Job 38497

European survey gathering the opinions of young people on perception of democratic participation and EU Values Report of the results of a survey in Austria, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia

15 March 2023





Methodology

The following report contains the results of the survey conducted by SWG in Austria, Greece, Italy, Hungary and Slovenia. SWG gathered 5 independent representative samples consisting of 500 interviews for each country (totalling 2500 interviews), stratified by geographical area and distributed according to gender and age quotas. Sample units were individuals with age ranging from 15 to 35 years old with residence in the named country. Interviews were gathered online availing of CAWI methodology (Computer Assisted Web Interview) between the 16th and the 28th of February 2023.

Data have been weighted with Random Iterative Method according to the cross distribution of NUTS1 region X age categories X gender and the cross distribution of Country X age categories X Educational level attained (considering individuals having attained an educational level ranging from 5 to 8 in the ISCED coding scheme). Data regarding the total sample are calculated applying the same weight to each country to prevent underrepresentation of smaller countries in the estimates. The statistical margin of error is +/- 4,4% at a 95% confidence level for each country sample.

Au	Austria Greece —		reece		ltaly			Hu	ngary	1	Slovenia		
Ge	nder	Ge	Gender		Gender			Gender			Ger	der	
Male	51	Male	52		Male	51		Male	51		Male	53	
Female	48	Female	48		Female	48		Female	48		Female	47	
Non binary	1	Non binary	0		Non binary	1		Non binary	1		Non binary	0	
A	sge		Age		Age			А	ge		Age		
15-19	20	15-19	24		15-19	24		15-19	22		15-19	21	
20-24	24	20-24	25		20-24	24		20-24	23		20-24	23	
25-35	56	25-35	51		25-35	52		25-35	55		25-35	56	
NUTS1	L Region	NUTS	1 Region		NUTS1 Region			NUTS1 Region			NUTS2	Region	
AT1	45	EL1	39		ITC	30		HU1	31		SI03	50	
AT2	19	EL2	13		ITH	15		HU2	29		SI04	50	
AT3	36	EL3	28		ITI	19		HU3	40				
		EL4	20		ITF	24							
					ITG	12							





Sample description

	Austria	Greece	Italy	Hungary	Slovenia
Educational level					
ISCED 0-4	70	72	81	79	70
ISCED 5-8	30	28	19 💻	21	30
Professional status					
Student	23	38	43	21	27
Employed	66	48	44	60	58
Other	11 🗖	14 🗖	13 🗖	19 💶	15
Self reported income					
High	65	40	48	41	57
Medium	20	38	37	38	31
Low	15 💻	22	15 💻	21	12
Political orientation					
Far Left	15 🗖	10	20	9 🗖	10
Left	22	19	26	12	16
Center	39	45	28	51	53
Right	16 💻	17 💻	15 🗖	18	15
Far Right	8 🗖	9 🗖	11	10	6 🗖





Key research numbers

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Summary

The research presented in the following pages outlines a portrait of an upcoming generation of citizens characterized by a strong connection to the European Union and its political establishment but also mixed feelings in regard to the political involvement toward this institution. This is underlined by the EU gathering the higher level of institutional trust and a strong perception of the union taking care of young people needs, but a relatively lower interest in engaging themselves in political decisions taken at the European level, in comparison with national and local level.

This is not paradoxical as soon as we account for the causes driving low interest in direct participation in decisions, where "*My participation does not change things*" gathers the highest number of citations across all countries, underlining a perceived dilution of one's own vote in such a "big" institution. Conversely in fact, interest toward directly partaking in decision reaches the highest level when considering decisions taken at the local level, where 62% of the interviewees would be interested in actively having a role. These feelings need to be understood in a context in which while the majority of the interviewees feel that there are occasions for being listened by policy makers, only a minority feels that their instances are taken into account.

These considerations are drawn at a general level, however, countries differences are very broad, an example is given by Austrians, where institutional trust is higher at all levels and the level of social and political engagement is the highest among their peers in other countries. Conversely, Italians display a lower level of trust for their own institutions and complain more about the lack of occasions for being listened by policy makers. Also Hungarians show lower trust in their own state but that is paired with quite a good relation with EU, and while they complain about the lack of participation opportunities, this is directed mostly toward local institutions. Slovenians are more negative toward EU, less socially involved and less interested to participate to decisions. Greeks are more critics towards their state and EU but at the same time are among the most inclined to social and political participation. On this side, they are the ones with the stronger perception of being able to become policymakers themselves.

Among the other countries, it prevails a perceived difficulty of undertaking such path. However, the majority of interviewees are conscious that politics does have a relevant impact on their lives and while Slovenians are less convinced about that, Greeks and Hungarians strongly perceive the impact of European politics. Young individuals show to believe in European politics and most of them feel like they're represented by EU establishment (albeit the feeling toward MEPS is not as positive, especially among Italians). The general perception is that there is indeed a connection with the European institutions and that activism can have a direct impact on decisions.

Moving to priorities of young individuals, differences among countries are very broad, but are all associated by a strong concern toward the theme of climate change, which is in the top 3 of all countries. In this regard, approximately two third of the respondents indicate that they are indeed worried about climate change, a feeling shared with higher intensity by women and left leaning individuals. Responsibilities toward climate changes are mostly given to institutions, and individuals role is considered less important. Regardless of responsibilities, living sustainably is considered a priority, but is not deemed as sustainable among most of the interviewees, especially among Greeks and Slovenians. The gap in perceptions is however very high, and while Italians are the ones attributing the higher level of responsibilities to citizens and indicating sustainable living as a priority, they are also the ones performing the lowest level of actions aiming at preventing damage to the environment.





1.

Youth perception of democratic participation at the EU Level





Trust in institutions

Trust is higher when regarding local institutions and the EU, compared to National institutions. Austrians display the highest levels of trust toward all institutions, Greeks instead, display lower levels, especially in regard to their own state.



Trust in institutions - detail

Trust is higher among younger individuals and interviewees with a higher self reported income. Political orientation heavily shapes trust in institutions, leading individuals on the right side of the spectrum to have higher levels of trust toward their own state (all countries except Slovenia are governed by centre right coalitions), while left wing individuals have higher trust toward European institutions.

How much do you trust...

TOTAL			Age		Professional condition				Self reported Income			Political orientation				
% Very Much + Someh	ow	15-19	20-24	25-35	Student	Employed	Other	High	Medium	Low	Far Left	Left	Center	Right	Far right	
Your municipal government	49	54	52	45	50	50	41	56	44	37	46	48	47	53	53	
The [nation] state	38	43	43	34	40	39	31	49	28	28	35	37	36	46	43	
The European Union	52	59	59	46	61	50	44	60	46	41	58	58	52	49	42	



Social and political involvement

Signing a petition and sharing content on social networks have the highest rate of engagement overall. However, country differences are very broad, with Italy and Slovenia showing a weaker involvement in most of the activities.



Involvement index

Overall the young Austrians and Greeks show to be socially and politically more active. The Hungarian case is peculiar as it displays a quota of interviewees with low involvement comparable to the Slovenian case, but a quota of individuals with high involvement higher than Italy and Slovenia.

In order to condense the degree of social and political involvement across countries considered an **involvement index** was computed. The score of each respondent was calculated considering actions performed in question: "During the last twelve months, have you?". Individuals values were assigned to each respondent based on the score given to each action performed, which were 0 if the action was not performed at all, 1 if the action was performed 1-3 times and 2 if the action was performed more than 3 times. Additionally, each action was weighted differently base on the effort one had to put to perform it, in order to give a higher value to actions which required the respondent to act physically and could not be done online or trough social media. The index was subsequently transformed in a scale from 1 to 10. Values below 1 were considered as low involvement, values between 2 and 5 were considered as medium involvement and values above 5 were considered as high involvement.



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Perception of political representation at different institutional levels

Young individuals feel a higher degree of representation at the European level, while national institutions are even below the local ones. One respondent out of three (with a peak of 42% in Greece) perceives a mismatch between his own expectations and politicians decisions. In Italy the feelings of representation are way below the level of the other countries.



Strongly agree Agree Tend to agree Don't know Tend to disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

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Interest toward forms of direct democracy

More than half of the respondents are interested in personally partaking in political decisions, with the exception of Slovenians. Italians and Greeks show a stronger enthusiasm. The propensity to participate to decisions is similar for the different institutional levels, but slightly stronger for the local dimension.

Would you be personally interested in taking part in initiatives where you can participate in the decisions, express your opinion and vote on the final decision?





% of answers INTERESTED



Interest toward forms of direct democracy - detail

Interest in direct forms of democracy is higher among individuals with an advanced level of education and among young individuals identifying themselves with the far left. When considering far right individuals interest is higher than average only when taking into account local politics.

Would you be personally interested in taking part in initiatives where you can participate in the decisions, express your opinion and vote on the final decision?

TOTAL	Ge	nder	Education (ISCED)		Political orientation						
% Very Much interested + Somehow inte	Men	Female	0-4	5-8	Far Left	Left	Center	Right	Far right		
Political decision taken at local level	62	65	59	60	68	73	64	55	65	70	
Political decisions taken at the national level	60	62	57	58	65	71	60	56	61	61	
Political decisions taken in the European Union	57	59	55	55	62	64	62	53	56	59	







Themes sparking interest toward partaking in decision

Priorities strongly vary by country, with Education being the most important theme in Austria, Greece and Hungary, while Pollution and environment are the most relevant in Italy. Slovenian young citizens tend to be interested mostly about employment.





Causes dampening interest in taking part in decisions

The general perception among who is not attracted by participation is that a direct effort will not directly change things. Differently from their peers, Greeks indicate as the toughest obstacle the lack of information on the functioning of institutions. Slovenians indicate as the third most important reason the lack of influence of politics on their life.







Occasions of communication with policy makers

The overall feeling is that there are more occasions to be listened by European policy makers rather than National or Local ones and that young people's instances are taken into account rarely, more often at the local or the European levels.



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2.

Youth needs and expectations on civic and democratic life in Europe





Opportunities for becoming a policy maker

Perceived chances for becoming a policy maker are relatively low, with the exception of Austria and Greece, where it exceeds 40%.

Do you feel like you would have enough opportunities to become a policy maker if you wanted to?





YOU



Opportunities for becoming a policy maker - detail

Higher perceived opportunities among men and more educated individuals. Among people without a degree and women approximately ¼ believes that they have no chance at all to become a policy maker.

Do you feel like you would have enough opportunities to become a policy maker if you wanted to?

то	TAL	Ger	nder	Education (ISCED)			
		Men	Female	0-4	5-8		
Not at all	23	19	27	24	18		
Very few	31	31	32	31	31		
SUM Not at all + very few	54	50	59	55	49		
Some	26	31	21	25	31		
Enough	11	12	9	10	13		
SUM Some + Enough	37	43	30	35	44		
I don't know	9	7	11	10	7		



Impact of political decisions on personal life

The impact of decision taken at the European level is perceived as consistently lower than the one of national and local decisions across all countries. Perceived impact of European decisions reaches the highest level in Greece and Hungary.



Impact of political decisions on personal life – detail

Perception of impact of political decisions is higher among left wing individuals and the higher educated at all levels. Right wing individuals feel a weaker impact, especially for decision coming from the European Union.

In your opinion, how much do political decisions impact on your personal life when taken at the...

TOTAL				cation CED)		Political orientation					
% Very Much interested + S	omehow interested		0-4	5-8	Far Left	Left	Center	Right	Far right		
Delitical desision taken at least layed	Very Much + Somehow	59	57	65	67	64	54	58	61		
Political decision taken at local level	Not Much + not at all	35	37	31	29	30	40	36	34		
Political decisions taken at the national level	Very Much + Somehow	63	60	69	72	68	60	57	60		
Political decisions taken at the national level	Not Much + not at all	32	34	28	25	26	34	38	35		
Delitical desiries taken in the European Union	Very Much + Somehow	53	52	58	60	59	53	48	47		
Political decisions taken in the European Union	Not Much + not at all	40	40	38	34	35	39	46	46		



Representation and accountability at European level

The majority of the respondents has a positive perception of the representation regarding European institutions, with the exception of Italians. In Greece, Slovenia and Italy the feelings about the link with MEPs are particularly weak. In general, the gap of perceived representation between countries is very consistent, separating Austria from Italy of more than 20 points.





3.

Opinions about climate change and public authorities policy action





Concerns among young people

The most serious problem is considered to be poverty and hunger. In general, climate change is indicated as the second most serious problem together with the economic situation and unemployment, however only Austrians and Italians put it in the top two of the priorities. In Hungary it only reaches the fifth place.







Concerns among young people – comparison with the 2020 PAN-EUROPEAN SURVEY

The perceived relevance of the different themes is tightly related to the timeframe of the survey. In 2023 concerns regarding the spread of infectious diseases loses importance, while the fear of armed conflicts is on the rise. The importance attributed to climate change declines heavily in Austria and Hungary.

which of the johowing do you consider to be the mo	Aust		Gree		, Ita	'	Hung	ary	Slover	nia
			12						Ö	
Poverty and hunger	43 🕇	39	65 🕇	51	38 🕇	30	42	39	55 👔	40
Climate change and issues like drought, floods and fires	41 🖡	55	38	37	49	47	28 🖡	40	31	36
The economic situation and unemployment	22	20	53	52	45	45	35 🕇	29	31	30
Environmental degradation	38 🖡	44	28	31	32 🖡	49	31 🖡	43	39 🖡	51
Armed conflicts	31 🚺	18	23 🕇	17	39 🕇	10	33 🕇	13	25 🕇	9
Lack of drinking water	16 🚺	11	18 🕇	10	13 🕇	7	25 🕇	16	28 🖠	14
Large-scale migration	21 🚺	16	19	22	14	11	15	14	18	18
Terrorism	21 🖡	35	17	18	7 🖡	20	18 🖡	28	18	22
The increasing global population	16	15	12 🕇	7	13 🕇	9	23 🕇	18	17	15
Spread of infectious diseases	9 🖡	25	9 🖡	27	9 🖡	52	20 🖡	29	14 🖡	33
Other	2	3	0	1	2	8	0	1	2	2
None	1	0	1	0	2	6	1	1	0	1
l don't know	3	0	1	0	3	0	3	0	3	0

Which of the following do you consider to be the most serious problems facing the world as a whole? (3 answers possible)

Values from 2023 survey

Values from 2020 Pan-European survey



Concerns among young people - detail

Women and students, together with left leaning individuals, give higher importance to the climate change issues. These same profiles give higher importance also to environmental degradation.

Which of the following do you consider to be the most serious problems facing the world as a whole? (3 answers possible)

TOTAL		Gei	nder	Profe	ssional cond	dition	Political orientation					
TOTAL		Men	Female	Student	Employed	Other	Far Left	Left	Center	Right	Far right	
Poverty and hunger	48	44	53	49	47	52	46	48	53	43	40	
Climate change and issues like drought, floods and fires	37	33	42	45	34	34	48	50	34	30	26	
The economic situation and unemployment	37	35	39	38	36	39	33	34	41	38	32	
Environmental degradation	34	30	37	41	31	30	43	38	34	24	28	
Armed conflicts	30	30	30	33	31	21	32	33	28	33	27	
Lack of drinking water	20	21	18	20	20	19	21	15	21	22	21	
Large-scale migration	18	21	14	15	20	13	9	14	16	25	33	
Terrorism	16	16	16	13	18	17		11	17	19	24	
The increasing global population	16	19	13	18	15	15	16	18	15	18	14	
Spread of infectious diseases	12	13	12	9	13	15	8	9	14	12	17	
Other	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	
None	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	
l dont't know	2	2	3	2	2	6	2	3	3	2	2	



Concerns regarding climate change

With the exception of Hungary and Slovenia, more than 2/3 of respondents feel extremely or very worried about climate change.

How worried, if at all, are you about climate change?



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Concerns regarding climate change - detail

The level of concern is generally higher among women and left leaning individuals. Among far right individual only half of the interviewees declare themselves as worried.

How worried, if at all, are you about climate change?

TOTAL		Gei	nder	Age			Political orientation					
TOTAL		Men	Female	15-19	20-24	25-35	Far Left	Left	Center	Right	Far right	
Extremely worried	27	22	31	27	25	27	45	28	24	20	18	
Very worried	40	37	43	35	42	41	31	52	39	39	32	
Sum Exteremely + very worried	67	59	74	62	67	68	76	80	63	59	50	
Not very worried	25	30	20	26	25	25	13	15	29	33	33	
Not at all worried	4	6	2	6	4	3	7	2	3	4	12	
Sum Not very + not at all worried	29	36	22	32	29	28	20	17	32	37	45	
I don't know	4	5	4	6	4	4	4	3	5	4	5	



Approaches toward sustainable living

Only in Italy a sustainable way of living is a priority for the majority of the individuals, at the same time however, acting this way is considered not practical. Same goes in all the countries considered.



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Don't know ■ Tend to disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

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Responsabilities in preventing climate change

The level of responsibility attributed to citizens is high but consistently lower than the one attributed to private companies and governments. Allocation of responsibilities is not equally distributed among actors within countries, with Slovenia generally attributing less responsibilities to everybody and Hungary indicating high responsibilities to all actors.



Institutional prevention of companies impact on climate change

Government actions are not deemed enough when considering containing the climate impact of private companies. The effort is considered especially low in the case of Italy.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Institutions/governments are doing enough to force companies to reduce their climate impact



SWG

world

YOU

Sustainability of individuals behaviour

Preventing the waste of resources and recycling are the most common practices, also buying products free of packaging and using environmentally friendly transportation are common choices. The least common saving practices involve saving in technological products and the purchase of second hand clothes. % of answers Always + Very frequently + Frequently



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Sustainability of individuals behaviour – comparison with the 2020 PAN-EUROPEAN SURVEY

The most relevant and consistent change regards purchasing behaviour, with rising consciousness in regard to fast fashion and clothing, but also the impact of fair trade products.

	Austr	ia	Gree	се	Italy	/	Hung	ary	Sloven	ia
			12 12						•	
-	75 🖡	80	74 🖡	79	72 🖡	80	75 🖡	83	78	81
5	76 🖡	89	71 🕇	64	72 🖡	87	69 🖡	75	82 🖡	91
:	62 🖠	59	64 🖡	73	54 📕	62	63	65	69 🖠	57
2	63	59	61 🖡	67	52 🖡	59	69	71	63 🖠	51
5	60	61	61 🕇	56	57 🖡	64	63 🕇	54	62	63
5	63 🖡	71	53 🖡	61	43 🖡	59	60 🕇	56	60 🕇	56
(71 ×	11	81 ×	28	25 🗴	15	50 ×	32	49 ×	39
2	56 🕇	41	53 🕇	30	44 🕇	39	59 👔	35	54 🕇	40
5	59 🕇	40	50 🕇	45	28	33	54	71	50 🕇	45
1	59	61	45 🕇	35	32 🖡	40	41 🕇	24	53 🖠	44
5	46	/	52	/	22	/	50	/	49	/
5	43 🕇	29	43 🕇	27	28 🖡	25	55 🕇	41	45 🕇	27

% of answers Always + Very frequently + Frequently

You try to save energy at home, for example by switching off lights or using less water You sort glass, cans, plastic, paper or other waste for recycling You buy bulk products without packaging, such as fruit, vegetables, frozen food, soaps, etc You opt for walking, cycling, and using public transport instead of going by car or motorbike You avoid buying and using disposable products You opt for locally produced food to save on food miles You throw away food because it is expired, rotten, etc. during the week You avoid buying fast fashion because it is not sustainable You buy fair-trade products You buy organic food Try to reduce the use of electronic devices and consume fewer gigabytes You avoid buying new things, for example by buying second-hand clothes

> Values from 2023 survey Values from 2020 Pan-European survey

X Results in regard to this item raise doubts regarding the interpretation by the respondent









How often, if at all, do you do the following?





act:onaid





Values, behaviours, preferences, consumption and political choices. To read and anticipate them is our mission.

"There is nothing so stable as change" Bob Dvlan



Founded in Trieste in 1981, SWG has been developing and producing with extreme care and precision market surveys, opinion and institutional polls, analysing trends and dynamics of the market, politics and society.

SWG supports its clients in making strategic decisions and developing communications and marketing by detecting, understanding and interpreting the stakeholders' and public opinion's thought and behaviour, taking into account the dynamics of the social, political and economic scenarios and using the most reliable and innovative methodologies.

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- **ALGORITHMS,** RELIABLE AND SCALABLE SOLUTIONS
- **PEOPLE,** PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND METHODOLOGICAL RIGOUR

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