

5. Social relationships¹

Prior to the pandemic, many indicators in the domain were at worse or stable levels compared to the situation a decade earlier, with the only exceptions being the number of non-profit institutions, the share of the population expressing trust in others, and the share of the population claiming to have people to rely on, which were instead showing a positive trend.

In 2020, the indicators have remained stable and some have shown improvement. In particular, family and friends networks have confirmed their central and protective role to alleviate the difficulties of a very delicate and unprecedented lockdown phase.

In 2021, on the other hand, people have more dramatically been affected by the lingering effects of the crisis, with many indicators in this domain clearly worsening compared to 2019 and touching the lowest values in the period considered.

Despite the generally deteriorating context, some indicators have registered positive signs in 2020-21: trust in others - historically very low in Italy – has increased, and civic and political participation has begun to grow again after years of decline. Non-profit organisations also have confirmed the upward trend (Table 1).

In 2022, many indicators in the domain show an overall improvement compared to 2021; however, in almost all cases, the growth only partially compensates for the losses experienced in 2021 and does not allow a recovery to 2019 levels.

Table 1. Social relationships indicators: value for the latest available year and percentage changes for different periods

Indicators	Starting year	Latest available year	Latest available year value	Percentage changes			
				2019 compared with starting year	2021 compared with 2019	2022 compared with 2021	2022 compared with 2019
Satisfaction with family relations (%)	2010	2022	32.6	●	●	●	●
Satisfaction with friends relations (%)	2010	2022	21.6	●	●	●	●
People to rely on (%)	2009	2022	81.0	●	●	●	●
Social participation (%)	2013	2022	25.4	●	●	●	●
Civic and political participation (%)	2011	2022	63.5	●	●	●	●
Voluntary activity (%)	2010	2022	8.3	●	●	●	●
Association funding (%)	2010	2022	12.8	●	●	●	●
Nonprofit organizations (per 10,000 inhabitants) (a)	2011	2020	61.2	●	●	-	-
Generalised trust (%)	2010	2022	24.3	●	●	●	●

● Better ● Worse ● Stable - Not available

(a) Year 2021 not available. Changes calculated between 2019 and 2020.
 Note: If the relative change between the two years exceeds 1% it is considered positive (green), if it is lower than -1% it is considered negative (red). In the range -1 and +1% the change is considered stable (yellow). The polarity of the indicator was taken into account when calculating the changes to consider the improvement or worsening in terms of well-being.

As the restrictions that characterised the most critical moments of the pandemic fade, satisfaction with family and friends relations begins to rise again, especially satisfaction with friends, which had shown the greatest decline. For both indicators, the improvement is most pronounced among 14-24-year-olds, who had experienced the sharpest worsening in satisfaction. In particular, the 20-24 age group returns to 2019 levels of satisfaction for both family and friends relations.

Involvement of the population in voluntary activities and the share of the population who say they have funded associations also show a recovery in 2022.

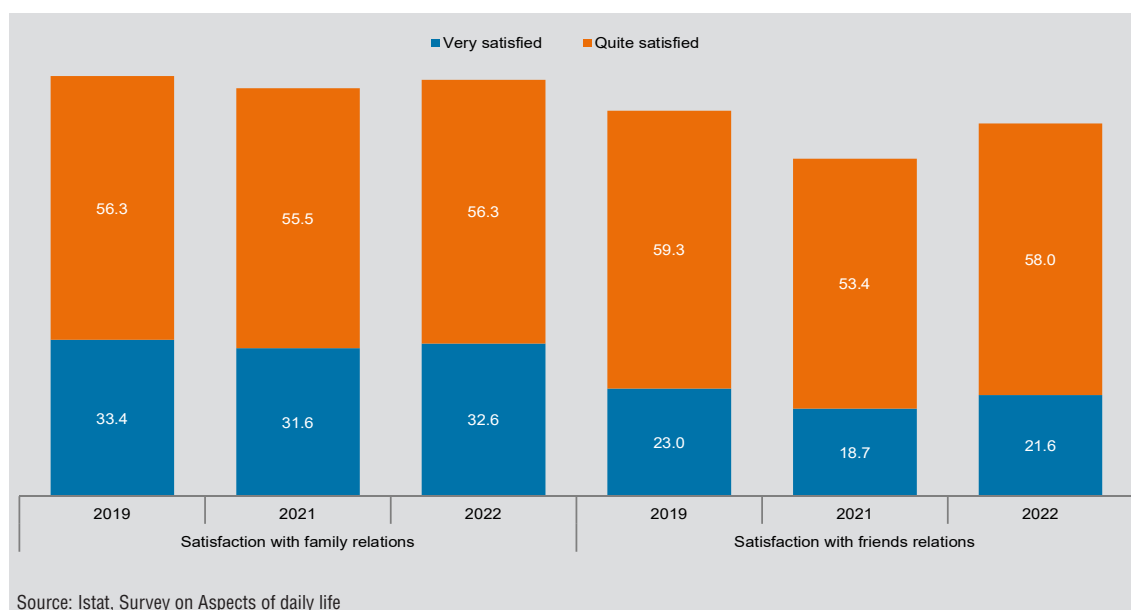
¹ This chapter was edited by Miria Savioli with contributions from Isabella Latini and Massimo Lori.

Of all the indicators in the domain, social participation is that showing the greatest growth in the past year especially for younger people, that experienced the sharpest decline in participation. However, pre-pandemic levels are not restored in any age group. In the most recent year, only those indicators that had improved during the pandemic show a negative decline: civic and political participation, which breaks the positive trend, and trust in others, which had reached its highest level in the entire time trend in 2021. Despite the decline in 2022, both indicators are still at higher levels than before the pandemic.

Satisfaction with family and friends relations grows, especially among younger people

Satisfaction with family and friends relations, which was stable in the first year of the pandemic and worsened in 2021, starts to improve again in 2022: 32.6% of people aged 14 years and over say they are very satisfied with family relations and 21.6% with friends relations. However, the growth does not fully compensate for the loss experienced during the pandemic (Figure 1).

Figure 1. People aged 14 and over that are satisfied with family and friends relations. Years 2019, 2021 and 2022. Percentage values



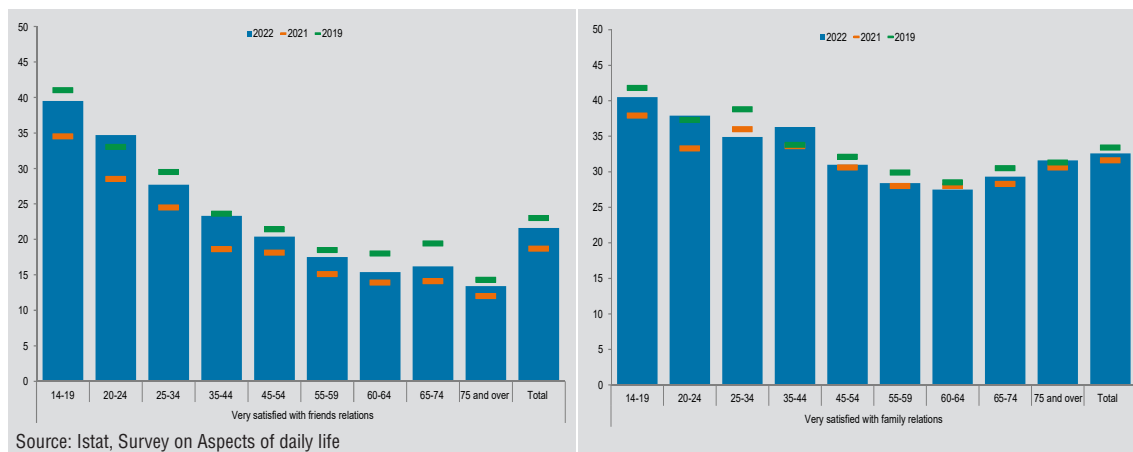
In 2022, satisfaction with family and friends relations shows small gender differences in favour of men; the differences by age, however, are more pronounced. Satisfaction with family relations, in fact, is highest between the ages of 14 and 44 (between 35% and 40%), and then declines at later ages, going down to 27.5% among the population aged 60-64; the proportion rises slightly in the older population (31.6% among those aged 75 and over, Figure 2).

Satisfaction with relations with friends is highest among 14-19 (39.5%) and 20-24-year-olds (34.7%), who tend to have a wider network of friends. Satisfaction with the friends' network declines markedly from the age of 25, reaching its lowest level in the older population (13.4% among those aged 75 and over, Figure 2).

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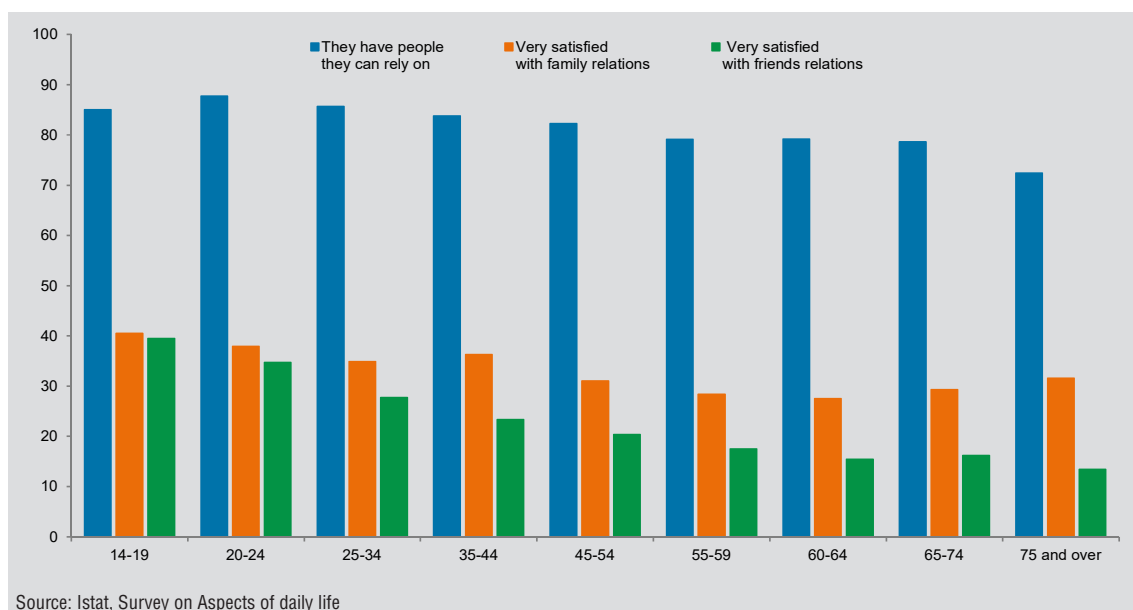
The improvement observed in 2022 is most pronounced among young people aged 14-24, that experienced the sharpest drop in satisfaction during the pandemic. In particular, the 20-24 age group returns to the 2019 levels of satisfaction for both family and friends relations (Figure 2).

Figure 2. People aged 14 and over that are very satisfied with family and friends relations by age group. Years 2019, 2021 and 2022. Percentage values



In 2022, the share of the population aged 14 and over declaring that they have non-cohabiting relatives, friends or neighbours to rely on in case of need continues to be very high (81.0%). There are no gender differences, but the indicator follows a downward trend with age: it is highest among people aged 14-54 (over 82%), decreases from age 55 onwards and reaches its lowest value among people aged 75 and over, among whom the share nevertheless remains high (72.4%, Figure 3).

Figure 3. People aged 14 and over that have people they can rely on and people aged 14 and over that are very satisfied with family and friends relations by age group. Year 2022. Percentage values



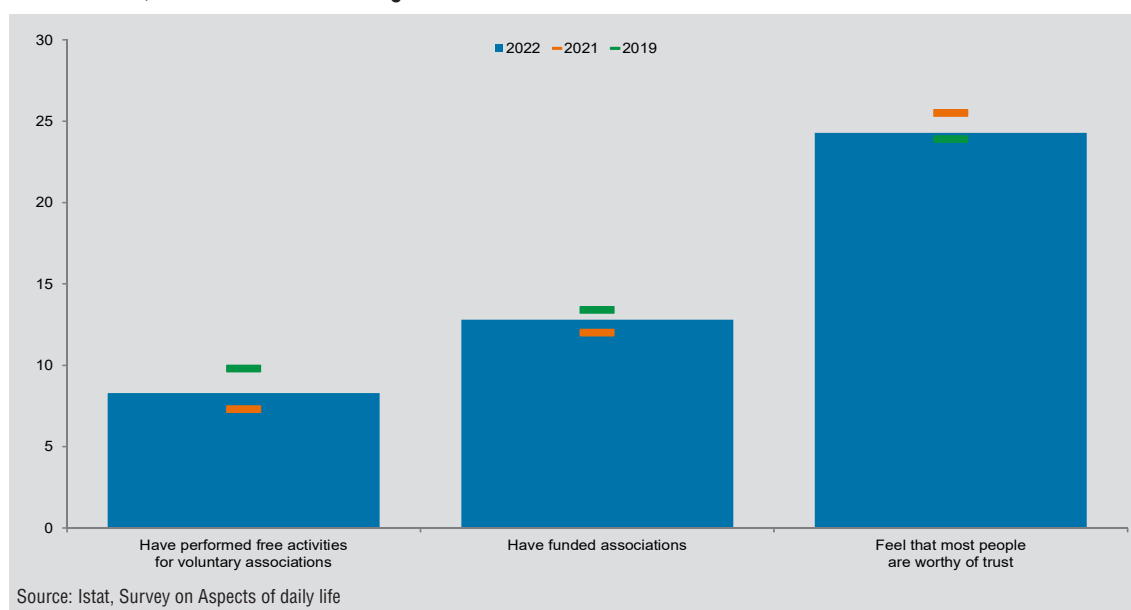
Voluntary activity and association funding grow

The share of people aged 14 and over that declares that it is involved in voluntary activity rises again compared to the previous year, reaching 8.3% in 2022 (+1 percentage point); the increase does not, however, make it possible to return to pre-pandemic levels (9.8% in 2019). There are no gender differences in volunteering, while in terms of age, the highest levels are found among young people aged 20-24 and in the 35-74 age group (between 8% and 9%); the lowest level is found among the population aged 75 and over (5.2%, Figure 4). In 2022, the percentage of population aged 14 and over that have funded association recorded a slight recovery reaching 12.8%; the growth is not enough to offset the decrease in 2021 and does not allow for a return to 2020 levels (14.3%, Figure 4).

Trust in others decreases

The trust that people are willing to place in their fellow citizens is declining, with a widespread mistrust emerging: in 2022, 24.3% of people aged 14 and over believe that most people are trustworthy. This decrease interrupts the upward trend that began in 2018 and in 2021 had reached the highest value of the entire time trend (25.5%, Figure 4).

Figure 4. People aged 14 and over that feel that most people are worthy of trust and people aged 14 and over that have funded associations or have performed free activities for voluntary associations in the last 12 months. Years 2019, 2021 and 2022. Percentage values



After a sharp decline in 2021, social participation grows

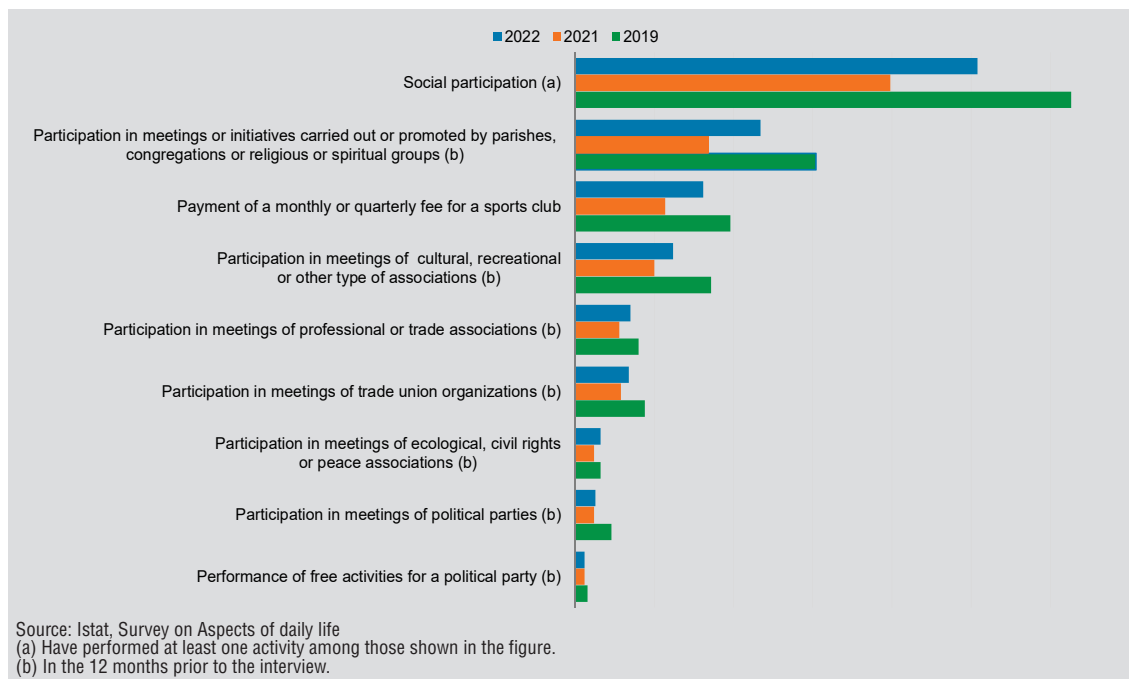
In 2022, 25.4% of the population aged 14 years and over carried out social participation activities, taking part in the activities of recreational, cultural, political, civic, sporting, religious or spiritual associations. After the sharp drop recorded in 2020-2021 due to the

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measures taken to counter the development of the pandemic, the percentage of those who carry out social participation activities is growing again (+5.5 percentage points compared to 2021), but at levels well below those observed in 2019 (31.3%, Figure 5).

When analysing the individual components of the indicator, it can be seen that the items that have increased in the last year are: participation in meetings or initiatives organised or promoted by parishes, congregations or religious or spiritual groups (from 8.4% in 2021 to 11.7% in 2022), payment of monthly or periodic fees to a sports club (from 5.7% to 8.1%) and participation in meetings of cultural, recreational or other associations (from 5% to 6.2%, Figure 5).

Figure 5. People aged 14 and over that have carried out social participation activities. Years 2019, 2021 and 2022. Percentage values

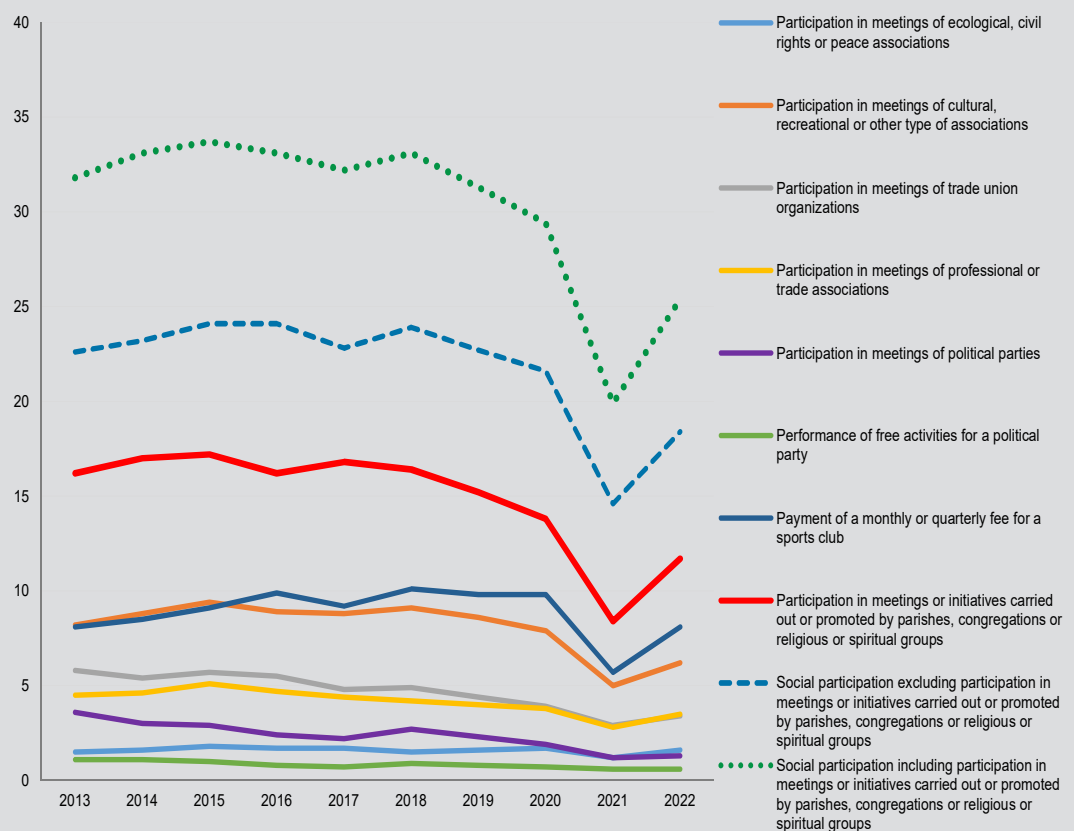


THE MULTIPLE ASPECTS OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION: THE CONTRIBUTION OF A NEW INDICATOR

This Bes report proposes the new indicator of social participation, which includes, among other activities, participation in social activities involving religious or spiritual centres as meeting places.

The share of the population aged 14 years and over that claims to participate in meetings or initiatives carried out or promoted by parishes or religious or spiritual groups stands at 11.7%, and this is the most performed activity among all those considered. This has a strong impact on the overall indicator, which stands at 25.4 percent in 2022, 7 percentage points higher than the indicator that did not take this type of participation into account (Figure A).

Figure A. People aged 14 and over that have carried out social participation activities. Years 2013-2022. Percentage values

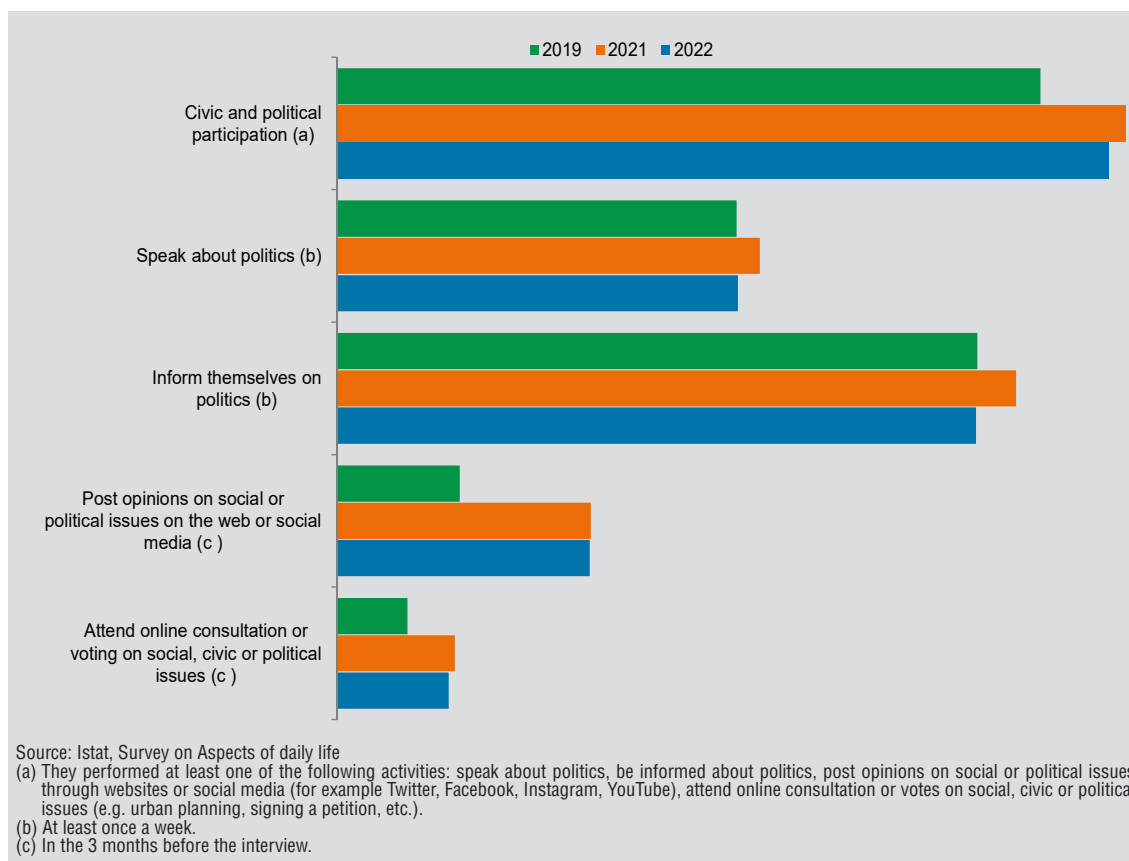


Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life

Civic and political participation declines

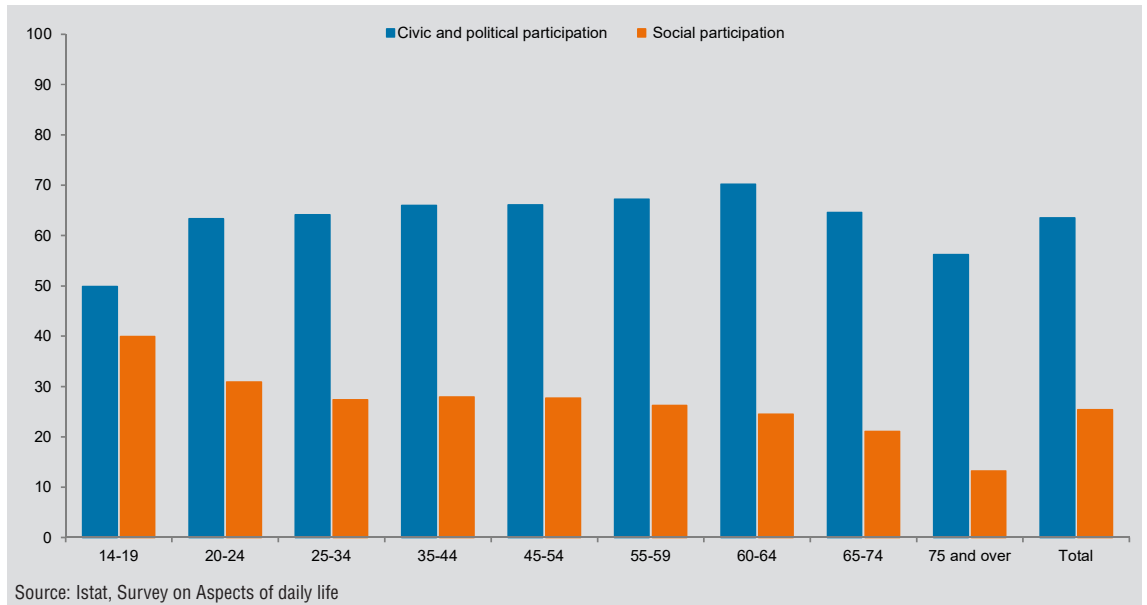
In 2022, 63.5% of the population aged 14 years and over said they had carried out at least one indirect civic and political participation activity, down from 2021 (64.9%, Figure 6). There is thus a reversal of the upward trend that began in 2020, when the need to follow the evolution of the measures put in place to counter the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic had favoured civic and political participation of the population. Despite the decline over the past year, civic and political participation is still higher than the pre-pandemic level (57.9% in 2019).

Figure 6. People aged 14 and over who perform activities of civic and political participation. Years 2019, 2021 and 2022. Percentage values



Civic and political participation, which is less widespread among young people (49.9% in the 14-19 age group in 2022), registers an upward trend with age, peaks in the adult population (70.2% in the 60-64 age group) and then declines to 56.2% among the over 74 years (Figure 7). Marked gender differences are observed in favour of men, with 9.7 percentage points more for men in 2022: 68.5% compared to 58.8% for women.

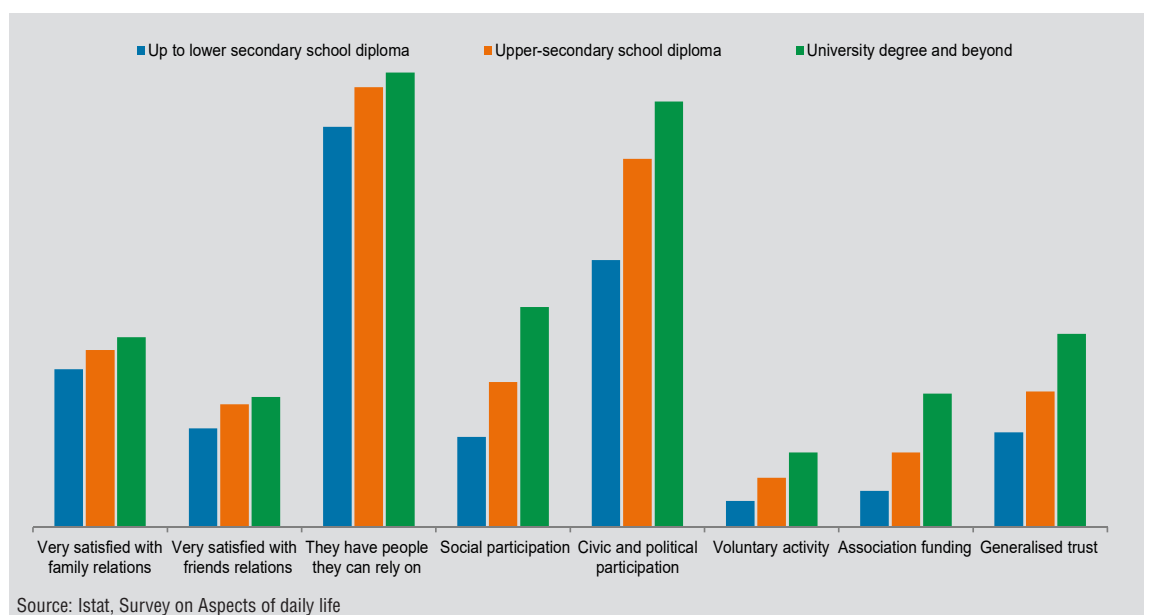
Figure 7. People aged 14 and over who perform activities of social, civic and political participation by age group. Year 2022. Percentage values



Significant differences by educational level

All indicators in this domain show the highest values among the most educated population. In particular, the indicators that differ most according to the level of education are those relating to the financing of associations and the performance of voluntary activities (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Social relationships indicators by educational level. Year 2022. Percentage values



The disadvantage of the South is confirmed

In the South and Islands, all forms of social networks appear weaker than in the rest of the country. Only in the case of the potential help network do the territorial differences diminish, almost to the point of disappearing: the possibility of relying on relatives, friends and neighbours who do not live with the respondent in case of need is in fact equally widespread throughout the territory, with values of around 81% in all the divisions (Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 9. Social relationships indicators by geographic area. Year 2022. Percentage values

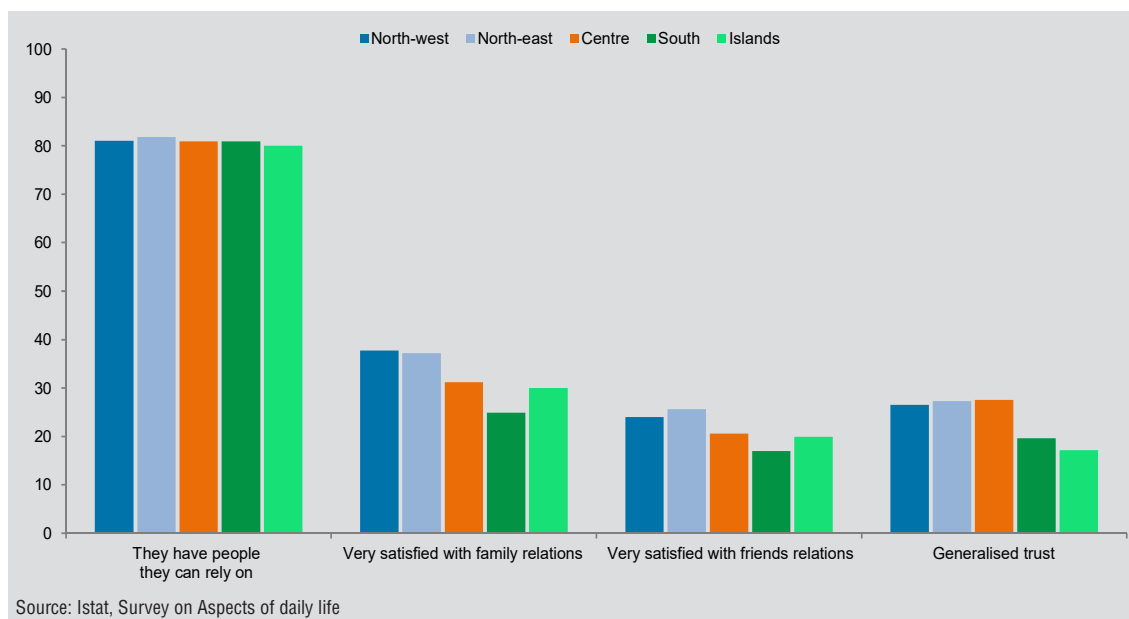
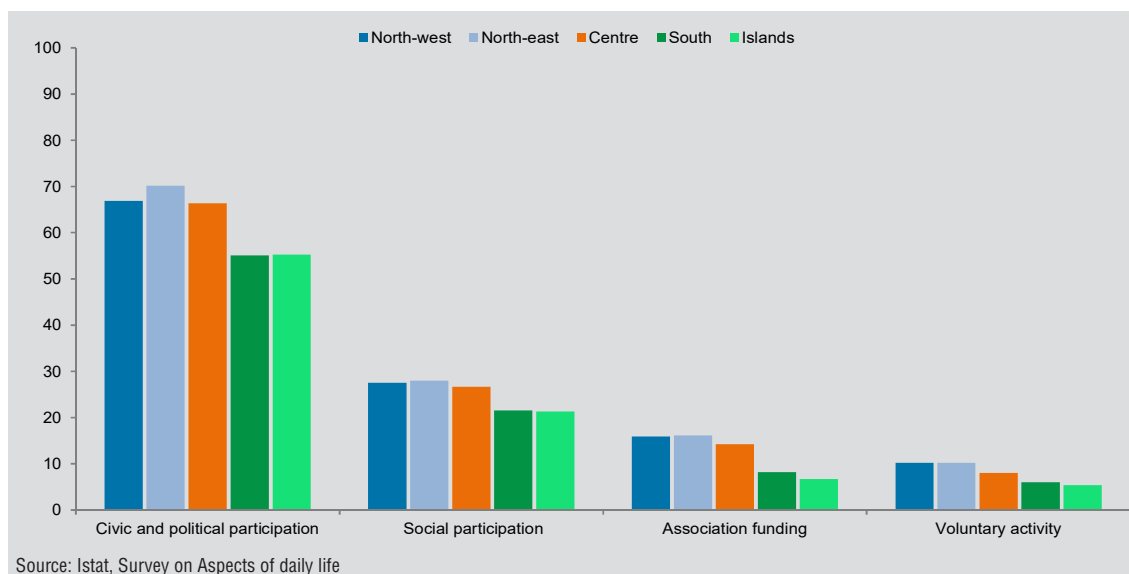


Figure 10. Selected social relationships indicators by geographic area. Year 2022. Percentage values



Slight increase in non-profit institutions, more widespread in the Centre-North

In 2020, there were 363,499 active non-profit institutions in Italy (61.2 per 10,000 inhabitants) and, in total, 870,183 people employed.

Between 2019 and 2020, nonprofit institutions grew by 0.2%, a smaller increase than that found between 2018 and 2019 (+0.9 percent) while the increase in employees remains around +1.0% for both periods.

Indicators

- 1. Satisfaction with family relations:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that are very satisfied with family relations on total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 2. Satisfaction with friends relations:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that are very satisfied with relations with friends on total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 3. People to rely on:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that have non cohabiting relatives (besides parents, sons, siblings, grandparents, nephews), friends or neighbors they can rely on, on total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 4. Social participation:** People aged 14 and over that have performed at least one social participation activity in the last 12 months on total population aged 14 and over. The activities in question are: participation in meetings or initiatives (cultural, sports, recreational, spiritual) carried out or promoted by parishes, congregations or religious or spiritual groups; participation in meetings of associations cultural, recreational or other type; participation in meetings of associations ecological, civil rights, peace; participation in meetings of trade union organizations, participation in meetings of professional or trade associations; participation in meetings of political parties; performance of free activities for a party; payment of a monthly or quarterly fee for a sports club.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 5. Civic and political participation:** People aged 14 and over who perform at least one of the activities of civic and political participation on total population aged 14 and over. The activities in question are: The activities in question are: to speak about politics at least once a week; to inform of the facts of Italian politics at least once a week; to attend online consultation or voting on social issues (civic) or political (e.g. urban planning, sign a petition) at least once in the 3 months prior to the interview, to read and to post opinions on social or political issues on websites or social media at least once in the 3 months preceding the interview.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 6. Voluntary activity:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that have performed free activities for voluntary associations or groups in the last 12 months on total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 7. Association funding:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that have funded associations in the last 12 months on total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 8. Nonprofit organizations:** Number of nonprofit organizations per 10,000 inhabitants.
Source : Istat - Statistical register and Census of nonprofit institutions
- 9. Generalised trust:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that feel that most people are worthy of trust on the total population aged 14 and over.
Source : Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life

Indicators by region and geographic area

REGIONS GEOGRAPHIC AREAS	Satisfaction with family relations (a)	Satisfaction with friends relations (a)	People to rely on (a)	Social participation (a)
	2022	2022	2022	2022
Piemonte	36.5	25.0	80.9	28.5
Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste	35.1	24.9	86.3	30.3
Liguria	36.5	24.6	83.7	25.8
Lombardia	38.4	23.4	80.6	27.3
Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol	42.9	31.2	83.1	33.4
<i>Bolzano/Bozen</i>	<i>46.1</i>	<i>33.3</i>	<i>81.4</i>	<i>34.1</i>
<i>Trento</i>	<i>39.9</i>	<i>29.2</i>	<i>84.6</i>	<i>32.7</i>
Veneto	37.8	25.1	80.3	29.5
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	36.5	24.3	83.5	27.3
Emilia-Romagna	35.5	25.0	82.6	25.2
Toscana	33.8	22.5	79.9	25.9
Umbria	40.4	26.5	82.5	25.7
Marche	31.6	20.6	84.9	26.2
Lazio	28.0	18.5	80.2	27.6
Abruzzo	30.5	19.8	81.3	26.7
Molise	27.6	19.5	81.1	21.4
Campania	23.2	16.2	82.8	22.3
Puglia	24.6	15.9	77.8	20.3
Basilicata	23.0	17.5	77.0	22.7
Calabria	26.6	19.1	82.6	17.8
Sicilia	30.4	19.5	78.5	20.5
Sardegna	29.0	20.8	84.7	23.6
North	37.5	24.6	81.3	27.7
North-west	37.7	24.0	81.0	27.5
North-east	37.2	25.6	81.8	28.0
Centre	31.2	20.6	80.9	26.7
South and Islands	26.5	17.9	80.6	21.4
South	24.9	17.0	80.9	21.5
Islands	30.0	19.9	80.0	21.3
Italy	32.6	21.6	81.0	25.4

(a) Per 100 persons aged 14 and over;

(b) Per 10,000 inhabitants.

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Civic and political participation (a)	Voluntary activity (a)	Association funding (a)	Nonprofit organizations (b)	Generalised trust (a)
2022	2022	2022	2020	2022
65.7	9.6	14.1	70.4	25.7
64.0	12.6	15.5	115.0	30.0
69.6	7.4	13.1	73.2	26.3
67.0	10.8	17.1	57.9	26.8
72.1	17.0	23.4	114.8	41.7
71.9	15.0	22.7	109.8	43.4
72.3	18.9	24.0	119.7	40.1
70.0	9.7	15.4	63.2	25.9
72.4	10.2	16.3	91.2	27.5
69.3	9.0	15.0	62.1	25.2
67.1	8.7	15.7	75.8	24.8
64.8	6.8	12.5	83.2	26.0
66.6	7.3	14.7	76.4	22.8
66.0	7.8	13.3	59.1	30.6
66.3	8.5	12.6	63.5	22.7
59.0	5.1	9.3	69.1	17.8
56.9	6.1	8.8	39.6	17.5
52.1	4.9	5.9	48.9	20.9
51.1	8.2	11.9	68.6	19.8
49.2	5.3	6.8	54.8	21.2
52.2	4.8	5.0	47.0	16.2
64.6	6.9	11.6	72.0	20.2
68.3	10.2	16.0	66.2	26.8
66.9	10.2	15.9	63.1	26.5
70.2	10.2	16.1	70.5	27.3
66.4	8.0	14.2	68.3	27.5
55.2	5.8	7.7	50.0	18.8
55.1	6.0	8.2	48.5	19.6
55.3	5.4	6.7	53.2	17.2
63.5	8.3	12.8	61.2	24.3

