



Sustainable Civil Society Dialogue for Sustainable Development

E-report

Results of Data Collection in Italy and Turkey

The *Activity A.1.3 – Data Collection* of the *Sustainable Civil Society Dialogue for Sustainable Development – SCSD-SD* project has been conducted by both applicants – *Kyoto Club* in Italy and *Çevreci Enerji Derneği* in Turkey – during the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th months of the action, as previously announced in the *Action Plan*, with the knowledge of the targeted Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) about EU environmental acquis tested during the *Activity A.1.2 - Monitoring Activities*.

Following the indications of the common communication strategy which has been agreed at the early stage of the project and as planned in the approved project proposals, a target of 50 CSOs for Turkey and 50 for Italy have been identified. The final number of CSOs agreeing to fill-in the data collection questionnaire has been 60 CSOs from Italy and 94 CSOs from Turkey.

As for the kind of participating CSOs: both in Turkey and in Italy they reflect the wide variety of fields of engagement covered by the *Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development* sustainability definition, i.e. including the environmental, social and economic dimensions.

The very high number of Turkish CSOs has been reached thanks to the communication efforts by the *Çevreci Enerji Derneği* Colleagues and to the great success of the *Monitoring Workshop*, held in Izmir on 12 September 2019. Even in Italy, where no data collection-related event was planned, the number of CSOs taking part is very interesting, with a noteworthy kind of participation: most of the respondents added spontaneous suggestions under the “Other” section in questions 3 and 4.

The strategy, for a more effective analysis and evaluation, was to ask the same questions both for the Italian and the Turkish participants, to build up a comparison of the replies.

To hopefully provide an as clear overview as possible, answers have been collected and analyzed using simple graphs. The additional suggestions under questions 3 and 4 have been regrouped by theme/subject: this, in our opinion, leads to a very interesting general final output.

On the following page, the questionnaire used is reproduced.



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Questionnaire

Dear Respondent, we are grateful if you could answer the following questions, which would be useful for the implementation of our project. While the questionnaire is anonymous, we kindly ask you to indicate the name of your civil society organization (CSO).

1. What is your opinion about the European Union (EU) enlargement process ?

Very negative ☐ Negative ☐ Positive ☐ Very positive ☐

2. What is your opinion about Turkey's accession to the EU ?

Of no use at all ☐ Little useful ☐ Useful ☐ Very useful ☐

3. In your opinion what would Turkey need to successfully finalize its accession to the EU ? (Maximum 2 answers)

A more competitive economy ☐

Higher renewable energy sources and energy efficiency investments ☐

More exchanges and contacts with EU countries ☐

More sustainable development ☐

Others (please specify) ☐

2

4. Which are the main barriers to Turkey to enter the EU ? (Maximum 2 answers)

The language ☐

The immigration policies ☐

The religion ☐

The absence of a long-term decarbonization strategy for the economy ☐

Others (please specify) ☐

CSO institution:.....

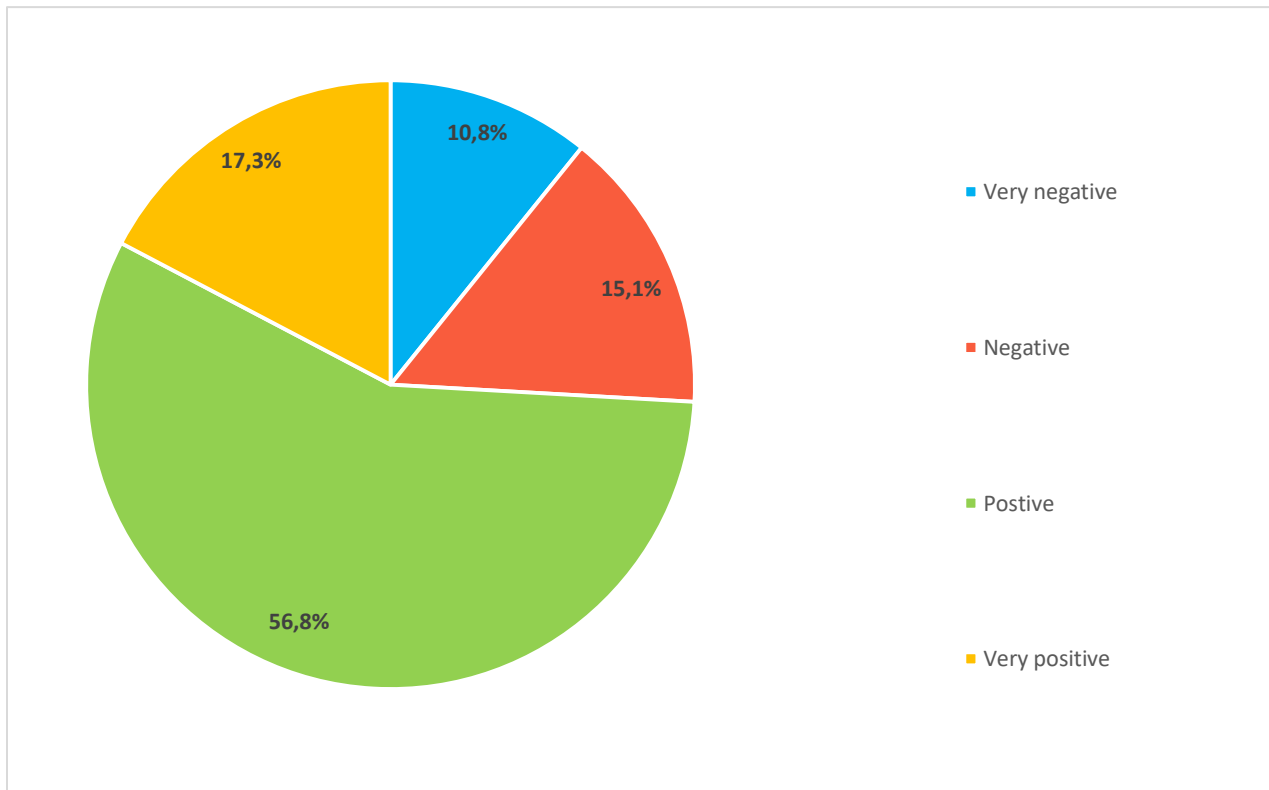




The results are:

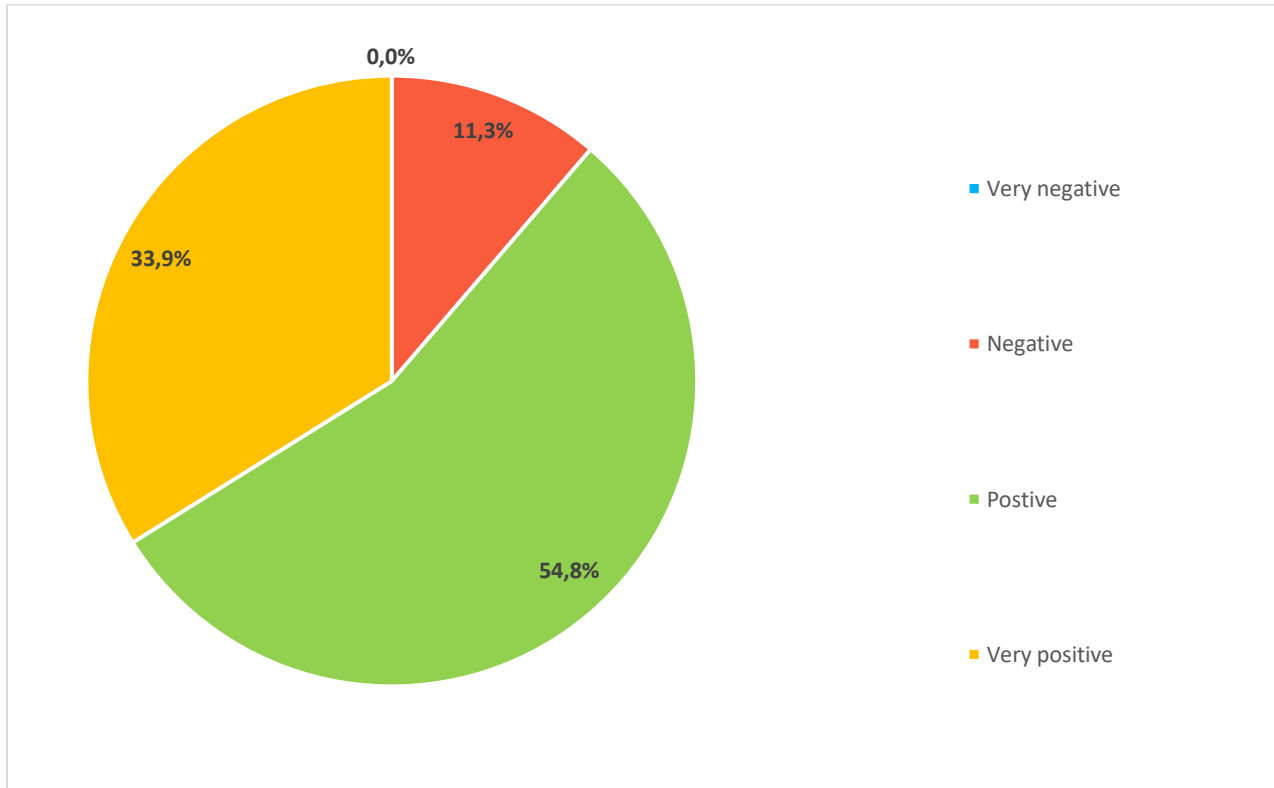
Question 1: *What is your opinion about the European Union (EU) enlargement process?*

Turkish CSOs:





Italian CSOs:



While the “positive” and “very positive” answers have reached around the same share of replies, the “negative” and “very negative” are lower by the Italian CSOs: 11,3% for Italy and 25,9% for Turkey.

The main significant result is that the trust in a positive impact of the EU enlargement process is confirmed by the most of the participating CSOs in both countries.

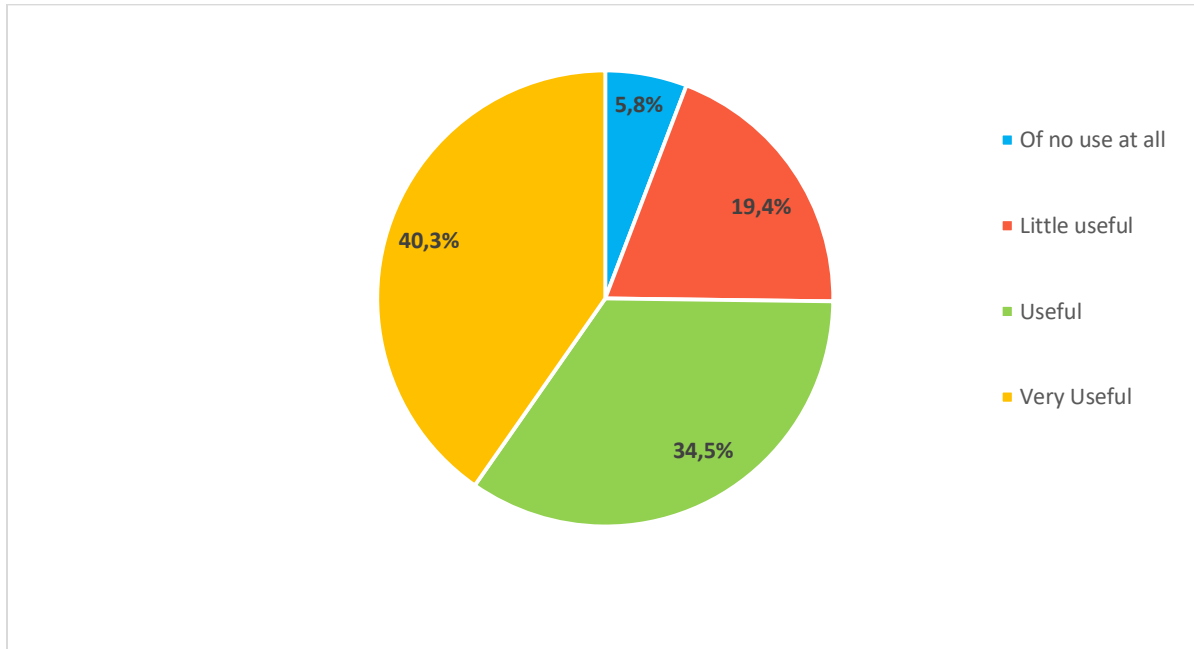




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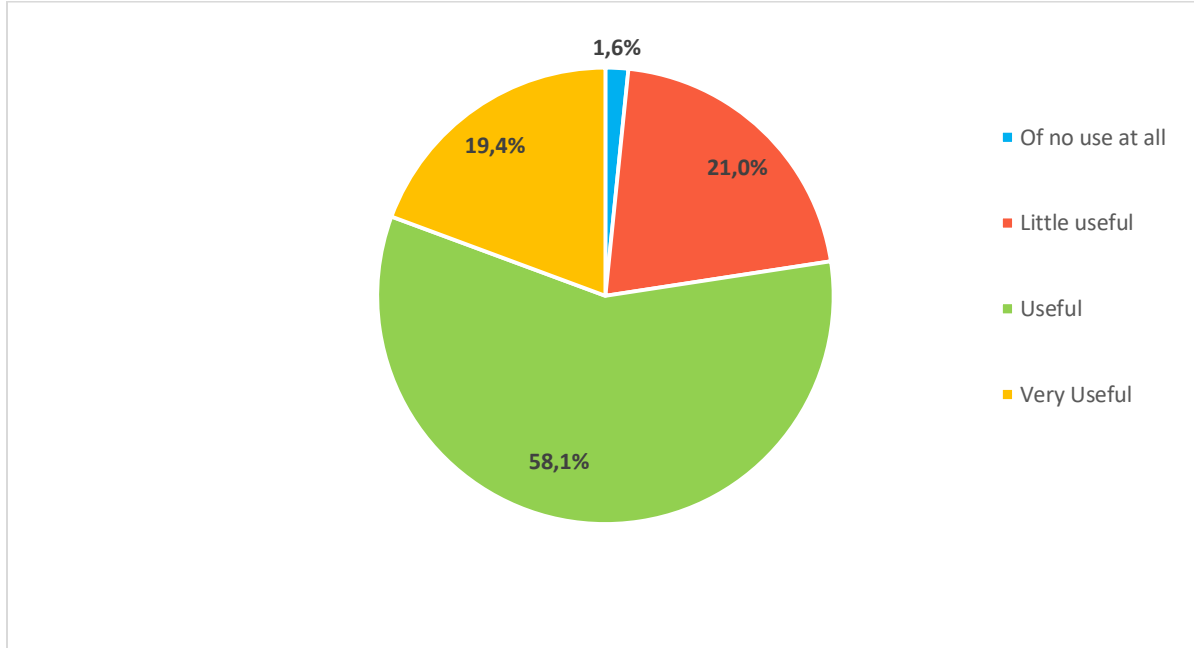
Question 2: What is your opinion about Turkey's accession to the EU?

Turkish CSOs:





Italian CSOs:



Here the share of the positive/negative answers is quite the same: 74,8% positive for the Turkish CSOs, 77,5% for the Italian ones. The result is in our opinion very impressive, especially from the Italian side: while drafting the project, one of the objective was to improve the mutual understanding and the bilateral exchange of common concerns through overcoming stereotypes and misperceptions: by these first results, the large majority of the participating CSOs is positive about the Turkish accession.

Italian respondents clearly expressed their interest in better understanding a complex country like Turkey: climate change, in particular, turns out to be a great driver for the dialogue, since the Mediterranean area is, globally, one of the most affected areas ¹ and Turkey and Italy are facing very similar challenges. This has been proved also by the project's *Civil Society Dialogue* meetings in Rome and İzmir.

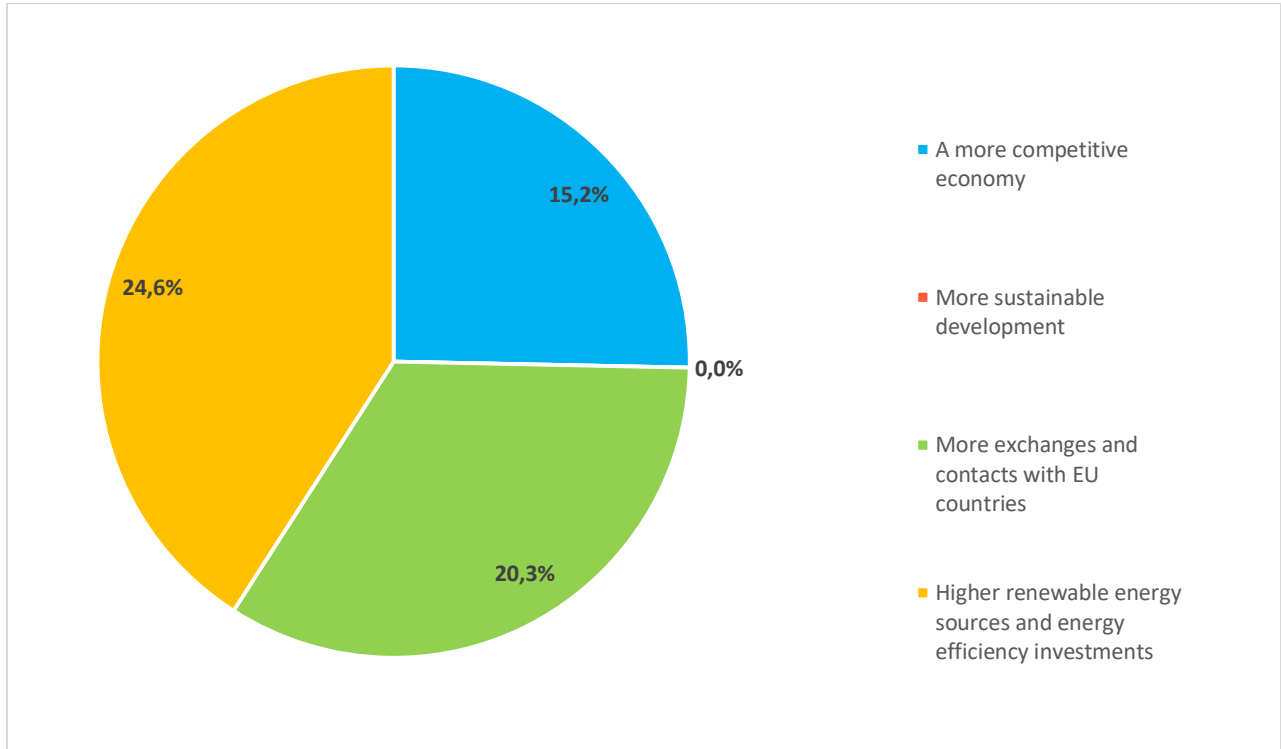
¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/science-update/worrying-effects-accelerating-climate-change-mediterranean-basin>





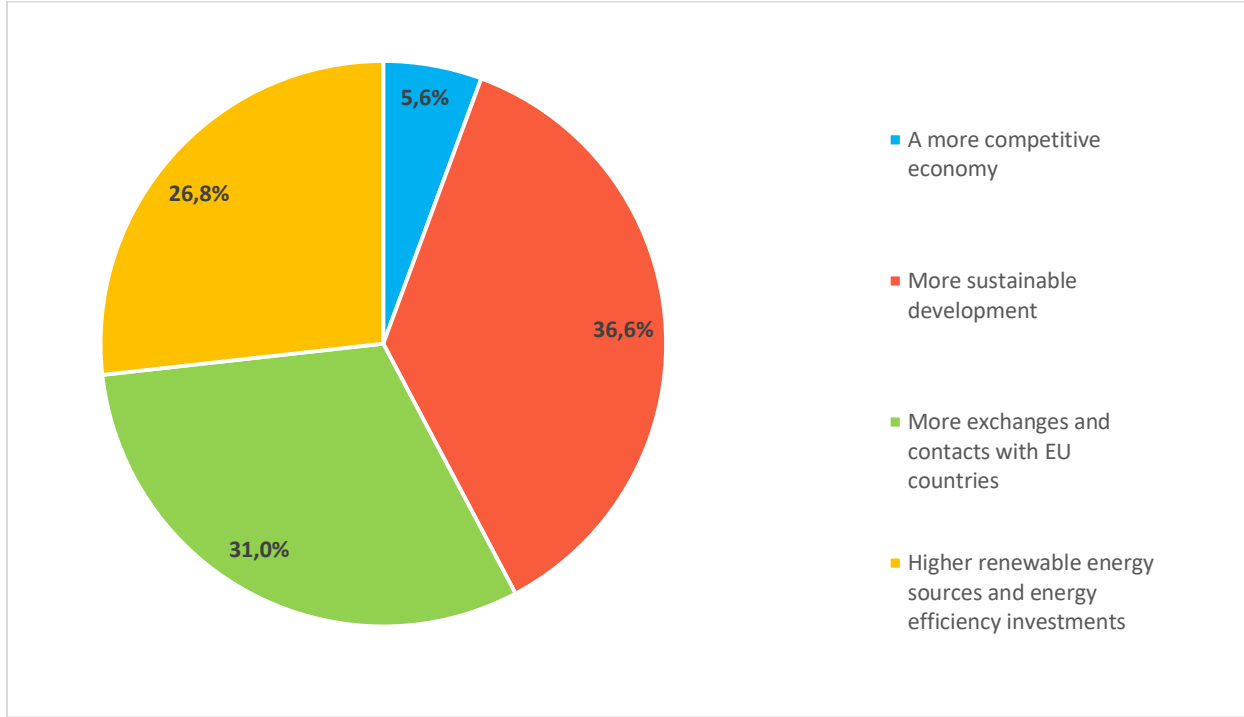
Question 3: *In your opinion what would Turkey need to successfully finalize its accession to the EU? (Maximum 2 answers)*

Turkish CSOs:





Italian CSOs:



8

The answer *higher investments in Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency* has been chosen by nearly the same share of respondents both in Turkey and in Italy.

Turkey has been moving on so fast on renewable energy investments especially in the last 10 years. With the change of legislation on renewable energy investments and with the revisions of the legislation on renewables, in recent years there is an increase in the usage of renewable energy resources. However, when we review the potential of Turkey there should be more renewable energy investments. That's why the answer *Higher renewable energy sources and energy efficiency investments* has been chosen by the 24,6% of the Turkish CSOs. One of the objectives of this project is raising the awareness of CSOs on renewable energy and energy efficiency.

We notice that the share of *more exchange and contacts with EU countries* is higher in Italy than in Turkey – 31% compared to 20,3% - confirming what mentioned before about the great interest that the Italian Civil Society demonstrated for Turkey.





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To be highlighted also is the much higher share that the Turkish CSOs gave to *a more competitive economy*: 15,2% compared to 5,6%. Our analysis is that the economic issues Turkey is going through in the last period are not well known in Italy, where instead great visibility had the latest Turkish investments on natural gas and fossil fuels, which in part explains the higher share of *more sustainable development* from the Italian participants. On the other hand, also the Turkish respondents are probably not aware about the economic crisis still ongoing in the EU, particularly in Italy and in the *MED* countries: Italian CSOs do not consider the EU economy so competitive right now, or at least a long-term sustainable development strategy is seen as a more relevant requirement to become an EU Member State.

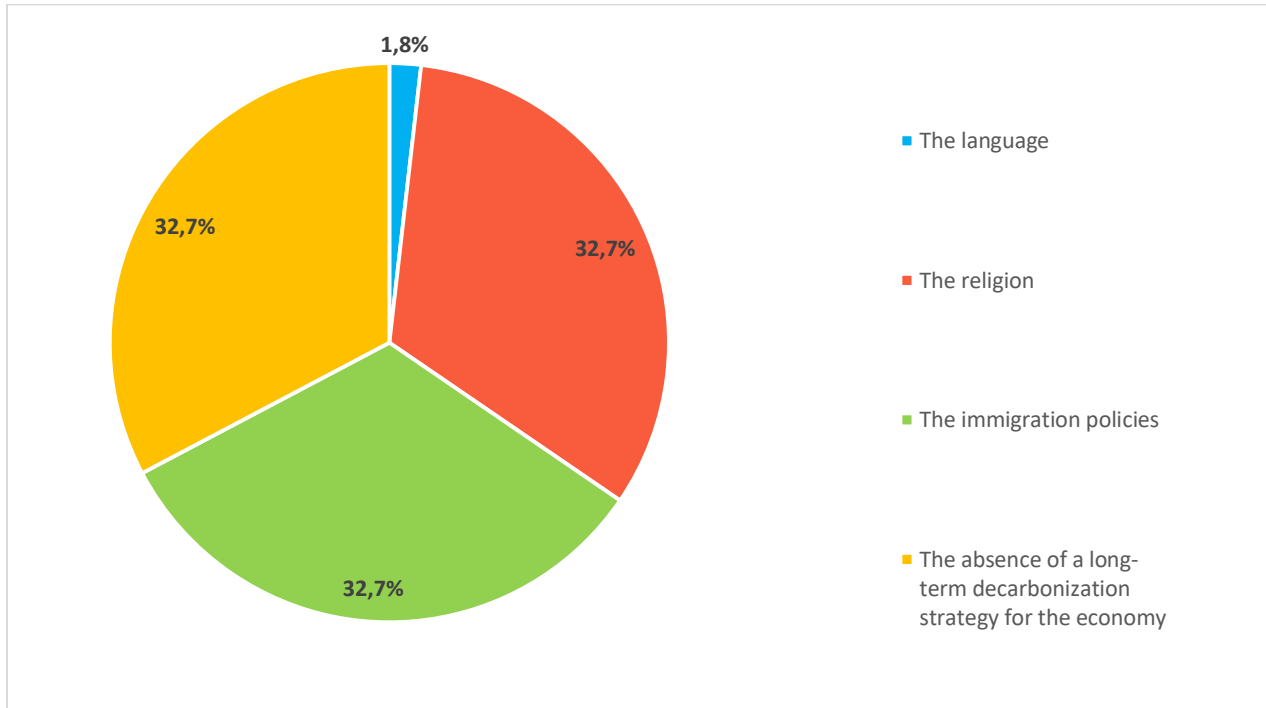




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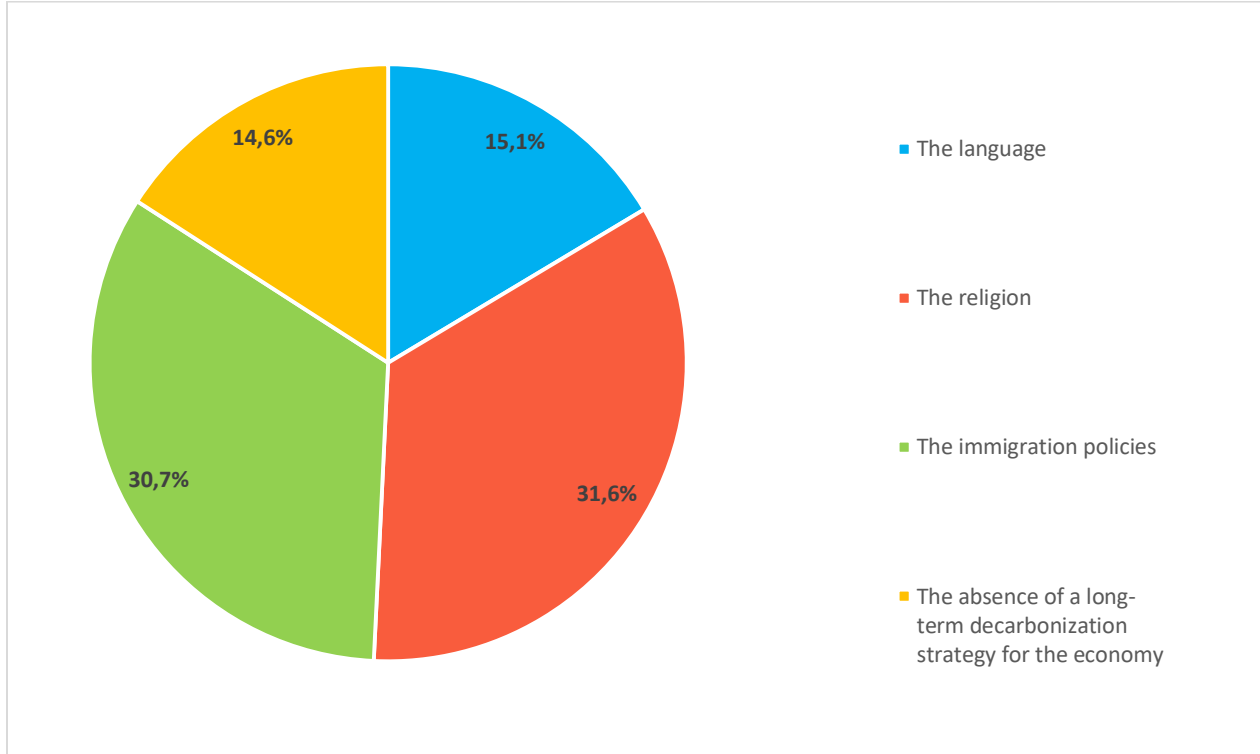
Question 4: Which are the main barriers to Turkey to enter the EU? (Maximum 2 answers)

Turkish CSOs:





Italian CSOs:



11

While drafting the questionnaire, these have been imagined as the answers to understand if, and how far, socio-cultural differences are considered as barriers by both Turkish and Italian civil societies.

The religion and immigration policies have been the most chosen answers from both sides.

The first one could be easily foreseen as, by many experts and researchers, the main obstacle, around 20 years ago when the negotiation talks between Turkey and the EU started, was the debate about the “Christian roots” of the EU: the reference was present in the EU Constitution draft of the early 2000s. Despite having been removed by the 2009 Lisbon Treaty – with a hard confrontation that split the EU civil society according to the different opinions at the time - where the project of a common EU Constitution has been definitely abandoned, it was introduced in the first place at the same time of the debate about the negotiations with Turkey, and for most of the Italian civil society this is still an issue.





In addition, the “fear of Islam” that in the last years has anguished the EU – due to the massive communication and the great impact on the civil society by the so-called “terror strategy”, from the 2001 *Twin Towers* onwards – had also a role in raising this obstacle.

Finally, the women position in the “Muslim” countries is also seen as a great obstacle around the EU: this could be one of the most valuable points of the project from the EU side, since generalization when speaking about Islam is very common and Turkey has always been a great laboratory under this point of view.

In fact, among Islamic countries one the most democratic and secular is Turkey: 67,3% of Turkish CSOs do not think that religion is one of the main problems for the accession to EU, so this is a good sign for Turkish civil society.

Regarding the immigration policies, this would be more a common point than an obstacle: both Turkey and Italy are facing massive immigration, from Syria and North/Central Africa. The concerns expressed by the civil society from both sides are the same, as are the prejudices.

As before mentioned, many respondents added inputs by filling the “Other” section: a summary of the answers, regrouped by theme/subject, is reproduced in the following page.

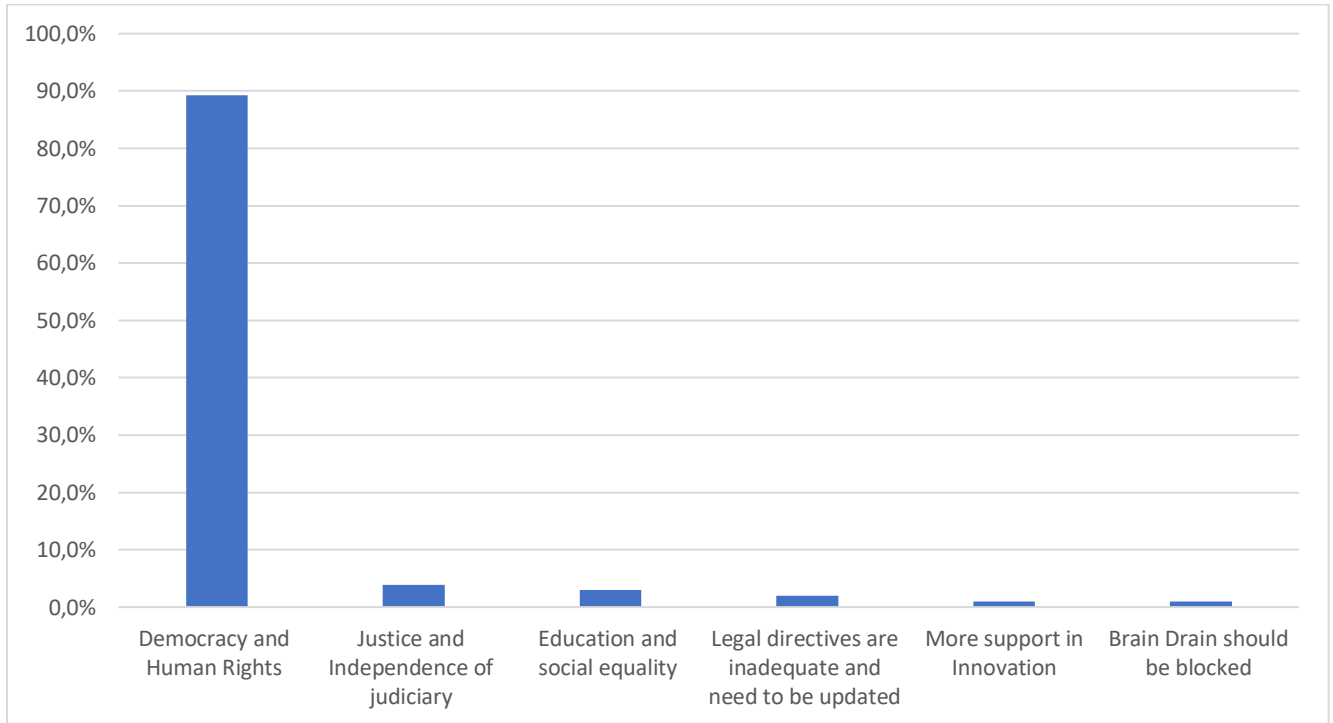




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Other – Question 3 (needs):

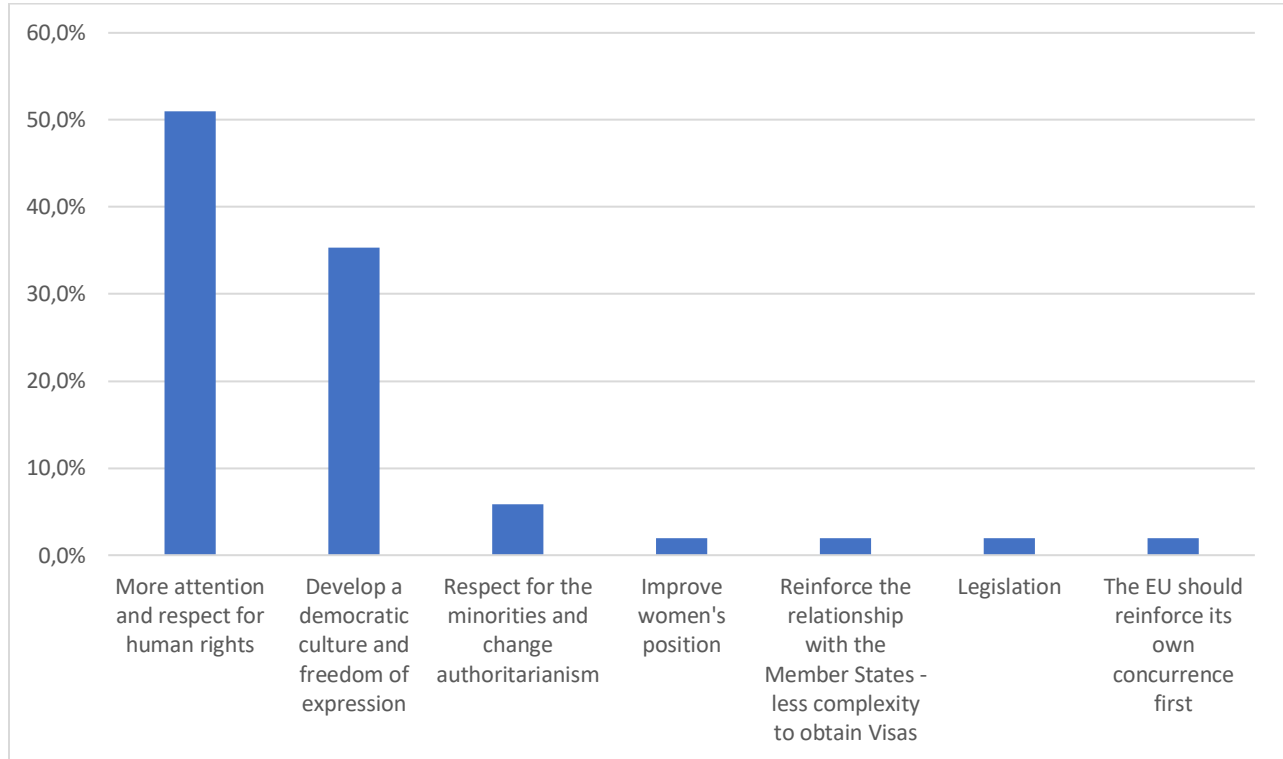
Turkish CSOs:





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Italian CSOs:



From these spontaneously added answers it is very clear that for the interviewed CSOs the greatest barrier are is the democracy and human rights dimensions. The fact that these are the tops concerns in both countries demonstrates how the participating Italian CSOs feel about the Turkish political situation and how this is actually a real issue also from the Turkish point of view.

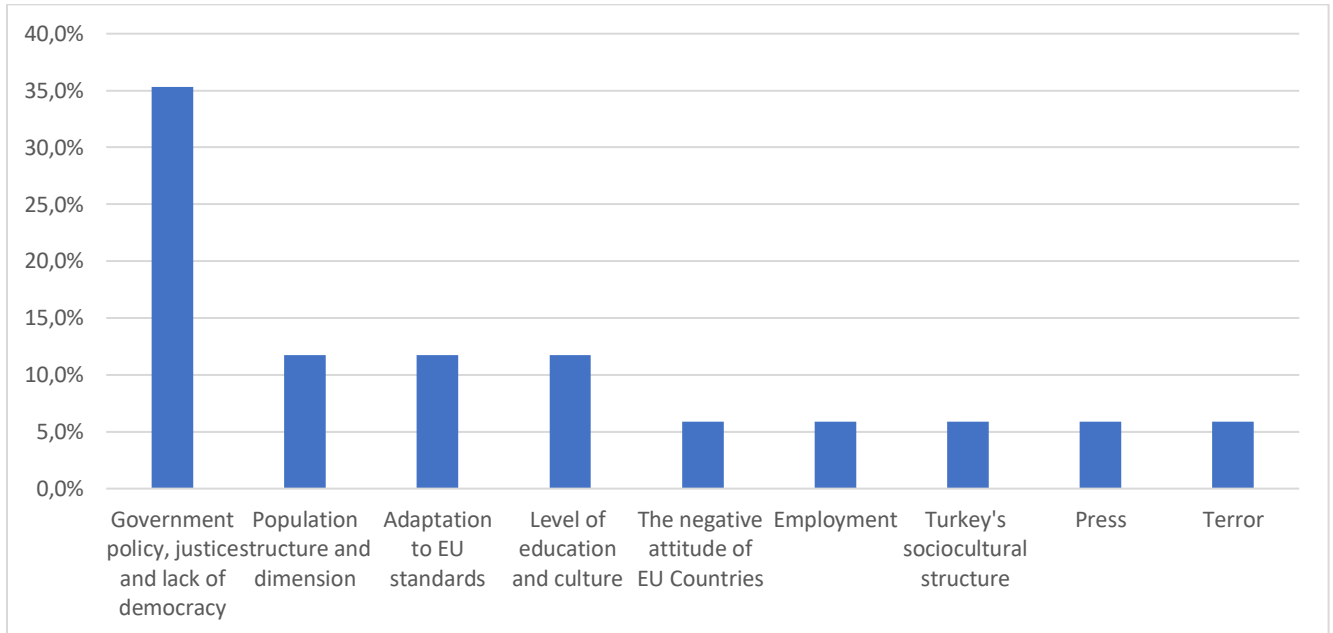




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Other – Question 4 (barriers):

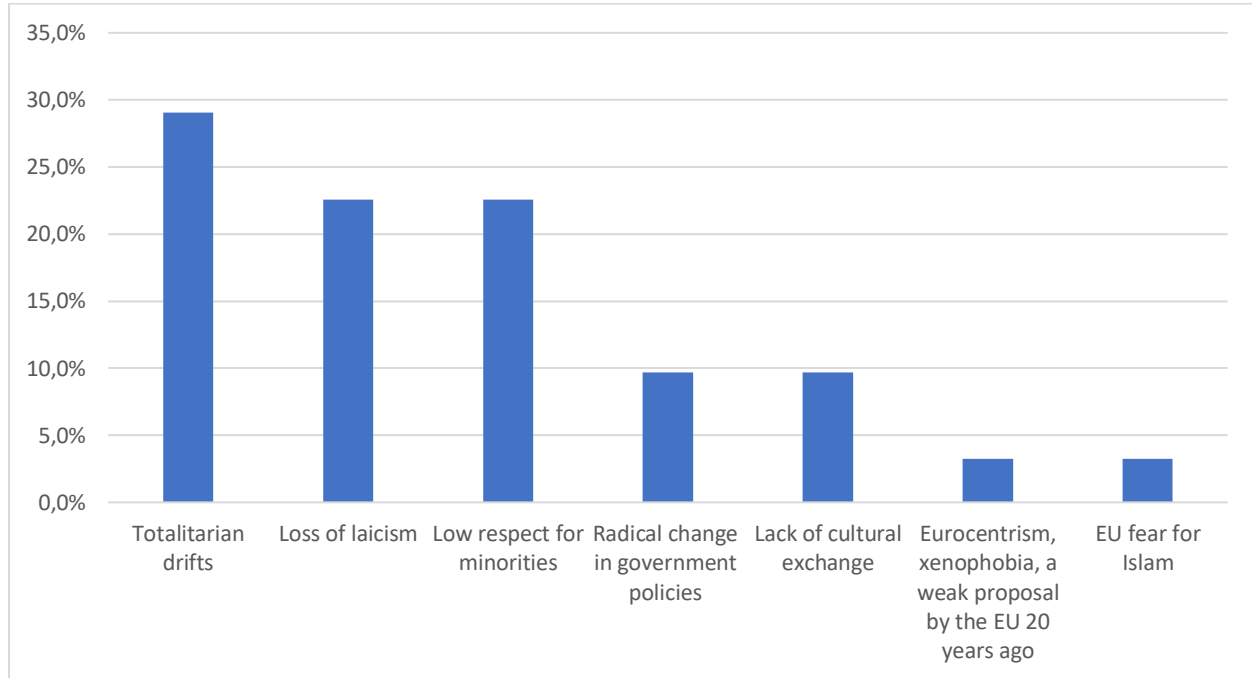
Turkish CSOs:





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Italian CSOs:



16

The lack of democracy is seen also as one of the main barriers. Other relevant feedback includes:

According to the Turkish CSOs:

- The socio-cultural structure (population, level of education/culture).
- The adaptation to the EU standards.

According to the Italian CSOs:

- The loss of laicism – linked to what already mentioned before about Questions 3 and 4: Turkey has been always seen from the EU as a great laboratory and hope for a secular Islam.
- Low respect for minorities.





Both sides gave some importance to the “negative attitude” of the EU Member States: a few of the Italian CSOs explicitly mentioned the weak EU Turkey accession proposal by the EU around 20 years ago.

With reference to the project objectives, great interest in building-up the dialogue has been shown in both countries, as also the other on-going project activities are demonstrating.

Misperception and prejudices turned out to be much less relevant than what imagined when drafting the activity plan. By the way, generalization is always a risk, and a country with so many social and cultural differences as Turkey is an opportunity to encourage a more realistic evaluation by EU CSOs.

When we check the answers by Turkish CSOs, the general opinion is positive for the accession to EU of Turkey. However, with the steps towards democracy the prejudices will be fall down also by the Italian – EU civil society. We still see so many different shortcomings by Turkey towards the accession. However, it is hoped that these shortcomings will be overcome in the near future.

