

Action 1.3 - Youth Democracy Projects

Direct Democracy



This project is co-funded by the European Union

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Diary Experience

Action 1.3 - Youth Democracy Projects



Project Direct Democracy IT-13-E12-2012-R2



A blue silhouette map of Italy and Greece is shown. The text 'Diary Experience' is overlaid on the map in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The word 'Diary' is on the top line and 'Experience' is on the bottom line.

Diary Experience

Action 1.3 - Youth Democracy Projects



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Youth in Action is the Programme the European Union has set up for young people. It aims to inspire a sense of active European citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future. It promotes mobility within and beyond the EU's borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the employability and inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background.



Youth in Action is a Programme for all! **The Youth in Action** Programme aims to respond at European level to the needs of young people from adolescence to adulthood. It makes an important contribution to the acquisition of competences through non formal learning as well as to the promotion of young people's active participation in society. It supports the new youth policy framework for European Cooperation in the youth field adopted in 2009, which outlines a cross-sectoral approach to youth issues with a view not only to creating more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market ("employability dimension") but also to promoting the active engagement, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people ("participation dimension"). It also contributes to supporting the **"Youth on the Move"** flagship initiative of the EU 2020 Strategy which puts young people at the centre of the EU's agenda to create an economy based on knowledge, innovation, high levels of education and skills, adaptability



and creativity, inclusive labour markets and active involvement in society. Finally, **Youth in Action** also fits into the context of the new EU competences conferred by the Lisbon Treaty, which calls the European Union to encourage the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe.

The **Youth in Action** Programme builds on the experience of the previous Youth for Europe Programme (1989-1999), the European Voluntary Service (1996-1999) and the YOUTH Programme (2000-2006).

It has been adopted after wide consultation with the different stakeholders in the youth field. An interim evaluation of the YOUTH Programme was carried out in 2003, receiving input from a wide variety of specialists, stakeholders and individuals involved in the Programme. An ex ante evaluation was also used in putting together the **Youth in Action** Programme.

This sub-Action supports young people's participation in democratic life. It aims to encourage the active participation of young people in the life of their local, regional or national community or at international level. Youth Democracy Projects enable young people to learn about democratic processes and become active citizens in their local communities or at European level.

They learn to critically analyse political or social issues, and to make their voices heard. The projects allow them to try out ways of influencing the reality they live in and to make the world a better place.

A **Youth Democracy Project** is developed by a European partnership, allowing the pooling, at European level, of ideas, experiences and methodologies from projects or activities at local, regional, national or European level, in order to improve young people's participation.

A **Youth Democracy Project** has three phases:

- planning and preparation
- implementation of the Activity
- evaluation (including reflection on a possible follow-up).

Non-formal learning principles and practice are reflected throughout the project.

Some examples of Activities implemented within a **Youth Democracy Project** are:

Direct Democracy

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- the creation of networks for the exchange, development and dissemination of good practice in the field of youth and participation
- consultations by and of young people, with a view to find out their needs and wishes on matters relating to participation in democratic life
- information events or seminars or debates for young people centred around the mechanisms of representative democracy at all levels, including the functioning of the EU institutions and the EU policies
- meetings between young people and decision-makers or experts in the field of participation in democratic life and democratic institutions
- events simulating the functioning of the democratic institutions and the roles of decision-makers
- a series or combination of the above activities, which may be carried out at different levels (local, regional, national, international) within the time-frame of the project.



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Inspired by the power of social networks in the beginning of this decade, we decided to put in action a fresh idea: the implementation of a digital referendum dealing youth problematic.

Partner of the project are two non governmental non - profit organization, **Euromed Carrefour**

Sicilia for Italy and **Youthrama** for Greece, together with two Municipality, **Castelbuono** in Italy and **Hortiatis-Pylaia** in Greece. The project is a bilateral cooperation between Italy and Greece.

Aim of the project is to make youngsters aware of democratic values, European citizenship and decision making procedures. The project was implemented through different steps and kind of activities, in each country and all together during the meeting in Italy. Both group of youngsters, in Italy and Greece, worked on the digital referendum, involving other 100 youngsters, to find common topics and problems to discuss with the decision makers; they also prepared presentations of their country, dances and songs of their tradition to show each other something of their own cultures. During the meeting in **Castelbuono** the youngsters learned to know each other, stay together, play to build their idea of European Citizenship, discussing about social matters like adults. They met the Mayor of **Castelbuono** and talked to him about the topic emerged from the referendum, asking for his opinion.

All the youngsters involved in the project learned new things and had new friends, they had experience of intercultural dimension in a European project, becoming

aware of all the opportunities from European Union for all the young people.

Preparatory Activities: In both countries youngsters gathered to discuss about the project and their role in democracy, which tools people can use to interact with public administration, what are their rights as citizens. The youngsters met experts in European Union History and Rights, local decision makers.



Referendum: 59 youngsters in Greece and 60 in Italy worked on a referendum about services, facilities, environment, culture and youth in their own Municipalities, trying to find solutions and new proposals on the problems emerged.

Meeting in Castelbuono

Group games: the youngsters, helped by a youth trainer, learned to know each other and became a group, they played games to learn their names, start collaborating and trust each other, having fun and laughing all together.



Theatre: the youngsters listened to a story about different characters with different

behavior, then each of them gave an opinion about the characters according to his own point of view. They discussed about the worst and the best character, analyzing the characters' behavior depending on their way of thinking and cultural background. Finally they performed the story acting like actors in a theatre.

Fish bowl: the youngsters, pretending to be spokesmen at European Union in 1987, tried to explain why European Union should create a fund for the youngsters in Europe, talking about future, new ideas, development, inclusion, trust, citizenship, integration, collaboration, exchange for a better world.



Simulation of Ancient Agora: the youngsters analyzed the results of the referendum and explained, one group to other, the situation in their own Municipality, trying to exchange best practices, find solutions.

Debate: the youngsters met the Mayor of Castelbuono and presented the referendum, they asked for his opinion about involving of youngsters in local democracy and the possibility to take part in more European projects.

All together in Palermo: all the group went to Palermo to visit monuments, know the history of the city and buy souvenirs!!

The protagonists

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Alessandro



Andreas - Giorgio



Gabriele - Marina



Giusy - Ioanna



Angela - Giuseppe



Elias

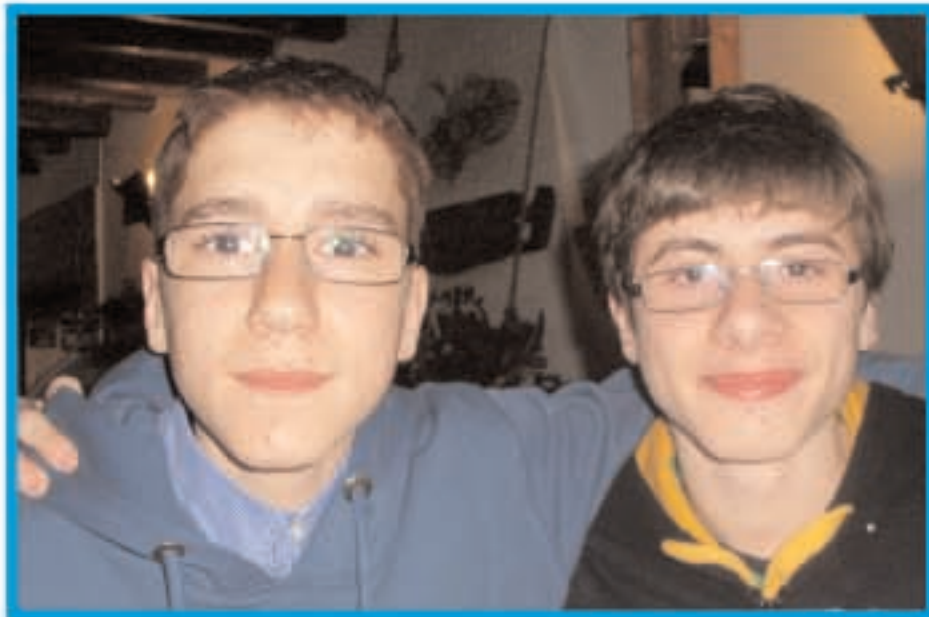


Helen - Veronica



Ioanna - Roberta

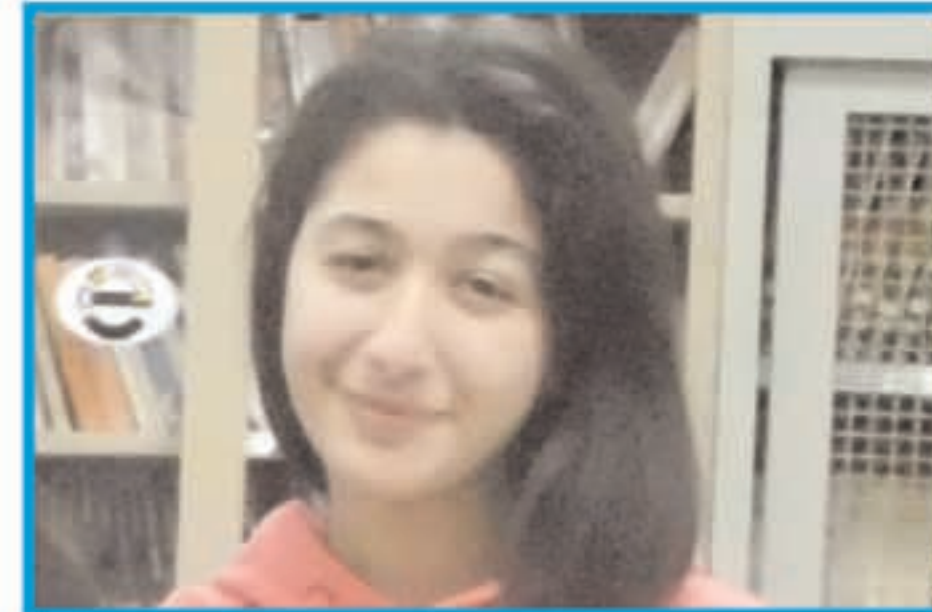
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Luigi - Filippos



Marilena - Lucilla



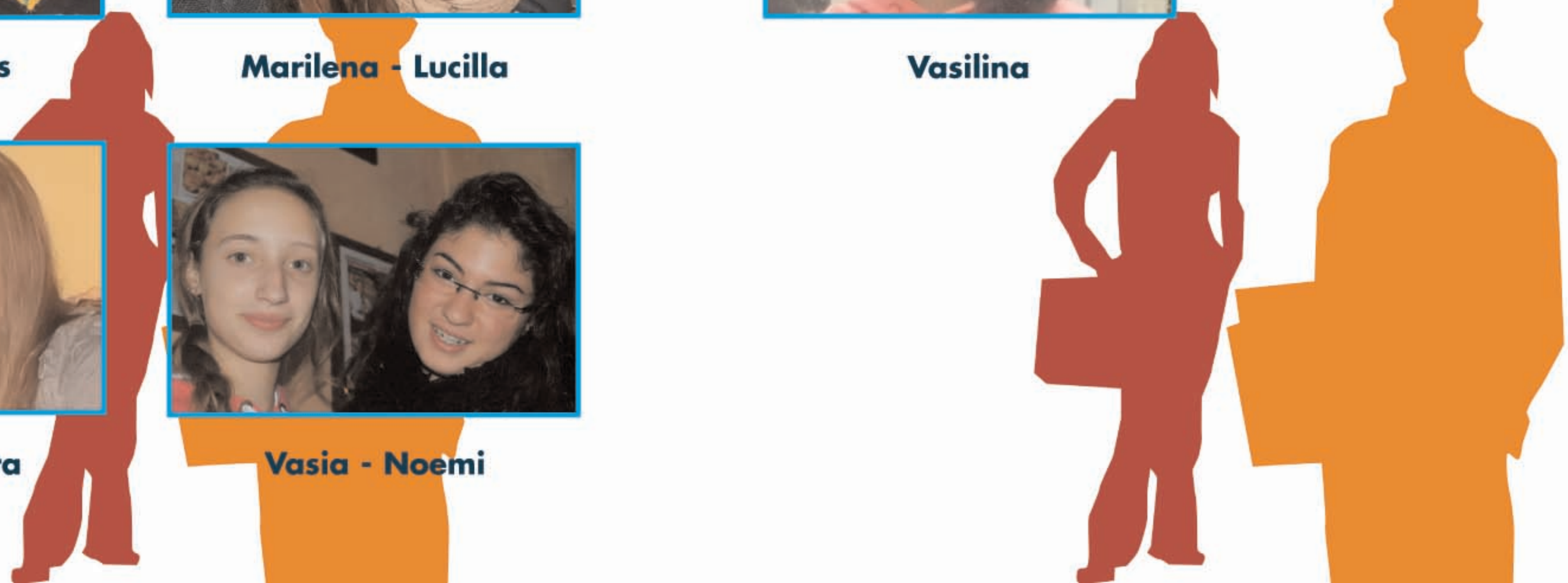
Vasilina



Rania - Roberta



Vasia - Noemi



Initial Comments

Alessandro

hello, how are you?? we're ready to go for our magnificent country XD, I cannot wait you arrive, even if you stay for a short time I'm sure we'll have fun

Gabriele

After the first meeting I was really happy to participate in this project and I cannot wait to get to know our Greek friends! I want to know them, as their culture and their customs, and I want them to know ours. But mostly I hope to make friends and have fun together.

Giorgio

Hello everyone! =) Sorry if I'm only now presenting ... I am George cannot wait to meet you in person, I'm sure we'll have a lot!!!=)

Lucilla

We guys of Castelbuono are honored to have been chosen for this project. We look forward to meeting the Greek guys who will be here in December. I hope it's a good experience .. that leads us to mature, to make new acquaintances, to learn English better and everything about "being people of a single country: the Europe!"

Noemi

We were raffled off to participate in this project, we should not waste the opportunity that presented itself, but get involved.

I expect a lot from this project, new knowledge, new smiles, new entertainment, new comparisons, all that can help us grow.

We live the world of this experience and we take every moment.

Roberta P.

I expect that with this project I will have new experiences, meet new people, improve my English and to expand my knowledge with regard to our country: Europe.

Roberta R.

I'm happy to participate in this project .. I hope to make new friends, to learn English better, but mainly to have fun :) :) I'm looking forward to December!

Veronica

Two of my schoolmates and me, we attended a meeting with other high school guys, we talked about the activities we can arrange in the "Direct Democracy" with the Greeks guys, I hope this experience can be useful, to learn new things.

Giusy

This morning, I along with the other guys of the high school, we started the project Europe Direct, we knew the tutor who will guide us over the next few days getting to know the Greek guys who will be here in our city to compare the differences of what binds us: we are a member of the European Union. I'm glad to participate in this project, I expect to learn a lot of things, to make new acquaintances and I will endeavor to accomplish this project.

Activity

Alessandro

December 6th we had the meeting with the mayor and his staff, who have shown us how young people could interact with the municipality to make us feel active part of the public life.

Gabriele

December 6th, me and my mates, we went to the municipal offices to meet the mayor. Were also present our coordinator Angela and the town clerk. After a nice sensible introduction of the mayor, the town clerk told us the main roles of municipal employees and also how we young people can interact with the city administration. Then we talked about the proposals that we shared during a meeting again with the municipal institutions. I supported with greater conviction the proposal that undoubtedly it's urgent the institutions to find a solution, that is locals for cultural associations and building of a cinema and theater.

I supported the second proposal to create a group of volunteers to clean the public green. Afterwards we talked about the Italian night, and they'll be surprises!! ;)

Giorgio

I loved the referendum. It was very educational because it made me open my eyes to many problems that plague the town and I did not know they existed, such as the fact that there are very few places of entertainment for youngsters, or the lack of sports facilities to meet the needs of young people or the lack of awareness of young people in politics and culture. I really enjoyed it and learned that it's really bad when you close the phone down I understand what workers in a Call center staff feel!

Thursday, when we went to the town hall I could not imagine what I might have learned right that day, but I felt that I would have enjoyed (and that Angela would be angry because I did not give the referendum on time).

Just arrived there, the mayor made a speech to sensitize us to a greater awareness of our rights as Italian and European citizens and to spur us on to a more active political life. Immediately after the town clerk told us of the various components of the Municipality and its representatives, explaining their various tasks and their various ways of choice on the part of citizens, also focused on the role and importance of the mayor pointing out its various decision-making powers. Once that the town clerk had finished speaking, the commissioner explained by what means or

associations citizens can be put in communication with the mayor or the town telling us that there is also planning to establish a youth consultation so that young people can communicate with the mayor and aldermen. I loved the meeting in the town it because it helped me to understand and learn many new things of municipal organization.

Lucilla

Yesterday the meeting at Municipality of Castelbuono was very helpful, there were with us also the mayor and some of his secretaries, who told us how the town and its main organs work! It was also great fun to continue to organize together with Angela the final preparations we have to do before the arrival of Greek guys. Answering the questions in the referendum was a very useful way to better understand what you really want to change in your city! Seeing the answers I've gathered from other guys I've noticed that in the end the things we want to improve in our city are the same for all of us and this is a very important thing! And was also very nice to be journalists for a day going around looking for someone to interview about these questions! After gathering all the referendum the other guys and I, with the help of Angela, have highlighted the proposals that were repeated several times! Finally we chose together the most interesting ones and we have chosen to present them to the debate of 18 December!

The selected proposals are:

- 1) Office Area for disabled people and listening center for young people with problems
- 2) public locals for associations, cinema, theater, participation in European projects
- 3) Involvement of young people in the political life of the city
- 4) Creating a group of volunteers to clean the public green
- 5) Construction of gym, pool, setting up women's soccer team
- 6) Activities for the procurement of public funds

Luigi

The questionnaire for the referendum was not easy because I find them not so simple for me and for the other five companions that I involved in the questionnaire. On 06-December-2012 we had a meeting with the city mayor, the secretary of the town of Castelbuono. The mayor made an introducing speech and then the Secretary explained to us how the Municipality of Castelbuono and its various offices are composed and work. After the meeting with the Mayor and the Secretary we have chosen six proposals to bring to the debate, we chose them from the answers of the referendum given by the youngsters we involved.

Noemi

We guys in Castelbuono are very taken by this project. We are doing different activities such as the referendum and we are having so much fun, we are joining more; The activity of the referendum was very creative, it allowed us to exchange ideas with other guys of our age and understand their needs. I thought it was a project like any other of those monotonous and boring instead is proving to be interesting. At last the young people are learning to play an active role in the community and this is great. We stayed at the town of Castelbuono to meet the mayor and the town clerk; everyone has explained its competence and what is the role within the municipality. They explained how the offices work and what are the laws that apply. The meeting was very interesting and we guys have been actively involved with questions and curiosity. One of the questions was to know how we guys could be active part in the community. In the end we have proposed to become part of a youth council. That submission allows us to make proposals to administrators.

Roberta R.

On 6th December we met the mayor and some of his colleagues to talk about the features of the municipality and how it is structured .. it was interesting and constructive .. Then with Angela we selected the six proposals to the debate. we had

fun, we began to organize the Italian evening and we talked about the project in general.

Make the questionnaire is not at all easy! For me and for the people that I interviewed .. at the beginning I did not know how to respond then thinking better I realized what I want to change my country and why .. has been difficult to translate everything that people told me in English .. but in the end I realized that more or less we all wanted the same things .. I enjoyed it and it helped me to understand how others think and what issues need to be addressed ..

Roberta P.

The referendum we did, was very tiring, especially in the translation into English. But it was a great experience and I had a great time.

On 06-12-2012 my group and me we met the mayor and his secretaries, it was a good experience because I learned many things I did not know, for example, how the bodies of the municipality work and how we young people can interact with the municipal administration. I was very satisfied with this meeting. Among the proposals that we have chosen the one that impressed me the most is to found a listening center for young people who have problems, because I think it is a very useful and important thing, thanks to this ,young people could have a better chance to directly solve their problem because it is important to live in serenity.

Veronica

The topics came out from the referendum are very interesting, I found things that we can improve in our city. On 6th December we were guests of the city mayor, he told us about the Municipality administration, then, together with Angela, we chose the six proposals for the debate, we have prepared the activities to do with Greek group . About the six proposals we have chosen for the debate I hope to have a good result.

Giusy

These days, waiting for the arrival of the Greeks, we have compiled a referendum, interviewing some of our friends about what we would like to improve, modify or create in our city. In some days the Greek group will be here, we will put these proposals in comparison to create a debate open to public, with the Mayors of Greece and Castelbuono.

This morning we were at the Municipality of Castelbuono, with the tutor of our group, we talked to the Mayor, the Secretary and a counselor to learn about the activities of the various Municipality components and understand how we guys can have relations with them, to expose our thoughts and our proposals for the welfare and development of our city. It was a very interesting meeting. Now we are preparing for the arrival of the Greek group. I can't wait to make this new experience.

Final Comments

Lucilla

Well, what about this project .. it was great, fun, interesting, everything and more! All together we have worked on the delivery of our tutors: Angela and Elias; through these tasks we got to know each other better and we have also learned something about democracy! We met new guys, their culture, some of their traditional desserts, we tried to dance the "dance of Zorba", and we Italian guys we also become aware of our culture to the Greek guys! In addition we also improved our English a little bit, but more important we spent a wonderful time together, we have new friends and for someone is born even love! 3 days were beautiful, there was some fatigue but did not feel much, but time have passed quickly, too quickly ... and who knows if we will gather together again!

Luigi

This project was a great experience because we know how to live and how to live as a Greek. We made several games to know each other, we had different activi-

ties such as a debate with the mayor of Castelbuono. We also went to Palermo to let them know the city. I hope we're going to Greece as they came here in Italy so we can get to know their city and lots more

Noemi

This project has changed me inside, I was open to new friendships, new resolutions, it is strange to say, but just in three days I grew up with them. Ours was an unforgettable experience, surely to do again. In a few days we knew everything about each other, as if we had known for all our life, and when they left for Greece I felt like I was empty but I know that good things are doomed to finish. We learned several things such as culture, sharing, language, etc., we compared our countries so far but at the same time close, because despite of the place we come from, we are all alike.

Roberta P.

This experience was truly magnificent. I met some great people that now are my friends, I enjoyed it very much. If I could turn back the month of preparation for the arrival of Greek guys I would study more English, because for me it was difficult to communicate with them, but I have to say that thanks to this I've definitely improved my English. I thank all those who gave me the opportunity to participate in this project but I thank especially Angela who has supported, helped, encouraged and made us live a wonderful experience. If in the future there will be other projects I'll be the first to participate because they help to grow. After this experience I'm really happy.

Roberta R.

I am very happy to have participated in this project. I learned how to get better with the others, I improved my English and I met wonderful people!! I hope to repeat an experience like this, also because it was very constructive and we enjoyed it very much. I have a good memory of the Greek guys and I think that it is the same for

them. I miss them so much! I hope to see them again soon!

Veronica

It was a wonderful experience that I will always remember, I have learned many things, I'm glad to have met so special guys. I hope that one day we can come to Greece to see you, I also thank Angela for helping me.

Ioanna L.

It was a great experience! The guys were so friendly with us and also the food was perfect. I would have liked more participation from decision-makers.

Andreas

I'm satisfied with the variety of the activities, they were educational and pleasant, I had a big amount of new knowledge about Italy, Castelbuono, morals, we had very good relationship with the Sicilian students. It was a positive experience. I expected a greater sharing with the citizens and more decision-makers because I think that a referendum regards everybody.

Vasia

I had a really good time in Castelbuono! The guys were very friendly and the rooms very comfortable! Castelbuono is very beautiful and I really enjoyed it! The programme was perfect and helped us to know each other better! It was a fantastic experience that I will never forget!

Ioanna F.

During our accommodation in Castelbuono I had a great time. We did many activities. On the first day we played some games to know each other better with the children and group building. The second day we did a debate with local decision-maker open to public. One day before our departure we visited the city of Palermo. We saw many tourist attractions. The rooms were very comfortable and

the guys very friendly! The programme was very good and helped us to learn many things! I enjoyed it very much. It was an excellent experience that I will never forget!!

Helen

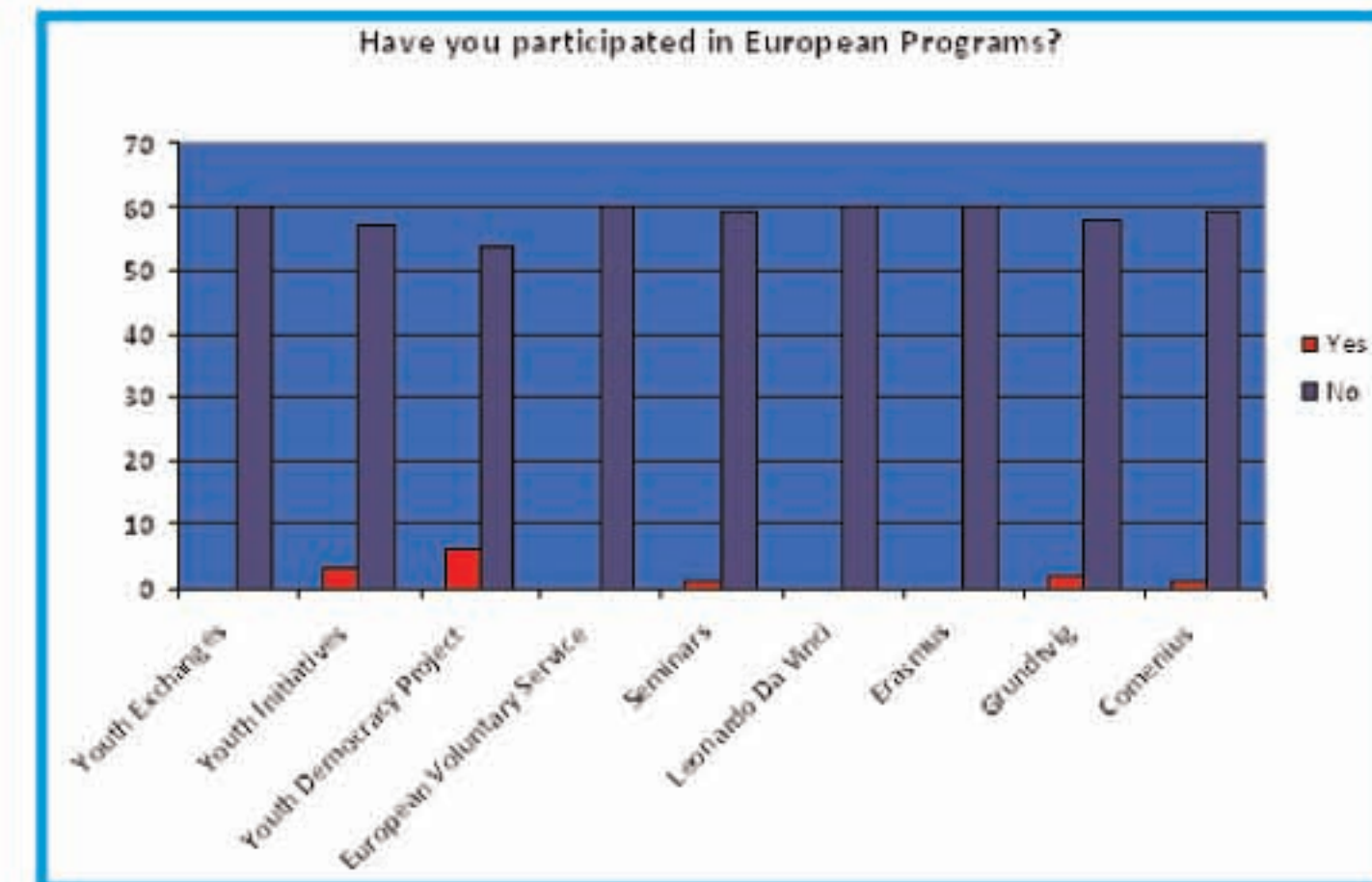
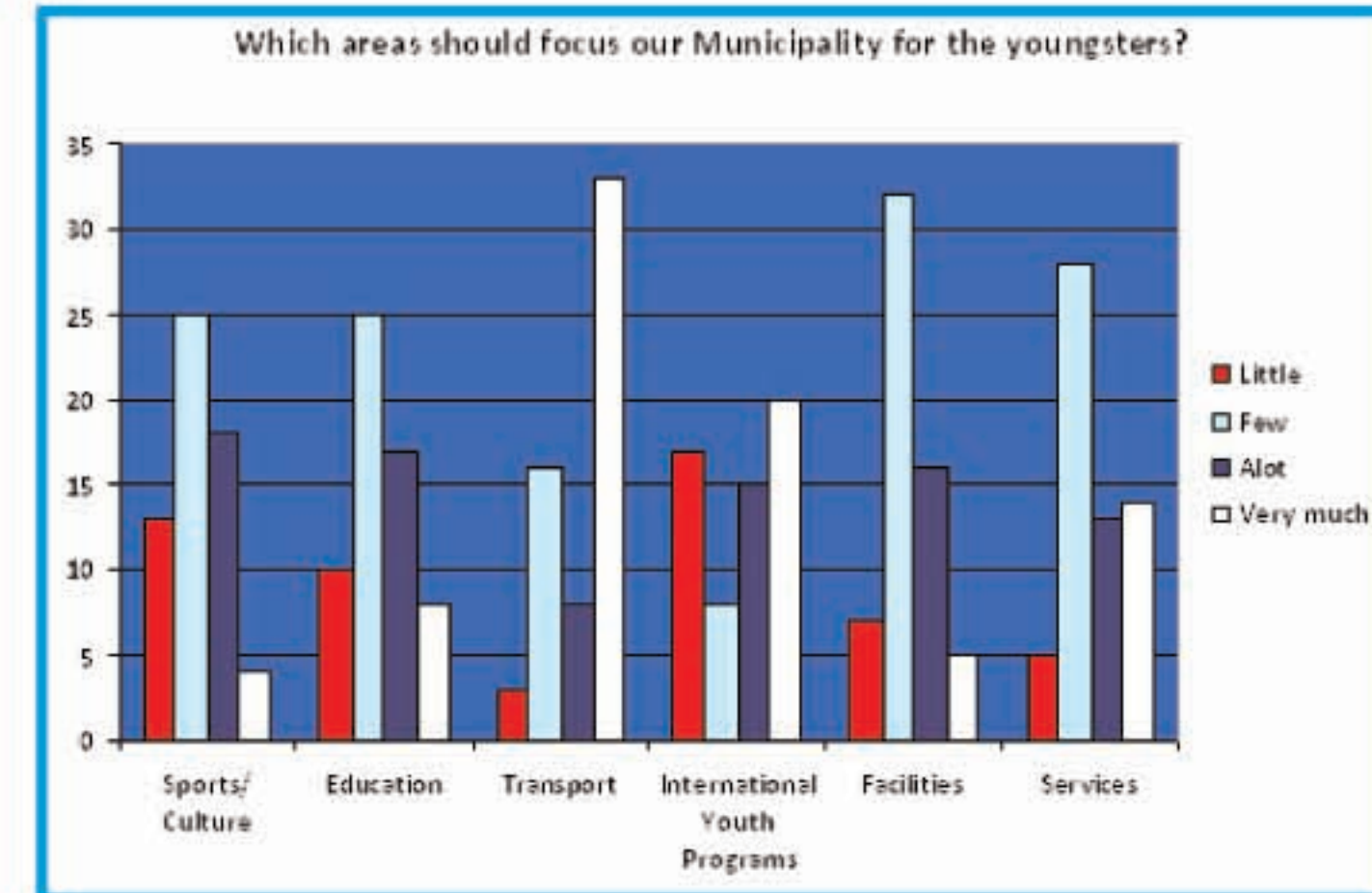
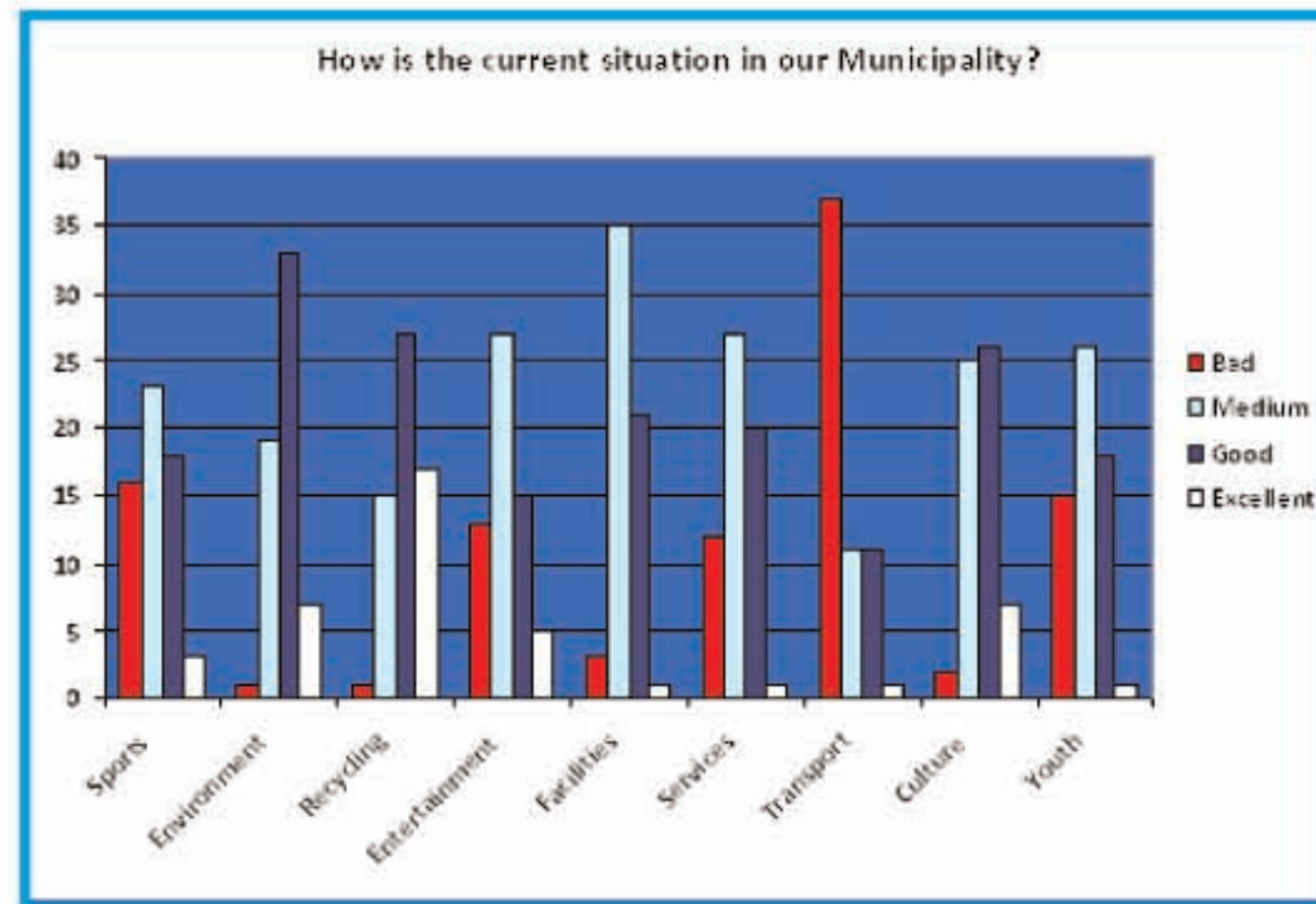
We had a great time in Castelbuono!! I think the project we did was very interesting and educating. We learned new things about youngsters and the European Union and new opportunities we could get through that! We also shared some ideas with guys of our same age. We learned how to solve several problems as a group!! We met great guys, we made good friends and had fun together! We did



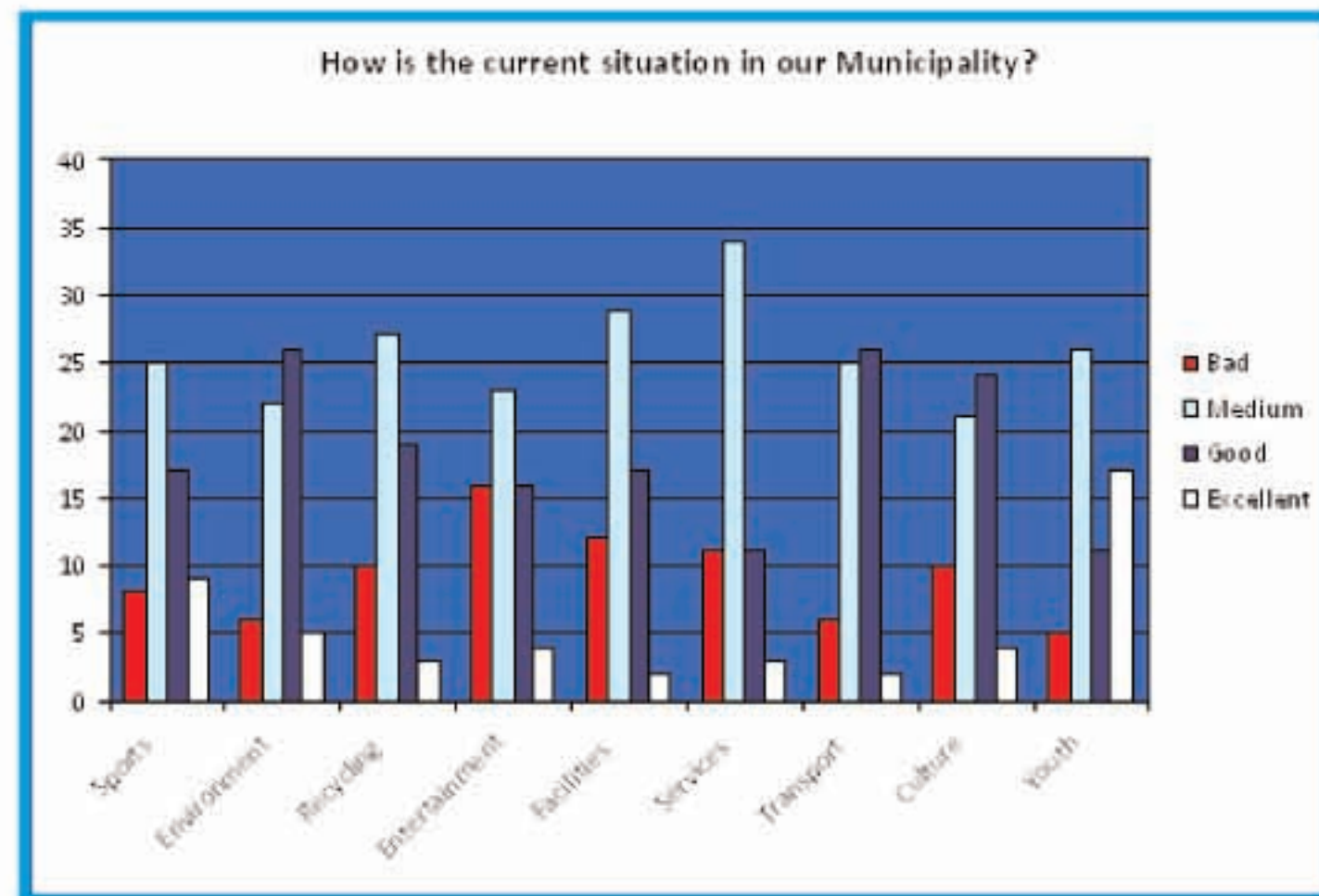
Referendum

some nice activities and got to know more about the culture and the history of the city!!! I'd love to come back and meet my new friends again
 100 youngsters were involved in the referendum, the result is that most of them think their Municipality should work better for: activities for disabled people; involving of youngsters in political life; participation in European projects; plans for green areas; sport centres; use of public funds; environment; cultural entertainment for young people.

General Results Referendum Group Castelbuono

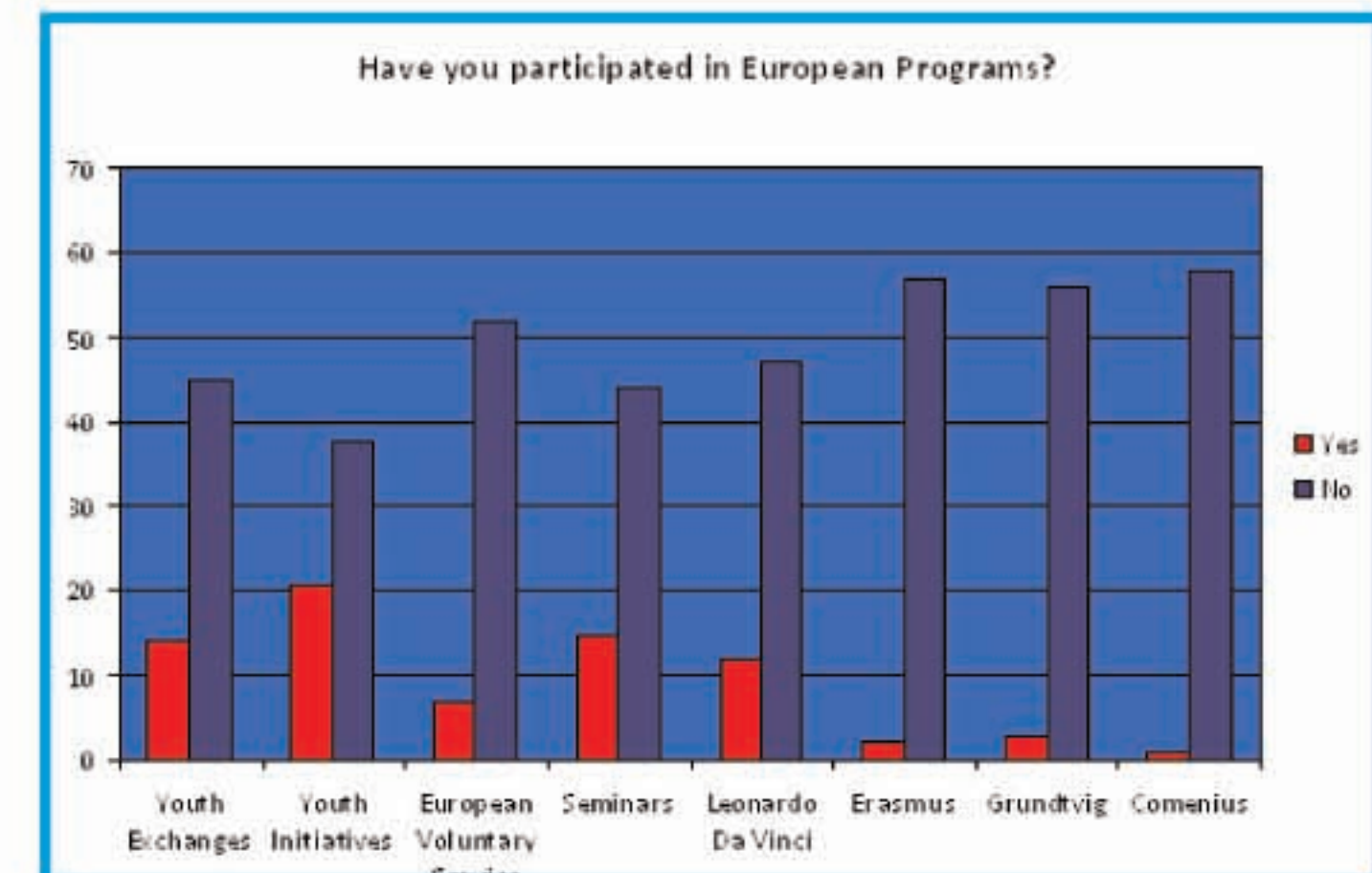
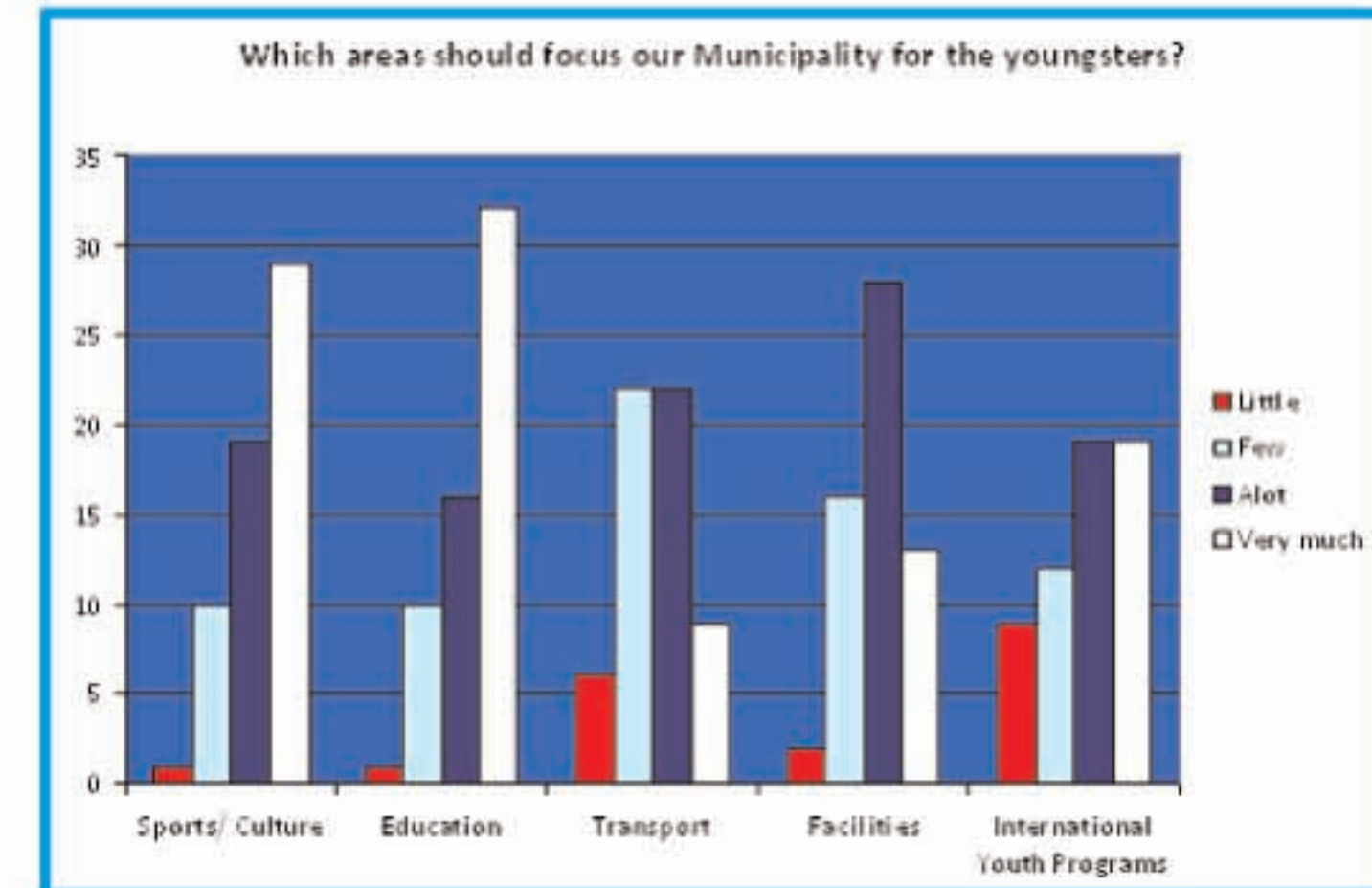


General Results Referendum Greek Group



Most youngsters, about the topics proposed, think their Municipality is on a medium level.

Few youngsters have experience in European Programmes





Euromed Carrefour Sicilia is a no profit association hosting a Europe Direct relay, that has as principal goal to inform the population of the region Sicily about European policies, giving in this way a contribute to the birth and/or consolidation of the sense of European citizenship in Sicily. Since our foundation, we have realised various regional, international and European projects, achieving always big success. One of the principal target groups of our activities are youngsters.



Youthorama is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation founded in 2003, based in Panorama of Thessaloniki. One of its aim is the educational benefit of chess as non-formal learning, they also encourage the participation of youngsters, providing information on youth programmes and involving young people with fewer opportunities. The organisation has implemented various European and international projects.



Castelbuono is a village of 10.000 inhabitants in the province of Palermo. It is especially famous for the castle which its name derives, and around which the city grew up in the 14th century.

The first traces of settlement date back to the Neolithic age (household utensils and weapons of polished stone), and are probably attributable to populations of Sicanian race,

the first settlements, therefore, can be traced back to the third millennium BC.



Castelbuono, now stands on the ancient Byzantine Ypsigro house (built on the hill of San Pietro). The name of Ypsigro was well known to historians and geographers of the past, which initially placed him on the Nebrodi. Only a document of 1105 is found the exact location. In the town, in 1282, there were about three hundred inhabitants and in the early fourteenth century there were three churches and it was a center

of some importance. To this period dates back the domain of the family Ventimiglia on County Ypsigro, which lasted until the twentieth century.

Construction of the Castle began in 1316, by order of Count Francesco I of

Ventimiglia, over the ruins of the ancient Byzantine town of Ypsigro, high on the San Pietro hill. Hence its original name, Castello del buon aere ("Castle of good air"), from which the name Castelbuono is derived - literally meaning "good castle".



The Cappella Palatina ("Palace Chapel") was built in 1683 by the brothers Giuseppe and Giacomo Serpotta, with a great profusion of precious marble, stuccowork, putti, and friezes that commemorate the most resplendent moments in the history of the House of Ventimiglia. Here is kept the holy relic of the skull of Saint Anne, in an urn that acts as the pedestal to the

sculpted bust of Castelbuono's patron saint. There are also the traditional underground dungeons and a tunnel that leads to the Church of San Francesco.

The village is also famous for one of the Europe oldest road running competition, "Giro Podistico Internazionale", and for the production of manna, speciality of this area, taken from ash trees.

Pylaia - Hortiatis



Pylaia-Hortiatis is a Municipality in the Thessaloniki regional unit, and consists of 4 suburbs: Asvestohori, Hortiatis, Panorama and Pylaia, there are 70.000 inhabitants and the seat of the Municipality is Panorama.



Pylaia

The first reference to Pylaia is found in the historian Thucydides, in 319 BC, under the name Strepsa. The current name came into general use in 1927, and is derived from the word Pyle, meaning gateway and referring to the Eastern Entrance of the city.

Hortiatis

It takes its name from Mount Chortiatis. In the antiquity, mountain and town were known as Cissus and Homer tells us that Cisseus was the king of this town. The modern name and town Hortiatis can be traced back to the 12th century, from a Byzantine monastery called Chortaites. In 1423 It fell under Ottoman Empire and in 1912 the Greek town was liberated.





The Massacre of Hortiatis

The Hortiatis massacre was a World War II mass murder of 146 civilians by the Wehrmacht on 2 September 1944. German soldiers surrounded the village, they gathered all the people they found in the town square and began

to burn houses down. One group of the civilians was led into the house of villager Evangelos Ntinoudis, they were locked inside and burnt alive. A total of 146 civilians residents of Hortiatis were killed that day.

