

GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS: GETTING MARRIED AND HAVING CHILDREN NOT A PRIORITY FOR 1 IN 2 YOUNG PEOPLE

84% ARE MORE FOCUSED ON CAREER AND MONEY

This is what emerged from the study **GenerationShip 2024**, conducted by **Kkienn Connecting People and Companies for the Unipol Group**:

- **Studying (82%), having a career (84%), a secure job (81%) and saving money (79%)** are the top priorities of Zoomers and Millennials, while **starting a family (45%) and having children (42%)** are less important.
- The **reasons for choosing not to have children are also changing**. “From not being able to, to not wanting to”: a decision young people are making with increasing conviction.
- **Job satisfaction** and perceived job security has improved (+4% vs. 2023), motivation to change jobs has decreased slightly (-5% vs. 2023) as well as the intention to emigrate (-22% since 2022).
- **Italian education** is considered mediocre by young people (average score of 6.3), who would like to see a profound reform of the educational system.
- New generations perceive a **more sexually open society**, with an increase in casual relationships (72%) and greater acceptance of personal preferences (67%). Internet and social media have facilitated these changes by making it easier to meet and connect.
- **Interest in politics** remains low (43%), with growing distrust towards institutions and democracy. Only a little more than half of Italian youth (54%) identify as European.
- **Young women and men in Gen Z have polarizing attitudes**: women are pushing harder for changes in the way of living and thinking, men are showing signs of slowing down (2023-24 trend of the importance of getting married/living together: young women -8%, young men +1%). A difference not observed among adults: this is the **New Gender Divide**.

Milan, 24 October 2024

2024 has seen an improvement in the **working and personal lives of young Italians**, but also a growing detachment from **political and social institutions**. While confidence in their individual futures is on the rise, uncertainty regarding the global context and macroeconomic dynamics lingers. This is what emerged from the third edition of the study **GenerationShip 2024, conducted by Kkienn Connecting People and Companies for the Unipol Group**.

The study gives a detailed picture of the **main transformations that have affected young** Italians in 2024. Priorities are increasingly oriented towards economic and professional fulfilment, with less interest in starting a family, a trend that has strengthened in recent years.

More work, less family

In 2024, new generations say they are equally or more interested in **advancing their career** (84%) and **economic wellbeing** (84%), while **getting married or living together and having children** is of lesser or no importance for over 50% of Zoomers and Millennials. These goals, while still relevant, are no longer seen as mandatory steps. Families are only formed if the economic conditions allow it. Furthermore, the choice not to have children is no longer considered a taboo.

Women are leading this change with a more radical vision: the percentage of young women between the ages of 16 and 35 whose main goals include **getting a degree** has increased by 42% compared to last year. For young men, this number increased by just 17%. Women also place greater importance on **job stability** (+40% compared to +11% among men) and **career** (+39% against +15%). They are also less interested in getting married than they were last year (-55% vs. -38% among men) or in having children (-58% vs. -41% among men).

Work

The job market has shown signs of improvement, with an **increase in youth employment**. Overall job satisfaction gone up slightly, reaching an average score of 6.71 compared to 6.63 in 2023.

However, many young people continue to look for **more secure and profitable alternatives** and the phenomenon of the **Great Resignation** is still relevant. Despite a decrease - from 58% in 2022 to 45% in 2024 - the propensity to emigrate still remains a choice for those who do not see other opportunities in Italy.

Education in crisis

Gen Z and Millennials gave **Italian education** an average score of 6.3. Young people are increasingly dissatisfied with their education (rising from 42% in 2022 to 47% in 2024). The main shortcomings include an excessive focus on theory and little practical experience (47%), poor quality teachers (44%) and a lack of direct connection with the world of work (43%).

All of the critical issues identified have worsened in the last year. Among the main causes for dissatisfaction are programs that do not value individual differences (+6 points) and quality of education that varies too much from region to region (+4 points).

While some merits are recognised, such as the ability to provide excellent general preparation (25%), the study found that a **profound reform of the educational system** is necessary in order to meet the needs of new generations.

Relationships and sexuality

Young people aged between 16 and 35 describe a **sexually open society** in which they have more casual relationships (72%, + 7% compared to 2023), more women have adopted freer sexual behaviour (70%), sexuality is discussed more openly (69%), and a wider range of preferences (67%) and different forms of relationships (66%) are accepted.

Romantic or sexual relationships initiated on social media are increasing for all generations except Gen Z, which instead reported a decrease (from 34% in 2023 to 31% in 2024). Use of **dating apps** has declined among young people (from 34% to 30%), but has increased among adults aged 36 to 74 (from 15% to 21%).

68% of Zoomers and Millennials also say they feel pressured by the **unattainable beauty standards** promoted by social media, which fuel insecurities and anxieties related to body image.

Politics and trust in institutions

Young people's interest in **politics** remains low (43%), with a **growing distrust towards institutions and democracy**: 69% have no confidence in Italian politics.

In a context of international crisis, the idea of a united **Europe** has gained ground as a symbol of cooperation and future, but only a minority recognise Europe as part of their own identity (54% feel European, but only 18% with conviction).

New Gender Divide

Gender tensions are set to grow. Today's young women want to take control of their lives and are questioning the roles assigned to them by society. They seek better education and a decent job, even though they are often disadvantaged (e.g. temporary employment contracts: men: 25%, women: 39%), along with the possibility of self-fulfilment. And they are no longer willing to subordinate these goals to their role as mothers and wives. They want to be free to decide about their own lives, starting with not having children (Gen Z men: 41%, Gen Z women: 52%). Young men share these values but not the burdens.

GenerationShip is the Unipol Group's New Generations Monitoring Unit. The socio-cultural initiative, which began in 2022, is now in its third edition. GenerationShip targets a population of young people aged 16 to 35, i.e. late teens to early adulthood. In generational terms, this includes a large part of Gen Z, in 2024 young people born between 1996 and 2008, and the youngest segment of Millennials, born between 1988 and 1995.

The study was based on feedback from a sample of young people, divided into focus groups and stimulated into discussion with strictly non-directive techniques. It continued by measuring the opinions that emerged from an online survey (structured questionnaire) of a representative sample of 1,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 35.

The results of this survey were compared with a twin survey conducted on a control sample of 500 adults aged 36 to 75, to understand the differences between the attitudes of young people and adults and the articulation of opinions across generations.

For further information: [GenerationShip 2024](#)

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