

## GLOBAL INSTABILITY. EUROPE UNDER SCRUTINY: 6 OUT OF 10 ITALIANS WOULD LIKE THE EU TO PLAY A STRONGER ROLE IN THE ECONOMY, DEFENCE AND FOREIGN POLICIES

**38% of Italians believe that membership of the EU increases our vulnerability in the current international landscape, with only 26% believing membership is a source of security**

**Financial concerns in particular lie behind these opinions: the high cost of living worries 71% of Italians, while 27% fear limitations on the freedom to travel and move about**

This is what emerges from new research by [Changes Unipol](#), carried out with Ipsos (market research and consulting firm), on Italian opinions about the current global geopolitical and economic situation. The research also showed:

### Italy's membership of the European Union

- The European Union is perceived as a source of vulnerability in today's geopolitical landscape, especially with respect to the procurement of **energy and raw materials (41%)**, the **importance and influence of Italy on the international scene (41%)**, and **protection against financial crises (40%)**;
- **Generational split down the lines:** Baby Boomers are most likely to consider the EU as a source of security, especially with regard to managing **global health crises (34%)** and giving international clout to **Italy on the international scene (28%)**; on the contrary, **Generation X** are more likely to view the EU as a source of vulnerability, especially for the procurement of **energy and raw materials (44%)**;

### The future of the European Union

- **41%** of Italians believe that **strategic autonomy in energy, raw materials and pharmaceuticals** should be a priority for EU security; in metropolitan areas, **31%** also note the importance of boosting **European economic competitiveness** with respect to the United States and China;
- **36%** of Italians want **more European integration**, while only **26%** want to give **greater sovereignty to the member states**.

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Against an international backdrop marked by conflict, geopolitical tensions and economic pressures, Italians believe that security has become increasingly fragile and uncertain.

The new research on *“Global Instability”. “Europe under Scrutiny”* carried out by [Changes Unipol](#) in association with Ipsos, demonstrates how **6 out of 10 Italians** (rising to 7 out of 10 Baby Boomers) **hope that the European Union will play a stronger role**, with greater decision-making powers in strategic areas like the **economy, defence and foreign policy**.

However, this hope does not spring from complete confidence in the European Union, but from the awareness that no country can face the current challenges on its own in this increasingly complex global landscape. **36%** would actually like **more integration among European countries** even though **26%** would prefer **more control at national level**, with this difference partly running along generational lines: the older category falls more decisively in favour of a stronger, more integrated Europe, while the younger seems to be more interested in maintaining the current status quo while focusing on effective cooperation among member states.

In the current international situation, **38% of Italians believe that membership of the EU increases our vulnerability**, while only **26% consider Europe to be a source of security**. The gap is particularly evident in **three key aspects**. The perception of vulnerability has increased significantly compared to **Italy’s importance and influence on the international scene**, indicated as a factor of security by 23% of Italians compared to 41% who consider it to be a weakness. **Financial stability** perceptions show a similar trend, with 24% believing that the European Union plays a protective role while 40% note the limitations. Finally, 41% of Italians note the vulnerability with respect to the **procurement of energy, gas and raw materials** compared to 27% who believe that belonging to the EU is a source of security.

Opinions differ along generational lines: **Baby Boomers** are most likely to consider the EU as a source of security, especially with regard to managing **global health crises (34%)** and giving international clout to **Italy on the international scene (28%)**; on the contrary, **Generation X** is more likely to perceive membership as a source of vulnerability, especially for the procurement of **energy and raw materials (44%)**.

However, this perception does not translate into a rejection of the European project but is rather a call for change to make Europe less exposed and more autonomous, less dependent and more capable of taking action. It is no coincidence that the **priority** noted with greatest clarity across the board, by **41%** of Italians, **relates to boosting the strategic autonomy of the European Union**, especially for energy, raw materials and pharmaceuticals. In metropolitan areas, 31% also state the need to **strengthen European economic competitiveness** compared to the United States and China.

This perception of vulnerability derives mainly from financial concerns: the **high cost of living is the main factor behind this apprehension, indicated by 71% of Italians**. This figure encompasses all age groups (from 61% for Generation Z to 82% for Baby Boomers) and makes the impact of global dynamics on individual choices and prospects tangible.

In addition to this anxiety shared across the board, there are specific worries linked to the different age groups. **30% of Generation Z and 29% of Baby Boomers** fear an increase in **social tensions**, signalling a widespread perception of possible internal instability. Boomers also express greater sensitivity towards risks such as **terrorist attacks**, which concern 40% of them, the **loss in value of savings and investments**, indicated by 35% of them, and increased migration, reported by 30%. The concerns linked to **limitations in the freedom to travel and move around** lies in fourth place and regards 27% of Italians, at broadly similar levels across the generations.

The survey shows that almost **half of Italians do not feel safe in Italy and Europe**, with the figure growing compared to the recent past when it was perceived as more stable. This sense of a lack of safety becomes even more acute if the rest of the world is included. **8 out of 10 Italians claim that they do not feel safe outside of Europe**. The perception of safety is not felt uniformly across the population within this framework. **Baby Boomers are the category most exposed to the sense of vulnerability**; 49% say that they now feel less safe in Italy compared to the past, and the perception of a lack of safety climbs to 91% when the rest of the world is considered.

Younger generations see things differently. **60% of Generation Z say that they feel safe in Italy and 27% extends this perception to the rest of the world**. Rather than a simple difference among age groups, there is another key to understanding this: on the one hand, there are those who feel a loss of stability compared to the comfort of a familiar balance, while on the other, there are those who are used to living in a context that has always been considered to be fluid.

Against a backdrop where global reference points appear to be more uncertain, trust tends to focus on that which is perceived as close and real. **6 out of 10 Italians believe** that the main **reference points in crisis situations lie in the civil protection and law enforcement authorities**, confirming the value ascribed to operational, tangible protection.

This closeness sits alongside the selective trust given to official supranational entities. **45% of Italians say that they trust NATO**, rising to 50% among the youngest, while about 4 out of 10 Italians place trust in the Italian State, the European Union and the local authorities. This balance reflects the search for protection at a number of levels, but without one single point of reference.

**Unipol Group**

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