

28.07.05

## Deliverable DN7.0.1: GÉANT2 Launch Event



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### Abstract

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback from the GÉANT2 Launch Event held on 14-15 June 2005 at the Centre Culturel de Rencontre Abbaye de Neumünster in the city of Luxembourg. This deliverable will describe the purpose of the event, outline the planning activities and summarise the results and the lessons learned.

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## 0 Executive Summary

To mark the substantial upgrade of the network and the inauguration of GÉANT2, a GÉANT2 Launch Event was staged on 14-15 June 2005 at the Centre Culturel de Rencontre Abbaye de Neumünster, 28 rue Münster, L-2160 Luxembourg. In total, 195 delegates from 49 countries attended this two-day event from all parts of the globe. An interesting and varied agenda was planned with keynote speakers and presenters from all stakeholder communities. Activities for the event included network application demonstration set-ups, a formal opening ceremony, consistent project and event branding, an Internet Café, and a Gala Dinner.

Feedback from a number of sources has indicated that the objectives set out for the event were fully achieved. The success of the event was due primarily to the excellent teamwork which took place within DANTE, between DANTE and the European Commission (DG INFSO), and with the local NREN (RESTENA) whose team were responsible for providing connectivity into the conference venue and who offered invaluable local support.

This deliverable is a post-event report providing the summary of key objectives and planning activities which went into organising this event. It sets out to provide and analyse feedback received from attendees. Finally, it summarises the results and the lessons learnt.

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# 1 Pre-event Organisation

## 1.1 Project Planning and Control

Planning and organisation of the event was managed by DANTE. A professional conference production company from Luxembourg was contracted to provide planning input to the master project plan held by the DANTE conference organiser and to carry out stage set production, preparation of exhibits, pre-event and on-site delegate management, audio-visual production and direction as well as coordination of all other factors and logistics common to this type of event.

To ensure that all plans remained on track, regular conference calls were held between DANTE and the European Commission, RESTENA and the conference production company.

### 1.1.1 Planning Assumptions

The capacity of the main conference room was around 280. Delegates would have free entry to the conference, but each would be expected to pay their own travel/hotel expenses. Attendance at the event was 'by invitation only'. The decision on timing and location was primarily determined by the Luxembourg EU Presidency and the e-IRG meeting which took place immediately before the Launch event.

## 1.2 Event Objectives

The key objectives for this event were as follows:

- To mark and celebrate the launch of the upgraded network;
- To provide a forum to discuss achievements and future developments in European and global research networking;

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- To bring together senior representatives of the networking community, opinion formers, representatives of funding bodies, users of research and education networking and infrastructure and equipment suppliers;
- To increase global awareness of GÉANT2;
- To demonstrate the global dimension of GÉANT2 and European initiatives to develop global connectivity;
- To understand the evolving requirements of different user groups;
- To show the capabilities of the network with live demonstrations of applications that take advantage of GÉANT2.

### 1.3 Conference Agenda

The drafting of the conference agenda progressed as the planning proceeded. The final agenda for the event can be seen in Appendix A. A first draft agenda was posted on the event website mid-March outlining the structure which was as follows:

- Day One – Opening Ceremony, featuring keynote speeches, among others, from Commissioner Viviane Reding.
- Day Two – Session I: *GÉANT2: A Different Kind of Network*, featuring presentations on the nature of the new network and on the current and future landscape of advanced networking and infrastructures.
- Day Two – Session II: *Global Development of Research Networking*, featuring presentations on opportunities and challenges of global research networking.
- Day Two – Session III: *User Support: From Technology to Service*, highlighting the importance of understanding and meeting the users' requirements.

Each session on Day Two was followed by a panel discussion lasting approximately 15-20 minutes.

Two amendments were made to the final programme: Mrs Mady Delvaux-Stehres, Luxembourg Minister for Education and Vocational Training, was replaced by Mr Raymond Straus, Conseiller de Gouvernement, Ministry for Education and Vocational Training. Mr Stefano Lorenzi made the Alcatel presentation, replacing Mr Romano Valussi.

Dr Doug van Houweling participated in the last session via a live video link from the Internet2 premises in Ann Arbor, MI (USA).

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The event was preceded by the 4<sup>th</sup> EUMEDCONNECT project meeting in the morning of 14 June held at a local hotel. Following the opening ceremony on 14 June a meeting between Commissioner Reding and representatives of the ALICE and EUMEDCONNECT project partners took place.

## 1.4 Demonstrations

Four demonstrations were on display at the event (see Appendix B) to illustrate the capabilities of the network. These were CrossGrid; BioCASE; eVLBI; and a video wall displaying webcam images from across the globe to illustrate the global reach of the network.

The demonstrations were prominently displayed outside the conference hall and following the opening ceremony a VIP tour in this exhibition area took place. Feedback from conference delegates was generally positive. The selection of the demos was limited by bandwidth constraints encountered in Luxembourg. The initial idea of a live music demo during the opening ceremony, involving a quartet in Luxembourg and a pianist in a remote location, was abandoned due to these connectivity limitations.

## 1.5 Promotion

### 1.5.1 Invitation Process

A delegate invitation list was compiled based on input from DANTE, the European Commission and other key stakeholders (eg NREN Policy Committee). On 24 March an advance notice email was sent out to some 600 potential attendees. This was followed up a week later with a formal invitation in A5 postcard format which was intended to suggestively convey the message of the launch by using a hot-air balloon image associated with the idea of 'take-off'. The online registration system went live on 11 April. A further set of invitations was sent out to additional nominees and key suppliers bringing the total number of invitees up to 700.

### 1.5.2 Event Website/Online Registration

A Launch event website was set up at [www.geant2.net/launch](http://www.geant2.net/launch). This site evolved as the planning proceeded. It contained conference objectives, agenda, information on local hotels and the venue, travel and visa requirement information as well as event specific maps. This part of the event website was managed by DANTE.

An online registration system with secure credit card transactions for hotel bookings was designed and managed by the conference production company and was accessible via a direct link from the event website. The system allowed registrants to amend their own data and to securely view in real-time the growing list of delegates also attending the event.

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## 2 Delegate Attendance

216 registrations were processed between 11 April and 15 June 2005 (see 1.5.3). There were 21 no-shows and/or cancellations, with 195 delegates actually attending the event. The invitees-attendees ratio was nearly 30%.

The participants list can be seen in Appendix C.

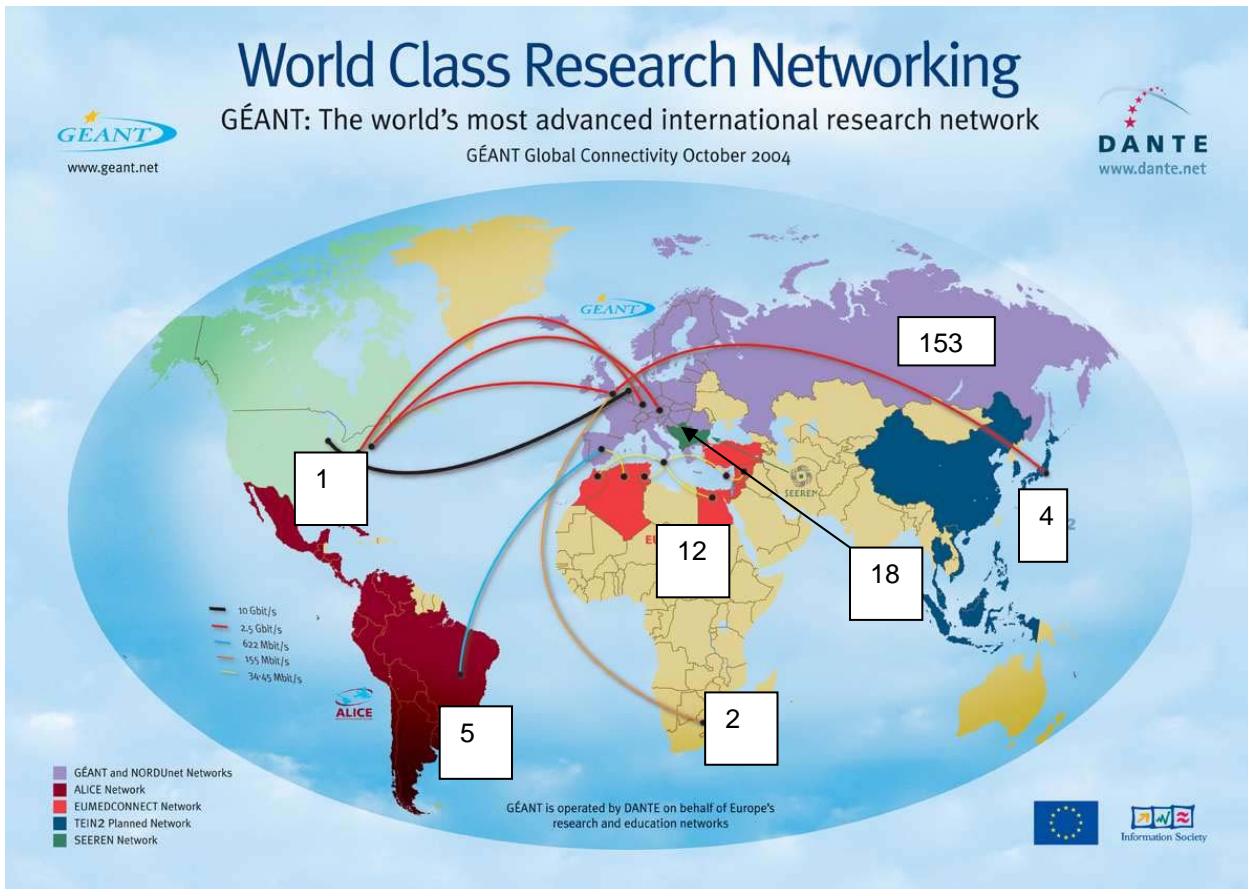
### 2.1 Delegate Profile

Attendance by DANTE, the hosting organisation, excepted, a total of 195 delegates from 49 countries attended the conference over the two days. The event can truly claim to have a global scope and interest given the delegate attendance profile as shown in table 2.1 below. The largest number of delegates originated from Luxembourg (18) and its neighbouring states: Belgium (24), Netherlands (14) and Germany (13).

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Country	Delegates	Country	Delegates	Country	Delegates
Algeria	1	Guatemala	1	Poland	6
Austria	1	Hungary	3	Portugal	2
Belgium	24	Iran	1	Romania	1
Brazil	1	Ireland	1	Russia	4
Bulgaria	3	Israel	2	Serbia & Montenegro	1
Chile	1	Italy	3	Slovakia	1
China	3	Japan	1	Slovenia	3
Croatia	1	Jordan	1	South Africa	2
Cyprus	1	Latvia	4	Spain	7
Czech Republic	1	Lithuania	3	Sweden	3
Denmark	1	Luxembourg	18	Switzerland	6
Egypt	2	Malta	2	Turkey	2
Estonia	2	Mexico	1	UK	14
Finland	2	Morocco	1	USA	1
France	5	Netherlands	14	Uruguay	1
Germany	13	Norway	1		
Greece	9	Palestinian Territory	1		

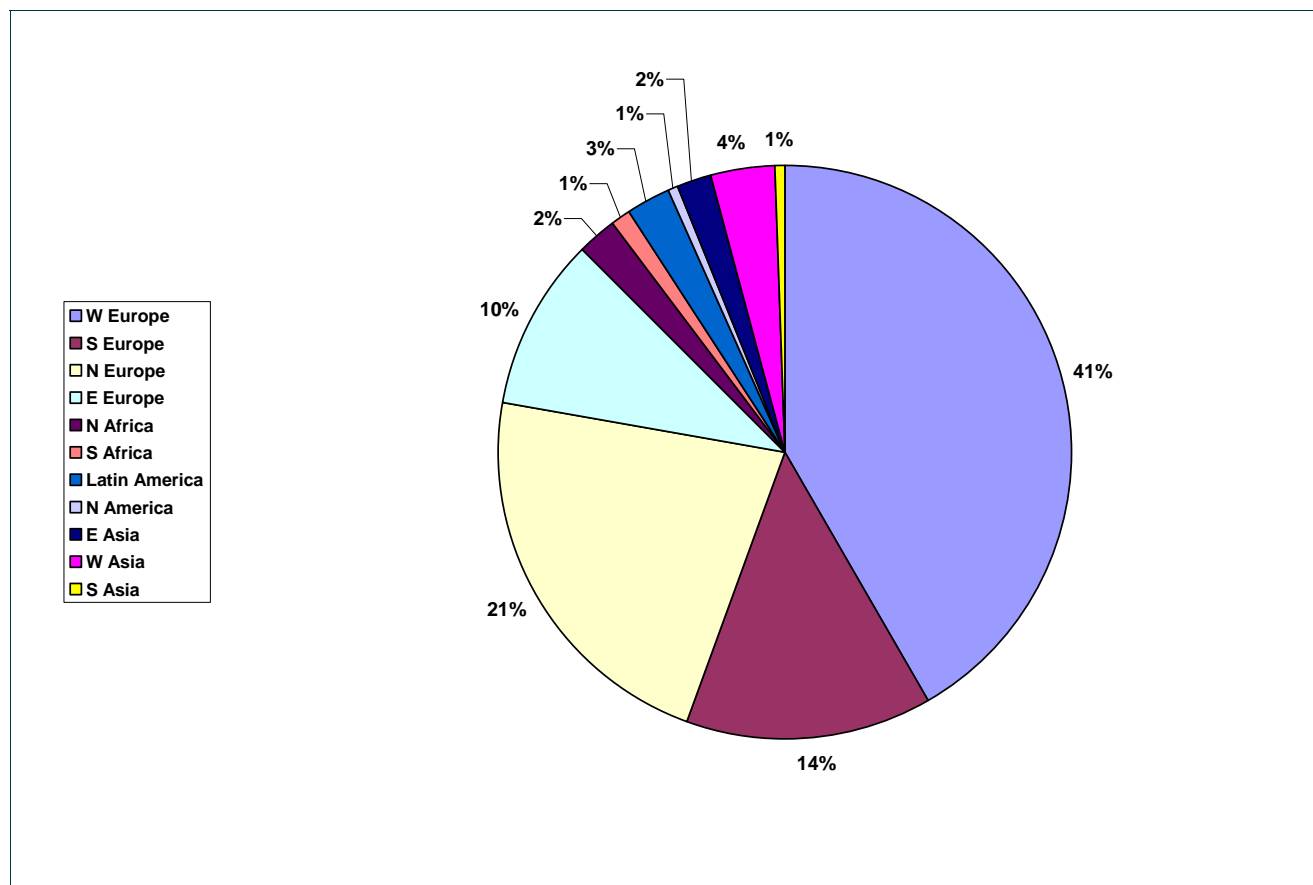
**Table 2.1:** Countries of origin of attendees



**Figure 2.1:** Distribution of attendees by region

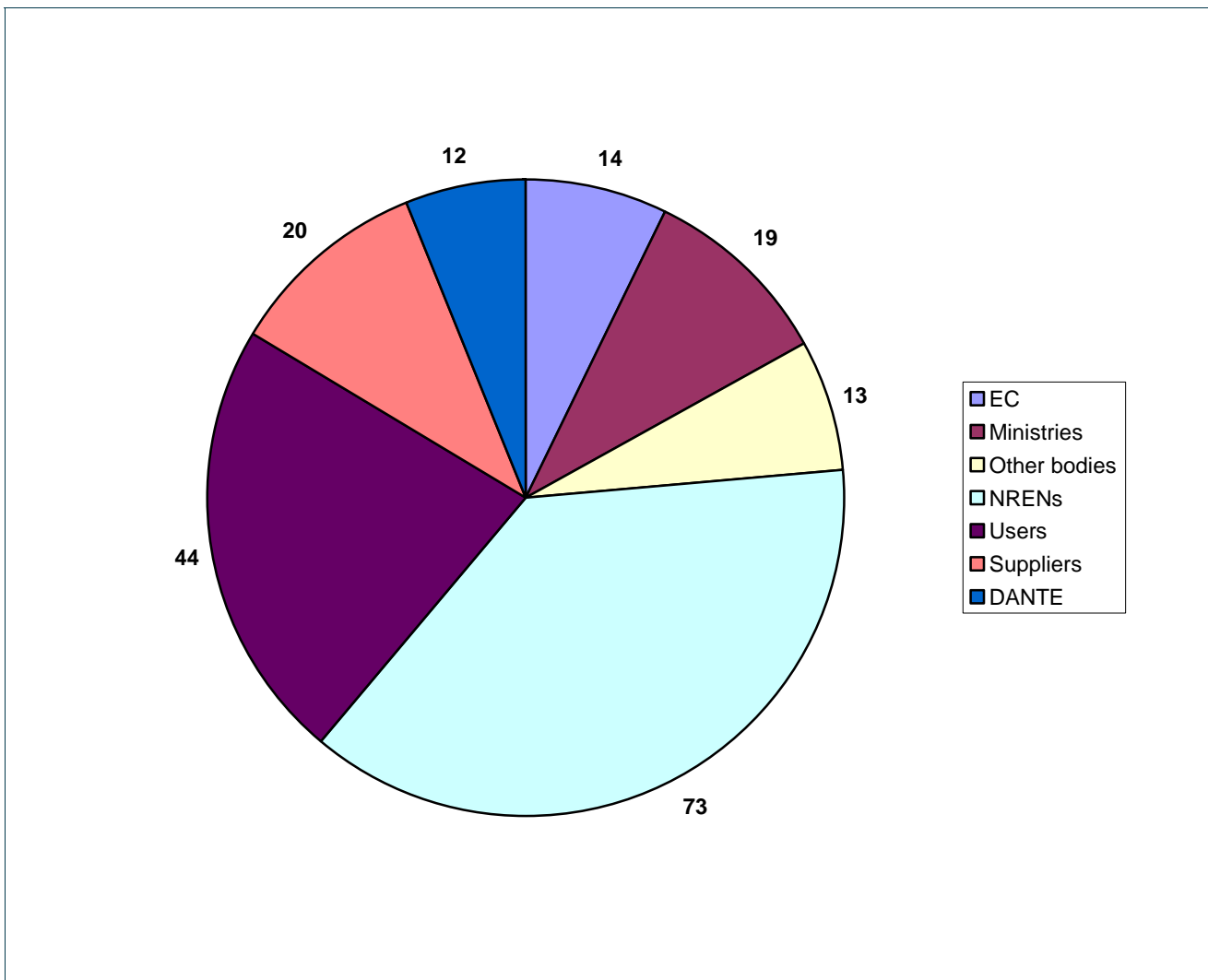
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The following chart shows a slightly more detailed regional distribution of conference delegates.



**Figure 2.2:** Macro-geographical distribution of attendees

Over 80% of the delegates originated from Europe. 10% represented Eastern European countries, 14% Southern European countries, such as Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece.



**Figure 2.3:** Distribution of attendees by affiliation

37% of the attendees were NREN representatives, 23% originated from the user community. Infrastructure and equipment suppliers made up 10%, followed by delegates from national ministries (10%) and EC officials (7%). Representatives from other bodies, such as COST-ESF, ENPG constituted 7%.

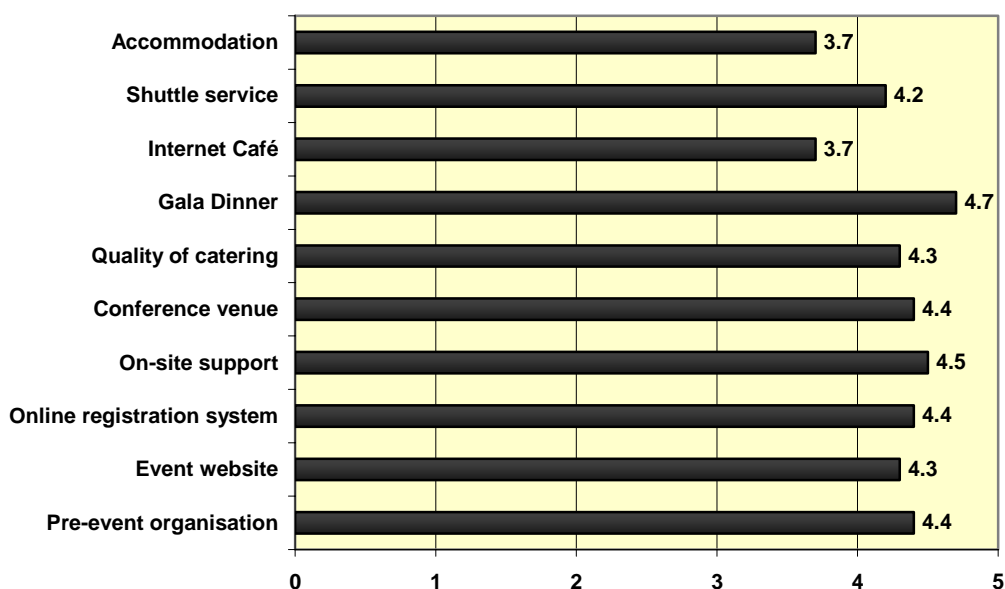
## 3 Feedback

### 3.1 Feedback Forms

The Feedback forms were included in the conference proceedings and delegates were invited to complete and hand them in at the end of the programme.

Forms were returned by approximately 25% of delegates.

### 3.2 Programme Administration Feedback



**Figure 3.1:** Feedback – Event organisation

Participants were asked to rate the administrative and logistical aspects of the event. On a marking scale of 1-Poor; 3-Fair; 5-Excellent, various items have been categorised. Overall, the feedback was very positive. Particular mention was made of the gala dinner at the Cercle Municipal. Delegates valued highly the opportunity to attend an event in unique buildings and historic settings.

Some participants criticised the lack of a central hotel with the sufficient capacity to accommodate all delegates and hence the need for coach transfers. This was, however, inevitable in a small location such as Luxembourg, aggravated by concurrent events under the Luxembourg presidency.

The online registration system was very well received.

### 3.3 Evaluation of Specific Sessions

When asked what their favourite session was, participants delivered the following picture:

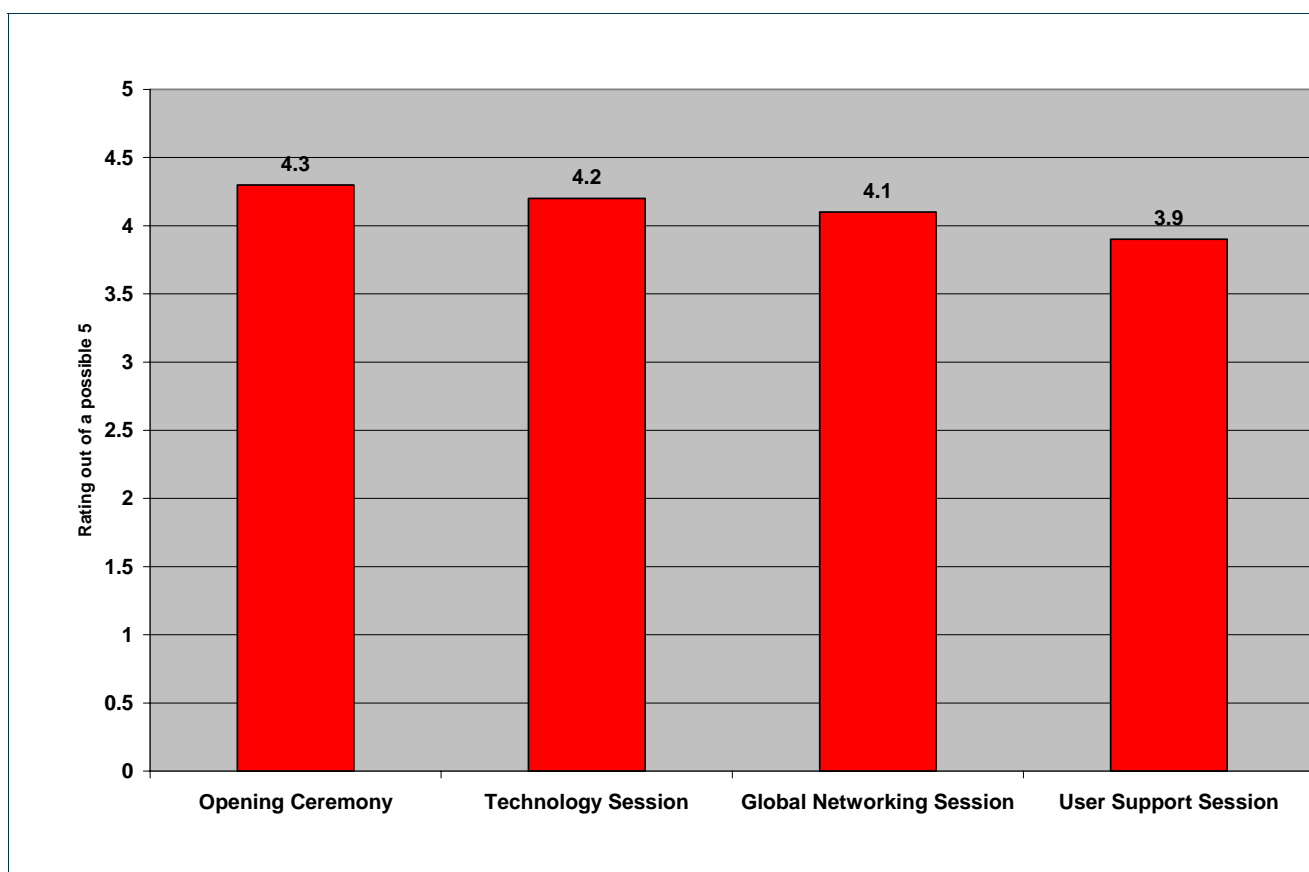


Figure 3.2: Feedback – Programme sessions

Ratings for the single sessions were consistently high. The Opening Ceremony scored the highest; particular mention was made of the video in which GÉANT2 was introduced in the words of users and politicians. Whilst

some delegates indicated that the programme of the first day was not more than a series of similar ‘polite’ speeches, most attendees commented positively on its content, and particularly on Viviane Reding’s presence.

In relation to the Technology Session ‘GÉANT2 – A Different Kind of Network’, most delegates explicitly mentioned Roberto Sabatino’s presentation, which depicted the technological landscape of GÉANT2, as the most interesting one. Attendees also valued the opportunity to get the picture of the significance of dark fibre as well as the outlook as far as the network development is concerned.

As far as the Global Networking Session is concerned, various delegates commented positively on the opportunity to get to know the situation in more countries such as Algeria, Chile and Southern Africa. Particular mention was made of Dai Davies’ presentation and his key message that despite undeniable practical issues, namely the digital divide, funding etc., there is a working European model for the development of global connectivity.

With 3.9 out of a maximum 5, the User Support Session scored the lowest. Some delegates criticised the poor sound quality of the video link to the US and the fact that the early departure of a significant number of attendees after lunch had devalued the session. However, various participants also indicated that the issues discussed were not relevant or too specific in scope. This shows that the research community has not yet fully embraced the significance of the concept of user support. On the other hand, some participants would have liked to see more on user services and applications.

The evaluation of the feedback, particularly of this last session, shows very clearly that the audience, the background knowledge and the objectives of the participants are not homogenous and comments on relevance do therefore vary.

### 3.4 Feedback of Event Overall

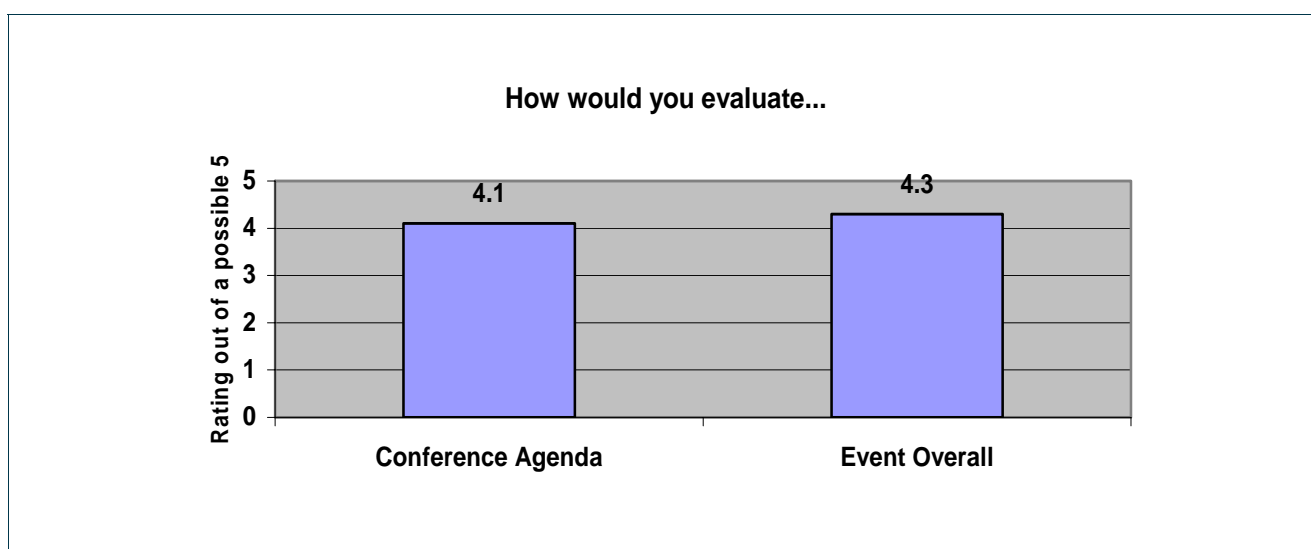


Figure 3.3: Feedback – Event overall

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In relation to the conference programme, most delegates commented positively on the structure, on the generic nature of the agenda, on the competence of most presenters and on the appropriateness of the allocated discussion time. Only one speaker remarked that the allocated speaking time in the global networking session was somewhat tight and that the level of technicality of a couple of presentations should have been higher.

### 3.4.1 What do you feel were the strengths of the GÉANT2 event?

The following were the most frequent answers to the above question:

- The combination of the presenters with enough time to talk, discuss and network
- Networking
- High level presenters and panels
- Facilities and conference hall
- Broadness of programme
- Breaks
- Quality of printing and other conference material

### 3.4.2 What will you take away from the event?

- Contacts and useful information
- Meeting old and new friends
- As a memory: the venue and the impressive first day
- GÉANT2 is something important
- The basic knowledge about GÉANT2: how, where, who, why
- The impact of GÉANT2 on European research and its global interconnections
- General update of research network activities
- Importance of getting the message across about the progress being made; a sense of achievement
- Status and plans for GÉANT2

### 3.4.3 Finally, looking back, in making your decision to attend this event, what aspects of the event appealed to you most?

- The panels
- Networking with a variety of people
- The celebrations on the first day
- Applications; getting an overview of the users' expectations towards GÉANT2
- International importance of the event and the EC's support and commitment
- Getting an idea about GÉANT2's plans and opportunities
- EUMEDCONNECT

### 3.5 Delegate Expectations

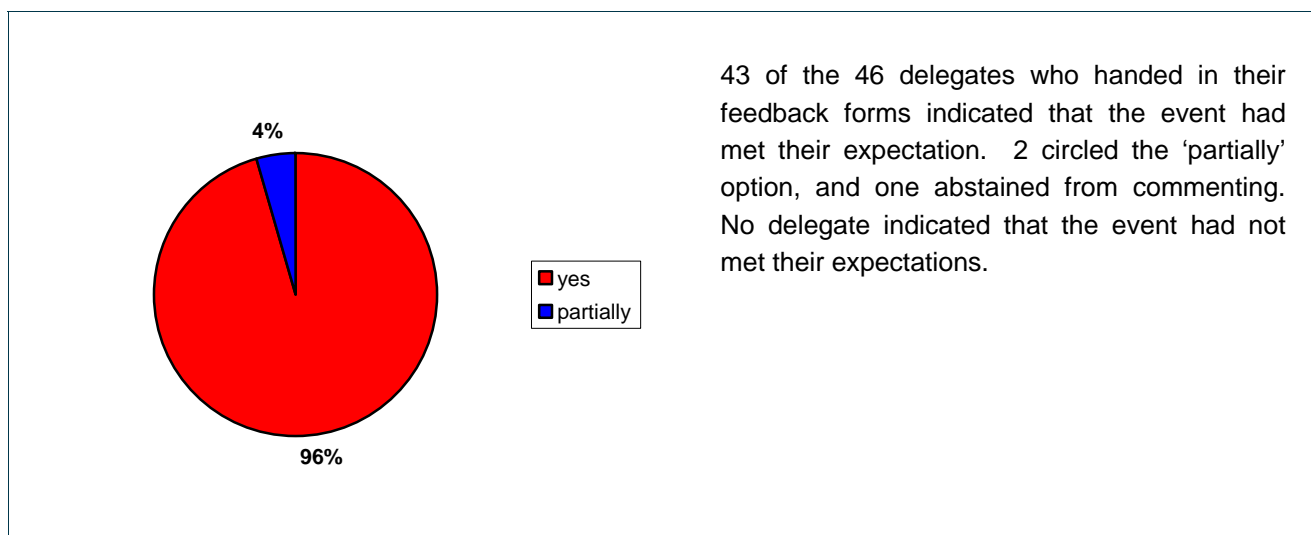


Figure 3.4: Were delegate expectations met?

### 3.6 Press Coverage

The launch event was accompanied by a press release which, at the time of writing this deliverable, generated coverage in a total of 28 European publications, consisting of 6 national newspapers, 6 national news agencies (with onwards distribution) and 16 internet news sites.

National coverage of the event included, among others

- El Pais ([http://www.elpais.es/articulo.html?xref=20050519elpcb\\_8&type=Tes&anchor=elpportec](http://www.elpais.es/articulo.html?xref=20050519elpcb_8&type=Tes&anchor=elpportec))
- Die Welt (<http://www.welt.de/data/2005/06/15/732118.html>)
- El Mundo (<http://www.elmundo.es/navegante/2005/06/14/esociedad/1118769704.html>)

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## 4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the memorable locations of the event and the high quality of the organisation provided the setting for a successful event enjoyed by the vast majority of those who attended. The topics covered and the balance between speaking/presentation time and discussion time provided a valuable opportunity to debate issues of relevance to research networking in Europe and worldwide. There was a broad mix of delegates, and the opportunity to network with one another. Several network demonstrations provided practical examples of the network's capabilities. Finally, and very importantly, the event generated a significant level of publicity about the network in the media.

Learning points which can be carried forward for future events include the need to begin planning and organising as far in advance as possible, and the need to ensure network demonstrations are placed in a location where they will attract the maximum attention.

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## Appendix A Conference Agenda

**Tuesday, 14 June 2005**

- 13:30 - 15:45**            **Registration – Marquee**  
 Sandwich lunch, Tea and Coffee available - *Marquee*  
 Opportunities for delegates to network and to view technical demonstrations in foyer area
- 15:45 – 17:00**            **Opening Ceremony – Salle Robert Krieps**
- 15:45**                      **Welcome and Introduction**  
 Greetings from the Host  
 Hans Döbbeling, General Manager, DANTE
- 16:00**                      **Welcome to Luxembourg**  
 François Biltgen, Minister for Culture, Higher Education & Research of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
- 16:10**                      **Keynote Address**  
 Viviane Reding, Commissioner for Information Society and Media, European Commission
- 16:20**                      **Expanding the GÉANT2 User Community to Schools**  
 Raymond Straus, Conseiller de Gouvernement 1ère classe, Ministry for Education and Vocational Training of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (replacing Minister Mady Delvaus-Stehres)
- 16:30**                      **European Research Area - Distant Dream or Real Project?**  
 Jerzy Buzek, Member of European Parliament
- 16:40**                      **GÉANT2: Evolving Networking - From Revolution to Evolution**  
 Vasilis Maglaris, Chairman, NREN Policy Committee – GÉANT Consortium
- 16:50**                      **Official Opening**
- 17:00**                      **Close**

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- 17:00-17:30**            **VIP tour** (Commissioner Reding, EU officials, Representatives of Luxembourg Government, Member of European Parliament) in demonstration area
- 19:15- 23:30**            **Reception and Gala Dinner** – *Cercle Municipal*, Place d'Armes, Luxembourg
- 

**Wednesday, 15 June**

**09:00 – 10:30**            **SESSION I** – *Salle Robert Krieps*  
**GÉANT2: A Different Kind of Network**

**Chair:** *Ulf Dahlsten, Director 'Emerging Technologies & Infrastructures', DG INFSO, European Commission*

**09:00**    **The Technological Landscape of GÉANT2**  
Roberto Sabatino, CTO, DANTE

**09:15**    **Pan-European Research Networking beyond GÉANT2**  
Dany Vandromme, Vice Chair, GÉANT2 Executive Committee; Board Director, DANTE; Director, RENATER

**09:30**    **Development of einfrastructures**  
Patrick Aerts, Director, NOW/NCF; Chair, e-IRG

**09:45**    **Bringing Dark Fibre to the Research Area: A Perspective from an International Dark Fibre Provider**  
Eva Lindqvist, President, TeliaSonera International Carrier

**10:00**    **The Convergence Solution in Practice: The Network Point of View**  
Stefano Lorenzi, Vice-President Customer Projects, Alcatel (replacing Romano Valussi)

**10:15**    **Panel Discussion**

**10:30**            **Coffee Break** - *Marquee*

**11:00- 12:40**            **SESSION II** – *Salle Robert Krieps*  
**Global Development of Research Networking**

**Chair:** *Kevin Thompson, Program Director, US National Science Foundation (NSF)*

**11:00**    **Progress in Global Networking**  
Dai Davies, General Manager, DANTE

**11:10**    **Challenges of Southern Africa-Europe Connectivity**  
Duncan Martin, CEO, TENET

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- 11:20 Benefits realised in Turkey from Participation in GÉANT2**  
Cem Sarac, Director, ULAKBIM
- 11:30 Benefits Realised in Algeria from Participation in EUMEDCONNECT and connection to GÉANT**  
Abdelkader Khelladi, Director, CERIST
- 11:40 Opportunities Offered by China-Europe Connectivity**  
Jianping Wu, Director, CERNET
- 11:50 ALICE – Advances in Latin America**  
Florencio Utreras, Executive Director, CLARA
- 12:00 Panel Discussion**
- 12:30 – 14:00 Buffet Lunch - Marquee**
- 14:00 - 15:15 SESSION III – Salle Robert Krieps**  
**User Support: From Technology to Service**
- Chair: Karel Vietsch, Secretary General, TERENA**
- 14:00 Understanding and Satisfying User Requirements**  
John Boland, Board Director, DANTE; Chief Executive, HEAnet
- 14:15 What Networking Means in Practice to Users**  
Joris van Enst, Director Multidisciplinary Research LOFAR, ASTRON
- 14:30 Networking Needs and Demands of the Life Sciences Community**  
Rupert Lück, IT Manager, European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL)
- 14:45 Supporting the Advanced Networking User: A Systems Approach**  
Douglas Van Houweling, President and CEO, Internet2 (via live video-link)
- 15:00 Panel Discussion**
- 15:15 – 15:45 Wrap-up session**  
Vasilis Maglaris, Chairman, NREN Policy Committee – GÉANT Consortium
- 15:45 Conference closes**

## Appendix B Summary of Demonstrations

### B.1 CrossGrid Demonstration 1: The Flood Forecasting Application

The demonstration presented the use of the web-based application portal for flood forecasting. A workflow (cascade) of simulation was submitted for execution. The portal was used to monitor the workflow service, starting jobs one after another according to the predefined dependencies, and executing them in the CrossGrid project testbed. Subsequently, the results were studied, including 2D and 3D visualizations. Finally, the use of the metadata catalogue to source a specific dataset among all the registered datasets was explained.

### B.2 CrossGrid Demonstration 2: The High Energy Physics Application

The HEP (interactivity) demo consists of two separate applications run from the CrossGrid Migrating Desktop (see below):

**Interactivity example:** a histogramming application was used to show some of the interactivity-related capabilities of the CrossGrid middleware. The programme was executed from the Migrating Desktop and presents a form enabling the user to input several HEP simulation parameters. Once these parameters are sent to the application, it calculates the distribution of results and generates a plotted histogram. The results are summarised, however the standard deviation of the distribution can be changed using a slider control.

**Interactive parallel ANN training:** a HEP application used to train artificial neural networks (ANNs) with simulated events in order to distinguish interesting (signal) events - in this case, Higgs bosons - from

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background events. This application was executed twice, at first using only two nodes and, subsequently, on twelve nodes. The purpose is to show the scalability of the application, reducing the waiting time for the physicist performing this kind of analysis from hours to minutes. This application also accepts (but does not require) human input during execution. As an example, the way ANN weights can be reset during training was shown during the demonstration.

### The Migrating Desktop

The Migrating Desktop (MD) is a framework graphical user interface for application management, Grid and job monitoring, data and metadata management. It creates a transparent user work environment, regardless of the system version and hardware.

Through interaction with a dedicated Roaming Access Server, the MD includes an authentication mechanism as well as advanced Grid tools. The user front-end - a desktop similar to the ones used in Windows or Linux - is implemented as an advanced graphical Java-based application. Hence, it supports various operating systems while maintaining identical functionality. This graphical environment is used as an advanced client for accessing Grid resources in CrossGrid. The MD offers container and plugin Java templates which make it possible to implement Grid application front-ends in a short time.

During the GÉANT2 launch event the basic functionality of the Migrating Desktop, such as submission of jobs, monitoring and data management, and launching interactive applications, was demonstrated.

## B.3 eVLBI: Advanced Networking for Radio-Astronomers over GÉANT2

Radio Astronomers are some of the most demanding users of the GÉANT2 network. Their eVLBI technique (Very Long Baseline Interferometry in Europe) uses national research networks and GÉANT2 to connect telescopes across Europe and create some of the most detailed images of the distant universe ever seen. This demonstration will show, in real time, pseudo eVLBI data being transferred from radio-telescope sites in the UK, Italy and Poland to JIVE, the central eVLBI processing site at Dwingeloo in the Netherlands. Streams of data will be sent from each site using the UDP protocol and the transfers monitored in terms of bandwidth, packet loss and packet re-ordering. A view of the data correlators at JIVE will show fringes (the first stage of creating an image) being built in real-time. It should be pointed out that the actual tests on view at the GÉANT2 launch will constitute a valuable part of the research programme for eVLBI networking. The demonstration showed how the high-performance capabilities of GÉANT2 are essential for advanced research techniques such as eVLBI and how, through the close collaboration of the two communities, methods have developed which allow innovative new science to be performed.

## B.4 BioCASE: The Biodiversity Collection Access Service for Europe

BioCASE (<http://www.biocase.org>) is a web-based information service providing researchers with unified access to biological collections across Europe while leaving control of the information with the collection holders. Using web-portals or customized applications it enables researchers to simultaneously query hundreds of collection databases, ranging from fossil collections to DNA banks. The network is co-coordinated by the Botanical Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem (<http://www.bgbm.org>) that holds a meta-database with data on more than 18,000 European collections as well as by the Central Registry for Distributed Data Repositories already linked to the system. BioCASE data providers are also linked to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility GBIF (<http://www.gbif.org>) aiming at making primary biodiversity data available at a global level.

The demonstration showed how BioCASE - being built on a flexible and stable XML specification - uses GÉANT2 to give access to very different specimens such as images of animal observations in the field, XML descriptions of collection specimens, movies taken from micro-algae, and high-resolution herbarium sheets.

## B.5 The World at a Glance: Webcam Images from across the Globe

DANTE and GÉANT2-connected NRENs from across the world, collaborated to produce this illustration of the global reach of the new network. This demonstration illustrated the ubiquity of the network across Europe, from Finland to Greece and also its international connections, highlighted by RNP's camera in Rio de Janeiro. At certain times of day, to see light growing and darkness falling in the different time zones, emphasising the geographic separation of the sites reached through GÉANT2 and its collaborators. Time zone differences in hours are given in [square brackets]. Regrettably, the webcam sent to Moscow got stuck in customs. BELNET kindly agreed to host a webcam in Brussels as an alternative location.

Renater Paris, France	RNP Rio de Janeiro, Bazil	Rediris Madid, Spain	RESTENA, Luxembourg
[0]	[-5]	[0]	[0]
GARR Rome, Italy	BELNET Brussels, Belgium	CSC/Funet Espoo, Finland	GRNET Athens, Greece
[0]	[0]	[+1]	[+1]

**Table B.1:** Overview of webcam hosting NRENs

Project:	GÉANT2
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## Appendix C Delegate List

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Aleksandar Belic	Ministry of Science and Environmental Protection - Rep. of Serbia	Advisor to Minister	Serbia & Montenegro
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