

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN
OBSERVATORY ON SECURITY, DRAWN UP BY DEMOS&PI
AND UNIPOLIS FOUNDATION

- **According to Italians (39%), economic problems** remain **the priority** that should be addressed by the national government.
- Fears that cause greatest concern among citizens are those attributable to **global insecurity (71%, down** four points from 2022).
- Few prospects for young people: **almost two thirds of Italians** believe that young people will have a **worse future** than their parents.
- In 2023, **fear surrounding immigration** grew significantly: close to 1 in 2 Italians think that **immigrants are a danger to public order and people's safety**.
- **66% of respondents** believe that **AI, the Internet and social media are making young adolescents (13-19 years old) slaves to new powers** and **71%** think that these tools **promote indifference and social and political disengagement among young people**.
- **7 in 10 Italians** believe that **crime in Italy has increased** compared to five years ago.
- Following the latest tensions in the Middle East, the share of **Italians who fear the outbreak of new wars in the world has risen to 54%** (compared to 41% recorded in July 2023).
- **76%** of respondents believe that **today's teenagers have a greater risk of suffering from anxiety or depression**.
- **According to adults, drug use, addiction to digital devices and depression are the three most serious problems faced by Italian teens today**.

Bologna, 6 December 2023

According to Italian (39%) and European (37%) citizens, economic problems remain the top priority that need to be addressed by the national government. This figure coincides with the lowest level of general economic satisfaction (30%), along with France.

Environment and climate change (mentioned by **18% of Italians**) came second among the concerns expressed by respondents, followed by **quality of services (13%)** and **political corruption (10%)**.

On the other hand, the fears that cause greatest concern among Italians relate to **global insecurity (71%)**, namely those linked to "Environment and nature", "Food security", "Wars" and "Globalisation".

For 72% of respondents, crime in Italy has gone up compared to five years ago and **36% reported an increase in their area of residence**.

These are the findings of the fifteenth report by the **European Observatory on Security** drawn up by **Demos&Pi and the Unipolis Foundation** which, this year, conducted three opinion polls to investigate the evolution of citizens' sense of insecurity and concerns related to adolescence, as well as providing a recent update on insecurity in Italy.

The results of the report were presented today at an event attended by **Marisa Parmigiani**, Director of the Unipolis Foundation, **Ilvo Diamanti**, **Fabio Bordignon** and **Luigi Ceccarini**, Demos&Pi and professors at the University of Urbino Carlo Bo, **Matteo Lancini**, Minotauro Institute and **Paola Barretta**, Pavia Observatory.

Priorities and emergencies that Italian citizens believe the government should address

Economic problems remain the most acute in Italy (39%) and in Europe (37%). **Climate change (18%)** finished second on the podium of priorities and emergencies in Italy, followed by **quality of services (13%)**. In fourth place, **inefficiency** and **political corruption**.

Specifically, with regard to economic issues, the **overall satisfaction of Italians with the performance of the national economy is quite low** (30% compared to the European average of 35%).

Satisfaction with the economic situation of their family is higher (56% compared to the European average of 55%), while **only 1 in 3 Italians** (compared to 52% recorded in Europe) **are satisfied with job opportunities**.

Finally, **65% of Italians interviewed believe that today's young people will have a worse social and economic position** than their parents in the near future: the highest figure compared to other European countries. Italians are largely negative when it comes to young people's prospects in terms of social and economic position.

Fears that cause the greatest concern among Italians

The fears that cause the greatest concern among Italians relate to **global insecurity (71%)**, namely those linked to "Environment and nature", "Food security", "Wars" and "Globalisation". These are followed by **concerns related to economic insecurity (48%)**, above all the **fear of not having enough money to live on (30%)**, and **insecurity linked to crime (33%)**, with **concerns related to organised crime (33%) standing out**, slightly lower than the previous year.

Although the underlying data of the crime-related insecurity index are characterized by slight increases or decreases, the perception of an increase in crime remains very high. **72% of respondents remain convinced that crime in Italy has grown compared to five years ago** and **36% reported an increase in their area of residence**. In just one year, the perception of increased crime in both national and local contexts rose by 8 and 10 points respectively.

New insecurities

Specifically, the data of a specific survey conducted in November to understand the effects linked to the tensions that flared up in the Middle East with the conflict between Israel and Hamas revealed that, among Italians, **the fear of new wars breaking out in the world increased significantly, rising from 41% in July 2023 up to 54%**. **Concern about terrorist attacks** more than doubled, increasing **from 19% in July to 42% in November**.

Furthermore, in 2023 there was a marked **growth in the share of people who expressed fears surrounding immigration**, identifying an association with the theme of security and public order. **According to 46% of Italians, "immigrants are a danger to public order and people's safety"**.

In July, the fear of being affected by natural disasters such as earthquakes, landslides and floods had risen to **31%**, in correlation with climatic events in Italy. **Alarm regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict** involved **almost 90% of those interviewed**. Concern about the spread of Covid-19 increased slightly, rising from 24% in July to 34% in November, remaining far from the peak recorded in May 2022, when it stood at 57%.

Insecurities related to adolescence: a European vision

The survey explored the problems of adolescence in four European countries - Italy, France, Germany and Finland – with results varying based on the age of the respondents. **Young adults under 30 gave significantly less importance to “digital addiction”** (-17 percentage points), likely influenced by their intense use of smartphones, tablets and computers. Other problems that are less of a concern for this segment include video game addiction (-6), substance use (-6) and the risk of bullying, scams and violence (-5).

As regards the **Italian sample**, at the top of the ranking is **the use, or rather the fear of abuse, of alcohol, drugs and medicines (40%)**.

Young adults in Europe are **more concerned about the mental health of adolescents**, including **depression (+11)**, excessive study load (+5), **loneliness (+5)** and problems related to body image (+5).

On the other hand, **adults over 30, with young children or grandchildren**, seem to downplay the importance of the obsession with looks, fashion and appearances (-1). Instead, they showed **alarmism over the risk of substance use (+3) and road safety (+2)**, issues that are often correlated, as highlighted by the journalistic category “Saturday night slaughter”.

Young people and artificial intelligence

Opinions are clearly skewed towards negative judgements, across all countries, in relation to the final five categories of the survey. **Only 33% of Italian respondents believe that the Internet, social media and AI “allow us to be freer in our relationship with any form of power”**, while **66% think these tools make “people slaves to new powers”**. **71% believe that these tools “promote indifference and social and political disengagement”**, with **just 28% believing that they encourage “social commitment and political participation”**.

In addition, over 70% are convinced that **digital tools increase “the risk of believing fake news and information” (72%)** and cause a **“loss of contact with the real world” (76%)**. On the contrary, others underlined how these tools encourage “the possibility to find correct news and information” (27%) and “sociality and meeting other people” (23%).

Request a full version of the Report by sending an email to: segreteria@fondazioneunipolis.org.

For further information and to consult all Observatory Reports, please visit the project website: <https://www.fondazioneunipolis.org/progetti/osservatorio-sulla-sicurezza>

Unipolis Foundation

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