



promoting youth involvement and
social engagement

PROMISE: Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement: Opportunities and challenges for ‘conflicted’ young people across Europe.

Collection of short comparative country reports – CROATIA

Summary: The full report presents a collection of standardised country reports from the ten partner countries involved in PROMISE. Using the most recent data available from macro-indicators and surveys, each country report provides a national baseline of the attitudes, activities and social involvement of young people. The macro-indicators used to describe the national context are used consistently throughout to allow comparison.

In particular, each country report provides an overview of the general ‘state of the country’s health’; the situation that young people face; how young people feel about their situation; and what, if anything, they are doing to change it.

We employ a concept of social and political engagement developed for PROMISE that includes four dimensions of engagement: civic activism, formal political participation, activism, and everyday engagement.

This report (Croatia) should be read in conjunction with the Introduction and Appendices document. It was submitted to the EC as part of deliverable D9 (D4.3).

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Croatia

	Population	4,170,600
	Population aged 15-29 years old	17.9%
	Population aged 65 years old and above	19.3%
	Birth Rate	8.9
	International migrant stock as a percentage of the total population	13.6%

1. Standards of living in Croatia¹

Croatia's economic situation is still suffering from the 2008 crisis. While the gross national income (GNI) is among the lowest (22930\$) (Fig.1.1), the percentage of the labour force that is currently unemployed (11.5%) (Fig.1.3) is among the highest within the PROMISE project countries. Also, unfriendly business regulations (score 51) makes doing business hard (Fig.1.2). Perceived corruption is quite high (score 49) (Fig.1.4), and the Government's effectiveness is rated relatively low (score 0.5) (Fig. 1.5).

Fig. 1.1 GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$), 2016

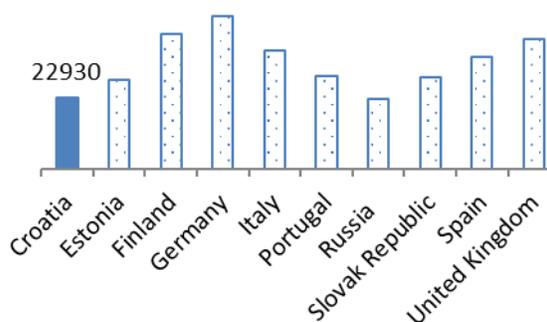


Fig. 1.2 Ease of doing business index (1=most business-friendly regulations), 2017

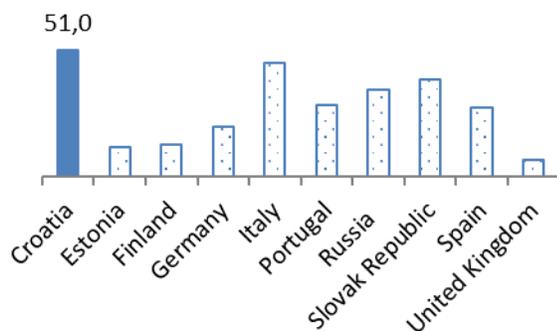


Fig. 1.3 Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate), 2017

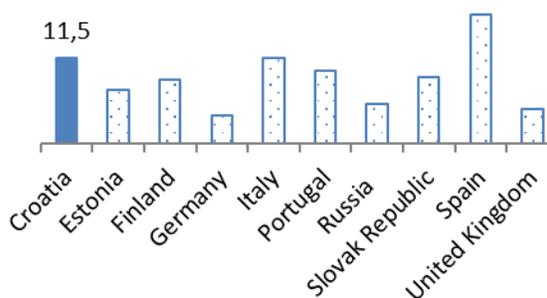


Fig. 1.4 Corruption Perception Index - Transparency International (1 to 100; 1= high corruption perceived), 2016

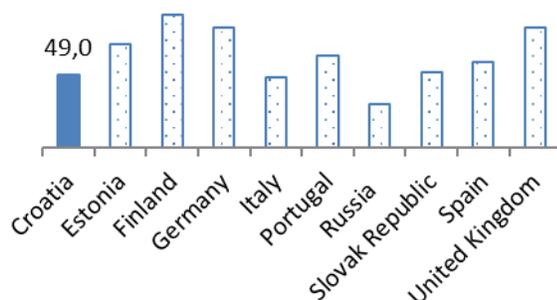
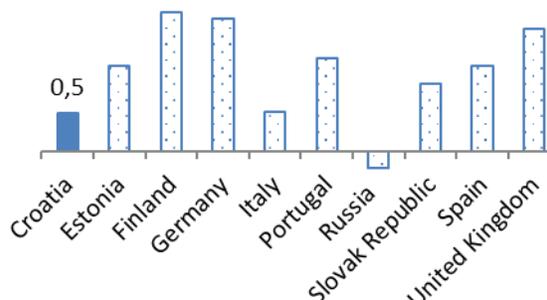


Fig. 1.5 Government Effectiveness: Estimate, 2014 (-2,5 to 2,5 -2,5=very low effectiveness perceived)



¹ Last available data. Sources: World Bank; Transparency International; Freedom House; Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum); Eurostat ; OECDStats. See Appendix for detailed references.

Fig. 1.6 Freedom of the press (0=best, 100=worst), 2017

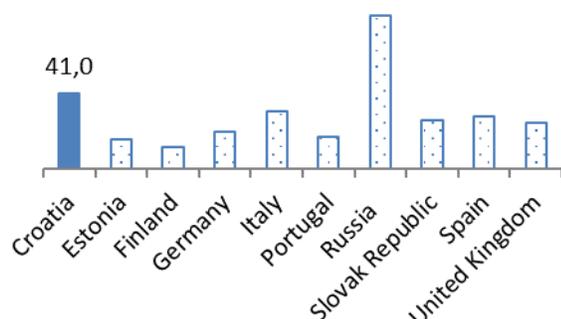
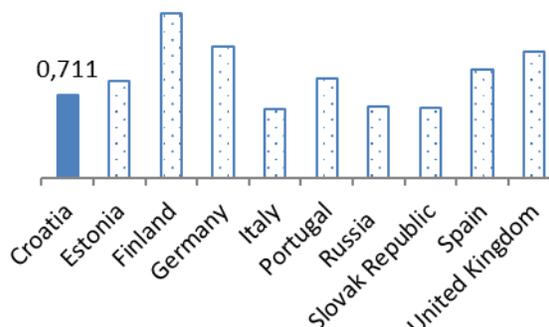


Fig. 1.7 Global Gender Gap Index (0 to 1, 1= gender equality), 2017



The Freedom House defines freedom of the press as “a media environment where coverage of political news is robust, the safety of journalists is guaranteed, state intrusion in media affairs is minimal, and the press is not subject to onerous legal or economic pressures”. According to these criteria, the freedom of Croatian press was perceived among the worst (index of 41) within PROMISE project countries (Fig.1.6). Croatia’s Gender Gap Index is 0.71 which places Croatia among the PROMISE project’s countries with greater gender inequality (Fig.1.7) and ranks at the 54th position out 144 in the Global Gender Gap Report, 2017. Among the PROMISE project’s countries, Croatia has a medium share of population with tertiary education (23%) and of internet users (73%) (Fig. 1.8, and Fig.1.9).

Fig. 1.8 % People with tertiary education (25-64 years old), 2016

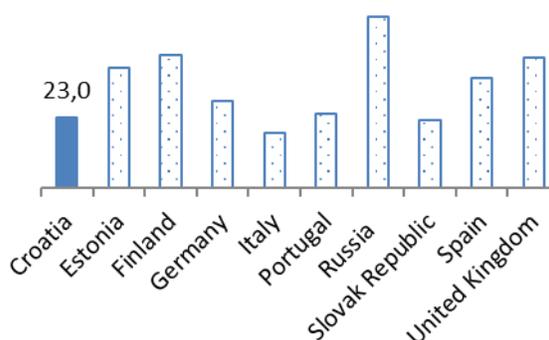
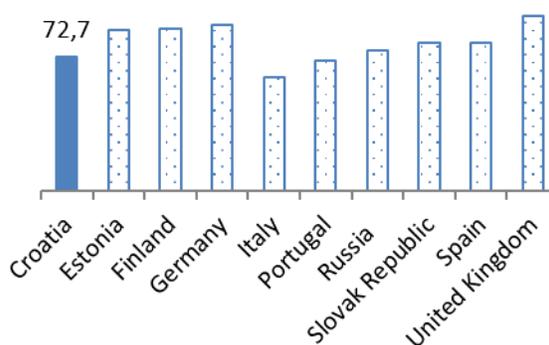


Fig. 1.9 Internet users (per 100 people), 2016



1. Being young in Croatia

2.1 Demographic situation

In around 1995 the share of the youngest and oldest of the population in Croatia swapped. Between 1950 and 2015, the share of youth between 15 and 24 years old dropped from 18.7% to 11.9%, while the percentage of people older than 65 increased from 7.9% to 18.7% in the same time-period. So nowadays, those older than 65 years represent one fifth of the Croatian population (Fig. 2.1).

The percentage of people aged 18-24 and of people aged 25-29 living with their parents in Croatia is very high (94.1% and 74.5 % respectively) (Fig.2.2).

In the past 12 years the share of youth aged 25-29 years old who still live with their parents increased by almost 10 percentage points (Fig.2.2).

Fig. 2.1 Demographic trends in Croatia 1950-2015: proportion of people aged 15-24 years old vs 65 years old and more

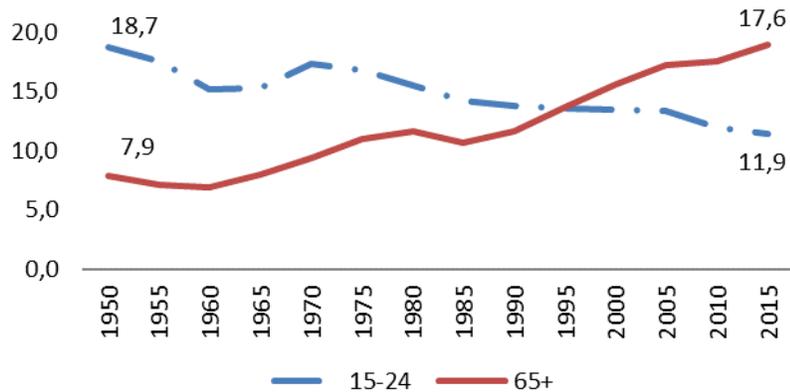
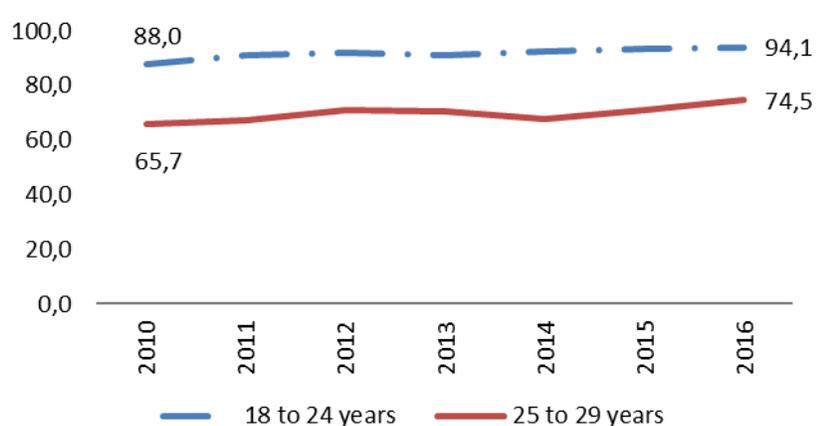
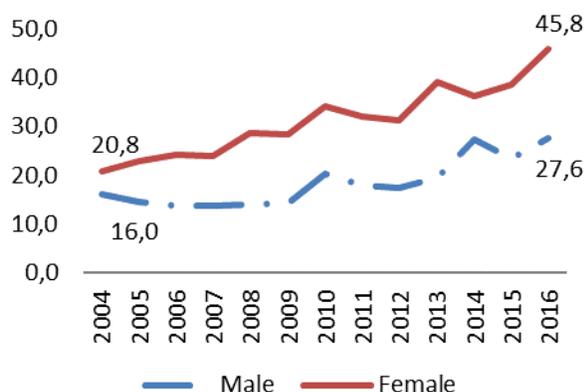


Fig. 2.2 Percent of young people (18-29 years old) living with parents 2010-2016



2.2 Education & Labour market in Croatia

Fig. 2.3 Percentage of young people aged 25-29 with tertiary education (2004-2016) by gender



There was an increase in the percentage of youth completing tertiary education in Croatia between 2004 and 2016, especially among women. Today more than 45% of women between 25-29 years old have a university degree in comparison to 27% of men (Fig.2.3).

The percentage of young people leaving education early has slightly declined since 2002, although even then this figure was low at less than 10% (Fig.2.4).

Over time, the share of young women and men who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) fluctuate, but in general it is higher among women than men. Over the past twelve years there has been a rise in the percentage of NEET men from 4% to 7%.

Fig. 2.4 Early leavers from education and training by gender (2002-2016)

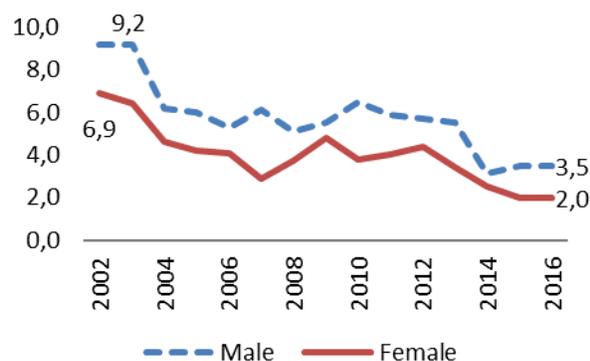


Fig. 2.5 Percentage of NEET aged 15-29 (2004-2016)

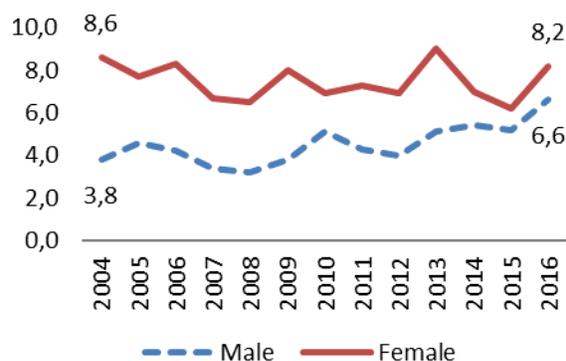


Fig. 2.6 Youth (25-29 years old) employment by gender (2002-2016)

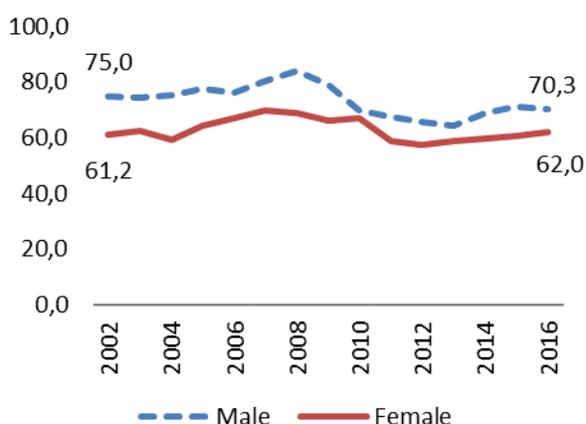
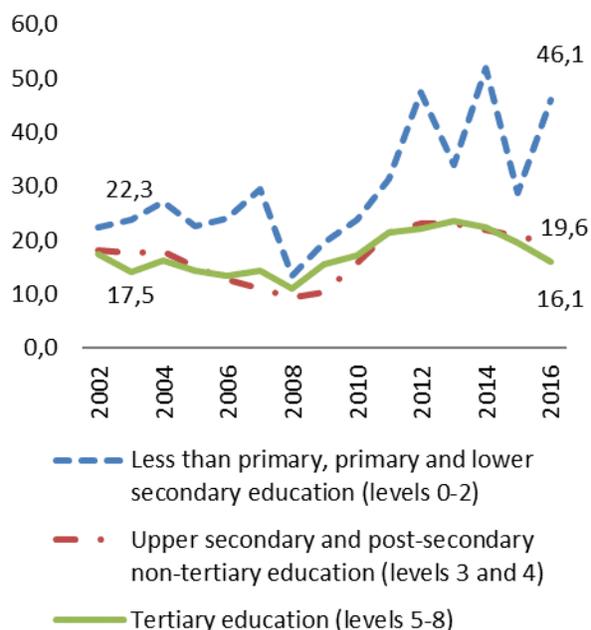


Fig. 2.7 Croatian youth unemployment rate (25-29 years old) by educational attainment (2002-2016)

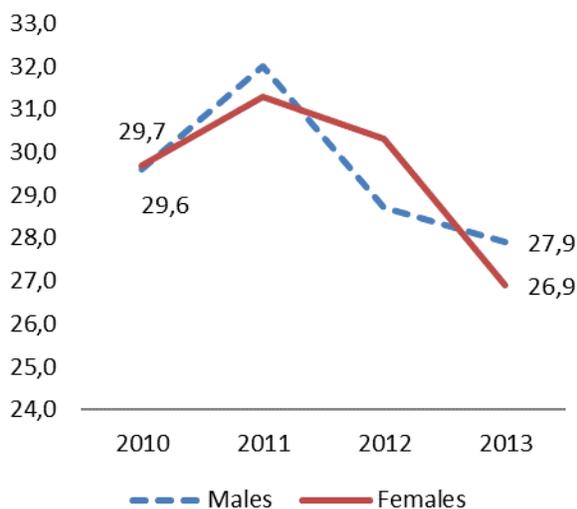


Currently, approximately 60% of women and 70% of men aged 25-29 years are employed in Croatia (Fig.2.6). In the period from 2002 to 2016 the situation did not change much, except for a slight decrease in the men’s employment rate after the economic crisis of 2008.

In the same period, youth with the lowest education were the most affected by widely fluctuating unemployment rates; so in 2016 almost 50% of these young people were unemployed. Among those with secondary and tertiary education, unemployment rates are lower but still a matter of concern (around 17.5%), although unemployment rates were quite stable between 2002 and 2016 (Fig.2.7).

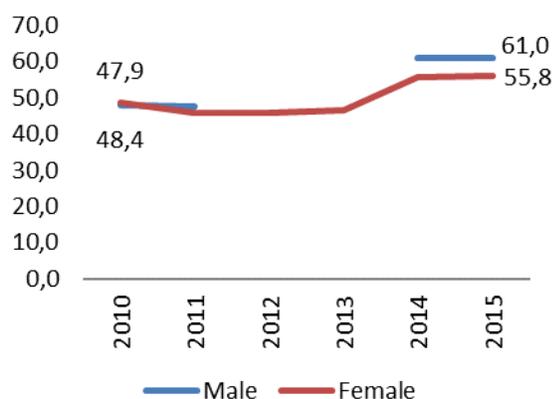
About one third of Croatian youth are at risk of poverty. The trends for both genders are quite similar (Fig.2.8).

Fig. 2.8 Croatian youth at risk of poverty or exclusion rate by gender (2010-2013)



2.3 Health and well-being

Fig. 2.9 Percentage of young people who perceive their health as good/very good by gender and age groups (2010-2015)



Croatian youth who perceive their health as good or very good increased from about 48% in 2010 to about 58% in 2015. This increase was similar among women and men (Fig. 2.9).

In 2014, around 3% of women aged 20-24 and 0.5% of men aged 25-29, reported current depressive symptoms.

Between 2002 and 2010 the suicide rate per hundred thousand inhabitants (Fig. 2.11) was quite stable among women, while among men the suicide rate declined from 20 to 15 per hundred thousand. Generally, this rate was four times higher for men than for women.

Fig. 2.10 Percentage of youth with current depressive symptoms by gender and age group (2014)

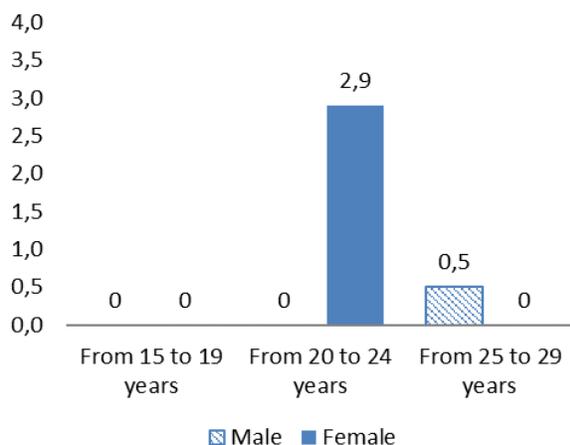
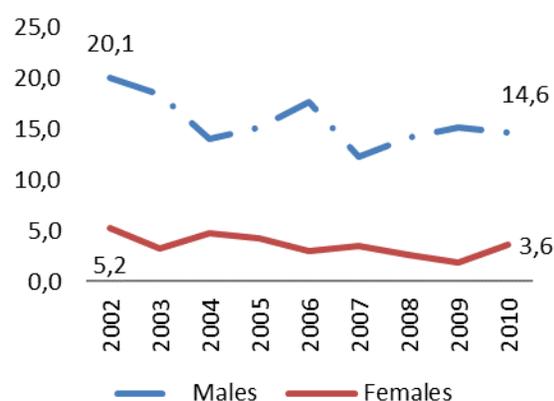


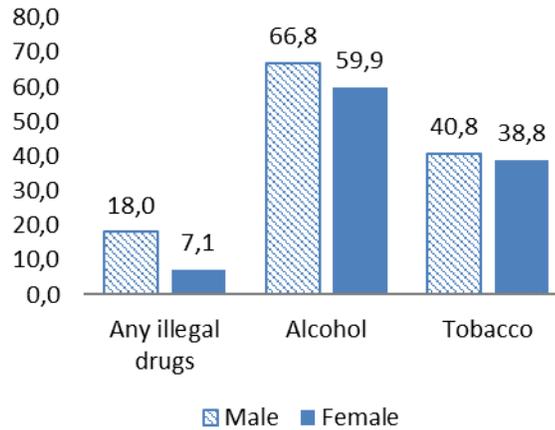
Fig. 2.11 Crude death rate per hundred thousand inhabitants by suicide of young people (2002-2010)



2.4 Use of Substances and Crime

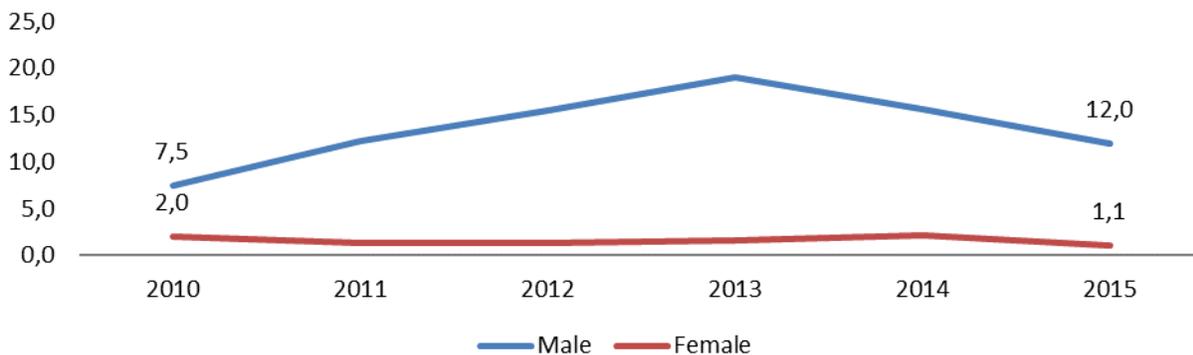
In 2015 (Fig. 2.12) about 63% of the Croatian youth admitted to having consumed alcohol in the last month, about 40% of them smoked tobacco, and 13% used illegal drugs. Men tended to use tobacco at an approximately equal level to women, but for alcohol, and especially illegal drugs, men tended to use more than women.

Fig. 2.12 Percentage of aged 15-29 who in the last month used... (2015)



Between 2010 and 2015 the rate of male juvenile prisoners somewhat increased (from 7.5 to 12 per hundred thousand), while the rate of female juvenile prisoners stayed low and pretty much the same (around 2 per hundred thousand) (Fig. 2.13). In the case of young men, the peak of imprisonment rate was 19 per hundred thousand in 2013 (19).

Fig. 2.13 Juvenile prisoners per hundred thousand inhabitants (2010-2015) by gender



3. What do young people in Croatia think and feel?

This section aims to provide an overview of the young Croatians’ perceptions and evaluations about the current situation in their country, and how they feel in such context.

Youth in Croatia are mainly not satisfied with the way democracy works in the country, they rated negatively the national economy and employment situation, consider they have been at least in some way marginalised by the economic crises, and they are not convinced that the overall situation will change in the near future. Also, they consider that the education system in Croatia is not very well adapted to the real needs of the labor market. Croatian youth express distrust in Law and Order institutions (with the exception of the Army), as well as in political institutions, and think that things are going in the wrong direction at the national, as well as at the European level.

Despite those critical evaluations of the Croatian context, young people appear quite satisfied with their personal life, mostly perceiving that their voices are heard at the national and at the European level, and are optimistic about their personal futures.

3.1.1 Croatian and European situation

About two thirds of young respondents are not satisfied with the way democracy works in Croatia, regardless of gender (Fig. 3.1). Young people aged 25-29 years old show the highest level of dissatisfaction (Fig.3.2).

Fig. 3.1. Are you satisfied with the way democracy works in Croatia?

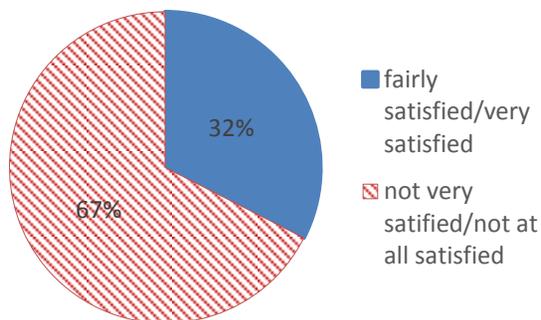


Fig. 3.2 Young people not satisfied with democracy in Croatia by gender and age (%)

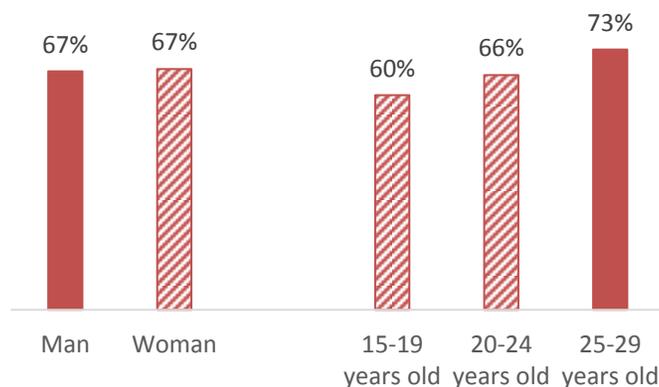


Fig. 3.3 How would you rate the situation of the Croatian economy

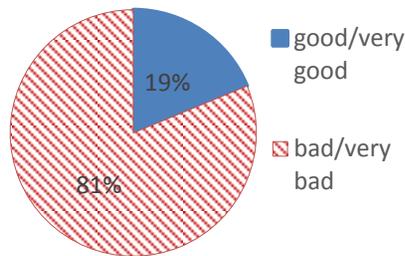


Fig. 3.4 What are your expectations for the next 12 months: the Croatian economy will be... (%)

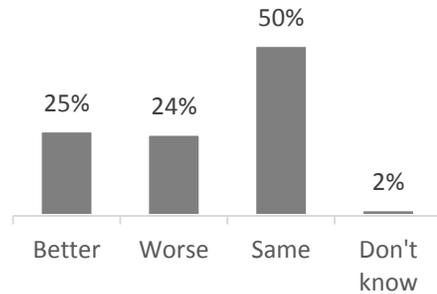
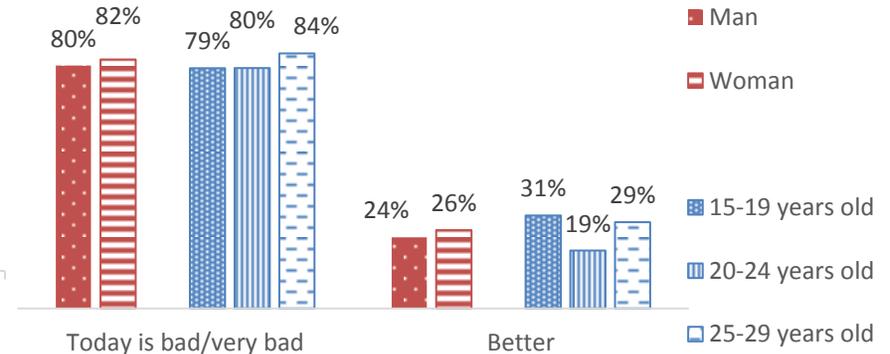


Fig. 3.5 Evaluation on the current Croatian economy and expectations for the future by gender and age



In line with the poor economic situation in Croatia (see Fig. 1.1 to 1.5 in the section 1” Standards of living”), the huge majority of Croatian youth, regardless of gender and age, rate the national economy and employment situation negatively (81%, 85% respectively, Fig. 3.3, Fig. 3.5, Fig. 3.6, Fig. 3.8). While half of Croatian youth think that the economic and employment situation will not change in the next year, a quarter of them are optimistic, and a quarter of them are pessimistic in this regard (Fig. 3.4, Fig. 3.7). Youth aged 20-24 years old appear the most skeptical about positive changes regarding the economic and employment situation (Fig. 3.5, Fig. 3.8).

Fig. 3.6 How would you rate the employment situation in Croatia?

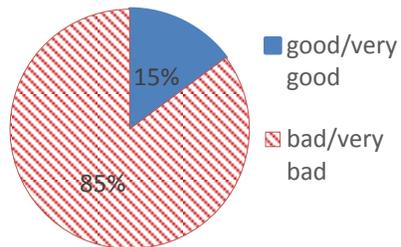


Fig. 3.7 What are your expectations for the next 12 months: the employment situation in Croatia will be...

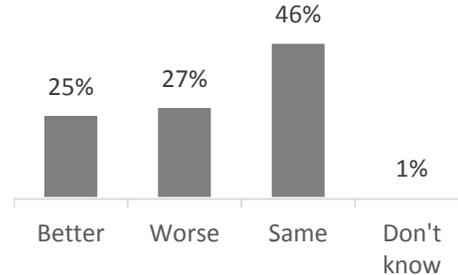


Fig. 3.8 Evaluation on the current Croatian employment, and expectations for the future by gender and age

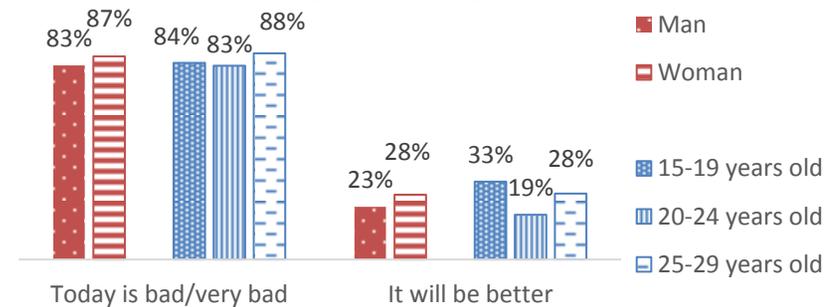
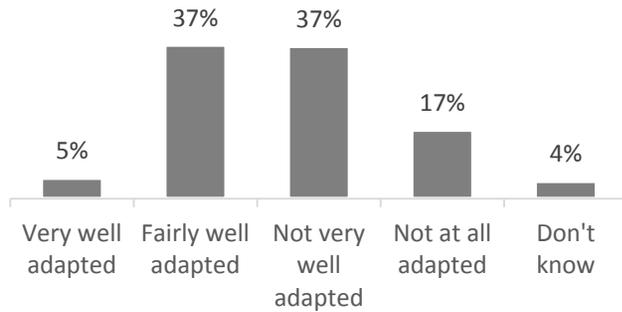
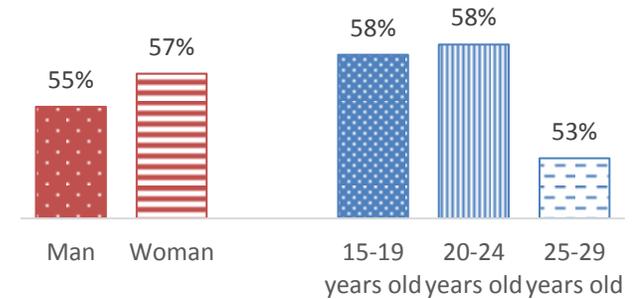


Fig. 3.9 Do you think that in Croatia the education system is adapted or not to the current world of work? (%)



Regardless of gender and age, more than 50% of Croatian youth consider that the education system in Croatia is not adapted to the needs of the labour market (Fig. 3.9, Fig. 3.10).

Fig. 3.10 "The education system is not well adapted to the current world of work", by gender and age



More than two thirds of Croatian youth feel that young people in Croatia have been, at least to some extent, marginalised by the economic crisis (Fig.3.11). At the same time, more than half think that impact of the economic crisis on the job market did not yet reach the peak (Fig. 3.12). Such opinion is less characteristic for men and those aged 20-24 years (Fig. 3.13).

Fig. 3.11 Do you have the feeling that young people have been marginalized by the economic crisis (%)

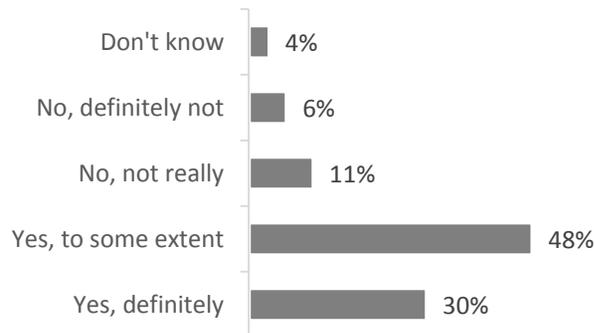


Fig. 3.12 What do you think about the impact of the economic crisis on the job market?

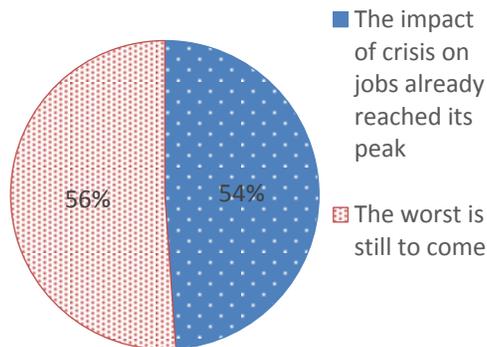


Fig. 3.13 "The impact of crisis on jobs already reached its peak", by age, gender, and place of living

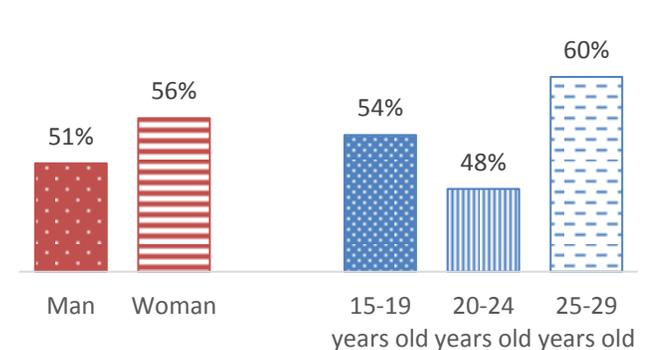


Fig. 3.14 Direction things are going in Croatia (%)

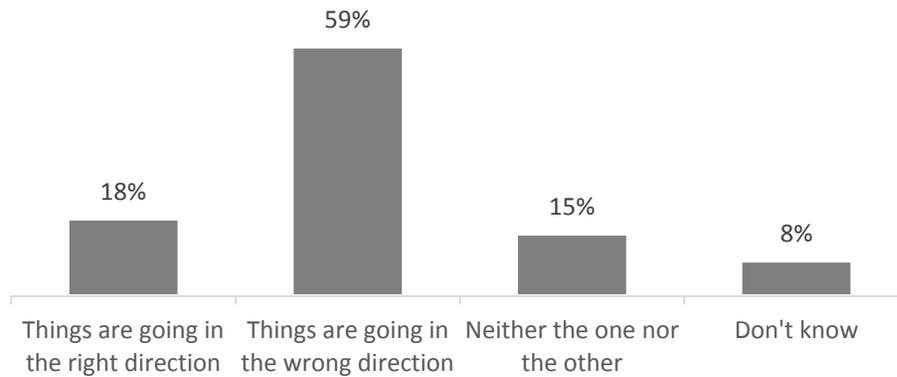
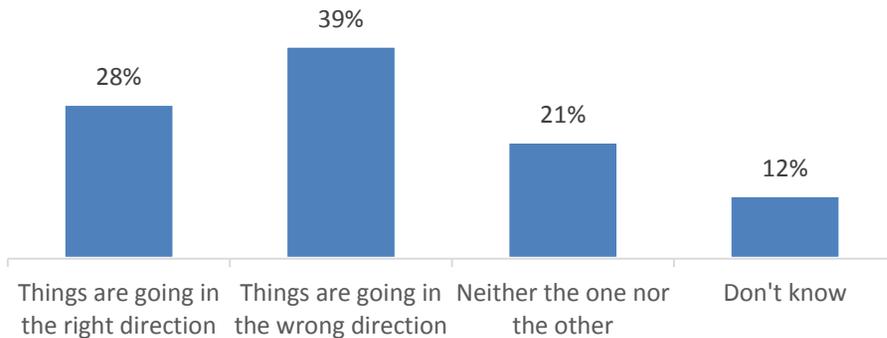
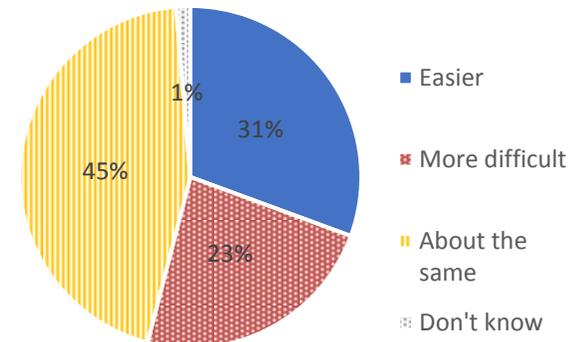


Fig. 3.15 Direction things are going in the EU (%)



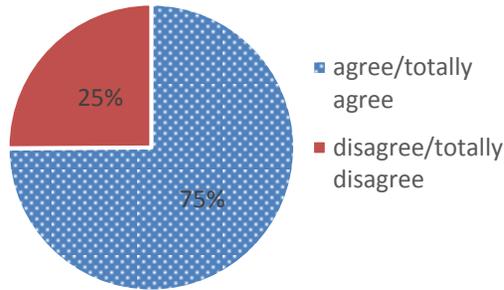
Most Croatian youth are pessimistic regarding the direction things are heading in Croatia and in Europe. Even 59% of them consider that things are going in the wrong direction at the national level (Fig.3.14), while 39% think the same at the European level (Fig.3.15). But, about one fifth are optimistic about the direction taken by their country, and about a third in the case of the situation in the EU. Also, one third of Croatian young people have positive expectations about the life of the future generation in EU, while almost half think that situation for the next generation will not change much (Fig. 3.16).

Fig. 3.16 Do you think that life for the next generation in EU will be... (%)



3.1.2 Perceived agency

Fig. 3.17 "My voice counts in Croatia"



Regardless of gender young people living in Croatia mostly perceive that they are heard at the national (75%) and at the European level (65%) (Fig. 3.17, Fig. 3.18, Fig. 3.19). At the same time the opinion that youth voice counts at the national level is least characteristic amongst the youngest (Fig. 3.19).

Fig. 3.18 "My voice counts in EU"

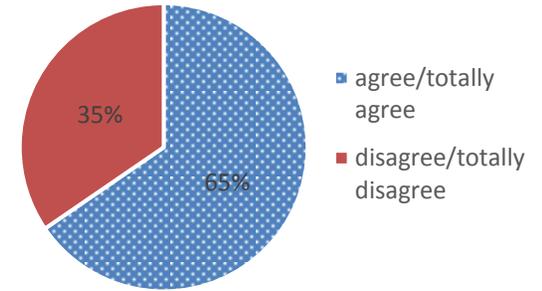
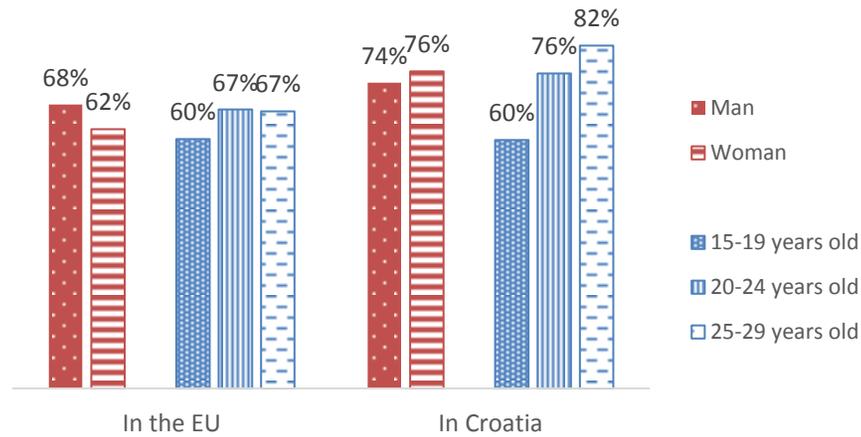
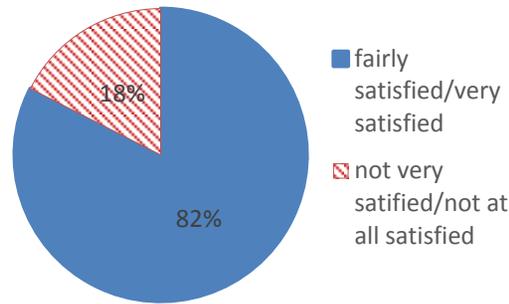


Fig. 3.19 "My voice counts" by gender and age



3.1.3 Personal situation

Fig. 3.20 Are you satisfied with your life in general?



Despite the negative evaluation of their country's situation, most Croatian youth declare to be satisfied with their life (Fig. 3.20). Satisfaction with life is most frequent among younger and those still in education, while there are no gender differences in life satisfaction (Fig. 3.21).

Fig. 3.21 Young people satisfied with their life by gender, age, employment status

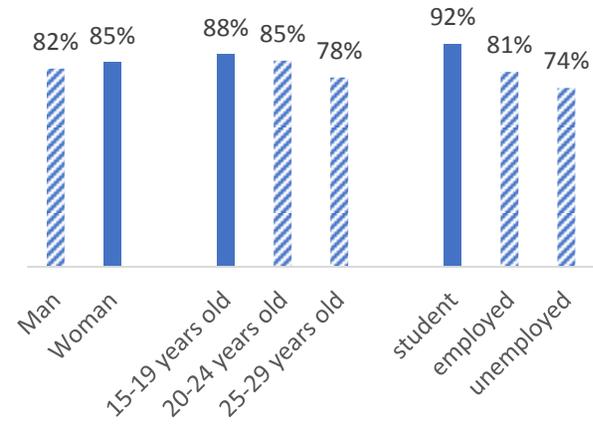
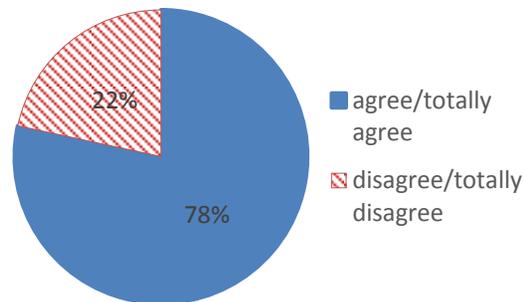


Fig. 3.22 % agreement: "You have confidence in the future"



More than two thirds of young Croats, regardless of gender, are also quite optimistic about the future (Fig. 3.22), and there are no differences regarding gender. This confidence in the future is least characteristic for youth aged 20-24 years (Fig. 3.23).

Fig. 3.23 Confidence in the future by gender and age

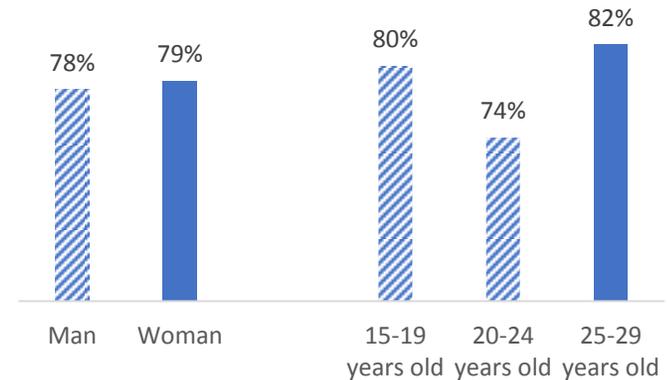


Fig. 3.24 How would you rate your personal job situation?

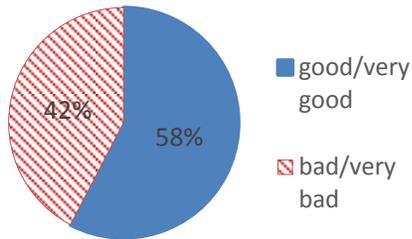


Fig. 3.25 What are your expectations for the next 12 months: your personal job situation will be... (%)

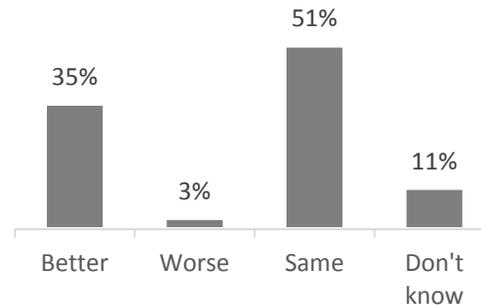
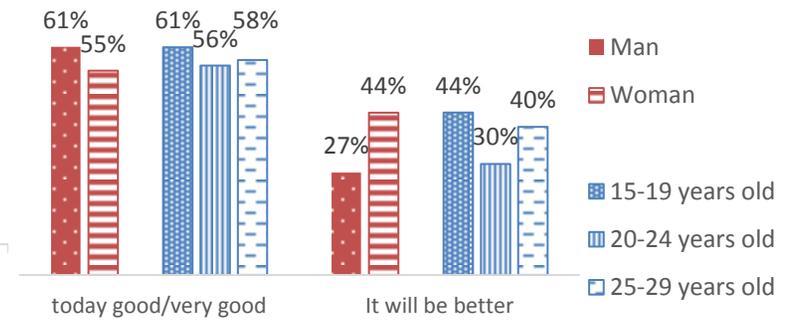


Fig. 3.26 Evaluation on the current personal job situation, and expectations for the future by gender and age



Around 60% of young Croats rate their personal job situation and the household's financial situation as good or very good (Fig. 3.24, Fig.3.27) while only a small percentage consider that their job or household financial situation will be worse in the near future (3%, 10% respectively, Fig.3.25, Fig.3.28). Positive expectations for the future are less characteristic for men and those aged 20-24 years old. (Fig. 3.26, Fig.3.29).

Fig. 3.27 How would you rate your household financial situation?

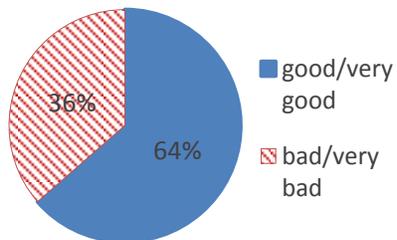


Fig. 3.28 What are your expectations for the next 12 months: the financial situation of your household will be... (%)

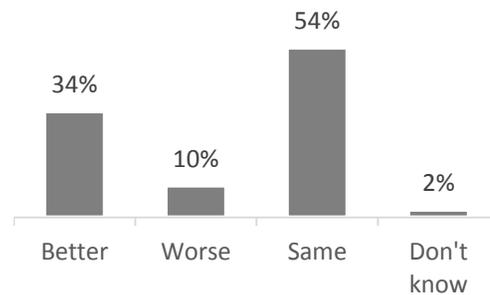
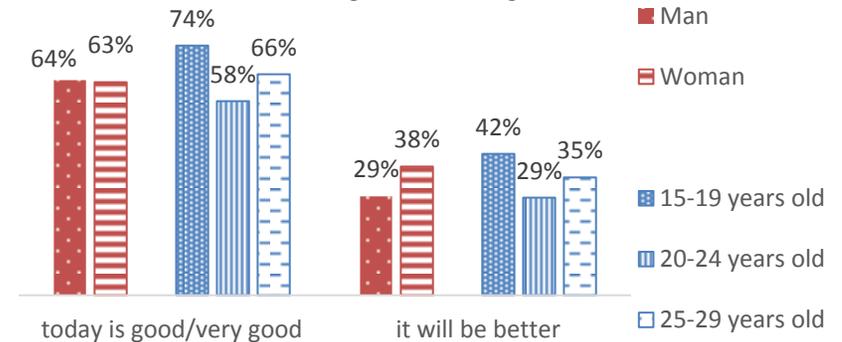


Fig. 3.29 Evaluation on the current household's financial situation, and expectations for the future by gender and age



3.2 Relation with authority

Fig. 3.30 Trust in Law & Order institutions

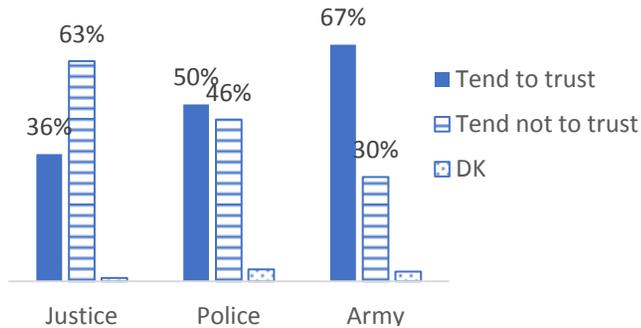
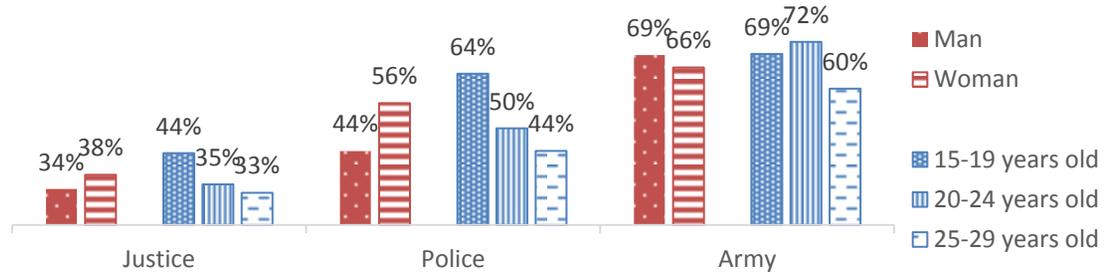


Fig. 3.31 Young people who tend to trust in Law & Order institutions, by gender and age



Among Law and Order institutions young people most frequently express trust in the army (67%), about half express trust in the police while only one third express trust in justice (Fig. 3.30). Youth aged 25-29 appear to be the most critical toward national Law and Order institutions, (Fig.3.31), while women have more trust in the police than men (Fig.3.31). The majority of youth in Croatia do not trust political institutions, especially political parties (Fig. 3.32). Nevertheless, about half of youth trust the EU. Youth aged 25-29 appear to be the most critical toward the national parliament (Fig.3.31, Fig.3.33), while the youngest have more trust in local public authorities and the EU than older ones (Fig.3.31, Fig. 3.33).

Fig. 3.32 Trust in political institutions

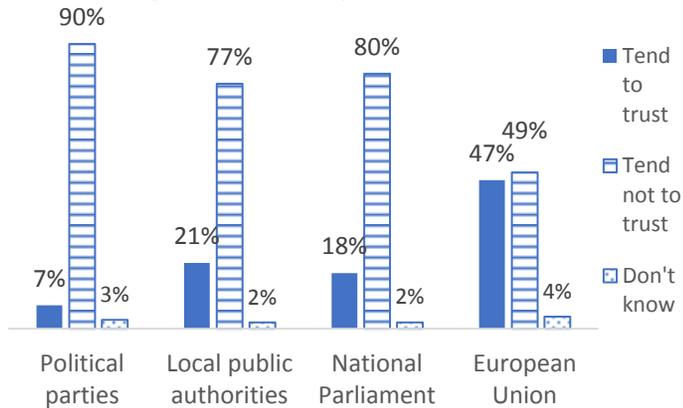
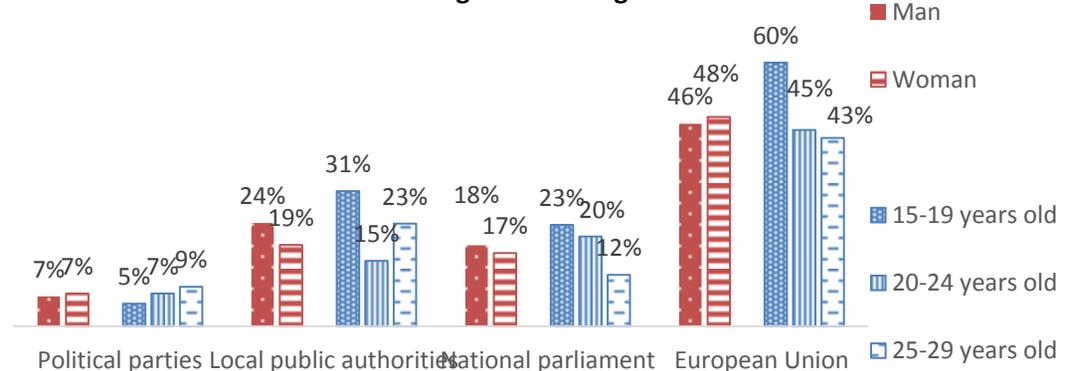


Fig. 3.33 Young people who tend to trust in political institutions by gender and age



3.3 Opinion on social issues

Fig. 3.34 Percentage of agreement with statements regarding migration

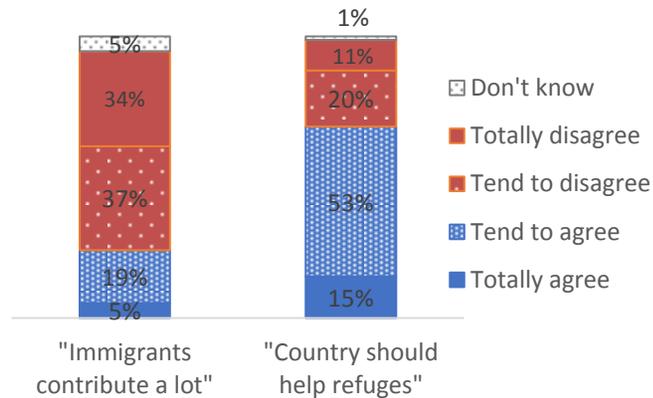
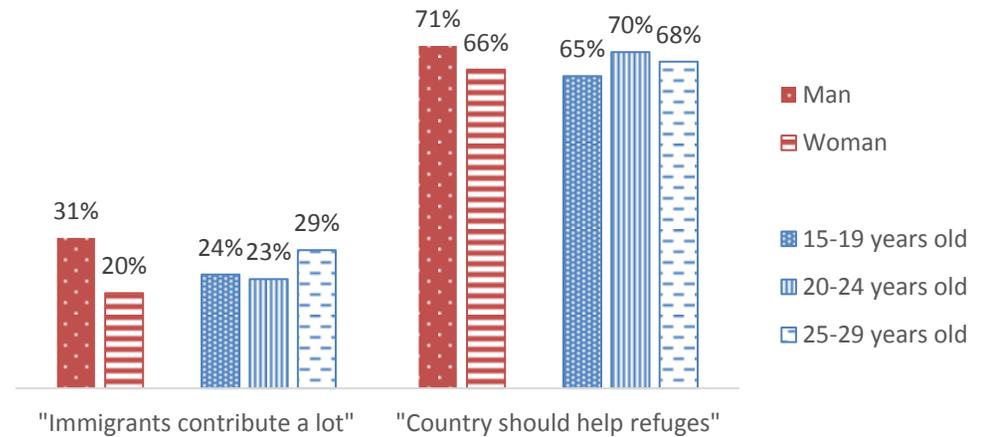


Fig. 3.35 Young people who agree with these statements by gender and age

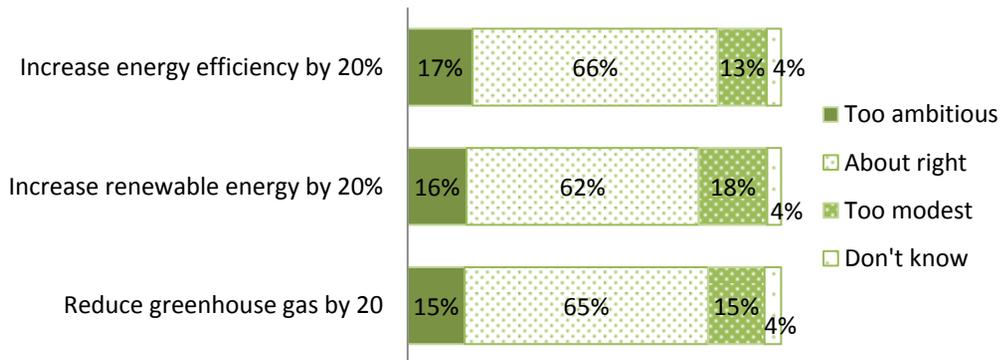


While the majority of Croatian youth (71%) don't think that immigrants positively contribute to Croatia (Fig. 3.34), at the same time the majority of them agree (68%) that their country should help refugees.

Both those views are more likely to be expressed by men than women (Fig.3.35).

In relation to the EU's H2020 goals related to environment, a large share of the Croatian youth (about 64%) support these goals (Fig.3.36).

Fig. 3.36 Do you find these H2020 goals... (%)



4. Engagement and Social Change

In this section we provide information about young people’s social and political engagement in Croatia. Our concept of social and political engagement includes aspects of civic engagement, formal political participation, activism, and everyday engagement. In most of the cases, questions aim to unpack the forms of participation that young people think are the most effective.

4.1 Civic engagement

Fig. 4.1 Best ways of participating in the public life in EU - civic engagement (%)

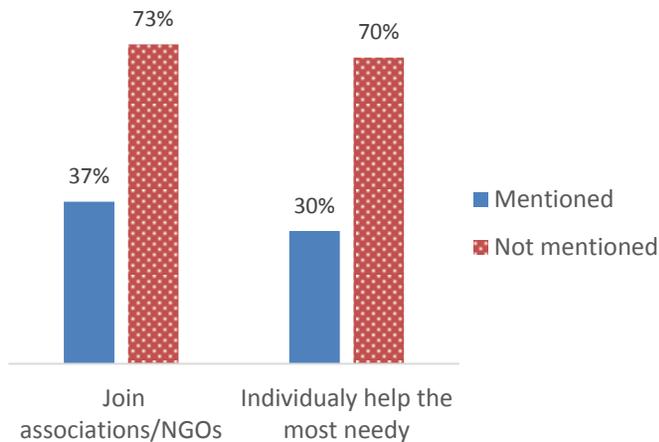
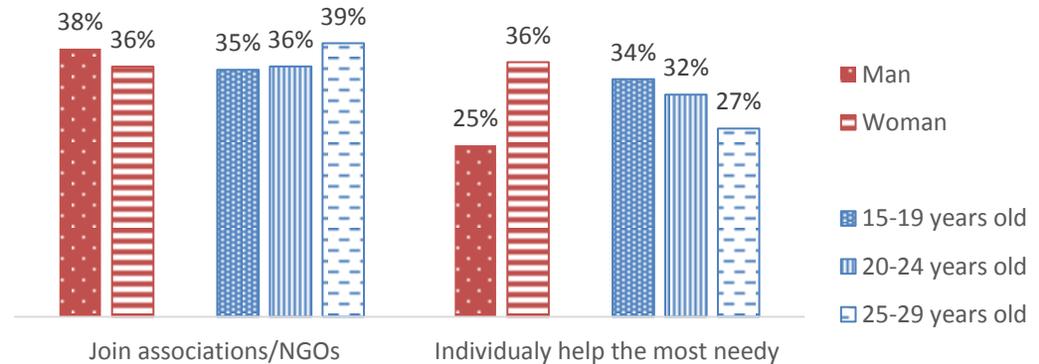


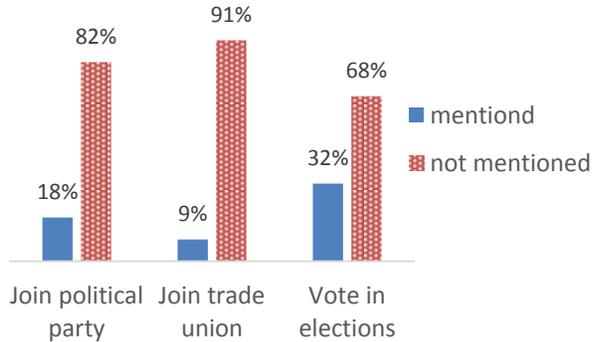
Fig. 4.2 Young people who says that joining associations/NGOs and individual help to the most needy are one of the best way of participation by gender and age



When asked about the best ways to participate in the public life of the EU, more than one third of youth in Croatia mentioned membership in civic organisations, and one third mentioned individual action to help the most needy (Fig. 4.1). There are no gender or age differences among youth in Croatia who consider that joining civic associations is one of the best ways of participation (Fig.4.2). However, fewer men and fewer older respondents (25-29 years old) think that individual help to the most needy is the best way of participating in public life in the EU (Fig. 4.2).

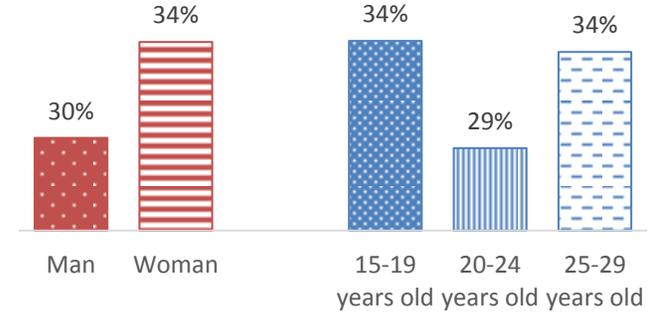
4.2 Formal political participation

Fig. 4.3 Best ways of participating in the public life of EU -Formal traditional participation (%)



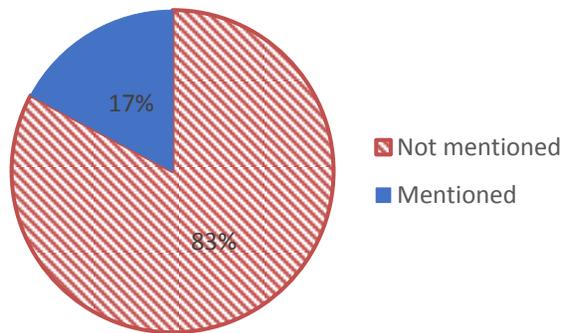
One third of Croatian youth think that voting is still one of the best ways of participating, regardless of age and gender (Fig.4.3., Fig. 4.4) Additionally, 18% of Croatian youth think that joining a political party is one of the best ways of participation, while only 9% think the same for joining trade unions. Fig.4.3.

Fig. 4.4 Voting is one of the best ways of participation, by gender and age



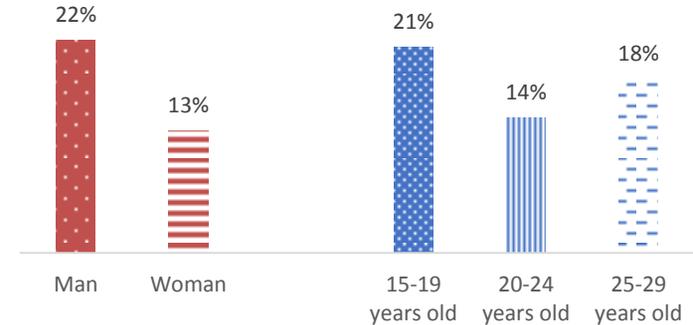
4.3 Activism

Fig. 4.5 Attend demonstrations is one of the best ways of participating in the public life in the EU - Activism



Less than a fifth of the young people in Croatia mentioned the participation in demonstrations as one of the best ways to make young people’s voice heard (Fig. 4.5). This belief is less spread among women and those 20-24 years old (Fig. 4.6).

Fig. 4.6 Attending demonstrations is one of the best ways of participation by gender and age



4.4 Everyday Engagement

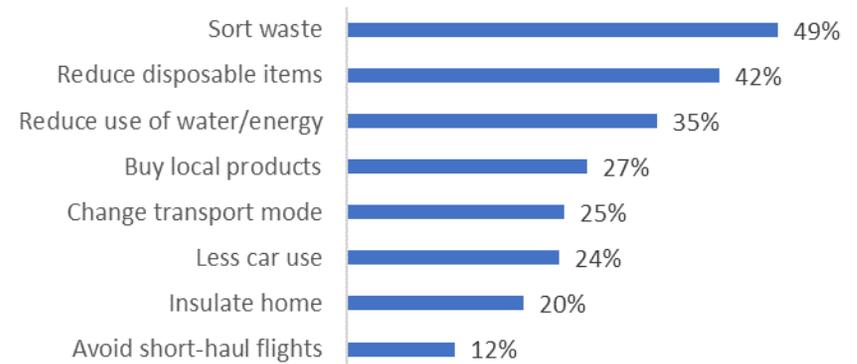
Fig. 4.7 What are the most important issues you are facing at the moment? (%) [max 2 answers]



Less than half Croatian youth actively participate in daily pro-environmental routines to protect their environment (Fig.4.8). Most of them sort waste (49%), reduce disposable items (42%), and reduce use of water/energy (35%) (Fig. 4.8).

The most important issue for about 40% of youth in Croatia is rising prices and the cost of living. (Fig. 4.7). Young people also mentioned the education system, unemployment, working and living conditions, as well as the financial and economic situation in the country as factors of concern. Generally, it seems that youth in Croatia are mainly concerned with economic aspects of their lives and education while other social issues such as taxation, terrorism, the environment, crime, and pensions are important only for a small number of young people in Croatia.

Fig. 4.8 Which of these steps have you taken personally to protect the environment?



Regarding the number of different environment-friendly actions, we can see that, overall, Croatian youth do not engage fully with environmental activities. (Fig. 4.9). About one half have low engagement (1-2 actions) and the other half show moderate engagement (3-5 actions), while high engagement (6-8 actions) is characteristic for only a few (2%). Moderate/high engagement is equally characteristic for both genders and for all age groups (Fig. 4.10).

Fig. 4.9 Engagement in environmental-friendly actions

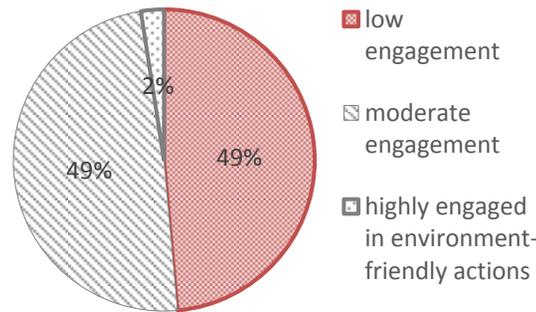
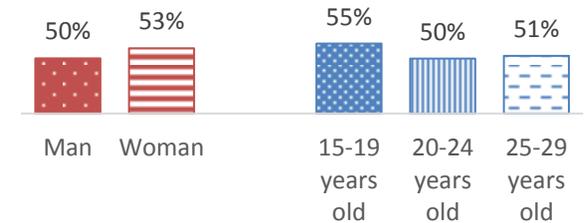


Fig. 4.10 Moderate/high pro-environmental engagement by gender, age, place of living (%)

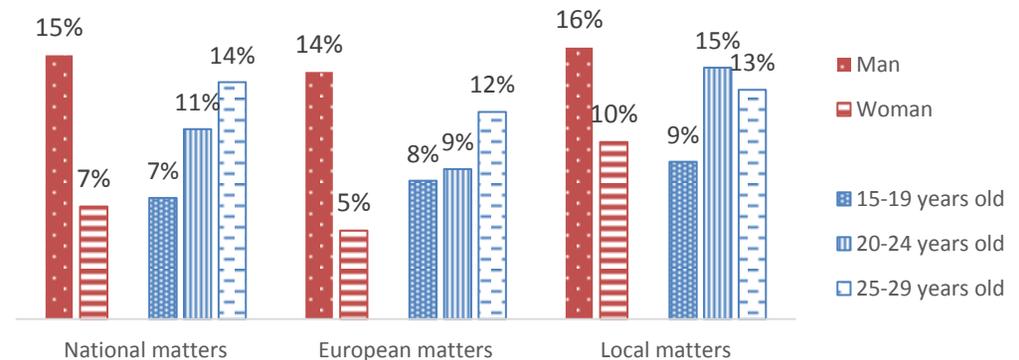


Discussion of political matters are not very present in Croatian youth conversation with their friends or relatives (Fig. 4.11). Only about 10% of youth discuss such matters frequently, and about half do it only occasionally. They equally often talk about local, national and European matters. Among the young people who often discuss politics (Fig. 4.12), men are more likely than women to be involved in such talks on all matters, while the youngest ones are the least involved in such talks.

Fig. 4.11 How often do you discuss political matters with your friends or relatives?



Fig. 4.12 Youth who frequently discusses political matters by gender and age





Project Identity

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