



EVALUATION REPORT 2009
CEPOL Courses and Seminars



Evaluation Report 2009

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Introduction

The Report aims to provide an overview of the evaluation outcomes of the CEPOL activities held in 2009, including post-course evaluation. It describes the reporting status, the tools used for evaluation, followed by a presentation of findings, analyses and suggestions for improvement.

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1. Reporting on Training Activities

A total of 87¹ training activities were organised in 2009, with a total number of 1995 participants and 832 trainers.

1.1 Evaluation at the end of the activity

Evaluation questionnaires are completed by participants and trainers at the end of the activity and returned to the Course Organiser, who in turn compiles all questionnaires into one report which is submitted to the Secretariat as part of the Training Report of the activity.

Evaluation reports were received for 78 of the activities, with feedback from 1712² (86%) of the participants.

Reports on feedback from participants are not available for the following 9 activities, due to activity being a conference, different evaluation questionnaire used, or evaluation not carried out. The outcome of these activities could therefore not be included in this Report:

- 01 Crime Police and Justice in 21st Century – Presidency Seminar
- 03 Conference on New Technologies to fight Cyber Crime - Private Sector
- 05 Conference with Russia
- 07 ESDC – Seminar on Decision Making Procedures
- 63 Information Seminar, Instruments & Systems of European Police Cooperation - English
- 68 English Language Seminar for Members of GB, Committees & WG
- 70 Police Research and Science Conference
- 84 National e-Net Managers Training Course (*different questionnaire used*)
- 89 Police Cooperation and Schengen: Europe and Schengen

Feedback from trainers was provided for only 45 (52%) of the activities with a total of 416 trainers. In addition to the above 9 activities, feedback from trainers was not reported for the following activities:

06, 10, 11, 12, 16, 20, 34, 40, 41, 46, 53b, 54abcd, 58, 60, 64, 65, 74, 75b, 76, 77, 79, 85, 86, 87, 92, 93, 95, 97+98, 99

1 Excluding 53a/2009 being a closed workshop in preparation for course 53b/2009.

2 It is normal practice in CEPOL activities that organisers allow a dedicated time at the end of the activity where participants are given the evaluation questionnaire to complete. These are collected by the organiser before participants leave the training room, ensuring that all questionnaires are completed and returned. The launch of LMS facilitated further the evaluation by participants at the end of the activity.



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1.2 Post-course evaluation

Post-course Evaluation was carried out by the Secretariat using lime survey for 68 courses and seminars (covering 72 activities³) held in 2009, attended by a total of 1673 participants. Out of these, 1588 received the questionnaire and 910 responded; a high response level of 57% (42% in 2008).

2. Evaluation tools used

CEPOL courses and seminars in 2009 were evaluated by two self-testified questionnaires completed by participants and trainers at the end of the activity, followed up by a self-testified questionnaire completed by participants 3-6 months after the activity.

2.1 Course/Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire, completed by **Participants** at the end of the activity, evaluating the following aspects:

- Organisation
- Learning & Content
- Experts and Trainers
- Objectives
- Transfer of Learning
- Networking
- General Satisfaction

2.2 Feedback from Trainers, questionnaire completed by **Trainers** at the end of the activity, providing their feedback on the following aspects:

- Time for preparation
- Information provided prior to the activity relating to their contribution
- Target group
- Pre-course material
- Participant motivation
- Participants' language skills
- Post-course reinforcement

3. Post course evaluation is carried out 3-6 months following the last module of a course, in case of multi-module courses. Conferences and closed workshop were not evaluated.

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2.3 *Post-course Evaluation Questionnaire, completed by Participants 3-6 months after the activity, evaluating the following aspects:*

- Course aims achieved
- Ability to apply learning outcome on the job
- Professional network maintained and developed
- Relevance of training outcome to requirements at the workplace
- Continuation of learning
- Sharing of experiences and knowledge gained

3. Presentation of findings

A 6-point Likert Scale from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' was used, reduced to a 3-point scale of 'Agree', 'Partial' and 'Disagree' as shown below.

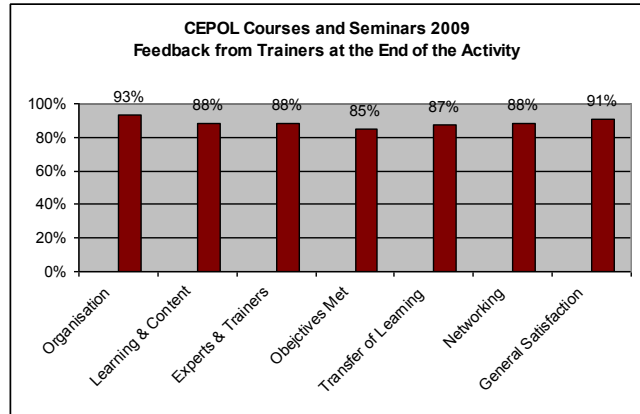
6-point Scale	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3-point Scale	Agree		Partial		Disagree	

The results presented in this report represent the percentage of ratings under 'Agree' on a 3-point scale.

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3.1 Results from Course/Seminar Evaluation (completed by Participants at the end of the activity)

Organisation	93%
Learning & Content	88%
Experts and Trainers	88%
Objectives Met	85%
Transfer of Learning	87%
Networking	88%
General Satisfaction	91%



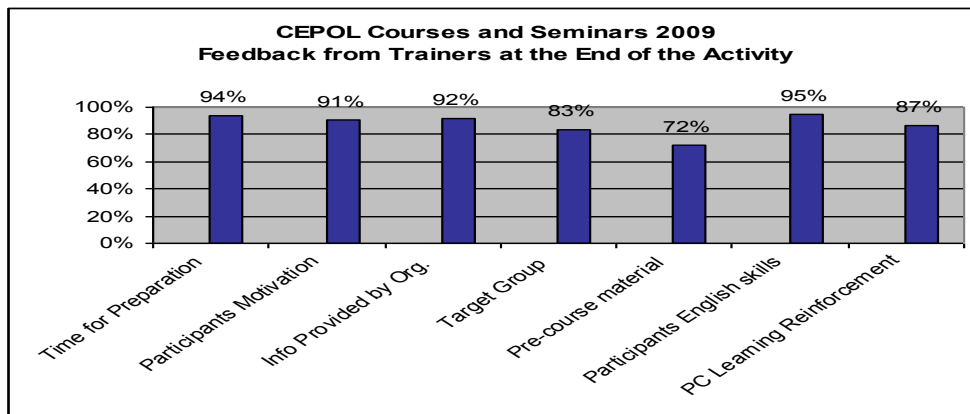
	<i>Agree</i>	Agree	Partial	Disagree
	<i>2008</i>	2009	2009	2009
Organisation	<i>93%</i>	93%	6%	1%
<i>Activity well-organised</i>		96%	3%	1%
<i>Programme well-balanced</i>		88%	11%	1%
<i>Logistic Arrangements</i>		94%	5%	1%
Learning & Content	<i>87%</i>	88%	12%	1%
<i>Relevance to workplace</i>		87%	12%	1%
<i>Knowledge gained</i>		87%	12%	1%
<i>Learned from others contributions</i>		90%	10%	0%
<i>Knowledge shared with others</i>		86%	13%	1%
Pre-course material/assignments contributed to learning		59%	28%	13%
Trainers & Experts	<i>88%</i>	88%	11%	1%
<i>Content up-to-date</i>		93%	6%	1%
<i>Materials/handouts useful/facilitated learning</i>		84%	14%	2%
<i>Methods used facilitated learning</i>		86%	13%	1%
<i>Level of English language used suited participants</i>		91%	9%	0%
Objectives met	<i>87%</i>	85%	14%	1%
Transfer of Learning	<i>87%</i>	87%	12%	1%
<i>Anticipated use of learning at workplace</i>		86%	13%	1%
<i>Anticipated benefit to the organisation</i>		87%	12%	1%
Anticipated use of Network established	<i>88%</i>	88%	12%	0%
General Satisfaction	<i>90%</i>	91%	8%	1%
<i>Expectations met</i>		89%	10%	1%
<i>Satisfied with activity as a whole</i>		93%	6%	1%

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3.2 Results from Feedback from Trainers

The *Feedback from Trainers* questionnaire was used in 45 activities (37 in 2008), with 416 trainers. Based on a response level of 50%, following the response rate in 2008, an approximate number of 208 trainers completed the questionnaire.

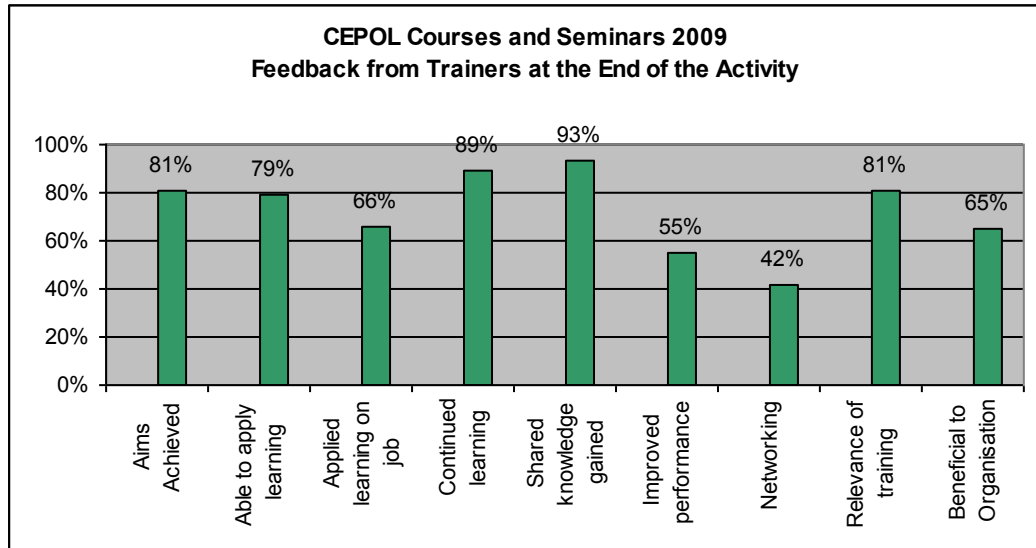
Timeframe for preparation	94%
Participant motivation	91%
Info provided for contribution	92%
Target Group	83%
Pre-course assignment provided	72%
Participants' level of English	95%
Post-course reinforcement	87%



	<i>Agree</i>	Agree	Partial	Disagree
	<i>2008</i>	2009	2009	2009
Timeframe for preparation	<i>92%</i>	94%	4%	2%
Information provided by organiser	<i>90%</i>	92%	8%	0%
Right Target Group	<i>87%</i>	83%	17%	0%
Motivation of participants	<i>90%</i>	91%	8%	1%
Pre-course assignment provided by trainers	<i>Open question</i>	28%	<i>(Yes/No question)</i>	72%
Participants well-prepared	<i>Open question</i>	91%	8%	1%
Participants' English language skills	<i>Open question</i>	95%	5%	0%
Post-course learning reinforcement	<i>Open question</i>	13%	<i>(Yes/No question)</i>	87%

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3.3 Results from Post-course Evaluation



Aims achieved	81%	Able to apply learning	79%
Applied learning on the job	66% *	Continued learning	89%
Share knowledge gained	93%	Improved performance	55% *
Networking	42%	Beneficial to organisation	65%
Relevance of training	81%		

	Agree %	Agree %	Partial %	Dis-agree %	N/A %
	2008	2009	2009	2009	2009
Course aims achieved	81	81	18	1	
Felt ability to apply learning outcome +	78	79	19	1	1
Applied learning on the job *	-	66	27	3	4
Continued learning	92	89	(Yes/No)	11	
<i>By re-reading course material</i>	62	52			
<i>By researching topic further</i>	49	48			
<i>By discussing the topic with others</i>	78	71			
<i>Other ways</i>	19	16			
Shared knowledge gained	96	93	(Yes/No)	7	
<i>With line manager(s)</i>	70	66	"	17	18
<i>With my colleagues</i>	87	89	"	7	7
<i>With staff</i>	64	56	"	19	32
<i>With others</i>	32	31	"	30	38
Improved performance *	-	55	34	6	5
Professional network maintained	39	42	40	13	5
Relevance of learning outcome on job	81	81	17	1	
Beneficial to organisation *	-	65	27	4	4

* Results from 2nd quarter only; pilot phase (Apr-Jun 2009) to test out the developed post-course evaluation questionnaire

+ Excluding 2nd quarter used for pilot phase to test out the developed evaluation questionnaire

3.4 *Comments from Participants and Trainers*

In addition to giving their score to the different areas of evaluation, both participants and trainers provided a rich amount of feedback through their comments, by which they could explain their rating, providing insight as to how the training activity could have served its purpose in a better way. This provides an opportunity for CEPOL course organisers to determine what lessons can be learned in order to improve the outcome of future training activities.

The results from the ratings on each area evaluated should not be disregarded when reading the comments presented below. It must be emphasised that 29 of the 35 areas evaluated are scored at the upper rating scale by more than 85% of the participants and trainers.

The comments from the three questionnaires (the *Course/Seminar Evaluation* completed by participants, the *Feedback from Trainers*, and the *Post-course evaluation* completed by participants), are grouped in the respective areas evaluated and presented below.

Participants were generally highly satisfied with CEPOL activities and had their expectations met. Comments show satisfaction with knowledge gained, acquiring a better understanding of the function of the different European bodies, systems and structures in other countries, learning from sharing of knowledge, experience and best practices with colleagues, and described the courses as a great opportunity for networking.

3.4.1 *Organisation – 93% (93% in 2008)*

The high level of organisation in CEPOL courses was noted extensively by participants and so were the logistic arrangements.

Over 1 in every 10 participants were partial with regards to the balance of the course programme. Comments given by participants indicate that there were too many presentations, sessions were too long, more frequent and shorter breaks should be included and more free time before dinner.

The need for more time to exchange experiences was also highlighted.

3.4.2 *Learning & Content – 88% (87% in 2008)*

Generally, participants found CEPOL training **relevant** to their work and gained **new knowledge and insight**. Most remarkable and appreciated by participants was the **exchange of information, experience and best practices** shared between colleagues during the activity.



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At the end of the activity, more than one-tenth of the participants were partial as to how relevant the training was to their workplace, rising to 1 in 5 when rated by participants 3-6 months after the activity.

Some comments highlighted the difficulty to meet everyone's needs due to the different backgrounds of participants on the course. Others expressed preference to dealing with practical issues rather than remaining on a theoretical level.

Almost half of the participants did not agree that the pre-course assignments/material contributed to their learning, while only around one-fourth of the trainers stated that they provided any pre-course material.

Analyses and Observations:

The noted preference for more *interactive ways of learning* and that participants mostly gained knowledge and insights through exchange of experiences is once again highlighted, as was in 2008. This aspect could be given due attention.

It seems that CEPOL training is losing its *relevance* with 20% of the participants when these are back at the workplace. One could argue that there may be cases where officers changed the nature of their job after attending the CEPOL activity. However, it may well be an indication of participants being in the wrong target group attending CEPOL activities. Also, the fact that almost 20% of the trainers did not agree that all participants were in the right target group confirms that there is room for improvement when selecting candidates for a CEPOL activity.

The provision of *course material/assignment* to prepare participants for the training activity was evidently lacking, as was the case in 2008. Participants' comments show that a reasonable amount of pre-course material is desired in order to improve understanding, induce more active participation and enhance the quality of the discussions. The introduction of LMS to support CEPOL training activities could have a positive impact in this respect in future.

On a positive note, the results show that participants are continuing to learn after the activity. The responses indicate that participants are using two methods of learning on average.

3.4.3 Trainers & Experts – 88% (88% in 2008)

An appreciation of the trainers/experts was made, in terms of content, material and handouts, training methods/style and language used.

Participants found CEPOL trainers/experts as being generally professional, well prepared and up-to-date in content. Trainers delivered clearly and were easy to follow.

On the other hand, 240 (14%) of the participants rated the methods used as not optimal to facilitating learning. Comments given by participants indicate a preference to interactive sessions, more discussions and workshops.

274 (16%) of the participants either felt the handouts did not contain sufficient information, missed handouts when these were not provided or when not provided at the beginning of a session.

Analyses

Comments from participants indicate that there may be a need for better communication between the Course Manager and the trainer prior to the course regarding the training methods and the quality of handouts desired in CEPOL courses and seminars.

3.4.4 Topics

Participants had the opportunity to comment on the topics they found beneficial and any topics they missed and recommend to include in similar courses/seminars in the future.

This section provides a myriad of specific and very useful information for the organisers particularly for the organisers responsible for future activities, as participants highlighted different aspects of the topics which they liked or recommended to be included in the programme and suggested ways how certain topics can be dealt with differently for a more effective learning outcome.

Some generic comments on what participants missed expressed in almost all activities without exception can be highlighted. These include:

- ◇ More emphasis on current and actual situations to try and find relevant solutions;
- ◇ Practical information and more concrete examples of international police cooperation (case studies)
- ◇ National experiences presented by other participants on the topic;
- ◇ Legislation, legal framework and structures of different



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- Member States and group work to compare these different systems;
- ◇ The issue of exchange of information between Member States and to explore problems encountered;
- ◇ Elaborate more on how other countries respond to problems faced on the topic;
- ◇ Deeper discussions on best practices and tools;
- ◇ A need for more discussion about different topics from one angle or another;
- ◇ Introduction about lecturers' role and function in their organisation in order to understand background and experiences.

Analyses

The above comments are in several aspects similar to those commented in 2008. It is evident from these repeated results that more emphasis needs to be put on a more practical approach, with more case studies, allowing time for more group work and discussions. Also notable is the high interest from participants to know more from each other on national situations and ways of dealing with actual problems. This necessarily means less time for standard lectures and more time on discussions and learning from and about each other. This means that trainers must use other methods. In order to build trust and the desired level of networking, more interaction between participants is required, focusing less on content, considering that participants should already be experts in the field.

The number of comments made by participants shows their strong engagement to contribute to the improvement of the courses. The participants' efforts in this regard should not be disregarded as these provide a good opportunity for Course Organisers to revise the content of the activity as they deem necessary.

3.4.5 Objectives – 85% (87% in 2008)

Participants were asked how successful they felt the course/seminar was in meeting its stated objectives. The results show that course objectives were largely achieved.

On a generic note, participants claim to have gained knowledge on European police systems/structures and appreciated the information exchange between participants when this was possible, as this provided a better understanding of what issues other European countries face and how they deal with these cases. The sharing of experiences and best

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practice when this was done during the activities was also remarkably appreciated.

Almost without exception participants highlighted satisfaction with the network established during the activities, which they believed will be useful in their work and conducive for better cross-border cooperation. CEPOL e-Net functionalities were also noted by participants as an opportunity facilitating further contact following the activity.

As discussed later in this report, this optimism faded drastically when participants were asked some months after the activity.

240 of the participants (14%) were partial in agreeing whether the objectives of the course were met, highlighting those objectives which they felt were not achieved, rising to almost one in five participants (18%) when asked if they achieved the course aims after 3-6 months after the activity.

The need for some activities to be more concrete with specific case examples was again highlighted here.

Analyses:

A number of comments made by participants indicated to specific objectives of the course not being met; this is useful information for course organisers as they can gauge what needs to be addressed in future courses and prepare trainers accordingly, where applicable. This information is also important for the Annual Programme Committee (APC) as well as the Governing Board, as it has an influence on the planning of the yearly programme of activities.

Course objectives are fundamental to the evaluation of an activity. As such, these need to be laid out in a measurable way, keeping also in mind the level of skill/knowledge that the training activity aims at.

Course objectives need to be in line with the aims of the activity, as planned in the yearly programme of activities by the APC and adopted by the Governing Board. At present, in the majority of the cases, detailed aims of the activity are not being presented before an activity is added to the yearly programme of activities. As such, the outcome of an activity cannot be measured against the intended purpose of the activity.

Although a slight improvement can be seen in the writing of objectives in 2009 compared to 2008, this still needs to be improved. An e-version mini-course on how to write learning objectives is made available on the CEPOL



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website⁴ accessible from 'Courses' by registered users.

From both evaluation and learning perspectives, it is paramount that people involved in the process of writing course objectives for CEPOL activities follow these guidelines.

- 3.4.6 Transfer of Learning** – *End of activity - 87% (87% in 2008)*
– *Post-course - 79% (78% in 2008)*
– *PCE Pilot phase - 66% (Apr-Jun 2009)*

The *usability of the learning outcome* of CEPOL activities, the *benefit to the organisation* and the *sharing of knowledge* were evaluated.

3.4.6.1 Use of learning outcomes

The '*usability*' of the learning outcome of CEPOL activities was evaluated at different stages in 2009:

- ◇ *at the end of the activity*, participants were asked if they anticipate that they can use the outcome of the course in their work, and whether they anticipate that the outcome of the activity will be beneficial to the organisation
- ◇ *3-6 months after the activity*, participants were asked if they feel they can apply what they have learnt
- ◇ *3-6 months after the activity (pilot phase in 2nd quarter only)*, participants were asked if they applied what they have learnt, and if the outcome of the learning activity was beneficial to the organisation

Participant's rating on the '*usability*' of the learning outcome dropped significantly from one stage to the other. At the end of the activity 86% of the participants anticipated that they will use it at work; this dropped to 79% when asked if they feel they can apply what they have learnt 3-6 months after the activity and dropped further to 66% when asked if they have actually applied the learning outcome in their job (the latter evaluated in the pilot phase in 2nd quarter 2009).

Comments provided by participants 3-6 months after the activity in answer to whether they applied what they have learnt show that CEPOL training is mainly being applied by participants through inclusion of new knowledge

⁴ <http://www.cepoleuropa.eu>

in their national training courses, contribution in meetings, reorganising the structure of their unit and also by working in joint cooperation with EU agencies.

Participants claimed that cooperation with other police organisations in Europe has improved, due to enhanced communication with the improved language skills and new knowledge on the different police systems.

Reasons stated for not applying what they have learnt are mainly that the training is not related to the nature of the participants' current job and that some of the training is not applicable to all countries.

3.4.6.2 Benefit to the organisation

The same can be said on the '*benefit to the organisation*'. At the end of the activity 87% of the participants estimated that the outcome of the activity will be beneficial to the organisation, while 65% of the participants who participated in the pilot phase agreed that the outcome was beneficial to the organisation when asked 3-6 months after the activity.

As reported by the participants, the organisation benefitted through the new information, knowledge, models and ideas brought in and by pointing out needs for improvement. The development of courses on the topic for fellow co-workers and national training contribute to the knowledge base of the organisation.

The *new contacts* established and the improved knowledge about *channels of international police cooperation* proved to be very helpful in the operation of the organisation for the work of the organisation.

3.4.6.3 Sharing of knowledge gained

Over 90% of the participants stated that they have *shared the knowledge gained* on returning to their workplace, predominantly with colleagues (89%) and with their line managers (66%).

Information is shared by presentations delivered on the topic to colleagues and staff, reports to line managers and in some cases also to national units, inclusion of new knowledge in national training, discussions during meetings, consultations on the topic, and dissemination of course material.



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Analyses:

The results show a drop from participants' estimation of the use of CEPOL training to actual application on the job. Factors affecting the applicability of CEPOL training can be various:

- ◇ Lack of commitment by participants to put what they have learned into practice. This could be due to the participant being in the wrong target group for the training activity or a change of job occurred after having attended the activity.
- ◇ Lack of opportunity for participants to apply what they have learned.
- ◇ CEPOL training not effective in ensuring transfer of learning (eg. relevance of training content, relating theory to practice, training methods used, post-course learning reinforcement).

The drop in CEPOL training being applied from participants feeling able to apply indicates that there may be a lack of opportunity for participants to apply what they have learned in their job.

The selection of participants for the activity, ensuring that these are in the right target group, could improve the results of CEPOL training being applied in police organisations across Europe. This would enhance the effectiveness of CEPOL training.

The application of CEPOL training is, to some extent, dependent on national police organisations to facilitate the application of its training by creating opportunities for participants to apply what they have learned. From 2010, line managers will be prepared prior to these attending the CEPOL activity, by involving them in the evaluation process. This is planned with the aim to increase line-managers' commitment to support the participant in using and applying the learning outcome of CEPOL training.

The aim of evaluation is to measure the quality and effectiveness of CEPOL core business, that is training, and take measures for improvement where possible. Evaluation is also carried out to enable CEPOL to report on its performance to its stakeholders.

The improved post-course evaluation, measuring how CEPOL training is being applied in the workplace, provides an opportunity for CEPOL to increase the effectiveness of its training where possible, as well as enables it to report on this. The results from the pilot phase show that CEPOL training is being applied in two-thirds of the cases. This can be viewed as a positive result for CEPOL! It is safe to say that CEPOL training is effective and as long as CEPOL programme of activities remain in line with its task given by the

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Council, it is safe to say that CEPOL is successful in fulfilling its mission of promoting police cooperation through learning.

3.4.7 Improved performance on the job – 55% (pilot phase only)

When asked 3-6 months after the activity, more than half of the participants claim that their *performance on the job has improved* since attending the CEPOL activity.

The ability to consult with colleagues in other countries on tasks at hand is reported to enhance participants' results on the job. Participants feel they can contribute more - writing more informed reports and being referred to for advice and contribution on the topic. They deal with aspects in their job differently due to the newly acquired tools, information, knowledge, insight and attitude.

3.4.8 Networking – End of activity - 88% (88% in 2008) – Post-course evaluation - 42% (39% in 2008)

At the end of the activity, participants were asked whether they foresee that the other participants on the course/seminar will be potential partners in their professional work. 3-6 months after the activity, the same participants were asked if they had maintained and developed the network established during the activity.

88% of the participants at the end of the training stated that CEPOL activities offer great opportunities to build a professional network with colleagues across Europe. Participants felt that the contacts made will be useful for exchange of information, a joint approach or simply for advice.

Other participants did not believe they could establish a network with the colleagues on the course, due to the different functions, different cultures and language barrier.

3-6 months after the activity, 42% of the participants stated that they are using the network they had established during the CEPOL activity. This is a drop of over 50% from the number of participants who thought they will use the contacts made when asked at the end of the activity; yet an increase of almost 10% compared to 2008.

Comments provided by participants in the post-course evaluation survey show that the main reasons why networking is limited are mainly due to a) busy daily workload, b) differences in the field of work of other participants on the course and c) the nature of their daily work does not provide the opportunity for international cooperation.



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Analyses:

The increase in networking over 2008 brings the figure closer to half of the participants using the professional network established at CEPOL courses and seminars. There is still room for improvement in this area.

All three reasons given above for not using the network indicate that these participants are in the wrong target group. This includes the reason given by participants that they are too busy in their daily work to maintain the network is rather concerning. The indication that networking is seen as an effort and a time consuming practice to some participants indicates that their work does not necessitate collaboration on a European dimension, because if this were the case, having a contact outside one's country would only facilitate one's job.

3.5 Feedback from Trainers

Overall, feedback from trainers shows that participants attending CEPOL courses and seminars are highly motivated, well-prepared, with adequate levels of English language skills that facilitate the learning process.

Preparation of Trainers – 92%+ (90%+ in 2008)

Generally, feedback from trainers shows that trainers are being prepared in good time by CEPOL organisers for their contribution. Involvement in the preparatory meeting was positively remarked by some trainers, as this also provided them with a clear picture of what is expected of them, having information on target audience, objectives, content and links with other topics in the programme. Having access to information on the LMS, including the report on the previous activity, was appreciated.

On the other hand, a number of trainers claimed that they did not have enough information on the participants, which would have helped them to target their presentation to the audience.

Target Group – 83% (87% in 2008)

Although trainers generally agree that participants were in the right target group for the CEPOL activities, almost one in every five trainers were not sure of this. Comments provided were that the level of participants' knowledge on the subject matter varied, participants were not all senior with some having completely different backgrounds, not all were experienced in the field - and this affected the process of learning. Some trainers also commented that course organisers ought to be more careful in selecting participants for the activity.

Pre-course material/assignments – 28% and Post-course learning reinforcement – 13%

These ratings show that more than two-thirds of the trainers in CEPOL activities do not seem to emphasise preparation of the participants and learning reinforcement to help participants strengthen what they have learned when back to their job to enhance application of learning.

Literature on adult learning claims that preparing participants for a learning activity enhances the level of reception and thus the learning outcome. Likewise, having a task to carry out following the activity reinforces learning and facilitates application of such learning.

CEPOL trainers could be encouraged by course organisers to put more emphasis on both pre-course assignments and post-course learning activities. This may well have an impact in the application of learning.

3.6 Suggestions for Future Courses and Seminars

At the end of the activity, both the participants and the trainers were asked to give their suggestions on how future courses/seminars could be improved. Participants also provided suggestions 3-6 months after the activity.

Suggestions made are largely specific to the activity, including suggestions to prolong certain courses to allow for more depth in discussions and suggested changes in dealing with the topics concerned. Such suggestions are very useful to the organiser and for the preparation of future courses.

The following are some generic suggestions made that are relevant for the purpose of this report for further considerations:

From Participants:

Participants took a third opportunity in their feedback to mention what can now be seen as repetitive. Suggestions were made to make sessions less theoretical and more practical with real-life concrete cases. More interactive activities were also copiously suggested, such as workshops, practical exercises and discussions to present problems and to develop more ideas from the participants. The need for more time for participants to share best practices of international cooperation and time for structured input from each participant on national models/guidelines was also highlighted.

Suggestions for pre-course material were also made, including handouts about the different police systems in Europe. The need to be less generic in



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tackling the topic was mentioned in a number of activities. Participants also suggested more time for networking.

Some participants commented on the target group, suggesting clearer course objectives to attract the right target group to the activity.

From Trainers:

Trainers suggested that more attention should be given to the description of the target group in the invitation and that more countries should be represented in the activities.

Repeated suggestions were made by trainers to include more case studies and workshops and also to provide participants with pre-course material, possibly with assignments.

Trainers also commented that the amount of participants for interactive learning should not be more than 20 participants.

4. Main Observations and Suggestions for Improvement

Target Group:

One reason for the low rating in *networking* and *application of learning on the job* seems to be due to participants not always being in the right target group.

It would be easy to say that course organisers should be more selective when taking on participants. However, when one considers the average attendance of 21⁵ in 2009 with the majority of the courses open to 30-40 participants, this leaves one to wonder how selective organisers can afford to be, keeping in mind their efforts to fill the course with enough participants to run the activity.

Organisers are faced with a dilemma of whether to refuse entry to participants who are not fully within the target group for the specific activity, or accept such participants to fill the seats.

In 2009, the average number of participants dropped from 22 in 2008 to 21. However, the use of the network 3-6 months after the activity has risen in 2009 (from 39% in 2008 to 42%).

⁵ *Statistics of CEPOL Courses and Seminars 2009*

Evaluation Report 2009

The level of participation in CEPOL training activities is undoubtedly important when assessing the success of CEPOL operation. However, more important is what is done with the outcome of training. Having a high number of participants not being in a position to fulfil what they take back home from the training is a weak point. This is bound to affect the process of learning and the effectiveness of CEPOL training.

The main task of CEPOL is to promote police cooperation across borders in Europe. Considering the direct link between professional networking and police cooperation, the increase in networking in 2009 can be considered as a significant improvement in the effectiveness of CEPOL training.

With this in mind, more focus should be given to who is attending CEPOL courses, rather than the quantity of participation.

Unclear responsibilities of Course Managers and Trainers:

As was the case in 2008, both participants and trainers highlighted the need for pre-course material to be provided and for sessions to be more interactive.

It is interesting to note the repeated comments from trainers suggesting that course organisers should include more case studies and interactive methods. This is rather odd and shows that trainers are probably being instructed by the organisers to stick to lectures/presentations in their contribution. Opening the CEPOL course 'Train the Trainer' to course organisers could be beneficial in this respect.

Networking and Applied Learning on the Job - Considerations from Post-course Evaluation:

The response level for post-course evaluation has increased significantly compared to 2008 from 42% to 57%. This is very positive indeed and the feedback from participants has provided important information for consideration to enhance the effectiveness of the training.

On the other hand, the significant drop in networking and use of learning on the job, some months after the activity, is rather concerning and merits due attention. The will and enthusiasm of the participants at the end of the activity seems to be fading drastically when rated some months after the activity.

A number of factors resulting from the findings in this report can be related to this issue:



Evaluation Report 2009

Participants expressed the need for more time for networking and structured input from each participant to share their national situation on the topic, experiences and best practices during the course/seminar. Participants also expressed the need for more interactive methods including workshops and case studies. Strangely enough, this need was also expressed by trainers!

These are two very important factors that provide the opportunity for participants to learn from each other and about each other and to build a strong network with the other participants during the activity. There seems to be a lack of structured interaction in many of the activities, not allowing solid networks to be established, inhibiting a long-lasting effect in networking.

The feedback from trainers indicates that trainers are being asked by the course organisers to merely give a lecture/presentation on a topic, and not to develop the topic by using other methods.

In effect, this could also explain why feedback from trainers was only provided for 45 of the 87 activities and why yet only 28% of these trainers could comment favourably to post-course learning reinforcement initiatives.

Addressing these four issues could have a positive impact on the effectiveness of CEPOL training, strengthening networking and the application of the learning outcome on the job.

Course organisers and course managers have a key role in contributing to the effectiveness of future activities.

EVALUATION REPORT 2009

CEPOL Courses and Seminars



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