



# **INTERACT**

## **Inclusion Through Environmental Activities**



**Funded by the  
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**Joint Report on the Survey  
“Knowledge, Perceptions and  
Views on Environment,  
Employment and Democracy  
amongst European Immigrants  
living in Cyprus and Italy”**



**Nicosia / Spoleto**

**January 2014**

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## Introduction

### THE PROJECT

The **NGO AKTI** in partnership with **GSI Italia** (Gruppi di Solidarietà Internazionale Italia) have undertaken a project titled **“INTERACT: Inclusion through environmental activities”**, funded by the **EU, Europe for Citizens Programme**, the aim of which is to bring together European citizens using the environment as a tool and an opportunity to improve the quality of life of all EU citizens in Cyprus, enabling the improvement of integration in society by sharing common values. The project, which will be implemented from October 2013 to March 2015, is specifically targeting women, youth and children.

Requiring an understanding of the context in which to plan, design and fine-tune various activities within the project, two national surveys, in Cyprus and Italy respectively, were conducted with the aim of eliciting quantitative data assessing immigrant knowledge, perceptions and views on environment, employment and democracy. The research focused on the subjects of social interaction, local community, access to Information and Participation in decision making processes and Green Jobs in order to elicit the relevant information. AKTI has commissioned RAI Consultants Ltd to carry out the survey whereas GSI conducted the survey internally through own means.

The **objective** of the surveys was to assess immigrant knowledge, perceptions and views on environment, employment and democracy. In terms of the **methodology** of the survey, the same questionnaire which was jointly developed and agreed upon was used in both national surveys. The fieldwork for both surveys was conducted in January 2014. The survey in Cyprus was conducted through face-to-face interviews using the snowball technique with 202 respondents, 70% of which were female and 30% male. The respondents, EU immigrants, resided in all the main cities/towns of Cyprus, more specifically 81 participants from the city of Nicosia, 51 from Limassol, 30 from Larnaca and 40 from Paphos. In Italy, 229 interviews were conducted out of which 73% were female and 27% were male, again using the snowball technique. The survey included 182 participants from the city of Spoleto, 19 from Terni, 9 from Spello, 6 from Foligno, 5 from Trevi, 4 from Perugia, 2 from Gubbio, 1 from Montefalco, and 1 from Bevagn.

### Structure of the research

Aiming to provide data on which to effectively plan AKTI and GSI’s activities in the context of their EU funded project, the research assignment was structured in four main sections, namely social interaction, local community, access to information and participation in decision-making processes and green jobs, with a number of questions addressing each issue, as outlined below:

Research objectives	Summary of questions asked
<b>Social Interaction</b> To identify the quality of living conditions and social interaction with local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Would you say you are happy or not happy with the house that you live in? / Why do you say that? / in what ways could your home be improved?</li><li>▪ Do you / your children ever receive guests at your house? / How often do you receive guests? / if not: why not?</li><li>▪ What is the nationality of your guests? / how often do you receive guests from each nationality?</li><li>▪ Do you have Cypriot neighbours? / what is your relationship with your Cypriot neighbours? / Do you come into personal contact with Cypriot people? / How would you describe the degree of contact that you have with Cypriot</li></ul>

	people? / (if no contact or superficial contact) Why?
<p><b>Local Community</b> To establish level of satisfaction and involvement with local municipality and the local community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Which of the following statements are true with regards to the services provided by your municipality: They provide me with adequate (ie in a language that I can understand) information about their services (eg taxes, rubbish collection times etc) / They provide me with adequate information (ie in a language that I can understand) about the events(festivals, lectures, cultural, sport, etc) that are organised by the municipality)</li> <li>▪ Which of the following statements are true with regards to your views and relations with the government and your municipality/local community participation: I participate in the entertaining events / festivals organised / I participate in my local school events / I participate in my children’s school Parents Association / I participate in the committee of my building / I participate in cultural, sport, educational classes or other groups/clubs offered by the government or the municipality/local community. / I’m a member of a social, cultural, environmental, or other NGO / I participate in other community based activities / My children are members of a local community group/ club/scouts etc / My children participate in after school activities</li> <li>▪ To what degree would you say that through this participation you have real positive interaction with local people and your local community?</li> <li>▪ To what degree do you feel that you share common interests and values with the local people?</li> <li>▪ Please indicate why you / your children do not participate in any of the above?</li> <li>▪ Is there anything that would encourage your child/children to participate in any community group? If so, please describe</li> <li>▪ To what degree, would you say, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your life in Cyprus? To what extent do you agree with the following statements: EU Immigrants in Cyprus are isolated and marginalised / EU Immigrants have no support in integrating in the Cyprus society / Women Immigrants have fewer opportunities in inclusion activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Research objectives</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of questions asked</b></p>
<p><b>Access to Information and Participation in decision making process</b> To assess level of interest towards environmental concerns and access to information thereof</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thinking about your everyday life in Cyprus, how often do you ...Read information about the environment in Cyprus? / Watch the local news on TV for information on the environment? / Listen to news about the environment on the radio? / Read news on the Internet regarding the environment?</li> <li>▪ How important is protecting the environment to you personally?</li> <li>▪ Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: Environmental problems have a direct effect on my daily life / As an individual I can play a role in protecting the environment in Cyprus / Protection of the environment is a common value shared by all EU citizens / Working together for the protection of the environment can support the integration of the EU immigrants in the hosting society / Environmental protection activities promote interaction and dialogue among EU citizens and contribute to a tighter EUROPEAN UNION.</li> <li>▪ Have you done any of the following during the past month for environmental reasons: Separated most of my household waste for recycling to be collected by the recycling scheme of the Green Dot / Cut down my energy consumption e.g. by turning down air-conditioning or heating, not leaving appliances on stand by, buying energy saving light bulbs / Cut down my water consumption e.g. by choosing shower instead of bath, installing water-saving tabs, etc / Chosen locally produced products or groceries / Used your car less / Bought an environmentally friendly product marked with an environmental label</li> <li>▪ Which are your main sources of information about the environment / Which of these sources do you trust most/least?</li> <li>▪ Thinking about your local authority and the Cyprus governmental services/departments: Do you participate in any decision making body or committee at local or governmental level? / Do you feel that your opinions and concerns are taken into account in your local authority/ municipality/ community? / Do you feel you are in any way part of the Cyprus government decision-making processes? / Do you feel your concerns and interests are</li> </ul>

	being represented in any way?
<b>Green Jobs</b> To establish the level of interest towards being employed in a Green Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would you be interested in the possibility of getting involved in a green occupation in Cyprus?</li> <li>▪ If interested: please give details</li> <li>▪ If not interested: Why not?</li> </ul>

### Sample characteristics

The study covered a representative sample of EU foreign workers and long-term residents in Cyprus and Italy respectively:

CYPRUS													
		Sex		Age				Children		Years living in Cyprus			
	Total	Female	Male	18-30	31-40	41-50	>50	With children at home	Without children at home	1-3	4-6	7-10	10+
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>96</b>
<i>Country of origin</i>													
Greece	28%	26%	36%	21%	21%	41%	23%	33%	8%	24%	10%	20%	40%
Romania	22%	23%	17%	38%	30%	20%	-	25%	8%	14%	38%	20%	18%
Bulgaria	21%	22%	14%	17%	25%	23%	13%	20%	25%	29%	28%	29%	13%
United Kingdom	21%	20%	25%	3%	12%	12%	63%	15%	43%	29%	15%	22%	21%
Poland	4%	4%	6%	14%	4%	3%	*%	3%	10%	5%	5%	9%	2%
Other <sup>1</sup>	4%	5%	2%	7%	8%	1%	1%	4%	6%	-	4%	-	6%
ITALY													
		Sex		Age				Children		Years living in Cyprus			
	Total	Female	Male	18-30	31-40	41-50	>50	With children at home	Without children at home	1-3	4-6	7-10	10+
<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>89</b>
<i>Country of origin</i>													
Poland	22%	26%	13%	28%	19%	15%	31%	23%	18%	25%	19%	21%	25%
Romania	78%	74%	87%	72%	81%	85%	69%	77%	82%	75%	81%	79%	75%

<sup>1</sup> Other EU countries: Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Slovakia

# Research Findings

## 1. Social interaction

The findings from both surveys were quite similar: the guests who visited the respondents were equally likely to be of their own nationality or Cypriot/Italian.

CYPRUS			ITALY	
FREQUENCY OF RECEIVING GUESTS BY NATIONALITY OF GUESTS	Own nationality	Cypriot	Own nationality	Italian
<b>Total: all who receive guests</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>149</b>
More than 3 times a week	9%	14%	11%	5%
2-3 times a week	19%	20%	18%	19%
About once a week	25%	27%	40%	44%
About twice a month	14%	11%	15%	8%
About once a month	16%	12%	9%	21%
Every 2-3 months	3%	5%	0%	0%
Every 6 months	9%	5%	4%	3%
Less often than every 6 months	5%	7%	2%	0%
<i>Average number of times per month</i>	4.8	5.7		

In Cyprus, almost all the respondents had Cypriot neighbours and relations with them ranged mainly from very close to welcoming. A very small minority (6%) felt unacknowledged or unwelcome. The vast majority of respondents reported having personal contact with Cypriot people and they also came into professional contact with them. On the most part, their contact with Cypriot people was described as meaningful, although a minority described their contact as superficial. Reasons for the superficial contact were mostly because of time constraints, but also because of the language barrier and cultural differences. Similarly in Italy, almost all the respondents had Italian neighbours. The vast majority of respondents reported that Italian neighbours were friendly but they were not so close; the immigrants had both a personal contact with Italian people and a professional contact with them, so their contact with Italian people was described both meaningful and superficial. The reason for the superficial contact was mostly because of time constraints as was also mentioned in Cyprus.

EVALUATION OF RELATIONSHIP WITH CYPRIOT NEIGHBOURS	CYPRUS	ITALY
<b>Total: all who have Cypriot neighbours</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>217</b>
<i>We have very close relations (eg visit each other often etc)</i>	30%	17%
<i>They are friendly but we are not so close (eg we say hello to each other etc)</i>	54%	61%
<i>I generally feel welcome in my neighbourhood</i>	10%	11%
<i>We hardly ever acknowledge each other</i>	5%	11%
<i>I do not feel very welcome in this neighbourhood</i>	1%	0%

## 2. Involvement in the local community

Both in Cyprus and Italy, the overall attitude of the respondents towards the provision of information by their municipality about their services and events was positive. The majority of the respondents and their children reported having participated in at least one of the various events of their local municipality and many of them were members of associations. Although one in five reported that they did not participate mainly because they had no time to spare, others did not reject the idea of joining some activity in their local community.

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that from those participating in local activities a very small percentage mentioned the participation in environmental activities per se.

PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES	CYPRS	ITALY
<b>Total: all respondents</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>229</b>
I participate in the entertaining events/festivals	53%	32%
I participate in local school events	54%	13%
I participate in children's school Parents Association	18%	9%
I participate in the committee of my building	14%	3%
I participate in cultural, sport, educational classes or other groups/clubs offered by the gov.or municipality	22%	4%
I am a member of social/cultural, environmental or other NGO	8%	4%
I participate in other local activities	15%	6%
My children are members of a local group/club/scouts	26%	5%
My children participate in after school activities	39%	3%
Do not participate in anything	20%	21%
Ways could be encouraged to participate in local activities	CYPRUS	
<b>Total: all who do not participate</b>	<b>40</b>	
If I had more free time	28%	
If I had more information	10%	
If I knew the language	8%	
If it was close to home	8%	
I would be interested in dancing	8%	
I would be interested in gymnastics	5%	
I would be interested in walking/trekking	5%	
I would be interested in Greek lessons	5%	
If it was free/low subscription	5%	
If there was someone to take me/pick me up	5%	
If I had a car	3%	
I would be interested in patient support	3%	
I would be interested in cycling /music	3%	
I would be interested in teaching children for free	3%	
If people I knew went & they asked me to go with	3%	

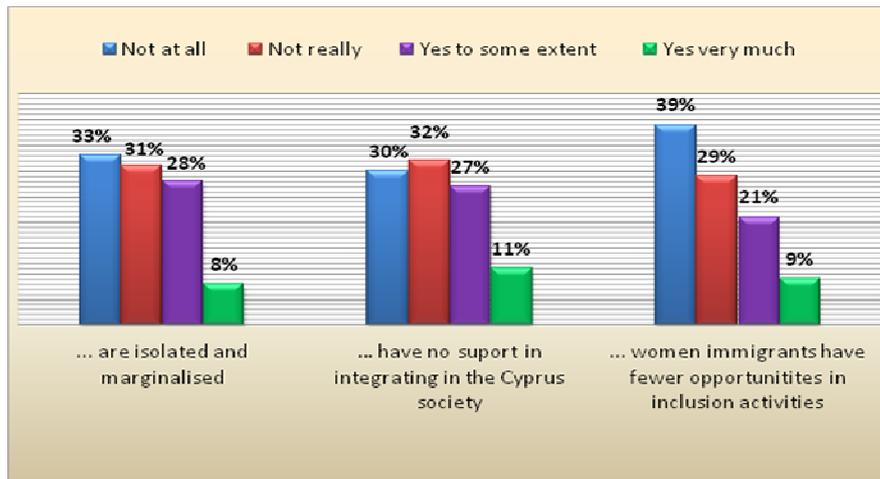
Ways could be encouraged to participate in local activities	ITALY
<b>Total: all who do not participate</b>	<b>33</b>
If I had more free time	33%
If I had more information	0%
If I knew the language	12%
If it was close to home	27%
If it was free/low subscription	0%
If there was someone to take me/pick me up	0%
If I had a car	27%
I would be interested in patient support	0%
I would be interested in teaching children for free	0%

In Cyprus, the respondents' participation was largely considered in positive terms, in that it encouraged interaction with local people, with whom they tended to believe that they shared common interests and values. In general, the respondents did not participate in the decision making process at the local or the state level. There were nevertheless small minorities of them who felt that their opinion, concerns and interests were taken into account somehow, having received some kind of assistance from their local government or another department.

As shown in the following graph, the majority of the respondents did not think that EU immigrants in Cyprus / Italy were isolated or marginalised or that they had no support in integrating in the Cyprus / Italian society, or that women immigrants had fewer opportunities in inclusion activities. Nevertheless, certain proportions of respondents did feel negatively on these issues, suggesting that appropriate actions for improvement in the area of integration are necessary. More specifically, In Cyprus 36% agree either very much or to some extent with the statement that they are isolated and marginalized whereas in Italy 18% share that view; 38% believe they have no support in integrating in the Cyprus society and 30% share that belief in Italy; in Cyprus 30% believe that women immigrants have fewer opportunities in inclusion activities and whereas the percentage in Italy is higher - 40%.

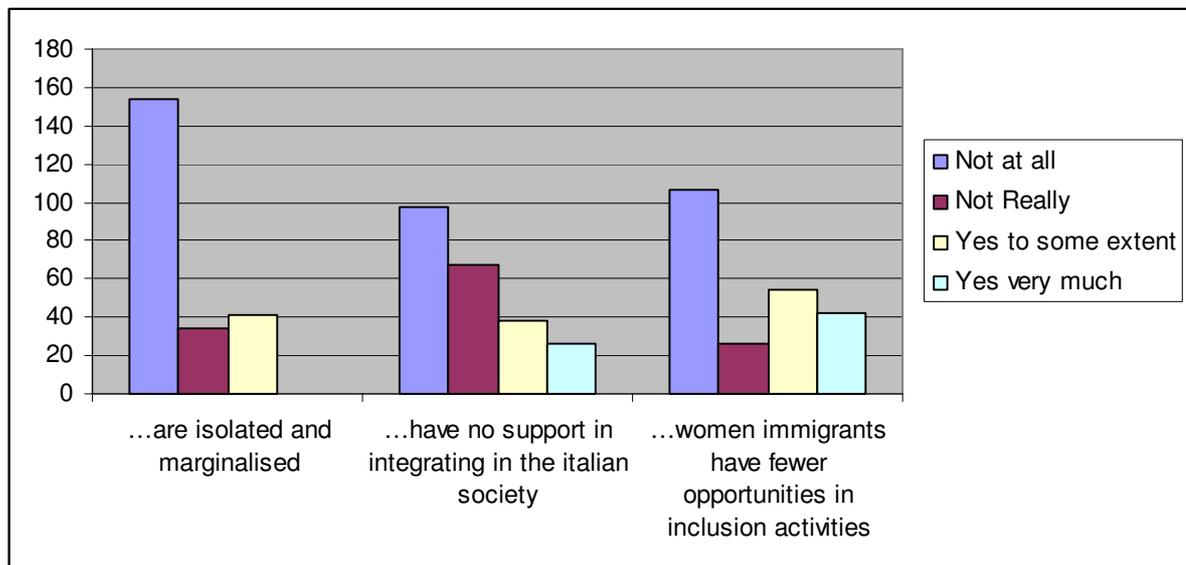
### Degree of agreement that EU immigrants in Cyprus...

Base: all interviewed (202)



### Degree of agreement that EU immigrants in Italy...

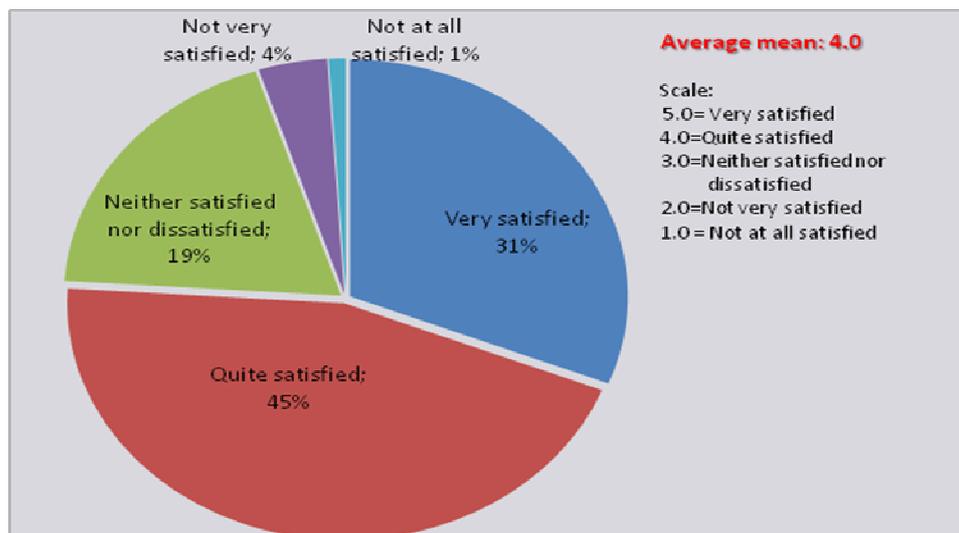
Base: all interviewed (229)



The level of satisfaction of the respondents with life in Cyprus was high, scoring 4 points in a five-point scale. They were, amongst others, happy with their work and with their family life. Dissatisfaction, expressed by very few, was mainly the result of the discrimination they felt against themselves. Similarly the level of satisfaction of the respondents with life in Italy was also high. They were happy with their work and with their family life. Dissatisfaction, expressed by few, was mainly because they did not receive an appropriate salary and they wanted more free time.

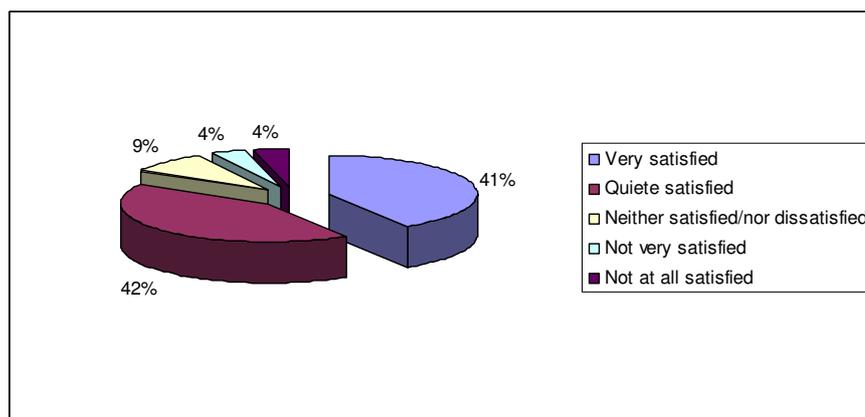
## Degree of satisfaction with life in Cyprus

Base: all interviewed (202)



## Degree of satisfaction with life in Italy

Base: all interviewed (229)



### 3. Access to information and participation in decision making processes

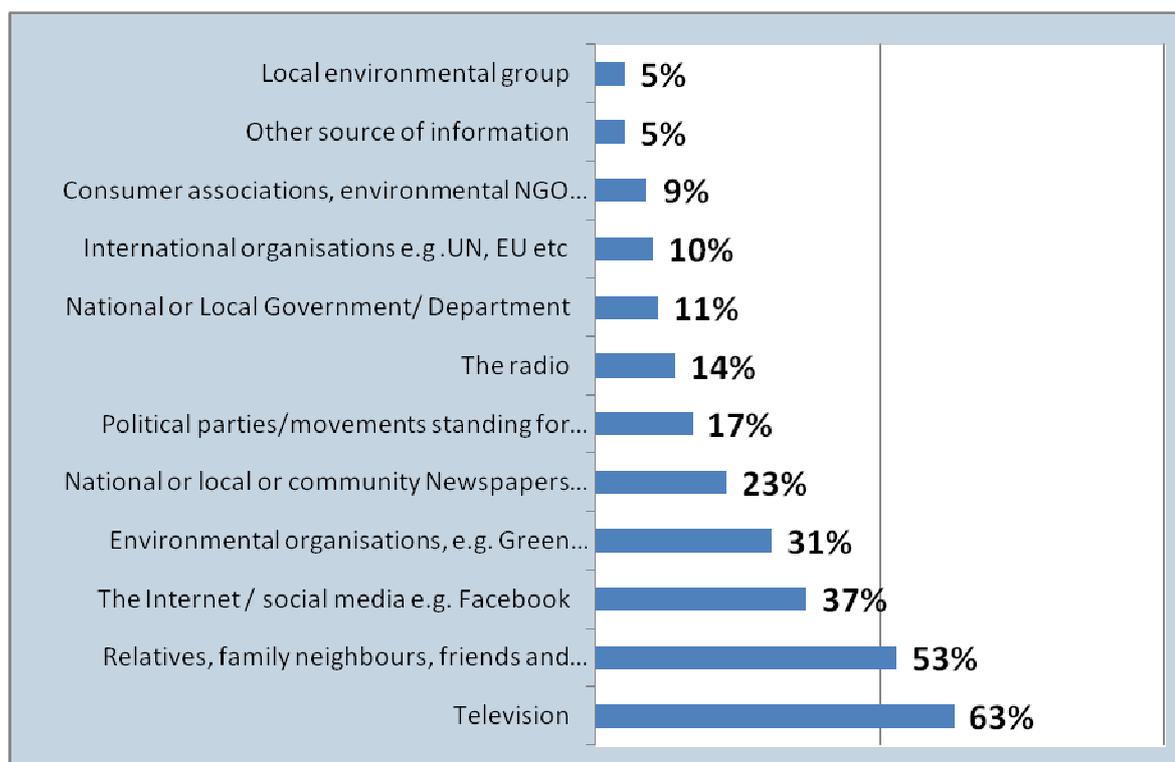
The most common and most frequently used source of information about the environment was reportedly the television in both surveys. In Cyprus, friends and relatives were also a source cited by a large proportion and it was followed, mostly, by the internet and International environmental organisations. However, Cypriot environmental NGOs and local groups were used the least as a source of information about the environment. This information is complementary to the lack of involvement in environmental local activities as mentioned earlier in the analysis of the previous section.

In Italy environmental organisations and international organisations were quite frequent followed by the national and local government, newspapers and the Internet. Television was the most used source, whereas friends and relatives were the least used source.

## Main sources of information about the environment

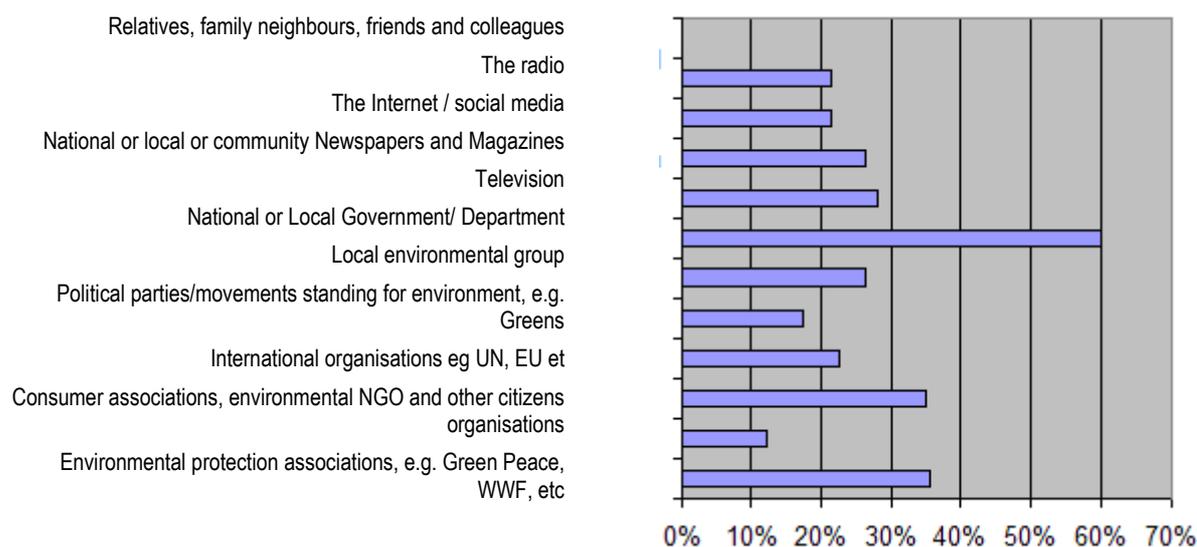
Cyprus

Base: all interviewed (202)



Italy

Base: all interviewed (229)

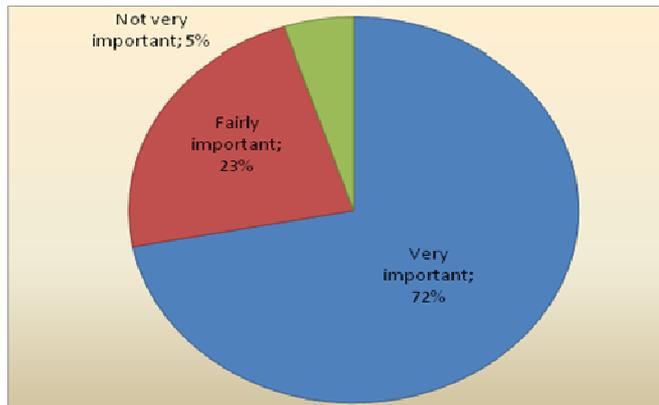


The respondents claimed, on the most part, that environmental protection was very important and valuable as far as they were concerned.

## CYRPUS

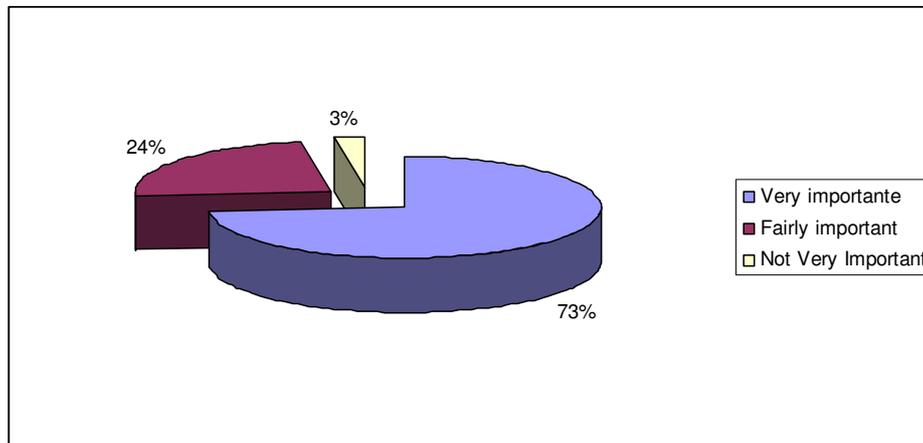
### Degree of importance of the protection of the environment

Base: all interviewed (202)



## ITALY

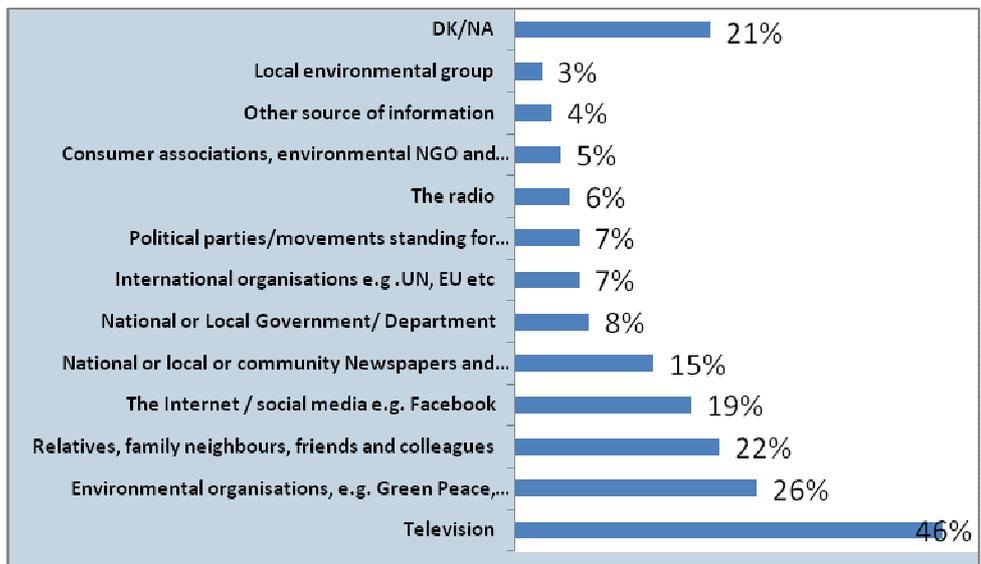
Base: all interviewed (229)



The source that was most likely to be named as the one trusted most with regards to the information it provided about the environment was television – mentioned as their most trusted source by 46% of the respondents. The next most trusted source were international environmental organisations like Green Peace, mentioned in this context by 26%. However this table highlights once again the disconnect between the participants and the local environmental NGOs and groups.

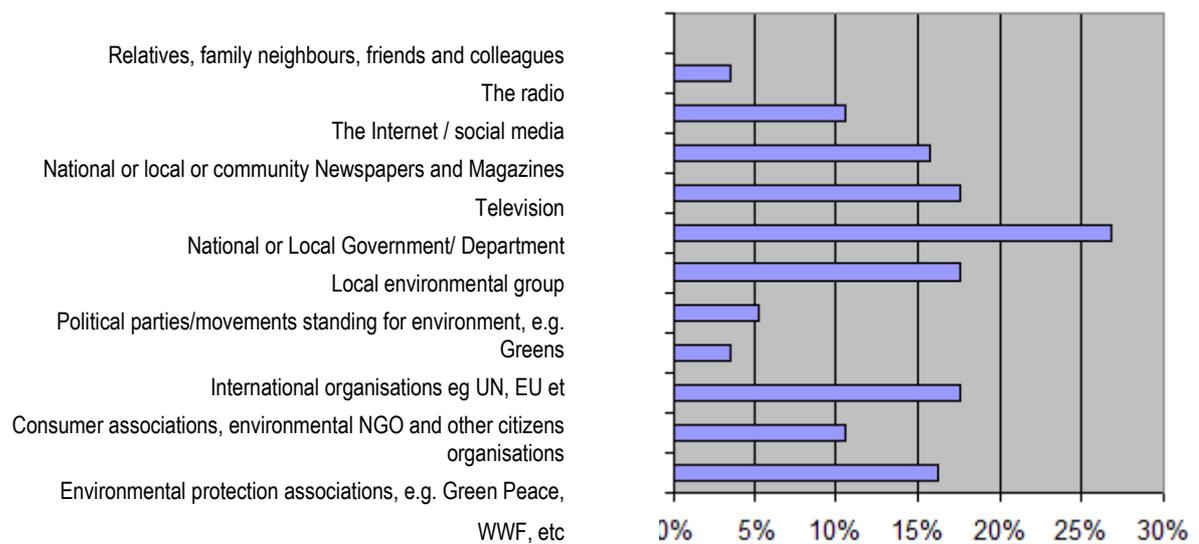
### Cyprus: Sources of information about the environment trusted most

Base: all interviewed (202)



### Italy: Sources of information about the environment trusted most

Base: all interviewed (229)



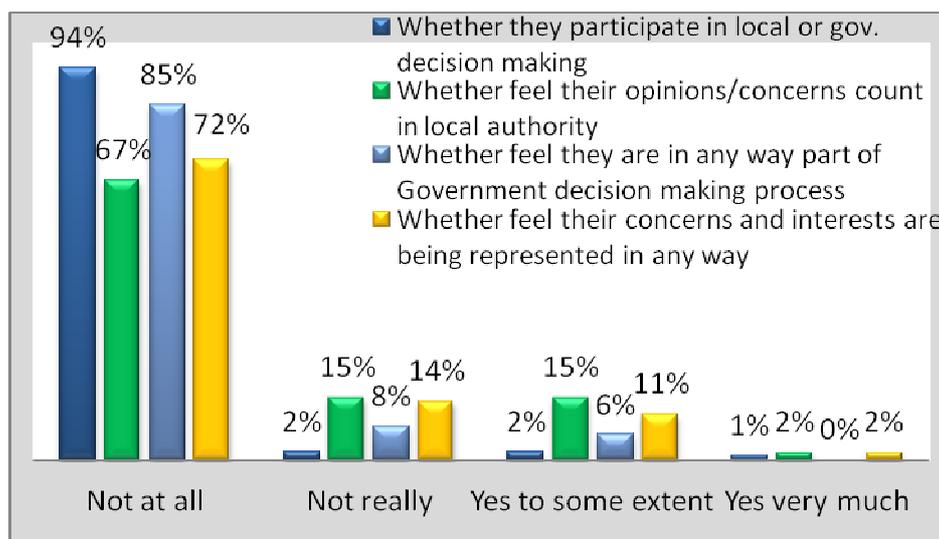
Another important finding deriving from the survey is that the respondents reported taking some action towards the protection of the environment, mainly energy saving, water saving, contributing to recycling and choosing to buy locally produced products.

Although the respondents appear to have environmental awareness and a good percentage of them are actually taking action at a personal level, they are not active at civil society level (i.e. they do not belong to environmental local groups and NGOs). Consequently, they are not participating in any decision making processes and feel that their concerns are not taken into consideration. The lack of participation in the decision making process at the local or the state level is shown below. There were only small minorities of them who felt that their opinion, concerns and interests were taken into account somehow, having received some kind of assistance from their local government or another department.

### Whether they participate or feel represented in the decision making process

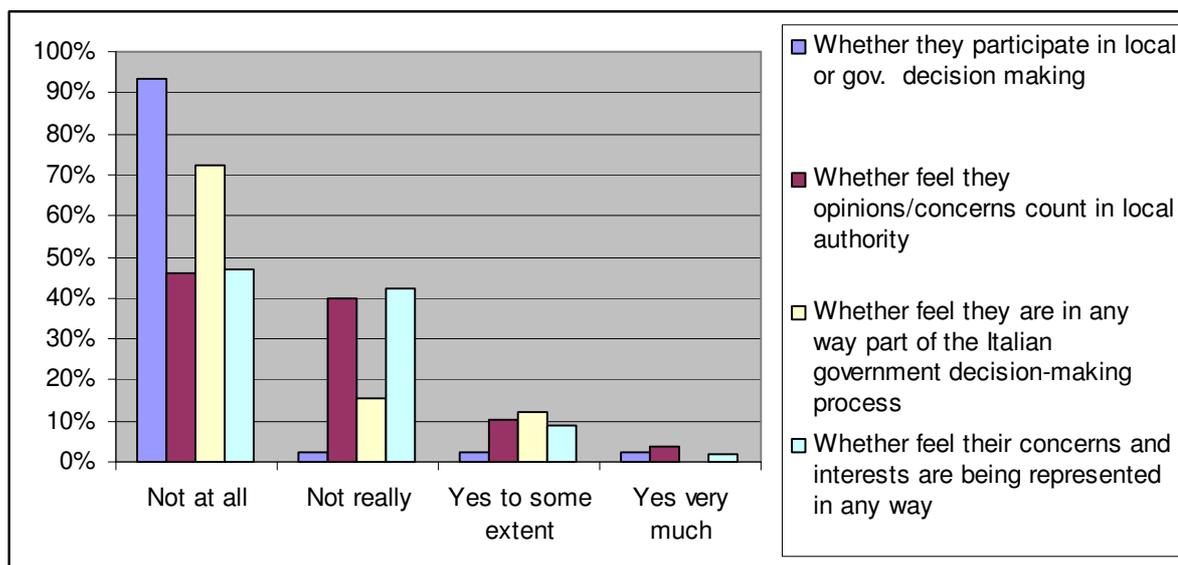
Cyprus

Base: all interviewed



Italy

Base: all interviewed

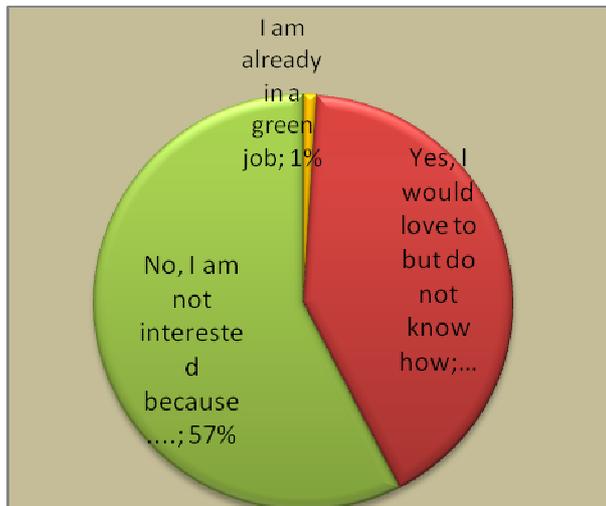


#### 4. Green Jobs

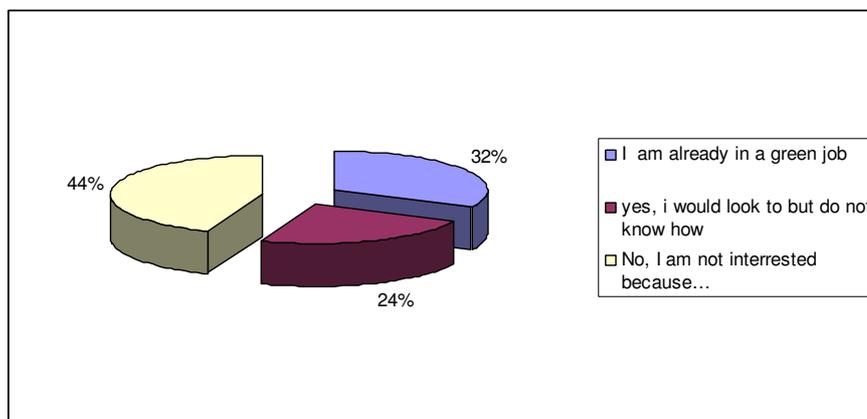
In Cyprus just over four out of ten respondents expressed an interest in finding out more about green jobs in Cyprus. Those who were not interested explained that this was mainly because they already had a job and they did not have the time for it. In Italy, the majority of the respondents expressed they were not interested in a green job because they already had a job and they did not have the time for it. A good percentage of the respondents answered they already were involved in a green job because they were gardeners or they contributed to recycling.

##### Cyprus: Whether interested in a Green Job

Base: all respondents (2022)



**ITALY**



While for some, the idea of getting a green job was attractive and wished to know more about it, others both in Cyprus and Italy, who were not interested, explained that this was because they already had a job and they had no time for it.

**Cyprus:**

REASONS FOR INTEREST IN GETTING A GREEN JOB	
<b>Total: all who expressed interest in Green Jobs</b>	<b>83</b>
I don't know enough about it / I would like to learn more about it	47%
I am interested in getting a job	14%
I am interested about gardening /	12%

REASONS FOR LACK OF INTEREST IN GREEN JOBS	
<b>Total: all who expressed no interest in Green Jobs</b>	<b>116</b>
I don't have any free time	55%
I already have a job	47%
I'm not interested in this subject	17%

agriculture	
I am generally interested about the protection of the environment	11%
There is not enough activity about the protection of the environment in Cyprus	7%
I am interested about recycling	5%
I am interested in volunteer work (not employment)	5%
I am interested in cleaning parks or public places	2%
Too old	1%
I am interested in protecting animals	1%
I am interested in protecting forests	1%
I am interested in cleaning the beach (part-time)	1%
I am interested in research work	1%
Other	7%
DK/NA	5%

I don't know enough about it / I would like to learn more about it	5%
Too old	4%
There is not enough activity about the protection of the environment in Cyprus	2%
I am generally interested about the protection of the environment	1%
I am interested in volunteer work (not employment)	1%

### ITALY:

REASONS FOR LACK OF INTEREST IN GREEN JOBS	
<b>Total: all who expressed no interest in Green Jobs</b>	<b>77</b>
I don't have any free time	95%
I don't know enough about it / I would like to learn more about it	5%
I'm not interested in this subject	0%

## Conclusions

- The results of both national surveys, conducted in Cyprus and Italy respectively show tendencies that are quite comparable in both countries.
- According to the results of the studies, the target sample, consisting mainly of EU immigrant women and their children in Cyprus and Italy, take a considerable interest in their local community. This is inferred from the relatively frequently mentioned involvement in local activities and events.
- The environment appears to be a common value among EU immigrants and can be an entry point for their further involvement and engagement in the public sphere.
- European immigrants in Cyprus and in Italy believe and personally support the environment. However, there is significant gap in regards to the possibility of their involvement in this area.
- Inroads for cooperation with the EU immigrant community of mainly women and their children could be made through an approach which incorporates the environment and its protection – including green jobs, the interest in which is not inconsiderable – since environmental concerns are very widespread amongst the sample.
- The study has also shown that the respondents are conscious of gaps in the area of social integration.
- The lack of access to information on environmental issues results in the immigrants' prevention to participate in decision making processes; It is evident from the survey that the European immigrants in Cyprus do not have information or the option of getting involved in the decision making for the improvement of environmental affairs.

- In terms of access to information and participation in environmental issues, European immigrants in Cyprus are relatively unaware of the existence of organizations that could support their involvement in decision making centres. To the contrary, European immigrants in Italy are more aware of local environmental organizations as well as international. The most common and most frequently used source of information about the environment was reportedly the television in both countries. In Italy, it was followed, mostly, by environmental organisations and international organisations, which are considered the most trusted source, whereas in Cyprus it was followed by friends and relatives. Although the most part of the respondents express their disinterested in a green job because they don't have any free time, a good percentage of immigrants answer they already are involved in a green job because they contribute to recycling.
- The concept of implementation of the three pillars of the Aarhus Convention in the civil society, appears strongly absent.
- The study shows that there is room for expanding the involvement of the target citizens in their local community.

## **Recommendations**

- Strengthen the role of NGOs as channels of integration of European immigrants in the configuration of the local European acquis. This recommendation is in line with the ongoing efforts of NGOs in further expanding their consistencies and making their work more relevant to the needs of their communities. The flexibility and openness of NGOs constitute a more accessible mechanism for European immigrants to get involved which is a potential NGOs should build on.
- Ensure access to information on environmental issues in order to encourage participation in decision making processes.
- Promote the environment as one of the most understandable, fun space for immigrants to get engaged in the local social context. The interest is there to begin with, so it is really up to the NGOs to find ways to get the immigrants to get informed. A good start is to better inform immigrants of their rights.
- Promote specific environmental actions as opportunities of active participation for European immigrants. Once they are more informed about what is happening in their communities, in the countries they reside and the European Union, the chances are they will be more inclined to get involved and feel empowered.
- Support the development of new green jobs as support mechanisms for easier social and professional integration of European immigrants in Cyprus and Italy. Especially nowadays, when the unemployment rates are so high, green alternative jobs can be a way out of the economic crisis.
- The survey findings justify the importance of the INTERACT project which focuses on the particular target groups. Additionally, the results indicate why further funding should be geared towards this type of interventions and follow up activities.

For **more information** you can download the Italian National Survey on behalf of GSI Italia ([www.gsitalia.org](http://www.gsitalia.org)) and the Cyprus National Survey on behalf of AKTI ([www.akti.org.cy](http://www.akti.org.cy)) from the respective websites.

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