, given the limitations mentioned above: it **triggered an interest on EU policies**. Evidence of this is the fact that eight out of ten visitors (on average in the two surveys) agreed that, after the visit, they wanted to learn more about EU's food policies. Interestingly, around 20% of visitors who took part in the follow-up survey indicated that they **had actively sought information** about things learned at the EU pavilion (see Figure 10). This points out to the fact that, at least for some visitors, the ideas that they were exposed to during the visit generated some sort of follow-up action in terms of active information searching. Another important follow-up action of visitors was that they told others about the visit and recommended others to visit the pavilion, reinforcing the idea of the overall high level of satisfaction with the visitor experience that was presented in section 3.2.

Figure 10: Visitors' actions after visiting the EU pavilion



n = 443

Going back to the statements presented in the introduction to this section, the effect on visitors' **understanding of what the EU is and what it does** in relation to food and sustainability was more moderate though, with slightly less people who agreed with both statements in the two surveys (seven in ten visitors, on average).

Visitors were also asked whether, after the visit, they had a **more positive view of the EU**. Results revealed mixed reactions, with 60% who agreed, 30% who neither agreed nor disagreed, and 8% who disagreed. Responses were more positive among young people though (15 to 24 years old). But this outcome should probably be

interpreted in light of the views of the EU that visitors had prior to the visit (see section 3.1). When breaking down responses of visitors we see that the visit to the EU pavilion had a **stronger effect among visitors who had stated 'fairly' positive views of the EU and neutrals**. In the first group, six out of ten agreed that they had a more positive view of the EU after the visit. This was four out of ten among neutrals. Among people with negative views of the EU, three out of ten said they now had a more positive view of the EU, which is still significant if we consider that 'negatives' are normally very difficult audiences to engage.

Therefore, most visitors were positive of the EU and remained liked that after the visit, but people with 'fairly' positive views and neutrals were more likely to emerge from the visit with a more positive view of it than people with prior negative or very positive views of the EU. This also indicates that the EU achieved the objective of impacting on those who took the EU 'for granted' and therefore were indifferent or 'neutral' towards the EU.

All in all, the examination of the effects of the visitor experience on visitors suggests that whereas it is possible to generate an interest or convey positive feelings on the EU, it is less likely that there will be strong effects on people's deeper understanding of EU policies in the context of a quite short visit to an EU pavilion in an international event. Therefore, the challenge is to **strike the right balance** between a merely entertaining and rather superficial experience that leaves no legacy at all and an informative and more 'institutional' event that proves to be quite boring to the average visitor. The EU pavilion apparently achieved a good balance between the two, because it engaged people in an experience that they judged to be interesting and entertaining, and also generated an interest and positive feelings about the EU.

Notwithstanding this overall positive result, we would still like to highlight some issues related to the design of the visitor experience and, in particular, of the pre- and post-show areas, that may have slightly **limited the impact of the visitor experience**. Despite it was naturally very difficult to get people stay long at the pavilion and catch their attention on aspects that were more complex to communicate (i.e. EU's food policies), the pre- and post-show could have been used more effectively to introduce and wrap-up the main ideas and information the EU wanted to convey to visitors.

For example, the queue to enter the pavilion was usually short and fast-moving, which made the pavilion very attractive compared to other pavilions where the waiting time could exceed the five hours (e.g. Italian pavilion). But this **did not allow enough time** for visitors to see/read the screens, which were also too high and far away for watching them comfortably (and especially inadequate for children). This was also the case once inside the pavilion, when volunteers welcomed visitors and quickly drove them to watch the first and second films, without having enough time to take in the information and illustrations spread across the walls and ceiling (which introduced Alex and Sylvia, provided key information for understanding the meaning of wheat and bread, and the role of the EU in agriculture and science).

The case of the post-show was similar, with a number of blue walls with no information or pictures displayed and shelves with posters occupying a third of the space. Moreover, the three touch-screens, which provided information on concrete EU food policies, were identical in terms of what visitors could do there (i.e. click on the icons and watch videos which visitors did not usually take the time to watch). There was also a **lack of explanations** of what visitors could see in those screens and how that information was linked to the movie they had watched before. According to discussions with some visitors, many adults were keen to learn more about EU policies, but thought the panels were more for children and did not take the time to investigate.

We also observed that, especially in the film and content centre, there was **'a little bit of everything'** and the pavilion tried to cover all possible topics related to food and

sustainability issues i.e. agriculture, science, peace, human rights, single market, climate change, etc. Throughout the visit, one could find countless details about the EU's work in food and sustainability. But discovering them all required a longer (or more than one) visit to the pavilion.

The multiplicity of topics addressed in the pavilion is explained by the fact that all relevant DGs contributed to the story and ensured that their policies were made present. Although this was an important effort and a valuable experience of cooperation between EU institutions, it resulted in a diverse, but too broad coverage of myriad topics.

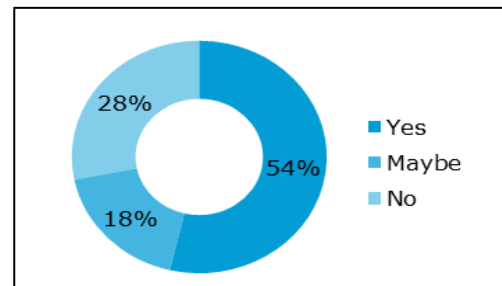
Effects on children

Last, we would like to examine the effects of the visit on children, as the evaluation uncovered that this was **one of the most inspired audiences** that visited the EU pavilion.

The EU pavilion was among the few which offered content targeted specifically at kids and, as explained in section 3.4, it was agreed with the Expo organisers that it was promoted as a 'hot spot' for school groups. In order to examine the effects of children's experience at the EU pavilion, the kids' survey included two questions specifically aimed at this:

- Did you learn anything new about the EU here, in this pavilion?
- If yes, what did you learn today?

Figure 11: Did you learn anything new about the EU in this pavilion? (n= 618)



The results revealed that it is likely that children emerged from the visit with an **increased understanding of the EU**, with circa seven out of ten kids who said that they either 'learned' (54%) or 'might have learned' (18%) something new of the EU during the visit (Figure 11). When asked to explain what they had learned, over 400 children provided an answer to this question. The majority stated that they had learned more about the **EU's structure and its history**, for example, some mentioned the number of languages and countries therein and that it won the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize.

A number of children mentioned the **importance of cooperation** among individuals and countries, as well as of teamwork and mutual respect. Some spoke of the role of agriculture and the technological investments that the EU makes to support food production. They also pointed to the importance of respecting nature and natural resources. Finally, several children spoke about the importance of **bread**: both its production techniques and its commonality across countries in the EU.

These results are in line with what teachers explained to us during our observations of the pavilion. About the film, they highlighted that it was very good, entertaining and that the **message was easy to understand for kids**. Some also explained that the theme of the Expo was relevant to their teaching programmes and so was the visit to the EU pavilion, which they found to be closely linked to the Expo theme and conveyed a positive message of cooperation, integration and working together.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the **role of volunteers** in facilitating children's learning experience. During our observations we noted that many volunteers were very good at interacting with kids and introducing them to what they would see in the pavilion. For

example, at the pre-show, they asked children questions about the EU (e.g. Do you know what the EU is? Which pavilion are you visiting today?), pointed to the EU flags on the wall, and alerted them of the smell of bread. During the post-show, they explained the information on the touch-screens and encouraged kids to play the sandwich game.

Conclusion

Visitors registered and recall the main messages conveyed in the EU pavilion, in particular those of 'cooperation' and 'working together'. The EU pavilion also generated an interest in the EU and conveyed positive feelings about it, especially among visitors with pre-existing 'fairly' positive and 'neutral' views of the EU. But the pavilion did not necessarily provide visitors with an increased understanding of EU policies and how it realises the goals/values promoted in the pavilion (cooperation, peace, teamwork, etc.). This was partly due to some drawbacks identified in the pre- and post-show, which were overall less effective in engaging visitors and conveying the intended messages. The information presented there was difficult to 'absorb' in a limited amount of time and required more explanations from volunteers. Finally, children were the most inspired audiences of the pavilion. The EU was very successful in reaching the youngest and stoking their enthusiasm and interest. The extent to which this generated any lasting impact would need to be further investigated.

3.4. Media performance

EQ 7: To what extent were website, social media and traditional media efficient in reaching the visitors of World Expo 2015 and those who could not attend it?

EQ 8: To what extent was the Europe Day successful?

A central element of the EU presence at Expo Milano was the media strategy, which involved the development of the EU pavilion's online presence (social media and website) and relations with the press. The objective of this was that the EU presence in Milan obtained high level coverage in online and traditional media and therefore reached visitors to the Expo, but also those who could not attend the exhibition.

In this section we examine the success of this strategy. The assessment is based on monitoring data provided by the ETF's communication function, including website and social media monthly reports and a press report. We also considered the views and explanations provided by members of the ETF. The evaluation showed that despite the modest budget for communication actions (see section 7.1.1), the media strategy was implemented effectively and the communication team over-achieved on all of its quantitative targets. Performance was particularly strong in social media and the Italian press, which means that the communication actions were likely to reach visitors to the Expo as well as those who could not attend. Based on Facebook and Twitter followers' profiles, and the fact that the communication team was relatively less effective in attracting international press coverage, it is likely that those who could not attend the Expo, but still learned of the EU pavilion, were mainly based in Italy.

Online presence

The EU pavilion's online media presence consisted of the EU Expo website (europa.eu/expo2015) and Facebook, Twitter and Instagram profiles.³⁵ These were launched in November 2014 with the following objectives:³⁶

- Promote the EU pavilion and its activities
- Enhance interest in EU food-related policies
- Gather global news, policies, scientific breakthroughs in the field of nutrition and food (specific for Twitter)
- Provide a space to contact the EU pavilion on Expo-related issues
- Interact with youngsters

The table below shows that the communication team exceeded all of the targets set for the EU's online presence.³⁷ Particularly on social media, targets were achieved one or two months before the end of the Expo.

Table 4: Achievement of targets set for the EU pavilion's online presence

	Target	To date (31/10/2015)	Achievement
EU Expo website	250,000 visits	278,401	111%
Facebook	50,000 fans	51,131	102%
Twitter	16,000 followers	18,239	114%
Instagram	2,000 followers	5,600	280%

According to evidence collected in this evaluation, there are several factors that explain over-achievement:

- **Setting of rather conservative targets:** Targets were established during the Expo's preparation phase (November 2014 to April 2015). These were based on the website and social media accounts' performance during that period and on the assumption that the budget for paid advertising was going to be almost ten times higher than what the communication team actually received. A month after the Expo started, the targets were revised and accommodated to the resources available, resulting in a more cautious approach.
- **Early start of the communication actions:** The communication plan was prepared at least six months before the Expo started. Team members were hired early and were fully integrated to the ETF. They launched the website and social media profiles very early (before most pavilions) and started working

³⁵ Initially, the EU pavilion was also present on Pinterest, Yammer and LinkedIn; however, due to limitations in resources available for communication work, the team prioritised the development of the Facebook, Twitter and Instagram profiles. The Pinterest account was archived. Yammer was used for sharing internal communication material and coordination among partners, including EU Member States. It was held back until the last month of the Expo when it was reactivated to coordinate some final social media activities with other EU institutions. In relation to LinkedIn, there was a group called "EU research and global food and nutrition security" to target professionals and researchers in the field of food security, and linked to the Scientific Steering Committee's paper. The group was quite successful, but the ETF's community manager could not continue developing it and pause it. The group could be reactivated though, and managed by, for example, DG JRC if there was an interest.

³⁶ EU at Expo 2015 – Web and social media report, February 2015.

³⁷ Data delivered by EU Expo Task Force and collected using software Engagor. EU at Expo 2015 – Web and social media report May – October 2015.

collaboratively with Expo organisers, EU institutions and other Expo participants to generate content and build a digital community, even before there was a story to tell about the EU pavilion.

- **Cooperation with EU institutions and others to develop content:** A lot of content was generated via cooperation with EU institutions and other Expo participants (e.g. United Nations, Expo organisers, and Member States). A collaborative working scheme was established early in the preparation phase, based on working groups, networking, face-to-face meetings and regular communication among those involved. Online 'Thematic Weeks' were an example of the actions generated, with at least one thematic week for each relevant DG.³⁸ Particularly in relation to EU institutions, the website and social media profiles worked as a common platform for them to communicate with EU audiences with one voice. For almost a year many EU institutions (DGs, EP, Committee of Regions, and Economic Social Committee) conveyed a unified message and disseminated food-related information through one unique channel, providing them with additional visibility.
- **Effective Facebook advertising campaigns:** There were two paid advertising campaigns which drove the number of followers to over 50k by mid-August.³⁹ Despite the team's efforts, it was difficult to further increase the number of fans without another campaign and a more modest second campaign was launched in August.
- **Leading role among Expo participants:** The EU pavilion was the first one to start building connections with communication teams of other country pavilions. Social media happy hours were organised for community managers to interact and exploit social media together. This helped to raise the visibility of the EU pavilion and have others talking about it on social media.
- **High-quality visual content:** Visual content was generated by a contractor. The Instagram and Facebook profile benefited from this in particular, as it helped to create very appealing profiles.
- **Informal language:** On Facebook in particular, developing a humane and less institutional profile (compared to other Commission social media accounts), with an informal tone and entertaining content proved to be the appropriate strategy for reaching and interacting with the Expo audiences, especially the youngsters.

Based on this quantitative data and additional evidence collected in this evaluation (visitor survey and interviews with members of the ETF), the EU pavilion had, in particular, a strong social media performance that contributed to **creating a 'buzz' around the EU presence at the Expo**, as well as develop a 'digital food hub' i.e. a digital community of people interested in following / discussing food policy with the EU. Throughout the duration of the Expo, the communication team was not only capable of developing this community, but also maintained a growing interest towards the EU's social media activities.

On **Facebook**, the EU's pavilion profile was not only the **most followed** one during the whole duration of the Expo (with even more followers than Italy and Germany,

³⁸ For example, thematic week on 'Food waste' with DG SANTE, on 'Climate change' with DG CLIMA, and on 'Humanitarian aid' with DG ECHO.

³⁹ The first paid campaign lasted from end-February to end-April, and served to increase followers from 2,731 to over 45,000 (+1,540%).

which received the award for “Best Pavilion”),⁴⁰ but also worked as a **platform to communicate on food policy by various EU institutions**. As shown before, the EU had a very successful cooperation with relevant DGs, which used the pavilion’s Facebook profile to communicate and engage their audiences too.

The EU pavilion’s **Twitter** account was very successful too, reaching also the top 10 of best performing pavilions (in May and June 2015 it was the second most followed account, after the Italian pavilion one). This is outstanding, especially if compared to other relevant EU institutional Twitter profiles and EU campaigns.⁴¹ The EU pavilion also achieved a satisfactory engagement rate (4.26K on average from May to October 2015),⁴² which demonstrates that there was a **community of people interested in listening, following and discussing food policy with the EU**. In effect, one of the advantages of social media, especially compared to traditional media, is that it offers a significant reach and engagement potential, as well as the possibility of having a ‘conversation’ with that community. According to members of the ETF, the EU pavilion’s Twitter profile worked as a platform covering food globally and allowed the EU to **reach a relatively high-educated audience with a specific interest in food policy**. This was achieved using Twitter for disseminating content related to the policy side of the Expo, instead of to the visitor’s experience at the EU pavilion, which was mainly done via Facebook. Evidence of this is that among the most effective tweets (in terms of level of engagement generated), there were a number related to ‘Thematic weeks’ with DGs and other EU institutions, online consultation on the role of research in global food and nutrition security, Charter of Milan, Citizen Dialogue, visits of VIPs, and food policy and scientific events held at the pavilion.

On **Instagram**, the EU pavilion reached **foodies and graphics’ enthusiasts** and engage them in photo-based calls to action. For the communication team, this was the most successful social media platform, which reached the initial target of 2,000 followers very quickly (end-June 2015) and grew outstandingly till the end of the Expo. The high quality of the visual content disseminated was considered as the main success factor. This was complemented by dedicated campaigns and strong and coherent cross-cutting promotion of content on the other platforms (Facebook and Twitter).

In terms of the **website**, it was quite successful in terms of reach (181,680 unique visitors). The website’s readership was relatively well-established too, with four in ten visitors who visited it at least twice, and one in ten three times (on average, from November 2014 to October 2015). However, the communication team considered that of all the channels developed for the Expo, this was the **most challenging one**, mostly because the limited resources did not allow them to dedicate the necessary time to it.

In terms of the profile of the social media audiences, the data provided by the communication team revealed that most Facebook and Twitter followers were from Italy, followed by other European countries. This is shown in the table and map below, provided by the ETF communication team.

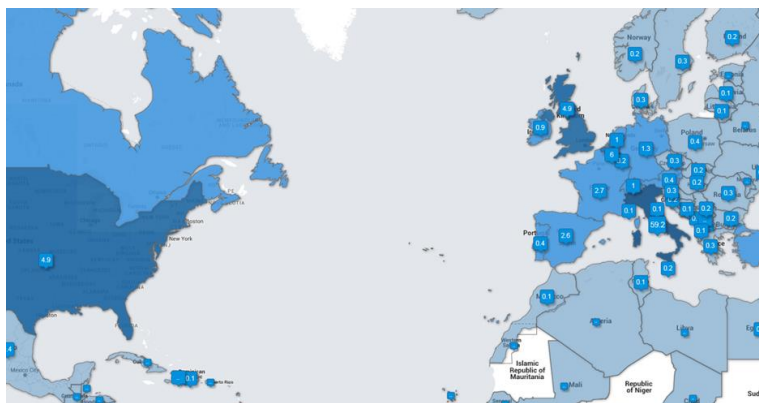
⁴⁰ Italy had 19,140 fans to 29 October 2015 (<https://www.facebook.com/padiglioneitaliaexpo2015>). The German pavilion had 21,982 Facebook followers (monitoring data provided by senior officials of the German pavilion)

⁴¹ For example: DG ENV: 13K followers; DG CLIMA: 12K; EFSA: 12K; DG SANTE – Food Safety: 3K; EP Agriculture Committee: 5K; DG AGRI: 3K; and DG JRC: 2K (<http://europa.eu/contact/social-networks/>). Recent communication campaigns by the Commission such as 2015 Year of Development and EU Mobility Week have also reached a considerable lower number of followers on Twitter, 3.2K in the first case and 2.8K in the second.

⁴² It is the average number of replies, comments and mentions by users in reaction to each original tweet by the monitored Twitter profile. An average 4.26K engagement rate means that the EU pavilion’s Twitter account received (on average) 4,260 re-tweets, tweets and replies for each of its tweets during the Expo.

Table 5: Country of Facebook fans **Figure 12: Country of Twitter followers**

Country	FB fans
Italy	44,157
Spain	959
Slovenia	685
Belgium	669
France	502
United Kingdom	451
Germany	305
USA	257
China	252
Romania	250



In summary, as with other aspects of the Expo, great achievements were made. However, the challenge now is to **translate short-term reach and engagement into longer-term changes** of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in relation to the EU and its food policies. In other words, it is a matter of consolidating (and even continuing to grow) this audience despite the Expo reaching an end. It is also very important that this audience is extended to other European countries too.

Traditional media

As it is outlined below, repercussions obtained in the press were **mostly positive**, with articles focusing on the EU's 'innovative' communication strategy, the educational content of the EU pavilion, and the EU's attempt to increase dialogue with citizens. The scientific/policy events and the volunteer programmes also received satisfactory levels of media coverage. This indicates that the ETF's press function was quite effective in conveying the intended information/messages in traditional media. However, media coverage achieved was mostly in the Italian media, and **did not seem to receive extensive international coverage**.

The objective on traditional media was mainly to promote the EU pavilion, focusing on disseminating four key elements:

- The visitor experience, in particular the film "The Golden Ear";
- The scientific debate promoted by the Commission and the European Parliament;
- The B2B events; and
- The volunteers programme.

Media coverage was especially high prior to the Expo opening on 1 May 2015, but continued to be relatively good during the next six months. The EU pavilion's preparation phase received extensive press coverage in the Italian printed press, online newspapers and blogs, and in national radio and TV programmes.

Most articles saw the pavilion as part of the **EU's new communication strategy**; an attempt to bring a sense of closeness and unity between European institutions and citizens. At the same time, it was described as trying to raise awareness of EU policies. Moreover, the pavilion was described as **different from other Expo structures**, which tended to focus more on architectural design rather than depth of

content. The EU pavilion's 'unexpected' message of hope and cooperation, symbolised by bread and Alex and Sylvia's story, was seen as a refreshing alternative from the 'Europe of the bureaucrats', a much needed reminder of the institution's original mission and aims.⁴³

A number of articles also spoke of the pavilion's great success in terms of **audience reach**. An example of this was an article by the ANSA news agency which said the EU pavilion's six months at the Expo were 'explosive', attracting more than 650.000 visitors, 840 volunteers, and 230 events dedicated to the debate on food and nutrition security, with 30.000 experts, 40 heads of state and Ministers, 13 European Commission Vice-Presidents and Commissioners, and 100 Parliamentarians. The article also contended that the film "**The Golden Ear**" was well received by the **public**, and that its message of cooperation between science and agriculture was understood by most of the audiences.⁴⁴ Other articles also highlighted the pavilion's attempt to **appeal to young people**.⁴⁵

The **scientific/policy debates** organised around the EU Scientific Programme for Expo Milano also received good press coverage, which were noted as being **pertinent to the Expo theme and of great public interest**. For example, the newspaper *La Repubblica* highlighted the link between the Expo theme and the EU's work in fields of food security, in the hope that debates witnessed in this occasion would lead to increased public awareness and sustained EU commitments to global development and peace building.⁴⁶ The participation of government authorities and of EU high-level representatives in the events was particularly highlighted.

The **final scientific conference** which took place on 15 October 2015 (see section 4.2), was one of the few cases in which not only the Italian press⁴⁷ covered the event but also press from other countries. The participation of four EU Commissioners, as well as the presence of a high-level audience of scientists from all over the world helped to generate international interest.⁴⁸

Regarding the **B2B events**, these were discussed in some of the main economic newspapers in Italy and news agencies specialised in the business sector. *Il Sole 24 Ore*, one of the most important Italian newspapers focusing on business, finance, and economic news, reported on such activities various times.⁴⁹ The coverage was mostly positive, highlighting the potential to create business linkages, to promote knowledge about European policies in this field, and to increase competitiveness and global visibility of European SMEs by facilitating their access to strategic markets. But as was highlighted before, main coverage was in the Italian press and even though these events involved the participation of Third Country businesses, it **did not receive**

⁴³ For further details, please visit: http://milano.repubblica.it/expo2015/voci-dal-mondo/2015/04/24/news/expo_l_europa_mette_il_pane_al_centro_ecco_l_alimento_che_unisce_i_paesi-112726889/

⁴⁴ For further details, please refer to: http://www.ansa.it/canale_expo2015/notizie/news/2015/10/30/ueoltre-650mila-visitatori-e-230-eventi_a11585fb-99cf-4aba-a0fd-2b36650c4bd3.html.

⁴⁵ For example: http://milano.repubblica.it/expo2015/i-personaggi/2015/06/11/news/facce_da_expo_il_passo_delle_volontarie-116594767/?refresh_ce and <http://news.mtv.it/mtv-news/erasmus-plus-ad-expo-2015/>

⁴⁶ For further information, please visit: http://www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/cibo-e-ambiente/2015/05/25/news/politica_dello_sviluppo_nell_anno_di_expo_l_ue_in_prima_linea-115214707/

⁴⁷ See, for instance: http://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/15_ottobre_15/milano-expo-eventi-sei-mesi-forum-ue-nutrizione-europa-sinergia-stati-ed7993c0-7367-11e5-b973-29d2e1846622.shtml

⁴⁸ Final press report by ETF.

⁴⁹ For example: <http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/impresa-e-territori/2015-12-30/da-expo-modello-i-b2b-063656.shtml?uuid=ACJ1zm1B>; http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/impresa-e-territori/2015-09-30/tra-ue-e-asean-scambi-240-milioni-063731.shtml?uuid=AC1jQJ7&refresh_ce=1

much attention at international level. This was signalled as one of the main areas for improvement of the EU-Third Country Events.⁵⁰

The **volunteer programme** was an important topic of discussion in national and local media. The high number of applications to the programme (which doubled the number of posts available) and the interest among young people received particular attention. In fact, young people in general, and volunteers therein, were described as the **true protagonists of the EU participation** at Expo.⁵¹ Articles also highlighted the presence of volunteers from various countries and showcased the individual stories of young people involved in the EU initiative.⁵²

In a more critical view, several articles highlighted **organisational issues**, especially in terms of the construction delays experienced, with many doubting whether the EU pavilion would be ready in time and commenting on the fact that some aspects of it were removed.⁵³ Moreover, one of the main Italian newspapers (*Corriere della Sera*) interviewed a small-scale farmer who talked about the **'distance' between the movie and reality**. According to this article, despite being 'one of the most pleasant surprises' of Milan Expo, the EU pavilion and its focus on the Alex and Sylvia's story stood in sharp contrast with the reality of small-scale farmers. Faced with 'oppressive EU bureaucracy', the farmer interviewed criticised the EU's stance focus on quantities, rather on defending local products and unique territories.⁵⁴

Finally, in contrast with the interest of Italian newspapers and news agencies, **international media coverage has been limited.** *Public*, a Portuguese daily newspaper, focused on the series of scientific/policy debates surrounding some of the main challenges around nutrition.⁵⁵ The *EU observer*, an independent online newspaper based in Brussels, presented a more critical view. Here, the pavilion was not seen as an adequate response to the Expo theme. While the EU presence intended to communicate a clear and accessible message, it did not, in this view, encourage visitors to think about their food consumption beyond not being wasteful or contribute to a meaningful debate about sustainability of production.⁵⁶

Europe Day (9 May)

One of the questions of the evaluation pointed to assessing the success of the Europe Day activities. This was a major media activity that **provided high visibility** to the pavilion on its opening day.

Europe Day activities received **extensive press attention**, with most national newspapers and all local press agencies covering the day's events. Europe Day, which marked the 65th anniversary of the Schuman declaration, began with an official welcome of the EU Delegation, featuring a flag raising ceremony, the EU anthem and

⁵⁰ PROMOS, EU-Third Countries Events at EXPO 2015, Final Report, January 2016

⁵¹ For further information, please visit: <http://www.expo.rai.it/volontariamente-in-europa/#Home>

⁵² See, for instance: http://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/15_aprile_14/expo-volontari-padiglione-ue-7cb41b10-e28f-11e4-89b8-6515027f356a.shtml and <http://www.expo.rai.it/volontariamente-in-europa/#Home>

⁵³ See for example: <http://www.eunews.it/2015/05/22/lue-allexpo-dei-ritardi-e-con-il-rischio-flop-di-visite/35768>; <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/milano/expo-padiglione-ue-corsa-contro-tempo-1125297.html>; <http://www.ilgiorno.it/milano/expo-unione-europea-1.927188>; and http://www.ansa.it/europa/notizie/rubriche/altrenews/2015/04/13/expo-ue-a-lavoro-giorno-e-notte-buona-cooperazione-italia_d0748477-248c-48d2-a30c-6bbdb8c605ee.html

⁵⁴ Article available from:

<http://www.selpress.com/unionecommercio/immagini/040615M/2015060429704.pdf>

⁵⁵ For example: <https://www.publico.pt/ciencia/noticia/na-expo-dos-alimentos-de-milao-sem-se-saber-oque-fazer-aos-transgenicos-na-europa-1696567>

⁵⁶ For further information, please visit: <https://euobserver.com/environment/128739>

official speeches by high-level EU representatives (the President of the EP, Martin Schulz, and the High Representative of the EC, Federica Mogherini).

Speeches were followed by a Citizen's Dialogue – a meeting between EU high-level representatives and the public. According to press reports, this was attended by more than 1,000 visitors, among which the majority were **young people and students from 28 European countries**, and focused on current issues such as employment, economic growth, and austerity policies.⁵⁷ The dialogue was followed by a parade, which began at the Expo auditorium and ended in front of the EU pavilion. The official visit of the EU delegation to the pavilion led to its public opening. A bread baking competition was then organised, followed by a discussion among EU representatives, Italian authorities, academics and bread industry actors. Finally, the day ended with a concert by the Orchestra La Verdi at the Milan Auditorium.⁵⁸

Most Italian news reports focused on Mogherini's opening speech, which was centred on the EU's need to propose solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges, including poverty, global conflicts and social inequality.⁵⁹ Her discussion of the migrant crisis – one of the most important topics of debate in Italy and Europe in general – was also mentioned.⁶⁰ News reports also highlighted how the **EU participation was closely linked to themes of innovation and research**, aiming not only to appeal to young people via its pavilion attractions, but also by assigning prizes for young researchers and organising visits to its research centre in Ispra.

Conclusion

The EU pavilion had a strong online media performance that allowed the development of a 'digital food hub'. This was particularly the case on Twitter, where the audience reached consisted of relatively well-educated people with an interest on food policy. The EU's online media presence at the Expo also worked as a common platform for relevant EU institutions to communicate on food policy with one voice. The EU presence in Milan was also successfully promoted in traditional media. However, based on the limited international press coverage and the profile of social media followers, it is likely that the overall audience reached was mainly from Italy.

⁵⁷ As highlighted, for instance, in:

http://ilmessaggero.it/expo_2015/expo_mogherini_europa_padiiglione_ue-1024720.html

⁵⁸ A more detailed outline of the day's events can be found at: <http://europa.eu/expo2015/node/340>

⁵⁹ See, for instance: http://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/05/09/news/expo_mogherini-113933579/

⁶⁰ See, for instance: <http://milano.fanpage.it/mogherini-inaugura-il-padiiglione-ue-a-expo-sui-migranti-intervenuti-dopo-900-morti/>

4. POLICY IMPACT

This section discusses the effectiveness of the EU presence at Expo Milan in terms of its contribution to the food policy debate. In simple terms, examining whether the EU managed to engage relevant stakeholders in a discussion on food policy issues, contributing somehow to the Expo's legacy. Ideally, this would entail some kind of assessment of impact on policies. Such an approach was not possible here as the evaluation took place shortly after the Expo ended and that type of impact normally takes time to happen. Moreover, it would also be necessary to determine the extent to which any evidenced impact can be attributed to the EU presence at Expo only (or in conjunction with other interventions or stakeholders that have an influence on EU/global food policy development). This kind of assessment is beyond the scope of this evaluation; therefore we will focus on examining the **EU's capacity to leverage partners who could potentially have an impact on food and nutrition security policies** at EU or global level.

This assessment covers two important aspects of the EU presence at Expo Milan:

- Presences of VIPs in the EU pavilion (e.g. Ministers, Commissioners, MEPs, etc.)
- Contribution to food policy debate

In line with this, the evaluation makes the assumption that the EU was more likely to make a difference on food and nutrition policy developments if it succeeded in involving relevant and high-level stakeholders (e.g. policy-makers, researchers, international organisations, industry) in fruitful scientific and policy discussions around the theme of the Expo. Therefore we need to ask whether the mix of activities proposed were attractive to these audiences and if the EU presence at the Expo worked somehow as a platform for networking, meetings, discussions and decisions that could extend into policy-making.

This section is structured around the two topics presented above. We first discuss the success of the ETF's protocol function in ensuring a high number of VIPs at the EU pavilion. Also, and more importantly, we will examine their overall appreciation of the EU presence at the Expo, in particular with regards to communication and policy impacts.

A final section explores the overall contribution of the EU to the food policy debate, particularly with regard to the impact of the EU Scientific Programme for Expo Milano. We draw heavily on 40 interviews of VIPs, representatives of Commission DGs and Member States, members/observers of the Scientific Steering Committee, members of the EU Expo Task Force, and other relevant stakeholders such as Expo organisers. The list of people interviewed is included in Annex 7. We also considered the results of the survey carried out with event participants and the European Parliament's final report on the Expo.⁶¹

⁶¹ European Parliament Information Office (Milan), Activities at the EU Pavilion 1 May – 31 October 2015, Final Report.

4.1. Presence of VIPs

EQ 8: How efficient was the protocol function in ensuring a high number of VIPs at the EU pavilion (e.g. Ministers, Commissioners, MEPs, etc.)

Among the main duties of the ETF, in relation to the **protocol function**, was the organisation of visits of high level representatives to the Expo. The evidence shows that the European Commission and Parliament worked jointly in this and secured the presence of a **high number of VIPs** to the EU pavilion. In addition, the European Commission Representation in Milan also supported the organisation of VIP visits, especially in relation to activities that took place outside of the Expo site.

The table below presents the number and profile of VIPs that attended. The importance of the presence of VIPs in the EU pavilion was already highlighted in Shanghai 2010.⁶² These serve to draw attention to the pavilion and are also evidence of the political support of the EU presence at the Expo.

Table 6: Number and profile of VIPs

Profile	Number
Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)	87
<i>Italy</i>	42
<i>Germany</i>	7
<i>Romania</i>	5
<i>Spain</i>	5
<i>France</i>	4
<i>Austria</i>	3
<i>Belgium</i>	3
<i>Other</i>	18
Heads of State, Ministers, National Parliaments' Representatives (European and Third Countries)	40
EU Commissioners	13
EC Directors-General and Services	10
Delegations of EP Parliamentary Committees	5
Delegation of European Economic and Social Committee	1
Delegations of the European Union Committee of the Regions	1
Delegation of ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Bureau	1
EP Laureate of the Sakharov Prize	1
Delegations from political groups at EP	N/A

The VIP visits reported by the ETF and EP⁶³ were of a very **high profile** and represented at least **25 Member States**. These included 87 MEPs, President Martin Schulz, Vice-Presidents Mairead McGuinness, Sylvie Guillaume, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, David Sassoli, Antonio Tajani and the Rapporteur for Expo Paolo De Castro. In addition, the Vice-Presidents of the European Commission Federica Mogherini, Kristalina Georgieva, Maroš Šefčovič, and Commissioners Tibor Navracsics, Karmenu

⁶²Shanghai 2010, Final Meeting Presentation to European Commission DGs.

⁶³ European Parliament Information Office (Milan), Op. Cit.

Vella, Phil Hogan, Miguel Arias Cañete, Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Vytenis Andriukaitis, Neven Mimica, Christos Stylianides, Carlos Moedas, and Violeta Bulc.

Moreover, ten **Directors-General of the Commission** visited the EU pavilion and participated in EU-organised events including those of DG Joint Research Centre, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, DG International Cooperation and Development, DG Health and Food Safety, DG Trade, DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology, DG Environment, DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, DG Communication, and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). In addition, delegations from the European Economic and Social Committee, European Union Committee of the Regions, five **EP Committees** (AGRI, INTA, ITRE, PECH, and DEVE), EP main political groups, and the AP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly visited the pavilion and participated in events..

In terms of **national delegations**, circa 40 Heads of State, Ministers and/or National Parliamentarians visited the EU pavilion.⁶⁴ Official delegations of countries such as the United States, Netherlands and Switzerland also attended, as well as from Member States which were not present at the Expo (Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, and Luxembourg).

In terms of impact, VIPs welcomed the EU participation in this type of mass/international event as an opportunity to **reach the 'common citizen'**. The feedback provided by VIPs in the golden book and interviews conducted with a sample of five VIPs (see Annex 7) confirmed this. In particular, they welcomed that the EU presented itself with a 'different face'. The communication impact of the initiative was the most clear for them, with messages that were direct and easy to understand for all sorts of people. To illustrate this, one of the VIPs interviewed explained that the pavilion helped to show that "*the EU is not abstract or purely institutional, legal and far away*". It is important to note that other high-level stakeholders who visited the EU pavilion during the Expo such as representatives of international organisations, members of the Scientific Steering Committee, Commission officials and EP representatives expressed similar views.

The VIPs interviewed also highlighted the opportunity for various EU institutions to be **present at the event together** (European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, and Economic and Social Committee) and **communicate jointly** with citizens. In particular, for the European Parliament, the Expo was "*a good opportunity to deliver a narrative that the Parliament supported*". Even though in past Expos the European Commission and Parliament had co-organised some events, the level of inter-institutional collaboration was much higher in this occasion, according to the stakeholders interviewed. Interviewees felt there was a **stronger EU identity**, in comparison with for example Expo Shanghai, when the EU shared its pavilion with Belgium.

VIPs and other high-level visitors also considered that the EU's physical presence at the Expo **facilitated meetings and interaction** with relevant stakeholders. This was particularly the view of Commission DGs who were involved as organisers of the events and members of the EU Scientific Steering Committee. In this respect, they appreciated the pavilion's facilities, in particular the office space and meeting rooms which could be used for working or for bilateral meetings that would otherwise be difficult to hold in the context of their short visits to the Expo. They also enjoyed the terrace which provided a more relaxed atmosphere for conversations and enjoying the view of the Expo site. Most of them also spoke positively of the protocol function and

⁶⁴ For example: Czech Republic, East Timor, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Scotland, Serbia, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Tuvalu

appreciated that they organised visits to other pavilions and introduced them to relevant stakeholders from other countries.

It is worth noting that a majority of VIPs interviewed, as well as other high-level Commission officials, were somehow **critical of the role of Universal Expos** in general and, consequently, the purpose of the EU's physical presence. Some thought that these events are not necessarily the most effective channels to communicate on global issues with the public and influence policy developments. In effect, a few VIPs who visited a number of pavilions mentioned that many did not focus much on the topics of the Expo and did not convey a message on food security. They were mainly promoting their own country interests and the national foods. This was not the case of the EU pavilion though, which they believed communicated important messages on cooperation and the important role of science in agriculture that could be easily grasped by the general public. VIP interviewees still questioned the extent to which having a physical presence at the Expo was the most adequate strategy if the objective was to impact food policy developments. The participation in global forums and/or high level events in Brussels were perceived as a more appropriate choice for this.

In opposition to this, there were a number of stakeholders interviewed (e.g. members of the EU Scientific Steering Committee, Commission officials and EP representatives) who were of the opinion that even though the Expo was not the only an important opportunity to discuss food and nutrition security, it was also **an additional occasion to debate**. In their view, not having an EU presence would have been a lost opportunity. Moreover, they saw Expos as events that serve to raise general awareness on issues of global concern and provide an opportunity to present these to the public in a simple way.

Conclusion

The evaluation found that VIPs and other high-level visitors who went to the EU pavilion were generally positive of the EU presence at the Expo, especially of the opportunity to engage with the 'common citizen' and talk about the EU in an appealing way. They also appreciated that there were several EU institutions represented in the pavilion and events, which resulted in the EU presence being a shared initiative. VIPs also highlighted the advantage of having offices and meeting rooms at the Expo, which allowed them to meet and interact with stakeholders in the food realm. At the same time, the evaluation also uncovered the existence of differing opinions in relation to the objective of World Expos and where the EU should focus its efforts.

4.2. Contribution to food policy debate

EQ 10: How efficient was the EU Expo Task Force contribution to food policy in relation to the global debate? In particular in relation to the following planned activities: (i) document on "The role of research in global food and nutrition security"; (ii) Final Declaration and Charter of Milan; (iii) Programme of scientific and food policy events; and (iv) Online public consultation of stakeholders.

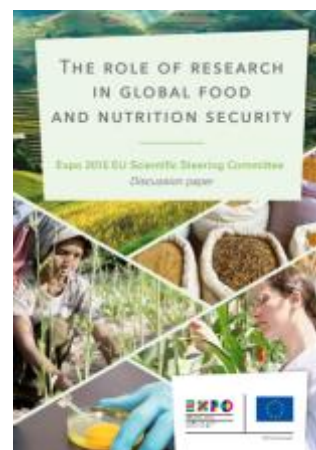
As we explained in the introduction to this section, one element of the evaluation is to examine whether the EU contributed to the debate on food policy with its presence in the Expo and if this could potentially impact on future policy developments. To assess this, we first provide some context by describing the mix of activities proposed within

the **EU Scientific Programme for Expo Milano**, including the documents produced by the Scientific Steering Committee (which included the results of the online public consultation) and the programme of scientific and policy events held during the months of the Expo. Following this, we will focus on determining whether these activities could potentially impact on policy developments by analysing if they (i) involved relevant stakeholders, (ii) generated high quality scientific/policy discussions around the themes of the Expo; and (iii) had any immediate repercussions or follow-ups at policy level.

The analysis is based on the results of the survey with events participants and interviews with stakeholders such as representatives of the European Parliament, Commission DGs, Member States, members/observers of the EU Scientific Steering Committee, and Expo organisers.

EU Scientific Programme for Expo Milano

One year before the Expo, the European Commission and Parliament established a Scientific Steering Committee, which was coordinated by the DG JRC, in its role of scientific service of the European Commission. The Committee was headed by the former Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, Franz Fischler and included 11 internationally recognised experts in the field and five advisors of international repute. As explained by the Committee's Chairman, "*its mandate was to ensure that the EU takes full advantage of this world Expo to establish its role as a key player in a global scientific debate on the role of research in global food and nutrition security*".⁶⁵ The first task commissioned to these experts was the production of a discussion paper that served to shape the EU participation in the Expo from a scientific and political point view. The result was a document called "**The role of research in global food and nutrition security**"⁶⁶ which considered those areas where European research could add most value. In addition, it identified seven key research themes to be addressed in order to overcome the challenges associated with hunger and malnutrition. Moreover, it examined a number of structural and crosscutting issues (e.g. stimulating interdisciplinary and strategic research and action) and the translation of knowledge into practice.



The discussion paper also framed an **online public consultation** launched in April 2015 by the Commission to gather the views of citizens, stakeholders, and the broader scientific community on the content of the report. A total of 306 contributions were received from a broad range of respondents from universities and research institutes mostly across Europe and a few from private citizens. These contributions were taken into account by the Scientific Steering Committee for developing a final publication on the Expo theme (see below).

The document was formally presented in the Expo on 8 May 2015 in the framework of the **conference "Toward a research agenda for global food and nutrition security"**. Key speakers were involved in the conference including the EP Vice President and Responsible for the Science and Technology Options Assessment Panel (STOA), Mairead McGuinness, the European Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, responsible

⁶⁵ Expo 2015 EU Scientific Steering Committee Recommendations: Research and Innovation in Global Food and Nutrition Security, Draft Report, pg. 2.

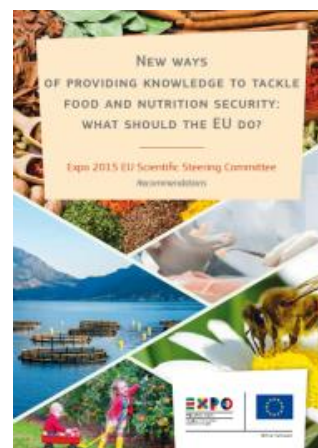
⁶⁶ [https://europa.eu/expo2015/sites/default/files/files/FINAL_Expo-Discussion-paper_lowQ\(1\).pdf](https://europa.eu/expo2015/sites/default/files/files/FINAL_Expo-Discussion-paper_lowQ(1).pdf)

for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, as well as for the DG JRC, and STOA Members Paul Rübige and Marijana Petir. Over 200 scientists, policy makers, business representatives and civil society organisations participated in the discussion of the paper.

This event also served as kick-off of a broader scientific debate that took place along the **230 scientific and policy events** hosted by the EU during the 6 months of the Expo. Over **30,000 experts** took part in the events, who were invited by several Commission DGs and Agencies, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions and European Economic and Social Committee. The events also counted with the participation of regional and national authorities from Italy, Member States and non-EU countries, business organisations, and representatives of civil society organisations. The events took place in different venues including the EU pavilion, the Expo Conference Centre, the Universities in Milan, other locations in Milan city centre, and the DG JRC-Ispra. The Scientific Committee of the Universities of Milan also organised a number of events in cooperation with the EU institutions, some of which were hosted at the EU pavilion.⁶⁷ Requests made by institutions for holding events in the EU pavilion increased during the last months of the Expo, when there were one to five events taking place every day.

In addition, the members of the EU Scientific Steering Committee participated in several of these events, contributing to the discussions and collecting input for developing a set of recommendations for policy development. A draft set of recommendations were compiled in the document "Expo 2015 EU Scientific Steering Committee Recommendations: Research and innovation in global food and nutrition security" and presented in the **conference "Strengthening Global Food and Nutrition Security through research and innovation - lessons learned from Expo 2015"** on 15 October 2015 in the Expo.⁶⁸ The policy recommendations were targeted at EU institutions and took into consideration both internal EU policies and the EU's role as a global actor. More than 250 participants from academia, politics and industry attended the final conference. This included the EP Committee on Development's Chair, Linda McAvan and Commissioners Andriukaitis, Hogan and Moedas; the EP Rapporteur for the Expo, Paolo De Castro, and other MEPs.⁶⁹

Following the six month debate at Expo Milano, the committee produced a final document: **"New ways of providing knowledge to tackle food and nutrition security: What should the EU do?"**⁷⁰ The publication took into account the discussions held at the events and the responses to the online consultation, and proposed concise recommendations for European policy makers.



Policy impact

Now we turn away from what the EU did in relation to the scientific and political dimension of its participation in Expo Milano and focus instead on the **potential impact on policy developments** at EU and global level. The simplest way to measure this was to look at the results of the survey with events participants, where we consulted them on their actions after participating in the event (e.g. Did you share

⁶⁷ European Parliament Information Office (Milan), Op. Cit.

⁶⁸ <http://europa.eu/expo2015/node/1090>

⁶⁹ European Parliament Information Office (Milan), Op. Cit.

⁷⁰ https://europa.eu/expo2015/sites/default/files/files/Expo-Document_1115_BD.pdf

the information that was discussed in the event with colleagues or friends? Did you use the information for policy-making?).⁷¹ To complement this information, we also interviewed a number of high-level EU and international representatives involved in the Expo and examined their perceptions in relation to the EU's capacity to leverage partners and induce change. As illustrated in the ensuing paragraphs, while the EU's scientific programme for the Expo was of a very high quality and generated a number of fruitful discussions around the theme of food and nutrition security, the results were mixed, with some important immediate outcomes at EU level and less evident achievements at global level.

As a reminder, participants of events (who answered the survey) were not average pavilion visitors. Rather, they were international politicians, policy-makers, researchers, businessmen/women, representatives of civil society organisations or students who were **invited by the organisers of the event** (e.g. Commission DGs, European Parliament, etc.). They were normally professionals over 40 years old who had a particular interest on the theme of the Expo. The survey served to capture their views of the content and outcomes of the events held at the EU pavilion.

The survey results were **overwhelmingly positive** insofar as they showed that a large majority of participants answered positively to questions regarding the relevance of the topics covered, the profile and quality of speakers, and the discussions held, which they said were 'useful' and 'productive'. Generally, participants were very satisfied with the events and appreciated the fact that the EU had organised them. They also considered that the EU should continue being present at this type of international events and organise/facilitate expert workshops, meetings and discussions.

Moreover, the survey suggested that the events worked as a platform for people to **build connections** and **interact with stakeholders** relevant to the Expo theme. Among the most important aspects of the events, participants highlighted the opportunities for networking and the ideas for policy development that came out of the discussions (Table 7). Also, many pointed out that they were likely to share the content of the event with others, as well as initiate or extend collaboration with people/institutions they met at the event (Table 8).

These findings were confirmed during the interviews with stakeholders when many stressed that the events had been occasions for high level discussions involving specialised people and a broad range of stakeholders. A number of the DGs that organised events at the EU pavilion (e.g. DG JRC, DG AGRI, DG SANTE, DG GROW and DG ENER) also mentioned that the events had **introduced them to many new stakeholders and information** which they would not normally have accessed in Brussels for example. Drawing from this, two representatives from DGs mentioned that it would have been good to have events open to the public and not focus on experts only, allowing them to collect views different from what is usually heard in the 'Brussels bubble'.

⁷¹Further details on the survey are provided in section 2.2. Annex 5 provides full list of questions and answers to the survey of event participants.

Table 7: Participants' appreciation of the results of the events⁷²

Results of the event	Freq.	Per cent (n=152)
It was an opportunity for networking with relevant stakeholders	74	49%
It triggered ideas for policy development	64	42%
It was an opportunity to speak constructively with relevant stakeholders	45	30%
It triggered ideas for further scientific research	41	27%
It raised the EU's image and profile	23	15%
Other	1	1%

Table 8: Participants' likely behaviour after the events

Action	Yes	Maybe	No	Total
Share the information that was discussed in the event with colleagues or friends	92%	7%	1%	100% (n=152)
Initiate or extend collaboration with people or institutions met at the event	72%	24%	4%	100% (n=147)
Use the information that was discussed in the event for research or scientific work	62%	22%	16%	100% (n=151)
Use the information that was discussed in the event for policy-making	54%	23%	23%	100% (n=150)
Participate in other events organised by the European Union during the EXPO	49%	25%	26%	100% (n=146)
Report on the information that was discussed in the event in the media	34%	25%	41%	100% (n=140)

The evidence suggests that the EU may have accomplished its aim of being a facilitator and **leveraging partners** that could **potentially induce policy change**. However, whether this will be realised or not is not clear yet. In effect, in the survey there were mixed reactions in relation to the extent that participants would use the information discussed for research/scientific work or policy-making, with over half of respondents that agreed that they would do this, a quarter that might do it, and circa twenty per cent that would not (Table 8).

The feedback from the **interviews with stakeholders** reinforced the survey results in that most interviewees found very difficult to say if the EU presence in the Expo had (or will have) an impact on EU/global food policy development. However, whereas most were cautious and did not draw any conclusions on the matter, they were generally very positive and hopeful of the prospects. They considered that the EU presence had worked as a **catalyst for policy debate** and that it succeeded in engaging relevant stakeholders at policy and scientific level. The EU presence at the Expo also worked as **platform** for the organisation of events on topics which would normally not be addressed in EU events in Brussels.

During the interviews, we asked stakeholders to provide their views of the EU Scientific Programme for the Expo, which included the events, but also the documents produced by the EU Scientific Steering Committee. Among representatives of the European Parliament, there was agreement that the final recommendations of the

⁷² Respondents were asked to select the most important possible results achieved in the event from a list. Respondents were allowed to choose up to three outcomes.

Committee had responded well to the EP's resolution regarding the Expo.⁷³ They were also of the opinion that they conveyed an important message showing that the **EU is thinking about global food and nutrition security** and that it is ready to step in. According to one of the members of the EU Scientific Steering Committee, the EU also succeeded in presenting the complexity of food and nutrition security, this being an issue with multiple related challenges in a number of scientific disciplines and policy areas. Also important was that the central role of research was recognised and highlighted in both the publications and discussions held at the events. As one of the members of the Committee explained: "We were able to say things that needed to be said and also say some things differently from how were normally said". Moreover, many saw that the recommendations added value and **contributed to discussions around other global issues or initiatives** such as the EP's proposal for a 50% reduction of food waste by 2025, the UN Agenda to eradicate hunger by 2030, and the Paris Climate Conference (COP21). The comments cited in the text box below are included as way of illustration of stakeholders' general views of the EU's legacy at Expo Milano.

Adding to this, the way in which the Committee was composed and operated facilitated buy-in and increased the likeliness that there is some follow-up at policy level. The membership of the EU Scientific Steering Committee was **broad and balanced**, with not only researchers being represented, but also practitioners, industry and international organisations. The high level profile of the members and the quality of the discussions held at the Committee's meetings was highly appreciated. In addition, members of the Committee mentioned that it was a **collaborative initiative** where the perceptions of many important stakeholders were taken into account. There were a number of meetings to discuss the EU Scientific Programme and draft versions of the documents were circulated among different DGs, the EP and other stakeholders to ensure that all opinions were considered. Moreover, the online consultation allowed the engagement of a broader number and type of stakeholders in the discussions.

Comments from high-level representatives in relation to the EU's legacy at Expo Milano:

"The Expo 2015 EU Scientific Steering Committee played a pivotal role in promoting the scientific debate on the Expo themes, following wide public consultation and high-level debate" (EP Final Report)

The EU's contribution to the legacy of this Expo was the scientific committee chaired by Franz Fischler" (Italian authority)

"It was clear to us this was an extraordinary event with an end point. The EU wanted legacy. One of those legacies is no doubt the huge number of scientific meetings that took place (...) There was genuine interaction and it was a learning experience." (Member of the Scientific Steering Committee)

Now, in terms of the concrete follow-ups at EU policy level, there were mixed views. Despite the majority of the people interviewed were of the opinion that the work of the EU Scientific Steering Committee was the "main legacy" of the EU participation in World Expo Milano (as illustrated by the quotes in the text box on the right), the **impact of this is still to be seen**. Many were of the opinion that the Committee had provided concrete ideas for addressing global food and nutrition security issues and that it was the turn of EU institutions, and especially of the Commission, to act.

Other stakeholders were more positive about the lasting legacy of the Expo and emphasised that there were a number of important outcomes already present, whereby the EU's work had been presented to relevant EU or international stakeholders who could use it as input for policy decisions. This is illustrated in the examples below:

⁷³European Parliament resolution of 30 April 2015 on Milano Expo 2015: Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life (2015/2574(RSP)) Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/document/P8_TA-PROV\(2015\)0184_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/document/P8_TA-PROV(2015)0184_EN.pdf)

- Presentation of the first document of the EU Scientific Steering Committee ("The role of research in global food and nutrition security") to the **Italian Agriculture Council** in May 2015. According to Italian authorities, the document was used as input for the development of the **Charter of Milan**.
- Presentation of the EU Scientific Steering Committee's conclusions and recommendations at the **DG AGRI's Outlook Conference** in December 2015.⁷⁴ The event was aimed at discussing policy options for food policy for the next 10 years.
- The workshop "Towards a long-term strategy for European agricultural research and innovation by 2020 and beyond" organised in the EU pavilion was a first step for **DG AGRI's preparation of a long-term strategy** for agricultural research and innovation that should be finalised by April 2016.⁷⁵
- Presentation of the EU Scientific Steering Committee's conclusions and recommendations to the **European Parliament** on 22 February 2016. This could lead to a decision for a resolution recommending the Commission to implement the recommendations.
- Presentation of the final document to the **UN's Secretary General**, Ban Ki-moon, who responded with a letter to the Chairman of the Committee, Franz Fischler, underlying the role of the scientific community in delivering on the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end poverty and hunger (see text box on the right). He also showed interest on discussing one of the Committee's recommendations with the Commission (i.e. creating an international panel on food and nutrition security).
- Discussion of publications of the EU Scientific Steering Committee at the DG **Joint Research Centre**, which could result with the incorporation of certain elements on work programmes and future orientation of the Centre.

"I welcome the commission of the European Union of the Scientific Steering Committee to foster coordinated global research and develop policy recommendations on the Expo Milano 2015 theme "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" (...) I applaud the efforts of the Committee and encourage the European Union to continue to show leadership by generating knowledge that will contribute to food and nutrition security" (Ban Ki-moon, 26 January 2016)

Adding to this, the results of the EU Scientific Steering Committee have also been disseminated through its members, who have presented the recommendations and participated in debates in countries such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Some of them have also promoted the Committee's recommendations in external projects in which they are involved, for example, the Food and Nutrition Security and Agriculture project undertaken by the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina in collaboration with the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP).⁷⁶

In summary, there have been meaningful steps taken which, according to interviewed high-level stakeholders and surveyed event participants, have helped to **bring attention to the topic, create an interest and a "certain momentum"**. It is possible that there will be some impact on policy developments if momentum is not lost and if the Commission follows up on the Committee's recommendations. The latter is especially important because participation in a Universal Expo itself is too limited in terms of time to generate policy impacts directly. The EU undoubtedly made an impact

⁷⁴http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/2015-outlook-conference_en.htm

⁷⁵A full report on the content and outcomes of the workshop is available at: http://europa.eu/expo2015/sites/default/files/files/events-reports/4/4%20-%20Research_strategy.pdf

⁷⁶<http://www.interacademies.org/>

on directly involving relevant individuals and organisations in fruitful discussions which have had some repercussions at EU and international level. In some cases, this impact might extend into policy-making through various means including the decision by the European Parliament of a resolution for the Commission to implement the recommendations.

However, the evaluation found **limited evidence of systematic efforts to maximise the impact** at policy level, despite the overwhelming satisfaction and recognition of stakeholders of the importance of the contributions of the EU Scientific Programme in Expo Milano. The initial divergent opinions in relation to the value of Expos as forums for political debate and, therefore, of the role that the EU should play in this type of event (see section 4.1), generated **different levels of buy-in within the Commission**, which in turn limited the opportunity to plan concrete follow-up actions.

Furthermore, two members of the Scientific Steering Committee mentioned that, initially, the role and objectives of the Committee were unclear. For the members, it was not clear if they should produce a policy document or provide scientific advice to the Commission in relation to the theme of the Expo. From the various comments received in the draft reports (which were circulated among Commission DGs and other EU institutions), the members of the Committee said it was possible to tell there was a political agenda behind the theme of the Expo, but that it was unclear what the EU wanted to achieve in the Expo at policy level.

As a conclusion, the EU's Scientific Programme for the Expo had a very positive reception among EU and international stakeholders, which in part responded to the high quality of the work of the members of the Scientific Committee. The theme of the Expo is part of a global on-going discussion and therefore the EU will have a number of opportunities to build on the work done during the Expo and continue contributing to debate and policy-making. The extent to which this is realised will depend on a Commission's decision to pursue the EU Scientific Committee's recommendations which include leading a global initiative on food and nutrition security.

Conclusion

While these results fit early into the policy-making process (which is also affected by a myriad of other factors), the evidence collected in this evaluation suggests that the EU did a good job of engendering the desired short/mid-term results in relation to the EU Scientific Programme for Expo Milano. The events and documents produced by the EU Scientific Steering Committee worked as a platform for policy debate which engaged relevant EU and international stakeholders. In addition, the EU presence at Expo was an opportunity for the EU to provide a collective response to the issue of food and nutrition security. It is however harder to say whether these results led (will lead) to real policy developments. Whether this happens depends on the ability of EU institutions to continue working on the Committee's recommendations and maximise synergy effects with other wider initiatives such as the UN's Agenda to eradicate hunger by 2030.

5. GROWTH AND JOBS IMPACT

Our assessment of the EU presence in World Expo Milano includes an examination of its capacity to engage enterprises and institutions of food related industries in meetings to discuss economic and trade opportunities between the EU and Third Countries. By doing this, we can make some statements about the EU's contribution to growth and jobs.

Drawing from this, the evaluation focused on the **EU-Third Countries Events** at Expo 2015 promoted by DG GROW and the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). These were meant to create an occasion for companies, clusters, research centres and organisations from the EU and Third Countries to meet and discuss about concrete opportunities of cooperation. The expected outcome was that **events led to negotiations** which would result in cooperation agreements to be fixed in the mid or longer term. A total of eight events were organised during the months of the Expo.

- EU-Mediterranean Countries and Turkey (6 – 7 May)
- EU-China (8 – 10 June)
- EU-Latin America and Caribbean (CELAC) (12 – 13 June)
- EU-Japan (10 – 11 July)
- EU-Africa (18 – 21 September)
- Food Tourism (28 September)
- EU- South East Asia (ASEAN) (29 – 30 September)
- EU-USA (5 – 6 October)

The events lasted for one day and a half and included three activities: (i) **conference** aimed at presenting the framework and tools for the industrial and regulatory cooperation between the EU and the respective country; (ii) **B2B meetings** (core activity) between companies, clusters, research centres, industry-related organisations; (iii) **visit to Expo**, and especially the EU pavilion, Lombardy Planet and partner pavilions (e.g. Austria, Thailand, and USA).

In the organisation of these events, the Commission was assisted by the European Consortium led by **PROMOS-Milan Chamber of Commerce**⁷⁷ which was responsible of the events with China, Japan, Sub-Saharan Africa and Food Tourism. The rest were organised by EEN, supported by PROMOS in the communication and promotion of events and the organisation of the conferences. The ETF also supported the organisation of the events and especially the visits to the EU pavilion and other country pavilions. The EC's Representations in Milan and Rome also collaborated in engaging participants and promoting the events.

An analysis of the EU's contribution to growth and jobs would normally entail an assessment of the value of trade agreements established between companies that participated in these meetings. But, as with the examination of policy impact, this type of economic impact could only be measured at a later stage, as trade agreements take

⁷⁷ Group Leader of the Consortium composed of eight institutions (mostly Chambers of Commerce) related to economic development and internationalisation of SMEs from 5 EU Member States (Italy, France, Spain, Poland and Belgium) and Eurochambres, which ensured the involvement of businesses from all Member States. The Service Contract between DG GROW and PROMOS was signed on 6 March 2015 (ref. SI2.703090).

time to be established. The type of outcomes that could possibly be observed at this stage are, for example, the views of participants in relation to the organisation and success of the events and, in particular, if discussions were fruitful, if agreements were reached and/or if there are on-going negotiations.

The monitoring and follow-up of the results of the meetings were the responsibility of PROMOS. For this task, it implemented feedback forms signed after the events, an online survey one month after the event, and a follow-up survey two to three months after that. This was also complemented with direct contacts (calls and emails) with all participants. The main indicators for measuring the B2B meetings' success were:

- Number and profile of participants to conferences and B2B meetings
- Number of B2B meetings
- Geographical composition of participants
- Number of fixed cooperation
- Number of on-going negotiations
- Number of cooperation considered
- Participant's appreciation of events (in terms of organisation, relevance of meetings, participants profile, etc.)

We based our evaluation on data provided by PROMOS and EEN in relation to these indicators. However, we complemented this with a number of interviews with Commission officials which also provided their views on the results of the initiative.

Our priority was to understand whether the EU-Third Countries events and, in particular, B2B meetings, served to bring together food-related enterprises and institutions in the EU and worldwide which **established (or could potentially establish) trade agreements and contribute to growth and jobs**. As evidenced in the analysis below, this allowed us to see the EU presence at Expo Milano as an important communication initiative, but also as a platform for leveraging partners and a catalyst of economic change.

In the following sections, we examine several aspects of the success of EU-Third Countries events with a view to providing an answer to the following question:

EQ 11: To what extent were B2B Third Country meetings successful?

5.1.Meetings and participant numbers

Over **4,200 B2B meetings** were organised in the framework of the EU-Third Countries events. These involved over **1,955 participants** (including SMEs, clusters and organisations), of which (on average) 72% were from 26 EU Member States and 28% from more than 50 Third Countries. Nearly half of the meetings took place in the framework of the EU-MED, EU-China and EU-Africa events (57%). Also, participation of EU and Third Countries companies in the EU-China and EU-Africa meetings was quite even, compared to other events where the EU Member States had a greater participation than their Third Countries counterparts (e.g. EU-MED, EU-ASEAN, EU-USA and Food Tourism). This may be indicating that the interest for further economic cooperation between the EU and China/Africa is shared and therefore future trade agreements with these countries are more likely.

Table 9: Overview of participants and B2B meetings at EU-Third Countries events

Events	Participants ⁷⁸	Third Countries (%)	MS (%)	B2B meetings	%
EU-MED	350	21%	79%	870	20%
EU-China	352	43%	57%	849 ⁷⁹	20%
EU-CELAC	242	39%	61%	631	15%
EU-Japan	180	34%	66%	312	7%
EU-Africa	362	50%	50%	711 ⁸⁰	17%
Food Tourism	237	8%	92%	242	6%
EU-ASEAN	136	21%	79%	366	8%
EU-USA	96	4%	96%	294	7%
Total	1955	27.5%	72.5%	4275	100%

Source: PROMOS, EU-Third Countries Events at EXPO 2015, Final Report, January 2016

The eight events involved participants from **26 Member States** and **57 Third Countries** from the agro-food sector, sustainability and biotechnologies. Naturally, circa two thirds of EU participants were from Italy (64%). This was followed by Belgium (6%), France (4%), Spain (4%), Slovenia (3%) and Poland (2%). Among Third Countries participants, Asia and Africa were the most represented regions, followed by Latin America. According to PROMOS's final report, the broad geographical coverage was due to the involvement of the EEN partners and the promotional activity carried out by Eurochambres.

It is worth noting the **broad geographical coverage of the EU Food Tourism** event which involved participants from 25 Member States and Norway, Asian region, USA, Africa and Latin America. These included companies in agro-food, tourism associations, tour operators, touristic agencies and hotel chains and farmhouses.

In terms of the profile of participants, there was a **large majority of SMEs** (56%), but this was complemented with a mix of large companies (14%), clusters (3%), research centres and universities (3%), and public institutions (Ministers, Diplomatic Representatives, Director General of Ministries, and National Agencies) (23%).

The high level of participants and the number of B2B meetings organised shows that there was a **genuine interest among EU and Third Countries companies**. As explained by one Commission official *"it is difficult and expensive for companies to move to another country in order to attend a meeting. They know in advance that there is a business opportunity there and that they can generate something there. If not, they wouldn't attend"*.

5.2. Results of B2B meetings

A large majority of participants were positive about the general organisation of the events, with 88% who said they were satisfied with it (on average for all event

⁷⁸ Participants to all activities covered in the event: conference, B2B meetings and visit to Expo pavilions.

⁷⁹ This includes 25 B2B meetings with companies from Parma.

⁸⁰ This includes 39 B2B meetings with companies from Parma.

participants). Participants from ASEAN countries were the most satisfied (94%) and those from CELAC were less satisfied (80%), but still very positive about it.

According to data provided by EEN and PROMOS, **20% of meetings have had a positive outcome** during the 2-3 months after the events (i.e. fixed cooperation, on-going negotiations or cooperation being considered). For the EU-Third Countries events organised by PROMOS, the target was that 25% of B2B meetings led to on-going negotiations or fixed cooperation. This was overachieved, with 55% of unique meetings that have had a positive outcome. In the case of meetings organised by EEN this was 14%.

As per the table below, B2B meetings organised by PROMOS (i.e. Food Tourism, EU-Japan, EU-China and EU-Africa) were the most fruitful, with **6 out of 10 meetings (on average) resulting in a fixed cooperation or negotiation**. The EU-ASEAN and EU-USA events were relatively successful too, with circa a third of meetings generating positive outcomes. Meetings between EU companies and those from the Mediterranean and Latin American regions were less successful, but still productive in a number of cases.

Table 10: Overview of results of B2B meetings

Events	Fixed cooperation	On-going negotiations / Cooperation considered	% B2B meetings
EU-MED	20	73	11% (835)
EU-China	20	196	51% (412)
EU-CELAC	5	61	10% (613)
EU-Japan	15	78	60% (156)
EU-Africa	18	152	51% (334)
Food Tourism	6	78	69% (121)
EU-ASEAN	4	76	22% (366)
EU-USA	6	51	19% (294)
Total	94	765	20% (4275)

Source: PROMOS, EU-Third Countries Events at EXPO 2015, Final Report, January 2016

It is worth noting that the results were quite balanced in terms of the country of origin of the companies which benefited from the B2B meetings, meaning that Italian companies did not necessarily prevail in the positive outcomes obtained. According to data provided by PROMOS, 42% of the cooperation agreements (fixed cooperation) that resulted from the events organised by PROMOS were among companies from EU countries other than Italy and with companies from Third Countries. In the case of on-going negotiations, the majority were between companies from EU countries other than Italy and with Third Countries (63%). For cooperation being considered, Italian companies were involved in six out of ten discussions (59%).

For PROMOS, the positive results of Third Country events can be attributed to various factors including the methodology in **selecting and coaching SMEs** throughout the process, which resulted in the selection of high quality and reliable partners. The communication strategy implemented - which included an online platform (Talkb2b.net) for companies registered to events that provided general information, companies' profiles, match-making method, B2B selection and logistic information -

proved to be very successful in raising awareness of the events and facilitating match-making. Moreover, the **virtual meetings**⁸¹ organised before the event allowed participants to assess the real scope for cooperation and arrive to the meetings with a clear idea of which could be the “business effect” of their trip to Milan.⁸² The presence of **government officials and policy-makers** in the conferences and the strong collaboration established with relevant organisations such as Eurochambres during the preparation phase also explain the high level of participation and broad geographical coverage.

The data collected by PROMOS allowed us to examine the number of fixed cooperation, on-going negotiations and considered cooperation that have been established so far. But it contains limited details in relation to the type of agreements or discussions going on. Although it is not possible to estimate the impact in monetary terms either, we can still cite some examples to illustrate the results of B2B meetings. The examples presented below show that there are a number of agreements being discussed or already set up between EU and Third Countries companies covering a broad range of economic sectors and types of cooperation:

Fixed cooperation

- **Technological and commercial collaboration in the health sector** established between a Chinese and Italian company. Companies are in the process of checking the technical competences and elaborating the business plan.
- **Technology transfer in the field of gas generation, separation and purification** agreed between a Chinese and Italian company.
- **Cooperation in catering services** established between a Japanese and Italian company.
- **Cooperation in renewable energy (Biomass) and wood** established between an Angolan and Italian company.
- **Agreement for the import of machines for the treatment of fruit and vegetables** between an Italian and Malawian company.
- **Signed agreement to jointly promote business exchange** in Africa between an Ivory Coast and UK company.

On-going negotiations

- **Consultancy on how to get in contact with Chinese operators** interested in northern Europe itineraries being discussed between a Chinese and Danish company.
- **Support to be provided by the Ministry of National Economy in Hungary** to an Italian company that needs to identify food-related Hungarian retailers
- **Agreement related to the distribution of agro-food machines** in Comoro to be signed in the first month of 2016 between a Spanish and Comorian company.

⁸¹ A total of 4,373 virtual meetings and pre-matching sessions were organised by PROMOS in advance to the EU-China, EU-Japan, EU-Africa, and Food Tourism events.

⁸² There are some examples of cooperation fixed during the pre-virtual meetings. For example, the cooperation established between Chinese and Belgian companies before the EU-China event.

- **Discussion of options for doing business together** between a Polish and Burkinabe company
- **Exchange of products samples** of an Italian company to test in Mali through an agreement with a Malian company

There are also various examples of cooperation fixed or on-going negotiations between companies from EU Member States for reaching Third Countries markets, for example, an agreement between an Italian and Spanish company appointing the Italian counterpart as "business procurator" for exporting and distributing a Spanish product in East Africa.

The stakeholders interviewed were also of the view that the B2B meetings were an important **opportunity** for EU and Third Countries businesses which would not have happened without the Expo. The Expo worked as a **"catalyst" for attendance** and the business events organised around it served to build **new partnerships** around the topics of the Expo and gave visibility to the EU.

As mentioned before, DG GROW, EEN and PROMOS also showed good capacity to **leverage partners and establish synergies** with different actors such as the EC Representations in Milan and Rome, the Lombardy Region, Assolombarda (Industrialists' Association of Milano Monza Brianza), CNA (Italian Association for Handicrafts), AICE (Italian Association for Import and Export), Parma Alimentare, and on-going EC co-funded programmes and initiatives.⁸³

Areas for improvement

Based on the information collected, we have identified some potential areas for improvement in relation to the business dimension of the EU presence at the Expo which concern mainly:

- **Calendar of events and B2B meetings:** Some dates were very close to each other, which resulted in overlapping of promotion and communication.
- **Participation of Third Country businesses:** The EU-USA, EU-ASEAN, EU-MED and Food Tourism events were mainly attended by EU businesses.
- **Visual identity:** There was no common visual identity between events organised by EEN and PROMOS, with the former being promoted in advanced and with no indication of the upcoming PROMOS events.
- **Language:** The use of professional translators should be made available at all times in order to facilitate interaction and discussion.
- **Organisation and monitoring:** The presence of several organisers led to some inefficiency in the scheduling, organisation, promotion, and monitoring of results of the events. In relation to the latter, we have identified some discrepancies in the data reported by EEN and PROMOS which is due to differences in the way that each organisation defines and measures the outputs of the events.

⁸³ For example, the China IPR Helpdesk, China EU SME Centre, EuroMed Invest-EU Support to Business and Investment Partnerships in Southern Mediterranean, Mercosur IPR Helpdesk, NEXO-AI Invest, network ERA Net-LAC, EIBN -Indonesia-EU Business Network, EVBN - EU-Vietnam Business Network, EuroCham Cambodia, EuroCham Myanmar, and EABC – Thailand-European Association of Business and Commerce. PROMOS, Ibid, pg. 6.

Conclusion

The results show that the EU-Third Countries events, especially those organised by the external contractor (PROMOS) were relevant and responded to a real need. The events and, in particular, B2B meetings, supported the internationalization and business cooperation of EU companies. There is evidence to support the idea that this was a quite fruitful initiative that complemented the EU presence at Expo Milano and gave the EU additional visibility among relevant stakeholders. The meetings have resulted in a number of European companies approaching foreign markets and finding good partners to start or strengthen trade relationships or cooperation, providing valuable business opportunities to EU SMEs. Moreover, it proved that taking the occasion of already exiting events (Expo) to schedule the brokerage events was effective and capitalised the interest of EU and Third Countries companies. These results invite to the consideration of future brokerage events to be organised in the framework of international events where EU and Third Countries businesses are present.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ In relation to this, it is worth noting that DG GROW (Unit A4) will launch a call for tenders in 2016 for organising 10 EU-Third Country events at the occasion of major international trade fairs in Europe and outside Europe which will share the same concept and rationale of the events in Milan.

6. ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

This section examines the organisational aspects of the EU presence at Expo Milano. More concretely, it examines the management approach towards Expo participation, the operation of the pavilion, and the volunteer programme. The main objective of this analysis is to identify **what worked well and what could be improved** in the delivery of the pavilion, with a view to drawing lessons for the future EU participation.

This aspect of the evaluation is relatively important given the sense of '**starting from scratch**' which was expressed by interviewees in relation to the lead up of the EU participation in World Expo Milano. After the elimination in 2000 of the special unit at the Secretariat-General that was in charge of managing participation in World Expos, the EU's involvement in the subsequent events became a major task for the different DGs that were in charge of it. Combined with budgetary limitations, this resulted in the EU scaling down its presence over the years, to the extent of sharing a pavilion with Belgium in Shanghai 2010.

For Milan 2015, the EU took an important step in setting up its own pavilion and trying a different communication approach, less institutional and formal and centred on reaching ordinary citizens. It also provided a platform for activities aimed at making policy and business impacts. This was a major task, handed to an EU Expo Task Force led by the DG JRC, with participation of the European Parliament and funding from DG AGRI, DG DEVCO, DG SANTE and DG GROW. The initiative also drew on and consulted various DGs and EU institutions in preparation of Expo Milano through a specially created Inter-service Working Group (ISWG).

In this section we focus on examining various aspects of the organisation and management of the EU participation at the Expo, where possible comparing with other pavilions and past Expos in order to put the results in context. The section is concluded with a set of concrete learning points and recommendations.

This element of the evaluation is based on 40 interviews with stakeholders including project managers and members of the ETF, contractors, members of the EU Scientific Steering Committee and ISWG, representatives of the European Parliament, and senior officials of Member States' pavilions. It also takes into account monitoring data provided by the contractors tasked with the visitor experience on the ground floor of the pavilion.⁸⁵

6.1. Organisational set-up of pavilion

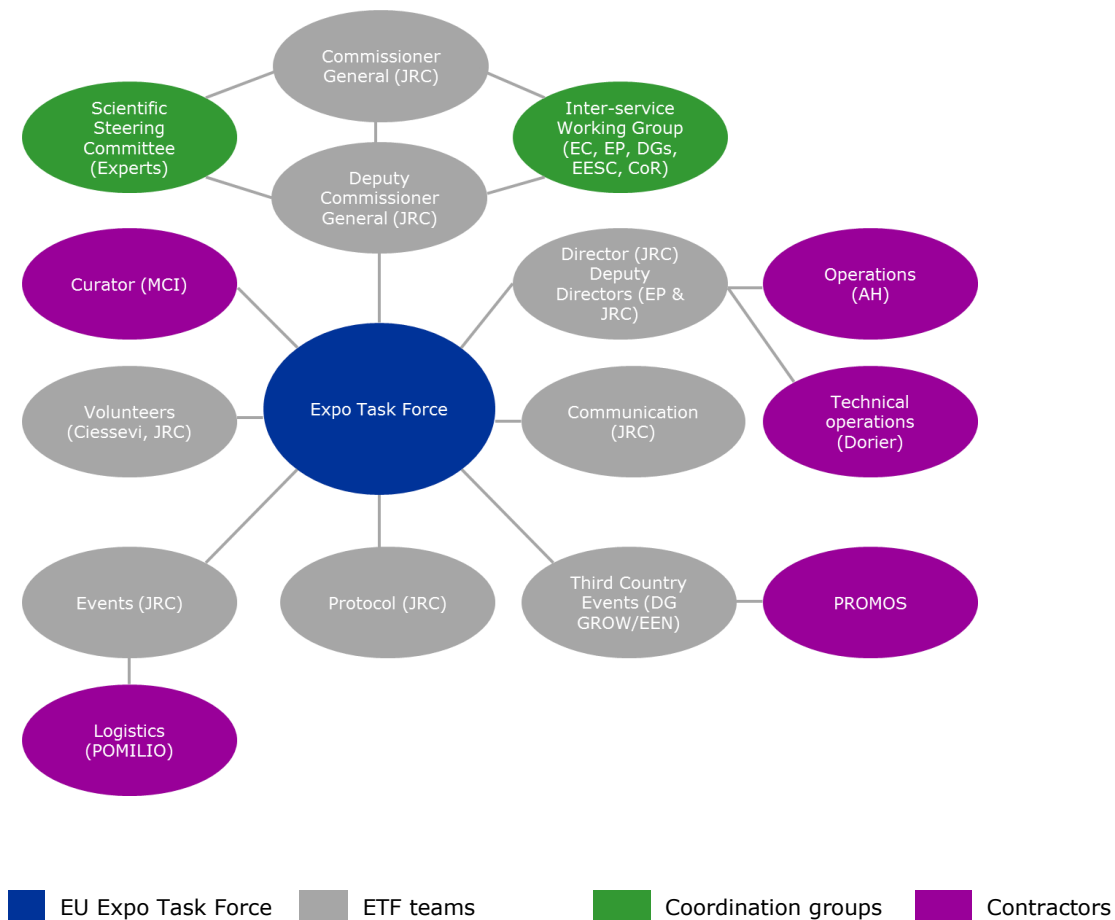
EQ 12: To what extent has the organisational set-up of the pavilion been successful also compared to other European country pavilions (at least 3)?

As was explained in section 1.2.2, DG JRC was responsible for managing the EU presence in World Expo Milano. In cooperation with the EP, DG JRC formed the EU **Expo Task Force** which was in charge of the conception, implementation and evaluation of the EU participation in Milan (Figure 13). There was a team present at the pavilion at all times the Expo was open, on a shift basis, with around **112 people per shift** (i.e. morning, afternoon and evening shifts). This included the people in the

⁸⁵ Clarke D. and Clarke M., EXPO 2015 EU Pavilion, Ground Floor Visitors Experience, Operations - Final Report.

different functions of the ETF, volunteers assisting in the visitor experience, event organisers, IT manager and staff, and security guards.

Figure 13: Organisational structure



To facilitate coordination with relevant DGs and other EU institutions, DG JRC also arranged the **ISWG**, chaired by the ETF’s Commissioner General. The ISWG met on a monthly basis throughout the preparation and implementation phases. It ensured the coordinated action and communication of the DGs involved including AGRI, COMM, SANTE, ENER, ECHO, ENV, MARE, EAC, RTD and GROW. It also brought in representatives of the European Parliament, Committee of the Regions and Economic and Social Committee.

For the delivery of the EU presence at the Expo, the ETF also worked with a number of contractors, namely:

- **MCI Group:** Curator and responsible for the creation of the visitor experience, media production, on-site experience, and story supervision.
- **Amadeus Holdings AG:** MCI’s sub-contractor responsible for the planning and deployment of the on-site operations at the pavilion, in particular the ground floor visitor experience.
- **Pomilio:** Contractor responsible for the logistics and catering of events held at the EU pavilion and other sites in Milan, as well as of EU-Third Country Events.
- **Ciessevi:** Italian civil society organisation in charge of coordinating the provision of 840 volunteers for assisting visitors in the pavilion.

- **PROMOS:** DG GROW's contractor in charge of organising four of the eight EU-Third Country Events held during the months of the Expo (chapter 5).

Organising and managing the EU presence effectively entailed a wide range of complex and time-sensitive tasks. This was inherently challenging, especially given that the ETF could not draw on experience from previous Expos or similar events. However, the evaluation found that these challenges were overcome due in particular to the high level of commitment, flexibility and professionalism of the ETF, contractors and institutions involved. Moreover, the success of the Expo as a whole and high number of visitors, especially during the last three months, brought additional political support to the initiative and helped to leverage the pavilion's impact. The ensuing sections present our findings in relation to the organisational set-up of the pavilion in terms of success factors and challenges that, while mostly overcome, are worth bearing in mind for future planning.

6.1.1. Success factors

The successful implementation of the EU presence reflects the **professionalism and high commitment** of the managers and members of the ETF, as well as their ability to make the most of the available budget and adhere to Commission's rigorous procurement standards. Financial risk was to an extent reduced by renting, rather than buying expensive equipment.

A large majority of knowledgeable stakeholders attributed this in part to the quality, motivation and strong leadership of the team. As exemplified in the words of one interviewee *"it was a great team-building experience and they really stepped up to the plate. And it worked, even if it diverted some staff from DG JRC. The management of the team went very well too"*.

Interviewees also pointed to the substantial **learning process** for many involved, and hoped that the knowledge and experience would be institutionalised and put to use in the future. In another typical statement: *"Some members of the ETF came out of this with enhanced skills in events operations. It was a fast track learning experience for many. So that the success is not a one-off, the EU should not lose those staff and the competences gained"*. The importance of institutional knowledge is discussed further in section 8 on overall conclusions and recommendations.

Inter-institutional collaboration was also singled out by most members of the ETF interviewed for the evaluation as a particularly important for the success of the EU participation. According to them, this was a **central element** for the management of the project which ensured a coordination action and unified messages by the EU. The interest in the Expo of a variety of DGs also ensured the high volume and quality of events and meetings that took place at the pavilion.

According to members of the ETF, **DGs were collaborative** and worked very well together throughout the process, which resulted in joint participation of some DGs in other upcoming events, as illustrated by the quotations in the text box to the right. The high level of cooperation was evident in the development and implementation of the media strategy too, as explained in section 3.4. In effect, the communication function followed the approach taken to the ISWG and created a similar group involving the communication people in the

Comments from representatives of EC DGs in relation to the cooperation within the ISWG:

"The ability to collaborate between DGs has been enhanced through the Expo experience. This is helping us participate in events with one presence. For example, now we are participating together in the Berlin International Green Week and the Salon International de l'Agriculture in Paris" (Commission representative)

"We really got to cooperate with DGs with which we could have had some overlaps. It helped to build relationships for future. The ISWG was a big added value" (Commission representative)

different DGs and DG COMM to agree on media actions and the dissemination of a common message.

Interviewees pointed out that such a high degree of collaboration was rare and attributed it to several factors. **Early engagement** was described as particularly important. Most relevant actors were invited to participate early in the planning of the initiative. As explained by one senior member of the ETF, it was essential to "*start preparations as early as possible and bring everyone around the table even before we knew what to do*". Moreover, it was important that the initiative was presented as a holistic, **corporate approach**, on behalf of the EU as a whole, rather than linking mainly to specific policies or institutions. This in contrast to past Expos where the EU presence was developed around a small number of policies related to the Expo theme, without allowing for broader institutional participation.

Finally, the increasingly apparent success of the event created a **virtuous circle**, furthering the level of cooperation and mutual support of all involved. The **shared governance and collaboration with the European Parliament** deserves special mention. This relationship was seen by most stakeholders consulted as constructive and unique. As one interviewee said "*this could be a study case of cooperation between colleagues from both institutions*". The EP President's interest in and commitment with the Expo (reflected in an EP Resolution⁸⁶) provided the foundation for the good collaboration, which led to the regular presence of three EP representatives at the Expo site and boosted the pavilion's exposure (and visits) among VIPs. Again speaking to the importance of early engagement, the appointment of the Director of the EP Information Office (EPIO) in Milan as member of the EU Expo Task Force at the beginning of the project also played a key role. It gave the Parliament the opportunity to participate in all decisions as well as increasing the sense of ownership of the initiative.

The **extensive relevant experience of external contractors** was another important success factor. Members of the ETF pointed out that Amadeus Holdings AG had participated in major events (e.g. London Olympics), helping it to adapt quickly to increases in the flow of visitors, thereby ensuring safety and security. Theirs and the other contractors' know-how also contributed in offsetting the absence of such experience among members of the ETF.

Finally, the **volunteer programme** must be considered one of the most important success factors of the Expo experience. This had an impact not only on the organisational set-up of the pavilion and its ability to attract visitors, but also on the pavilion's impact on young people, one of its key audiences. The volunteer programme is discussed in greater depth in section 6.2.

6.1.2. Challenges

This section describes and analyses the lessons learned and challenges encountered in the organisation and management of the EU participation. The overall success of the event demonstrates that these were to a large extent overcome. Nonetheless, they do explain certain limitations to the event's potential and provide important evidence for the overall conclusions and recommendations presented in section 8, as well as providing recommendations for the future. The findings below are based on interviews with members of the ETF, EU Scientific Steering Committee, ISWG, contractors, and

⁸⁶[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/document/P8_TA-PROV\(2015\)0184_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/document/P8_TA-PROV(2015)0184_EN.pdf)

representatives of the European Parliament, as well as the operations report submitted by Amadeus Holdings AG.⁸⁷

Timing and buy-in

Preparing for a World Expo entails significant and coordinated efforts related to strategic planning, engaging relevant organisations and stakeholders, creative development, procurement and administration, logistics and external communication. Good practice (according to members of the ETF, contractors and representatives of other pavilions) demands at least three years for this, while the decision to participate in the Expo was taken in May 2013, only two years before the event. According to a large majority of interviewees, it was also difficult at first to generate the buy-in needed for key decisions. These challenges were mostly overcome due to the strength and commitment of the ETF and its contractors and the other success factors described above.

However, there were **some limitations**. For example, contracts had to be procured through existing Commission Framework Contracts rather than open competition, since the latter would have taken more time. This limited the ETF's choice of contractor for crucial creative and logistical aspects of the pavilion. The lack of time also contributed to construction delays that in part explain why the pavilion was not able to open with the rest of the Expo on 1 May.

Similarly, while the public diplomacy and policy elements were highly successful, (even) more active engagement from key VIPs could have generated further exposure for the EU participation and increased its impact. In terms of the communication impact, more and earlier buy-in from some DGs could have helped the ETF and contractors to come up with a more effective way of conveying complex messages (see section 3.3. for a full analysis of this aspect).

Experience of personnel

Without a permanently-existing unit dealing with large-scale events such as World Expos, it was not possible to draw on substantial institutional experience. Instead, members were selected based on the qualifications for specific roles, interest, availability and command of Italian.⁸⁸ In general this worked well, especially as members of the ETF gained experience over time. However, interviewees suggested that prior expertise about how to deal with event organisers could have helped offset the logistical problems, such as severe construction delays, that affected much of the Expo.

Construction timeframe

The management of the project suffered from one unexpected situation which was the delay in the construction and installation of the EU pavilion. Local political disputes, corruption scandals and the difficulties inherent in setting up a major event such as a World Expo contributed to a slowdown in construction and prevented Expo Milan from having all pavilions ready on the agreed dates. This impacted negatively on the EU's operations readiness phase which was shortened from 8 to 2 weeks, **reducing the**

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Project personnel were made of Commission officials and contractors.

quality and increasing the cost of the pavilion opening.⁸⁹ The EU pavilion opened eight days later than the Expo as a whole, which meant a slow start in terms of visitor numbers and a reduced experience for the first visitors. Although some delays could not have been avoided, interviewees suggested that more event organisation experience would have helped the ETF deal with unforeseen problems and thereby reduce their impact.

Administrative and financial regulations

As an institution entrusted with public funds, the Commission is bound to strict administrative and financial rules. While the benefits of such rules are many, members of the ETF also pointed out that the need to adhere to set procedures made it difficult to react quickly and flexibly to changing circumstances. This caused **delays** not only in addressing some unexpected situations (e.g. construction delays), but also in the definition and implementation of key elements of the initiative such as the volunteer programme.⁹⁰ In some cases, it also resulted in **additional costs**.⁹¹ One member involved in the organisation of events also mentioned that accounting for events and asking for reimbursement of expenses was difficult, especially for events held outside the Expo site. This was due to the fact that finances were run by officials in Brussels who were not entirely familiarised with the project and agreements with contractors. The feedback received partly reflects inevitable frustration with the need to balance expediency with accountability, but **performance in such matters can always be improved**, for example, by allowing specific exceptions, considering more flexible arrangements with contractors, and establishing clear mechanisms for making decisions on expenditures in compliance with the EC Financial Regulations and the EC Legal Framework

6.1.3. Comparison with other country pavilions

When examining the success of the organisational set-up of the EU pavilion, we collected feedback from other countries/organisations present at the Expo that could serve to put the EU's achievements and drawbacks in perspective of what others experienced. As shown in Table 11 (page 67), all pavilions were confronted to certain challenges in the management of the project. Moreover, according to what pavilions' senior officials expressed in the interviews, all countries/organisations had some level of **debate around the purpose of the Expo and the overall value of their participation**. There was no general consensus, except in the German and Spanish case, about whether or not their countries should, as a rule, participate at Expos. However, all tended to agree that despite the initial doubts, the experience proved to be very successful and they were optimistic about future participation.

As in the EU case, the decision to participate and preparations started a bit late in the UK (2013) due to initial difficulties in finding interest from sponsors. The decision was

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ According to one of the interviewees, there were many delays in relation to the implementation of the volunteer programme and what type of compensation/allowance volunteers would receive for their contribution to running the visitor experience.

⁹¹ This was the case of hotel costs for event participants. Tariffs for hotels had to be fixed in the Technical Specifications of the Call for Proposals for the organisation of events in Milan, and these were based on the assumption that hotels in Milan would be overbooked. However, during the first months of the Expo, hotel rates were lower than expected and hence the Commission paid the contractor more than the actual hotels' rates. This was partly compensated during the last months of the Expo when hotel prices raised and were over the Commission's tariff. A more flexible financial regulation would have allowed the EU to negotiate with contractors and lower the risk of paying over-prices.

political in the end, but it still took some time to define the objectives and approach to be adopted. In the case of Germany, France and Spain, the Expo generated enough interest and expectations from start and preparations commenced early enough.⁹² It is worth noting that in the German and Spanish cases, as there is a **permanent unit/agency** responsible for the country's participation in International and Universal Expos, the decision to participate and the definition of the approach was taken in a more procedural way than in other countries. In the case of France, the early decision responded to Italy and France's long standing economic, diplomatic, and scientific relations.

Two interesting examples for the EU are the UK and Save The Children. Similar to the EU, they both had some initial doubts about participation. However, when the decision was made, they based their presence in the Expo on existing (and on-going) communication campaigns,⁹³ meaning that their participation in Milan was thought to reinforce or expand work that was already being carried out. This, together with Germany and Spain's choices of having a permanent unit/agency points out to the **importance of experience and institutional learning**, which was a major drawback in the EU case. The successful delivery of the project is therefore more likely if it relies on people with extensive experience and/or on ideas/resources that have already been tested.⁹⁴

Moreover, the consultation with other country pavilions uncovered the importance of putting the Expo participation in the **framework of specific mid or long-term goals**, as in the case of Germany and the UK. As explained by one senior official of the German pavilion, their participation in Expos are seen as "*an investment for the future*" which pursue long-term goals related to being an exporter of innovations and solutions. In the case of the UK, the government developed "Grown in Britain and Northern Ireland" a programme of business events and activities that began with the milestone of the Milan Expo and will continue during a number of major events taking place until 2020 (i.e. Rugby World Cup 2015, Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympics' Games and Dubai 2020).

Finally, it is worth noting that all countries have relatively **flexible approaches** towards organising their presence at Expos and have tested different configurations in different Expos. Their presence is mostly funded by public money, but in all cases they had some level of private investment coming from sponsors. Moreover, they all had bars or shops to attract visitors and/or showcase the country's food and beverages. The money raised covered the cost of the shop/bar and/or construction costs. The exception was Save The Children, which installed a shop and a specific donation area for raising money for their charitable projects.

⁹² Although no specific date was provided by the stakeholders consulted, they all mentioned that they had started early enough and experienced no issues in relation to this.

⁹³ In the case of the UK, this was the GREAT Britain campaign, a Government's ambitious international promotional campaign that seeks to showcase the best of what the UK has to offer to the world to generate jobs and growth for Britain. To link this to the Expo, in the case of STC, there were two campaigns that had been very successful in the past and that were extended to Milano 2015 i.e. the "Everyone" campaign against child mortality (launched in Italy in 2013) and the "Be the change" campaign aimed at involving the general public in changing the outcome for a child.

⁹⁴ It is relevant to note that despite the UK did not have a permanent Expo unit; the government has decided to keep a small team of three people for next Expos. They will run the initial recruitment process and train the new team.

Table 11: Project management approach of EU and other pavilions

	EU	UK	Germany	Spain	France	STC
Decision	Late (2013)	Late (2013)	Early (N/A)	N/A	Early (N/A)	N/A
Political support	Consensus still emerging about rationale for EU presence	Doubts about overall value of participation	Consistent participation in Expos over past years	Consistent participation in Expos over past years	Lot of expectation and support since the beginning	Seen as opportunity to fund-raise and disseminate existing campaigns
Strategy	Consensus still emerging about strategic goals and objectives	Participation built on existing (and on-going) campaign about UK's scientific excellence	Participation pursues mid and long-term goals related to exporting innovations	Participation aimed to demonstrate high potential of national food industry and cuisine.	N/A	Participation built on existing (and on-going) campaigns to raise awareness on child mortality
Project management	No permanent unit or team. Limited prior experience of staff, precluding institutional learning.	Inconsistent project management approach across Expos. Recent decision to maintain small team for next Expos.	Permanent Expo unit in Federal Ministry, but no permanent team. General manager is stable though, and teams are created for each Expo via a tender process.	Integrated management approach and stability of public agency in charge of developing presence in Expos.	No permanent unit. Seven ministries involved.	Participation managed by local affiliate. Participation in future Expos unlikely if no local affiliates in the countries.
Team composition	Public officials and contractors	Public officials	Public officials and contractors	N/A	N/A	N/A
Funding	Public (100%)	Public (91%) & Private (9%)	Public	Public (96%) & Private (4%)	Public (91%) & Private (9%)	Funded w/ sponsorships

Source: Monitoring data templates filled in and submitted by senior officials of country pavilions

Conclusion

While managing the EU participation at the Expo was a learning process, it benefited from several factors, notably high levels of commitment, strong leadership, inter-institutional collaboration and reliable contractors. These contributed to the overall success of the event. There were also challenges. Some of these, such as delays caused by problems with the Expo organisers, were largely outside the ETF's control. But others stemmed from the Commission's lack of mechanisms to retain institutional knowledge, despite its participation in previous Expos. The examination of other countries' pavilions shows that it is possible to put such mechanisms in place. Doing so would be an important way for the EU to ensure the legacy of its participation in Expo Milano and enhance its performance at any future events.

6.1. Volunteer programme

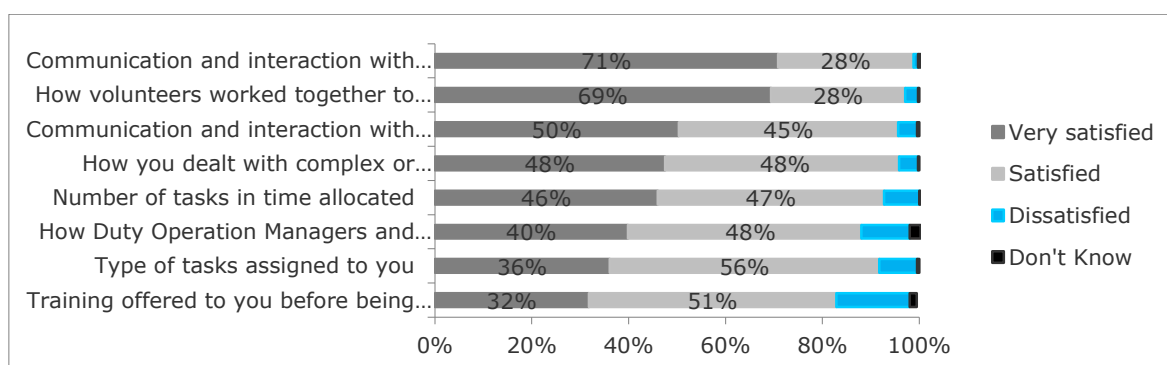
EQ 13: To what extent was the volunteer programme a success?

The volunteer programme was one of the key aspects of the organisational setting of the EU pavilion. Volunteers were mainly in charge of attracting visitors to the pavilion, welcoming them at the queue, and guiding them throughout the visitor experience. Volunteers were also in charge of conducting the surveys of visitors and event participants developed by the evaluation team. Through an external contractor (Ciessevi),⁹⁵ a total of **840 volunteers** were engaged from the beginning of May to the end of October 2015.

On-site, the volunteers were mainly managed by the Duty Operation Managers (contractor), assisted by a Commission's on-site volunteer coordinator. Moreover, one volunteer per shift (i.e. morning, afternoon and evening) also played the role of Team Leader. Volunteers rotated in different positions of the operation of the ground-floor (pre-show, main show and post-show), which included tasks such as guiding visitors, introducing the various elements of the pavilion and surveying visitors.

Overall, surveyed volunteers were **highly satisfied with their volunteering experience** at the EU pavilion, nine out of ten stated they were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with it. In terms of the organisational aspects of the experience, volunteers were mostly satisfied with the interaction with other volunteers and visitors, as well as with how they worked together (97% satisfaction, on average). Volunteers were also very happy with how they dealt with complex or unexpected events (96%), whereas they were slightly more critical of how Duty Operation Managers and other pavilion staff dealt with this type of situations (12% dissatisfaction).

Figure 14: Level of satisfaction with different aspects of the volunteering experience

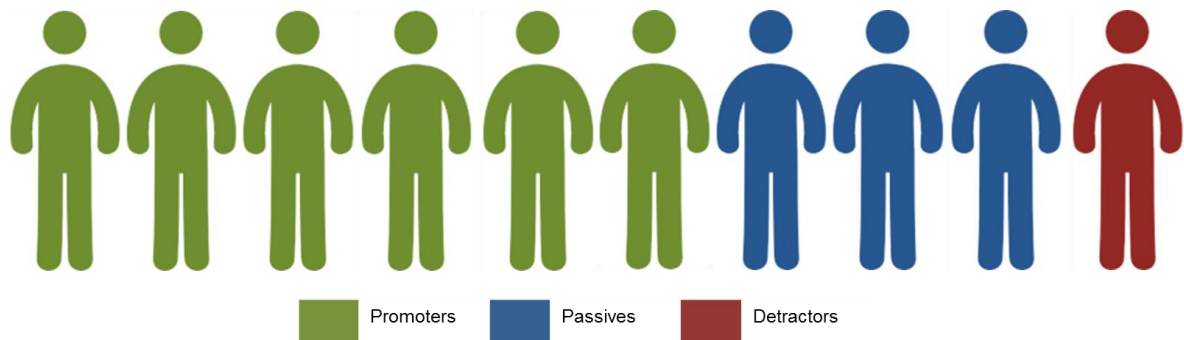


n=416

Evidence of the high level of satisfaction with the experience was the fact that six out of ten volunteers were very likely to recommend the volunteering programme to their peers (promoters) (Figure 15).⁹⁶

⁹⁵ <http://www.ciessevi.org/>

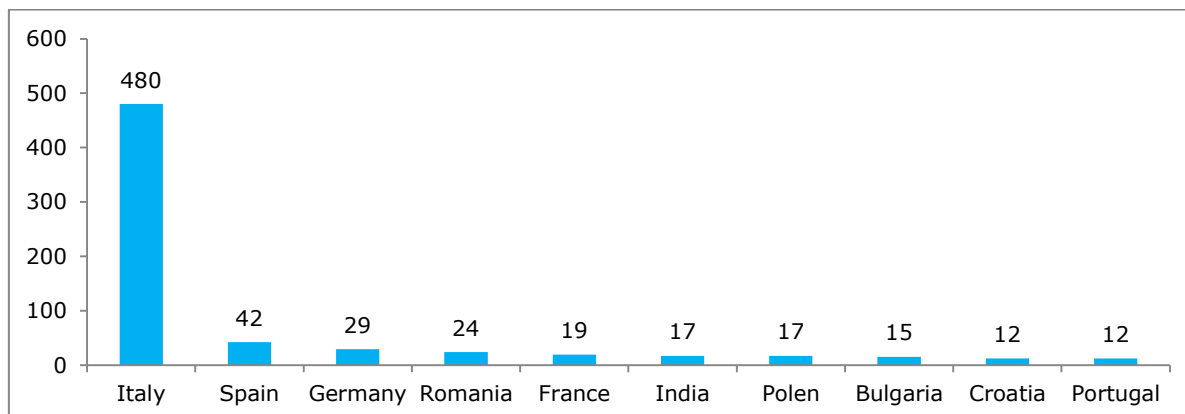
⁹⁶ As was explained in section 3.4., in marketing, it is general practice to consider "promoters" those who responded 9-10, "passives" those who say 7-8, and "detractors" the ones who respond 0-6.

Figure 15: Promoters of the volunteering experience

In terms of areas for improvement in relation to the volunteer programme and/or the work at the pavilion in more general terms, volunteers' comments pointed to the following:

- **Improving internal communication and organisation.** For example, informing volunteers of upcoming events and meetings taking place at the pavilion.
- **Improving the training delivered prior to the Expo experience.** In particular the online training was seen as not very relevant for the actual volunteering tasks and duties. Volunteers also suggested that further explanations of how EU policies related to the Expo theme were needed. Volunteers also mentioned that they did not receive training on the panels in the post-show area for example. As a result, the information contained there was not always explained to the public.
- **More social activities and networking.** Several volunteers asked for more social activities to get to know fellow volunteers as well as more networking opportunities with the Commission staff that worked at the pavilion.
- **Improving the volunteering certificate.** It did not detail the skills that were learnt and what tasks were carried out. Some volunteers also mentioned how they had not received their certificate a month after they had finished their volunteering experience.

Volunteers played a **double role** in the EU pavilion. They were part of the staff involved in running the visitors' experience, but they were also one of the **key audiences** that this project reached (young people from different European countries). In effect, as reflected in the survey results, volunteers **came from all parts of Europe and worldwide**. Not surprisingly, volunteers were mainly Italian, but there were over 50 other nationalities too (Figure 16). Therefore, beyond considering their views on their work at the pavilion, we also took the opportunity to dig into the effects of the volunteering experience on them.

Figure 16: Top ten nationalities among volunteers

n = 678 (total volunteers = 826)

According to the survey results, volunteers were attracted to the programme by the possibility of **'experiencing the Expo'**. Many were also interested in gaining some working experience and meeting people. Some volunteers also mentioned that they were 'passionate about the European project' and highly motivated to work with EU institutions.

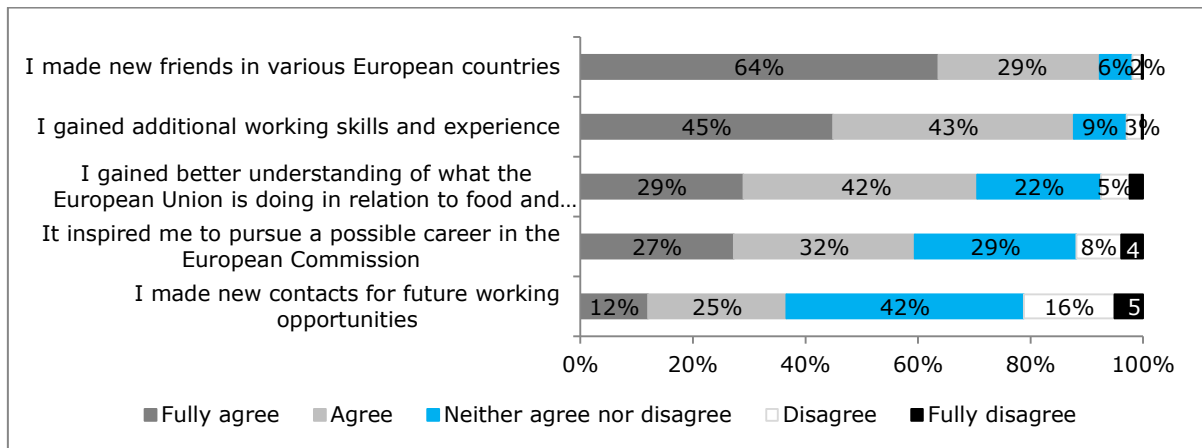
In general, volunteers rated the **'intangible benefits'** from the volunteering experience (e.g. opportunity to learn, discover, participate and connect to people) higher than the 'tangible' ones such as the free tablet given to all volunteers or the certificate of volunteering. Many volunteers commented about this, emphasising how the real 'take away' was **working together with young, interesting and enthusiastic people** from the entire world, as illustrated in the quote in the text box.

The voice of volunteers

"I spent 14 days with a nice team of volunteers from all around the world, we worked in team and we learnt a lot about each other in a short time, I did various tasks and I conquered some of my fears during this volunteering. That's why I'm very satisfied about my experience in the EU pavilion"

The volunteering experience appears to have played an important role in **fostering networks and friendships**. As the figure below shows, over 64% of volunteers fully agreed that they had made new friends. It also provided additional working skills and experience for many, and an increased understanding of EU policies on food and sustainability. On the latter, roughly two out of five volunteers had been inspired to research issues that they learnt about the EU at the pavilion. Several spontaneous comments in the survey also referred to this, with volunteers describing how they were now **more interested in EU policies** as a result of their volunteer experience.

Figure 17: What volunteers took away from their Expo experience



Finally, it is important to note that many of the stakeholders interviewed, including members of the ETF and Commission officials highlighted that the volunteer programme was one of the “biggest successes of the EU presence in the Expo”. It allowed the EU to not only have a motivated group of people who could guide visitors throughout the visitor experience, but also conveyed a very positive, fresh and young image of the EU pavilion.

Conclusion

The volunteer programme was highly successful in that it engaged numerous people of one of the key target audiences of the EU presence in the Expo. It proved to be an attractive activity for young people who were motivated to living the ‘Expo experience’. Volunteering at the EU pavilion provided them with opportunities to meet new people, gain working skills and learn something about the EU.

7. COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND ADDED VALUE

Another important aspect in this evaluation is the assessment of the costs, benefits and added value of the project. This is, to what extent the EU presence at Expo Milano produced a good result with the money spent (cost-effectiveness) and added value to Member States' participation.

Ideally, our assessment of **cost-effectiveness** would allow us to hold up its costs against quantifiable benefits relating to higher-level objectives such as improving citizens' attitudes towards the EU, contributing to the global food debate and to EU's growth and jobs. However, such broad impacts would be hard to quantify and attribute to the EU presence at the Expo only. Instead, we examine the initiative's cost drivers, itemise them against evidenced benefits where possible, discuss the value for money of (various aspects of) the project and identify areas for improvement.

As with the case of the organisational aspect of the experience (chapter 6), in order to make some statements on cost-effectiveness, it is important to compare costs and benefits with those of other pavilions, but also with past Expos and other EC communication initiatives. Therefore, this part of the evaluation relies on a comparative exercise that will involve the following steps:

1. Determining the cost of the EU presence at Expo Milano and main cost drivers
2. Establishing what was achieved with the resources invested
3. Comparing with the cost-benefit equation done by others (other pavilions, past Expos and other EC communication activities)
4. Identify lessons learned and areas for improvement in terms of cost-effectiveness

In terms of **EU added value**, this concept is often used when trying to assess whether an intervention is justified according to the principle of subsidiarity. In general, EU added value can be described as the benefits over and above those that could be created by the Member States or other actors on their own. The nature of EU added value differs according to the intervention in question. In the case of the EU presence at Expo Milano, we defined EU added value as relating to: (1) complementarity of the EU pavilion with Member States pavilions; (2) reduction of costs and burdens for Member States; (3) networks fostered with Member States, Expo organisers and/or other relevant stakeholders; and (4) contribution to the Expo legacy.

With a view to assessing whether and to what extent these effects have been realised, we interviewed various stakeholders (senior officials of Member States' pavilions, Expo organisers, EU institutions officials, and other) and collected their views on the following issues:

- How they/the Expo benefited from the EU presence
- What was achieved by the EU which could not have been achieved by Member States alone
- What efficiency and/or synergy effects were generated by EU presence

Therefore, after talking about cost-effectiveness, we will explore the EU's role as catalyst of benefits for others and of the Expo as a whole.

7.1. Costs, benefits and added value

EQ 14: To what extent was the relation between the costs, benefits and the added value of the EU pavilion a success if compared to three other Member States pavilions, past Expos and other EC communication initiatives?

EQ15: To what extent were the relations with Member States (present and not present at the Expo) a success?

First, we will address EQ 14, which entails an assessment of overall expenditure (in terms of money and time) and the benefits derived from this participation, for the EU and three other pavilions. As was agreed during the initial stages of this evaluation, this analysis will also include a comparative exercise with past Expos and other EC communication activities.

Following this, we will focus on EQ 15 and examine the relations established with Member States, in particular whether they resulted in EU added value and if there were any actions that could be taken forward in terms of cooperation within similar international/mass events.

7.1.1. Cost-effectiveness of EU pavilion

In terms of cost-effectiveness, we will look at the cost of the project in its entirety and how it is composed. According to the financial information provided by the Commission, the cost of the EU presence at Expo Milano amounted to **€ 15.4 million**, with 20% of this funded with the contribution of various DGs (JRC and DEVCO, SANTE, GROW and AGRI which contributed to the costs of the post-show/content centre). The remaining funding came out of the budget assigned to the Expo. The table below presents distribution among the different activities/elements of the project.

Table 12: Total cost and composition

Item	Cost (in million €)	%
<i>A - Pavilion construction and installation</i>		
Construction & running costs ⁹⁷	2.93	19%
Fitting out & furniture	1.23	8%
<i>B- Visitor experience</i>		
Setting-up of visitor experience (pre-show & show) ⁹⁸	6.42	42%
Setting-up of content centre (post-show) ⁹⁹	0.58	4%
Volunteer programme	0.68	4%
<i>C - Internal and external communication</i>		
Communication events and gadgets	0.17	1%
<i>D - Staff</i>		

⁹⁷ This includes electricity, cleaning, security etc.

⁹⁸ This includes all elements of the visitor experience (pre-show and show) e.g. exhibition, decoration, story and animation, movie, music, operation of visitor experience etc.)

⁹⁹ This was covered with DGs contributions.

Item	Cost (in million €)	%
Staff and mission costs ¹⁰⁰	2.55	16%
<i>E - EU Scientific Programme and other events</i>		
Scientific Steering Committee	0.19	1%
Science events	0.38	2%
ERASMUS / EUCYS event (by DG RTD)	0.07	0%
Art & Science event	0.05	0%
<i>F - Evaluation</i>		
Evaluation of EU participation in World Expo	0.10	1%
<i>G - Other</i>		
Other costs (e.g. office supplies)	0.08	1%
Total	15.43	100%

In the next section, we focus on examining the cost per visitor of the EU presence in World Expo Milano, followed by an examination of factors of project management that had an impact on cost-effectiveness. Then we examine the EU Scientific Programme's value for money, which was an important element of the project especially for achieving policy impact objectives. Lastly, we present a simple comparison exercise between the EU pavilion in Milan and two other Commission communication initiatives aimed at exploring what different results can be achieved with similar budgets.

Cost per visitor

Looking at the major costs of the initiative in relative terms helps us to identify the elements that provided most value for money. Based on the table, it seems that our priority should be to understand whether the investment in setting up the EU pavilion and visitor experience achieved its benefits in a cost effective way. The impacts of such funding are hard to quantify (and difficult to benchmark) in monetary terms; however, the number of people that visited the EU pavilion and went through the visitor experience, provide some evidence for us to examine and hold up against costs.

For this assessment we consider costs related to the setting up and operation of the **visitor experience (ground floor)** only which include the following:

- 50% of pavilion construction and running costs (Item A)
- 50% of pavilion fitting out and furniture (Item A)
- 20% of total staff costs (Item D)

As per information provided by the EU Expo Task Force, the rest of the costs presented in Table 12 correspond to the construction and operation of the first floor and terrace used for events, meetings and social gatherings with VIPs and other high level stakeholders.

¹⁰⁰ This includes salaries and mission costs of members of the ETF, both Commission officials and contract agents (i.e. 12 people in 2014 and 18 in 2015)

Therefore, the total cost of the visitor experience is **€10.44 million (68% of total budget)** and breaks-down as follows:

Item	Cost (in million €)
<i>A - Pavilion construction and installation</i>	
Construction & running costs	1.47
Fitting out & furniture	0.61
<i>B- Visitor experience</i>	
Setting-up of visitor experience (pre-show & show) ¹⁰¹	6.42
Setting-up of content centre (post-show) ¹⁰²	0.58
Volunteer programme	0.68
<i>C - Internal and external communication</i>	
Communication events and gadgets	0.17
<i>D - Staff</i>	
Staff and mission costs	0.51
Total	10.44

Given that a total of 657,150 people visited the EU pavilion, the **cost per visitor was € 15.89**. It is important to note that an additional 256,650 people were reached digitally (via the website and social media profiles); however, these were not taken into account in the calculation in order to be able to compare results with other Member States' pavilions and past Expos (where there are no figures available for people reached digitally).

Therefore, to be able to make some statements in terms of cost per visitor, we looked at what other Expo participants have achieved (Table 13) and found that EU costs per visitor were relatively high. Germany and the EU had a similar cost per visitor, but the EU was higher than France, Spain and the UK. We also looked at past Expos and found that the cost per visitor was slightly lower than that of Hannover 2000, which amounted to € 20 per visitor.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ This includes all elements of the visitor experience (pre-show and show) e.g. exhibition, decoration, story and animation, movie, music, operation of visitor experience etc.)

¹⁰² This was covered with DGs contributions.

¹⁰³ In Hannover 2000, the EU's costs amounted to €19.8 million and received 0.87 million visitors. There are no figures available for Shanghai 2010. Moreover, given that the EU presence in that Expo was as "annex" of the Belgian pavilion - benefiting from this pavilion's central location and attractive design - the number of visitors attracted (6 million) cannot be entirely attributed to the EU's efforts and resources.

Table 13: Cost per visitor for the EU and four other pavilions

Cases	Budget (in million EUR)	Visitors (in millions)	Cost per visitor (EUR)
EU	10.42	0.66	15.89
Germany	48.0	3.00	16.0
France	20.0	2.30	8.7
Spain	18.0	3.50	5.1
United Kingdom	14.2	3.40	4.2

Source: Monitoring templates developed by the evaluators and completed by senior officials of country pavilions. All data collected from countries is available in Annex 9.

As shown in the table, costs per visitor differed considerably between the different countries, with the German and EU pavilions being the most expensive ones. In the context of the serious competition for visitors, the UK and Spain showed the greatest capacity to attract visitors and maximise value for money. Among the factors that explain their success were the **attractive exterior design and exhibit** of the UK pavilion¹⁰⁴ and the **varied offer of restaurants** in the Spanish pavilion. The restaurant and bar in the UK pavilion was also mentioned as one of the key factors that helped to draw people in.

The most evident explanation for the EU cost per visitor was the number of visitors reached, which was low in comparison to the other countries. It was also slightly lower than in Hannover 2000 and Shanghai 2010 (in Milan, 3 out of 100 visitors went to the EU pavilion, whereas in Hannover this was 4/100 and Shanghai 8/100).¹⁰⁵ This was quite expected though, partly due to the **slow start of the Expo** in terms of visitor numbers (which were relatively low for the first months).

In addition this was also a result of the EU's focus was more on communication, policy and growth and jobs impacts than on visitor numbers. Moreover, the EU had a modest budget which resulted also in a modest and less striking pavilion, at least compared to other more spectacular pavilions in terms of exterior design.

There are some additional factors **which may have affected visitor numbers** and are worth considering as explanations of the cost per visitor achieved, including:

- Exterior design not able to attract enough visitors
- Lack of a bar/shop/restaurant
- Late opening of the pavilion

As regards the pavilion's exterior design, it is important to note that this was delivered by the Expo organisers and was considered to be not sufficiently attractive which led to the ETF taking action in July to improve it (e.g. adding banners promoting the Alex and Sylvia film) which indeed contributed to raising the numbers of visitors. In addition, it would not have been possible to have a bar/shop/restaurant due to the Commission's Administrative and Financial Regulations and Legal Framework, which prevent the Commission from receiving money from private individuals.

¹⁰⁴ As explained in the interviews with senior staff from country pavilions, the concept and architecture of the UK pavilion was a great success, which resulted in the UK receiving the BIE award of 'Best Pavilion Architecture' for pavilions up to 2,000 m² (<http://www.premioarchitetturexpomilano2015.com/docs/29092015ComunicatoStampaPremioArchitetturaExpo.pdf>). It also received the "Best Exhibit" award of the Exhibitor Magazine (<http://www.exhibitoronline.com/news/article.asp?ID=15391>)

¹⁰⁵ Although in Hannover and Milan, the EU reached a similar target capacity (65% and 66% respectively).

In relation to the late opening of the pavilion, this was due to **construction and installation delays** (responsibility of Expo organisers) which resulted in the EU pavilion opening to the public 8 days later than planned (9 May). This led also to many technical difficulties that extended into the operational period, impacting on the continuity of the visitor experience and visitor numbers along the first weeks of operation.¹⁰⁶ Germany's high cost per visitor can be mainly explained by a higher budget (three times higher than that of the EU, Spain and UK).

However, from an outcome perspective, the German pavilion was very successful. In effect, it received a number of awards including the BIE Golden Award for the best thematic implementation of the Expo theme.¹⁰⁷ The German pavilion was also praised for having a **congestion-free visit** and implementing the Expo theme with clear messages as well excellent design and exhibition. It also had an **innovative and interactive board** (SeedBoard) which was a great success among visitors.¹⁰⁸

The German example points to another important aspect of cost-effectiveness: visitor satisfaction and effects of the visit. In effect, the EU cost per visitor is crude in that it does not take into account the nature of the intended visitor experience at the EU pavilion. As discussed in section 3.4, the EU pavilion attempted to and succeeded in providing an **immersive experience**. This engaged visitors for a substantial amount of time and made a sizeable impact on their views of the EU.

In this sense, it is also important to consider that the EU succeeded in reaching the main target groups and, in particular, people with fairly positive and neutral views of the EU, allowing for maximum impact. The visitor experience had a **strong effect among neutrals**, with four out of ten that agreed they had a more positive view of the EU after the visit. If the EU presence in the Expo helped to engage normally 'hard-to-reach individuals' and generate positive feelings of the EU, the large cost per participant could be easily justified. Moreover, other pavilions, particularly those with 'pass through' exhibitions, could not reach individual visitors to the same extent. In other words, while the EU spent more to reach individuals than the UK, France and Spain, it may have reached them to a greater extent and thereby provided similar or even greater value for money.

The EU cost per participant does not distinguish between other reached individuals like **children and young people**. As was claimed in section 3.4, the visitor experience made a relatively large difference on children's information and understanding of the EU. In the case of young people, the survey showed that youngsters (15 to 24 years old) were amongst the age groups which had the most positive view of the EU after the visit. Adding to this was the particularly high level of satisfaction and appreciation of the EU among the volunteers who were involved in the operation of the pavilion, who were all between 18 and 30 years old.

Leading from this, the most obvious way to increase cost-effectiveness would be to **enhance the positive outcomes of the visitor experience**. In section 3.4 we

¹⁰⁶ As explained in the Final Operation Report by Amadeus Holdings AG, the construction delays caused a late initiation of the simulation exercises and testing of technical equipment, which had to take place once the pavilion opened. This meant that the visitor experience was not functioning at its maximum capacity and highest quality until a couple of weeks after the opening.

¹⁰⁷ Germany also received the Exhibitor Magazine award for "Best Pavilion" (<http://www.exhibitoronline.com/news/article.asp?ID=15391>), the Red Dot Award for "Exhibition Design" (<http://red-dot.de/cd/en/online-exhibition/work/?code=15-02783&y=2015>), and three FAMAB Awards (i.e. Best Public Event (gold), Best Thematic Exhibition (bronze), and Best Interactive Installation (SeedBoard) (gold) (<http://famab.de/en/famab-award/famab-award/qewinner-2015>)).

¹⁰⁸ Each visitor was given their own personal "SeedBoard" emulating their own "Field of Ideas". This was tool that actively and playfully involved visitors in initiating and navigating the different exhibits in the pavilion and selecting and storing content. According to the developers of the tool, it contributed to making the pavilion visit a personal adventure, while bringing to life Germany's innovative technology (<http://www.milla.de/en/projects/das-seedboard>).

argued that one of the main areas for improvement was the post-show or content centre. We also identified a number of factors which limited the effect of the content centre on visitors' understanding of EU policies and how the EU realises the goals/values promoted in the pavilion (i.e. cooperation, peace, teamwork, etc.). These included the lengthy explanations and information on the EU that were difficult to 'absorb' in the limited amount of time people spent at the pavilion. Taking steps to ensure a more organic storyline, where all the elements presented can be pulled together easily in a short period of time, whereas additional information is easily accessible to those who want to know more, could plausibly improve cost-effectiveness as much or more than efforts to cut costs. Another suggestion made by visitors, as well as DGs who funded the content centre, was that it would be important to count with the presence of Commission officials or policy experts who could interact with visitors and talk about EU policies with more depth than volunteers.

In addition to this, there is still an opportunity for the Commission to increase the visitor experience's value for money and this would be to **continue disseminating the Alex and Sylvia movie**, which represented a third (est.) of the visitor experience costs (€ 6.1 million – Table 10). According to feedback collected in the visitor survey, children (and schools/teachers) were very much interested in watching the movie again and using it for educational purposes (section 3.4). The Commission could therefore implement some follow-up actions in this respect.

All things considered, the evidence suggests that pavilions had varying levels of cost-effectiveness. Whereas the UK and Spain had lower costs per visitor (high number of visitors, high visitor satisfaction and moderate budget), the EU and Germany compromised a higher amount of resources to be able to attract normally difficult to reach audiences (EU) or to produce high recall and impact on visitors and Expo stakeholders (Germany and EU). Also, it should be mentioned that the EU was particularly effective in engaging children, whereas the UK, France and Germany attracted the average Expo visitors in a greater extent, mainly an Italian middle age audience.

EU Scientific Programme

We will examine now the costs linked to the **EU Scientific Programme** for Expo Milano. These account for **18% of the budget (Table 12)** and include:

- 50% of pavilion construction and running costs (Item A)
- 50% of pavilion fitting out and furniture (Item A)¹⁰⁹
- Expenditures related to the EU Scientific Steering Committee, science events organised by the members of the Committee and the ETF, and other events (Item E)¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹There were three rooms, one with a capacity of 90 people and two for 15 people. The pavilion's terrace was also used for hosting social events. The meeting and conference rooms were fully equipped with audio and visual equipment and furniture.

¹¹⁰ One was the European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) is a Commission's annual event. The 2015 edition took place in Milan (7-22 September) as it was understood that the Expo offered a platform on which to debate and raise awareness among young people about the issues concerning food security. The Scientific Steering Committee presented the awards at EUCYS 2015 in Milan for projects reflecting the Expo theme "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" (<http://europa.eu/expo2015/school-and-youth-projects>). The ERASMUS event consisted of the selection of 10 ambassadors from the Erasmus Student Network in Italy (ESN) who were awarded the chance to tour Europe and present the opportunity to volunteer at the EU pavilion at Expo 2015 in Milan. The Art & Science event was organised by DG JRC together with the Expo

In analysing cost-effectiveness of this element, it is important to consider that the Scientific Programme included a total of 230 events held at the EU pavilion and other sites in Milan (see section 4.2), which **costs were absorbed by organisers** (i.e. Commission DGs, European Parliament, international organisations, Italian institutions, etc.) and negotiated with the contractor in charge of catering and logistics (Pomilio). The meeting/conference rooms were fully utilised due to the overwhelming number of requests for using the pavilion's facilities for events and meetings, resulting in one to five events per day during the last months of the Expo. This is partly explained by the fact that the **EU did not charge for the utilisation of its facilities**. This was highly appreciated by event organisers, but also by Member States and VIPs who were able to organise meetings that would otherwise not be possible in other pavilions or Expo facilities.

Based on the analysis of **policy impact** presented in chapter 4, it is relatively difficult to sustain what some pointed out during the interviews i.e. that the events and scientific work done in the framework of the Expo could have taken place in Brussels anyway and with more or less the same results. Despite that concrete impacts of the EU Scientific Programme on policy developments is not yet evident, there are indications of *potential* impact, especially in relation to the EU's agricultural and research policies. Moreover, most DGs involved in the organisation of events have pointed out to the *uniqueness* of the occasion and the opportunity to reach audiences and address topics that would otherwise not have been possible in Brussels.

When looking at the **small portion of the budget absorbed** by these activities and the overwhelming satisfaction and recognition of stakeholders of the importance of the contributions of the EU Scientific Programme to the Expo, it is possible to say that this element of the project was the one that **provided most value for money**. Moreover, we should cite one of the managers of the project who noted that: "*without our own base, organising events at the Expo would have been horrendously expensive*". Even though there are no cost estimations of this, it suggests that the cost-effectiveness of the initiative would have decreased if the EU had opted for organising events in Milan in the context of the Expo, but without a physical presence and adequate facilities in the Expo site.

Finally, this aspect of the project also provided **high added value to other EU institutions and Member States**. As evidenced in the interviews, DGs, Member States and VIPs were able to organise meetings that would otherwise not have been possible in other pavilions or Expo facilities.

Project organisation and management

One important cost driver of the EU presence in Milan was the **staff and mission costs**, which accounted for 16.5% of the total Expo budget (Table 12).¹¹¹ It is possible to argue that since it was a relatively small team (12 people in 2014 and 18 in 2015) composed of Commission officials or contract agents who were already working for the Commission, part of this cost would have been incurred even without the Expo.¹¹² However, there is **scope for improving the organisation and staff management**

organisers and consisted of an exhibition, talks and performances showcasing "things" that can be interpreted in different ways relevant to science, ethics and policy. The aim was to stimulate and monitor the resonance between these interpretations (<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/event/exhibition/resonances-science-arts-politics>).

¹¹¹ These cover salaries and mission costs of members of the EU Expo Task Force, as well as mission costs of other Commission officials who had to travel to Milan for tasks/events related to the Expo.

¹¹² Except in cases where contracts were renovated or extended specifically for the Expo (in the case of contract agents only)

aspects and mitigate a number of inefficiencies in order to maximise cost-effectiveness. It is also worth noting that despite the drawbacks that we examine below, the EU Expo Task Force did a very capable and professional job. Their commitment, professionalism, enthusiasm, and flexibility were fundamental factors of the successful delivery of the project.

The areas for improvement related to organisation and management were examined with great depth in chapter 6. In order to avoid repetition, we list here the main areas for improvement:

- **Experience of personnel:** According to feedback collected in this evaluation, prior expertise in the planning, implementation and operation of mass/international events could have helped mitigate the logistical problems such as the severe construction delays that affected much of the Expo. This also points to the importance of not losing the experience and knowledge gained in through the event. It should be noted also that after the experience in Hanover 2000 it had been clear that the selection of staff for organising the Expo presence was of utmost importance, and this included the involvement of professionals/experts in the events field.¹¹³
- **Administrative and financial regulations:** The difficulty of adapting to the set administrative and financial Commission's regulations caused delays in addressing some unexpected situations (e.g. construction delays) and defining a few elements of the initiative (e.g. volunteer programme and possibility of having a shop or bar at the pavilion). In the future, this can be mitigated by allowing specific exceptions (as was done in this occasion), considering more flexible arrangements with contractors, and establishing clear mechanisms for making decisions on expenditures, all within the EC Administrative and Financial Regulations and Legal Framework.

Comparison with other Commission communication initiatives

In terms of cost-effectiveness, it is also useful to compare the EU presence in Milan with other Commission's communication activities. With this objective, we selected two communication initiatives which budgets were similar to the Expo one: the "EU Working For You" pilot corporate campaign implemented between June 2014 and March 2015, and the 2015 European Year of Development (EYD) that took place during 2015.

Table 14: Comparison with other EC communication initiatives

Benchmarks	Expo Milan 2015	"EU Working For You"	2015 EYD
Type of initiative	EU pavilion in 6-months event	Pilot corporate campaign (advertising)	Year-long communication activities
DG in charge	DG JRC	DG COMM	DG DEVCO
Objectives	Awareness and engagement	Awareness and recall	Awareness, information and engagement
Target groups	General public w/focus on families w/children and young people (who normally take the EU 'for granted')	EU citizens aged 25 and older w/neutral opinion of the EU	EU citizens w/focus on young people (15-24 years old)

¹¹³NEI Macro and Sector Policies (2001), Op. Cit.

Benchmarks	Expo Milan 2015	"EU Working For You"	2015 EYD
Activities	Emotional and entertaining experience, traditional and digital communication and visitor and digital	Multi-channel advertising (TV, print and digital) and PR	5 EU and 64 national events, and dissemination of campaign material on traditional and social media
Geographical coverage	1 MS (Italy) + tourists from EU & Third Countries	6 MS	28 MS
Budget (in million EUR)	15.43	13.45	15.00
Audience reached	657,150	115 million ¹¹⁴	35.5m ¹¹⁵
Cost drivers	High construction costs (27% budget)	No construction costs. Most spent on advertising (TV, print and digital)	No construction costs. Half spent in co-financing activities at national level

Sources: Monitoring data collected for the current evaluation; Final Report of the Evaluation of the European Commission Corporate Communication Campaign (2015); and Interim Report of the Evaluation of the European Year for Development 2015 (2015).

It is important to start by saying that the initiatives aimed to achieve different objectives, therefore results will differ and are hard to compare. However, the EU at Expo Milan and the "EU Working For You" campaign shared the idea of focusing on relatively young people and, in the second case, on those with 'neutral' views of the EU. The EU's communication approach in Milan was also based on the idea that the youngest citizens are more likely to take the EU 'for granted' and have a more neutral view of the EU. With this aim, both initiatives chose to present citizens a less 'distant' and institutional image of the EU and to demonstrate in which ways EU impacts ordinary citizens' lives.

With quite similar budgets, the corporate campaign had a considerably **higher reach and broader geographical coverage** than the EU in Expo Milan (i.e. 115 million citizens reached out in six Member States out of a total target universe of 131 million aged 15-70 vs. 0.66 million visitors to the EU pavilion, mainly Italians). This is due to the fact that the campaign was based on multi-channel advertising in six Member States with a larger total audience than that of Expo Milan (21.5 million people). Also, as the Expo visitor figures showed, Expo Milan was mainly an "Italian affair".

Establishing which initiative was more cost-effective in achieving its objectives is beyond the scope of this evaluation. However we can still examine the qualitative impacts achieved and make some general statements. Our evaluation found that the visit to the EU pavilion had a strong effect among neutrals (i.e. four out of ten neutrals agreed that they had a more positive view of the EU after the visit). In the case of the campaign, citizens with a neutral opinion of the EU proved more difficult to reach and recall the campaign. Having a physical presence at a mass event such as an International/Universal Expo gave the EU the opportunity to **impact on a "captive audience"**, who was more likely to notice the pavilion than for example, an ad on TV. However, an advertising campaign such as the "EU Working For You" allowed the EU to reach a much larger (and broader) audience during a longer period of time, increasing the likeness of recall and mid/long-term impact.

In relation to the 2015 EYD, it is important to mention that the objectives of the two initiatives were different. The visitor experience at the Expo was aimed mainly at

¹¹⁴ The campaign's contractor (HAVAS) calculated total reach taking into account de-duplication figures i.e. people viewing the advert via different mediums.

¹¹⁵ Data provided by DG COMM in May 2016, based on information provided by DG DEVCO.

citizens, while the 2015 EYD was focused on engaging Member States and national civil society organisations. It also reached large numbers of citizens, indeed far more than the EU pavilion (35 million versus 657,000). But the evaluation found that a one-off, single location event can (if designed and implemented well) make a real impact on those individuals who were reached, in terms of awareness and views of the EU and its policies. It is likely that much of the 2015 EYD audience was reached more superficially.

Another interesting point of comparison between 2015 EYD and Expo Milan was the limited **involvement of school-children and students** in the former. As we explained in section 3.1, the EU pavilion received flows of school groups particularly during the last two months of the Expo. This was mainly due to the attractiveness of the visitor experience (in particular, of the story, film and special effects) for children. Although both initiatives aimed to engage children/young people, the idea of having an entertaining pavilion with an animated and emotional story proved to be more successful than the approach of engaging schools in events organised by civil society organisations.

Finally, whereas the “EU Working For You” campaign and the EU pavilion in Expo Milan provided an opportunity for the Commission to **communicate to the general public as one, using the “EU” term**, the European dimension of the EYD initiative was a bit lost vis-à-vis the promotion of national development cooperation by the national players involved. The first approach appears to have had stronger impacts on ordinary citizens’ views of the EU and have triggered an interest on knowing more about what the EU does for them.

Conclusion

While comparisons between the cost-effectiveness of various pavilions at the Expo were not possible, costs per participant varied considerably between them. The EU reached the targeted audiences relatively expensively, but its presence had strong effects on hard to reach individuals and strategic audiences who received a positive impression of the EU. This was partly due to the opportunity that a presence in an Expo provides, which is to engage visitors (face-to-face and not virtually) in an immersive experience.

The audience size that can be reached is lower than in an advertising campaign on TV or multiple events taking place in 28 Member States, but it is still possible to have an impact on citizens’ views of the EU and thereby leave a legacy.. In addition to the effects on ordinary people, the EU engaged numerous experts and international stakeholders in discussions about the Expo theme which could potentially impact policy developments at great value for money. Nevertheless, there is scope to improve cost-effectiveness by maximising the impact of the visitor experience, re-utilising the communication products that have been developed (i.e. “The Golden Ear” film) and focusing on enhancing project organisation and management.

7.1.2. EU added value

The EU participation in World Expo Milano cannot be assessed separately from the Member States’ presence, in particular whether the EU created synergies and added value to their participation. In this sense, the EU pavilion was thought as complementary to the national pavilions, offering a coherent image of the European Union and emphasising the value of collaboration among the different member countries and cultures. To realise this, early in the preparation phase, the ETF put in place a coordination process aimed at encouraging collaboration and links between the

EU and Member States on several aspects, including communication, public diplomacy, B2B meetings, VIP visits, and the evaluation process.¹¹⁶ In the ensuing sections, we examine the results of this cooperation.

Communication

From a communication perspective, the main added value of the EU presence in World Expo Milano was taking the opportunity to **communicate to young people and families with children about Europe**. The EU pavilion was then intended to provide visitors with a coherent image of the EU by bringing all countries together. Drawing from this, the story of Alex and Sylvia presented in the EU pavilion featured a competition for the best bread where wheat was presented as the grain as a unifying theme. Whereas each European country has its own bread specialty, the presence of bread at the centre of the table, is something that Europeans all share.¹¹⁷

This was complemented by other actions aimed at linking the EU's pavilion narrative with Member States. For example, Member States were invited to participate in the "recipe card and landmarks initiative" in which visitors could take away national bread recipes available at their pavilions. They could also take 'The Golden Ear' poster with corresponding national landmarks in the background. Furthermore, a collection of digital pictures of historic bread-related paintings and bakery photos from each Member State were collected and incorporated into the EU pavilion's visitor experience.

However, the two surveys of visitors conducted, as well as our observations of the EU pavilion, uncovered that more complex messages and symbols about the EU were harder to get across. The importance of bread as the main unifying concept was not sufficiently taken up by visitors mainly due to the weaknesses identified in the design of the visitor experience that were mentioned in section 3.4.

This points to the need of finding additional ways of strengthening the message of what the EU is and how it is linked to the Member States that are also present in the Expo. Some interviewees mentioned, for example, having the EU and Member States pavilions on the same location in the Expo site (cluster of EU countries), organising highly visible events, as well as adding/strengthening communication elements in Member States pavilions that talk of the EU.

Another element where the EU added value to Member States' presence was **social media communication**. The ETF communication team encouraged cross-promotion of EU and Member States pavilions on social media during the Expo and established a network of Member States community managers to facilitate collaboration and coordinate actions, such as joint promotion of national days. In addition, "The EU at Expo meets Member States" was a very successful initiative of the EU which consisted of visiting the different Member States' pavilions and sponsoring these in the EU's social media profiles.

¹¹⁶ (Draft) communication on the evaluation of the EU participation at Expo Milan and EU policy on Future Expos.

¹¹⁷ MCI Group, Client stories: Lead the global response to food security. Available at: http://mci-group.com/~media/Files/Client_Stories/EU_Exhibition_Expo_Milano_2015_CS.ashx

Public diplomacy

The efforts of the EU Expo Task Force to connect and organise meetings between representatives from EU institutions, Member States and other participating countries helped make the EU pavilion in a **hub of public diplomacy**. While intrinsically hard to measure, this reportedly conveyed a positive image of the EU, especially among Member States and their key stakeholders.

The ETF protocol function was very active in this sense and coordinated over 150 VIP visits and a large number of meetings of high-level representatives of EU institutions and Member States. For every VIP visit, the protocol function created an agenda in coordination with the VIP's cabinet following the political and professional priorities of the VIP and of the delegation accompanying him/her. Additional agendas of visits to Member States and Third Country's pavilions were also developed, looking to ensure that the VIPs met the highest hierarchy of the pavilion (e.g. Commissioner General, Deputy Commissioner General, Directors, etc.) and governmental authorities (e.g. Ministers, Consuls, Ambassadors, etc.). Conversations, briefings, bilateral meetings, and social gatherings between EU VIPs and Member State/Third Country representatives that would have otherwise been difficult to set-up cost-effectively from Brussels. The intention is that this would have policy impacts over the medium-to-long-term.

Based on initial Expo visits organised by the pavilion's protocol function, we also found evidence of follow-up meetings or visits that took place in Brussels, Member States or Third Countries between high-level representatives of the EU and national institutions. The eight meetings of Member States' pavilions organised prior and during the months of the Expo in Brussels, Varese, Milan and at the EU pavilion also serve as example of the type of outcomes achieved by the protocol function (see below).

Public diplomacy was therefore an important mechanism through which the EU established **productive relationships** with Member States and Third Countries during the months of the Expo, enhancing the visibility of the EU and serving its broader objectives.

Relations with Member States

Another important mechanism of coordination and exchange of information with Member States which provided EU added value were the meetings of EU and Member States pavilions' officials organised by the initiative of the ETF. All Member States present at the Expo attended at least one (and usually several) of these meetings, and attendance rates (compared to registrations) were 100% in each case.

According to evidence collected in this evaluation, the meetings were a **platform to learn from each other experiences in the Expo** and discuss actions for further cooperation. One of the results of these meetings was the willingness of a number of Member States to share monitoring data and results of their participation in the Expo with the EU's evaluators.¹¹⁸ This provides an indication also of the level of trust and cooperation achieved.

¹¹⁸ Coffey participated in two Member States meetings where it presented the objectives of the EU evaluation and shared preliminary findings with the participating countries. Member States provided feedback in relation to the value of the EU presence in individual interviews with the evaluators organised during the final months of the Expo. They also shared their own evaluation results by filling in a template developed by Coffey.

Member States' senior officials who participated in individual interviews with the evaluators talked very positively of the efforts of the ETF to make the **EU pavilion a 'house' or venue** where Member States could meet, exchange information and knowledge and/or hold events. There was agreement too that the communication had evolved from limited interaction prior and early in the Expo to regular contact towards the end. The (free) meeting rooms provided by the EU pavilion were also highly appreciated by Member States. Looking forward, some interviewees also mentioned that the EU and Member States could have a joint volunteer programmes or evaluation. This appeared as especially important for smaller countries with limited resources.

There were also some mentions of how the EU could further enhance added value. Many mentioned that while individual EU countries think of their particular objectives when planning their presence at Expos, the EU is a more global player that can deal with the more political aspects of these international events. The opinion was that the EU can have a stronger impact than individual Member States in **advocating cooperation** for addressing many of the global problems faced today. In line with this, they encouraged the EU to continue building on the path of being a facilitator of consensus and a platform for discussions between the EU and Member States.

B2B meetings

The B2B meetings were another important added value of the EU presence in Milan, especially from the perspective of Member States which were not present at the Expo. As was explained in chapter 5, the EU-Third Country Events that were organised by the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) and PROMOS (contracted by DG GROW) in the context of the Expo resulted in the participation of over 1,700 representatives (companies and institutions) from 83 different countries, including eight Member States which were not present at the Expo.¹¹⁹ More than 3,400 business-to-business meetings were organised, with nearly four out of ten meetings resulting in trade agreements or on-going negotiations. This was judged as one of the most important B2B initiatives in the Expo which benefited the EU Member States in a way which could not have been possible without the EU presence in Milan. Drawing from this, there is scope for further investigating on the outcomes of these meetings and provide general conclusions of the overall value of the EU presence in Milan from a growth and jobs perspective.

Conclusion

The EU demonstrated the added value of its presence mainly through communication, public diplomacy, cooperation with Member States, and B2B meetings. The successful collaboration scheme established with Member States provided opportunities for organising numerous bilateral meetings in Milan and Brussels, exchanging information and lessons learned on Expo participation, enhancing promotion of EU and Member States pavilions, and participate in B2B meetings. Moreover, the evaluation showed that there is scope for building on the successful relationship established and creating additional value, especially in relation to communicating on Europe with the general public and impacting on global policy developments.

¹¹⁹ Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal and Sweden

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following pages bring together the findings of the evaluation on the EU participation in World Expo Milano 2015 to draw conclusions. These start with an overall conclusion and then discuss the key evaluation issues¹²⁰ of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and EU added value. Based on the conclusions, we then propose several practicable recommendations to improve Commission initiatives in the future.

8.1. Overall conclusion

The EU presence at Expo Milano 2015 was an initiative that the European Commission can be proud of. It was a risky project as it implied a change in the Commission's traditional communication approach. But it paid-off and was appreciated by the majority of the visitors to the EU pavilion, social media audience, Italian press, as well as members of the European Commission and the European Parliament. The EU was successful in reaching the intended audiences and left them with a positive feeling about the EU. The EU presence at the Expo also contributed to the Expo debate with important policy recommendations for accelerating the efforts to achieve sustainable global food and nutrition security.

By facilitating trade agreements and negotiations between EU and Third Country businesses and providing a hub for public diplomacy, the initiative worked towards economic, trade and other policies. Overall, the Expo was an important forum for responding to global challenges related to food security and sustainability.

But the EU presence in such events can always be improved. There would be ways to decrease costs and enhance benefits, especially by establishing strategic (short, mid and long-term) objectives and an integrated project management structure to steer efforts. Finally, it is important that the learning and experience gained in this occasion is not lost and that it feeds into and informs future decision-making.

8.2. Relevance

Relevance refers to the 'need' for an initiative. The evaluation found that the aims of the EU participation in World Expo Milano, and activities put in place to achieve them were broadly appropriate, especially in relation to the problems it was supposed to address and the needs/interests of the target groups. The conclusions below demonstrate this in more detail. They refer to the extent to which the communication aspects of the project were appropriate for addressing disenchantment with the EU and if the scientific and growth and jobs elements of it were relevant to the Europe 2020 strategy:

- **Putting ordinary citizens in the centre of the communication process proved to be a successful choice.** The EU had a key communication challenge which was to provide a clearer message on how the EU affects the lives of ordinary citizens and thereby increase trust in the EU. In doing this, there was a decision to try a different communication approach, focusing on an emotional, simple, and direct narrative that talked of the EU. The high level of

¹²⁰ Better Regulation Guidelines (2015): http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/index_en.htm

satisfaction and appreciation of visitors, especially of families with children, showed that the evolution from an institutional to a citizen-centred communication approach is the right path to follow during the next years.

- **However, the EU could not reach and please everyone.** The vast majority of visitors to the pavilion (and to the Expo as a whole) came from Italy (circa 75% of visitors), making it difficult for the EU to reach people from other Member States and Third Countries. Moreover, most had positive views of the EU and therefore reaching neutrals and visitors with negative views of the EU proved to be more difficult to achieve in this type of events. This was also the case of young people and adults over 45 years old who found the pavilion relatively less interesting than other age groups given the focus on families with children.
- **Participating in Expo Milano provided an opportunity to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy by engaging high profile experts and stakeholders in fruitful discussions about food and nutrition security.** The EU Scientific Programme complemented well the communication dimension of the EU presence in the Expo by working as a platform for a democratic debate that involved various EU institutions and experts representing a number of sectors. This was also seen as an opportunity for the EU to provide a collective response to a global challenge.
- **The B2B events organised in the framework of the Expo were highly relevant to the Europe 2020 strategy in that they created growth and jobs opportunities.** The events involved institutions and enterprises from EU and Third Countries in discussions that could potentially result in trade agreements between EU and Third Country businesses in the food sector. The relevance of the events was evidenced in the high number of participants achieved and the number of B2B meetings that took place.

8.3.Effectiveness

Here we conclude on the successful achievement of the objectives set for Expo Milano 2015. As the conclusions below demonstrate, the objectives were achieved with varying degrees. All in all, we argue that (i) the EU was highly effective in engaging visitors in an emotional experience that talked about the EU and that generated positive feelings; however, it had a limited impact on visitors' understanding of EU policies (communication objective); (ii) the EU made a meaningful contribution to the global debate on food and nutrition security, although the concrete impacts at policy level are not yet evident (scientific/policy objective); and (iii) the EU succeeded in facilitating discussions related to economic and trade policies in terms of future agreements between EU and Third Country businesses; however there is scope to capitalise more on these results (growth and jobs objective):

Communication impact

- **Diverse profiles of visitors, but in particular parents and children, were overwhelmingly satisfied with their experience at the EU pavilion.** This proved that the strategy of using a creative and immersive film as hook has paid off. The Alex and Sylvia film was everyone's favourite part of that experience and children were one of the most inspired audiences. The visit conveyed 'warm, fuzzy' feelings about EU and left visitors curious to know more. As a first experience of the EU communicating in a more emotional way, it was very positive and was also a learning experience for future communication initiatives.

- **More complex messages and symbols about the EU were nevertheless harder to get across.** Visitors of all ages and countries understood the main messages conveyed at the EU pavilion (i.e. that cooperation between agriculture and science is important for feeding the planet and that Europeans should work together to solve their problems). But the experience did not necessarily provide them with an increased understanding of EU policies and how the EU realises the goals/values promoted during the visit (i.e. cooperation, peace, teamwork, etc.). This was due to some drawbacks identified in the design of the experience, in particular that the information/explanations provided before and after the movie were difficult to 'absorb' in the limited amount of time people spent in the pavilion.
- **The success of the EU presence in World Expo Milano proved the importance of having a prime location in the Expo site and an attractive exterior design.** The EU pavilion's location in front of the Italian pavilion and the Expo Lake Arena, which was a result of the good (and early) cooperation established with the Expo organisers, was key in attracting numerous visitors. The pavilion's terrace made the most of this advantageous location in that it provided a privileged view of the Expo site, as well as a relaxed atmosphere which facilitated conversations and networking of VIPs and event participants. The pavilion's exterior design was delivered by the Expo organisers (Expo S.p.A) and had to be improved by the Commission later as it was considered to be not sufficiently attractive, especially in the context of the fierce competition for visitors with other stunning pavilions.
- **The EU's digital communication was highly effective in reaching Expo visitors and those who could not attend.** Despite the modest budget of the communication function (and in particular for paid advertising), the EU was able to build a digital community of people interested in following / discussing food policy with the EU. Engagement and fellowship on Facebook and Twitter were amongst the highest of all Expo participants, creating a 'buzz' around the EU presence in the Expo. Digital communication also worked as a common platform for EU institutions to communicate with one voice, which was highlighted as a quite unique experience in the Commission's communication tradition.

Scientific/Policy impact

- **Whereas Expo Milano was not a platform for key political decisions, it created a momentum that the EU used for promoting its central role in feeding the planet.** It gathered numerous stakeholders in the pavilion and in various other venues in Milan during six months, who were involved in discussions that could potentially have an impact on EU policy developments, particularly on agriculture and research policy. At global level, the EU issued a powerful recommendation aimed at creating an international forum where to continue discussions. This recommendation has been taken up by central global actors such as the United Nations' Secretary General. All in all, the EU showed that it had an important role to play in discussions on food and nutrition security.
- **The initial heterogeneous opinions within the Commission in relation to the value of Expos as forums for political debate and, therefore, of the role that the EU should play there framed the opportunity to plan concrete follow-up actions on the recommendations of the EU Scientific Programme.** Even though the Expo theme (i.e. Feeding the Planet) is part of a global on-going discussion and that there will be a number of opportunities for the EU to contribute to that debate, the EU will maximise the impact of the

work done so far only if the Commission will make plans for sustained follow-up action.

Growth and jobs impact

- **The EU-Third Country events were highly effective in fostering trade relationships and agreements between EU and Third Country businesses.** According to evidence collected by an external contractor (PROMOS), after the events there were a total of 94 fixed cooperation and 765 on-going negotiations or cooperation being considered between EU and Third Country companies. These results show that the EU presence at Expo Milano was not only an important communication initiative, but also a platform for leveraging partners and a catalyst of economic change.¹²¹ Nevertheless, until now results of the business dimension have been promoted to a limited extent and there is scope for the Commission as a whole (not only DG GROW) to capitalise on what has been achieved.

8.4.Coherence

Here we argue that the EU participation in Milan was well aligned with the Europe 2020 strategy and with the Commission's will to restore faith and trust in the EU.

- **The EU presence in World Expo Milano 2015 was coherent with the EU's overarching policy objectives embodied in the Europe 2020 strategy.** The EU contributed to sustainable development goals (food and nutrition security) through the EU Scientific Programme, which created an opportunity for an open, interactive and forward-looking exchange with experts and relevant stakeholders on (EU and global) food policy. Moreover it enhanced growth and jobs by facilitating discussions on potential trade agreements between EU and Third Country businesses.
- **The EU presence in Milan was also coherent with the Commission's aim of restoring trust and faith in the EU.**¹²² Through the decision of targeting citizens that 'take the EU for granted' (e.g. children and young people) and presenting a less distant and bureaucratic EU through a quite emotional experience, the EU presence in Milan was well articulated with other communication initiatives of the last years (e.g. "EU Working For You" pilot corporate campaign). These have attempted to show how the EU makes a difference to peoples' lives and thereby increase trust in the EU. The EU presence in Milan was also sufficiently distinct from these other initiatives in that it focused very much on children and young people and appealed to feelings and emotions instead of being mainly informative; therefore providing a complementary offering.

¹²¹ Given the timeframe of this evaluation, there is no information available on whether these outcomes are sustainable and will result in effective trade agreements between the companies involved.

¹²² Jean-Claude Juncker, A New Start for Europe: My Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change, Political Guidelines for the next European Commission, 15 July 2014 [online:]
http://ec.europa.eu/about/juncker-commission/docs/pg_en.pdf

8.5. Efficiency

This section considers the value of the results delivered by the EU presence in World Expo Milano in relation to the total costs (i.e. financial, organisational and human resources). Here we argue that the EU managed to reach and make a real impression on the targeted audiences, but had to spend more per person than some other countries.

- **The EU presence in Milan had strong effects on strategic audiences, but with a higher cost per visitor than some other countries.** People with fairly positive or neutral views of the EU, as well as children and young people, were more positive of the EU after their visit. But other countries were able to engage larger flows of visitors and as a result had lower costs per visitor. Cost-effectiveness could therefore be improved by, on the one hand, improving the capacity to attract visitors (e.g. with a more attractive exterior design and a restaurant/shop) and, on the other, enhancing the positive outcomes of the visit (e.g. improving the content centre) and re-utilising the communication products that have been produced (e.g. "The Golden Ear" film).
- **The EU Scientific Programme was the element of the project that provided most value for money.** At a relatively low cost, the EU managed to engage numerous experts and international stakeholders in high quality discussions which could potentially impact policy developments. Moreover, the facilities of the EU pavilion for holding events and meetings ensured also high value for money for event organisers including EU institutions, Member States, VIPs and Italian institutions. Finally, it should be noted that the trade impact of the EU and Third Country events has not been established yet, but it is nevertheless a central factor for examining cost-effectiveness of the EU participation in the Expo.
- **The commitment and flexibility of the EU Expo Task Force, in addition to strong financial processes, ensured the successful delivery of the project, but some aspects could have been accomplished more cost-effectively.** There were a number of operational challenges which could have been mitigated with the presence of more experienced staff and a clearer management structure. This affected the planning and implementation of the initiative and prevented the EU from maximising the impact of its presence.

8.6. EU added value

This is the examination of the benefits derived from the EU presence in World Expo Milano measured against what could have been achieved by Member States on their own. Here we argue that the EU presence in the Expo complemented that of Member States and created important opportunities in terms of communication, public diplomacy, and business-to-business (B2B) affairs. Moreover, the evaluation shows that there is scope for building on the successful relationship established with Member States in this Expo and creating additional value.

- **The EU was the best positioned actor to communicate to the general public about the Europe.** Significant efforts were made in this respect and this was evident in the way the pavilion talked about the EU, focusing on shared values such as peace, solidarity and friendship. Moreover, the story of Alex and Sylvia featured a competition for the best bread where wheat was presented as the grain that bound Europe together. There were additional

actions initiated by the EU Expo Task Force with the aim of linking the EU pavilion's narrative with Member States, for example, the recipe card and landmark initiative¹²³ and the collection of pictures of historic bread-related paintings and bakery photos from each Member State incorporated into the EU pavilion's visitor experience. But the importance of bread as the main unifying concept was not sufficiently taken up by visitors mainly due to the weaknesses identified in the design of the visitor experience that were mentioned in section 1.3 (e.g. loads of information and images to absorb in a limited amount of time)

- **The EU Expo Task Force fulfilled a facilitating role in the relationship between EU institutions, Member States and Third Countries and emerged as a hub for public diplomacy.** The efforts of the EU Expo Task Force to connect and organise meetings between representatives from EU institutions, Member States and other participating countries helped to transform the EU pavilion in a hub of public diplomacy. The proactivity of the EU Expo Task Force in connecting and organising these meetings and visits was a central element of the project. It helped the EU pavilion become a 'house' or common venue where high-level representatives could meet, exchange information and knowledge, and hold events and bilateral meetings. This was key for enhancing the visibility of the EU in the Expo and conveying a positive image of the EU in member countries. It also helped to identify a high level of interest of various stakeholders in working together with the EU.
- **The high level of appreciation of the EU's facilitating role by Member States shows that there is scope to further enhance cooperation.** There was agreement among the Member States consulted that that the EU is a global player that has greater capacity than individual Member States to impact on the more political aspects of Expos. Therefore, the EU should continue on the path of being a platform for arriving to consensus and advocating for the development of EU messages in relation to the global problems faced today.
- **The EU presence in World Expo Milano generated opportunities for discussing potential trade agreements with Third Country businesses, also for Member States not present in the Expo.** The eight EU-Third Country Events organised by the Commission counted with the participation of almost 2,000 representatives (companies and institutions) from 83 different countries, including eight Member States which were not present in the Expo (i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal and Sweden). More than 4,200 B2B meetings were organised, with nearly two out of ten meetings resulting in trade agreements or on-going negotiations.¹²⁴ This was judged as one of the most important B2B initiatives in the Expo which benefited the EU Member States in a way which could not have been possible without the EU presence in Milan.

8.7.Recommendations

The decision to participate in future International and Universal Expos (or any other mass/international events) is a political one and therefore beyond the scope of this evaluation. However, the evaluation gathered substantial evidence about how

¹²³ Visitors could take away national bread recipes from the different Member States pavilions and 'The Golden Ear' poster with corresponding national landmarks in the background.

¹²⁴ In the case of B2B meetings organised by the external contractor (PROMOS), five out of ten meetings resulted in positive outcomes.

participation in such events could be improved. The following recommendations present this, with a view to informing future decision-making and improving performance, especially with regard to communication initiatives where the EU may have a physical presence and may intend to reach either ordinary citizens or stakeholders:

- **Keep track of upcoming mass / international events and systematically assess the pros and cons of participating:** International / mass events such as World Expos are unique occasions for communicating with the general public. As these take place periodically and the location and content of the events are defined in advance by the organisers, it would be possible for the Commission to develop procedures for a regular review of the calendar of upcoming events (e.g. every two years) and to decide whether it would be advantageous to have an EU presence. This should take into account that not participating also implies certain costs (e.g. from a reputational perspective). An early decision about the events in which the EU will participate (which is recommended to be of at least 3 years before the event takes place) will ensure that preparations start on time and make it easier to formulate and execute a strategy to maximise impact. Later operational, financial and administrative choices could then be made on these important initial principles.
- **For any events were the EU decides to participate, it should consider the factors listed below and, in particular, that political commitment at the highest level proves to be a necessary condition for ensuring that the EU takes full advantage of its participation and that there is follow-up action to take forward the event's results.**
 - **Goals and objectives:** these should be defined clearly and early and understood by all the actors involved. This should facilitate the design and implementation of the project, and help agree on clear and measurable objectives, target audiences, messages and activities.
 - **Coherence:** there should be plausible links between EU participation in any specific event and other relevant policies/initiatives (at global or EU level). This will allow the EU to identify potential partners, ensure their buy-in and thereby maximise leverage and impacts.
 - **Adaptability:** given the uniqueness of each individual event and frequency with which conditions change, on-going reflection and flexibility in terms of approaches, planning and delivery should help ensure success despite unforeseen developments (e.g. changes in political priorities, swings in visitors/participants, difficulties with contractors, etc.).
- **The EU should focus on all areas where it can add value.** It is important that the EU does not focus only on the communication dimension of participating in events, but also on political and economic aspects. Whereas the communication effects of the EU participation in events are more evident and can be easily assessed in terms of visitor/participant numbers and level of appreciation of the initiative, the evaluation showed that there are powerful complementary actions that the EU can undertake in order to maximise the benefits of participation. The EU's contribution to the scientific/policy debate around the Expo theme and the creation of opportunities for contributing to growth and jobs made the EU participation in Milan worth more than expected. This also talks of the areas in which the EU can add more value vis-à-vis the presence of Member States.
- **Build on the approach of talking to ordinary citizens.** The evaluation found that implementing a new way of communicating with citizens – one that

intends to generate feelings or emotions towards the EU – has paid off. It is important to note too that even though this creative communication approach allowed the Commission to go beyond the institutional communication style, it felt a bit short in being informative and explanatory of what the EU does and means for its citizens. We recommend that the Commission adopts a more concrete and focused approach taking into account the insights generated in this evaluation:

- People wanted to know more about EU policies and how exactly these affect their everyday life
 - People did not have enough time to read or interact with touch-screens and panels
 - Children were the most interested in listening stories of the EU and were the ones that knew less about it
 - People appreciated when there was a person available for answering their questions and providing additional information
 - In calling people's attention, design and location are important aspects
- **Young people can be continued to be involved as volunteers, ambassadors or multipliers of the EU's messages**, especially among their peers; however, they should not be entitled with the responsibility of talking about EU policies with citizens. This should be the role of Commission officials and/or policy experts present on-site. This recommendation is particularly important in view of the results of the visitor surveys which pointed to the desire and interest of people of getting more information about the EU and its policies.
 - **Show a unified EU to give more force to the message.** Seek this by enhancing inter-institutional collaboration, pooling of resources and expertise. This implies avoiding the inertia of having the Commission (and its DGs) working separately from other EU institutions. Synergies with DGs and the European Parliament proved to be very beneficial in this occasion, especially in terms of attracting high level experts and stakeholders to participate in events, ensuring a high number of VIP visits, and communicating unified messages on the theme of the Expo on social media. In achieving this, it is important that the various EU institutions are engaged early in the planning phase and that there is a mechanism for fostering the collaboration (e.g. the Inter-service Working Group). In the case of the Parliament, it was beneficial to include a representative in the EU Expo Task Force, facilitating participation and contribution to the decision-making process, as well as sense of ownership of the initiative. Also, it is possible to reinforce the "unified EU" visual identity with a stronger use of EU visuals/logos rather than the Commission's.
 - **In line with the above, the EU should continue pursuing a coherent and coordinated presence with Member States.** This evaluation showed that there is interest in having a closer collaboration between the EU and Member States. Interviews with Member States' pavilions senior officials showed that there is good will for coordinating specific actions (e.g. scientific/policy events and discussions and joint cultural activities) and looking for efficiency gains in sharing/pooling resources.
 - **Promote the EU presence beyond the site/venue of the event in order to enhance communication impact and a high flow of visitors and stakeholders.** The EU presence in Milan (as well as of other countries such as the United Kingdom) was not extensively promoted outside of Milan/Italy.

Using traditional communication material (banners in buses, airports etc.), social media, ambassadors and public relations can help to maximise impact beyond the frontiers of the hosting country and increase visitor/participant numbers. Also related to this is the dissemination of information on the results of the event, particularly in the case of policy follow-ups and/or economic/trade gains, which would provide additional visibility to the EU and the benefits of participation. Moreover, it is important that stakeholders involved in the initiative know about post-event actions.

- **In terms of project management, the evaluation pointed to the following needs:**
 - **Consider centralising the organisation of EU presence at events, but giving the relevant DG(s) a central role.** This would allow that the experience and learning gained remains in the organisation, which would result in a more efficient use of resources. In events happening outside Brussels, it is also important to involve the relevant Commission Delegation or Representation (and possibly European Parliament Information Office), as well as the European External Action Service (EEAS), in order to gain access to the local press and stakeholders and maximise visibility in the country.
 - **For each event, set up a task force that involves all relevant actors and an integrated management approach.** The task force should include people from the relevant DGs, as well as people with experience in similar events. There should also be a clear definition of roles and responsibilities and a decision making structure and process. Functions that are central to be defined early in the preparation phase and that are filled in by highly experienced people are the events operations and logistic managers. These should participate in definitions of design, resources and budget.
 - **Consider the use of open calls for tender for engaging contractors.** If the time allows, this would provide more options for selecting and negotiating with contractors than using existing framework contracts. Also, it would be advisable to allow a more flexible management of resources and create contingency budgets. If feasible and appropriate to a specific event, setting up a bar or shop can help to partly fund the EU presence and/or raise money for charity. Moreover, bars/shops can be part of the communication aspect too (e.g. a bar with EU certified food can help to promote the value of EU certification).
 - **Repeat the approach of involving evaluators early in the implementation phase and of strong cooperation with the evaluation team.** These were key success factors in the current evaluation, which resulted in potentially useful findings, conclusions and recommendations. From the methodological side, the evaluation would have benefited from clearer indications of the paths to achieve communication, political and growth and jobs impact. In this sense, we would recommend the Commission to develop intervention logic diagrams that can then be tested during the evaluation.
- **In terms of assessing the EU participation in World Expos or other similar events, we would recommend the European Commission to develop an evaluation framework to track performance and draw comparisons across Expos/events.** There is scope for improving the measurement of EU's performance at Expos in order to increase comparability of results. The lack of such framework has made it difficult to gauge the

performance of the EU at Milan in view of what was achieved in past Expos and how it could be improved. Below we suggest some measures for achieving this:

- **Put a system in place to support the generation, storing and sharing of (anonymised) data sets:** Raw data coming from surveys/interviews of visitors should be integrated into a large data set that could be made accessible to evaluators to draw comparisons between present and past evaluations. This would help with the problem of comparison between evaluations since often evaluators only have access to the evaluation report, and not the data used for figures. In addition, this could also serve as a benchmarking database for Commission communication activities.
- **Use the limited number of variables that were defined in the Terms of Reference of this evaluation to measure the success of future events, independently of additional variables that could be proposed in view of the specific objectives of each event:** Variables that would be interesting to measure across time (and countries where Expos/events take place) are: audience reached (including visitors to the pavilion and people reached via other means such as social media or traditional media), visitor/audience profile (e.g. age, gender, country of residence, occupation, level of education, views on the EU), overall level of satisfaction with the pavilion, awareness of messages, likelihood of recommending the pavilion to others (net promoter score), and views on the EU prior and after the visit.
- **Develop guidelines that specify parameters regarding the definition of variables/concepts (e.g. visitor satisfaction, audience reached) and methods for collecting data (e.g. on-the-spot/online surveys, interviews, etc.)** to allow for consistency and comparison across time and with other Commission communication initiatives.

