

2016 Questionnaire on Annual Conventions: Results and Interpretation

The questionnaire was

- a) distributed to the 51 attending members at the annual convention in Heidelberg. 35 were returned – a return rate of 69%!
 - Returns were from 3 of the 4 (sponsored) student members, 6 of the 9 committee members (67%) and 26 of the 38 ordinary members (68%).
 - Return is good and representative; the organisers encouraged participants repeatedly to return the questionnaires before leaving the convention, which had the desired effect.

- b) sent to 274 members after the convention. Until 21 August (deadline was 4 August) 19 questionnaires were returned – a return rate of 7%!
 - 3 of these were from current student members (7%).
 - Return is not representative. Was the time span to answer too short and/or chosen unfortunately (holiday period), or could it be expected that
 - the many members who have not participated in any convention in the last 10 years and
 - student members who never attended a convention after the first (sponsored) attendance did not return the questionnaire? We believe the latter and have not re-sent the questionnaire to the non-respondents.

Of the 54 questionnaires received back, 6 were from student members and 8 from non-German speaking members. Only 4 were handed in anonymously.

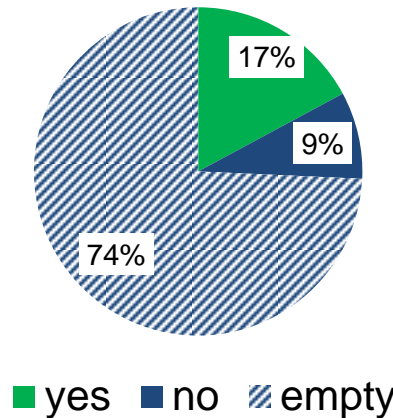
Members were asked to give an average opinion on the last few conventions they attended.

Observation: Heidelberg participants dominantly judged the Heidelberg convention and not earlier ones.

Question 1: Attendance Annual Convention

Heidelberg: It's the first time I attend an annual convention

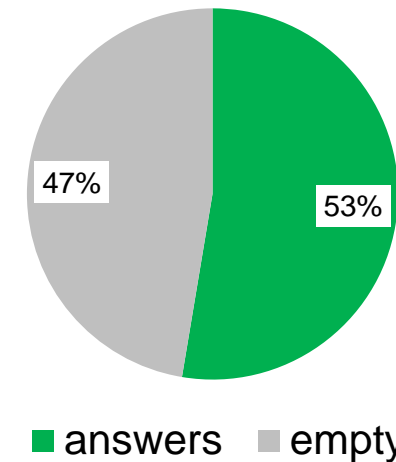
It's the first time I attend an annual convention



A large part of the «empty» answers are from members who have attended several times in the past (there was no „no“ box for this question)

Non-Heidelberg: Number of conventions attended

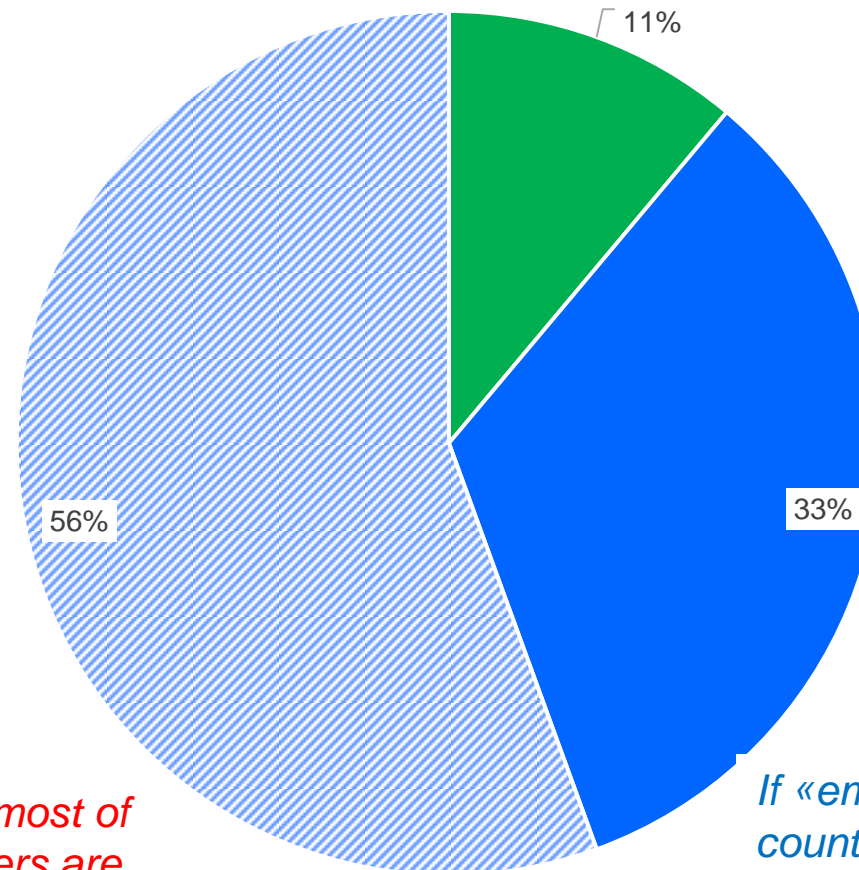
Number of conventions attended



Once: 3; two times: 1; six times: 1; nine times: 1; eleven times: 1, fourteen times : 1; many times: 2

At least 5 of the «empty» answers are from members who attended several times

Question 2: I am a (sponsored) student

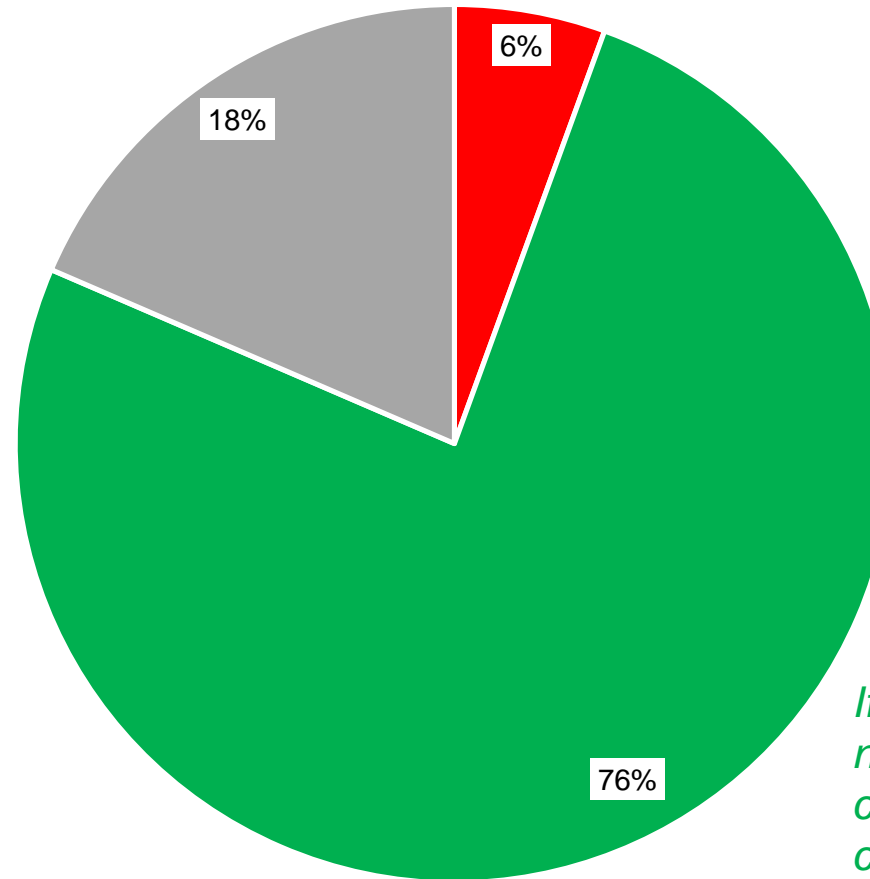


It is assumed that most of the «empty» answers are from ordinary members

If «empty» answers are counted as ordinary members, then 89% of participants are not (sponsored) students

■ yes ■ no ▨ empty

Question 3: Overall Costs

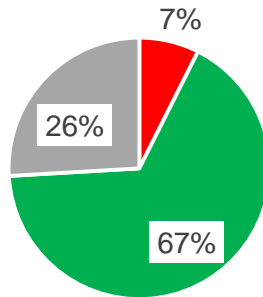


■ too high ■ adequate ■ empty

If «empty» answers are not counted, then overall convention costs are considered adequate by a vast majority (93%) of respondents

Questions 4 to 6: Costs Drinks and Meals Saturday

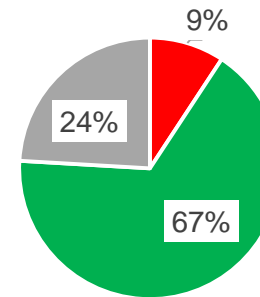
4 Costs Cocktails



If «empty» answers are not counted, then adequate is 90%

■ too high ■ adequate ■ empty

5 Costs Dinner Saturday evening

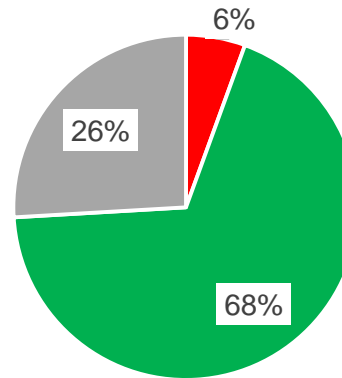


If «empty» answers are not counted, then adequate is 88%

■ too high ■ adequate ■ empty

Also here costs are considered adequate by a vast majority. The highest percentage of „too high“ is the Saturday dinner; even there only 12% of the respondents with an opinion said „too high“.

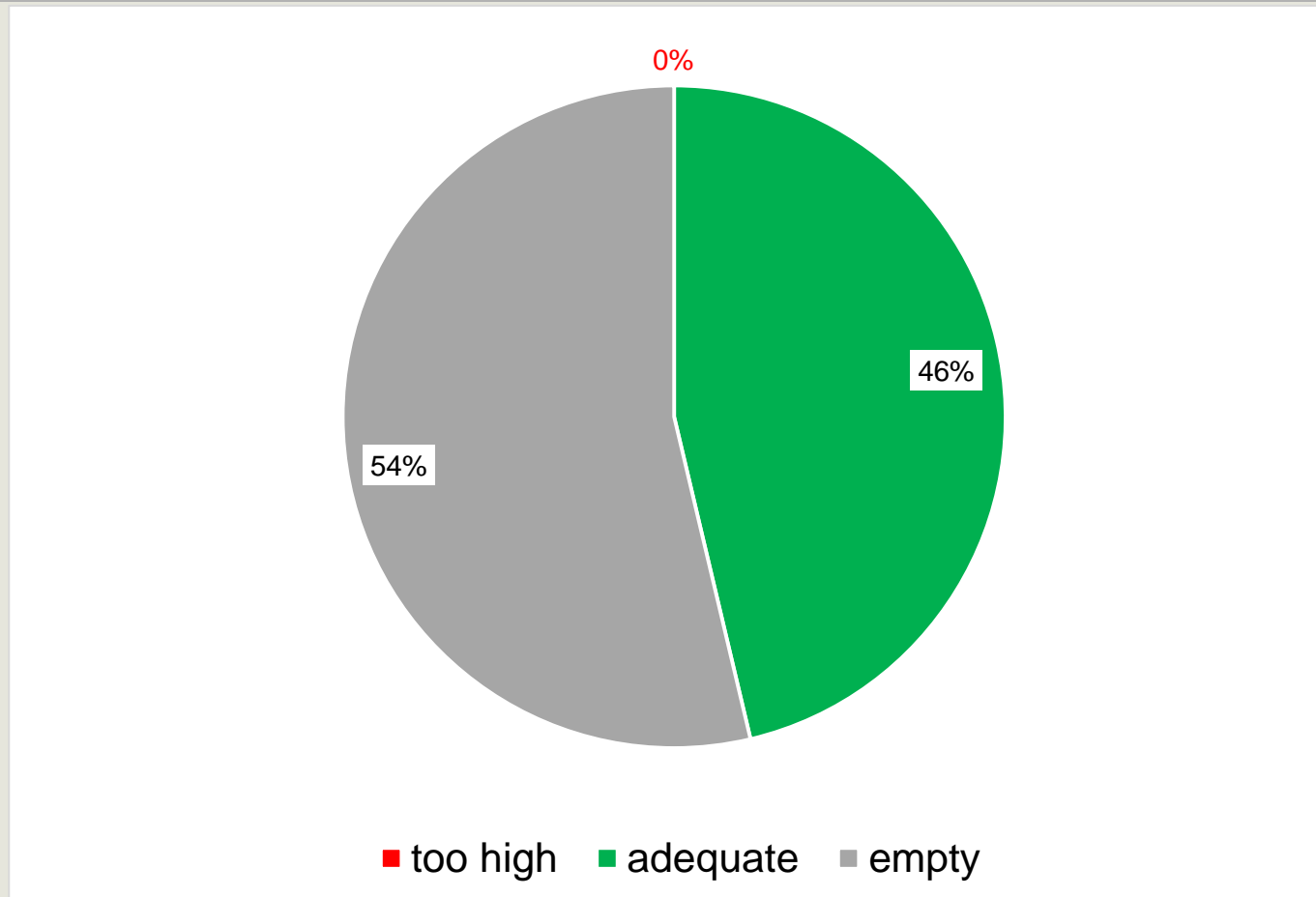
6 Costs Lunches



If «empty» answers are not counted, then adequate is 93%

■ too high ■ adequate ■ empty

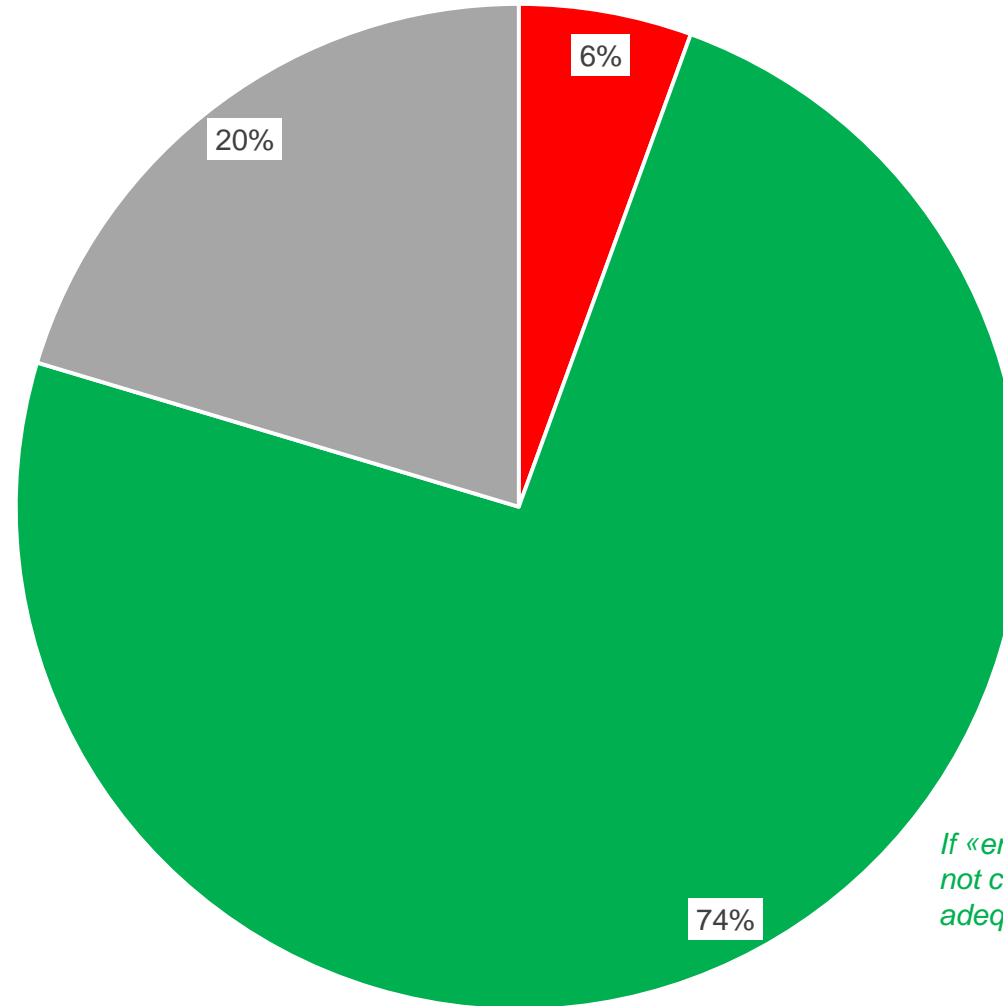
Question 7: Cost Partner Programme



- *The many sheets without an answer are easily explained: no partner at the conventions.*
- *100% adequate (of those who responded) is a good result because indeed SASEG paid not only the guided tour but also a refreshment and the tip for the guide.*

Question 8: Cost Excursions Sunday and Monday (incl. lunch and costs for bus)

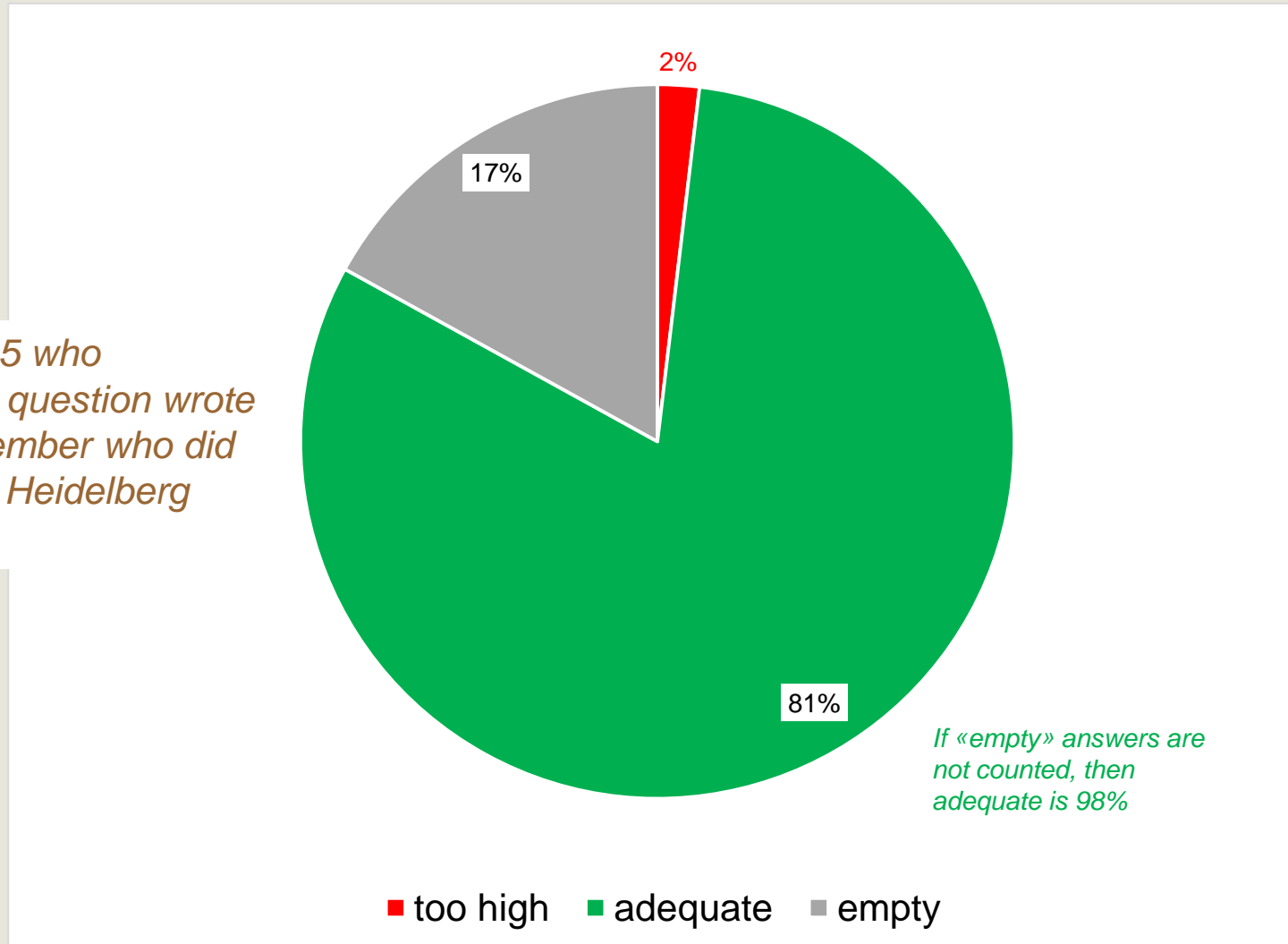
Excursion costs are considered adequate by a vast majority of respondents



If «empty» answers are not counted, then adequate is 93%

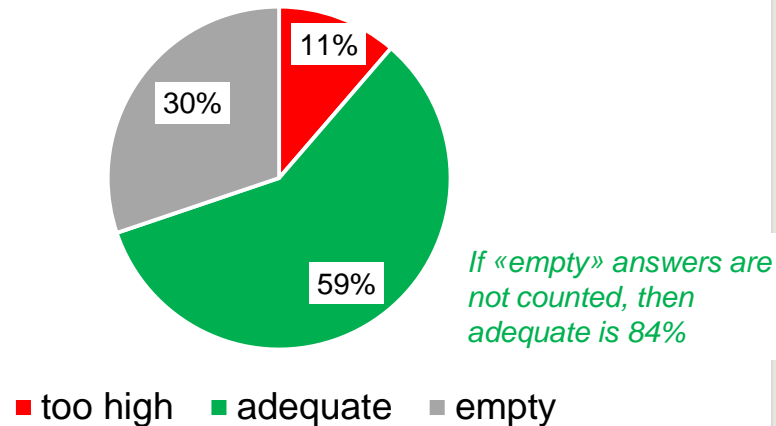
■ too high ■ adequate ■ empty

Question 9: Cost Convention Fee



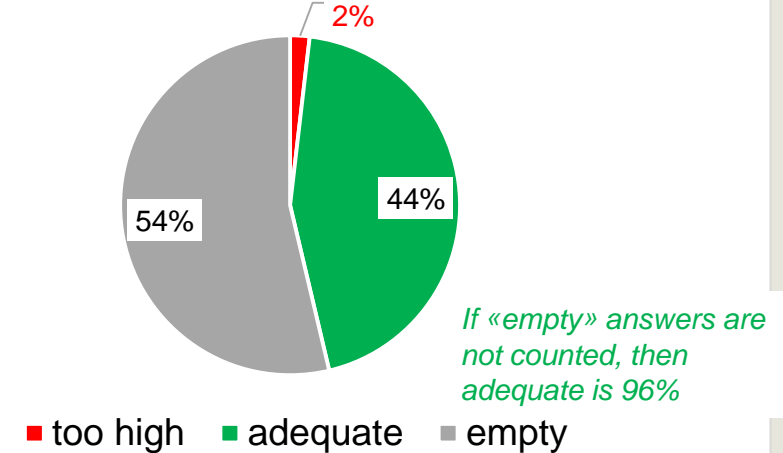
Questions 10 & 11: Cost Hotels

10 Room rates convention hotel



Here as many of 4 out of 11 members not attending Heidelberg (vs. 2 out of 25 at Heidelberg) responded „too high“.

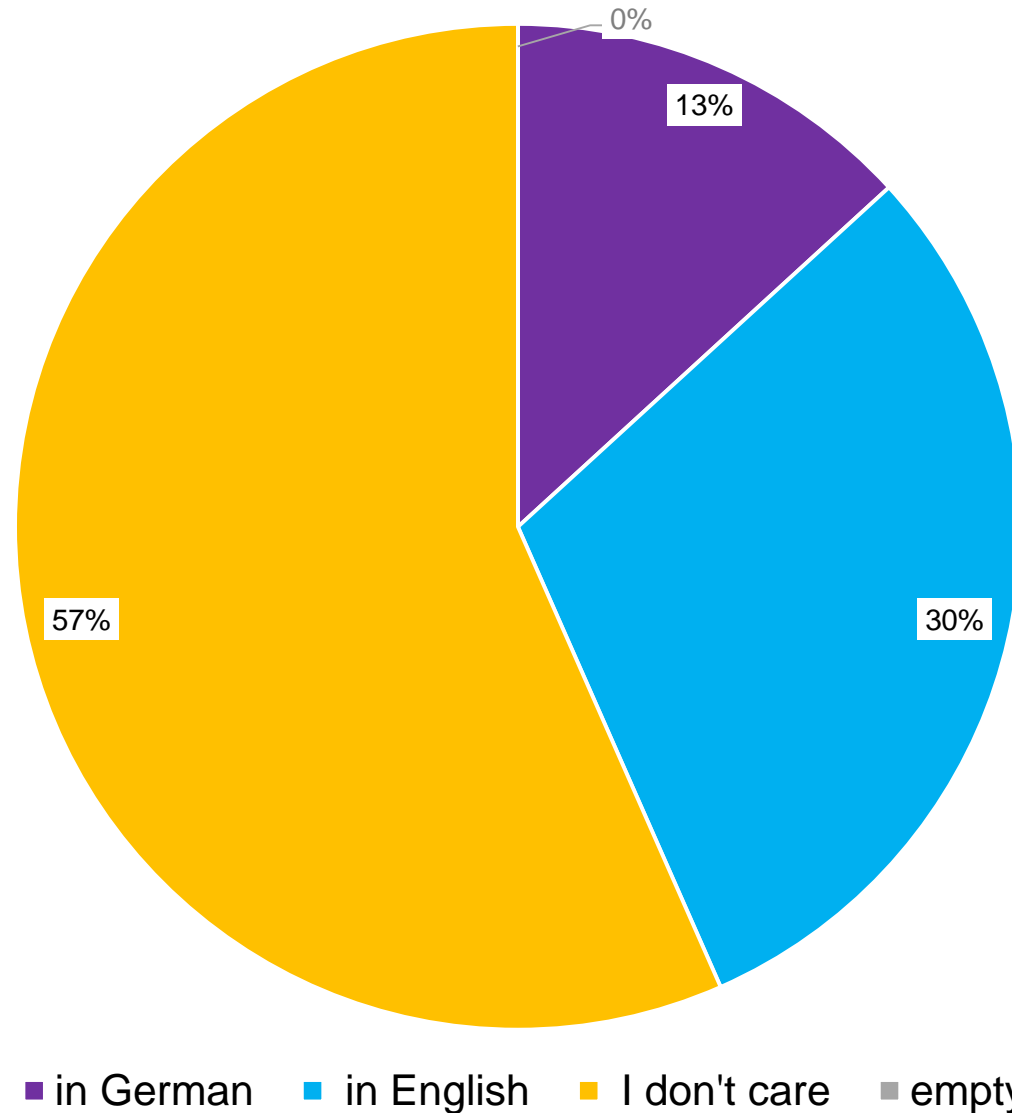
11 Room rates other hotels listed



*The higher number of no answers (compared to the pie on the left) are interpreted that many members who returned the questionnaire stayed at the convention hotel.
The single „too high“ answer (vs. 6 for the convention hotel) means that we definitely need to continue to offer cheaper hotel choices as alternatives to the convention hotel.*

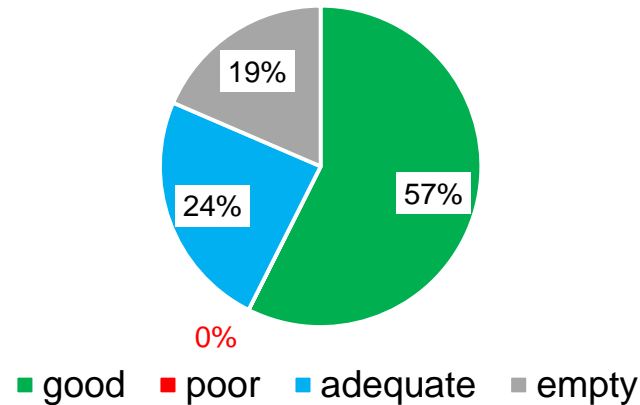
Question 12: Language General Assembly

- „I don't care“ answers dominate, both amongst Heidelberg and non-Heidelberg respondents.
- Those with a preference rather have the General Assembly in English than in German.
- In Heidelberg, where the G.A. was in English for the first time, only two out of 35 members preferred German.



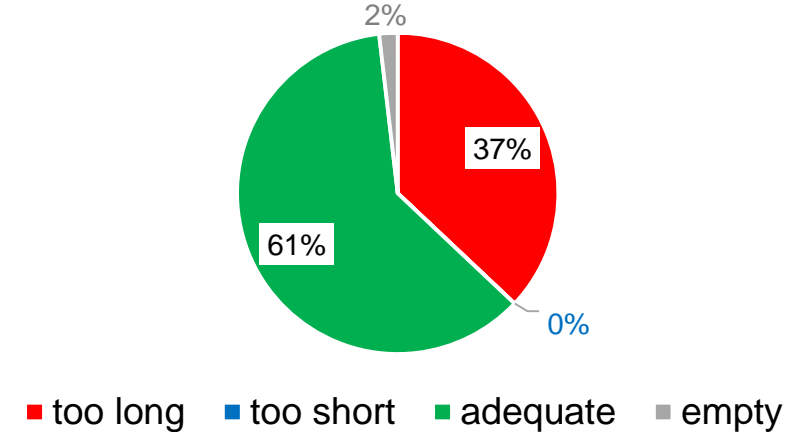
Questions 13 & 14: Scientific Presentations

13 Substance of presentations



A good result indeed

14 Durations of presentations

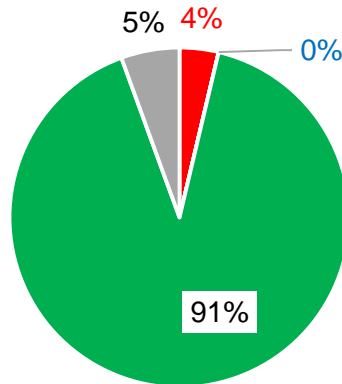


Result is dominated by the Heidelberg convention where 16 of 35 respondents (46%) judged the presentations as being too long. In the comments, the first and also to some extent the third presentation were specifically mentioned as being too long.

This definitely needs attention by the organisers of the next conventions; however, well-known experts often want to speak at length and not just 20-30 minutes (see recommended actions, last slide)

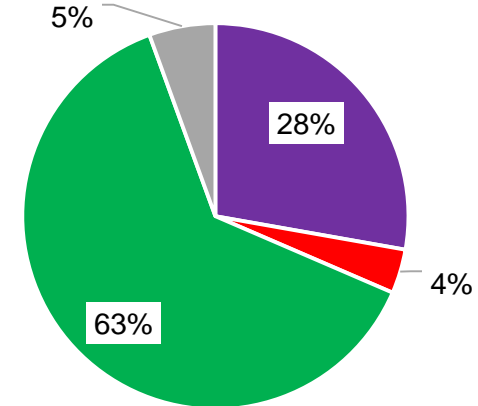
Questions 15 & 16: Excursions

15 Duration of excursions per day



■ too long ■ too short ■ adequate ■ empty

16 Duration lunch break

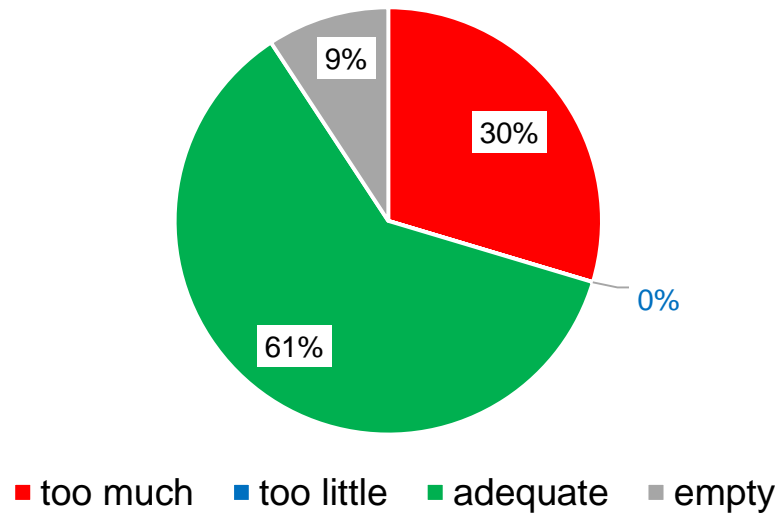


■ too long ■ too short ■ adequate ■ empty

Result appears unambiguous. For Heidelberg, however, we should not overinterpret the result since one of the two coaches arrived at the hotel on Sunday only at 7 p.m. and many respondents had handed in the questionnaire before that time

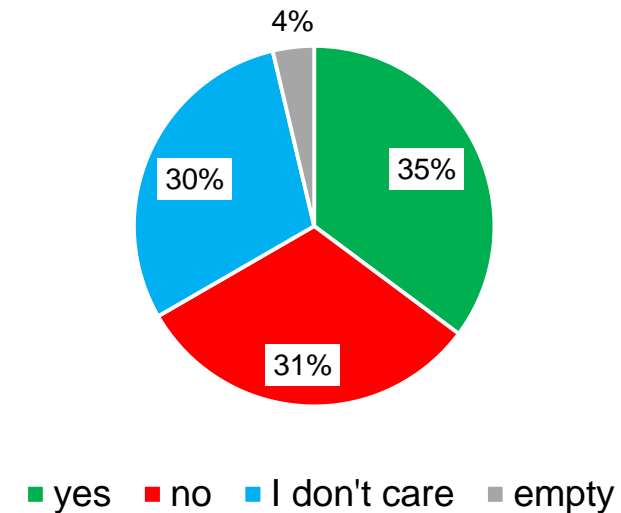
Questions 17 & 18: Lunch Excursions

17 Quantity of lunch



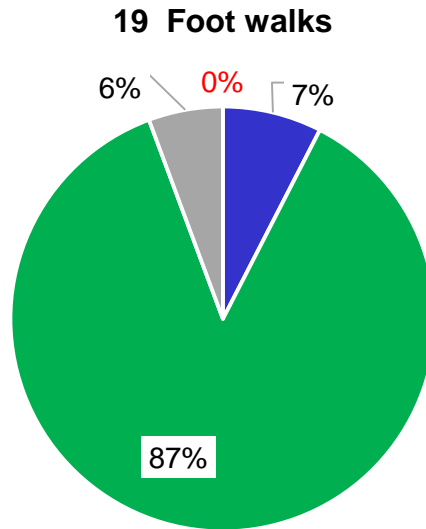
Again, the first of the two Heidelberg excursion days most likely caused 13 out of 33 (39%) respondents to write "too much" (see last slide). In the Non-Heidelberg answers, "too much" was the answer of only 3 out of 15 respondents (20%).

18 Lunch box instead of restaurant



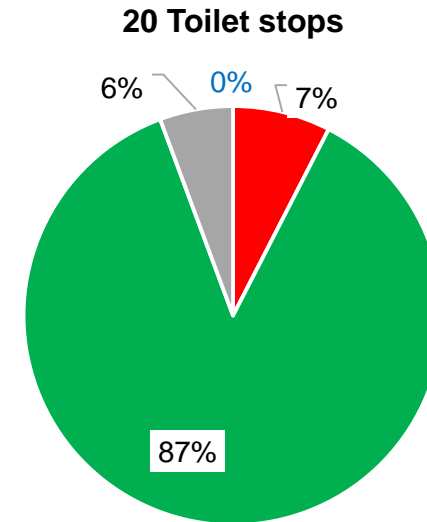
The most common answer amongst Non-Heidelberg respondents is yes regarding a lunch box (7 for, 3 against, 7 don't care). Heidelberg participants have a different opinion: 12 for, 14 against, 9 don't care. Certainly an answer to follow up when preparing the next convention (see recommendations, last slide). Our opinion is that the votes against a lunchbox weigh heavily since many (esp. older) participants cannot rest adequately in the field (without chairs), and beside this there is the toilet issue.

Questions 19 & 20: Foot Walks and Toilet Stops



■ too long/steep ■ too short ■ adequate ■ empty

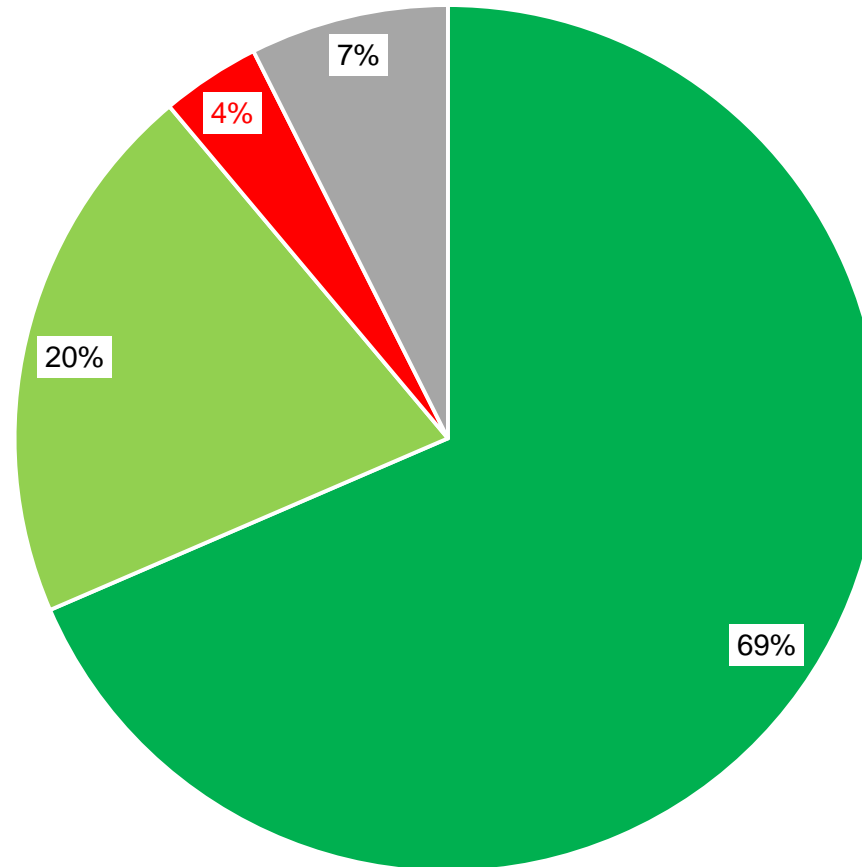
The large majority is satisfied with the foot walks. No respondent wrote „too long/steep“, although in the past there were conventions with long and steep walks. All 4 answers „too short“ came from Heidelberg participants.



■ too many ■ too few ■ adequate ■ empty

In both data sets two members answered „too few“.

Question 21: Student Sponsoring



A clear opinion for continuing the sponsoring of students at our conventions. In the two data sets only one answer each was „not reasonable“.

■ reasonable ■ I am sponsoring ■ not reasonable ■ empty

Summary (1)

- Return rate of questionnaires sent out by mail to members is very low (7%) but at the Heidelberg convention 69% of the distributed questionnaires were returned.
 - Only two (elderly) members could not handle questionnaire as Excel file.
 - 11% of respondents have attended as (sponsored) students.
 - 76% consider overall costs as adequate and only 6% as too high! 11% find the convention hotel costs too high (59% adequate). **These percentages change to 93 vs. 7% and 16% vs. 84% if only respondents with an opinion on overall costs are counted.**
 - 7 questions on costs received a total of 24 answers that costs are too high
 - Most "too high" were on room rate of the Convention hotel (6x), least "too high" on Convention fee (1x) *(We have always offered also hotel(s) with cheaper rates)*
 - The 24 answers "too high" came from 10 members
 - 6 of these members are retired, contributing 13 answers "too high"
 - 4 of these members have a full job, contributing 11 answers "too high"
- This is not a result that can be translated into actions from our side.

Summary (2)

- **57% don't care in which language the General Assembly is held; 30% prefer English, 13% German.**
- **Scientific presentations: 37% (Heidelberg participants: 46%!) consider them to be too long, 61% to be adequate in time. 57% rate the quality of the presentations as good, 24% as adequate.**
- **91% find the hourly duration of the excursions adequate, only 4% too long.**
- **63% find the duration of the lunch break adequate, 28% (!) too long.**
- **61% find the quantity of the lunches adequate, 30% (!) too much.**
- **35% would consider a lunch box convenient, 31% don't and 30% don't care.**
- **The length of the footwalks and the number of toilet stops are considered adequate by 87%.**
- **The student sponsoring programme is considered reasonable by 69%, 20% said they are themselves sponsoring and only 4% think the sponsoring is not reasonable.**
- **For some questions, particularly about costs, the amount of «empty» answers is relatively high and hence the consent for adequate costs is interpreted to be higher than shown! (see last slide and comments to individual questions)**

Recommended Actions

- A large majority considers convention costs in general and also for specific items to be adequate. **However, give adequate attention to moderate costs for meals and accommodation when planning a convention.**
- Although the English language at the general assembly is favoured or no objections raised, still 13% would prefer German. Native English-speaker seem to be a minority of some 4% in Heidelberg and 12-23% over the last 3 years before.
- **Scientific presentations: Plan speaker time strictly to 20 min (w/o discussion) and interfere at convention when overrun.**
- **Lunch break at excursions: If we keep restaurant lunch, serve at most two courses and agree with restaurant that lunch duration incl. paying drinks should not exceed 90 mins.**
- **Lunch box instead of restaurant may be tried out; however, chairs and large enough shelter AND toilet facilities must be provided.**