



2007 Survey on:
“Interest groups in a global context”
Summary Report
May 2007

Summary by Christophe Leclercq and Giovanna Di Ruberti for EurActiv¹, in co-operation with Kellen Europe².

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The authors thank Dan Luca, PR Director at EurActiv, and Alfons Westgeest, Managing Director of Kellen Europe, for their comments on the survey.

Main findings

- Federations' media relations so far rely mainly on co-operation between Brussels and the capitals.
- Both federations and their media counterparts also understand the key importance of online communication of policy positions;
- only a minority of respondents have changed their membership and other priorities following EU enlargement;
- the success of organisations is measured mainly in terms of growth of membership and access to decision-makers;
- one fourth of the respondents intend to become a global association, based on relations with relevant national/European/global institutions and on the membership base.

I. MEDIA RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

a. Budget for external tools

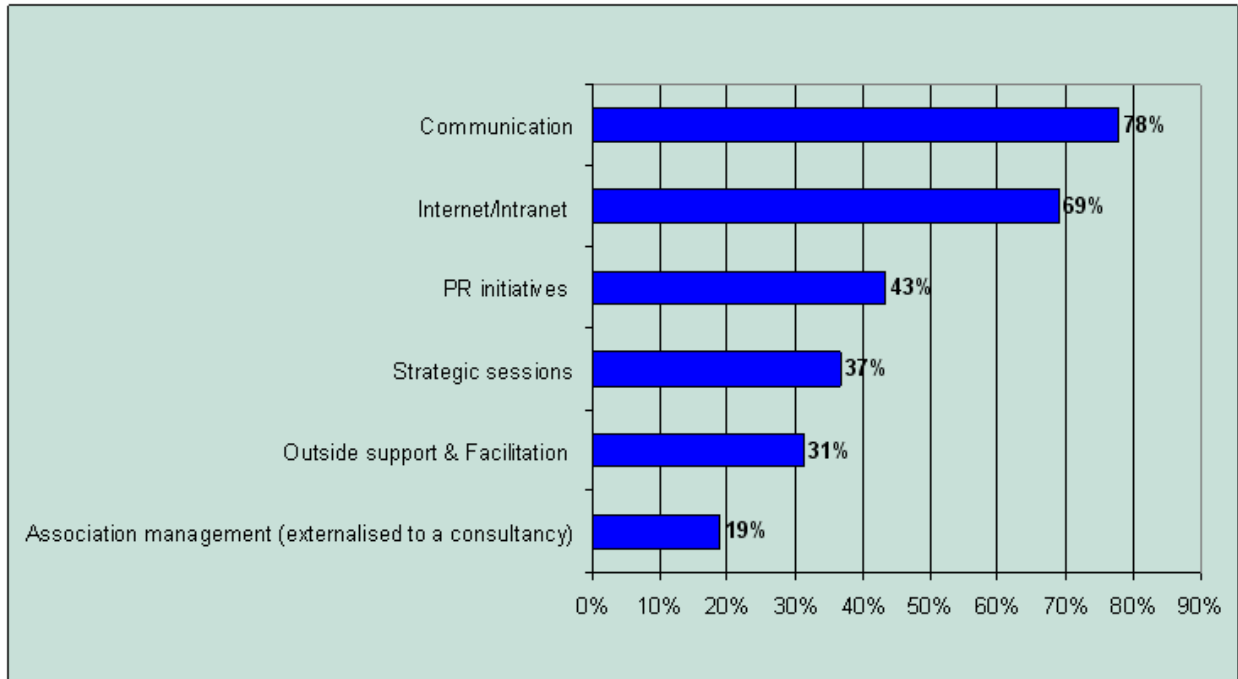
As one might expect, the leading budget lines for external tools are those for communication and intranet/extranet. Association management is used by 1/5 of respondents.

¹ EurActiv is the network of policy portals, reaching 475,000 readers (as of May 2007) in 10 languages, mostly policy professionals. Summaries of other EurActiv surveys of stakeholders and readers can be found at <http://www.euractiv.com/main/Fixed/surveys-journalism-media-EU>.

² Over the last 15 years, Kellen Europe has been Europe's leader in the creation, management and representation of associations - www.kelleneurope.com

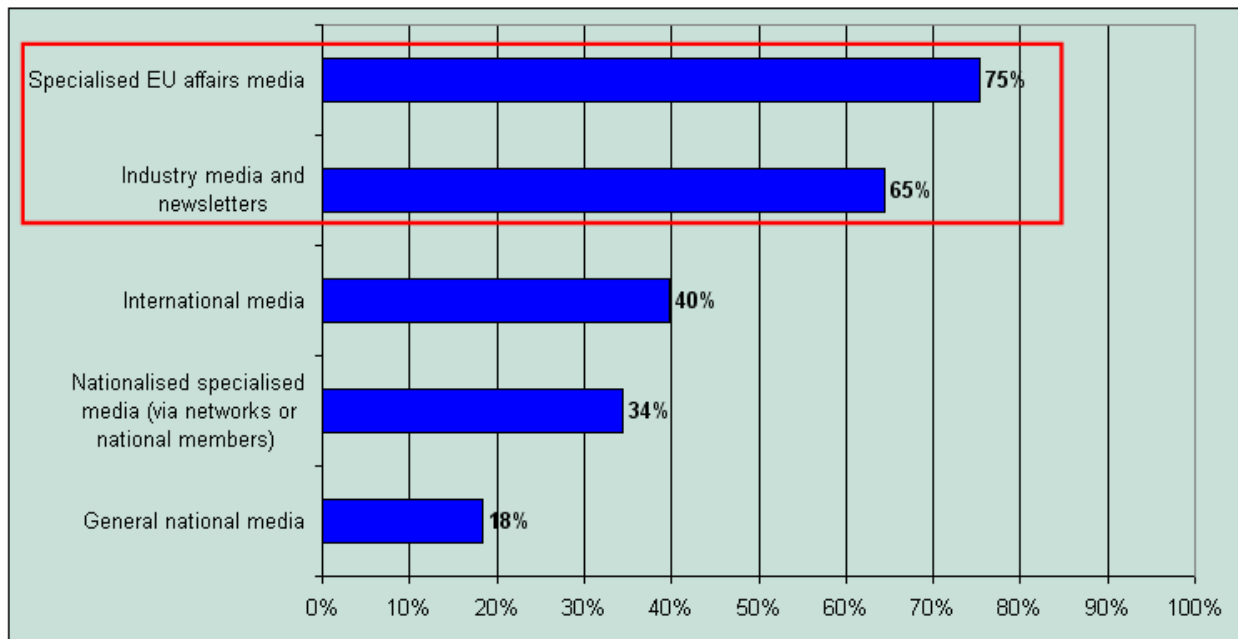
Dan Luca, PR Director at EurActiv, underlines that “the internet/intranet are important in the budget of European associations, confirming that online tools are becoming a commonly used channel”.

For which of the following areas do you have a standard budget line?



b. Relevant media for external communication

In your external communication which media are more relevant?

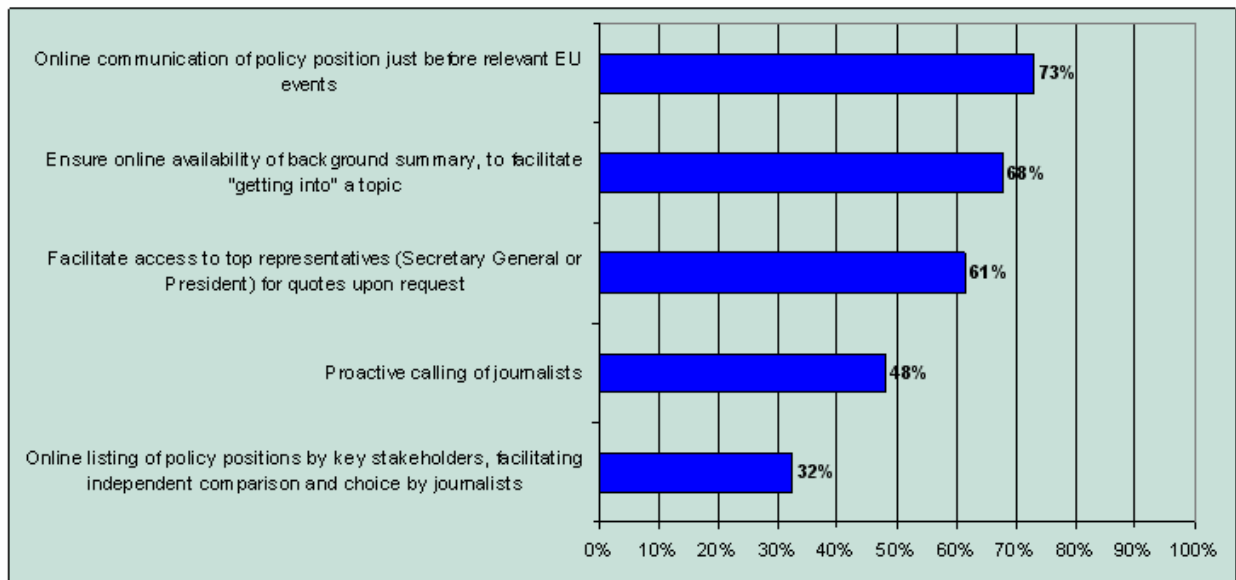


The most relevant media for the respondents' external communication are those specialised in EU affairs (75%), followed by industry media (65%), well ahead of international (40%), national specialised (34%) and general national media (only 18%).

Dan Luca says that "if we consider that 95% of the journalists in Brussels come from the general national media, we can see that the few journalists working for specialised EU affairs media are the main target of interest groups for their external communication".

c. Media visibility

What would you be ready to do in order to trigger more attention from the media?



A similar question was asked in a previous survey to EU media correspondents³: "We understand journalists are working under pressure. What would save your time most?" In both cases, respondents underlined the importance of online tools, with some differences:

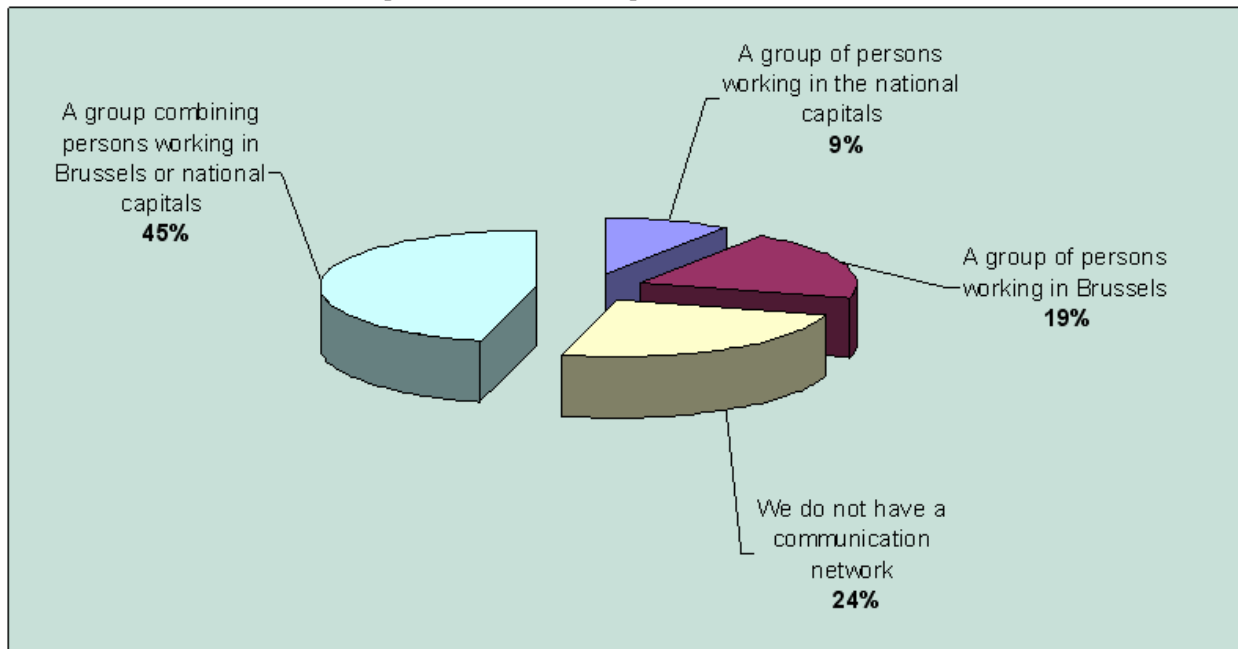
- "Online communication of policy position just before relevant EU events": is considered important by 73% of the respondent federations and 65% of the journalists;
- "Ensure online availability of background summary, to facilitate getting into a topic": is considered even more important for journalists (83%) than for federations (68%), and;

³ EurActiv Media Survey 2006 "Media perception about interest groups in EU affairs", <http://www.euractiv.com/en/opinion/brussels-journalists-give-tips-media-relations/article-159758>

- "Online listing of policy positions by key stakeholders, facilitating independent comparison and choice by journalists": is considered important by 58% of journalists but only by 32% of federations.

d. Press relations

How does your industry organise its network of people responsible for press relations?



When asked about the way their industry organises its network of people responsible for press relations, most respondents (45%) reported they use a combination of Brussels and national networks to communicate. Besides this, 1/4 of respondents do not have a communication network (and implicitly use only the European federation staff) and 1/5 use a group working in Brussels.

e. Evaluation of different media

Compared with other EU specialised press, international/global press and national press, EurActiv is rated as the best-performing media in terms of:

- *Independence*, with 70% of respondents saying it is either good or outstanding. There is a big gap between other EU specialised press (52% consider them good/outstanding) and the national press (25%);
- *Objectivity and impartiality* (with 69% of respondents saying it is either good or outstanding, versus 49% for other EU specialised press, 39% for international press and only 18% for the national one);
- *Credibility* (73% of respondents saying it is either good or outstanding). There is a big gap between other EU specialised press (good/outstanding for 61% of respondents) and the national press (35%);

- *Accuracy* (considered either good or outstanding by 74% of respondents, with a wide gap with other EU specialised media, which are considered good/outstanding by 54% of respondents).

The second best in all categories is other EU specialised press, which is almost at the same level as international press. According to the respondents, the lowest level of independence, objectivity, credibility and accuracy is with the national press.

II. LOBBY STRATEGY

a. Communication to national stakeholders influencing EU policies

The survey results show that communication to national stakeholders influencing EU policies requires adaptation and national events, or at least an exchange of web content and translation of press releases.

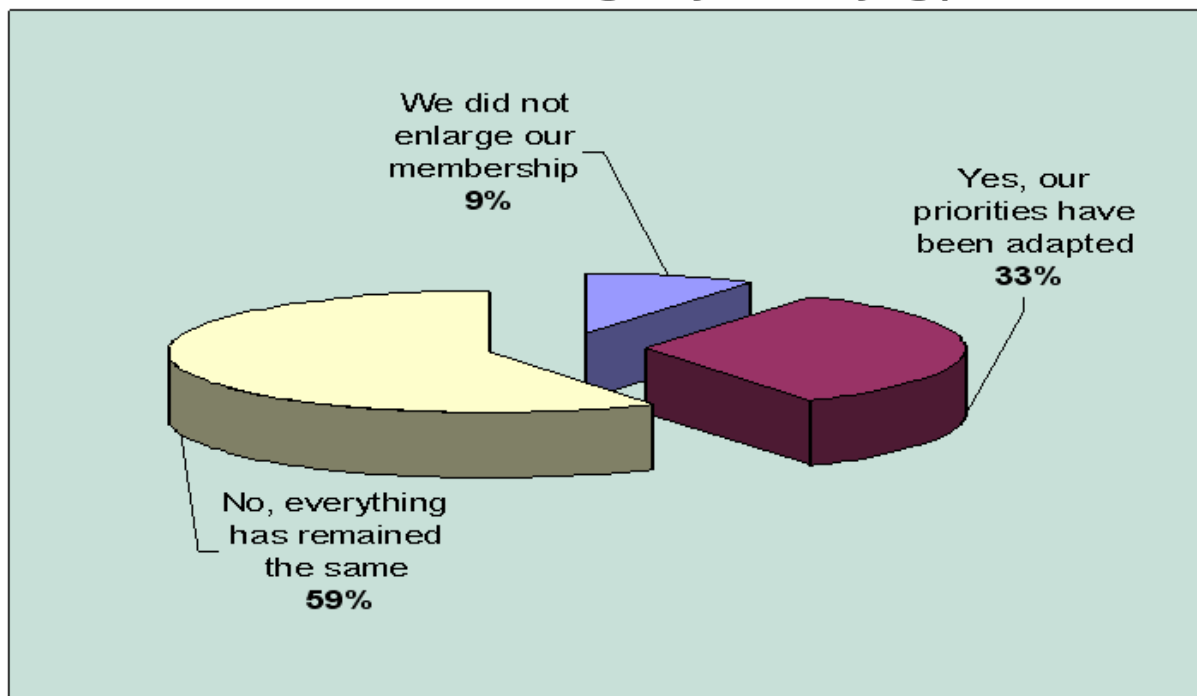
In particular, the main ways of communicating to national stakeholders influencing EU policies are:

- A network of press persons, adapting (localising) releases;
- national events with co-ordination, and;
- joint events.

Some respondents also mentioned the importance of direct contact with national decision-makers and national representations in Brussels.

b. EU enlargement and lobbying priorities

Did the enlargement of your membership to include members from other countries cause a change in your lobbying priorities?



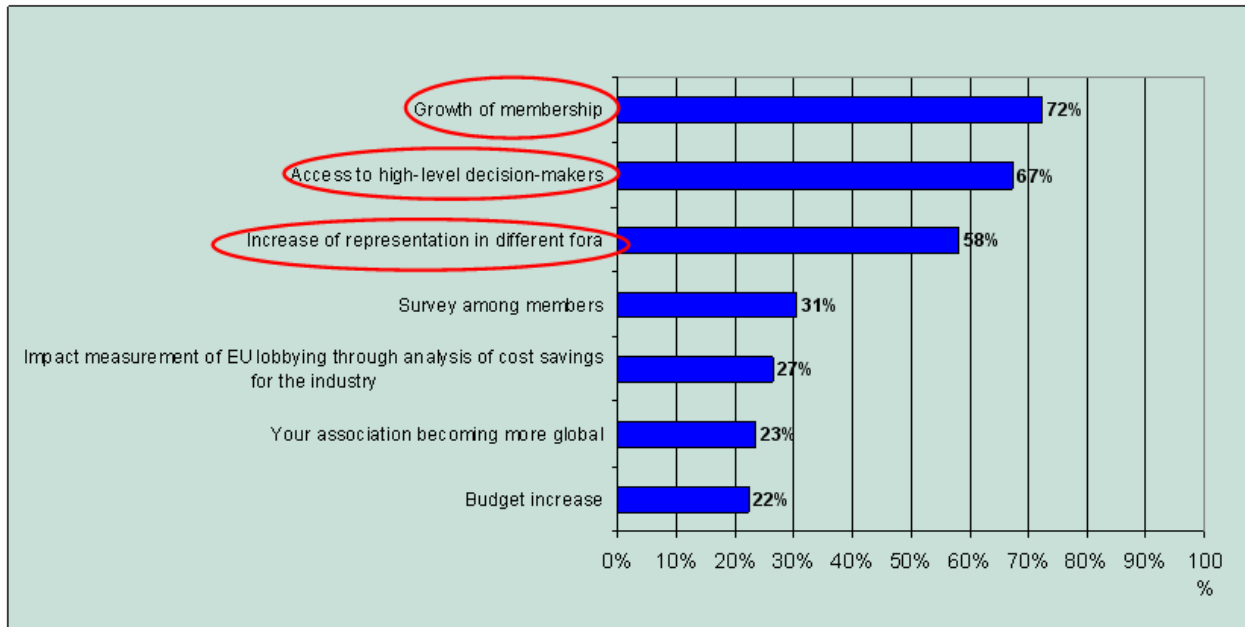
Following EU enlargement, only 1/3 of respondent federations has changed their membership and other priorities accordingly.

Compared with the results of the same question asked in the 2005 Survey, those who said that they did not enlarge their membership have fallen from 24% to 9%.

III. GOVERNANCE

a. How organisations measure their success

How do you measure the success of your organisation?



The respondents measure the success of their organisation mainly through:

- Growth of membership;
- access to high-level decision-makers, and;
- increase of representation in different fora.

In comparison with the same question asked in the Survey 2005, the ranking has not changed (note: In 2005, the item "your association becoming more global" was not in the survey.)

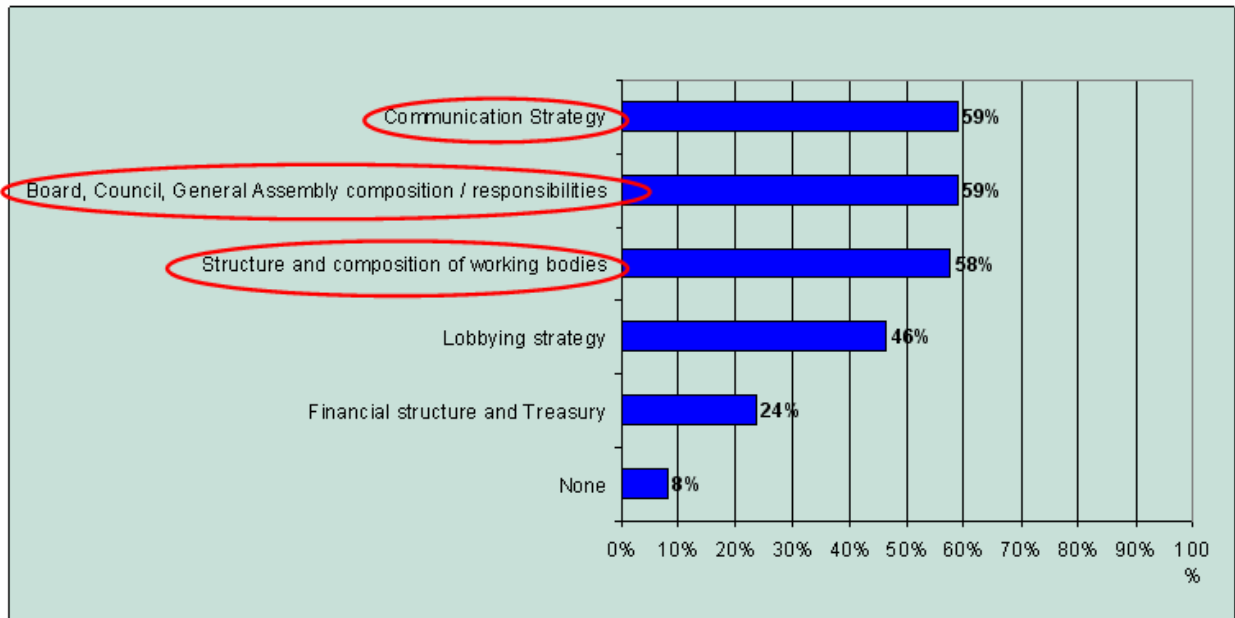
It is interesting that a considerable number of respondents also spontaneously mentioned their organisation *being consulted by EU institutions on sector specific issues and taken into account in new/revised legislation and media coverage*. This important item will be included in the next EurActiv survey.

b. Governance revision

According to the respondents, the following governance revisions have the same importance:

- Revision of the Communication strategy;
- revision of the responsibilities and composition of Board/Council/General Assembly, and;
- revision of the structure and composition of working bodies.

Which type of governance structure revision did you do in the last 2 years?



IV. ASSOCIATIONS GOING GLOBAL

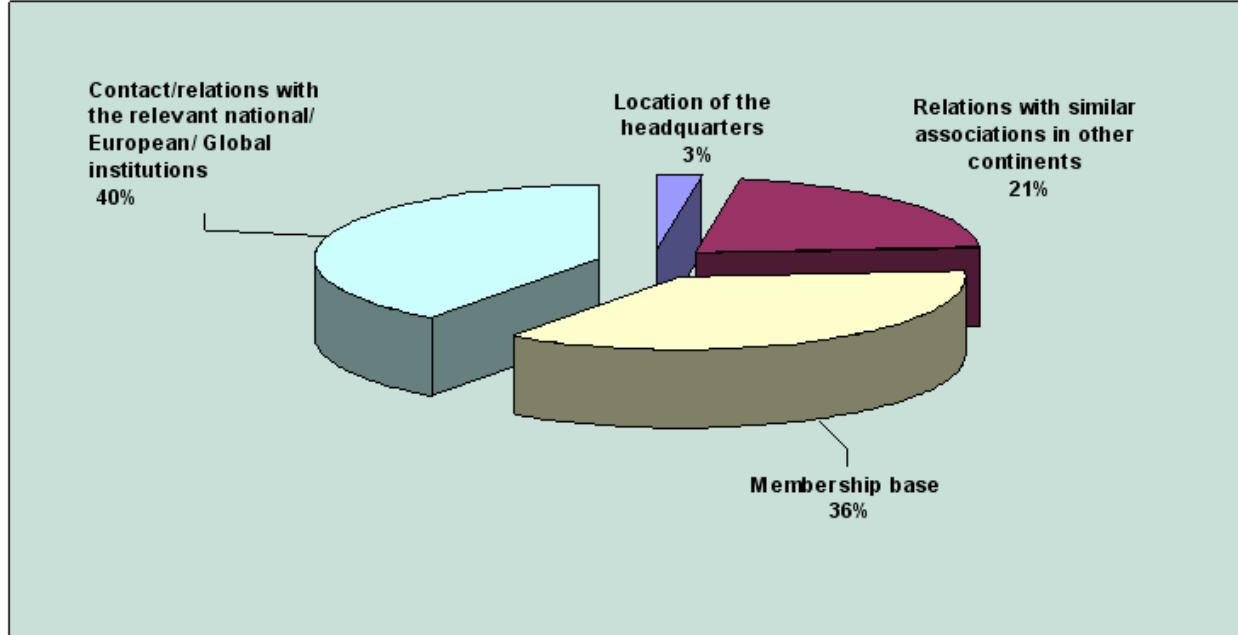
25% of respondents intend to become a global association.

Kellen Europe's Alfons Westgeest notes: "Brussels-based associations are operating in an increasing global environment - or their members are. Just a few examples: global manufacturing is now centered in Asia, regulatory policy on the environment tends to emanate from the EU, and increased security concerns originating in the US is impacting transport of goods and persons globally. Raising awareness of the global agenda and its opportunities is vital."

Concerning the most important factor to becoming a successful global association, respondents consider as almost equally important "contacts and relations with the relevant national/European/global institutions" and "membership base".

Alfons Westgeest comments that "a diverse membership base will in itself require a global outreach to decision makers. However, the key to success is to target the correct level of decision-makers (national, European or global) at the right time on the right issue - one that he or she really holds within their remit."

What do you see as the most important factor to becoming a successful global association?



On the difference between lobbying strategies to address global and European audiences, respondents say that global lobbying still requires taking national differences into account, as is the case with European lobbying.

In particular, around 1/3 of respondents underlined that global lobbying has to take into account cultural and regulatory differences, and to adapt to a wider range of ethic and business values. Therefore the message has to be more localised, by tailoring the lobbying to the specific context, with the implementation being done at local level.

1/3 of respondents have also mentioned that a global lobbying strategy should tackle only more general issues. Moreover, EU lobbying is usually triggered by EU policies/legislation, and therefore it has a "ready-made" context, which is absent in global lobbying. For this reason, a global audience is less aware of an issue, and lobbying should include more explanation as to why an issue is relevant.

RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

- Most respondents have a model based on direct membership, exclusively or partly corporate.
- More than half of the respondents (60%) have a small Secretariat (up to five people), and nearly 1/3 a large Secretariat with more than ten full-time equivalents.
- Total annual budget for running the activity of the Brussels Secretariat: 41% of respondents have a budget of more than €500,000 per year, 27% between €200,000 and €500,000 annually.

Methodology note

EurActiv's survey of European federations takes place on a yearly basis. The results of the 2007 edition are based on 98 responses from European business federations who replied online from 23 November 2006 to 1 February 2007.

The survey was presented at the 2007 EuroConference organised by Kellen Europe on 28 February 2007.

http://kelleneurope.com/2007_euroconference/

RELATED Links on www.EurActiv.com:

Links dossier on EU Communication Policy: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/pa/eu-communication-policy/article-117502>

Fondation EurActiv, Yellow Paper on EU Communication:

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/Fixed?tcmuri=tcm:29-151919-16>

Article summarising this paper:

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/pa/euractiv-survey-2007-relations-key-trade-associations/article-162730>

RELATED SURVEYS BY EURACTIV:

- Media Survey 2006 "Media perception about interest groups in EU affairs"
- Federation survey 2006: "Communication trends within European Federations"
- Federation survey 2005: "Strategy and Governance of European Associations in EU Brussels"