

Many Italians still feel they are struggling to make ends meet

The OECD's new cross-national survey, *Risks That Matter*, examines people's perceptions of social and economic risks and their views on how well government reacts to their concerns. The survey, conducted in Italy in spring 2018, polled a representative sample of 22 000 adults in 21 OECD countries in an effort to understand better what citizens want and need from social policy.

Italians are most worried, in the short run, about making ends meet. 56% of people in Italy list "struggling to meet daily expenses despite working" as one of their top-three risks in the next couple of years. The other two most common short-term worries are crime or violence (48%) and becoming ill or disabled (47%).

When looking beyond the next decade, 71% of Italians identify financial security in old age as one of their top-three perceived risks. This is the most common result across countries. About half of Italians are concerned about the lack of social mobility, reporting that they worry their children will not do as well in life as they have done. A similar share of Italians worry that they themselves will not do as well as their parents did.*

Most Italians feel they have little influence over public policy. Only 19% agree with the statement "The government incorporates the views of people like me when designing/reforming public benefits."

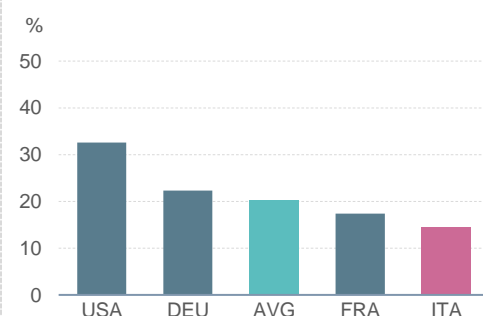
An even smaller share of Italians (15%) feel that they could easily access public benefits if they needed them (Fig. 1). This may reflect the fact that Italy's social safety net for non-retired people is indeed weaker than it is in many other countries.

When asked about their satisfaction with a range of public services, Italians are most happy with education: 41% feel that they have access to good-quality and affordable education (but 36% disagree). In contrast, a majority do not feel that they have access to good-quality and affordable public services in the areas of long-term care for the elderly (57%), long-term care for people with disabilities (55%), housing (61%) (Fig. 2), and employment services (55%).

Unsurprisingly, given the high levels of dissatisfaction, most Italians want more support from their government. 85% of Italians say government should do more to ensure their economic and social security (Fig. 3). At the same time, though, Italians are less willing (or perhaps less able, given the legacy of the crisis) to pay for expanded benefits than people in many other countries. Across policy areas Italians are most likely to support higher spending on pensions, for example, but still only 30% of Italians would be willing to pay an extra 2% of their income on pensions – relative to a cross-country average of 38% who would be willing to pay more.

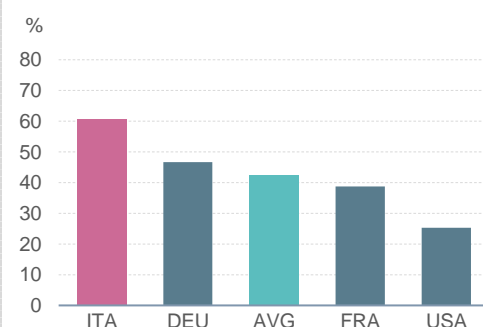
*Values exceed 100% because respondents could select up to three answers.

Fig. 1. Few Italians believe they could easily access benefits if they needed them



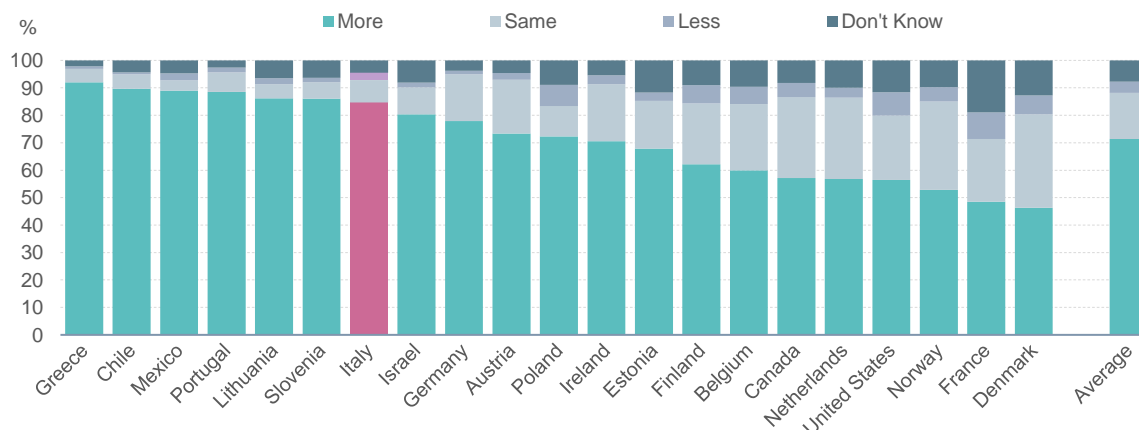
Note: Percent that agree (or strongly agree) with the statement: "I think I could easily receive public benefits if I needed them."

Fig. 2. Many Italians are concerned about accessing good-quality public housing services



Note: Percent that disagree (or strongly disagree) with the statement "I think that my family and I have access to good quality and affordable public services in the area of housing."

Fig. 3. More than four in five Italians want government to do more to safeguard their economic and social security



Note: Distribution of responses to the question "Do you think the government should be doing less, more, or the same to ensure your economic and social security?"
Source: OECD (2019), *Main Findings from the 2018 OECD Risks that Matter Survey*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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