

Annexes to Final Report

This document presents annexes I-IV to the final report on DG ECFIN's communication activities.

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Annex I: Survey Reports

I.1. Survey of Stakeholders

Introduction

We conducted a **targeted survey of DG ECFIN's stakeholders** to collect feedback on their **awareness and perceptions of usefulness** of DG ECFIN's communication products and stakeholder engagement.

The questionnaire was aimed at the following target groups, as listed in DG ECFIN's 2019-2024 communication strategy:

- economic opinion-formers, including academia and think tanks,
- trade unions,
- financial institutions and the investor community,
- business,
- civil society / non-governmental organisations,
- university students.

The questionnaire was organised in two sections: Section 1 consisted of three questions aimed at collecting respondents' perceptions of their **current level of information and interest to learn more** about the European Union's role in fulfilling the objectives identified in DG ECFIN's communication strategy 2019-2024; Section 2 consisted of ten questions, aimed at assessing respondents':

- awareness and perceptions of the usefulness of **DG ECFIN's publications programme**,
- awareness and perceptions of the usefulness of **DG ECFIN's stakeholder engagement programme**,
- perceptions of **DG ECFIN's social media**.

The survey was launched on 29 July 2022 and closed on 5 September 2022. The survey link was advertised via DG ECFIN's newsletter and on DG ECFIN's website. European Semester Officers were also asked to distribute it widely within their relevant stakeholder networks. Overall, **285 respondents** contributed to the survey.

Recoding of variables

We recoded the variable "Other" for Question 2: "Which of the following best described your current main occupation?" to account for those respondents who worked for national / local governments and European institutions.

Our two new variables, called **"national / local government"** and **"European institution"**, were derived from responses to an open comment, which asked those respondents, who indicated "Other" in response to question 2, to please elaborate:

- "national / local government" captures those respondents, who indicated in open comments that they worked for "national administrations", "national governments", "ministries" or "governments",
- "European institution" captures those respondents, who indicated in open comments that they worked for the "European Commission", "European Union", "EU institution", "EU agency".

Survey results

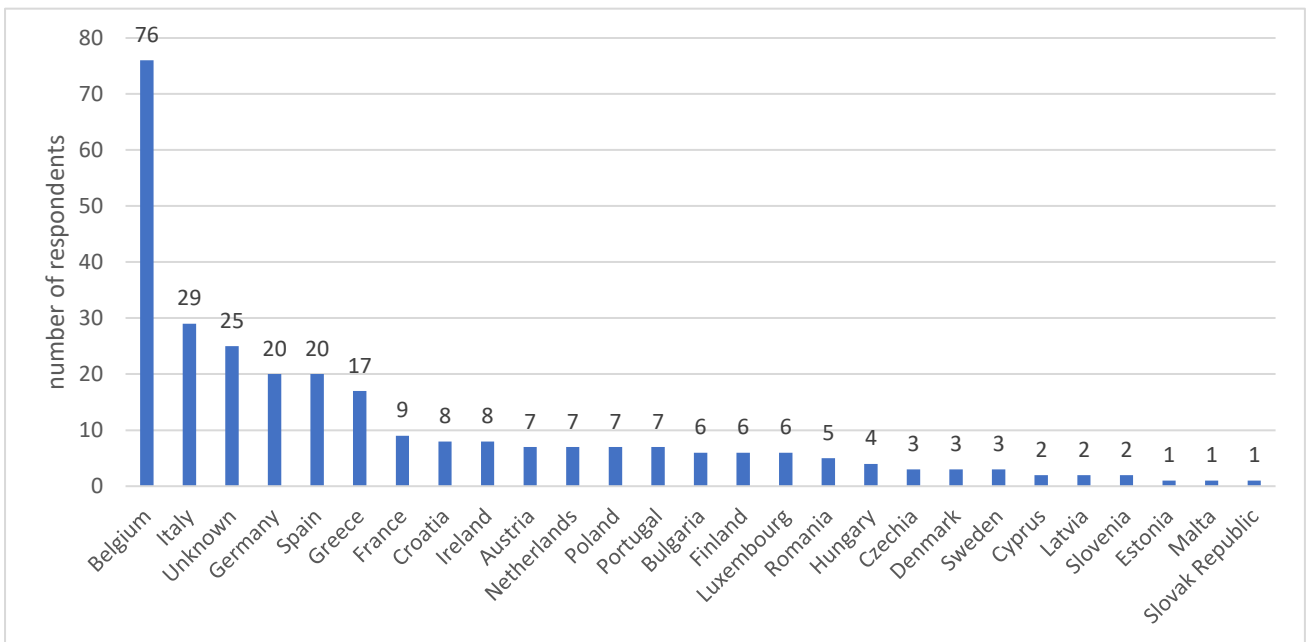
The analysis below presents **descriptive statistics** (frequencies and cross-tabulations) for each survey question, as well as **recurrent themes** that emerged from the qualitative analysis of open comments. Where relevant, we included an **analysis by stakeholder group** for those with 20 or more respondents in the sample:

- Other (n=45)
- National / local government (n=38)
- Business sector (n=35)
- Financial institution (n=35)
- CSOs / NGOs (n=34)
- Academia (n=30)
- Think tank (n=22)

Respondents' profile

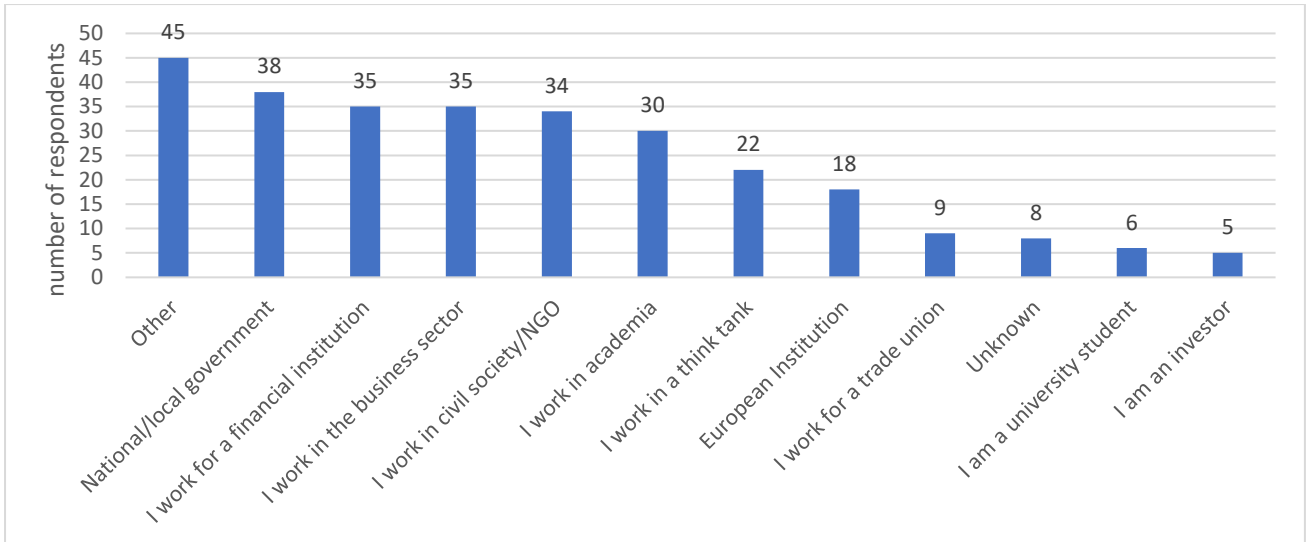
Overall, **285 respondents** contributed to the survey. They represented all EU Member States, apart from Lithuania. The **largest proportion was from Belgium** (27%, 76 out of 285 respondents), followed by Italy (10%, 29 out of 285 respondents), Germany and Spain (7%, 20 out of 285 respondents, respectively).

Figure 1: Your country of residence:



In terms of their **current main occupation**, the largest proportion of respondents indicated “Other” (16%, 45 out of 285 respondents). Of those, most specified in open comments that they worked for the media or were retired. Large shares of the sample also worked for national / local governments (13%, 38 out of 285 respondents), financial institutions and the business sector (12%, 35 out of 285 respondents, respectively), and civil society / non-governmental organisations (11%, 34 out of 285 respondents).

Figure 2: Which of the following best describes your current main occupation?



Relevance of DG ECFIN’s communication objectives

To assess the relevance of DG ECFIN’s communication objectives, respondents were asked **how well informed** they felt about how the European Union contributed to several policy areas relevant to DG ECFIN. The question was formulated based on DG ECFIN’s communication objectives stated in the communication strategy 2019-2024, specifically:

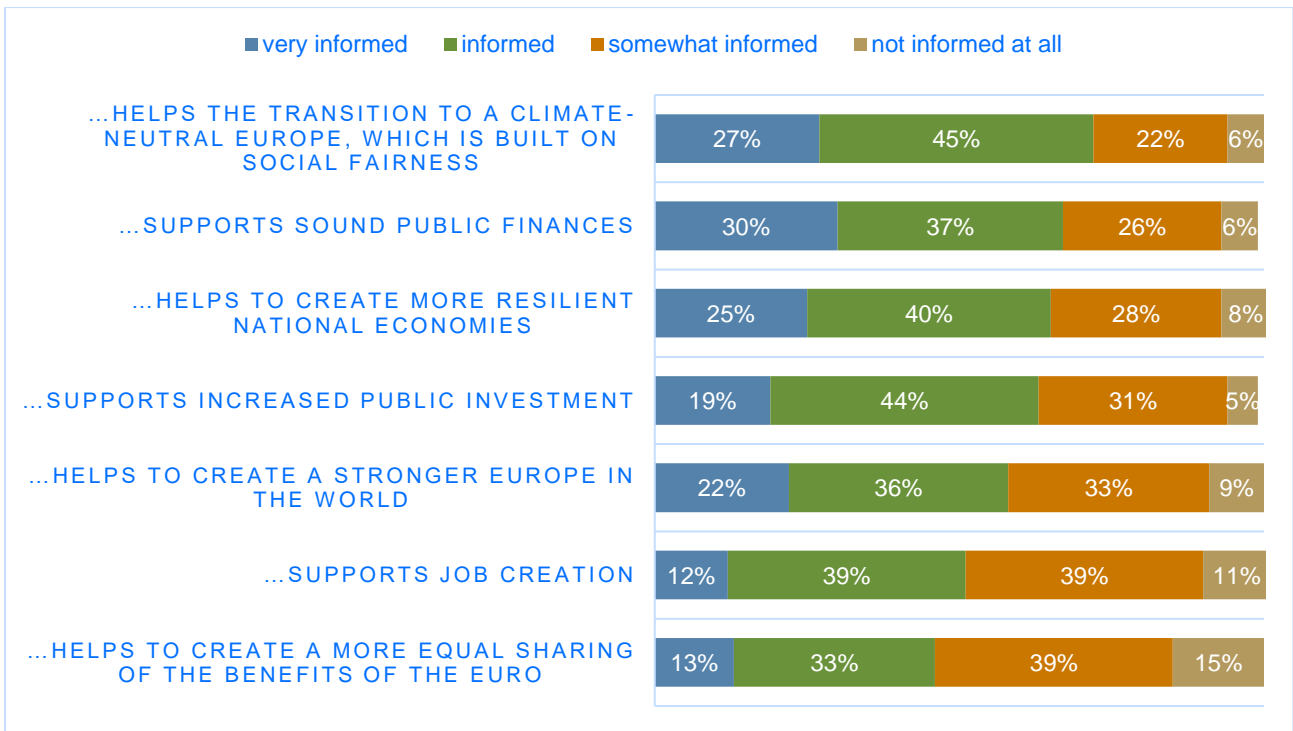
“To inform and explain how the economic policies of the Commission are helping the transition to a climate-neutral and future-ready Europe built on social fairness, and how they support creating jobs, sustainable and inclusive growth and investment, sound public finances and financial stability; communicate how economic policy coordination and the Commission’s proposals help to create more resilient national economies, a stronger Europe in the world, and a more equal sharing of the benefits of the euro; raise awareness of EU instruments for unlocking investment for managing the climate and digital transitions; shape the economic policy debate at the EU level; and influence policy-making at the EU and national level in line with policies developed by the DG, in particular by means of active engagement with key stakeholders.”

Most respondents felt “very informed” and “informed” about how the European Union:

- **helps the transition to a climate-neutral Europe, which is built on social fairness (72%),**
- supports sound public finances (67%),
- helps to create more resilient national economies (65%),
- supports increased public investment (63%).

Respondents reported that they felt comparatively **less informed** about how the European Union helps to create a more equal sharing of the benefits of the Euro (46%) and supports job creation (51%).

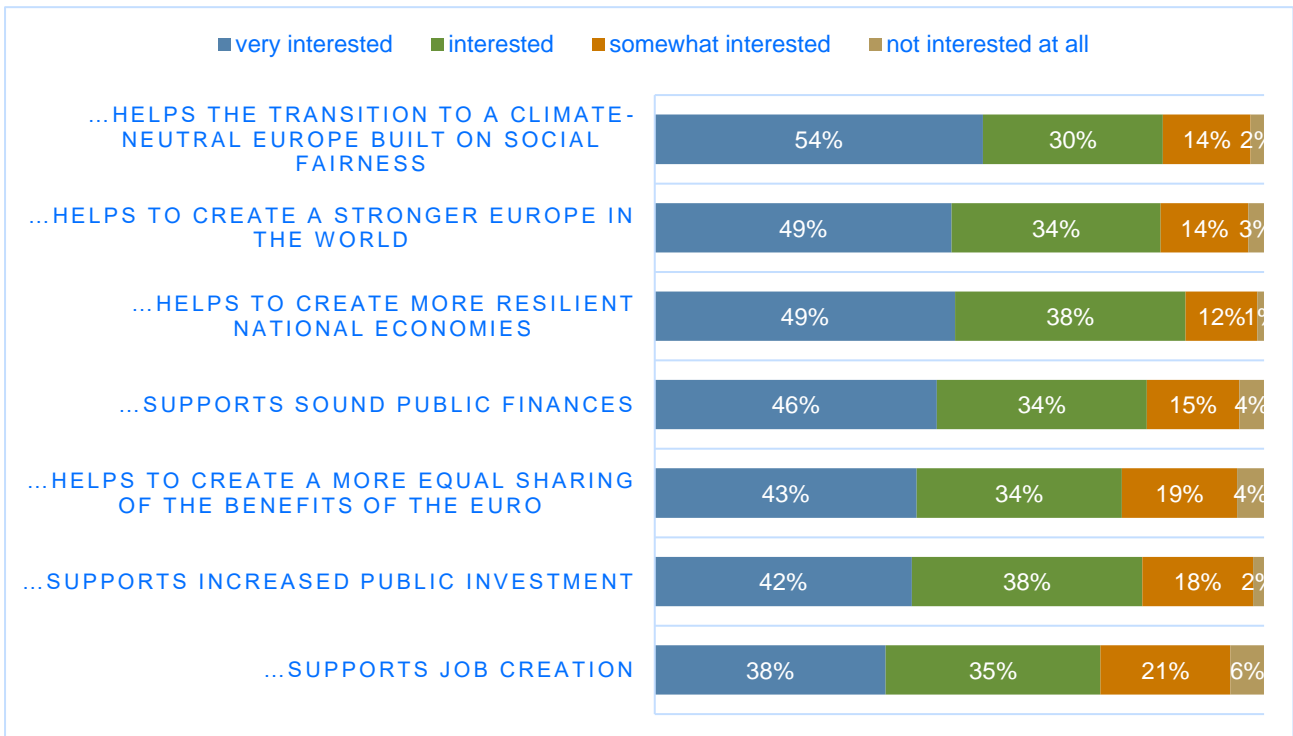
Figure 3: How well informed do you feel about how the European Union...



Respondents were then asked to what extent they were **interested to learn more** about how the European Union contributed to these policy areas.

Most were “very interested” to learn more about **how the European Union helps to transition to a climate-neutral Europe (54%)**, and almost half of the respondents (49%, respectively) were “very interested” to learn more about how the European Union helps to create a stronger Europe in the world and how it helps to create more resilient national economies.

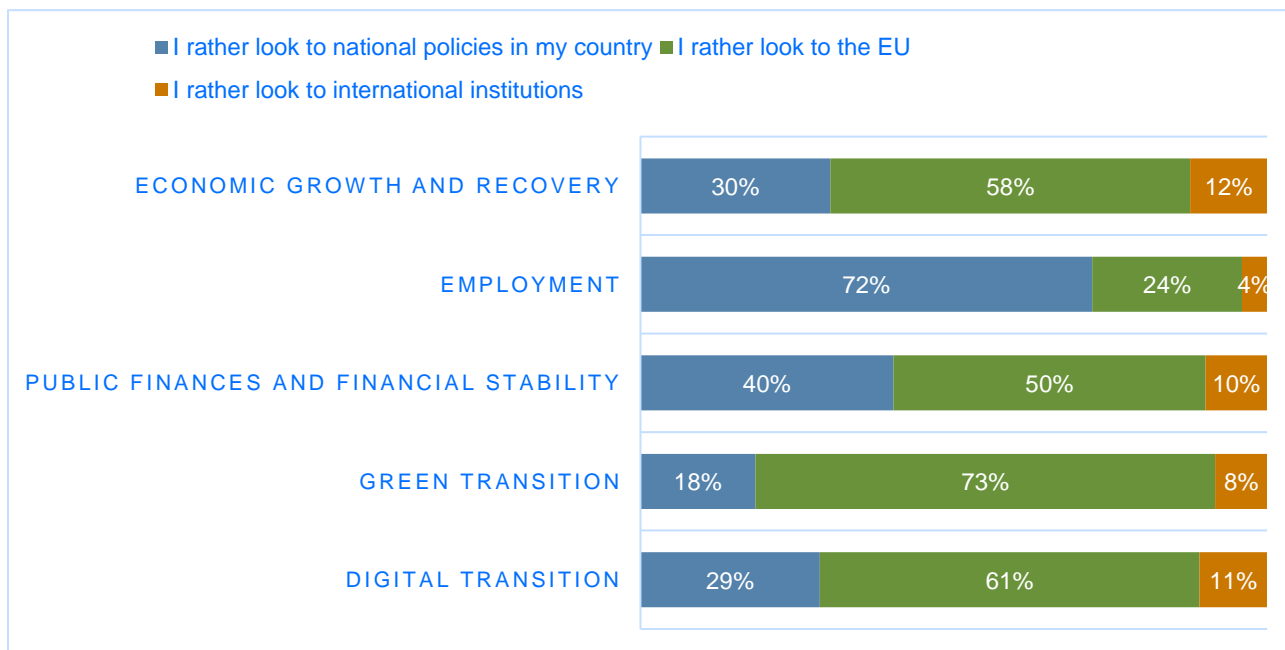
Figure 4: To what extent are you interested to learn more about how the European Union...



Respondents were then asked to what extent they **rather looked to the EU, international institutions and/or to national policies in their country** on several topics that are reflected in DG ECFIN's communication objectives: economic growth and recovery, employment, green transition, digital transition, public finances and financial stability.

Most respondents “rather looked to the EU” on green transition (73%), digital transition (61%) and economic growth and recovery (58%). On the topic of employment, most respondents (72%) rather looked to national policies in their country. Only very small proportions of respondents looked to international institutions on these topics.

Figure 5: To what extent do you rather look to the EU, international institutions and/or national policies in your country on the following topics:

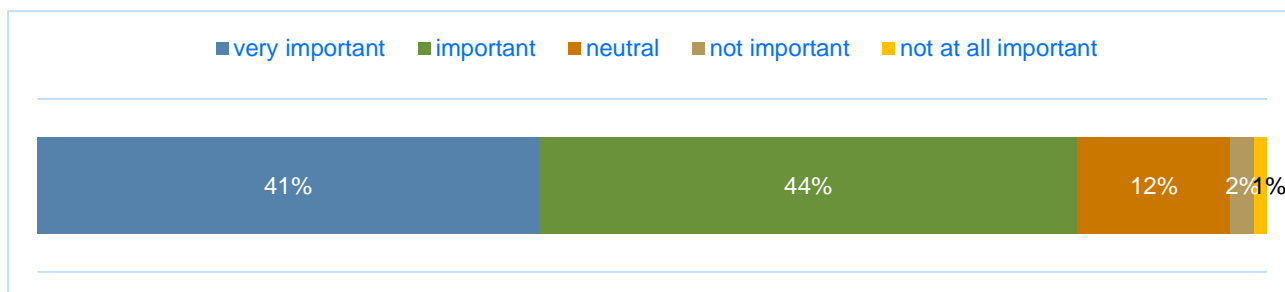


Finally, respondents were asked **how familiar they were with policies supported by DG ECFIN**.

Most (73%) indicated that they were **familiar with DG ECFIN**. These respondents were then directed to the second section of the questionnaire, which first enquired **how important updates from DG ECFIN were for respondents' work or studies**.

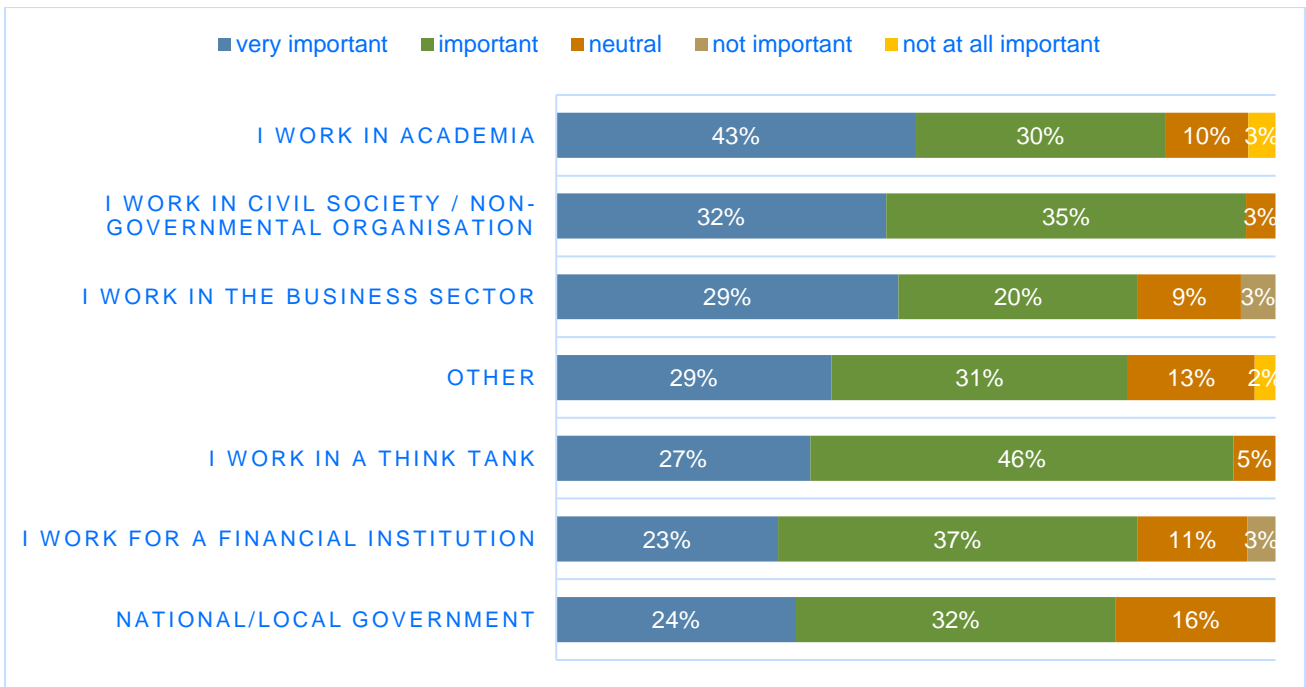
The vast majority of respondents (85%) indicated that updates from DG ECFIN were **“very important”** and **“important”** for their work (41% and 44%, respectively).

Figure 6: How important are updates from DG ECFIN for your work / studies?



The share of respondents who indicated that updates from DG ECFIN were “very important” for their work was particularly high among those working in academia (43%) and civil society / non-governmental organisations (32%).

Figure 7: Importance of updates from DG ECFIN for work/studies by stakeholder group



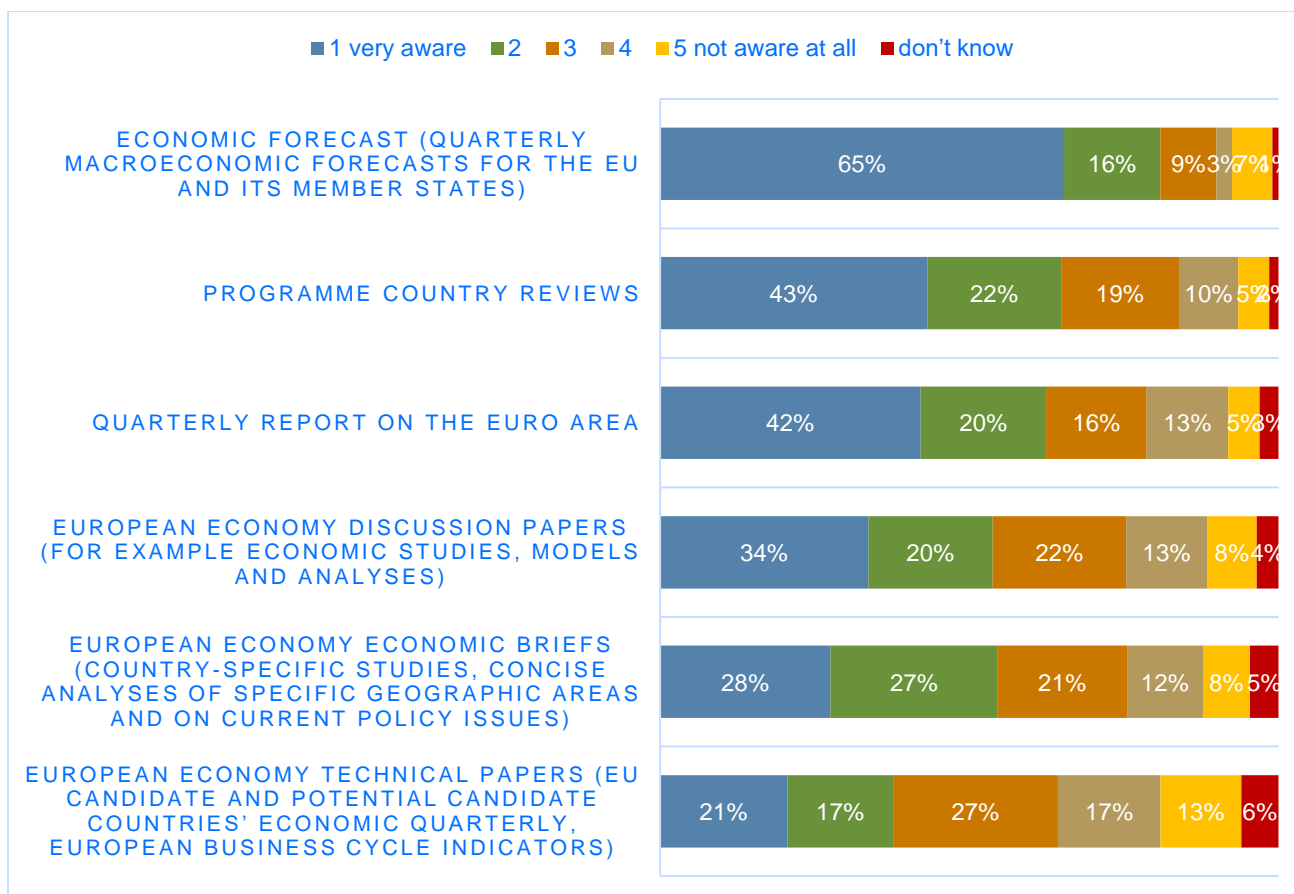
Effectiveness of DG ECFIN's communication products

Respondents were then asked about their **awareness and perceptions of usefulness** of DG ECFIN's communication products and stakeholder engagement, namely publications, events and social media.

Publications

In terms of materials published by DG ECFIN, **65% of respondents reported that they were “very aware” of the Economic Forecasts**. Most were also “very aware” and “aware” of the Programme country reviews, quarterly report on the Euro area, and European Economy Discussion papers. Respondents were comparatively less aware about the European Economy Technical Papers.

Figure 8: To what extent are you aware of the following materials published by DG ECFIN? (1-very aware to 5-not aware at all)

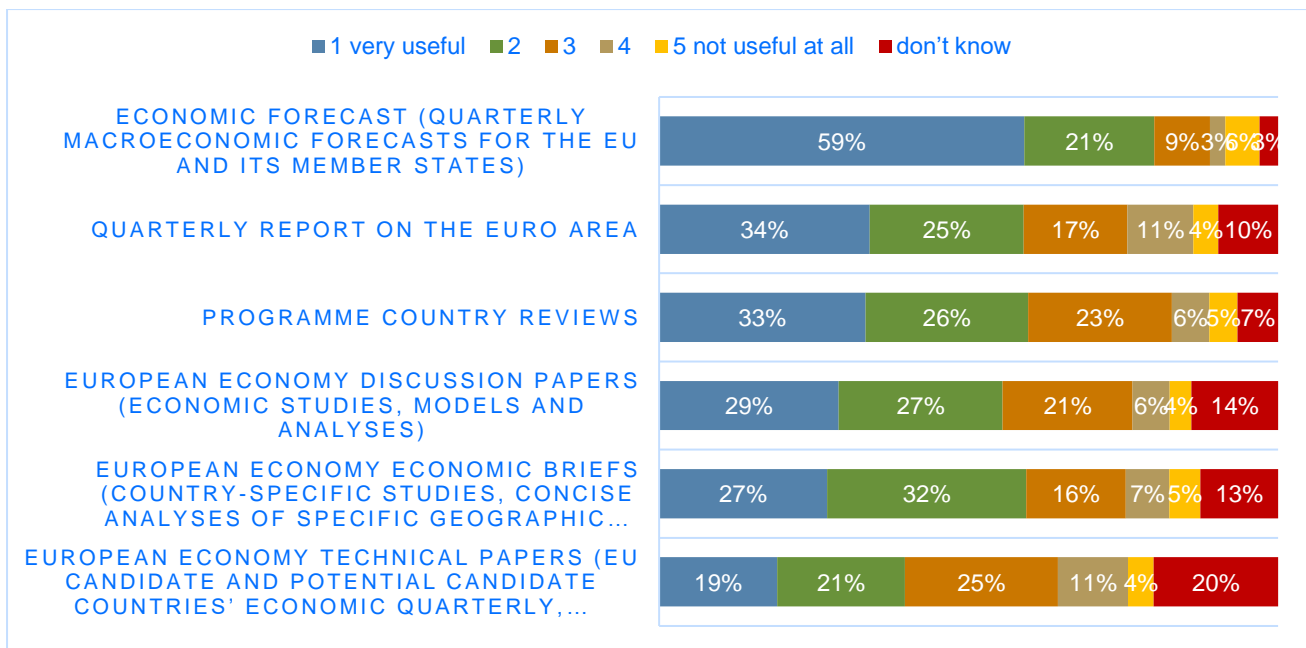


Awareness of DG ECFIN’s publications was generally highest among academics, think tanks and national / local governments, and lowest among those working in business:

- Awareness of the Economic Forecasts was particularly high among those working in academia (76% reported being “very aware” and “aware”), followed by think tanks (68%), national / local governments (63%), and financial institutions (54%). Those working for civil society / non-governmental organisations and business reported lower levels of awareness (44% and 43%, respective, reported being “very aware” and “aware”).
- Awareness of the Programme Country Reviews was highest among academics, think tanks, and national / local governments (67%, 55% and 56%, respectively, reported being “very aware” and “aware”) and lowest among those working in the business sector (31%).
- Awareness of the Quarterly Report on the Euro Area was highest among academics and national / local government (64% and 57%, respectively, reported being “very aware” and “aware”, compared with 33% of those working for civil society / non-governmental organisations and 28% working in business).
- Awareness of the Economy Economic Briefs was highest among academics and national / local governments (50% and 55%, respectively reported being “very aware” and “aware”) and lowest among financial institutions (32%) and business (28%).
- Awareness of the European Economy Discussion Papers was highest among academics and think tanks (55% and 54%, respectively, reported being “very aware” and “aware”) and lowest among business (36%) and civil society / non-governmental organisations (37%).
- Awareness about the European Economy Technical Papers was low among all stakeholder groups.

The Economic Forecasts were considered “very useful” by 59% of respondents. Similarly, the Quarterly Report on the Euro Area, Programme country reviews, European Economy Discussion Papers, and European Economy Discussion Papers and European Economy Economic Briefs were considered **“very useful” and “useful”** by most respondents.

Figure 9: To what extent do you find these materials useful? (1-very useful to 5-not useful at all)



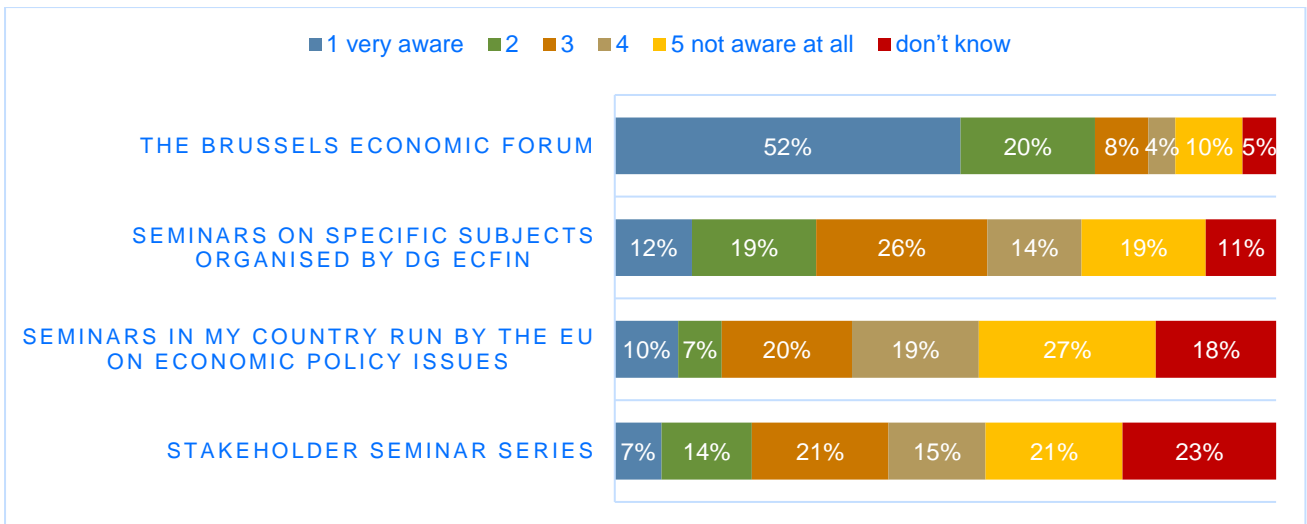
In open comments, 83 respondents contributed their suggestions for how the usefulness of these materials could be improved. These mainly related to the need for a more comprehensive products targeted at the wider public. They also noted that the structure of the website could be improved, on which the publications are hosted, to make it more user friendly.

The usefulness of DG ECFIN's publications was generally assessed highest by academics, with the exception of the programme country reviews:

- 73% of academics indicated that the Economic Forecasts were “very useful” and “useful” compared with 58% of national / local authorities and 54% of those working in a think tank.
- Programme country reviews were considered most useful by think tanks (46% indicated “very useful” and “useful”), financial institutions (43%) and civil society / non-governmental organisations (39%).
- The Quarterly Report on the Euro Area was considered most useful by academics (60%), followed by think tanks (45%) and national / local government (42%), and least useful by those working for civil society / non-governmental organisations (33%).
- The European Economy Economic Briefs were considered most useful by academics (46%) and least useful by those working in the business sector (34%).
- The European Economy Discussion Papers were considered most useful by academics (53%), and less than half of the respondents in the remaining stakeholder groups.
- The European Economy Technical Papers were rated as less useful by all stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder engagement

In terms of **DG ECFIN initiatives**, most respondents were “very aware” of the **Brussels Economic Forum (52%)**. However, respondents reported much less awareness of seminars on specific subjects organised by DG ECFIN, seminars in their country run by the EU on economic policy issues, and stakeholder seminar series.



Awareness of the Brussels Economic Forum was particularly high among academics (66%), national / local government (56%) and think tanks (64%), and lowest among those working in the business sector (40%).

Awareness of the other DG ECFIN initiatives for stakeholder engagement was low in all stakeholder groups.

Social media

However, **most respondents “did not know” how to assess DG ECFIN’s social media** (Twitter and Facebook) in terms of the frequency and timing of posts, interactivity of posts, posts being tailored to the respondents, DG ECFIN listening and engaging, and DG ECFIN’s social media showing a human face / personal story. These proportions were high among all stakeholder groups on each item.

Figure 10: How do you rate DG ECFIN’s use of Twitter?

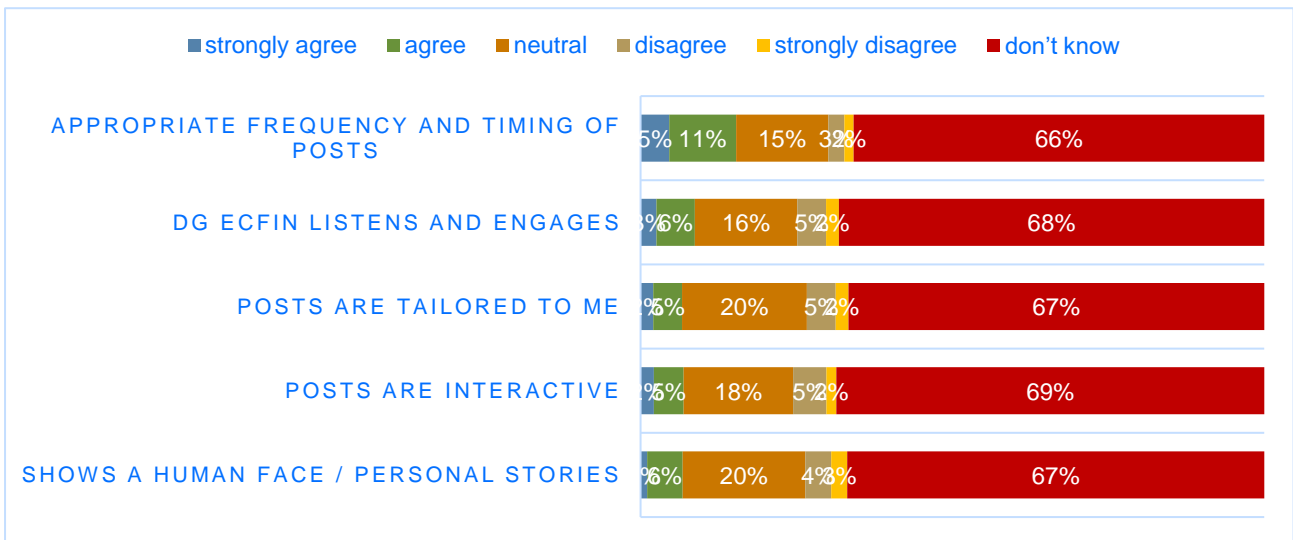
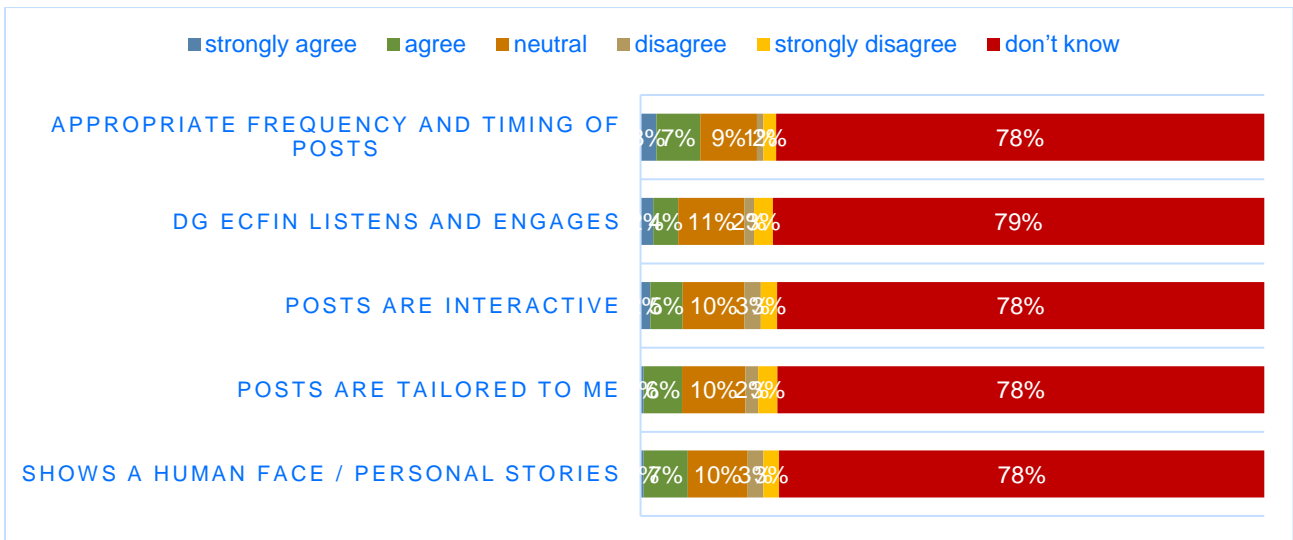


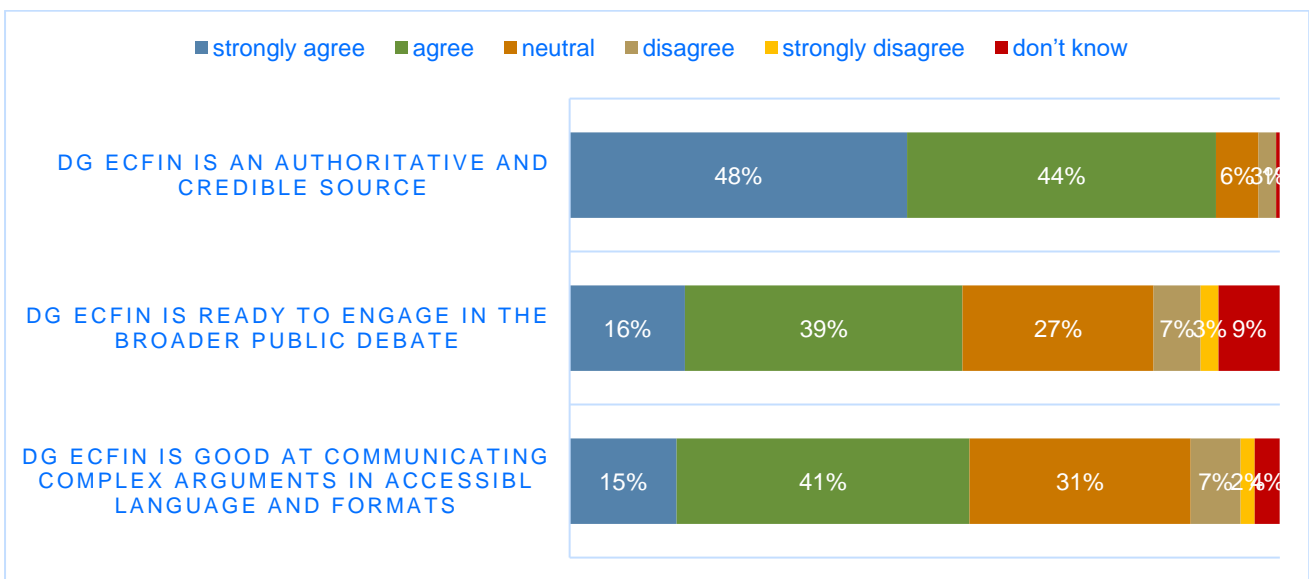
Figure 11: How do you rate DG ECFIN’s use of Facebook?



In open comments, 61 respondents contributed suggestions on how DG ECFIN's use of social media could be improved, which mainly centred on broadening reach via short, simple videos, wider tag policy, engaging with comments on Twitter, organising more live seminars and workshops on social media, posting more personal / human stories, and expanding the social media use to YouTube and LinkedIn.

Communication objectives

The vast majority of respondents (92%) “agreed” and “strongly agreed” that DG ECFIN was an authoritative and credible source. Most also “agreed” and “strongly agreed” that DG ECFIN was ready to engage in the broader public debate and good at communicating complex arguments in accessible language and formats. But here over one third of respondents reported that they were “neutral” or “did not know”.



In open comments, 48 respondents elaborated on their answer choices. The main recurrent theme that emerged was that if DG ECFIN wanted to engage in the broader public debate, communication would need to change to make it more accessible for the wider public.

DG ECFIN was considered an authoritative and credible source especially among those respondents who worked in academia (76%) and think tanks (78%), and least among those working in the business sector (62%).

Respondents working in academia indicated the highest level of agreement with the statement that DG ECFIN was good at communicating complex arguments in accessible language and formats (60%), compared with those working for financial institutions and the business sector (32% and 35%, respectively).

Respondents working in academia and civil society / non-governmental organisations indicated the highest level of agreement with the statement that DG ECFIN was ready to engage in the broader public debate (53% and 45%, respectively) compared with those working in financial institutions (23%).

I.2. Survey of national authorities

Introduction

We conducted a **survey of national authorities** to collect feedback on **their perceptions of the usefulness of DG ECFIN’s communication products**, and insights about **their experiences of informing and engaging national audiences on economic policy issues and the Recovery and Resilience Facility**.

The survey consisted of 20 questions and was divided into three sections with questions about:

- stakeholder engagement on economic policy issues in respondents’ countries,
- respondents’ engagement with EU-level economic policy debates,
- communication about the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

The survey was launched on 29 July 2022 and closed on 2 December 2022. It was distributed by DG ECFIN via a contact in the EFC Secretariat who assisted by circulating the invitation among the EFC Alternates.

Respondents’ profile

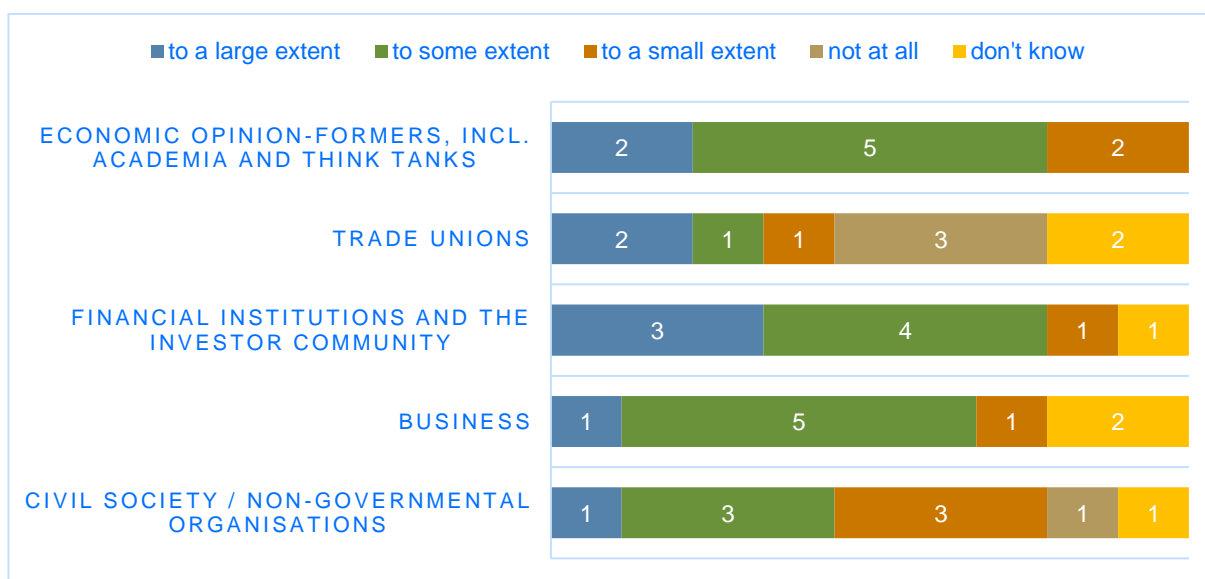
Overall, **nine respondents** contributed to the survey of national authorities. They represented Czechia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Romania, and one unknown. Four respondents worked for their Ministries of Finance, and the rest in Central Banks or national financial institutions in their Member States.

Stakeholder engagement on economic policy issues

Respondents were first asked about **the types of stakeholders and ways in which they informed and engaged with them on economic policy issues** at the national level.

Respondents indicated that they engaged with **economic opinion-formers, financial institutions and the investor community, business and civil society / non-governmental organisations** “to a large” or “to some extent”. The stakeholder group that respondents engaged with the least was trade unions.

Figure 12: To what extent do you engage with the following stakeholders on economic policy issues in your country?



As for the ways in which their governments informed and engaged with these stakeholders on economic policy issues, respondents most frequently indicated **events and formal dialogues, fora or committees**, and least frequently online consultations, studies / special interest publications, and by joining stakeholder networks.

In open comments, five respondents specified that the mechanisms that their governments used to inform and engage stakeholders on economic policy issues included both online and offline consultations through working groups established by ministers and through ad hoc meetings. Other mechanisms mentioned were social media, publications, specific conference-style meetings and through various entities such as a forum (e.g., National Economic Dialogue, Ireland) and a central institution governing the social dialogue (e.g., Comité de Coordination Tripartite, Luxembourg).

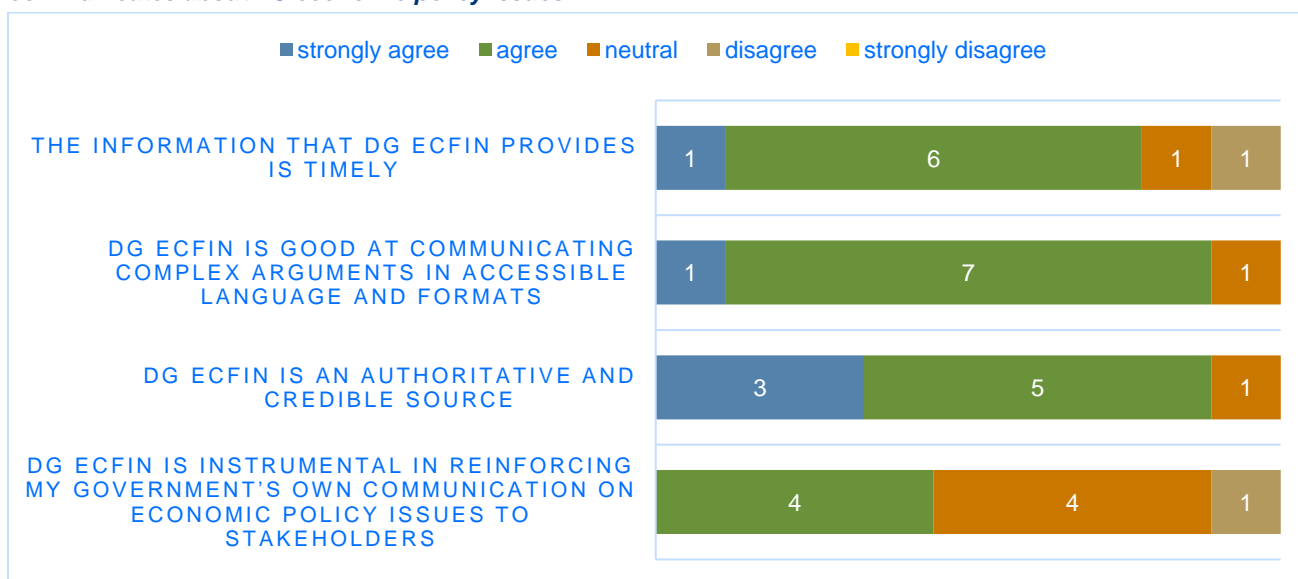
Engagement with EU-level economic policy debates

Respondents were then asked about the **ways in which they engaged with EU-level economic policy debates**, the **perceived usefulness of DG ECFIN’s communication products**, and **suggestions for better engagement in the future**.

Almost all respondents (eight out of nine) followed economic policy debates taking place at the EU level “to a large extent”, and all were aware of the work of DG ECFIN.

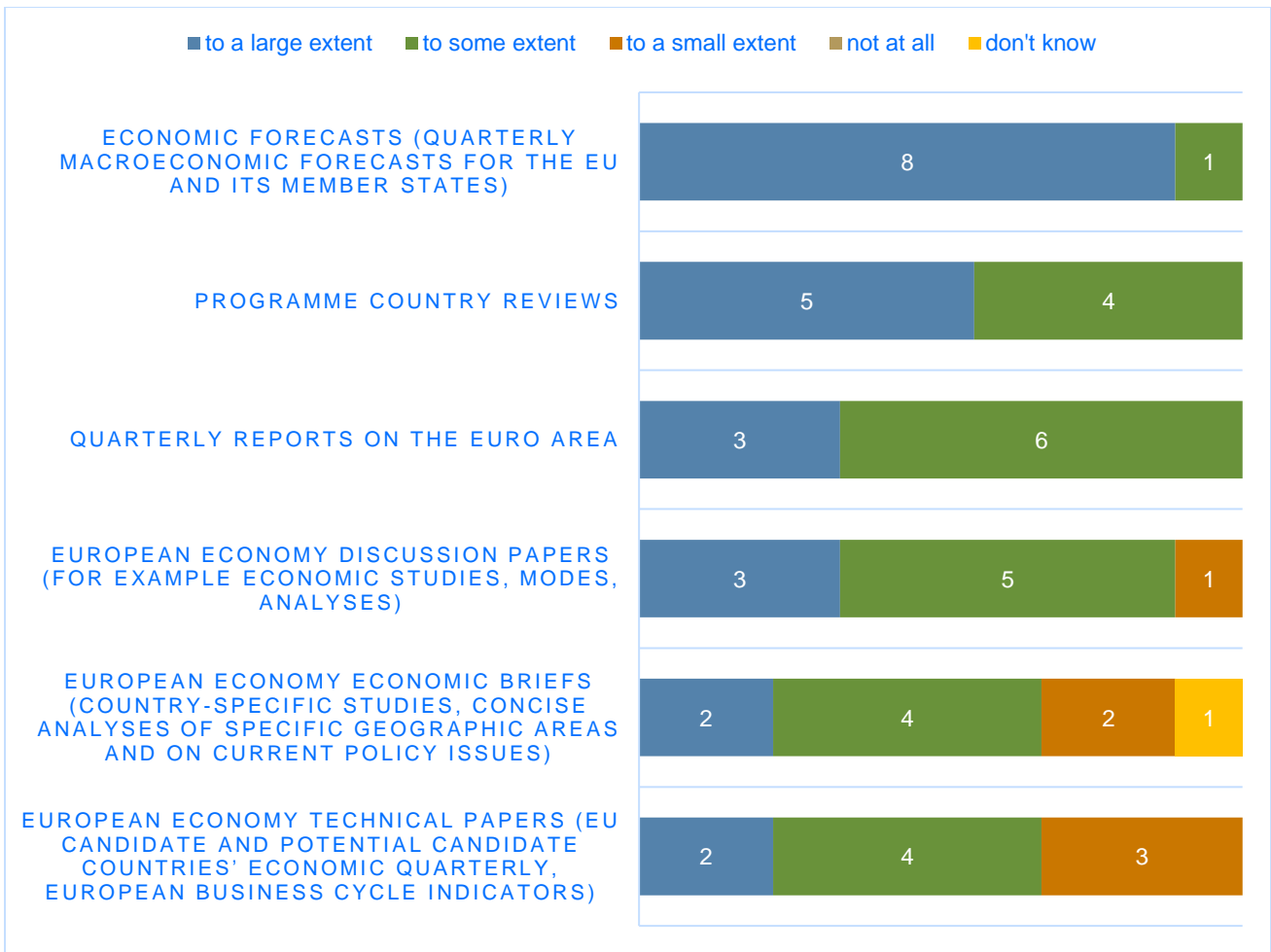
Respondents tended to agree that **the information that DG ECFIN provided was timely**. They also tended to agree that **DG ECFIN was good at communicating complex arguments in accessible language and formats**, and that **DG ECFIN was an authoritative and credible source**. Respondents were split between agreeing and being neutral / disagreeing on whether DG ECFIN was instrumental in reinforcing their government’s own communication on economic policy issues to stakeholders.

Figure 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on the ways in which DG ECFIN communicates about EU economic policy issues:



DG ECFIN’s publications that respondents deemed **most useful were the Economic Forecasts**, followed by Programme Country Reviews and the Quarterly Reports on the Euro Area.

Figure 14: To what extent do you find the following publications by DG ECFIN useful:



DG ECFIN’s events were also generally perceived as **useful**. However, large shares of respondents “**did not know**” how to answer the question about the **usefulness of DG ECFIN’s social media**.

Figure 15: To what extent do you find the following events by DG ECFIN useful:

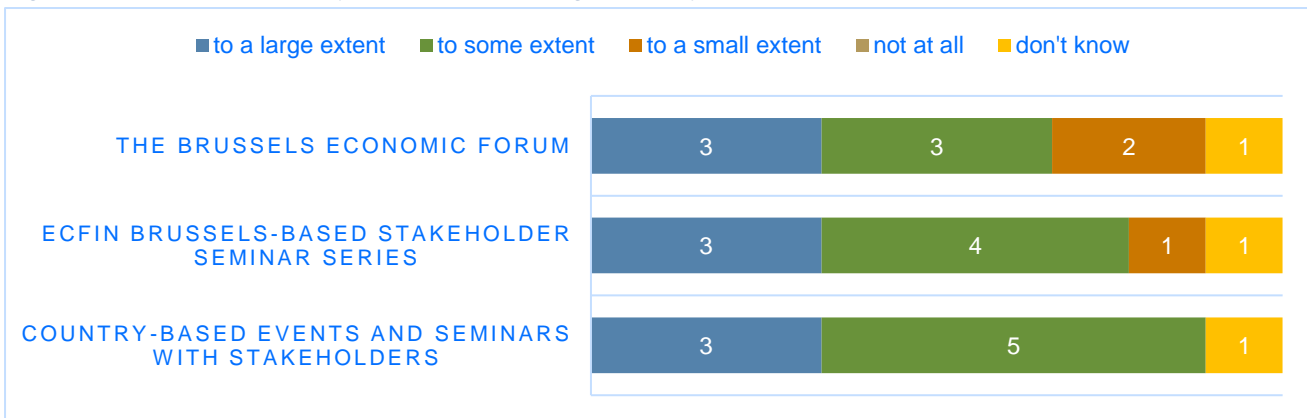
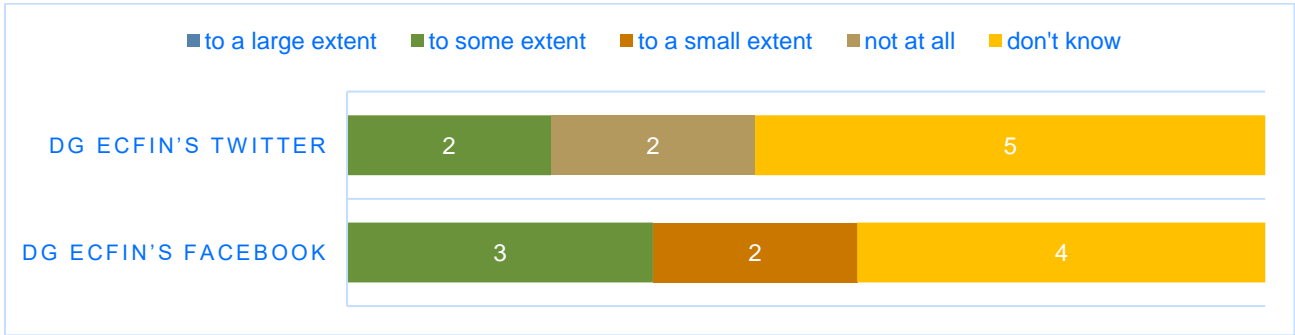
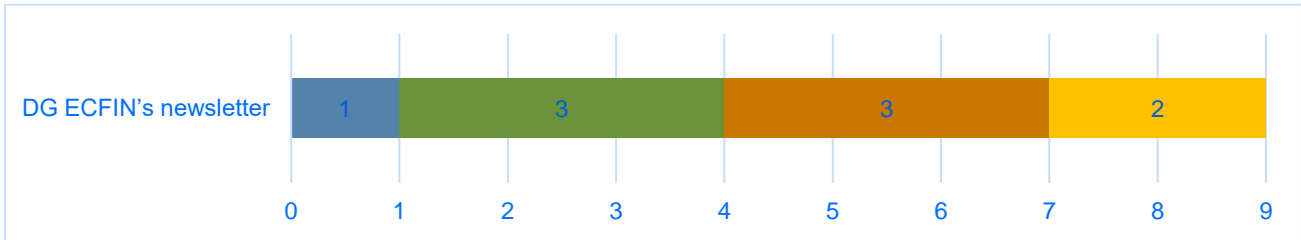


Figure 16: To what extent do you find DG ECFIN's social media useful:



Respondents were also **split on their perceived usefulness of DG ECFIN' newsletter**, with four indicating that it was useful “to a large extent” and “to some extent”, and five indicating that it was useful “to a small extent” or did not know.

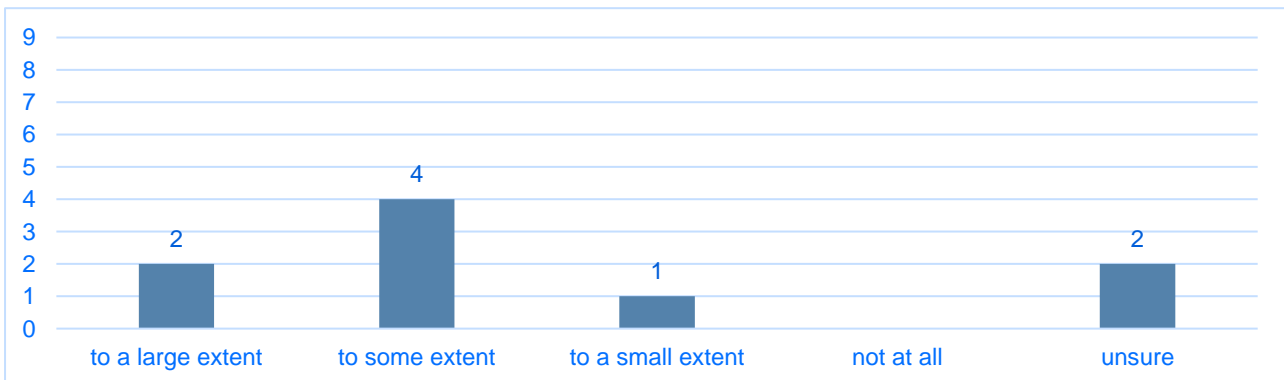
Figure 17: To what extent do you find DG ECFIN's newsletter useful:



Respondents were then asked to rank, by order of preference, what ways they thought would be best for the European Commission to interact more on economic policy issues with stakeholders in their country, if it wanted to do so. **“Occasional debates in the capital”, “virtual meetings / Q&As” and “tailored factsheets”** were ranked the highest. “Providing more information through the European Commission Representation in their Member State” and “providing more information through the Europe Direct network” received the lowest ratings.

Respondents indicated that there was generally **scope for closer collaboration between the European Commission / DG ECFIN and their government** to better communicate on the EU’s economic policy and coordination tools at national level.

Figure 18: To what extent do you feel that there is scope for closer collaboration between the European Commission / DG ECFIN and your government to better communicate on the EU's economic policies and coordination tools at national level?



In open comments, five respondents provided examples of areas where they felt that closer collaboration would be possible and desirable, which included **closer communication and centralised information on matters such as economic policy analysis and fiscal issues** would be desirable. Another suggestion involved meetings with national desk officers.

The **stakeholders** that respondents felt **could benefit the most from closer collaboration** between the Commission / DG ECFIN and their government on engaging them in economic policy discussions were **economic opinion-formers, including academia and think tanks, and financial institutions and the investor community**. By contrast, respondents felt that civil society / non-governmental organisations and trade unions would benefit the least from such collaboration.

Communication about the Recovery and Resilience Facility

Finally, respondents were asked about **communication about the Recovery and Resilience Facility in their Member State**.

Most indicated that there was a **“high” level of importance** placed on **promoting awareness of their country’s national Recovery and Resilience Plan** in their government’s own communication strategy.

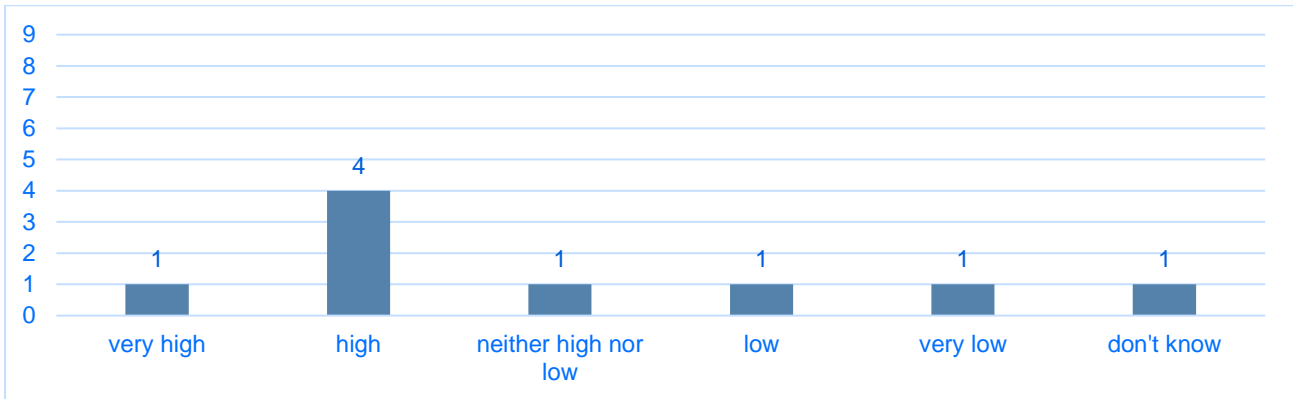
Figure 19: What level of importance is placed on promoting awareness of your country’s national Recovery and Resilience Plan in your government’s own communication strategy?



The **most frequently indicated types of communication activities** that respondents conducted to inform national audiences about the Recovery and Resilience Facility were **ad-hoc special meetings, formal dialogues, fora or committees, and media engagement** (n=4, respectively), followed by events, social media engagement, dedicated websites and stakeholder networks (n=3, respectively). Respondents indicated less frequently campaigns (n=2), online consultations and tailored factsheets (n=1, respectively).

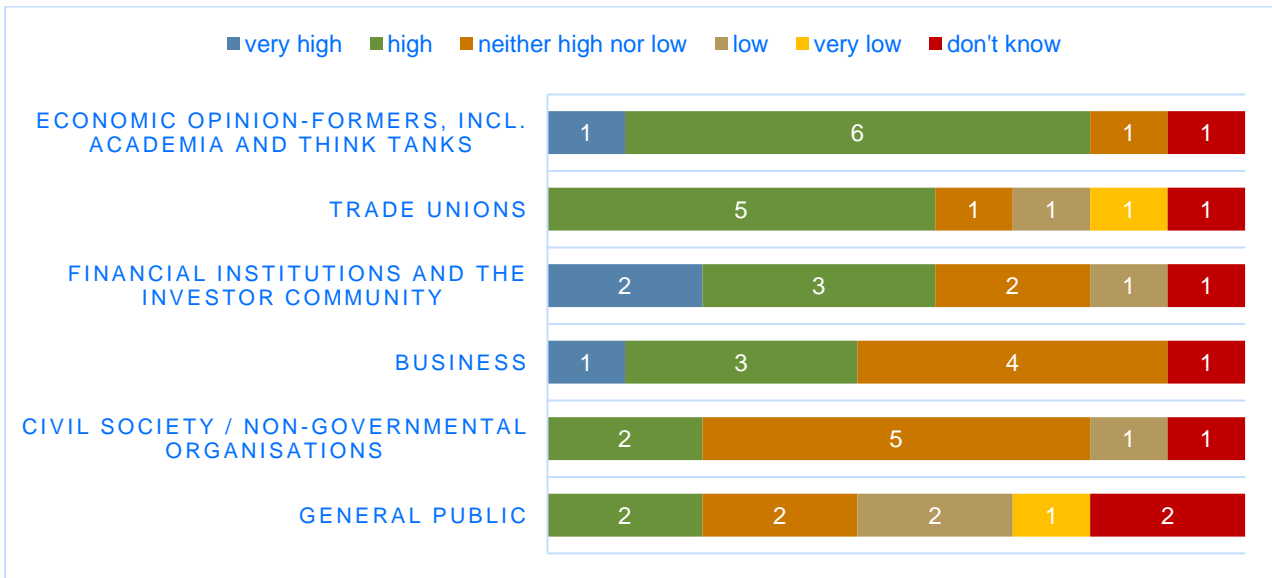
Half of the respondents assessed the level of **visibility** of the Recovery and Resilience Facility in their country overall as **“very high” and “high”**.

Figure 20: How would you assess the level of visibility of the Recovery and Resilience Facility in your country overall?



Respondents assessed the **level of understanding of the role and purpose of the Recovery and Resilience facility highest among economic opinion formers**, including academia and think tanks, as well as financial institutions and the investor community and business, and lowest among civil society / non-governmental organisations and the general public.

Figure 21: How would you assess the level of understanding among the following stakeholders and the general public of the role and purpose of the Recovery and Resilience Facility?

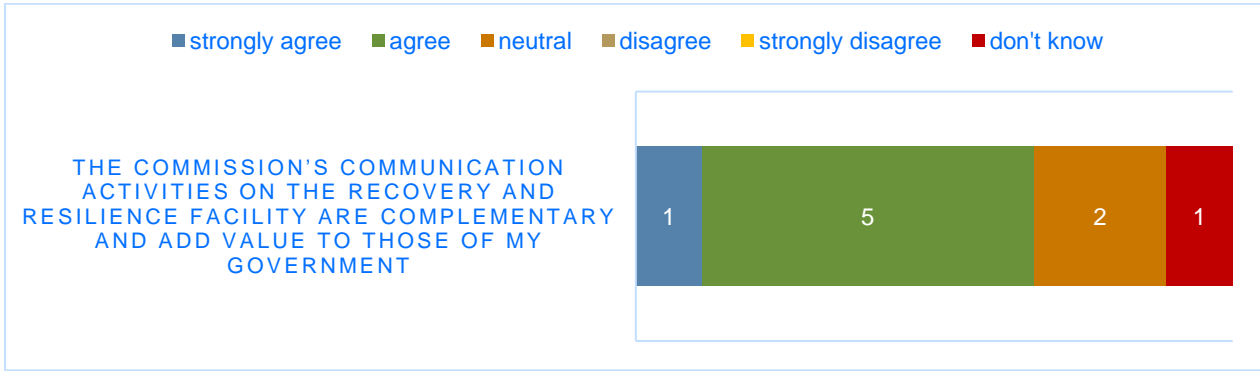


In open comments, respondents raised the issue that **wider society did not know about the RRF beyond think tanks, consultancies and similar institutions**, while other respondents highlighted that due to the small financial allocation under the RRF to their countries, only a limited number of projects were financed at national level.

As for the **main challenges in communicating about the RRF**, six respondents emphasised in open comments that **reaching a wider audience beyond institutions involved** was the main challenge.

Respondents tended to agree that the Commission's communication activities on the Recovery and Resilience Facility were **complementary and added value** to those of their governments.

Figure 22: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:



In open comments, four respondents who previously agreed that the Commission's communication activities on the RRF added value to those of their governments elaborated that the **Commission was viewed in a very positive light in political spheres in their country** and that **EU representatives were in constant dialogue with national authorities** and launched **complementary communication** regarding the national RRP.

I.3 Survey of European Semester Officers

Introduction

We conducted a **survey of European Semester Officers** to collect feedback on their collaboration with DG ECFIN, their perceptions of the usefulness of DG ECFIN's communication products, and insights about their experiences of informing and engaging national audiences on EU economic policy issues and the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

The survey consisted of 24 questions and was divided into three sections that focussed on:

- ESOs' stakeholder engagement on EU economic policy issues in respondents' countries,
- their work with DG ECFIN,
- communication about the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

The survey was launched on 29 July 2022 and closed on 2 December 2022. The survey link was shared by DG ECFIN within the relevant ESOs network. Reminders were sent on 31 August, 8 September and 20 September.

Respondents' profile

Overall, 14 ESOs responded to the survey. They represented Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Italy (n=2), Malta, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and one unknown.

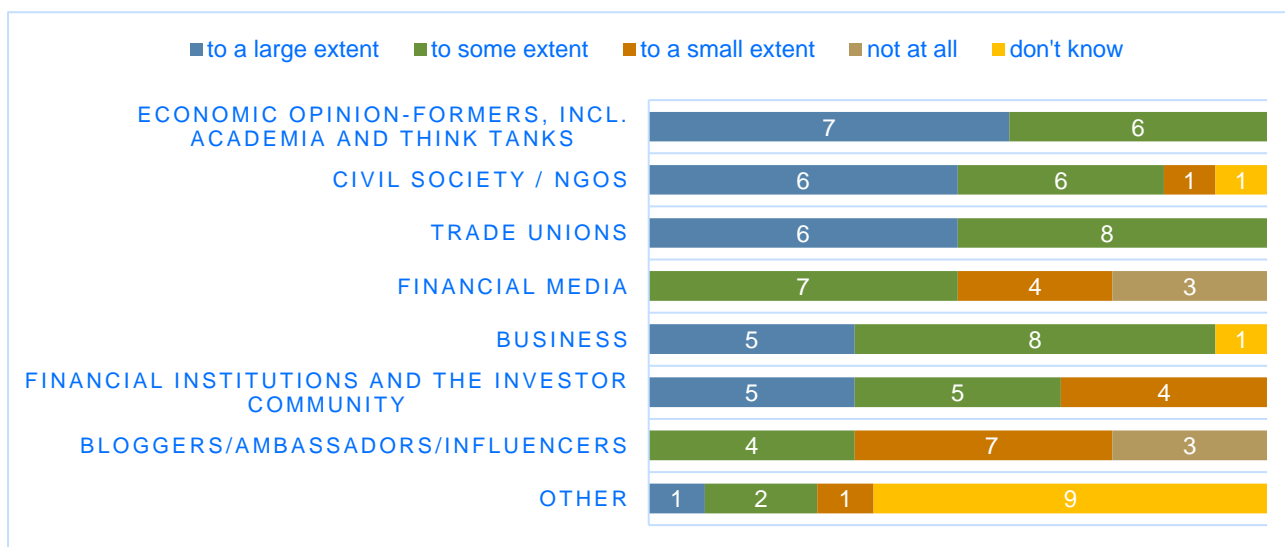
Stakeholder engagement

Respondents were first asked about which stakeholders they engaged with on EU economic policy in their Member State, and the networks they used to do so.

Economic opinion-formers, including academia and think tanks, civil society / non-governmental organisations trade unions and business were the stakeholders that respondents most often indicated that they engaged with "to a large extent" and "to some extent". They engaged to a lesser extent with multipliers, such as bloggers / ambassadors and influencers, and financial media.

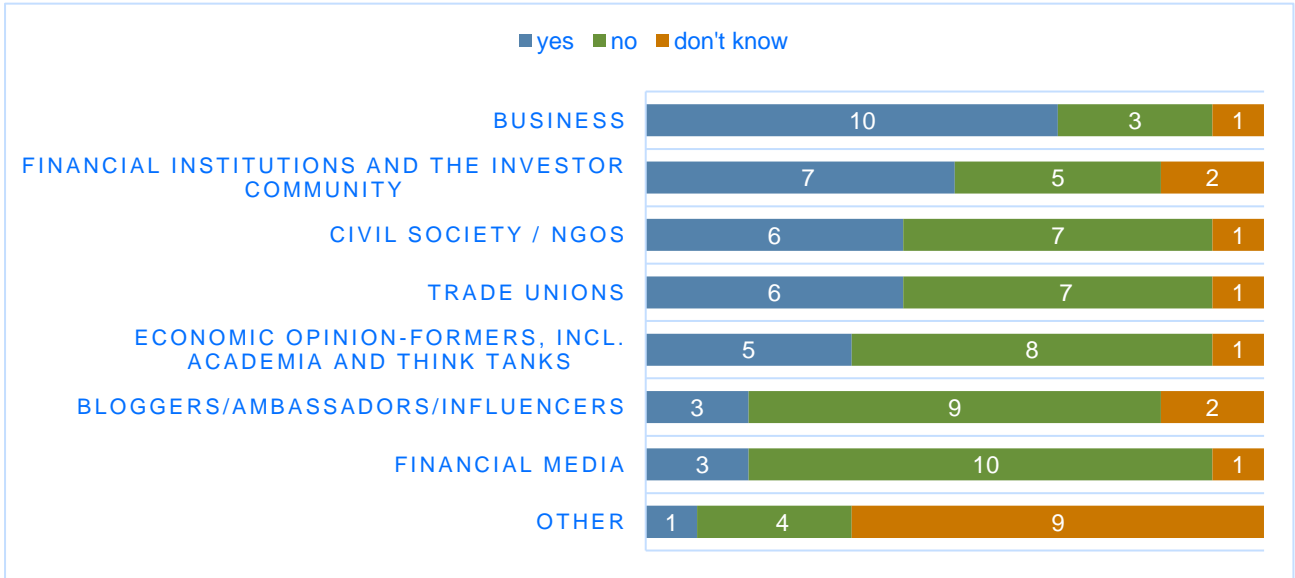
In open comments, four respondents indicated that they engaged with other stakeholders, such as national authorities, schools, and the general public.

Figure 23: To what extent do you engage with the following stakeholders and multipliers on EU economic policy issues in your Member State?



Most respondents confirmed that they engaged with business through specific networks, as did half of the respondents as regards financial institutions and the investor community. For the remaining stakeholder groups and multipliers, most respondents did not engage with them through specific networks.

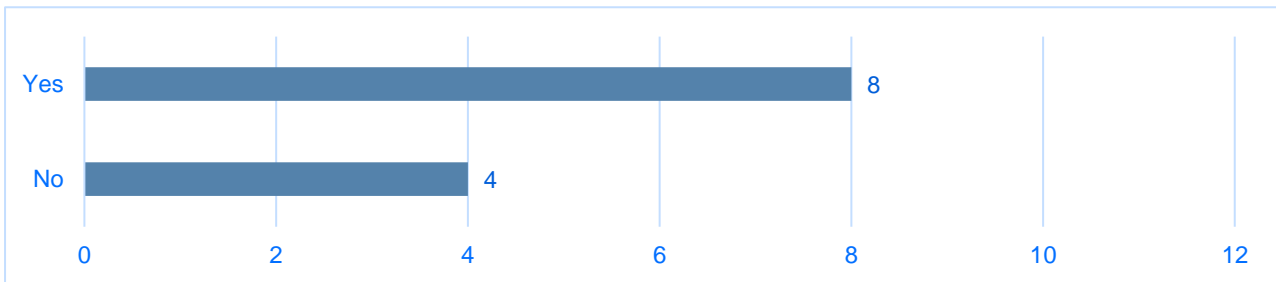
Figure 24: Please confirm whether you do so through specific networks for each type of stakeholders / multipliers?



In open comments, eight respondents specified that the networks they used to engage stakeholders were umbrella organisations, networks of non-governmental organisations, think tanks, investors interest in EU economic policy, Representations' press officer networks, business associations, unions of national trade unions. Some also mentioned creating their own networks through bilateral contacts, meetings and participation in events and conferences.

Eight respondents indicated that they used specific mailing lists to hare information on EU economic policy issues with their national stakeholders / multipliers.

Figure 25: Do you use specific mailing lists to share information on EU economic policy issues with your national stakeholders / multipliers?



Finally, respondents were asked which organisations they thought would be most interested in EU economic policy debates, as DG ECFIN was considering expanding its reach to more non-economic specialists on specific policy topics.

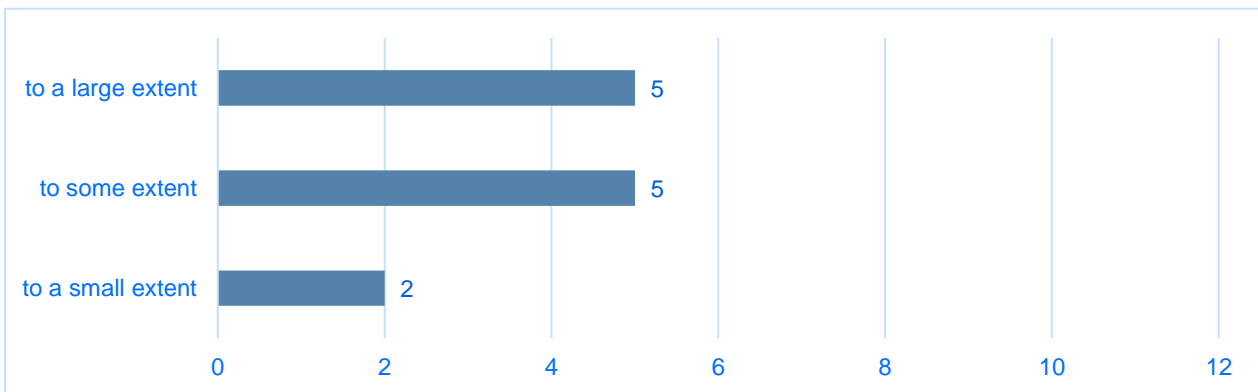
The most frequently indicated organisations were environmental organisations and trade unions (indicated 9 times, respectively), followed by social welfare organisation (indicated 6 times), agricultural organisations and women's associations (indicated 3 times, respectively) and fundamental and citizens' rights organisations (indicated 2 times).

ESOs' work with DG ECFIN

Respondents were then asked a series of questions about their work with DG ECFIN, including the extent to which they relied on DG ECFIN to provide lines to take and content to convey on EU economic policy to national audiences, their general perceptions of DG ECFIN's communication and collaboration with DG ECFIN, the extent to which they used DG ECFIN's communication products and the newsletter in their work, and their perceptions of the usefulness and interest of national audiences to participate in DG ECFIN's events, as well as their views on DG ECFIN's social media. Finally, they were asked to what extent they had capacity to provide additional support to DG ECFIN.

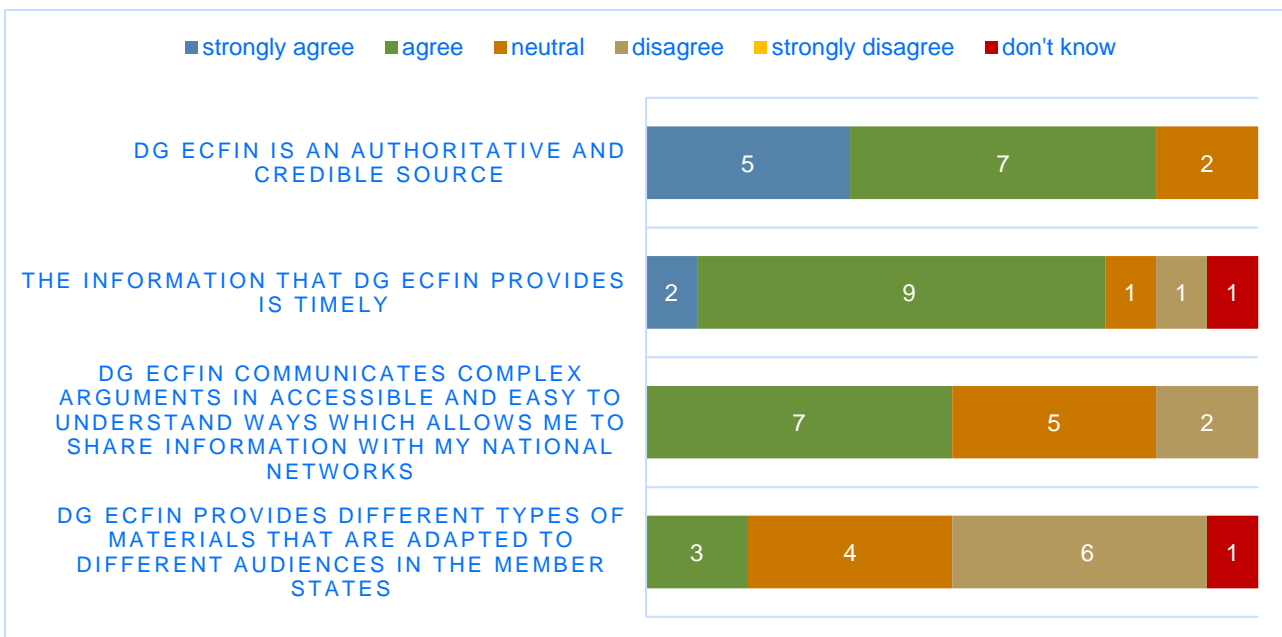
Most respondents indicated that they relied on DG ECFIN to provide lines to take and content to convey the Commission's key economic messages to national audiences "to a large" and "to some extent".

Figure 26: To what extent do you rely on DG ECFIN to provide lines to take and content to convey the Commission's key economic messages to national audiences?



Most respondents "strongly agreed" and "agreed" that DG ECFIN was an authoritative and credible source, and that the information that DG ECFIN provided was timely. There was less agreement with the statement that DG ECFIN provided different types of materials that were adapted to different audiences in the Member States.

Figure 27: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about DG ECFIN's communication:



In open comments, seven respondents noted that the information provided by DG ECFIN was rather targeted at experts and highlighted that briefings for political meetings were also highly technical.

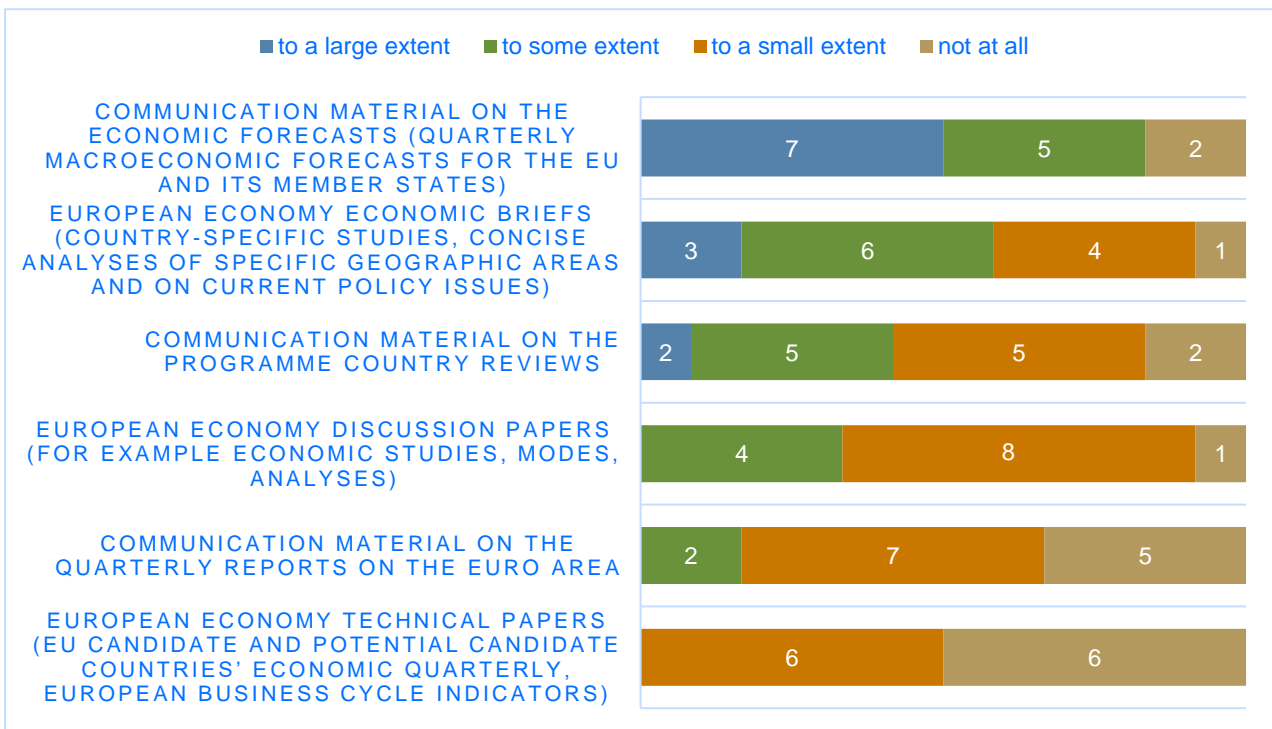
Most respondents rated their collaboration with DG ECFIN as excellent and very good, overall.

Figure 28: How would you rate your collaboration with DG ECFIN overall?



Half of the respondents indicated that they used communication material on the Economic Forecasts “to a large extent” to support their work in their Member States. Most respondents also indicated that they used the European Economy Economic Briefs “to a large extent” and “to some extent”. European Economy Technical Papers were used the least in the respondents’ work.

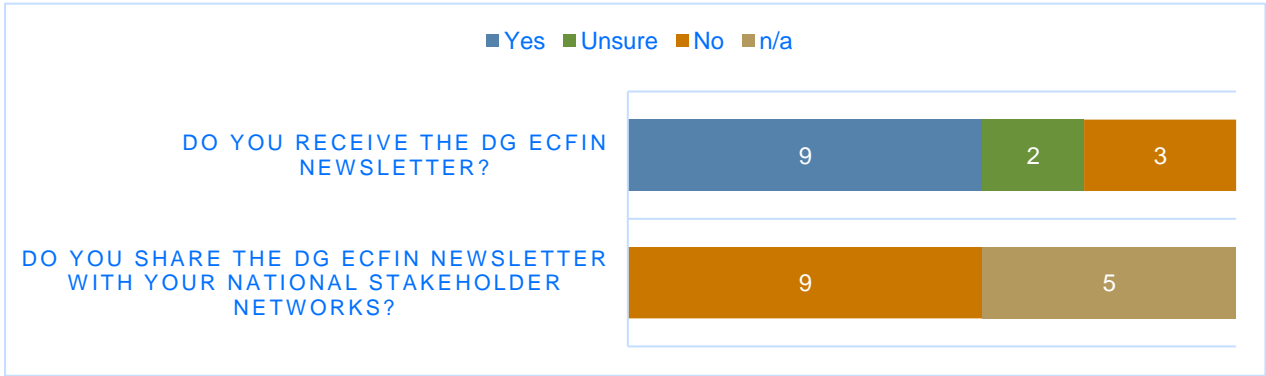
Figure 29: To what extent do you use any of the following communication products to support your work in your Member State?



In open comments, seven respondents specified that DG ECFIN’s communication products were useful for stakeholders, but not for the general public, given their technical nature. They also mentioned that simpler language in some instances and more summaries, visual images, and country-specific slide packs could support the communication effort.

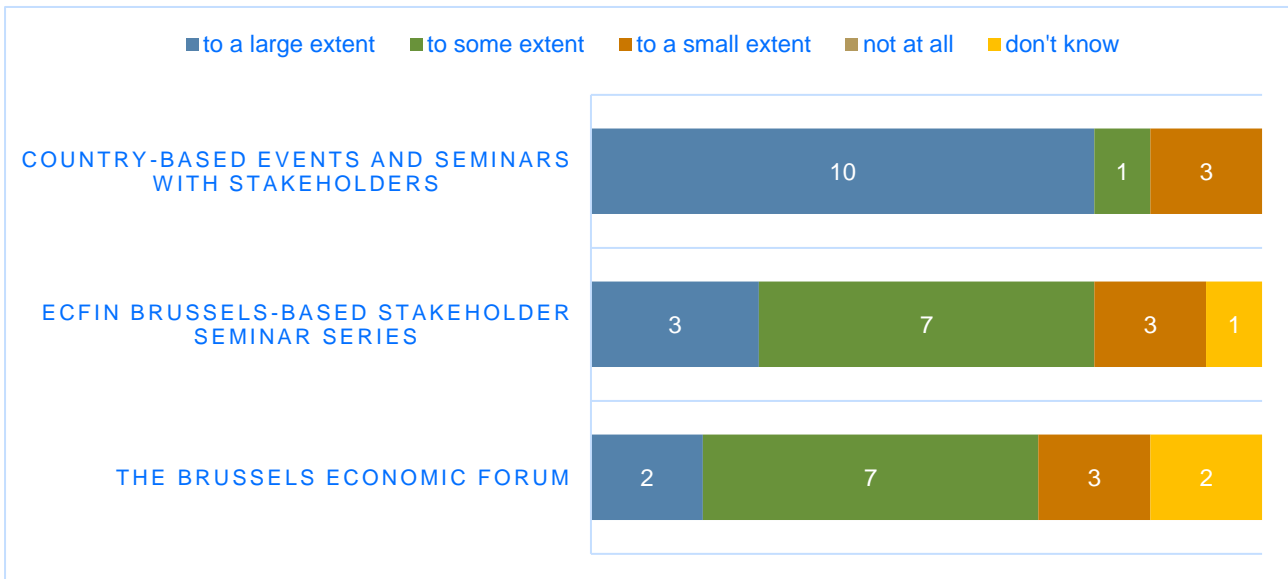
Most respondents received the DG ECFIN newsletter, but they did not share it with their networks. In open comments, four respondents elaborated that they did not share the newsletter as it would need to be translated into the national language, and that they were not aware that they were “allowed” to share it.

Figure 30: Do you receive the DG ECFIN newsletter? Do you share the DG ECFIN newsletter with your national stakeholder networks?



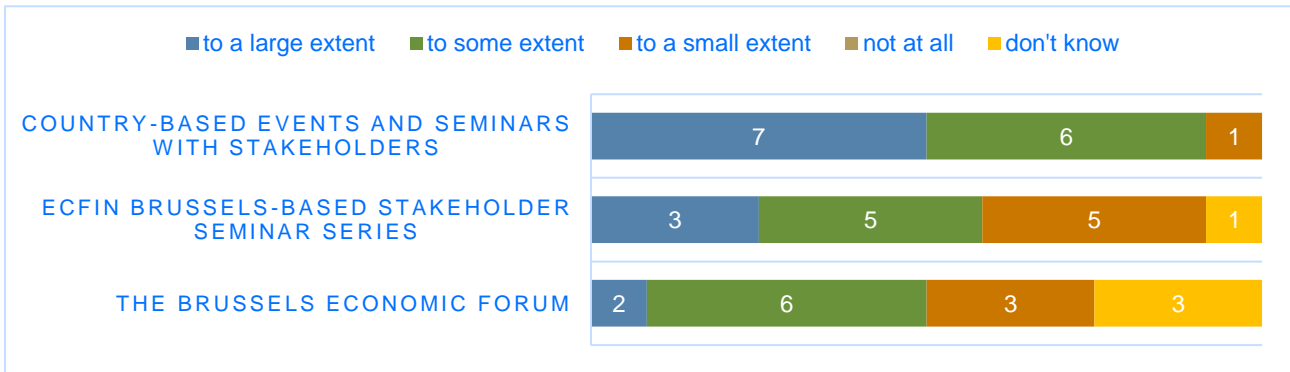
Respondents were then asked to what extent they found DG ECFIN's events useful for informing and engaging national audiences in their Member States. Nine respondents indicated that country-based events and seminars with stakeholder were useful “to a large extent”. The ECFIN Brussels-based stakeholder seminars series and the Brussels Economic Forum were considered useful “to some extent” by half of the respondents.

Figure 31: To what extent do you find DG ECFIN's events useful for informing and engaging national audiences in your Member State?



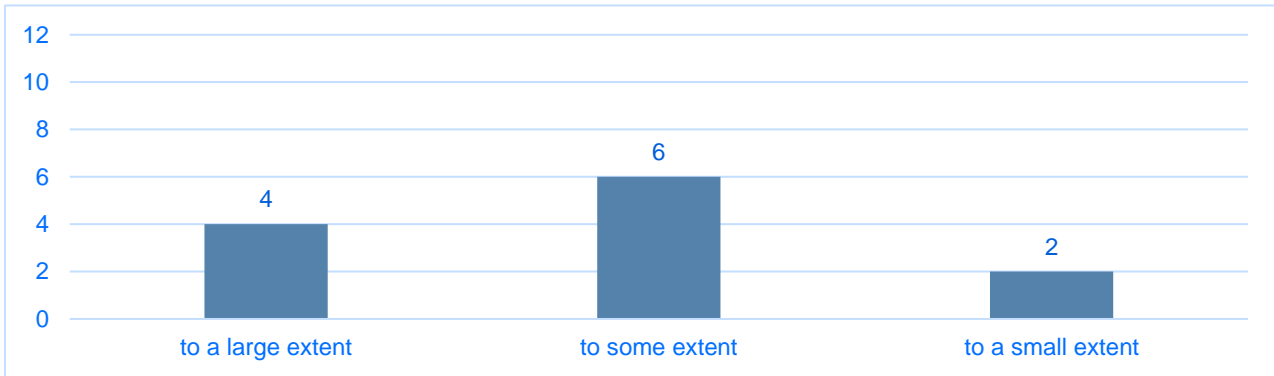
Most respondents indicated that there was interest for national audiences to participate more in country-based events and seminars with stakeholders “to a large extent” and “to some extent”.

Figure 32: To what extent do you feel that there is interest for national audiences to participate more in these events?



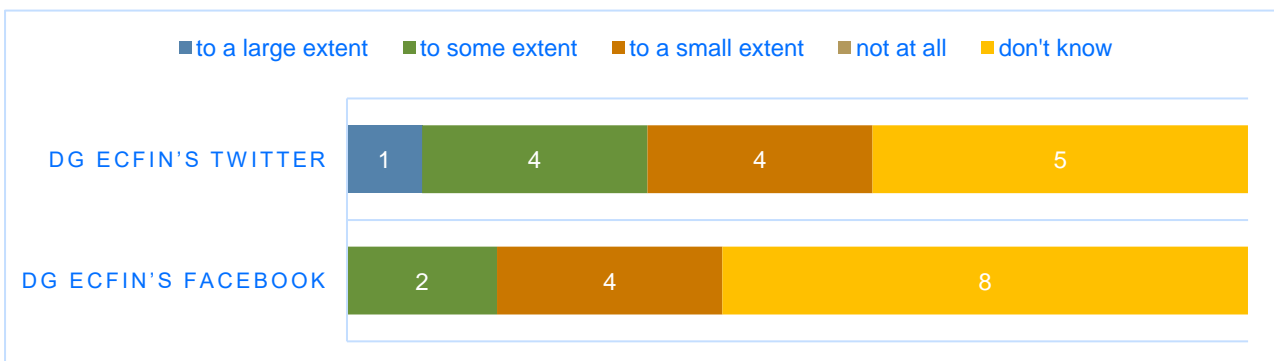
Most respondents felt that there was more scope to engage civil society organisations in Brussels-based seminars series “to a large extent” and “to some extent”.

Figure 33: To what extent do you feel that there is more scope to engage civil society organisations in Brussels-based seminar series?



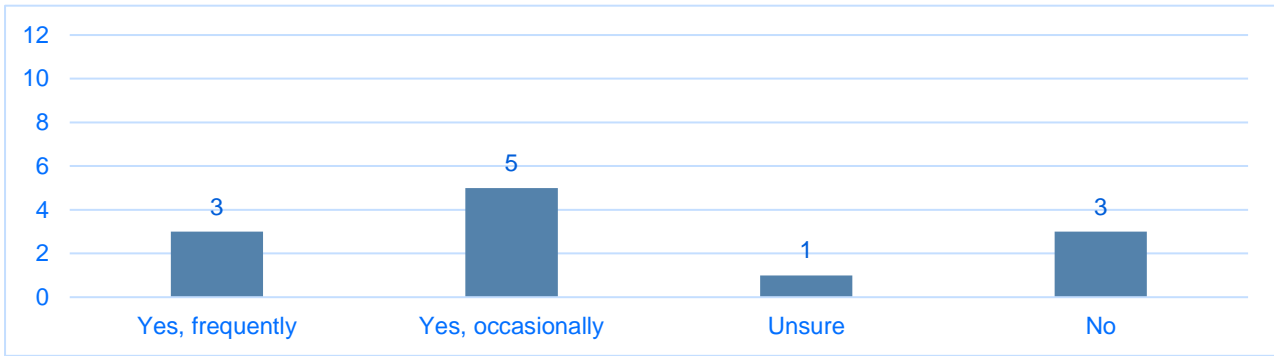
As regards DG ECFIN’s social media presence, most respondents “did not know” whether DG ECFIN’s Facebook was useful for informing and engaging national audiences in their Member States. Four respondents indicated that DG ECFIN’s Twitter was useful “to a large extent” and “to some extent”.

Figure 34: To what extent do you find DG ECFIN’s social media useful for informing and engaging national audiences in your Member State?



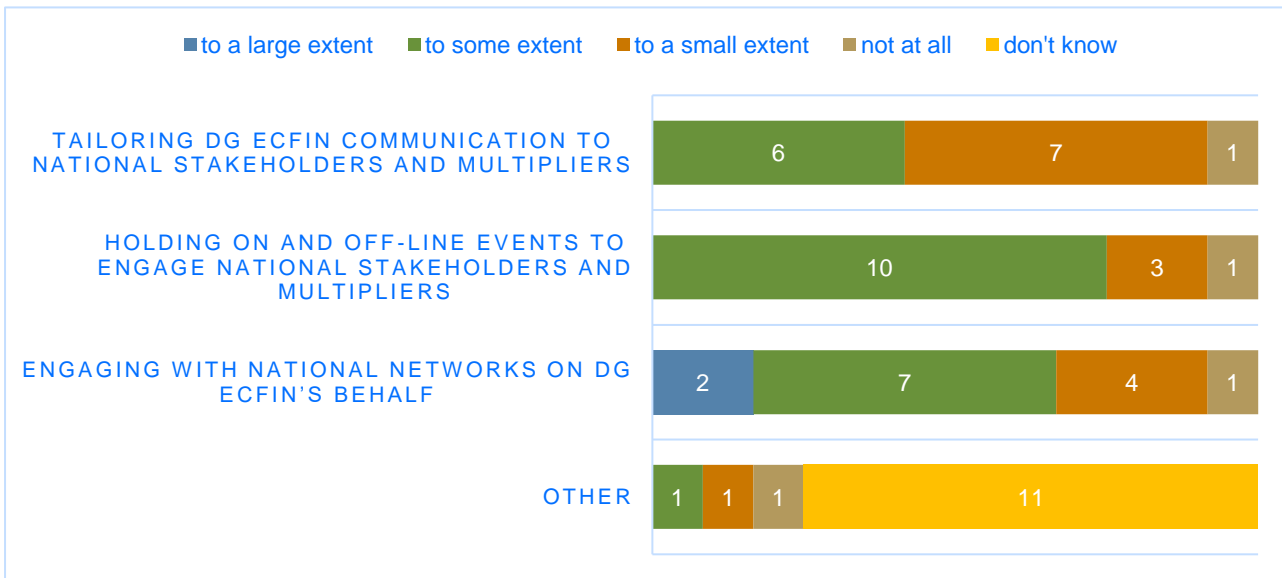
Most respondents indicated that they promote DG ECFIN’s events on social media to their networks “frequently” and “occasionally”.

Figure 35: Do you promote DG ECFIN's events on social media to your networks?



Most respondents indicated that they had some capacity to provide additional support to DG ECFIN on holding on and offline events to engage national stakeholders and multipliers. Most also indicated capacity to engage with national networks on DG ECFIN's behalf "to a large extent" and "to some extent". Half of the respondents indicated that they had small capacity or no capacity at all to tailor DG ECFIN communication to national stakeholders and multipliers.

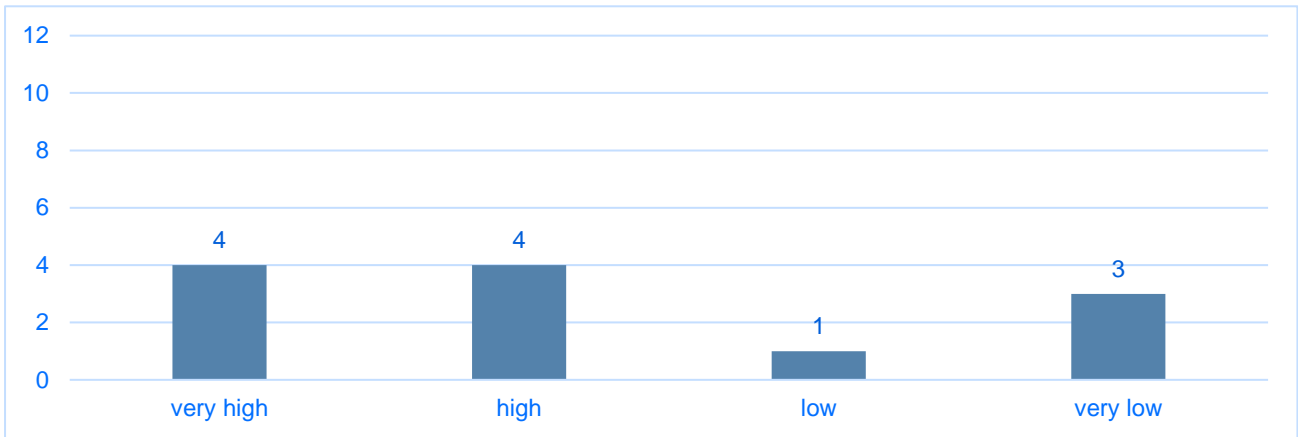
Figure 36: To what extent do you have capacity to provide additional support to DG ECFIN in the following areas:



Communication about the Recovery and Resilience Facility

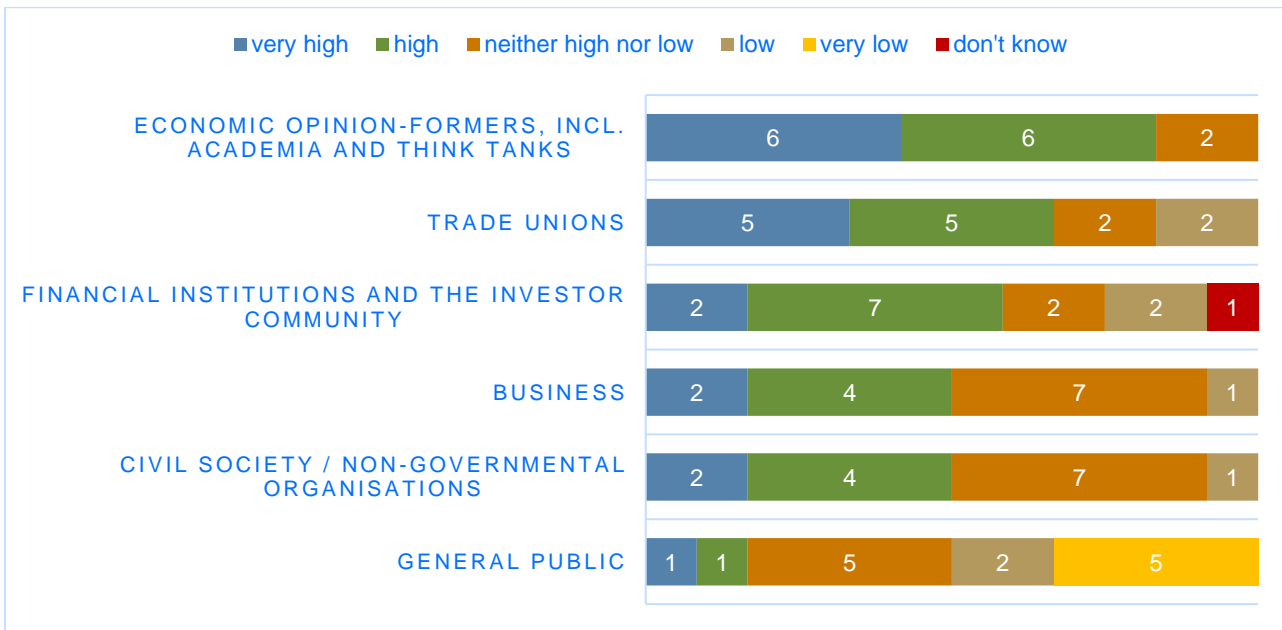
Finally, respondents were asked about communication on the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). Most assessed the level of visibility of the RR in their Member State overall as "very high" and "high".

Figure 37: How do you assess the level of visibility of the Recovery and Resilience Facility in your Member State overall?



On the level of understanding among stakeholder groups and the general public of the role and purpose of the RRF in their Member States, most respondents indicated that it was “very high” and “high” among economic opinion-formers, including academia and think tanks, trade unions, and the financial institutions / investor community. The level of understanding was rated lower for business, civil society / non-governmental organisations, and particularly for the general public.

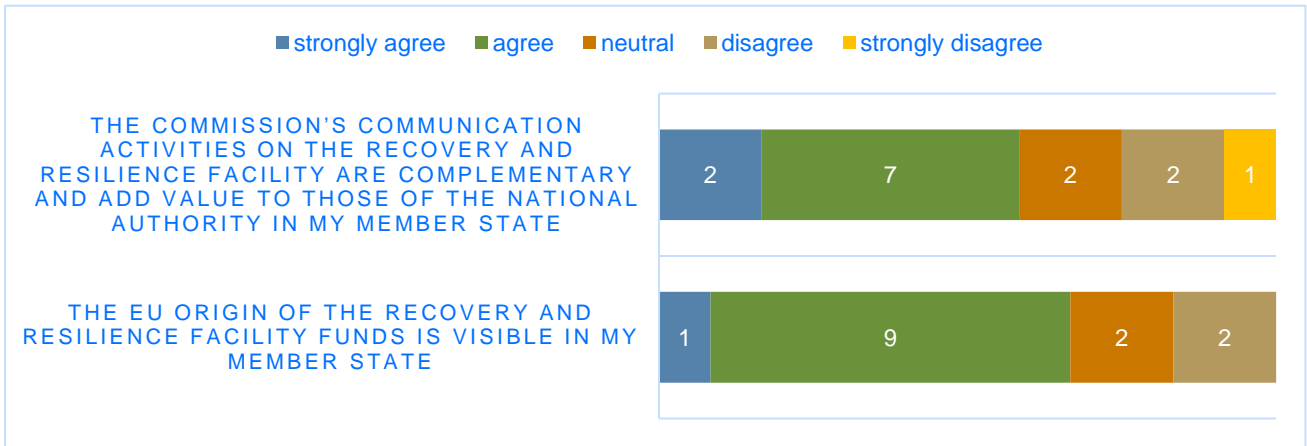
Figure 38: How would you assess the level of understanding among the following stakeholders and the general public of the role and purpose of the Recovery and Resilience Facility in your Member State?



In open comments, ten respondents noted some of challenges that they faced when communicating about the RRF. The main challenge concerned rather small RRF allocations to their Member States with a limited number of projects, making it difficult to communicate tangible results to the general public. Moreover, they emphasised that the general perception of the RRF was “funding with strings attached” (reforms, investments), making it a hard sell for some national audiences.

Finally, most respondents “agreed” and “strongly agreed” that the Commission’s communication activities on the RRF were complementary and added value to those of the national authorities in their Member States, and that the EU origin of the RRF funds was visible in their Member States.

Figure 39: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



In open comments, six respondents pointed out that the Commission's communication on the RRF should not only be complementary, given the risk that national authorities may not mention the European Union in their communication on the RRF. Moreover, respondents indicated that the visibility of RRF projects is still largely not there, as investments were only in the pipeline.

Annex II: Stakeholder workshop – background note

Overview

This document provided the background for discussion during the stakeholder brainstorming and analysis workshop which was led by Mark Rogerson on 25 November 2022. It builds on the stakeholder identification and mapping in DG ECFIN’s internal documents (2014-19 and 2019-24 communication strategy) and outlines key findings from the evaluation of DG ECFIN’s communication activities that relate to stakeholder analysis. The workshop was organised in a plenary session (1 hour) and discussion session (45 minutes). It sought confirmation of the following issues:

- goals for DG ECFIN’s communication towards each stakeholder group, i.e., the expected response that DG ECFIN wants to generate in each group,
- prioritisation of stakeholders (why they are important to DG ECFIN),
- actions required per stakeholder group, including best ways to reach the group, content / formats, ways to enhance their multiplier potential.

Below, we present the key issues that we identified in our assessment as they relate to each stakeholder group featured in the 2019-24 communication strategy, based on survey results, targeted interviews, focus groups, DG ECFIN’s own continuous monitoring, and our expert review of DG ECFIN’s communication materials:

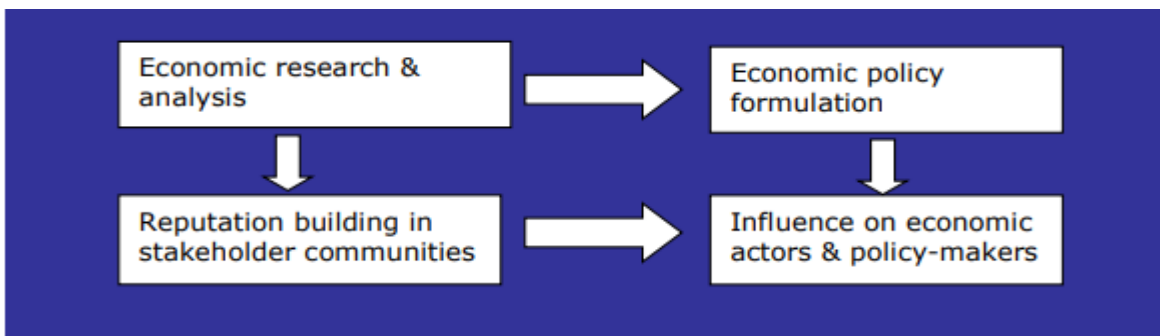
Stakeholder multiplier group /	Key issues
Policy makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current materials in line with stakeholder expectations and needs • Scope for closer collaboration between EC and national governments to communicate about EU economic policy at national level
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DG ECFIN communication often too long and complex to easily distil information for a news item • Desire for more opportunities for briefings and access to DG ECFIN’s experts to understand economic / political thinking of the Commission, technical concepts and EU governance structures
Economic opinion-formers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current materials in line with stakeholder expectations and needs • More direct engagement / dialogue and discussion sought on economic analyses – trends, changes
Financial institutions and the investor community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current materials generally in line with stakeholder expectations and needs, but awareness limited to Forecasts • Difficulty findings materials, raised issue of better promotion (e.g., on Twitter) and improving user-friendliness of the website
Trade unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main interest in national data that is nuanced and timely, simple and jargon-free presentation • Desire to participate in economic debates / discussion – e.g., via contact point in the DG
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire for more “inclusion” - into economic analyses (e.g., survey data including business community), via engagement on social media • Require jargon-free language
Civil society organisations / NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current materials in line with expectations and needs of topical civil society organisations, but simplification required (e.g., visual summaries) to share with constituents • Desire for more direct engagement e.g., through expert group or patronage of DG ECFIN over membership organisation of relevant CSOs to participate in different EU/ECFIN consultations
University students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current materials in line with stakeholder expectations and needs • Difficulty finding ECFIN materials via Google searches
Bloggers, ambassadors, influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited awareness of DG ECFIN • Require jargon-free, practical examples of impact on relevant follower base (emphasis on audio-visual materials)

Europe Direct Centres and similar institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keen desire to promote DG ECFIN messages and readiness to tailor to local concerns, but current materials (apart from EURO leaflets) not suitable Require jargon-free, pedagogical, interactive stories in the national language Suggestion for slide packs to accompany important publications that they can present to their audiences
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DG ECFIN's stakeholders

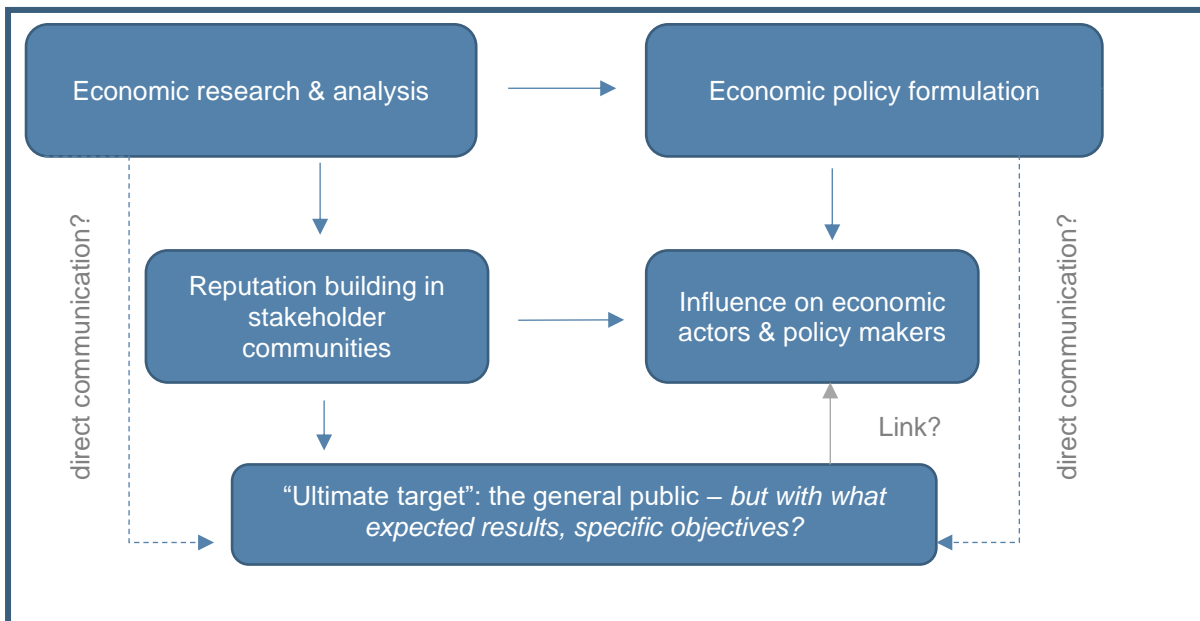
DG ECFIN's communication strategy 2014-19 presents an influence model which shows that the economic research and analysis conducted by DG ECFIN is intended to not only contribute to economic policy formulation and reputation building in stakeholder communities, but also aims to influence economic actors and policy makers. This model underpinned the identification of stakeholders based on their potential influence on the achievement of DG ECFIN's operational objectives, meaning their **decision-making capacity**, their **ability to shape the public debate**, and the **importance to them of DG ECFIN's work**, namely: policy makers, media, economic opinion formers, trade unions, financial institutions and the investor community, businesses, civil society / NGOs).

Figure 40: DG ECFIN's stakeholder influence model, communication strategy 2014-19, p. 10



In the context of decreasing trust in institutions and experts, and increasing anti-establishment feelings, the 2019-24 strategy places additional emphasis on not only leveraging these stakeholders and multipliers, but also **communicating to those with the ability to reach out to citizens and who are perceived by them as reliable and credible**. The 2019-24 strategy thus includes “outsider groups”, identified as those with the advantage of being very close to the citizens in their communities and having the potential of amplifying ECFIN messages to a broader audience: university students, bloggers / ambassadors / influencers, and Europe Direct Centres or similar contact points.

The 2019-24 communication strategy does not contain an influence model as above, but based on the strategic aims listed, we suggest the following model, that we would like to clarify with DG ECFIN during the stakeholder workshop to further distil specific objectives, aims and expected results as regards the “ultimate target” of DG ECFIN's communication – the general public:



We note that the 2019-24 communication strategy is organised by DG ECFIN’s communication programmes (media, social media, stakeholder outreach, website development, publications, internal communication, on-the-ground communication through ESOs, Euro change-over), and specific objectives, expected results and challenges were formulated in relation to these programmes.

Apart from the media programme, which is specifically targeted at journalists, all other programmes’ specific objectives, expected results and challenges have been formulated to cover all the remaining stakeholder groups. During the workshop, we will discuss with DG ECFIN the feasibility and usefulness of further differentiating specific objectives, challenges and expected results by stakeholder groups to facilitate prioritisation and tailoring of communication activities, in the same way as this has been done for the media.

Detailed analysis:

Media:

Both the 2014-19 and 2019-24 communication strategies identify the media as **potential multipliers** of ECFIN communication to reach the general public indirectly and include a broad range of broadcast and print media. However, **key stakeholders are limited to a subset of media**, with whom DG ECFIN engage more extensively: major economic-focused journalists among the Brussels press corps, economic and financial journalists of major serious press in the Member States, journalists for the specialised economic and financial press.

As per the 2019-24 communication strategy, the specific objective of media engagement, challenges and expected results are as follows:

Specific objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to facilitate accurate and objective coverage of DG ECFIN’s policy positions and initiatives by the print and broadcast media, within a meaningful context, and thus contribute to a better understanding of ECFIN’s work by citizens tackling misleading or uninformed reporting by promoting a fact-based public debate and by debunking common myths
Expected results	Journalists use the materials prepared for them (press releases, background notes, factsheets, etc.) to produce well-informed and accurate coverage of EU economic policy issues; ECFIN’s (counter-)arguments contribute to balanced coverage.

In terms of journalists' interest, communication needs and expectations towards DG ECFIN, our evaluation¹ found the following:

What interest do they have in DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional interest • DG ECFIN considered relevant for their work compared with other players (IMF, World Bank, etc.), especially in European context
What is their current opinion of DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • credible and authoritative institution compared with national finance ministries • highly complex and technical publications and materials • information released in a more systematic manner than five years ago • Forecasts well-structured and well-delivered • more open to journalists than five years ago – more materials under embargo, information easier to find online
Is this opinion based on sound information?	Yes, it is based on their professional experience and contact with DG ECFIN
What information do they want from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short statements that can be read “at one glance” on a mobile phone (“short sentences for huge stories”) • clear and concise language without jargon that can be easily transferred into a news article • explanations of concepts and EU governance structures (e.g., architecture of Eurozone governance) • visuals and examples to illustrate findings to strengthen link to areas of public interest
How do they want to receive information from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-page documents to easily distil information on the Commission’s position on important topics – in national languages, if national focus • opportunities for briefings and access to DG ECFIN’s experts to understand the economic / political thinking of the Commission (e.g., on particular themes or countries) • off-the-record technical briefings, similar to those on RRF (e.g., for Stability and Growth Pact and other important reforms) • close relationships with policy makers – e.g., journalist event for those new to Brussels every September / October to meet and greet DG ECFIN Directors and Heads of Unit, like a “university starter-week”.

Policy makers:

Both the 2014-19 and 2019-24 communication strategies identify policy makers as key stakeholders of ECFIN communication, specifically: ministers, senior officials working on EU issues in finance / economics or other relevant ministries and related institutions, members of the ECON Committee of the European Parliament and their main advisors, members of budget / economic committees of national parliaments and their staff. Important interlocutors are key policymakers of member countries of the G7 and the G20 as well as the IMF and World Bank.

¹ Key findings are based on 10 interviews with journalists (news agency and broadcasters, Brussels-based financial journalists, financial journalists in the Member States) and the evaluation team’s expert review of DG ECFIN’s communication materials

As per the 2019-24 communication strategy, policy makers are targeted by the publications programme, website, social media and on-the-ground communication. We extracted the specific objectives and expected results from these programmes as follows:

Specific objective	<p><i>To be confirmed during stakeholder workshop:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to inform stakeholders about ECFIN policies and help shape an informed policy debate through actively involving them in communication efforts • to engage stakeholders in dialogue both upstream and downstream in the policy process in order to build a solid relationship between them and the DG • to achieve greater impact of the DG's publications by means of wider dissemination of published works to new readers and clearer interpretation of their main findings
Expected results	<p><i>To be confirmed during stakeholder workshop – from strategy: avoiding misperceptions, increasing trust and ensuring the support of Member States on key issues?</i></p>

In terms of policy makers' interest, communication needs and expectations towards DG ECFIN, our evaluation² found the following:

What interest do they have in DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional interest • updates from DG ECFIN considered important for their work
What is their current opinion of DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • credible and authoritative source of economic analyses • timely information provision • complex arguments presented in accessible language and formats
Is this opinion based on sound information?	Yes, it is based on their professional experience and contact with DG ECFIN
What information do they want from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current materials seem to cater to this stakeholder groups' needs
How do they want to receive information from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope for closer collaboration between the EC and their government to communicate about EU's economic policy, e.g., through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ occasional debates in the capital ○ virtual meetings / Q&As ○ meetings with national desk officers ○ tailored factsheets to national context

Economic opinion-formers, including academia and think tanks:

The 2014-19 and 2019-24 communication strategies identify economic opinion-formers as both **consumers and multipliers** of ECFIN analysis and policies, as well as **key contributors** to and **shapers** of the economic policy debate. Their endorsement of ECFIN research and policy lends ECFIN credibility, including with other stakeholders, especially ECFIN peers in national administrations (*expected results?*). At the same time, ECFIN draws on their work to improve the quality of their own. The focus of communication is on faculties and institutions that are most influential and expert on ECFIN core business.

² Key findings are based on survey responses to the stakeholder survey (38 respondents from national / local government) and survey of national authorities (9 responses).

As per the 2019-24 communication strategy, economic opinion-formers are targeted by the stakeholder outreach programme, the publications programme, website, social media and on-the-ground communication. We extracted the specific objectives and expected results from these programmes as follows:

Specific objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to inform stakeholders about ECFIN policies and help shape an informed policy debate through actively involving them in communication efforts to engage stakeholders in dialogue both upstream and downstream in the policy process in order to build a solid relationship between them and the DG to achieve greater impact of the DG's publications by means of wider dissemination of published works to new readers and clearer interpretation of their main findings
Expected results	<p>Stakeholders will act as ambassadors and multipliers of DG ECFIN's messages in their organisations and with their stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Suggested: Economic opinion-formers will endorse DG ECFIN's research and policy, and in doing so lend credibility to DG ECFIN in their circles, including ECFIN peers in national administrations.</i></p>

In terms of economic opinion-formers' interest, communication needs and expectations towards DG ECFIN, our evaluation³ found the following:

What interest do they have in DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> professional and personal interest updates from DG ECFIN considered important for their work
What is their current opinion of DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> credible and authoritative institution with top-class economists – reputation unaffected by COVID-19 crisis publications considered useful and of a high quality (especially the Forecasts) ready to engage in a broader public debate good at communicating complex arguments in accessible language and formats
Is this opinion based on sound information?	<p>Yes, it is based on their professional experience of working in relevant fields and using DG ECFIN's materials; less direct engagement with DG ECFIN (limited awareness of stakeholder engagement activities apart from the BEF)</p>
What information do they want from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurate, detailed and technical data to support their work and facilitate comparisons with other sources of evidence interactive charts or any other useful tools that allow for key messages to get across during a 3-4 minute read to assess relevance of full report
How do they want to receive information from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> materials currently well-suited for this audience (very technical, which is in line with their expectations) direct engagement through meetings (stakeholder seminars preferred hybrid / in-person over online) specific engagement related to the publication of Forecasts (e.g., webinars to explain the forecasts further – main elements and main changes) and Q&A options advance notice of publication of Forecasts to be able to prepare their own work

³ Key findings are based on stakeholder survey (52 responses), 2 targeted interviews with think tanks, the evaluation team's expert review of communication materials, and DG ECFIN's continuous monitoring reports

Trade unions:

The 2014-19 and 2019-24 communication strategies identify trade unions as stakeholders to account for the Commission's emphasis to engage with social partners at EU level for the delivery of their priorities for creating a deeper and fairer economic and monetary union, as well as engaging a broader range of actors at national level. To complement formal mechanisms of social dialogue, DG ECFIN expanded communication activities more strongly to trade unions. The 2019-24 communication strategy states the fight against inequalities, importance of fairness and need to take into account the social impact of the economic policies that DG ECFIN advocates means that trade unions are considered crucial for credibility (*expected result?*).

As per the 2019-24 communication strategy, trade unions are targeted by the website, social media and on-the-ground communication. We extracted the specific objectives and expected results from these programmes as follows:

Specific objective	<p><i>To be confirmed during the workshop:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to inform stakeholders about ECFIN policies and help shape an informed policy debate through actively involving them in communication efforts to engage stakeholders in dialogue both upstream and downstream in the policy process in order to build a solid relationship between them and the DG
Expected results	From strategy: credibility – <i>to be discussed for whom</i>

In terms of trade unions' interest, communication needs and expectations towards DG ECFIN, our evaluation⁴ found the following:

What interest do they have in DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> professional interest DG ECFIN not considered a natural interlocutor for trade unions within the Commission
What is their current opinion of DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> credible and authoritative institution with top-class economists difficult to get in touch with directly, except for the high level inputs rather "mainstream" language of materials not suitable for trade union staff without expert economist knowledge (however, not a target group of the publications programme)
Is this opinion based on sound information?	Yes, it is based on their professional experience of working in relevant fields and having engaged with DG ECFIN in the past
What information do they want from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> national data deemed most interesting timely, detailed and nuanced (national) data to support their work and facilitate comparisons with other sources of evidence on social impact of economic policies – e.g. inequalities, unemployment (jobs, total out of work, total hours of work, etc.) simple and jargon-free presentation of findings for non-expert trade union staff translated into national languages
How do they want to receive information from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> point of contact in the DG to lead debate and discussion (e.g., an economist)

⁴ Key findings are based on stakeholder survey (9 responses) and one interview with European trade union association.

Financial institutions:

The 2014-19 and 2019-24 communication strategies identify financial institutions, and specifically chief economists and their research teams, as key stakeholders when looking at longer-term trends and the general economic climate. Additionally, they identify institutions such as EIB, EBRD, national promotional banks etc. as “active stakeholders” as they are potential investors in the EU’s financial programmes and instruments and the investEU fund (a key priority for 2019-24).

As per the 2019-24 communication strategy, financial institutions are targeted by the publications programme, website, social media and on-the-ground communication. We extracted the specific objectives and expected results from these programmes as follows:

Specific objective	<p><i>To be confirmed during the workshop:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to inform stakeholders about ECFIN policies and help shape an informed policy debate through actively involving them in communication efforts to engage stakeholders in dialogue both upstream and downstream in the policy process in order to build a solid relationship between them and the DG to achieve greater impact of the DG’s publications by means of wider dissemination of published works to new readers and clearer interpretation of their main findings
Expected results	<i>to be discussed during the workshop</i>

In terms of financial institutions’ interest, communication needs and expectations towards DG ECFIN, our evaluation⁵ found the following:

What interest do they have in DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> professional interest updates from DG ECFIN considered important for their work
What is their current opinion of DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> credible and authoritative institution with top-class economists room for improvement as regards communicating complex arguments in accessible language and formats room for improvement as regards engaging in the broader public debate
Is this opinion based on sound information?	Yes, it is based on their professional experience of working in relevant fields and having engaged with DG ECFIN in the past
What information do they want from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials generally considered useful (in line with the needs and expectations of this target group), but awareness mainly limited to the Forecasts
How do they want to receive information from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> better promotion of the materials (e.g., on Twitter) to make it easier to find them Q&A sessions on social media (Twitter) Improving user-friendliness of the website to make materials more easy to find

Business:

The 2014-19 and 2019-24 communication strategies note that ECFIN’s core business has become more focused on structural reforms and investment, alongside more traditional macroeconomic and fiscal work, so it has more direct impact on businesses. Businesses are regarded as key and – ideally – supportive stakeholders.

⁵ Key findings are based on stakeholder survey (35 responses) and two targeted interviews

This also is meant to reflect the EC's emphasis on engaging with social partners. Comms efforts focused on influential business federations (incl. small and large SMEs) rather than individual enterprises.

As per the 2019-24 communication strategy, businesses are targeted by the website, social media and on-the-ground communication. We extracted the specific objectives and expected results from these programmes as follows:

Specific objective	<p><i>To be confirmed during the workshop:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to inform stakeholders about ECFIN policies and help shape an informed policy debate through actively involving them in communication efforts to engage stakeholders in dialogue both upstream and downstream in the policy process in order to build a solid relationship between them and the DG
Expected results	<i>to be discussed during the workshop</i>

In terms of businesses' interest, communication needs and expectations towards DG ECFIN, our evaluation⁶ found the following:

What interest do they have in DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> professional interest updates from DG ECFIN considered less important for their work compared with the stakeholders above
What is their current opinion of DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> credible and authoritative institution with top-class economists room for improvement as regards communicating complex arguments in accessible language and formats room for improvement as regards engaging in the broader public debate
Is this opinion based on sound information?	Yes, it is based on their professional experience of working in relevant fields
What information do they want from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> current economic situation, plans and developments to inform decision-making risk assessments and benchmarking against non-EU markets insights from business community in reports (e.g., survey data)
How do they want to receive information from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> jargon-free language more targeted engagement on social media ("inclusion") user-friendly website

Civil society / NGOs:

The 2014-19 and 2019-24 communication strategies highlight communication efforts focused on "limited but representative range of civil society and non-governmental organisations with an important stake in economic issues to ensure that citizens' concerns are not completely excluded from the discussion."

As per the 2019-24 communication strategy, civil society organisations are targeted by the website, social media and on-the-ground communication. We extracted the specific objectives and expected results from these programmes as follows:

⁶ Key findings are based on stakeholder survey (33 responses) and 1 targeted interview

Specific objective	<p><i>To be confirmed during the workshop:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to inform stakeholders about ECFIN policies and help shape an informed policy debate through actively involving them in communication efforts to engage stakeholders in dialogue both upstream and downstream in the policy process in order to build a solid relationship between them and the DG
Expected results	<i>to be discussed during the workshop</i>

In terms of civil society organisations’ interest, communication needs and expectations towards DG ECFIN, our evaluation⁷ found the following:

What interest do they have in DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> professional interest updates from DG ECFIN considered important for their work
What is their current opinion of DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> credible and authoritative institution with top-class economists room for improvement as regards communicating complex arguments in accessible language and formats ECFIN ready to engage in the broader public debate
Is this opinion based on sound information?	Yes, it is based on their professional experience of working in relevant fields and using DG ECFIN data / materials in their work
What information do they want from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> impact of economic policies on specific (social, environmental, etc.) policy areas insights on how EU economic policy making is done at EU level
How do they want to receive information from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> jargon-free language visual summaries of reports (infographics, videos) that are less technical and more accessible, can be shared on social media dedicated expert group compiled of civil society organisations with required level of expertise on economic and fiscal policy supporting the creation of a membership organisation to ensure permanent and technically sound participation of relevant civil society organisations to different EU/ECFIN consultations, working groups, expert groups, etc. creating section in newsletter on “what CSOs should follow”

“Outsider groups”

The 2019-24 strategy places additional emphasis on not only leveraging the above stakeholders and multipliers, but also **communicating to those with the ability to reach out to citizens and who are perceived by them as reliable and credible**. The 2019-24 strategy thus includes “outsider groups”, identified as those with the advantage of being very close to the citizens in their communities and having the potential of amplifying ECFIN messages to a broader audience: university students, bloggers / ambassadors / influencers, and Europe Direct Centres or similar contact points.

University students

⁷ Key findings are based on stakeholder survey (33 responses) and 2 targeted interviews, s

The 2019-24 communication strategy notes that, like academics and think tanks, university students are both consumers and multipliers of ECFIN analysis. They represent academics and policy makers of tomorrow, so important to establish an early contact and nurture the relationship. Comms efforts targeted to those universities and faculties with a reputable economics department.

As per the 2019-24 communication strategy, university students are targeted by the publications programme, website, social media and on-the-ground communication. We extracted the specific objectives and expected results from these programmes as follows:

Specific objective	<p><i>To be confirmed during the workshop:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to inform stakeholders about ECFIN policies and help shape an informed policy debate through actively involving them in communication efforts to engage stakeholders in dialogue both upstream and downstream in the policy process in order to build a solid relationship between them and the DG to achieve greater impact of the DG's publications by means of wider dissemination of published works to new readers and clearer interpretation of their main findings
Expected results	<i>to be discussed during the workshop</i>

In terms of university students' interest, communication needs and expectations towards DG ECFIN, our evaluation⁸ found the following:

What interest do they have in DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> study / personal interest updates from DG ECFIN considered not important for their work not interested in using their social media activity to post EU economic policy-related content
What is their current opinion of DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no strong opinion language considered appropriate for their needs
Is this opinion based on sound information?	Not really, students had little experience of engaging with DG ECFIN or using DG ECFIN materials
What information do they want from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reports and data useful for their courses and theses
How do they want to receive information from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> better positioning of DG ECFIN website on Google when searching for information website considered well structured and a good repository of relevant materials focus group participants subscribed to the newsletter during the focus group (but did not know about its existence in advance, even though they had used the website in the past) podcasts preferred way to gain insights into most important economic policy developments no interest in social media engagement (students don't use Twitter or Facebook, mainly Instagram)

Bloggers, ambassadors, influencers

⁸ Key findings are based on stakeholder survey (6 responses) and online focus group (3 participants, economics students from the College of Europe)

The 2019-24 communication strategy notes that reputable and renowned bloggers, ambassadors, social media influencers are both consumers and multipliers of ECFIN work. Engagement through dialogue and stories and generate “buzz” around them. Categories of blogs ranging from general economics to specific topics such as finance and environmental economics. Blogs often curated by academics, so comms efforts could be modelled on those envisaged for academics and think tanks, with special focus on stories that could be particularly interesting for bloggers.

As per the 2019-24 communication strategy, bloggers / ambassadors / influencers are targeted by the publications programme, website, social media and on-the-ground communication. We extracted the specific objectives and expected results from these programmes as follows:

Specific objective	<p><i>To be confirmed during the workshop:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to inform stakeholders about ECFIN policies and help shape an informed policy debate through actively involving them in communication efforts to engage stakeholders in dialogue both upstream and downstream in the policy process in order to build a solid relationship between them and the DG to achieve greater impact of the DG’s publications by means of wider dissemination of published works to new readers and clearer interpretation of their main findings
Expected results	<i>to be discussed during the workshop</i>

In terms of bloggers / ambassadors / influencers’ interest, communication needs and expectations towards DG ECFIN, our evaluation⁹ found the following:

What interest do they have in DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> professional interest (based on social media analysis of top authors engaged with ECFIN’s Twitter account)
What is their current opinion of DG ECFIN?	NA (interviewees did not know about DG ECFIN)
Is this opinion based on sound information?	NA
What information do they want from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuous monitoring reports and our own social media analysis show that tweets that get reposted most often use infographics / photos showing real life impact of economic policies on their followers “surprising” data / nuggets of information that can trigger interest in their follower base
How do they want to receive information from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> jargon-free, practical examples of impact on relevant follower base suggestion for collaboration included brief 5 bullet points with jargon-free information to facilitate video content creation emphasis on audio-visual content that can be easily shared emphasis on broader approach to tagging than EU institutional tags (e.g., lifestyle tags)

Europe Direct Centres

The 2019-24 communication strategy notes that EDCs can be multipliers of ECFIN messages with general public and should be targeted by citizen-friendly comms activities. Their very local character means that they are able to adapt ECFIN messages to local context and target them to the local specificities.

⁹ Key findings are based on 2 targeted interviews, DG ECFIN’s continuous monitoring reports and our evaluation team’s social media analysis

As per the 2019-24 communication strategy, EDCs are targeted by the publications programme, website, social media and on-the-ground communication. We extracted the specific objectives and expected results from these programmes as follows:

Specific objective	<p><i>To be confirmed during the workshop:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to inform stakeholders about ECFIN policies and help shape an informed policy debate through actively involving them in communication efforts to engage stakeholders in dialogue both upstream and downstream in the policy process in order to build a solid relationship between them and the DG to achieve greater impact of the DG's publications by means of wider dissemination of published works to new readers and clearer interpretation of their main findings
Expected results	<i>to be discussed during the workshop – EDCs distribute DG ECFIN messages within the general public?</i>

In terms of EDCs' interest, communication needs and expectations towards DG ECFIN, our evaluation¹⁰ found the following:

What interest do they have in DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> professional interest aimed at bringing the EU closer to citizens
What is their current opinion of DG ECFIN?	NA
Is this opinion based on sound information?	NA
What information do they want from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> information they can share with schools, municipalities, non-governmental organisations and businesses in different sectors (agriculture, fisheries, construction, etc.) directly linked to tangible examples on how EU economic policy impacted or could impact everyday lives of citizens in areas that are not necessarily economic (e.g., environment, education)
How do they want to receive information from DG ECFIN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> jargon-free pedagogical, interactive (linked to games or maps), in the national language, story-telling videos (e.g., explanatory videos on economic concepts, legislation) information that can be easily tailored to local concerns and economic sectors dominant in their region – e.g., slide packs on ECFIN statistics

General public:

The 2019-24 communication strategy states that the general public is not a stakeholder group, and the strategy relies on ECFIN stakeholders to act as multipliers and amplifiers in order to reach the general public, rather than placing a heavy emphasis on trying to reach citizens directly. But DG ECFIN recognises that citizens are users of the euro and ultimate beneficiaries of policies aimed at raising their economic welfare and as electors, and have an important say in whether EC's policy recommendations will be accepted and successfully implemented or not.

¹⁰ Key findings are based on three focus groups with EDCs from Germany, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Sweden (23 participants) representing capitals / larger cities and smaller towns / rural areas.

Importantly, the 2019-24 strategy defines the general public as the “ultimate target” of DG ECFIN’s communication.

The Euro Changeover programme, communication on InvestEU and the campaign on the 20th anniversary of the EURO notes and coins target the general public, and web development and social media programmes are targeted at specific stakeholder groups but also provide a means of communicating directly with the public, as do activities targeted at the media.

Missing: specific objectives and expected results regarding the general public; approaches to identify areas of general public concerns to address with targeted comms through stakeholders

[ECFIN and other Commission staff: Not stakeholders, but key actors in external comms strategy and at the same time participants in internal comms programme.]

Summary of stakeholder analysis

DG ECFIN’s communication strategy 2014-2019 identified stakeholders based on their potential influence on the achievement of DG ECFIN’s operational objectives (influencing economic actors and policy makers), meaning their decision-making capacity, their ability to shape the public debate, and the importance to them of DG ECFIN’s work. In the 2019-24 communication strategy, the scope was widened to include those with the ability to reach out to citizens and who are perceived by them as reliable and credible. Currently, the stakeholder list is as follows:

- Policy makers
- Media
- Economic opinion-formers, including academia and think tanks
- Financial institutions and the investor community
- Trade unions
- Business
- Civil society / non-governmental organisations
- University students
- Bloggers, ambassadors, influencers
- Europe Direct Centres and similar institutions

Our evaluation generated the following insights:

- The influence model from the 2014-19 communication strategy requires updating to reflect the “ultimate target” defined in the 2019-24 strategy, namely the general public – what are the expected results of this target group (and which segments within the group), which specific objectives are tied to it, and how does it link to the aims of reputation building in stakeholder communities and influence on economic actors and policy makers (are these aims still up to date)? How can this be achieved through direct and indirect communication?
- The communication strategies (2014-19 and 2019-24) are organised by communication programmes; only the media programme is targeted at one specific stakeholder group (journalists) and identifies specific objectives and expected results for this group. For the remaining stakeholder groups, specific objectives are applied that were formulated for the programmes targeted at them – this makes the specific objectives appear less strongly linked to the particular stakeholder group, and therefore less relevant; moreover, formulating expected results by target group may aid prioritisation.
- 2019-24 communication strategy mentions “active” stakeholders (financial institutions) and “supportive” stakeholders (business), but no clarification on what this entails (*expected results?*).
- DG ECFIN’s work is more important for some stakeholder groups (policy makers, journalists, economic opinion-formers, financial institutions, civil society organisations) than others (trade unions, business, university students).
- DG ECFIN’s materials align with the expectations of some stakeholder groups regarding language, technicality, complexity (policy makers, economic opinion-formers, financial institutions, university students), but are deemed too complex for others (journalists, civil society organisations, business, Europe Direct Centres):

- Materials that present information in a way that makes it easy to distil important topics, that is jargon-free (and in national languages) and contain examples of real-life impact on citizens were sought by journalists, civil society organisations, trade unions, EDCs, bloggers / ambassadors / influencers and policy makers.
 - Preferred formats for those groups that deemed materials too complex included one-page summaries, infographics, videos, fact sheets, slide packs.
 - EDCs emphasised that interactive, pedagogical materials (games, maps) that contain story-telling were best suited for their audiences (schools, businesses, municipalities, civil society organisations, citizens more broadly).
 - Journalists and civil society organisations also noted that they would benefit from more insights into the EU economic policy making process in general.
- More dialogue / direct engagement with DG ECFIN was particularly sought from journalists (briefings on technical aspects, access to experts, relationship-building with policy makers), policy makers (in terms of scope for collaboration between national governments and the EC on economic policy making), economic opinion-formers (direct discussions on trends and changes in economic analyses), trade unions (e.g., a contact point at DG ECFIN), and civil society organisations (collaboration with and between topical organisations via membership organisation, expert group).
 - Some stakeholder groups (financial institutions, business, civil society organisation) also emphasised the need to improve the user-friendliness of the website, to make materials and publications more ease to find.

	Media	Policy makers	Economic opinion-formers	Financial institutions	Trade unions	Business	Civil society organisations	University students	Bloggers, ambassadors, influencers	EDCs
DG ECFIN important for their work	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		NA	NA
current materials aligned with needs / expectations		✓	✓	✓				✓		
current materials too complex	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
desire for more direct engagement/ dialogue with ECFIN	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			
User-friendliness of website needs to be improved				✓		✓	✓			

Annex III: Expert review of DG ECFIN's communication materials: summary note

This document is a summary note of an expert review of selected communication materials that took place on 3 October 2022 with our experts, Mark Rogerson and Cinzia Alcidì.

Mark Rogerson

Mark is an expert in PR, a former TV journalist and Spokesperson for the European Court of Auditors. He has extensive experience in financial communication. He has developed and coordinated public relations and communications programmes for clients throughout the EU, including the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, the European Parliament, the London International Financial Futures Exchange, the International Petroleum Exchange, Swiss Bank Corporation, JM Finn Stockbrokers and AIG Insurance.

At the BBC, he was a producer and presenter on Radio 4's The Financial World Tonight, after which he worked as Economics Correspondent for BBC Television News. He was also a reporter on The Money Programme, BBC 2's weekly business magazine. He presented Business Daily on the UK's Channel 4 and European Business Weekly on Superchannel. He holds a master's degree from the University of St Andrews in Economics and Philosophy.

On this assignment, he has conducted interviews with journalists, to collect their feedback on the reputation of DG ECFIN, ways in which DG ECFIN engages with journalists and with other media, and suggestions for improvement. This feedback has fed into Mark's review.

Dr Cinzia Alcidì

Cinzia is the Co-Director of Research at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and head of the Economic Policy Unit and the Jobs and Skills Unit. She is also the Head of CEPS Academy. She is an expert in economic and financial governance of the EU and fiscal and monetary policy, with over ten years of professional experience providing evidence-based policy analysis to EU institutions and national governments.

In addition to studies and reports, she has published in peer-reviewed journals in the area of macroeconomics. She regularly participates in international conferences and expert workshops.

On this assignment, she has conducted interviews with think tanks and international institutions. to collect feedback on their communication needs from DG ECFIN, as well as their communication activities (insights and lessons learnt) and perceptions of DG ECFIN's reputation. This feedback has fed into Cinzia's review.

The aim of the review was to:

- assess the consistency of branding and messaging, and suitability of the communications materials for the different target groups,
- brainstorm ideas about new activities, contents, formats that could work well for DG ECFIN to communicate about EU economic policy to different stakeholders,

The review was conducted from the perspective of a sample of selected target groups and multipliers listed in DG ECFIN's communication strategy 2019-2024. The communication materials were assessed on how easy to read / concise they were for each audience, how relevant and applicable / easy to use for their work, how relevant for the daily life of citizens (topics of interest), and their potential for easy adaptations that might increase their relevance and usefulness. The selected audiences were:

- journalists,
- economic opinion formers (academia and think tanks),
- civil society organisations and trade unions,
- the general public.

The reviewed materials included:

Type of material	Title	Date	Link
Press release	Business and consumer survey results	August 2022	PDF
Press release	Summer 2022 Economic Forecast: Russia's war worsens the outlook	14 July 2022	Summer 2022 Economic Forecast: Russia's war worsens the outlook (europa.eu)
Press release	Financing the green transition: the European Green Deal investment plan and just transition mechanism	14 January 2020	Financing the green transition (europa.eu)
Materials uploaded by DG ECFIN on Teams (13 September, folder: Press) containing background notes and FAQs ("MEMOs"), lines to take, defensives			
Event – news article	Brussels Economic Forum 2022	17 May 2022	European Commission - Brussels Economic Forum 2022 (europa.eu)
Promotional material	A short guide to the euro	1 February 2020	A short guide to the euro (europa.eu)
Promotional material	The euro area	1 February 2020	The euro area (europa.eu)
Promotional material	One currency for one Europe	1 February 2020	One currency for one Europe (europa.eu)
Web-article	Eurobarometer shows record public support for the euro and broad support for the introduction of rounding rules	28 May 2021	Eurobarometer shows record public support for the euro and broad support for introduction of rounding rules (europa.eu)
Euronews: Real economy	As cost of living soars, why is war in Ukraine hitting Europe's economy so hard? [VIDEO]	9 June 2022	As cost of living soars, why is war in Ukraine hitting Europe's economy so hard? Euronews
Publication	European Economic Forecast, Summer 2022, incl. web presentation	14 July 2022	European Economic Forecast. Summer 2022 (europa.eu) Summer 2022 Economic Forecast: Russia's war worsens the outlook (europa.eu)
Publication	Fiscal Sustainability Report 2021	25 April 2022	Fiscal Sustainability Report 2021 (europa.eu)
Thematic blog	VOX EU: Economic rebound interrupted: Key features of the Commission's autumn 2020 forecast	6 November 2020	Economic rebound interrupted: Key features of the Commission's Autumn 2020 forecast CEPR
ECFIN website			Economy and finance (europa.eu)

We present our considerations below by target group or multiplier. We introduce each section with short information on what each target group needs and why, based on previous research on communication towards these groups, personal experience and the (small number of) interviews conducted for this assignment.

Journalists

What they want/need: short statements that they can read “at one glance” on a mobile phone. Clear and concise language without jargon that can be easily transferred into a news article.

Our review: All DG ECFIN’s press materials would be difficult to understand for non-financial experts, and financial journalists may find it burdensome to translate jargon into a digestible news item. Currently, we found that about one quarter of all words in DG ECFIN’s reviewed press materials were jargon or technical terms. If DG ECFIN wants to inform the general public, reaching non-financial journalists and providing them with digestible information could be one approach to take. We also note that press releases are viewed by other stakeholders who do not necessarily work for the media, and links to press releases could be forwarded by and to other types of organisations, for example civil society. This warrants that jargon is removed from press materials, as much as possible.

Another issue concerns the length of the press materials, in terms of sentences, headlines and the press releases themselves:

- As noted in one of our interviews with journalists, journalists need “short sentences for huge stories”; however, we note an average sentence length above 20 words in DG ECFIN’s press materials.
- Our recommended length for headlines is 12 words maximum.
- Many press releases are 4 pages long, whereas we recommend reducing them to 2 pages maximum; this could be achieved by removing “redundant information”, such as in the following example:

~~“This is the first part of the exceptional MFA package of up to €9 billion announced in the Commission’s communication of 18 May 2022 and endorsed by the European Council of 23-24 June 2022.”~~

Press releases could also be shortened by reducing the number of quotes from Commissioners to just one quote. This would also ensure that any quote that is included is significant and impactful, and not “diluted” by the use of multiple quotes that often only confirm the original statement made.

- Our recommended length for any quote is up to 20 words (some quotes in DG ECFIN’s press materials are up to 70 words long).

We also found that the opening paragraphs did not lend themselves to being easily copy-pasted into news agencies’ “snaps”, as they were lengthy, contained jargon and “redundant information”. This limits their usefulness and impact, which could be achieved by making the information more succinct. Below we provide one example of how an opening paragraph could be revised:

The European Commission, on behalf of the EU, has today disbursed the first half (€500 million) of a new €1 billion macro-financial assistance (MFA) operation for Ukraine. The second tranche (another €500 million) will be disbursed tomorrow, 2 August. The decision about this new exceptional MFA was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 12 July 2022.

Revised version:

The European Union has today released the first €500 million of its financial assistance package for Ukraine. The second €500 million will be released tomorrow.

“Soundbites” also tend to be up to 300 words long, whereas we would recommend a maximum of 30 words, as in the examples below:

The global economy’s future health rests critically on the successful calibration of monetary policy, the course of the war in Ukraine, and the possibility of further pandemic-related supply-side disruptions, for example, in China.

IMF World Economic Outlook

Within our mandate, the ECB is ready to do whatever it takes to preserve the euro. Believe me, it will be enough.

Mario Draghi

If you wish to have free access to the single market, then you have to accept the fundamental rights as well as the obligations that come from it.
Angela Merkel

Economic opinion formers

What they want/need: accurate, detailed and technical data to support their own work and facilitate comparisons with other sources of evidence.

Our review: Evidence from our interviews and survey of economic opinion formers, and our expert's own assessment shows that DG ECFIN's communication materials are well suited for this audience. The materials are very technical, which is in line with the expectations of this target group. The materials are also very relevant to their everyday work, particularly the Forecasts, which are frequently used by think tanks, research centres and international organisations. They are highly reputed publications, with their high quality recognised by peers.

Our expert noted that the forecasts are presented on DG ECFIN's website enriched with charts and maps that are interactive and a useful tool that allows for the key messages to get across during a 3-4 minute read.

However, we do have some suggestions on improving the organisation of the publication of the Forecasts:

- the publication dates are not sufficiently advertised, so considerations could be made about advertising the date heavily on social media, on the website and in the newsletter **in advance** of the publication;
- stakeholders could be better engaged through organising events or at least a webinar to follow the publication that would "explain" the forecasts further (e.g., show main elements and main changes) and allow economic opinion formers to ask questions. For example, the OECD organises big events for their global and country reports that are a staple in the diary of every economic opinion former, with people willing to travel to Paris to participate in them.

Civil society organisations and trade unions

What they want/need: information (on a finding / findings) focused on the impact of economic policies on specific policy areas, that is concise and easy to read, and free of jargon; this is a very diverse audience, including organisations representing business and non-business interests.

Our review: We identified several publications with scope to be of particular interest for civil society organisations, particularly those around gender balance and research into the workforce. Publications on these types of topics could be accompanied by simpler formats highlighting key findings using non-specialist language to make them more digestible for civil society (e.g., 1-page summaries to the technical publications, infographics).

If DG ECFIN wants to inform and engage this audience at national or regional level, a key consideration is the need for materials in national languages, to allow civil society organisations to share with their members. Translations could be considered for the 1-page summaries to technical publications and/or infographics if cost-effective, which may also target the general public (e.g. via EDCs).

General public

What they want/need: again, this is a very diverse audience, with citizens of different ages, jobs, education levels, interest in EU matters and attitudes towards EU and economic issues. This also warrants further target group research, which could start by looking at areas of concern reported in the Eurobarometer, to identify relevant topics.

Our review: For our review, we took the perspective of citizens who are sufficiently interested in EU economic issues to search for information online. We particularly appreciate any elements that emphasise “what is in it for me” and myth busting contained in DG ECFIN materials, which are aimed at the general public. We consider this to be sharable content for social media and blogs.

However, we note that any examples used for illustration need to be relatable for an ordinary citizen. The Euronews episode which we reviewed provides space rockets as an example of the impact of the war in Ukraine on supply chains. To some citizens the message might be that because of the war in Ukraine, Europeans won't fly into space as much as before. However, the war has impacted on the everyday life of citizens in terms of interrupted supply chains also for everyday goods and food, examples of which could resonate more with the audience.

Based on feedback from our interviews and focus group with EDCs, we note that DG ECFIN's technical publications could be accompanied by short videos explaining basic concepts such as “inflation” or “growth”, that could be picked up by EDCs to promote in their local contexts, subtitled into the relevant national language. However, such videos may be already available online, produced by national news agencies, links to which could be provided with the publications for efficiency reasons.

Summary

For very specialist audiences, DG ECFIN's communication materials may remain as they are, with some additional organisation around the publication of materials (e.g., the Forecasts). For every other audience, the key rule has to be using plain English, keeping messages simple, and adapting materials to their particular requirements: a YouTube video, a press release, a leaflet, etc.

However, materials may not cross over from one audience to another: journalists may not be interested in a video, which civil society and the general public may appreciate; instead, they may just expect short statements that they can read on their mobile phones. Professional economists, on the other hand, will want to read advanced economic analyses in detailed reports.

Any decision to reach audiences beyond the core stakeholders, even if only in a small proportion, will require a revision of the communication strategy and leadership buy-in. This includes target audience research about their communication needs and topics of interest, and a clear definition *why* DG ECFIN may want to communicate with other audiences and the general public and *how* DG ECFIN would like these audiences to respond: is it about raising awareness about DG ECFIN, or increasing levels of trust? A clear logic would need to underly any decisions made and actions taken.

Considerations could be made around moving away from some of the complex documents to more audio-visual materials, for example, involving presenters who may not necessarily be civil servants, but whose communication style may resonate more with broader audiences. However, in our review, the videos of the Commissioner seemed effective at providing a good summary of the publication of the Forecasts and this approach could be considered to provide summaries of all forecasts and selected publications on topics of interest for civil society and the general public. This format is suitable for anyone seeking to gain an overview perspective. Such videos are visual, they are very sharable, and they give an opportunity to create a persona for the Commissioner, making the European Commission appear less as a bureaucracy.

However, it is not only about the particular ways in which communication might have to be adjusted, but also about identifying topics that might be of broader interest and that could lend themselves to being communicated in audio-visual ways. The RRF is a clear example of a topic that has content relevant for civil society organisations as well as the general public. Eurobarometer surveys could further be used to gauge specific areas of concern that could guide topic selection.

Such revisions may not necessarily warrant budget or human resource implications, if the decision is made to change the approach to communication. This is what we learnt from one of our interviews with an international organisation, which recently decided to completely change the approach and move from written towards audio-visual communication. A thorough stakeholder analysis and target audience research and segmentation could ensure that revisions to the communication strategy remain efficient, as it is not about creating additional materials (“more”), but about revising the approach (“different”).

Annex IV: Topic guide for targeted interviews

No.	Type of interviewee	Topics for discussion
2	partner DGs and services: DG FISMA DG EMPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adaptations to communication strategy and activities in view of the pandemic / to address the same multipliers and stakeholders • best examples, lessons learned and key success criteria of other communication strategies / campaigns, which have been / are implemented with similar levels of human and financial resources to DG ECFIN • additional scope for synergies / partnerships to increase efficiency of future activities • new collaboration and partnership opportunities to reinforce the relevance of DG ECFIN activities • options to increase joints mechanisms / platforms • insights and lessons learnt from own activities, incl. social media, flagship events, MS outreach
2	EU institutions: EP (ECON) ECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adaptations to communication strategy and activities in view of the pandemic / to address the same multipliers and stakeholders • examples of other communication strategies / campaigns, which have been / are implemented with similar levels of human and financial resources to DG ECFIN • new collaboration and partnership opportunities to reinforce the relevance of DG ECFIN activities • options to increase joints mechanisms / platforms • additional scope for synergies / partnerships to efficiency of future activities • insights and lessons learnt from own activities, incl. social media, flagship events, MS outreach • perceptions of DG ECFIN's established and changing reputation
5	Journalists: Financial journalists in MS Financial journalist in Brussels	<p>We propose to use the following questions with journalists. There are deliberately open as journalists do not like leading questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your overall opinion of DG ECFIN?

	<p>News agency</p> <p>Broadcaster based in Brussels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has that opinion changed over the last five years and, if so, how? • How would you rate the reputation of DG ECFIN among the media by comparison with other international players in economic policy making (e.g. government finance ministries, IMF...)? • What is your opinion of the way(s) in which DG DEFIN engages with you as a journalist and with other media? • Has that opinion changed over the last five years and, if so, how? • What could DG ECFIN do to improve its engagement with the media?
2	<p>International Institutions:</p> <p>EBRD</p> <p>IMF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adaptations to communication strategy and activities in view of the pandemic / to address the same multipliers and stakeholders • examples of other communication strategies / campaigns, which have been / are implemented with similar levels of human and financial resources to DG ECFIN • insights and lessons learnt from own activities, incl. social media, flagship events, MS outreach • current use of networks / platforms on economic policy issues • insights into tools and influencers used that would expand audience reach and engagement for DG ECFIN (without increasing budget) • new collaboration and partnership opportunities to reinforce the relevance of DG ECFIN activities • perceptions of DG ECFIN's established and changing reputation
2	<p>Bloggers, ambassadors, influencers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of ECFIN's role / key messages • current levels of engagement with EU institutions and national authorities / other organisations on economic policy issues • level of interest in engaging with DG ECFIN and specific benefits of doing so • expectations for shareable content and key messages • habits /expectations re. communication activities, which engage with target audiences
2	<p>Civil society organisations / trade unions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of ECFIN's role / key messages

	Finance Watch ETUC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current levels of engagement with EU / international institutions and national authorities on economic policy issues • use of relevant national, international and EU platforms and networks on economic policy issues • level of interest in engaging with DG ECFIN and specific benefits of doing so • ways to enhance this engagement in the future • usefulness of existing activities and ways to improve these • sharing messages and content to wider constituencies • perception change / reinforced view of DG ECFIN as key authority
2	Think tanks: Bruegel EPC	as above