

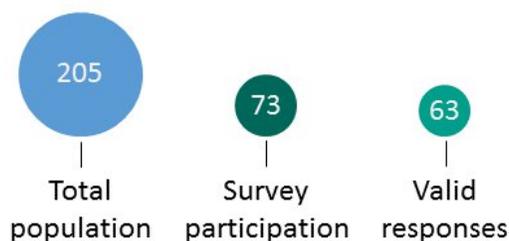
## PostdocNet founding meeting - Feedback and perspectives

From the 29 to the 30 of April 2019, the postdoc community of the Max Planck Society (MPS) had their first meeting to launch the PostdocNet. The PostdocNet is a networking and lobbying organization for all postdocs of the MPS.

After this meeting, the postdoctoral community was asked for feedback on this first meeting and for perspectives to guide the organization of future meetings. Here is the summary of this survey conducted from the 29/05/2019 to the 19/06/2019.

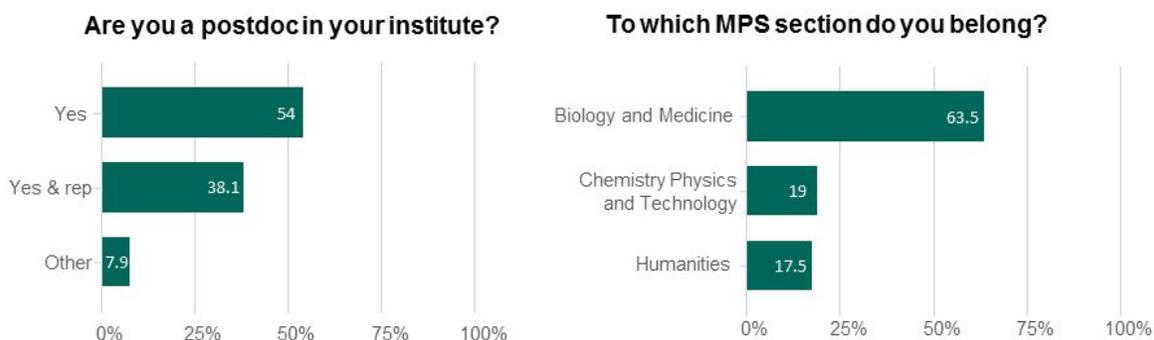
### 1) Demographics of the survey

The survey was sent to the PostdocNet mailing list and at the time of survey closure, about 35% of the postdocs answered it. Incomplete questionnaires were filtered out, yielding a final participation (valid responses) of 30% (figure 1).



**Figure 1.** All persons registered in the Max Planck Society PostdocNet mailing list at the closure of the survey (19/06/2019), all survey participants, and the ultimately evaluable data sets, in absolute figures.

Among the postdocs, 38.1% were also postdocs representative in their Institute and a majority of answers came from the Biology and Medicine section of the MPS (figure 2).

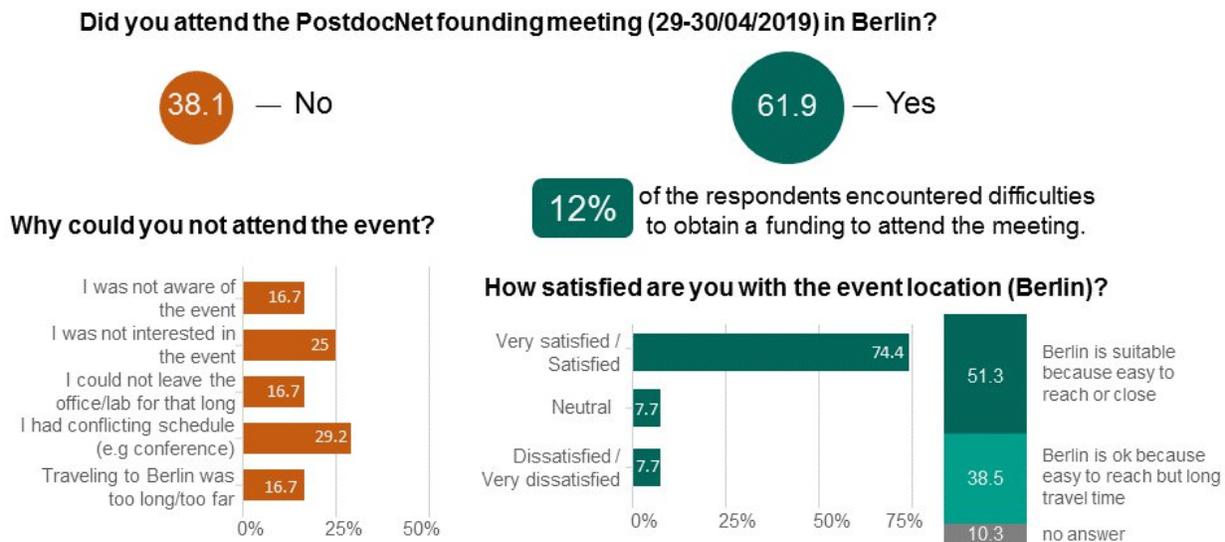


**Figure 2.** Overview of the PostdocNet community and to which scientific section do this community belong. “Rep” corresponds to a postdoc that is postdoc representative in their institute. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who gave the answers given on the y axis. N=63.

### 2) Concerning the 1<sup>st</sup> PostdocNet meeting

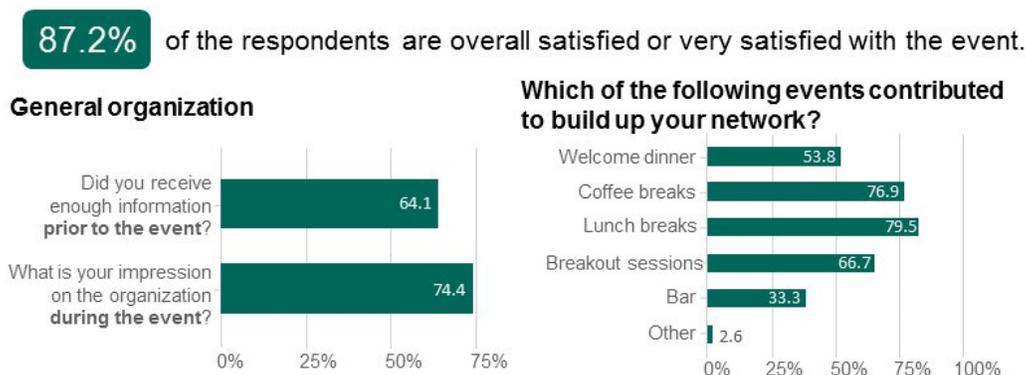
From the total responders, 38.8% did not attend the meeting (figure 3, top). The main reason was conflicting schedule (figure 3, bottom left). Positively, no one has responded: “My supervisor/institute did

not allow me to come” to this question. However, among the 61.9% that attended the meeting, 12% encountered difficulties to obtain a travel financial support (figure 3, bottom right). The majority of people that attended the meeting did not consider Berlin as an unsuitable location, but it was a concern for more than 15% of people that did not join the meeting.



**Figure 3.** Responses of postdocs with respect to their participation to the founding meeting in percentages (N=63), followed by answers to questions specific to the first response. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who gave the mentioned answers. N (“No”)=24, N (“Yes”)=39.

More than 85% of the postdocs were satisfied with this 1<sup>st</sup> meeting (figure 4).

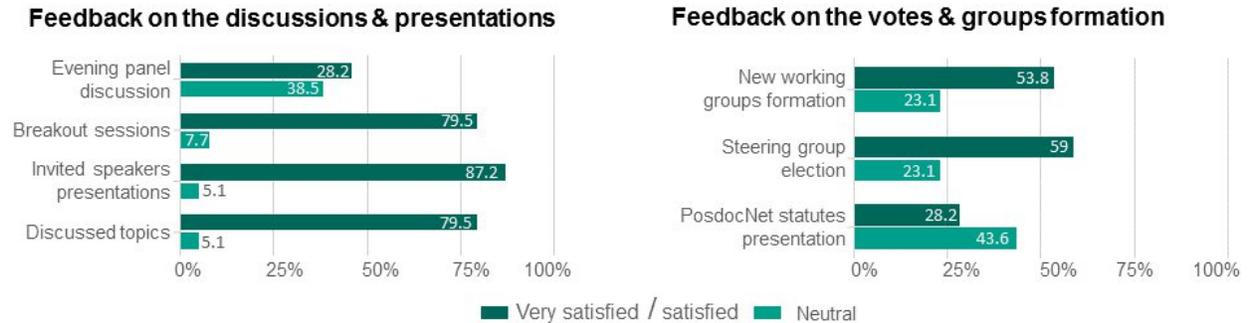


**Figure 4.** Responses of postdocs with respect to overall satisfaction and the organization of the event as well as the role of internal events to networking. Percentages on the left panel represent the proportion of respondents who answered the relevant questions with “Very satisfied” or “Satisfied”. Percentages on the right panel represent the proportion of respondents who gave the mentioned answers. N=39.

Overall, more than 60% of the postdocs that attended the Founding meeting received enough information prior to the event and found the event well organized. In addition, breaks and breakout sessions facilitated networking between the postdoc community (figure 4, bottom).

The satisfaction was also quite high on the discussed topics, the presentations given by the invited speakers and the smaller group breakout sessions (figure 5, left). The reserved opinion on the evening

panel discussion was that half of it was redundant with the next day program. The feedbacks were extremely positive concerning the talks given by the European Network of Postdoc Associations and the Postdoc Representative of Karolinska University. Postdocs appreciated to listen to Prof. Reinhard Jahn especially about the postdoc guidelines of the MPS.



**Figure 5.** Responses of postdocs with respect to the satisfaction with the mentioned topics. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who answered the relevant questions with either “Very satisfied” or “Satisfied” in dark green or “Neutral” in light green. N=39.

As general comments, postdocs highlighted the lack of time to discuss more in depth questions like the PostdocNet statutes, future organization of working groups, hot topics concerning postdoc community.

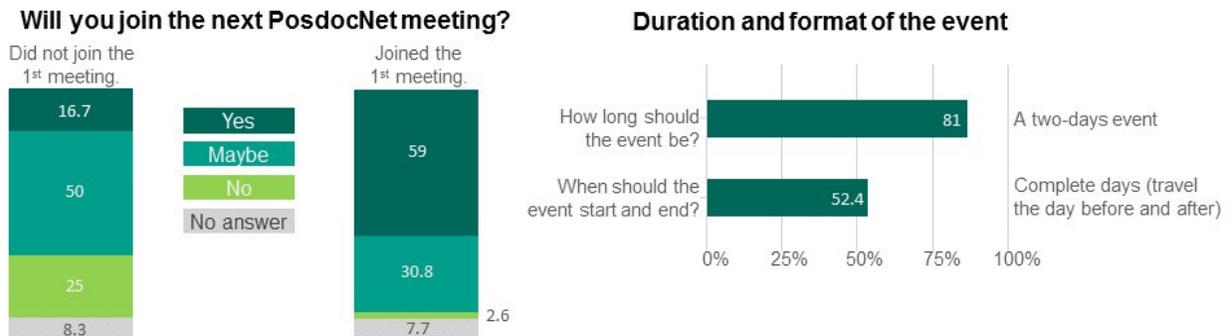
- “ - The time slots were not kept [...] the chairs needed to be somewhat ‘stricter’.
- Stay in time
  - Everything was great, but the evening session (panel discussion) was too long.
  - The second panel, with the speakers of the next day, was unnecessary and redundant.
  - Second panel redundant with day 2, as they talked about stuff that they presented the next day.
  - Everything on the second day was very rushed, when it was perhaps the most important part!
  - Not enough time for the statutes’ discussion.
  - There was too little time to discuss the statutes.
  - We should have really started discussing the statutes earlier.
  - Information about this election should have been advertised beforehand.
  - When electing the steering group, I didn't have any prior information about the candidates, this should have been sent the day before so we make a more informed decision. ”

This lack of time is reflected in the reserved opinion that postdocs had on the presentation and votes of the PostdocNet statutes as well as the constitution of the different working groups (figure 5, right).

### 3) Perspectives on future meetings

Concerning the perspectives to give to this 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, 16% of people that did not attend in 2019 showed interest to come in the future. Only one person that came at the founding meeting said that they will not attend PostdocNet meetings in the future. It is expected that attendance will greatly be dependent on absence of conflicting schedule as well as interest in the proposed program.

The majority of respondents liked the current format of two complete days (figure 6). To be noted, people would appreciate if the end of the meeting allowed an easy 3 to 4 hours trip.



**Figure 6.** Responses of postdocs with respect to the attendance and format of future PostdocNet meetings. Left panel, percentages represent the proportion of respondents that gave the mentioned answers. Right panel, percentages represent the proportion of respondents who gave the answers mentioned on the right to the respective questions. N=63.

In addition, people stressed the need of time for discussions within the PostdocNet group and concrete “work”:



- I do think we should have some breakout 'working' sessions that can actually come out of the PostdocNet meeting with some concrete starting points for initiatives for the year. It's such a great environment, with so many motivated postdocs in one place, we should actually do some work! Perhaps the talks could be shorter in the morning and a few of these 'working sessions' could happen in the evening.

- Maybe one day with reports of the several working groups, the steering committee and other relevant, associated units (like for example the head quarter and the dept. for human development) and one day which is more workshop-like, for example with content about career development (the seminar group could help with that), or mental health, or other stuff like that. Maybe also a slot and format for explicit networking.

- For the next meeting a clearer route for discussion of new working groups and elections should be established.

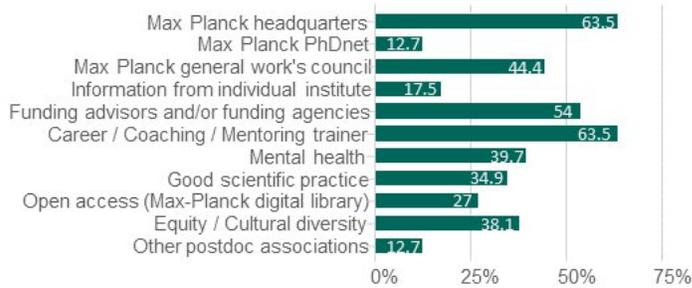
- Please, give more time for forming the new working groups next time.

- Next time we should plan more time for the meeting of the new forming groups. I am in some of them and it would have been nice to make a very rough work plan already in Berlin.

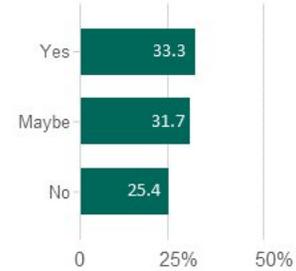


Their main interest for future invited speakers went to Max Planck headquarters (Department of personal development & opportunities) and Career / Coaching / Mentoring trainer (figure 7).

### Which of the possible speakers / topics would be interesting for you?



### Would you like to include a leisure activity?



**Figure 7.** Responses of postdocs with respect to the content of future PostdocNet meetings. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who gave the mentioned answers. N=63.

In addition to the proposed topics, postdocs also suggested:

- Sustainability
- Implementation of postdoc guidelines at institutes (tips, tricks, successes and failures and how to improve)
- Breakout sessions on job search / applications / CVs / 'getting prepared for the next step'
- Breakout sessions on developing your career goal and determining how to reach it
- PostdocNet working groups
- Helmholtz and Leibnitz postdoc representatives
- Science politician
- Science Policy Officer
- European commission dedicated to postdoc
- Interested in leisure time did not reach 50% agreement from the respondents.

To conclude, postdocs are aware of the importance to meet all together to discuss and raise important topics for our community. They emphasized the importance of good and effective use of the meeting time. Additionally, postdocs stressed the fact that they should decide for topics discussed during PostdocNet meeting.



*I really disliked how the topic of stipend/fellowship was dismissed [during the panel discussion] when this is an extremely important topic especially since it was supposed to be resolved 5 years ago. I think it is not up to the organizers to decide what topic is worth discussing but to the people present.*



On behalf of the survey working group, we are looking forward the future meeting!