



Technology, innovation and digitalization
EU opinion poll

Opinion in Italy

Within the framework of the “Fostering Innovation. Unlocking Potential.” project, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has conducted an online survey in all EU countries with the eupinions¹ survey tool. This survey elicits information regarding citizens’ attitudes – across the EU and within individual countries – toward technological innovation. The results for Italy are representative.

How Italians view their country

Italians have little confidence in their country’s innovative capacity. This may in part be due to the fact that they see the economic and political conditions in their country as relatively weak. Although Italians are also afraid of jobs being lost as a result of new innovations, most respondents expect technological progress and digital transformation will have a positive impact on their lives.

- Of all EU states included in the representative survey, Italians’ self-assessment is the most negative. Some 55% of the Italians surveyed **rate the technological innovative capacity of their country** as poor in international comparison.
- More than two-thirds (71%) of Italians believe that their country lacks the **economic environment and policy framework** capable of boosting innovation. Across the EU, less than one-half (42%) of respondents say this about their own country.
- Almost three-quarters of Italian respondents (73%) generally expect technological innovation and **digital transformation to have a positive** impact on their own lives over the next 15 years.

¹ eupinions is an independent platform for European public opinion. They collect, analyse and comment on what the European public thinks about current political issues and megatrends. eupinions employs cutting-edge data collection techniques. Every quarter, they collect samples from each EU member state in 22 languages. The data meets the highest scientific standards and is representative with regard to age, gender, education and country/region. eupinions is a project of Bertelsmann Stiftung. The data is collected by Dalia Research.

They are therefore slightly more optimistic than most EU citizens, as only 68% of those surveyed across the EU anticipate positive effects.

- Italian respondents expect innovation to negatively influence the labor market in particular (43%). This is also reflected in the fact that 70% of Italian respondents support fostering **innovation in order to create jobs**.

Italy and the European Union

Italians have a rather negative view of the EU's innovative capacity in international comparison. Most Italians see the EU as lagging behind the United States and China, and favor deepened cooperation efforts between the EU states.

- Only half of Italian respondents (50%) consider the EU's **technological innovative capacity to be good by international comparison**. On average, Europeans give the EU a better rating. For example, two-thirds of European respondents (66%) have a positive view of the EU's innovative capacity in international comparison.
- More than two-thirds (69%) of Italian respondents **consider both China and the United States to be more innovative** than the EU. By contrast, 52% of those surveyed across the EU consider the United States to be more innovative with regard to technological progress, and as many as 59% see China as outpacing the EU in this area.
- Two-thirds (68%) of Italian respondents believe that **EU countries need to work more closely together** in order to create a more innovative and competitive economy. This figure is 4% higher than pre-coronavirus crisis figures for this issue. Only 15% of the Italian population favors the country going it alone.

Differences according to specific respondent characteristics

Italians with higher levels of education attainment are generally more pessimistic about innovation capacity than those with lower levels of education. Older Italians and those with a low level of formal education have a more negative attitude towards EU-wide cooperation.

- Some 60% of Italian respondents with a medium to **high level of education** think that their country's **innovative capacity is poor in international comparison**. Among those with no to low levels of formal education, only 49% share this view.
- Three-quarters of Italian respondents with a **medium to high level of education** (75%) see their country's **economic environment and policy framework** as doing a poor job of facilitating innovation. In contrast, only **63% of those with lower levels of formal education** support this statement.
- The **older** the respondent in Italy, the more likely they are to view the country's **economic and policy environment** to be **deficient**. For example, 74% of the **baby boomers** (born 1955-1973) rate the conditions in Italy as poor. Among those **under 23**, this figure is 58%.