



Co-funded by
the European Union

C.O.N.T.A.C.T.

Creating an On-line Network, monitoring Team and phone App to Counter hate crime Tactics

Results of the perceptual experiment

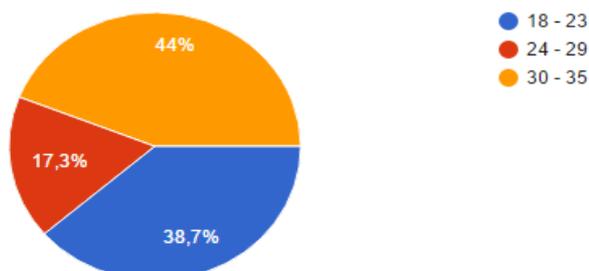
following the answers to the online questionnaire in Italy

In the framework of the European project C.O.N.T.A.C.T., led by the University of Cyprus, we can carry out an assessment on the perception of what online hate speech and hate crime are on the basis of the answers to our questionnaire by young Italian internet-users aged 18 – 35.

Information about the respondents:

The total number of respondents was 76. The number exceeds the minimum stated number of 40 as the online questionnaire was successfully disseminated through social medias (students forums and forums for students of media and journalism, young professional networks) and former Ce.S.F.Or. students, and has received, in terms of numbers, a good feedback.

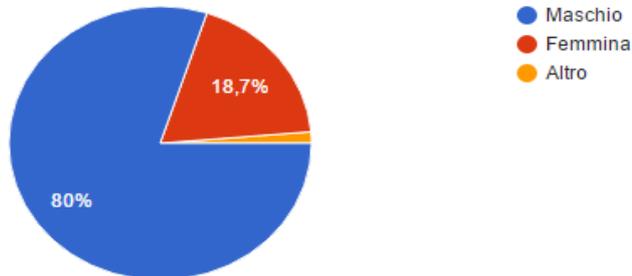
Age: 38,7 % of our respondents is aged 18 – 23 years old, 17,3 % is aged 24 – 29, while 44% is aged 30 to 35. So the majority of our respondents are adult on their thirties.



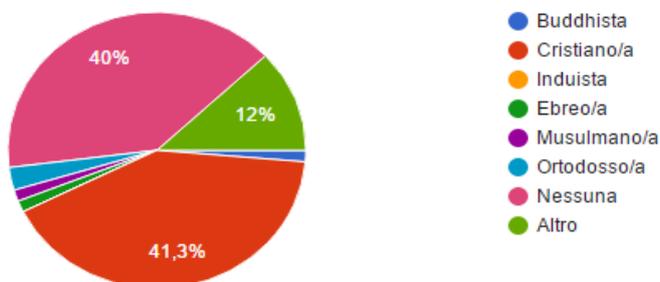


Co-funded by
the European Union

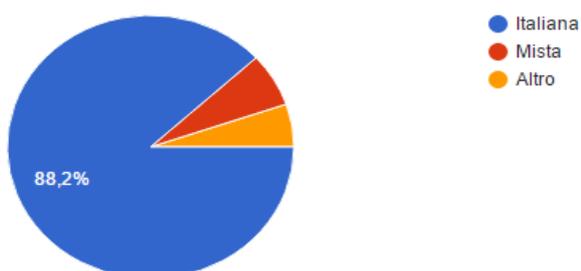
Sex: 80% of our respondents are males (therefore the majority), while 18,7% are females and there's a 0,3% who identified himself as "other".



Religion: Out of the total 76, 41,3 % of respondents identified themselves as Christians (all confessions: Roman Catholics, Evangelicals, Lutherans, etc.), 6,7% of respondents identified themselves either as Buddhist (1), Orthodox (2), Muslim or Jew (1), 12% stated they belong to "another" religious group and eventually 40% stated not to belong to any type of confession. The majority of respondents appear to be Christians or not belonging to any religious faith.



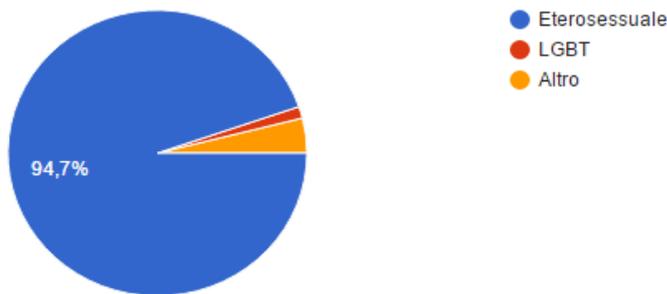
Nationality: The majority of our respondents are Italian nationals (88,2%), while 11,8% are either mixed nationality or have another nationality.



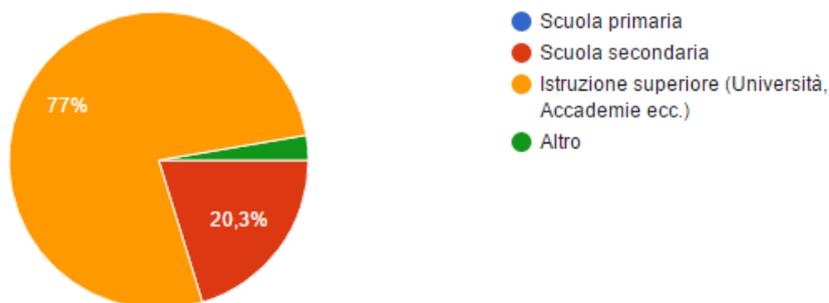


Co-funded by
the European Union

Sexual orientation: Of our total respondents 94,7% stated to be heterosexual, while 5,3% are either LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transsexual) or classify themselves as "other".



Education level: out of the 76 respondents, 77% have carried out or are currently carrying out academic studies (Bachelor's or Master's degree, Academy of fine arts, Military academies, Academy of Sciences etc.), 20,3% are still studying at secondary school, while the remaining 2,7% stated to have "other" educational levels.



1. You will be given six examples of what people write in online comments in public forums and asked to indicate how acceptable you think it is for people to write such comments online in public forums.

This first area of the questionnaire showcases a range of selected hatred-based comments (respectively on xenophobia and homophobia) taken from online news articles to which respondents had to decide whether they found them acceptable or unacceptable. This first thematic area (level of acceptability of online hate speech)



Co-funded by
the European Union

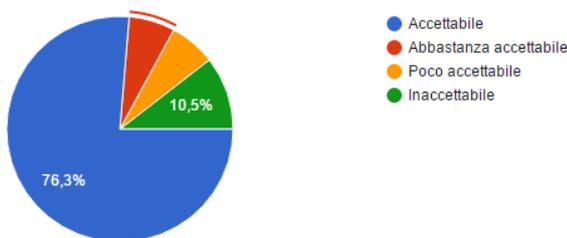
allows us to understand how acceptable young internet-users find certain online comments, and therefore their perception of hate towards particular social groups.

1.1.

IT: "Vanno rimpatriati in massa, salvo i pochi con diritto d'asilo. Se no è una invasione (e, ancor peggio, in gran parte una invasione di musulmani, che portano una religione e una cultura pericolose e violente). L'Europa non deve e non può tollerare invasioni."

EN: "they need to be sent back en masse except those few ones with asylum rights; otherwise it's an invasion (and even worst, an invasion of Muslims bringing their dangerous and violent culture and religion). Europe must not and cannot tolerate such invasions"

This comment to an article on the arrival of boats with refugees and migrants from Africa and the Middle East, has had the following results: Out of the total number of 76, 76,3% have found the above statement to be acceptable, while 6,6% have found it quite acceptable. Another 6,6% answered not really acceptable and only 10,5% of respondents found it unacceptable.



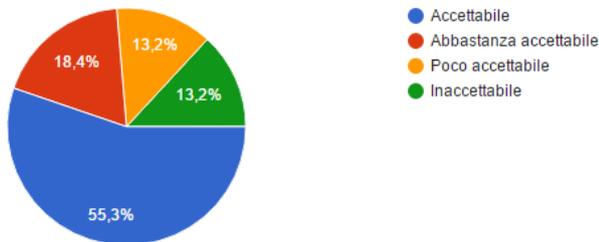
1.2.

IT: "Seppellitela in galera e buttate la chiave. Data l'età non dovrebbe avere figli piccolissimi che possano farle da scudo. Dimenticavo. Era una rom di etnia sinti? Ebbene, i sinti sono i peggiori e più pericolosi fra gli zingari perché sono quelli che più degli altri si sanno mimetizzare fra la gente comune. In ogni caso sempre ladri e delinquenti rimangono."

EN: "Lock her up in prison and throw the keys away. Given her age she probably hasn't got children who can act as shield for her. Ah I almost forgot, was she a Sinti? Well, Sintis are the worst and most dangerous among Roma as they can blend in among common people better than others. Anyway, they're all thieves and outlaws."

The above comment is yet another expression of xenophobia or hate against a particular ethnic group, in this case Roma people, related to the attempted theft in a jewelry store

by a Sinti woman. Out of 76, 55,3% answered acceptable, while 18,4% found it rather acceptable. on the other hand 13,2% respondents found it not really acceptable and only 13,2% answered unacceptable.

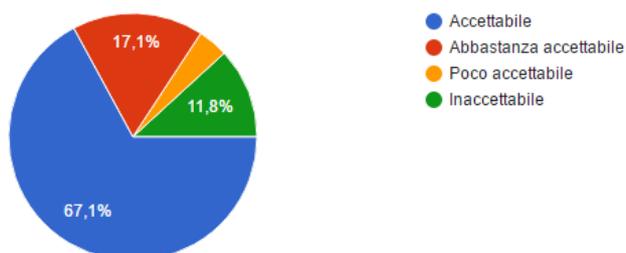


1.3.

IT: "Noi invece ci teniamo tutti gli scarti di galera e i "nulla da perdere" provenienti dalle regioni subsahariane (Nigeria, Ghana, ecc.). Ormai l'Italia è sulla via del declino, diventando un'enorme discarica sociale"

EN: "We keep in all jailbirds and convicts coming from sub-Saharan regions (Nigeria, Ghana etc.) instead. Italy is on its way to decline already, by becoming a massive social dump."

For this statement, which clearly is an expression of xenophobia addressed to African migrants, 67,1% think it is acceptable, 17,1% think it's rather acceptable, 3,9% respondents find it not really acceptable and eventually only 11,8% answered unacceptable.



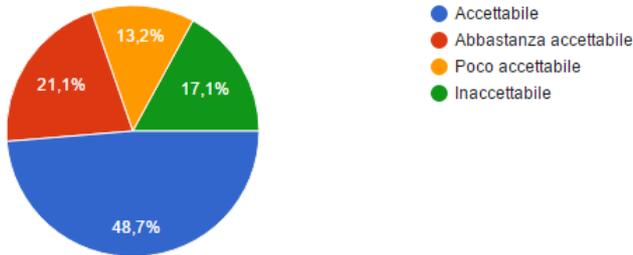
1.4.

IT: "Domani la nostra città sarà per l'ennesima volta un deprimente palcoscenico di qualche migliaio di frustrati, vittime di aberrazioni della natura."

EN: "Tomorrow for the nth time our city will be a depressing stage for some thousands of frustrated victims of nature's perversions."

This statement, focused on the demonstrations by the LGBT community and its supporters for the civil unions, was regarded by 48,7% respondents as acceptable, by

21, 1% of them rather acceptable, by 13,2% of them not really acceptable and eventually only by 17,1% of them unacceptable.

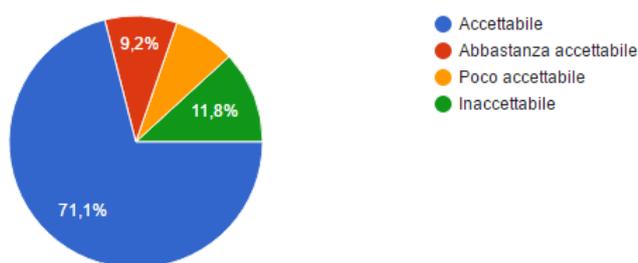


1.5.

IT: "Già i movimenti del '68 hanno rovinato intere generazioni volendo far passare l'idea che siamo tutti uguali, tutti hanno le stesse capacità e nessuno deve/può rimanere indietro. Ora vogliono pure uniformarci rispetto all'orientamento sessuale che abbiamo facendoci credere che tutto è "normale".

EN: "The protests of the '68 have ruined entire generations by conveying the idea that we're all the same, we all have the same capabilities and no one shall be left behind. And now they want us to agree on the sexual orientation by making us believe that they're all "normal".

This comment is again focused on the demonstrations of the LGBT communities and their supporters, and shows us that 71,1% of respondents find it acceptable, while 9,2% thought it was rather acceptable. on the other hand 7,9% thought it was not really acceptable and only 11,8% of respondents regarded the comment to be unacceptable.

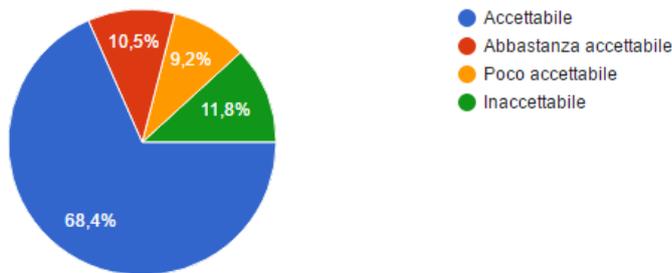


1.6.

IT: "NON MI SEMBRA CHE LA LEGGE SUI «DIVERSAMENTE ORIENTATI SESSUALMENTE» E LE ADOZIONI GAY SERVANO MOLTO ALL'ITALIA!!!"

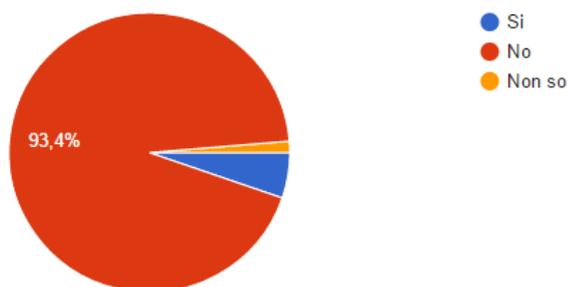
EN: "I don't think that laws on "different sexually-oriented" (here the definition in the source language is clearly linked to the Italian word "diversamente abili", meaning disabled people) or gay adoption s are really useful to Italy!!!"

Here again another homophobic comment arisen from an article dealing with the fight to have norms regulating civil unions and adoptions for same-sex couples. The 68,4% of respondents have replied acceptable and 10,5% rather acceptable. on the other hand 9,2% have replied not really acceptable and only 11,8% have judged it unacceptable.



2. The comments in question 1 were written as public comments to newspaper articles. Would it make a difference to your scores for what is acceptable if they had been written in private contexts online (e.g. private emails, private chat, private Facebook pages)?

Out of the total 76, 93,4% people has answered “No”, while 5,3% answered “Yes”, and 1 “I don’t know”. Therefore it results that the majority of respondents wouldn’t think otherwise if comments were privately written, while just a few of them, namely 5.3%, has stated they would change their mind if they were private comments.



3 respondents of those who responded “yes” have also said that it would make them more acceptable, while 1 answered they would be less acceptable.

3. Have you ever been a target of insults, threats because of your: Nationality, Skin colour, Ethnic origin, Religion, Gender, Sexual Orientation or other factors?



Co-funded by
the European Union

Here we have the second thematic area (direct/indirect discrimination experience), in which people had the chance to say if and why they have ever been object of insults or threats:

In terms of Nationality: 3 respondents have frequently been object of discrimination because of their nationality, while other 21 stated to have been rarely discriminated. On the other hand 51 answered “no” or “never” and 1 “I don’t know”.

In terms of Skin Colour: 2 respondents have frequently been object of discrimination because of their skin colour, while other 11 have said to have rarely been target of discrimination on this motivation. On the other hand 62 answered “no” and 1 “I don’t know”.

In terms of Ethnicity: 3 respondents have answered to have frequently been object of discrimination because of their ethnic roots, and 14 of them stated to have rarely been. 57 have never been object of discrimination on this factor and 2 of them stated “I don’t know”.

In terms of Religious faith: 13 people have responded to have frequently been object of discrimination based on their religious belief and 10 to have rarely been. 51 have answered “never” or just “no”, while 2 of them said they don’t know.

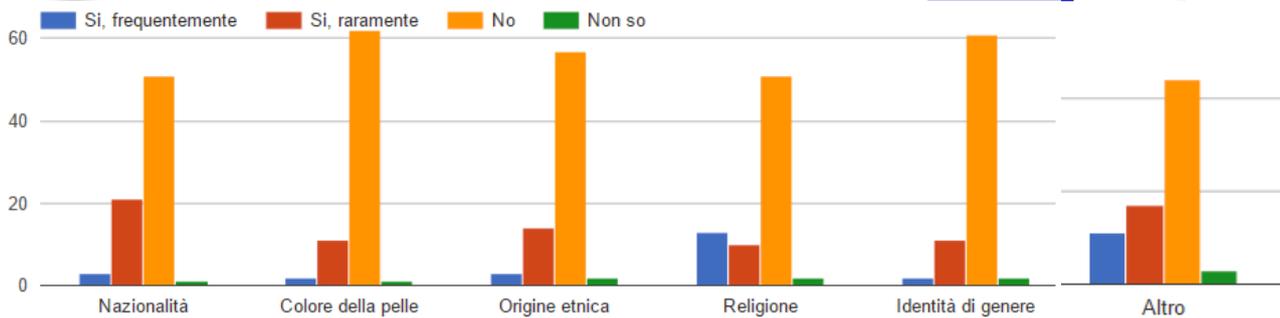
In terms of gender identity: 2 people have answered to have frequently been target of discrimination based on their gender identity and 11 to have frequently been. On the other hand 61 said they’ve never been discriminated because of this and 2 responded with “I don’t know”.

Other: 11 people stated to have frequently been object of discrimination because of elements other than the ones previously mentioned (e.g. physical disabilities, age, political views etc.), 17 people stated to have rarely been discriminated on other factors. On the other hand 44 respondents said they’ve never been target of discrimination of factors others than the one stated above and 3 answered with “I don’t know”.

These results point out that among our target group Religion as well as elements other than the ones stated on the questionnaire (be they physical handicaps, political views etc.) represent the main cause of frequent discrimination while nationality and to a lesser extent ethnicity and sexual orientation have sometimes been reason for discrimination among our respondents.

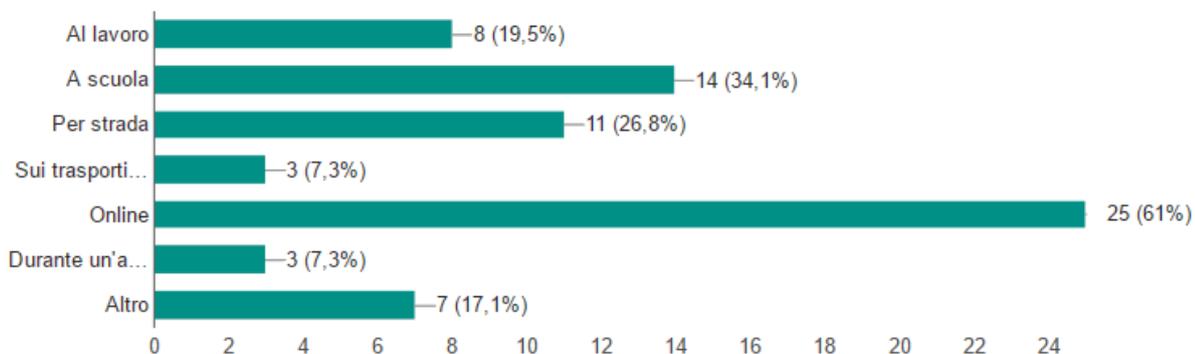


Co-funded by the European Union



When asked about where these discriminatory activities have occurred, the respondents gave the following results:

The majority of those who answered “yes” have reported discriminations online (61%) and at school (34,1%). While 26,8% reported to have been discriminated on the street and 19,5% in the workplace. Public transports and sport events have been place of discrimination for just 7,3% of respondents respectively and eventually 17,1% people answered “Other” as a place of hate discrimination. The bar graph below clearly shows the outcomes just explained.



4. Have you ever witnessed anyone being a target of insults or threats because of their: Nationality, Skin colour, Ethnic origin, Religion, Gender, Sexual orientation or other factors?

This question gave people the chance to say if and why they have ever witnessed other people being discriminated on the basis of the aforementioned characteristics, the results were the following:

In terms of Nationality: 11 respondents have answered they have frequently witnessed acts of discrimination based on a different nationality; 26 respondents stated to have



Co-funded by
the European Union

sometimes witnessed such acts of discrimination. On the other hand 38 respondents have answered not to have seen any such acts.

In terms of skin colour: 9 respondents stated they have frequently witnessed other people being target of discrimination due to their skin colour, while 25 respondents said they have sometimes experienced such discriminatory acts. On the other hand 42 people responded not to have witnessed any person being target of offence due to their colour of skin.

In terms of ethnicity: 13 participants have answered to have frequently witnessed people being target of discrimination based on their ethnic background, while 26 have sometimes or rarely witnessed such discrimination. On the other hand 37 answerers stated not to have ever witnessed such discrimination.

In terms of religious belief: 17 respondents have frequently witnessed discrimination based on a different confession while 19 other respondents have answered to have sometimes or rarely seen such a thing. On the other hand 40 people responded not to have ever witnessed such actions of creed-based discrimination.

In terms of gender identity: 10 respondents have stated to have frequently seen cases of discrimination based on the gender identity of the person and 20 have answered to have sometimes or rarely experienced such discriminatory actions against this group. On the other hand 45 people responded not to have ever witnessed such a case and 1 answered with "I don't know".

In terms of sexual orientation: 13 respondents have frequently witnessed sexual orientation-based threat or discrimination and 23 of them reported to have sometimes or rarely had such experience in their life. On the other hand 38 respondents have answered they've never witnessed any such discrimination and 2 of them answered with "I don't know".

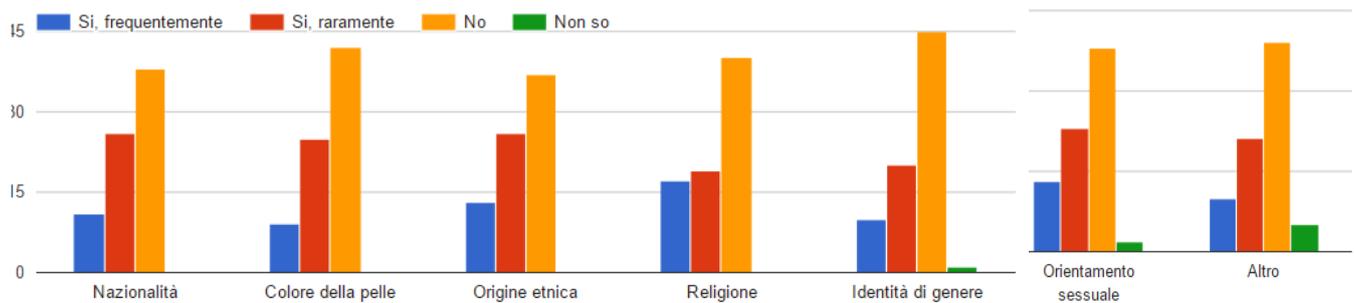
Other: 10 respondents have answered to have frequently witnessed people being target of insults, threats or discrimination because of factors other than the ones stated above and 21 of them have answered to have rarely to sometimes watched such cases. On the hand 39 respondents have stated never to have witnessed discriminatory acts because of the other factors different from the ones stated before and eventually 5 respondents have answered with "I don't know".

These results suggest that religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation are the most common causes of frequent discrimination as witnessed by our respondents while all



Co-funded by
the European Union

other factors (nationality & skin colour) have all been pointed as motives of insults or threat yet less frequently witnessed by our respondents. It might be interesting to notice how religious motives of discrimination have been indicated both by witnesses and by direct subjects as the main discriminatory factors.

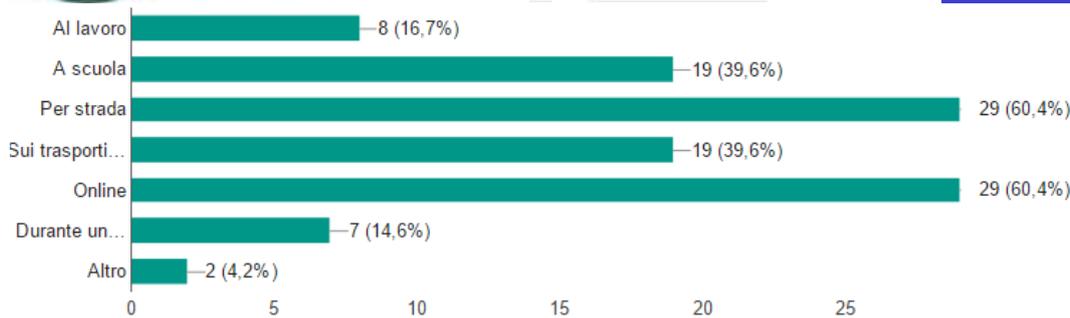


When asked about where they have witnessed such discriminatory activities, the respondents who gave a positive answer have subsequently given the following results:

The majority of those who answered “yes” have equally witnessed discriminations online (60,4%) and on the street (60,4%). Subsequently 39,6% have marked school as a place where they have seen discriminatory actions as well as another 39,6% of respondents who have indicated public transportation as such place. 16,7% mentioned the workplace and then sports events seem to be the least scene where people have witnessed discriminatory activities (14,6%). Eventually 4,2% respondents have reported to have witnessed discrimination or threat in other places. This data can be clearly seen in the bar graph below. It’s highly interesting to observe how online media rank as top-rated places for discrimination both by people who directly experience it/have experienced it, and by those who witness/ have witnessed it, thus making the web a critical high-risk discrimination area. It’s also remarkable to highlight how public transportation and the street, as well as schools, seem to be the venue of most cases of discrimination witnessed by our respondents after online media.



Co-funded by
the European Union



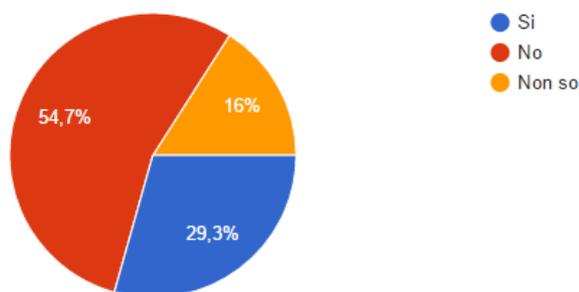
5. Would you report insults or threats directed at you because of your nationality, skin colour, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation?

Here respondents were asked if they'd report threats or insults they're target of and the outcomes are the following:

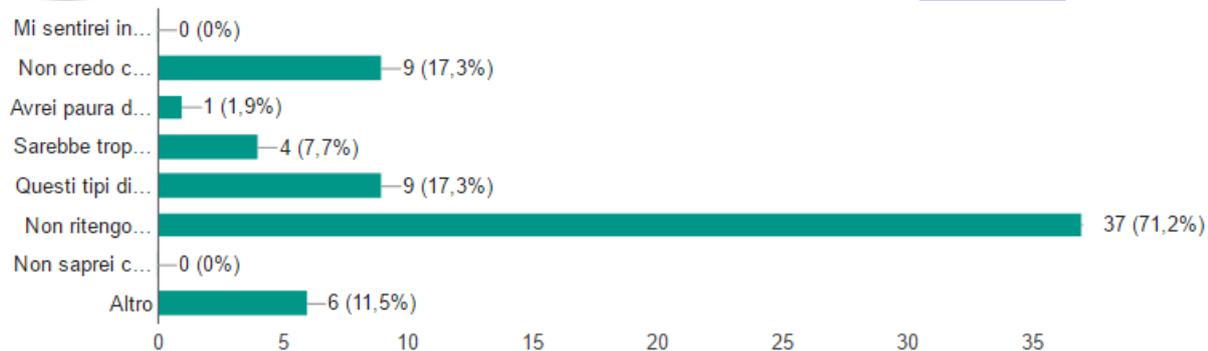
54,7% of them, so the majority, has answered they'd not report it.

29,3% of them have answered they'd report such actions.

16% respondents have answered they've got no clue about it.



Those who answered “no” were subsequently asked to indicate the reason why they wouldn't report such discriminations. Most of them (71,2%) pointed out that they don't deem such actions to deserve notification or lawsuit, while a 17,3% answered they believe that these incidents are far too common to be reported and, equally, another 17,3% responded they don't think police or law enforcement can do anything to tackle it. 7,7% have responded that it'd be too difficult to report such actions, while 1,9% has stated he/she would be afraid of reprisals. The remaining 11,5% have answered that they'd not report insults or threats directed at them because of other reasons. For reference see bar chart below.



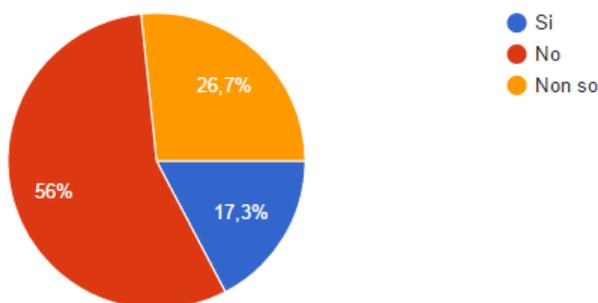
6. If you witnessed someone being insulted or threatened because of their nationality, skin colour, ethnic origin, religion, gender or sexual orientation, would you report this?

Here respondents were asked if they'd report threats or insults they've witnessed towards third parties and the outcomes are the following:

56% of them, so the majority has answered they'd not report it.

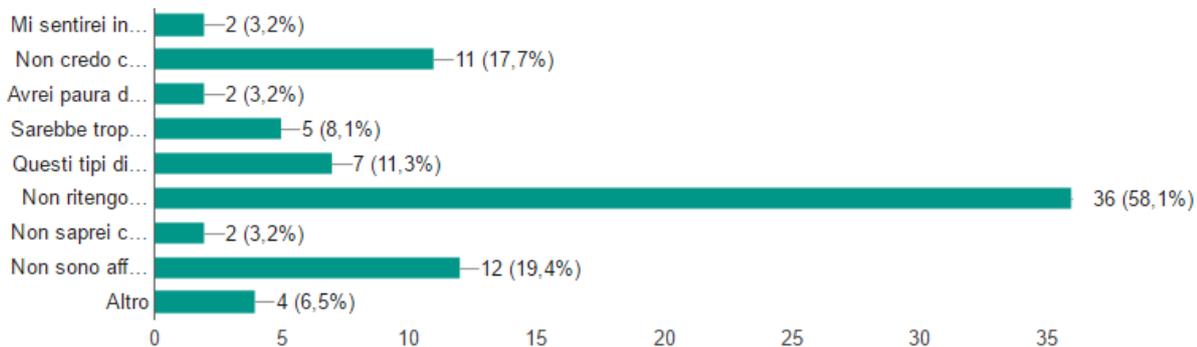
17,3% of them have answered they'd report such actions.

26,7% respondents have answered they've got no clue about it.



Those who answered “no” were subsequently asked to indicate the reason why they wouldn't report such discriminations. Most of them (58,1%) have answered that they don't deem such actions as offensive so as to require to be reported. 19,4% have answered that it's none of their business to report someone else's discrimination, 17,7% have answered that they don't believe the law enforcement can do anything to prevent it, 11,3% have answered that these kind of incidents are far too common to be reported,

8, 1% have stated that it'd be too complicated to report such actions. Eventually tied for 6th we've got 2 respondents saying that they'd feel embarrassed or uneasy, 2 respondents saying they'd be afraid of reprisals, and 2 respondents saying that they wouldn't know how to report it. Eventually the 6,5% of respondents have stated they they'd not report insults or threats directed at them because of other reasons. For reference see bar chart below.



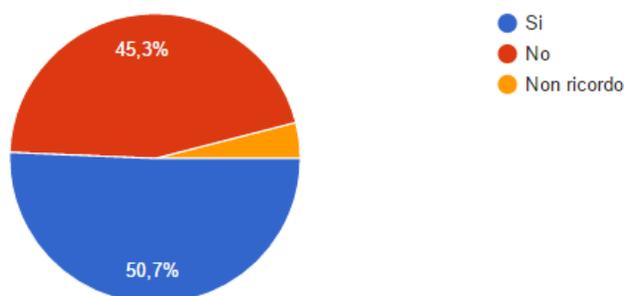
7. Have you ever heard of the notion of hate speech?

Our 76 respondents have answered to this question as follows:

The majority (50,7%) said they've heard of hate speech

45,3% stated they haven't heard of it

The remaining 4% responded with "I don't remember"



8. The notion of hate speech does exist and can be defined in different ways. In the following you will be given some definitions and asked to indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of them.

8.1 *“Hate speech means making negative prejudiced remarks about people because of their race or nationality or ethnic origins or religion or gender or sexual orientation”*

Here hate speech is identified as a negative prejudice-based remark on the basis of race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation etc., so participants have answered as follows:

35,5% respondents have answered they strongly disagree with the definition above;

14,5% respondents have answered they disagree with the definition;

13,2% respondents have answered they rather agree with the definition;

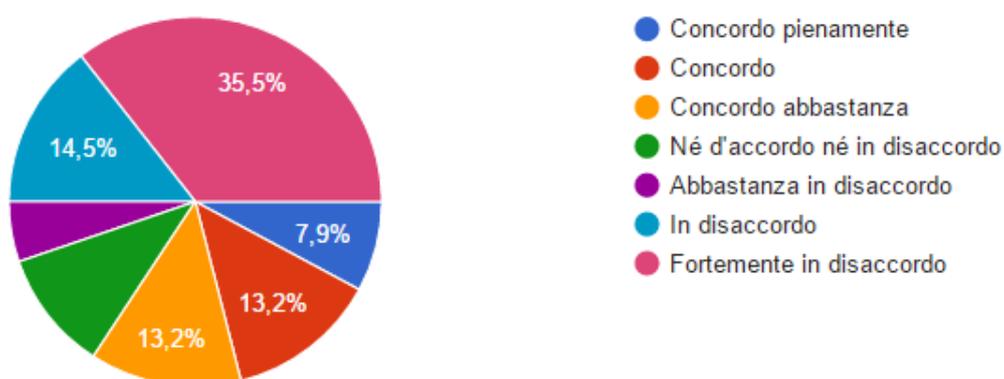
13,2% respondents have answered they agree with the definition;

10,5% respondents have answered they don't agree nor disagree;

7,9% respondents have answered they fully agree with the above statement;

5,3% respondents have answered they rather disagree with the definition.

See below for graph reference.



Then respondents had to express their thought on whether they believed necessary to have laws regulating this kind of crime and the answers were:

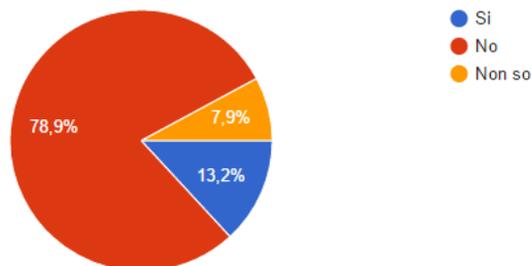


Co-funded by
the European Union

78,9% answered “no”

13,2% answered “yes”

7,9% answered “I don’t know”



8.2 *“Hate speech means insulting someone because of their race or nationality or ethnic origin or religion or gender or sexual orientation.”*

Here hate speech is identified as an insult based on race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation etc., so participants have answered as follows:

31,6% respondents have answered they strongly disagree with the definition above;

17,1% respondents have answered they rather agree with the definition;

14,5% respondents have answered they disagree with the above definition;

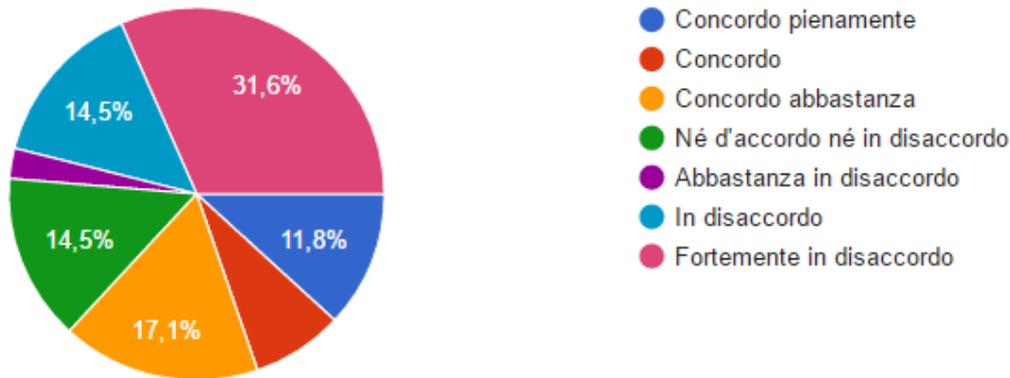
14,5% respondents have answered they don’t agree nor disagree with it;

11,8% responders have answered they fully agree with the above statement;

7,9% responders have answered they agree with the above statement;

2,6% responders have answered they rather disagree with the definition.

See below for graph reference.

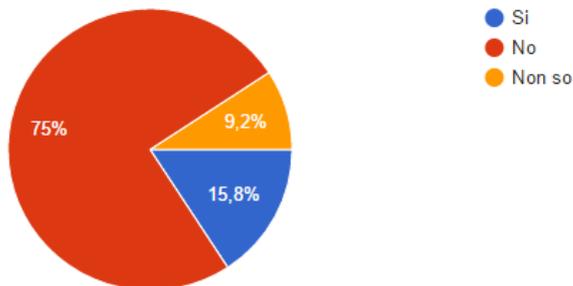


Then respondents had to express their thought on whether they believed necessary to have laws regulating this kind of crime and the answers were:

75 % answered “no”

15,8 % answered “yes”

9,2 % answered “I don’t know”



8. 3 *“Hate speech means threatening someone because of their race or nationality or ethnic origin or religion or gender or sexual orientation.”*

Here hate speech is identified as a threat to someone on the basis of their race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation etc., so participants have answered as follows:

25% of respondents have answered they strongly disagree with the definition above;

21,1% of respondents have answered they rather agree with it;

14,5% of respondents have answered they fully agree with it;



Co-funded by
the European Union

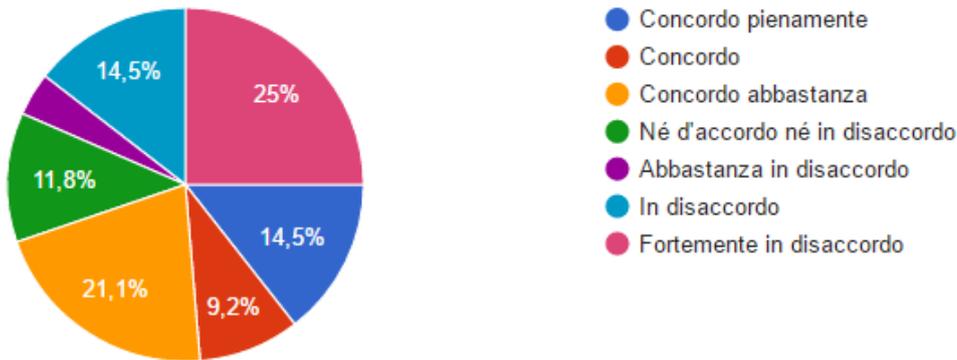
14,5% of respondents have answered they disagree with the above statement;

11,8% of respondents have answered they don't agree nor disagree;

9,2% of respondents have answered they agree with it;

3,9% of respondents have answered they rather disagree with this definition.

See below for graph reference.

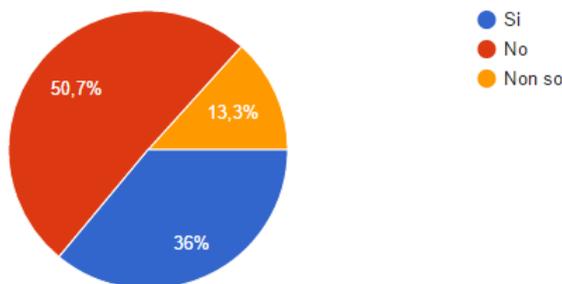


Then respondents had to express their thought on whether they believed necessary to have laws regulating this kind of crime and the answers were:

50,7 % answered "no"

36 % answered "yes"

13,3 % answered "I don't know"



8.4 *“Hate speech means encouraging other people to be violent towards or show hatred towards people because of their race or nationality or ethnicity or religion or gender or sexual orientation.”*

Here hate speech is identified as an incitement to hatred against a particular group on the basis of their race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation etc., so participants have answered as follows:

19,7 % of respondents have answered they strongly disagree with the definition above;

19,7% of respondents have answered they rather agree with the point;

19,7% of respondents have answered they don't agree nor disagree with what stated above;

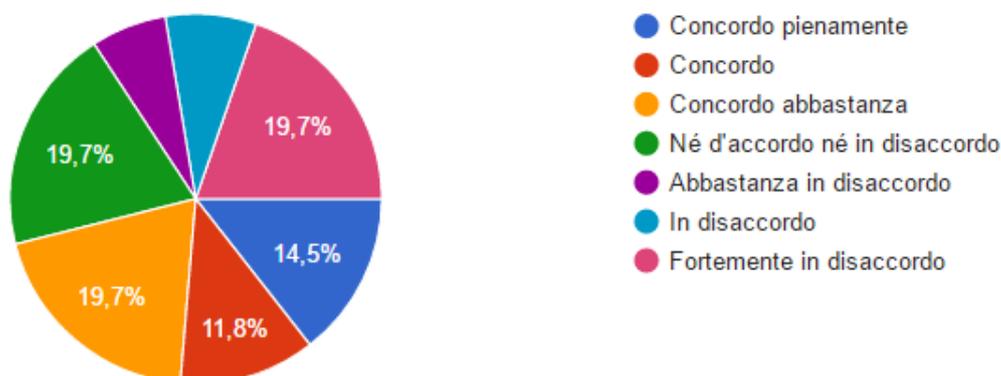
14,5% respondents have answered they fully agree with the above statement;

11,8% respondents have answered they agree with it;

7,9% respondents have answered they disagree with it;

6,6% respondents have answered they rather disagree with the above definition.

See below for graph reference.



Then respondents had to express their thought on whether they believed necessary to have laws regulating this kind of crime and the answers were:

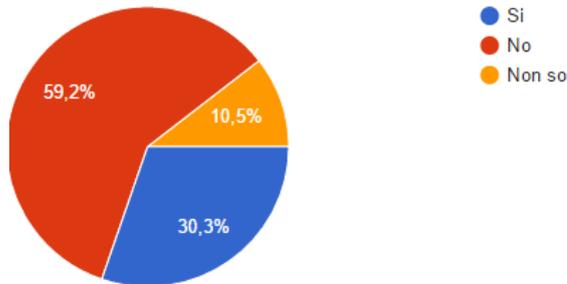


Co-funded by
the European Union

59,2 % answered “no”

30,3 % answered “yes”

10,5 % answered “I don’t know”



Conclusions:

The results of this questionnaire provide some empirical data about the perception of young internet users in Italy of the hate speech phenomenon. This survey obtained information from a diverse group of people, from students to professionals, from people as young as 18 to people in their 30s. The data resulted from this survey provide a small-scale evidence about how respondents perceive discrimination based on racial, religious and sexual elements, as well as what they think about the need to develop norms and tools to tackle hate-based discrimination. The survey findings suggest that:

- The majority of our respondents don't have a sufficient perception of discrimination and all the forms it may take. They're not really acquainted with the hate speech phenomenon as they haven't received any kind of education on it.
- The majority of them is not able to discern and to acknowledge discriminatory speeches and attitudes.
- Hate speech and hate crime are not well-known issues.
- The lack of knowledge on what hate speech represents is linked to an underdeveloped culture on the discrimination of citizens as the majority of our young respondents appear not to be aware and/or sensitive to the different forms of discrimination.