



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 – ITALY

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 (Italy) 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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Italy

	Population	60,776,000
	Population aged 15-29 years old	15.2%
	Population aged 65 years old and above	22.4%
	Birth Rate	1.456
	International migrant stock as a percentage of the total population	9.7%

1. Standards of living in Italy¹

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

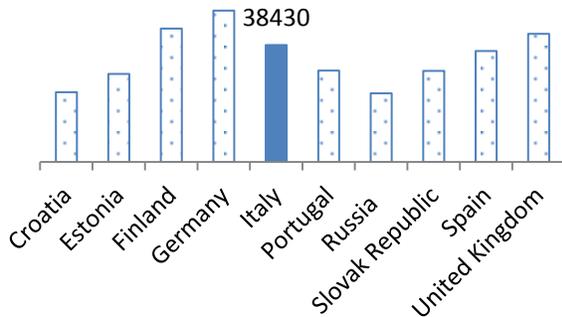
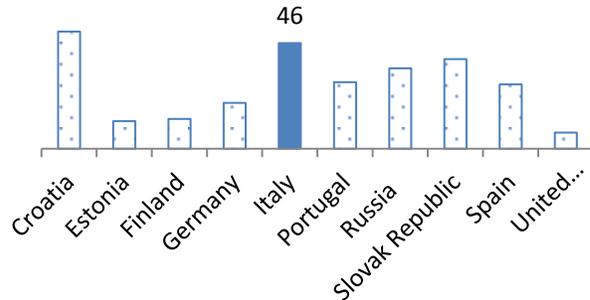


Fig. 1.2 Ease of doing business index (1=most business-friendly regulations), 2017



Italy’s economic situation is still suffering from the 2008 crisis juxtaposed with a long period of political instability.

The gross national income (GNI) is 38,430, but the 11,6% of the labour force is currently unemployed. Due to unfriendly regulations, doing business in Italy is not easy and the perceived corruption is quite high. As a possible consequence of this situation, the Government effectiveness is rated quite low.

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

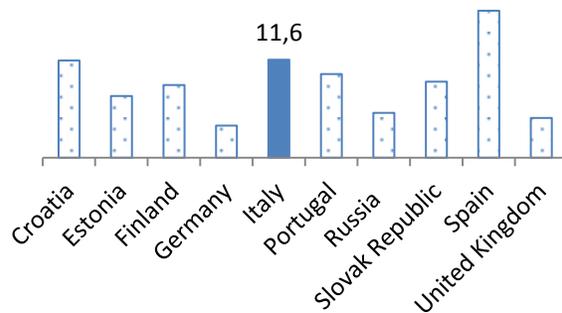


Fig. 1.4 Corruption Perception Index - Transparency International (1 to 100; 1= high corruption perceived), 2016

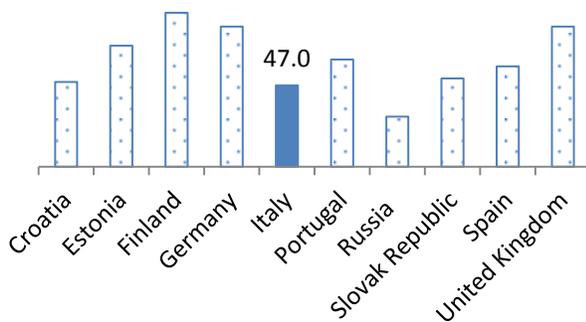
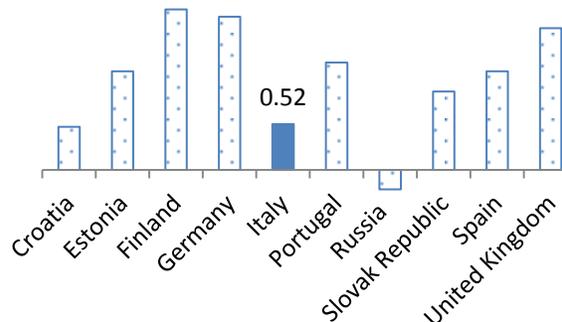


Fig. 1.5 Government Effectiveness: Estimate, 2014 (-2,5 to 2,5 -2,5=very low effectiveness perceived)



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

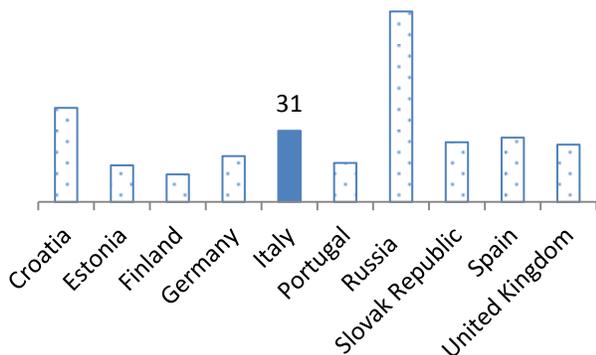
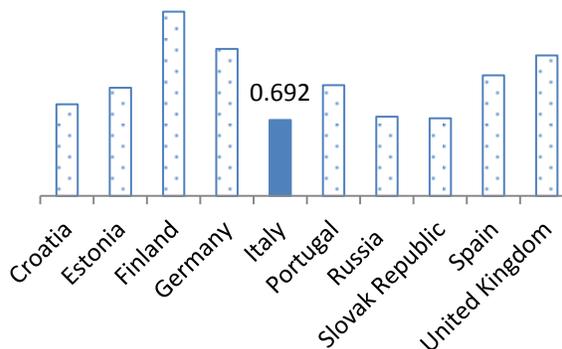
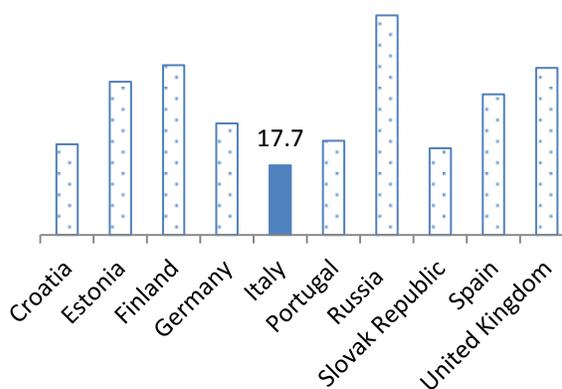


Fig. 1.7 Global Gender Gap Index (0 to 1, 1= gender equality), 2017



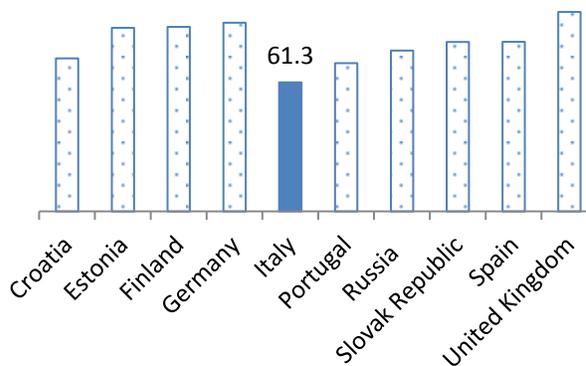
The Freedom House defines freedom of the press as “a media environment where coverage of political news is robust, the safety of journalists is guaranteed, state intrusion in media affairs is minimal, and the press is not subject to onerous legal or economic pressures.” According to these criteria, the Italian press is not completely free (31). Among the PROMISE project’s countries, Italy is also among those with bigger gender gap (0.692) and ranks as 82 out of 144 in the Global Gender Gap Report 2017.

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



Italy also has a very low share of the population with tertiary education (17.7%), and of internet users (61.3%).

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



2. Being young in Italy

2.1 Demographic situation

The demographic transition in Italy reflects in a complete overturn of the share of the youngest and oldest age-groups in the population. In the past 65 years, the proportion of youth aged between 15 and 24 years, dropped from 17.3% to 9.3%, while people aged 65 years old or more specularly increased and nowadays they represent almost one-quarter of the Italian population.

Fig. 2.1 Demographic trends in Italy, 1950 -2015: proportion of people aged 15-29 years old vs 65 years old and more

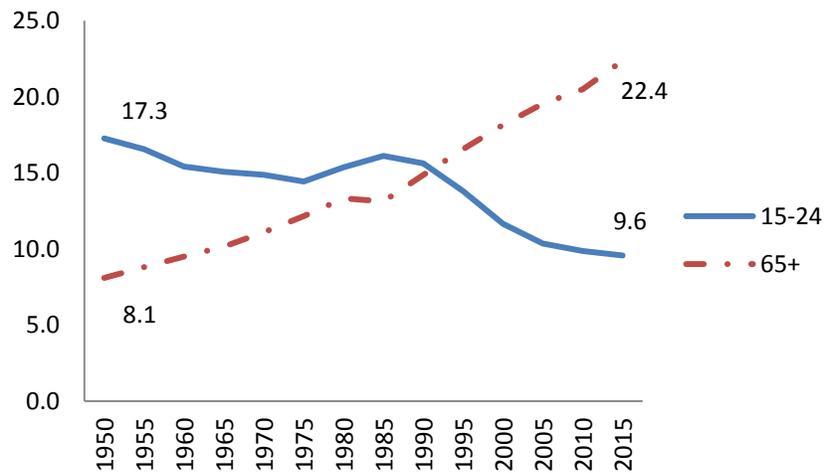
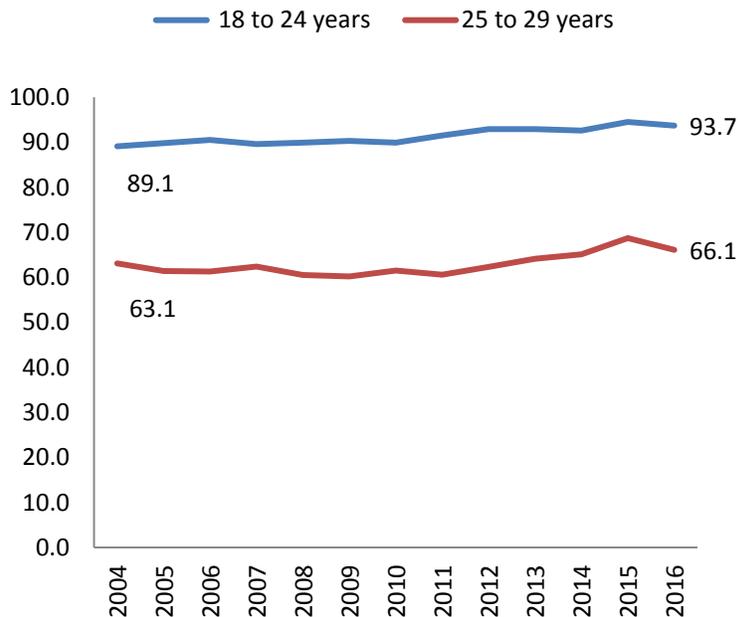


Fig. 2.2 Percent of young people (18-29 years old) living with parents 2004-2016



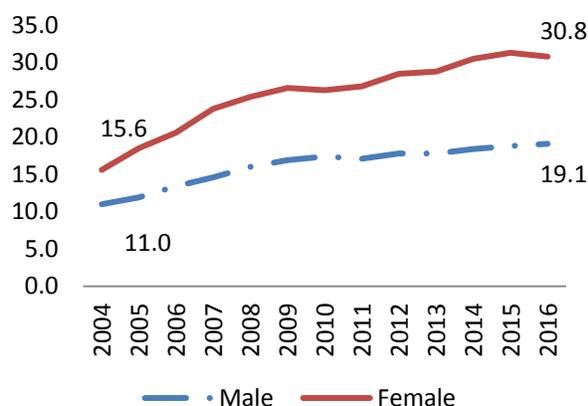
This demographic transition impacts on many aspects of social life.

With no specific youth policies for housing, and with the effects of the economic crisis, young people face difficulties in finding their way to becoming independent adults. In the past 12 years, the share of young people aged 25-29 years who still live with their parents remained stable between 63 and 66%.

Far from being just a “cultural” Italian issue, as it is often described, the high proportion of young people living with their parents reflects structural problems (see Deliverable D3.1).

2.2 Education & Labour market in Italy

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



Since 2004, education provides increasingly better features. Youth with a tertiary education steadily increased, in particular in the case of women: today one-third of females aged between 25-29 years old have a university degree.

As shown in figure 2.4, the Italian school system made many efforts to deal with the phenomenon of early school leavers: since 1992 they decreased from about 37% to 14%, again females appear to be more engaged in the school system. However, considering a broader age group (15-29 years old), the share of youth who is not in employment, education, training (NEET), is stable, and bigger in the case of females (about 16%). During the economic crisis, NEET young men increased by about 4 percentage points.

Fig. 2.4 Early leavers from education and training by gender (1992-2016)

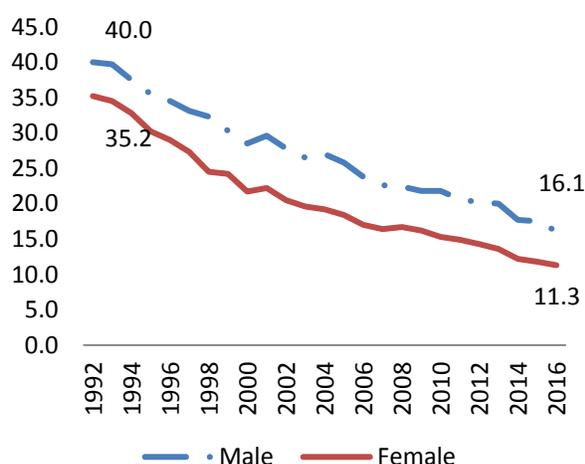


Fig. 2.5 Percentage of NEET aged 15-29 (2004-2016)

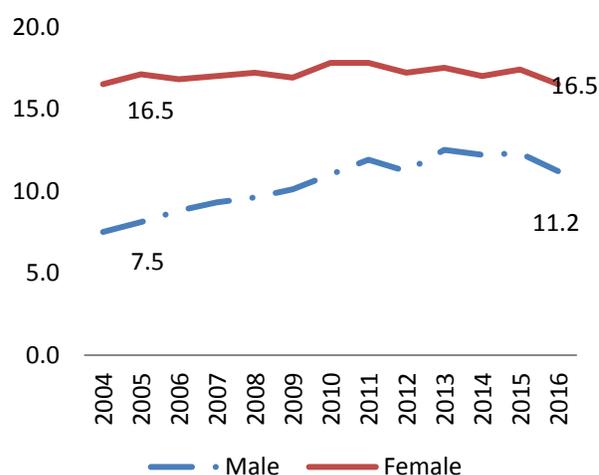
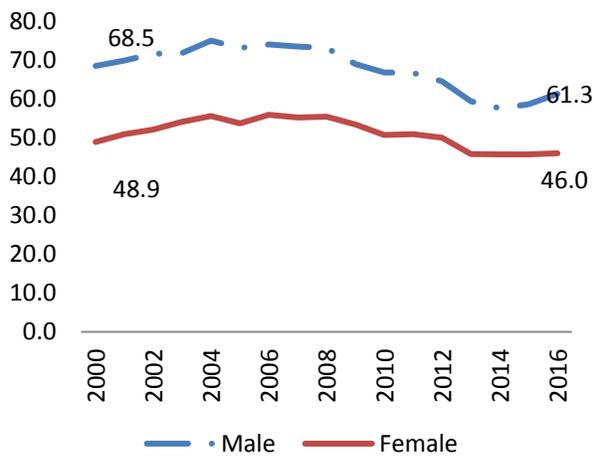


Fig. 2.6 Youth (25-29 years old) employment by gender (2000-2016)



More than one out two females and two out five males aged 25-29 years old are not employed (Fig.2.6). The situation has not changed much over 16 years.

The economic crisis had strong consequences on youth unemployment. In 2007 about 12% of the young people were unemployed, but this rate steadily increased to about 25% in 2014 (Fig. 2.7). Probably as a reflection of the Italian economic system, youth with a secondary degree are generally less affected than those with lower educational levels. Youth with tertiary education were the most affected by unemployment until 2010, later the situation improved a little, but in 2016 more than one-fifth of youth with a university degree is unemployed.

About one-third of the Italian youth is at risk of poverty (Fig.2.8), the trends both for men and women are quite stable, with an increase of about five percentage points from 2009 to 2013.

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

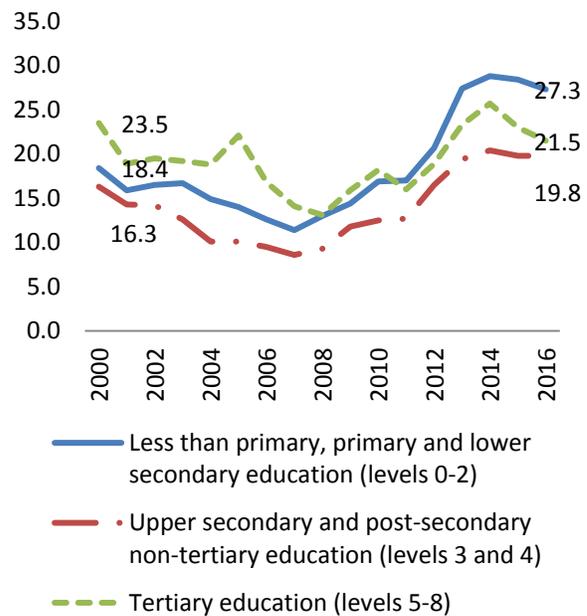
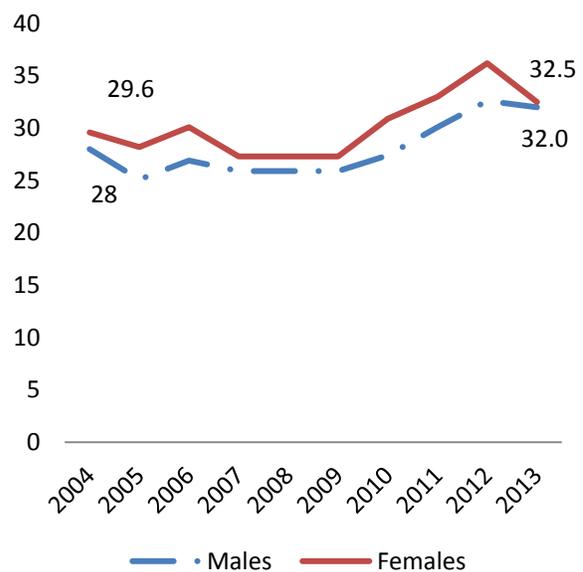
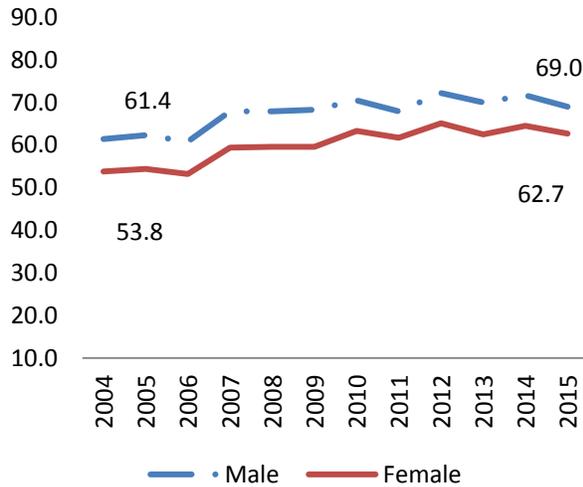


Fig. 2.8 Italian young people's at-risk-of-poverty or exclusion rate by gender (2004-2013)



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 (2004-2015)



According to their self-report (Fig. 2.9), Italian youth, who perceive their health as good or very good, increased from about 57% in 2004 to almost 66% in 2015. However, females reporting this positive feeling are consistently fewer than their male peers.

Young females, between 15 and 19 years old, report higher current depressive symptoms than their male peers and also compared to older females. In 2014, 2,1% of males aged either 20-24 or 25-29, reported current depressive symptoms, significantly more than among females of the same age.

Between 2006 and 2010 the crude death rate per hundred thousand inhabitants (Fig. 2.11) is quite stable, except for a moderate peak for men in 2007-08, and a small decrease over time. In any case, the rate is very much higher for males than for females.

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

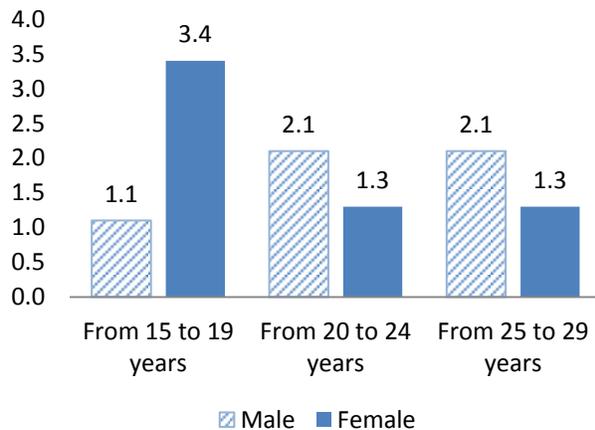
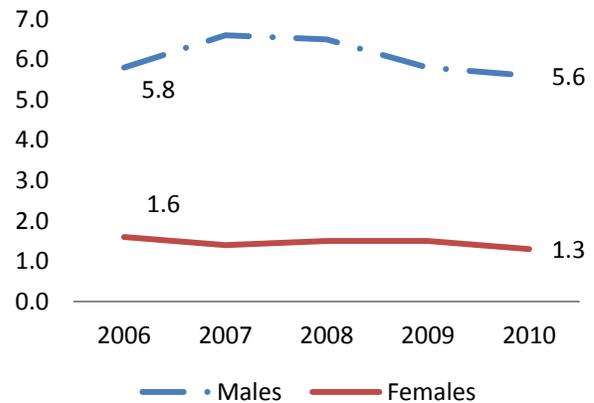
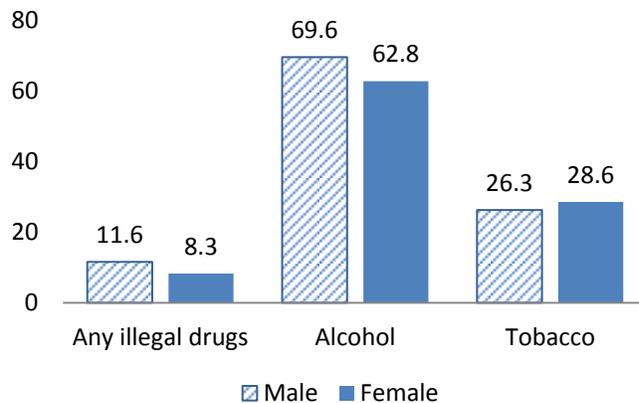


Fig. 2.11 Crude death rate per hundred thousand inhabitants by suicide of young people (2000-2010)



2.4 Use of Substances and Crime

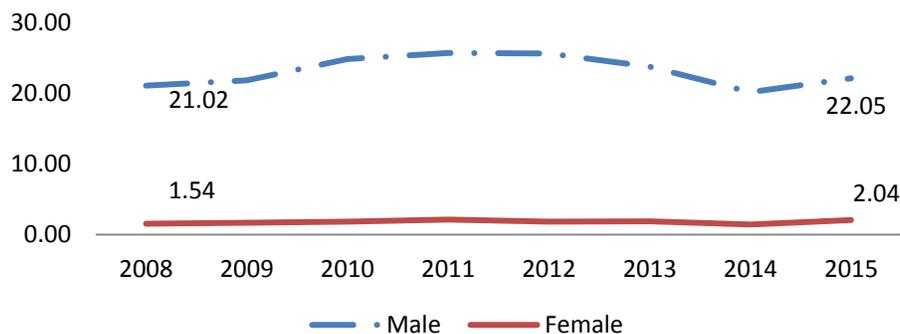
Fig. 2.12 Percentage of aged 15-29 who in the last month used... (2015)



In 2015 (Fig. 2.12) about 66% of the Italian youth admitted to having consumed alcohol in the last month, about 27% of them smoked tobacco, and 10% used illegal drugs. Except for tobacco, which was used more by females, males tend to use these substances more than the females.

Between 2008 and 2015 the number of juvenile prisoners increased (Fig. 2.13). This is much higher for young males than for females (about 20 vs. 1 young prisoners per hundred thousand inhabitants). In the case of young men, the higher peak was in 2011 (25,6).

Fig. 2.13 Juvenile Prisoners Per hundred thousand inhabitants (2008-2015) by gender



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

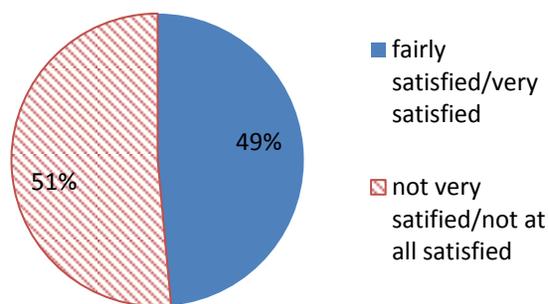
This section aims to provide an overview of the young Italians' perception and evaluation about the current situation in their country and how they feel in such context. Despite the critical evaluation of the Italian context, young people appear quite satisfied with their personal life and tend to be optimistic towards their future, but they are less confident considering the whole general national and European context.

Their relation with authorities is very weak. Together with the feeling that their voice counts neither at the country nor the European level, the Italian young people express deep distrust in political institutions. This is probably because they feel unable to address the effects of the crisis with efficacy, leaving them marginalised.

3.1 Perception of opportunity and constraints

3.1.1 Italian and European situation

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



About half of the young respondents are not satisfied with the way democracy works in Italy, without any differences between girls and boys.

Those that are at that age to have completed their experience with the school system and face the hard transition to the labor market and their adult life appear as the less satisfied. Young people aged 25-29 years old, and the employed, show the highest level of dissatisfaction (Fig.3.2).

Fig. 3.2 Young people not satisfied with democracy in Italy by gender, age, employment status (%)

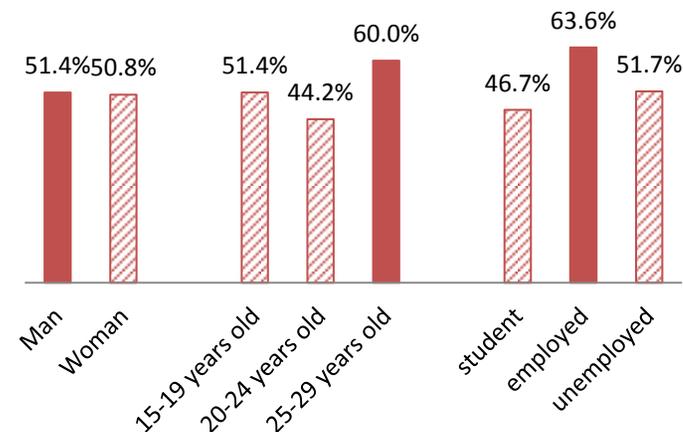


Fig. 3.3 How would you rate the situation of the Italian economy?

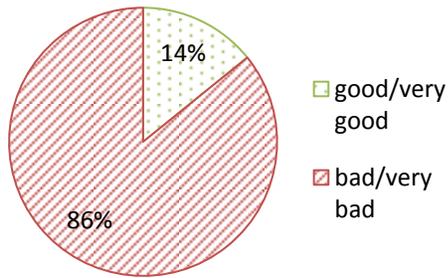


Fig. 3.4 What are your expectations for the next 12 months: the Italian economy will be... (%)

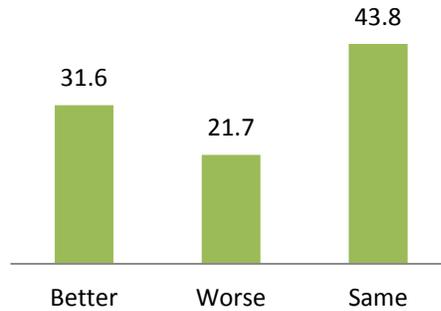
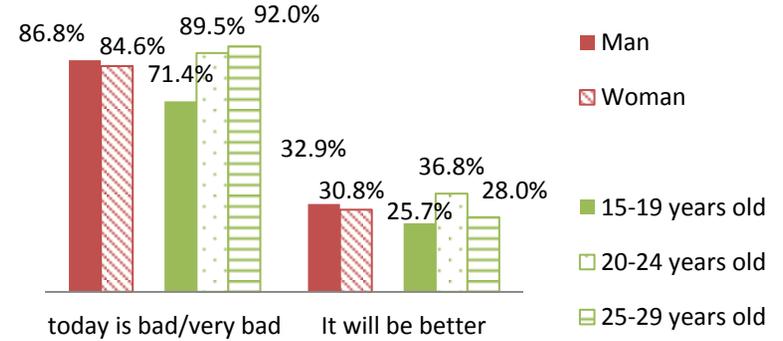


Fig. 3.5 Evaluation on the current Italian economy and expectations for the future by gender and age



In line with the weak situation of the Italian economy (see Fig. 1.1 to 1.5 in section 1 “Standards of living”), 86% of Italian youth rate negatively both the Italian economy (Fig. 3.3) and the employment situation (Fig. 3.6). Although only one-fifth of them expect that things will be worse, more than the 40% think that the situation will not change in the next year (Fig. 3.4, Fig. 3.7). Youth aged 15-19 years old appear the most skeptical about a positive evolution (Fig. 3.5, Fig. 3.8).

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

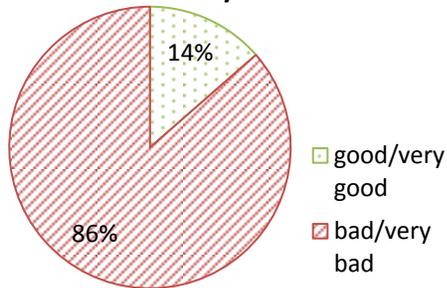


Fig. 3.7 What are your expectations for the next 12 months: the employment situation in Italy will be... (%)

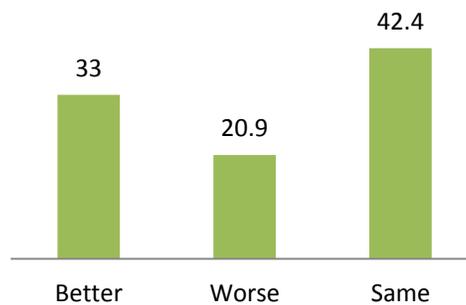


Fig. 3.8 Evaluation on the current Italian employment, and expectations for the future by gender and age

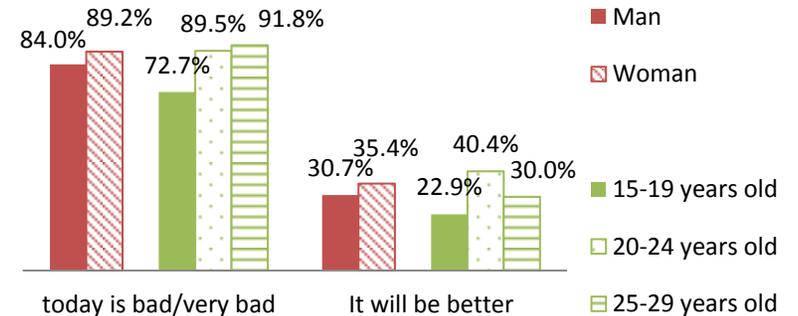
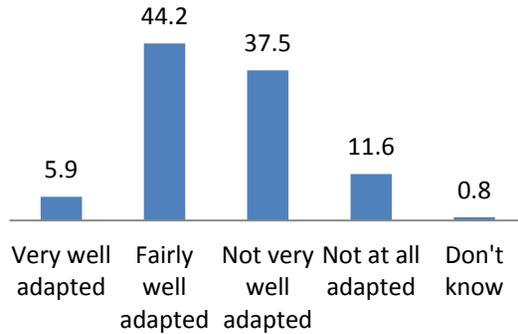


Fig. 3.9 Do you think that in Italy the education system is adapted or not to the current world of work? (%)



While education largely improved in the last decades as discussed in section 2 (see Fig. 2.3 to 2.5), half of the Italian youth are critical of how education prepares them for the world of work. The young people find that training, school, and university are poorly adapted to the real needs of the labour market (Fig.3.9).

The most critical are men, those aged 25-29, and those who live in rural areas (Fig. 3.10)

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

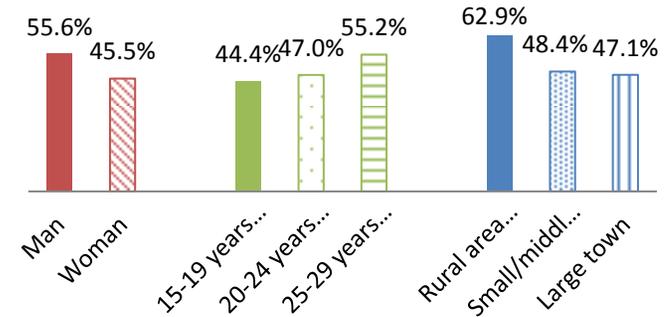
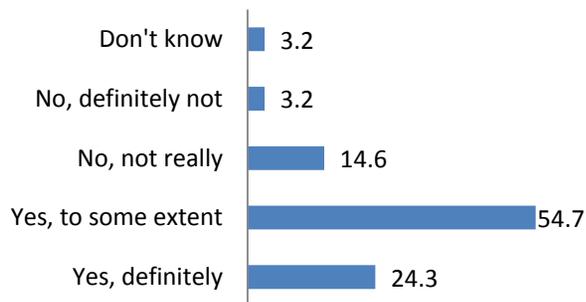


Fig. 3.11 Do you have the feeling that young people have been marginalized by the economic crisis (%)



This feeling of mismatch between their educational profile and the job market opportunities has probably been affected also by the impact of the crisis. Although for about 60% of the respondents the crisis has already reached a peak (Fig. 3.12), for most of the young people (80%) the crisis marginalised youth in Italy, affecting their participation in work and social life (Fig. 3.11). However, those who lives in big cities, those aged 20-24 years old, and women appear to be the most positive about the situation post-crisis (Fig. 3.13).

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

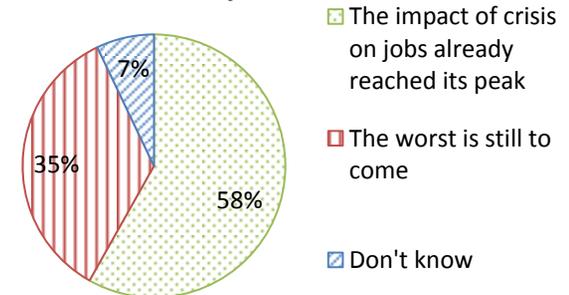


Fig. 3.13 "The impact of crisis on jobs already reached its peak", by age, gender, and place of living

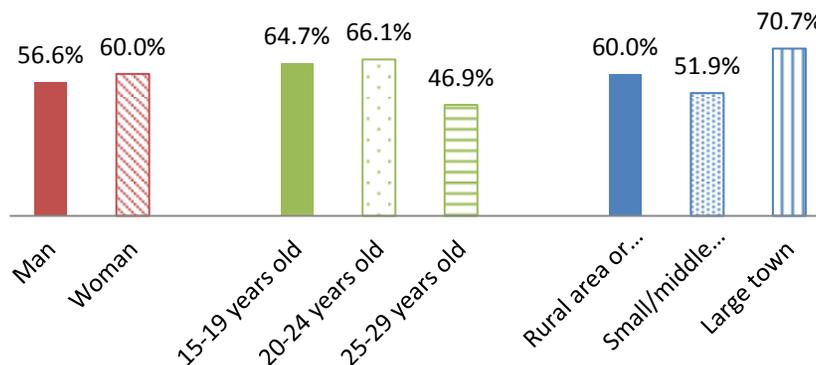
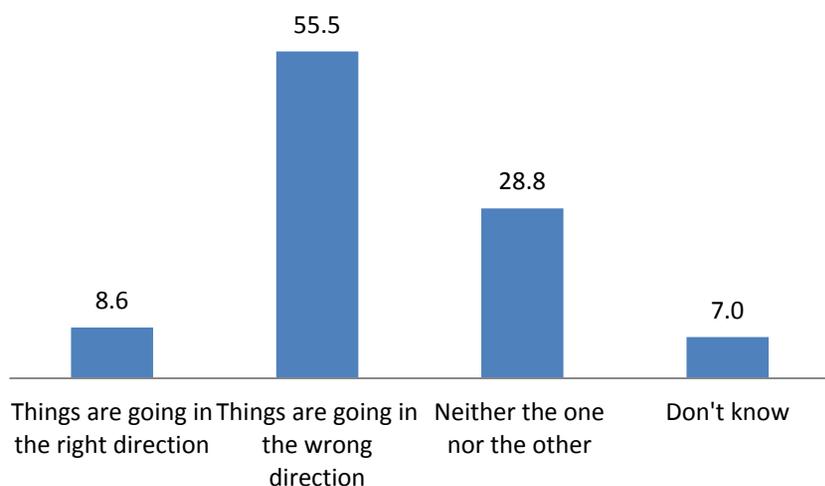


Fig. 3.14 Direction things are going in Italy (%)



When asked to evaluate the direction things are going in Italy and Europe, 7% young people answered “don’t know” in relation to Italy (Fig 3.14), and 12% answered don’t know in relation to Europe (Fig 3.15). Only a small minority feel that things are going in the right direction – 8.6% in relation to Italy and 9.4% for Europe. Whereas the vast majority feel that things are going in the wrong direction – over half, 55.5% in relation to Italy and 41.8% for Europe.

The dissatisfaction with the general national situation and the distrust in those that should rule the country (see next section, Fig.3.31), could help in explaining this feeling, as well as the perceived distance from the institutional level of Europe, together with possible lack of knowledge about it.

However, only a minority (about 9%) think that things are going in the right direction (Fig. 3.14, Fig. 3.15) and only one quarter has positive expectations about the life of the future generation (Fig. 3.16).

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

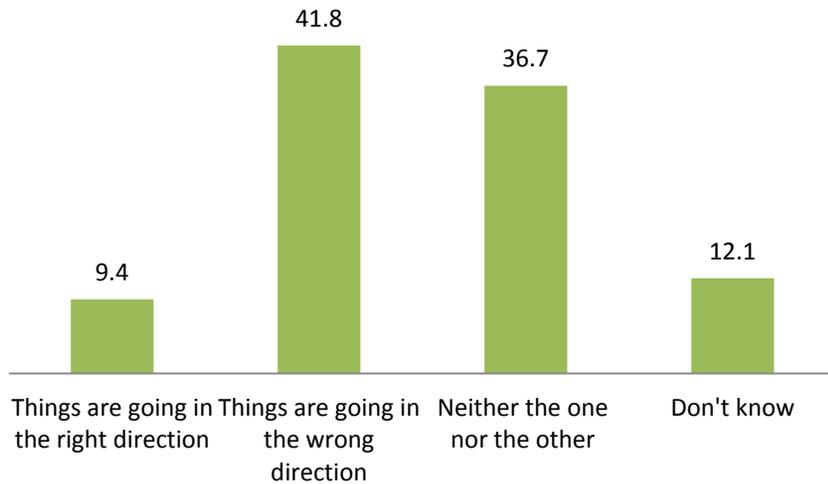
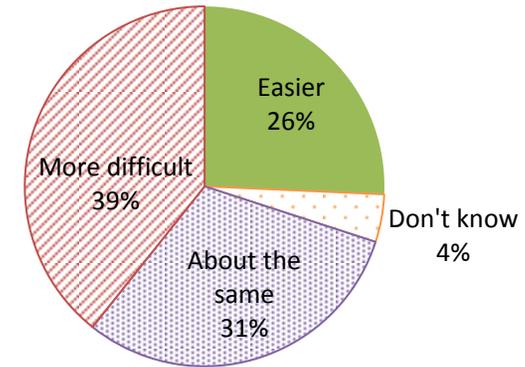
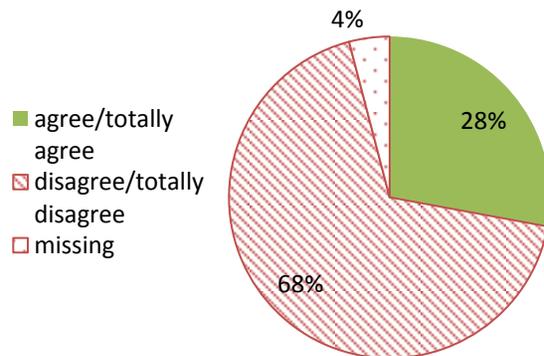


Fig. 3.16 Do you think that life for the next generation in EU will be... (%)



3.1.2 Perceived agency

Fig. 3.17 "My voice counts in Italy"



Young people living in Italy feel that they are not being heard, neither at the national nor the European level (Fig. 3.17, Fig. 3.17a).

About seven out ten young Italians think that their voice doesn't count. This feeling is extremely common regardless of gender, however it tends to be stronger among the youngest and those living in rural areas (Fig. 3.18).

Fig. 3.17a "My voice counts in EU"

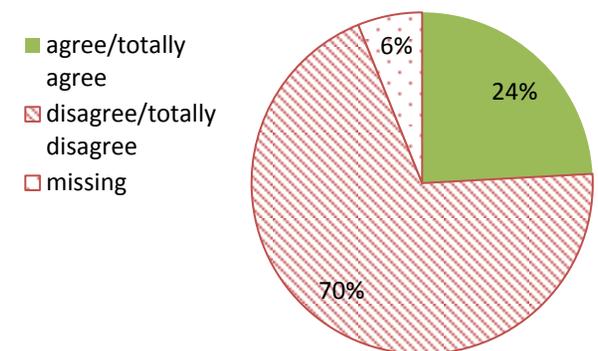
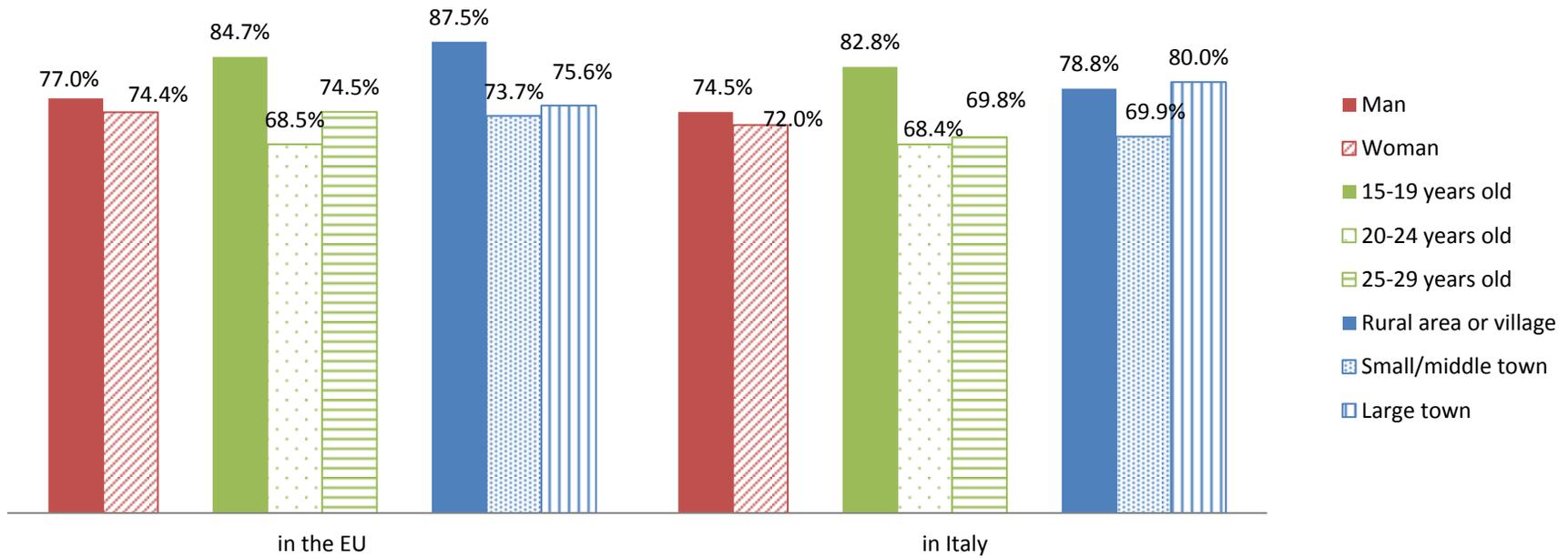
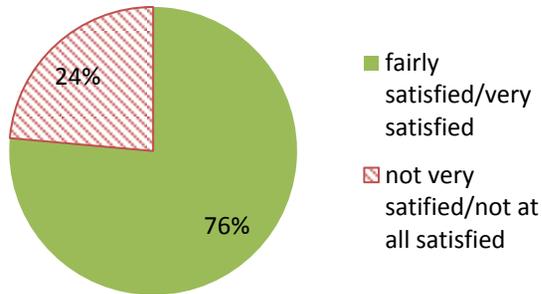


Fig. 3.18 "My voice does not count" by gender, age, place of living



3.1.3 Personal situation

Fig. 3.19 Are you satisfied with your life in general?



Despite the negative evaluation of their country’s situation, most of the Italian youth declare to be satisfied with their life (Fig. 3.19), this is mainly the case for women and young people still in education (Fig. 3.20), while the unemployed display the lowest level of life satisfaction.

Fig. 3.20 Young people satisfied with their life by gender, age, employment status

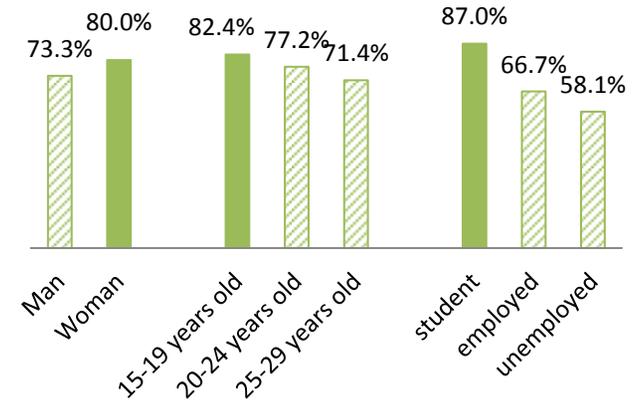
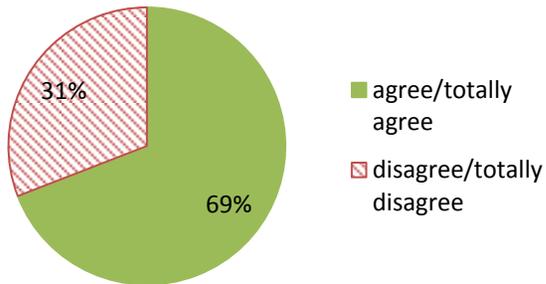


Fig. 3.21 % agreement: "You have confidence in the future"



Seven out ten young Italians are also quite optimistic about the future (Fig. 3.21). Women and youth aged 20-24 years old are the most confident (Fig. 3.22).

Fig. 3.22 Young people who have confidence in the future by gender and age

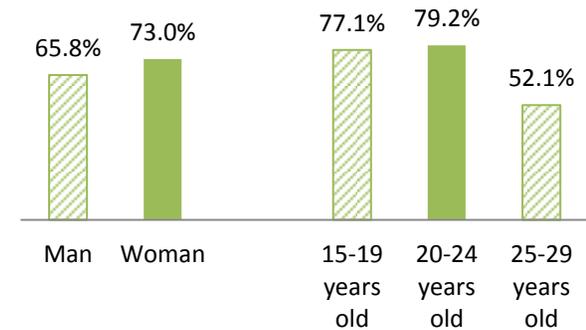


Fig. 3.23 How would you rate your personal job situation?

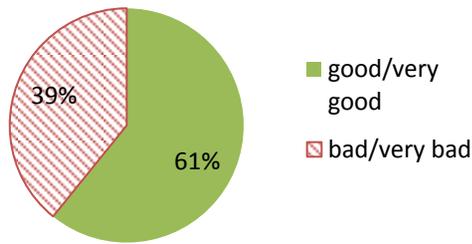


Fig. 3.24 What are your expectations for the next 12 months: your personal job situation will be... (%)

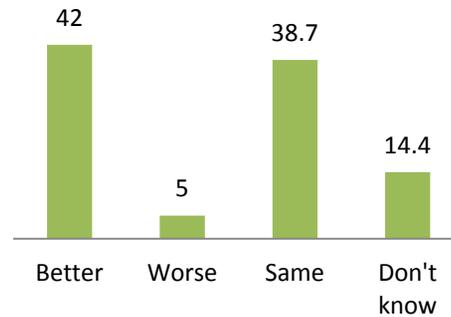
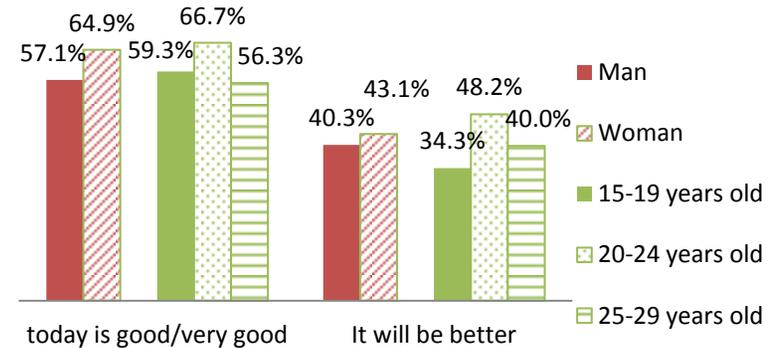


Fig. 3.25 Evaluation on the current personal job situation, and expectations for the future by gender and age



Italian young people seem to rate their personal current situation much better than the national one. Six out ten rate good or very good their personal job situation (Fig. 3.23) and only the 5% have a negative expectation about the future. The most optimistic are women and those aged 20-24 years old. The evaluation of their household's financial situation displays quite similar positive views (Fig. 3.26-3.28).

Fig. 3.26 How would you rate your household financial situation?

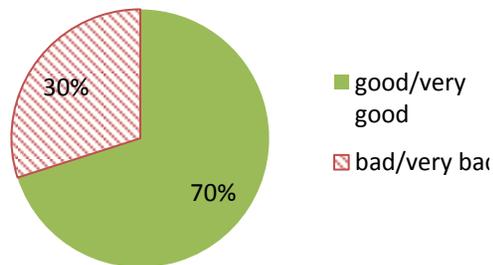


Fig. 3.27 What are your expectations for the next 12 months: the financial situation of your household will be... (%)

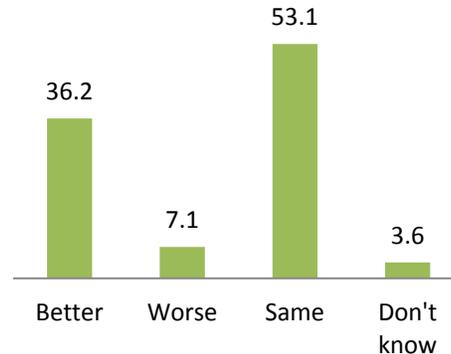
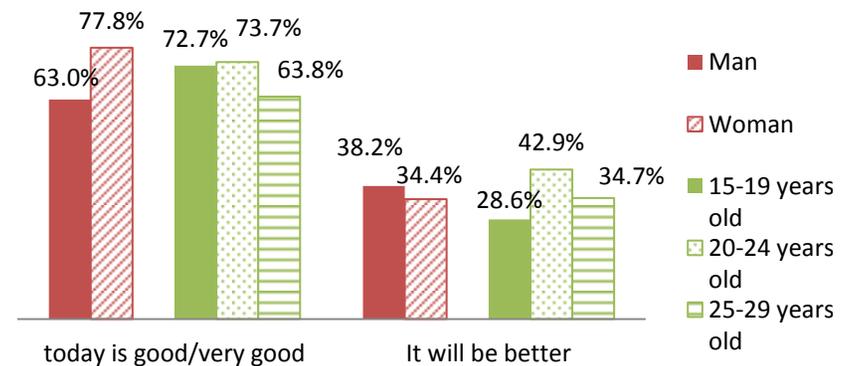


Fig. 3.28 Evaluation on the current household's financial situation, and expectations for the future by gender and age



3.2 Relation with authority

Fig. 3.29 Trust in Law & Order institutions

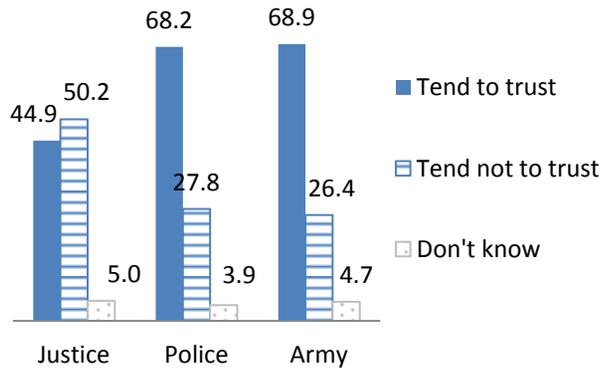
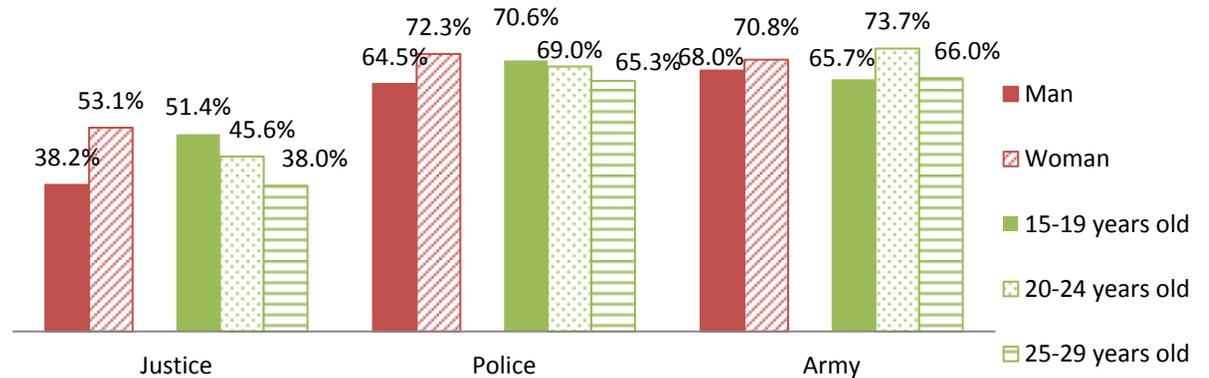


Fig. 3.30 Young people who tend to trust in Law&Order institutions, by gender and age



Most young people express trust in Law and Order institutions (in particular, the Police and the Army) (Fig. 3.29), especially women (Fig. 3.30). But youth manifest also a strong distrust in political institutions, especially in political parties, trusted only by 10% (Fig. 3.31). Women and youth aged 20-24 appear as the most critical (Fig. 3.32). Nevertheless, more than 40% of the youth overall, have trust in the EU.

Fig. 3.31 Trust in political institutions

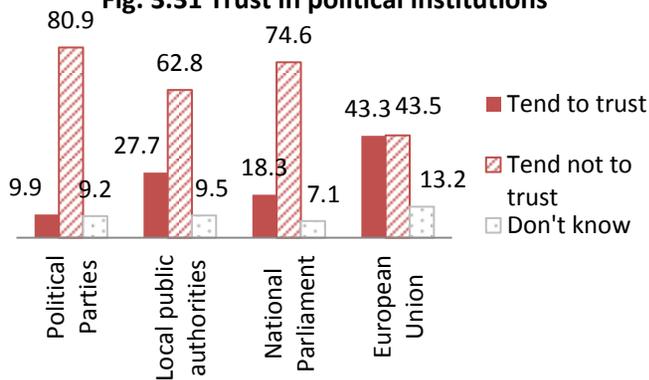
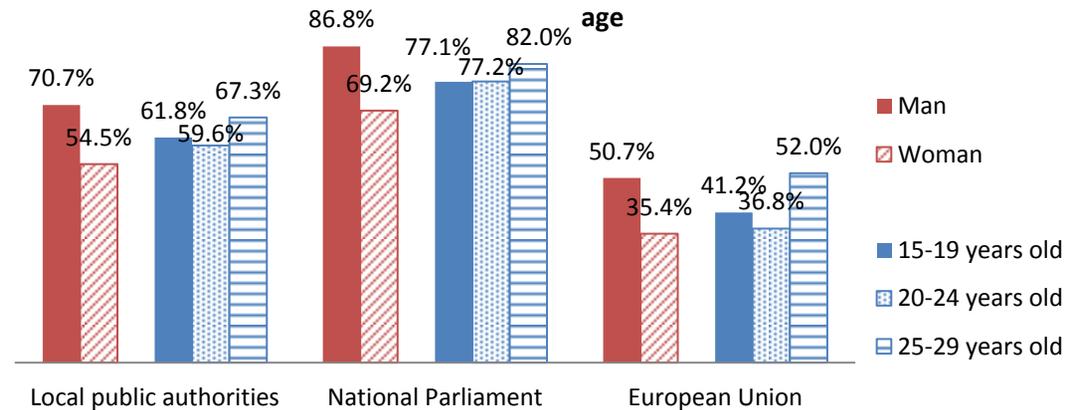


Fig. 3.32 Young people who NOT trust political institutions by gender, age



3.3 Opinion on social issues

Fig. 3.33 Percentage of agreement on statements regarding migration

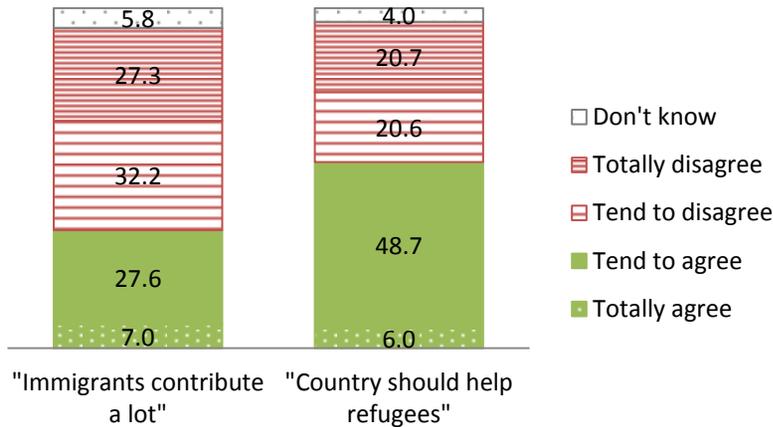
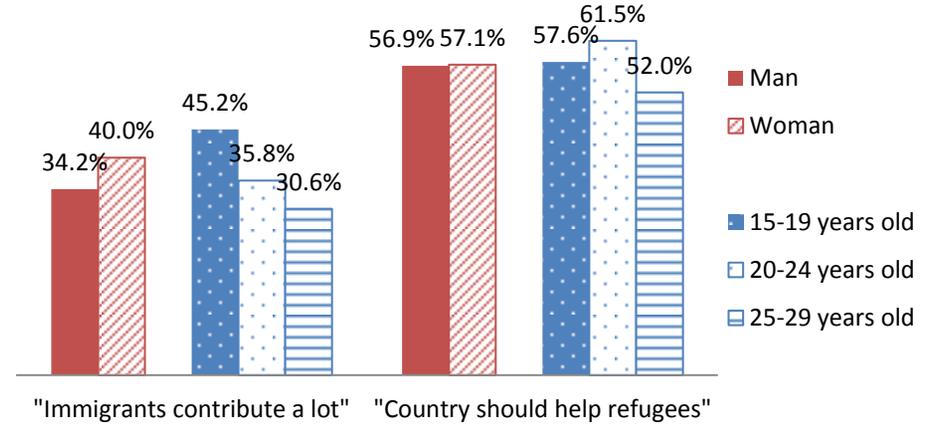


Fig. 3.34 Young people who agree with these statements by gender and age



As a probable reflection of the migration crisis that affected Italy, with the very poor resources (in conjunction with the economic crisis) and the lack of support from the international community, about six out ten young people think that immigrants don't positively contribute to Italy (Fig. 3.33). This feeling is mainly shared by men and the oldest group. On the other hand, about 55% of the respondents believe that the country should help refugees.

Talking about the EU H2020 goals related to the environment, about 14% think they are too modest, and a large share of the Italian youth (about 59%) support these goals, revealing a concern for environmental issues.

Fig. 3.35 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 Italy. We adopt the concept of social and political engagement as defined in D4.1, including aspects of civic engagement, formal political participation, activism, and everyday engagement. In most of the cases, the questions are regarding which forms of participation do 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 (%)

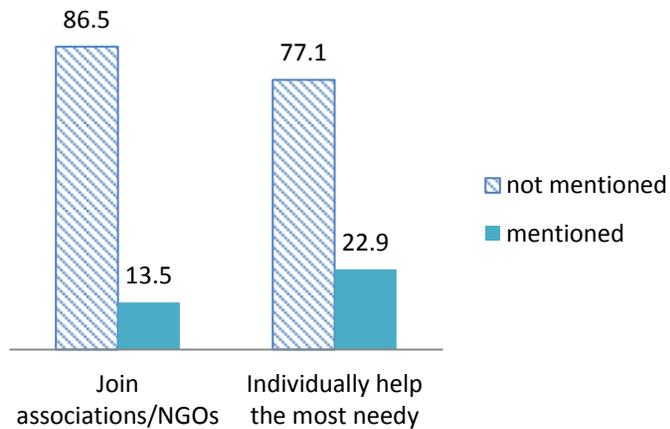
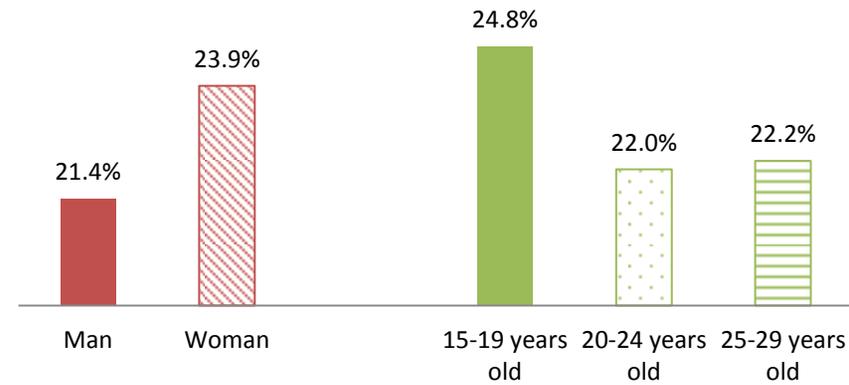


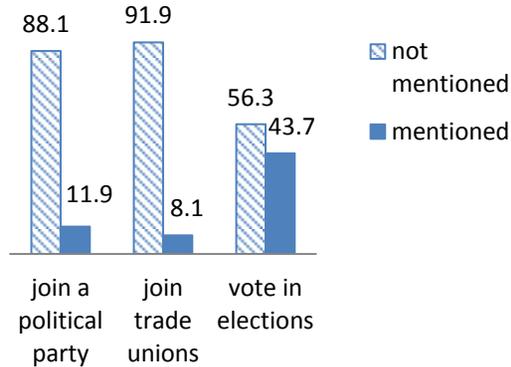
Fig. 4.2 Young people who says that individual help of the most needy is one of the best way of participation by gender and age



Civic engagement as participation in civic society organisations is not particularly popular among Italian youth (see also D4.1). When asked about the best ways to participate in the public life of the EU, membership in such organisation is selected only by 13% of the sample (Fig. 4.1). Instead of joining formal organisations, young people seems convinced that the individual action of helping the most needy can be more effective. This is particularly true for women and the youngest age-group (Fig. 4.2). (Regarding the option of joining civic society organisation, the small sample size do not allow to break down in categories).

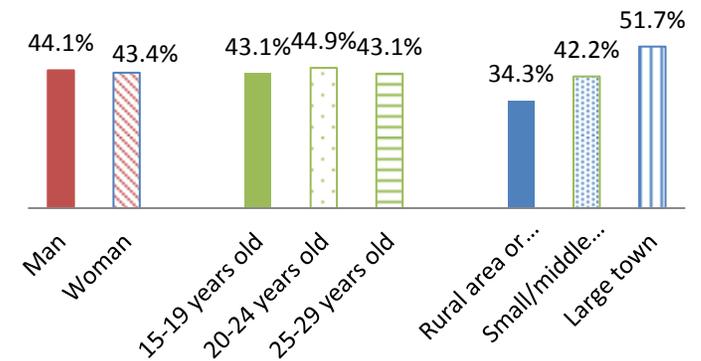
4.2 Formal political participation

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



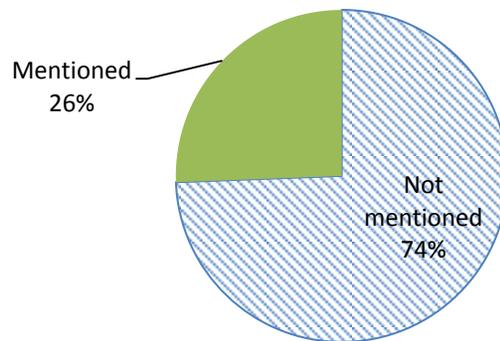
Joining a political party or a trade union is not considered a good way to be active in the public life in Europe (Fig. 4.3). This does not come as a surprise, considering the very low trust in political institutions (Fig. 3.31) and the general idea that formal politics was not able to provide adequate responses to the crisis. However, more than four out ten young Italians think that voting is still one of the best ways of participating, regardless of age and gender. Compared to youth who live in rural areas and small town, this opinion is stronger among those living in big cities (Fig.4.4)

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



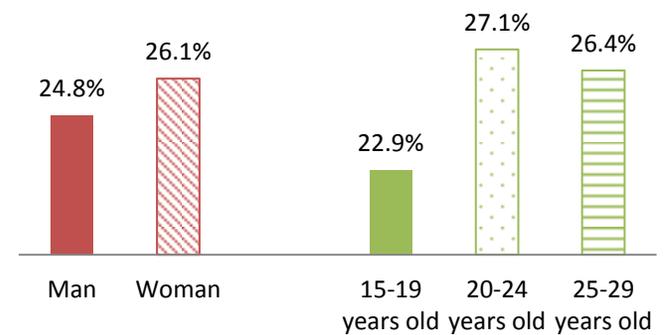
4.3 Activism

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



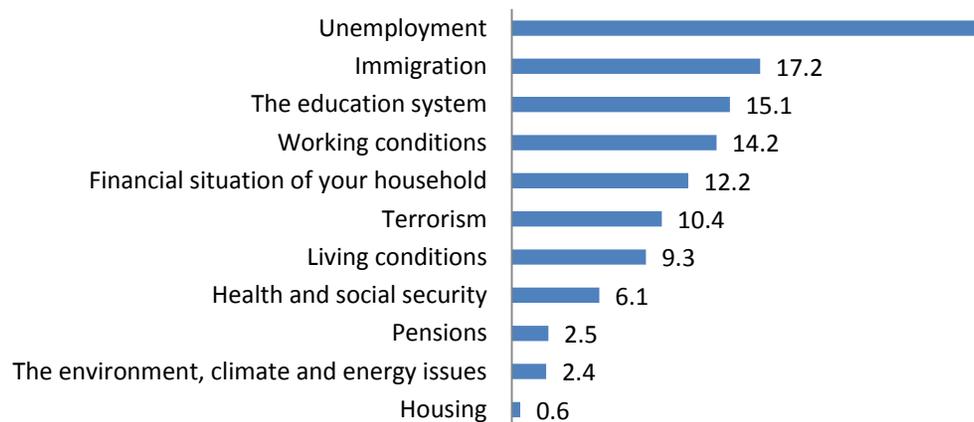
One-fifth of the young respondents recognise the participation in demonstrations as one of the best ways to make young people's voices heard (Fig. 4.5). This belief is quite widespread among the young population, with relatively small differences by gender and age: only the youngest opted a bit less for this type of political action (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]



The most urgent issue for about one-third of young Italians is unemployment (Fig. 4.7). This is more than understandable, considering the high level of youth unemployment and the lack of adequate resources. Also migration, which already emerged as a potential issue in Fig.3.33, is confirmed as one of the most important issues that young people are directly facing.

Other aspects, like Pensions, Environment, and Housing, apparently are less urgent topics for young people living in Italy.

Although young people did not indicate environmental protection and the climate change among the most important issues in their personal life (Fig.4.7), most of them show a good level of awareness about environmental issues, as shown by their pro-activity in this respect (Fig.4.8). More than half of the young respondents sort waste, and more than one third undertook, in their daily life, pro-environmental routines that include reducing disposable items, reducing the use of water and energy, and buying local products (Fig. 4.8).

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

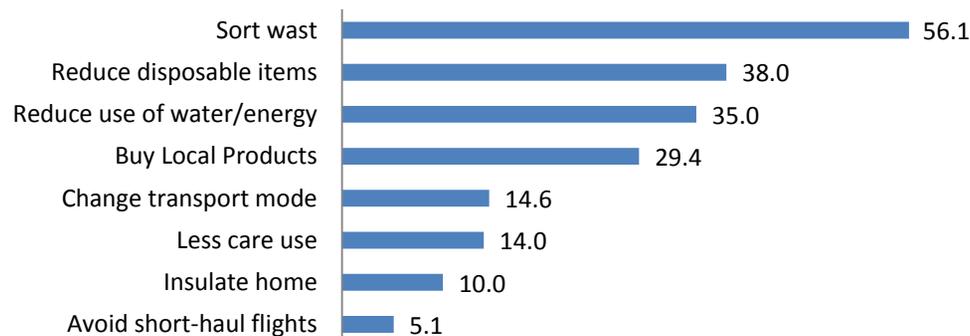


Fig. 4.9 Engagement in environmental-friendly actions

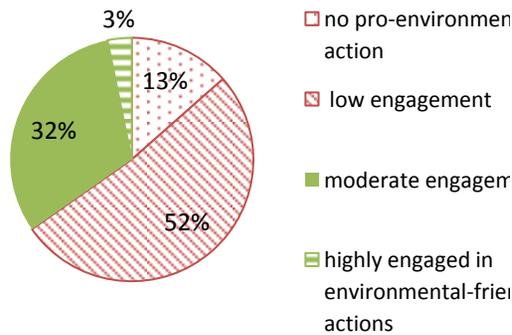
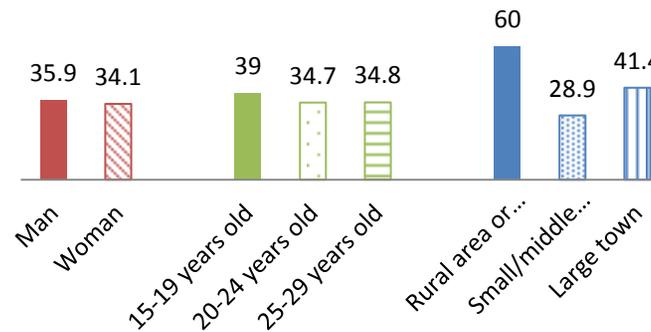


Fig. 4.10 Moderate/high pro-environmental engagement by gender, age, place of living (%)



Considering the number of their environment-friendly actions, we can consider different levels of young people’s engagement in this dimension of participation (Fig. 4.9). About one out two show a low engagement (1 or 2 actions), one out three show a moderate engagement (3-5 actions), and a few (13%) indicate high engagement (6-8 actions). The group of those who display moderate/high engagement does not show differences by gender or age, but adopting this lifestyle seems to be easier for those who live in the rural areas, followed by those living in big cities (Fig. 4.10).

In line with the results reported in D4.1, it seems that young people prefer to put distance between them and everything that explicitly refers to the traditional politics. Even if they affirm concern about social issues affecting their personal life (Fig. 4.7), or feel marginalised by the crisis (Fig. 3.11) and rate as ‘quite bad’ the situation in Italy (see section 3.1), they do not talk much about politics (Fig. 4.11). Only a minority often discuss such matters, less than half do it only occasionally, and the others never talk about politics, regardless if the matters concern the local, national or European levels.

Among the young people who often discuss politics (Fig. 4.12), men and those aged 20-24 appear as the most involved in such talks on local and national matters, while the oldest group are most involved in discussing European matters.

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

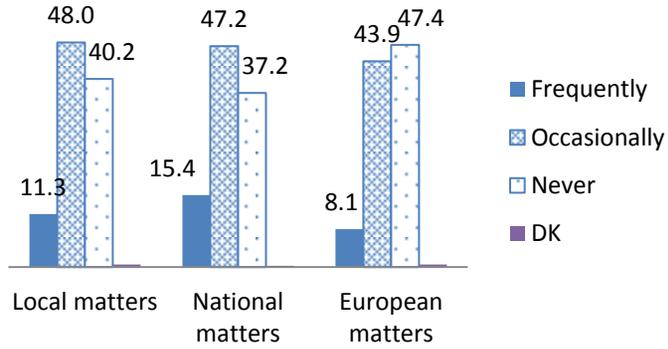
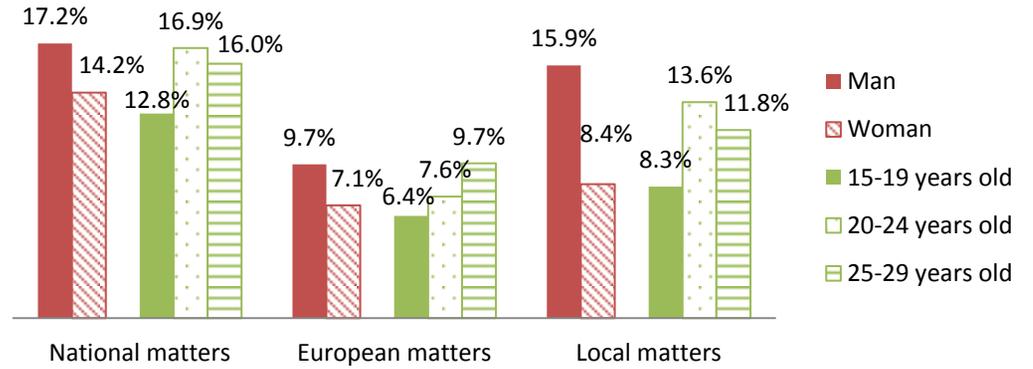


Fig. 4.12 Youth who often discusses political matters by gender and age



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