



Youth in Action Programme

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.





Action 1.3 - Youth Democracy Projects

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:

- :: 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.





Direct Democracy

Inspired by the power of social networks (Facebook) 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 **Youthorama** 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.



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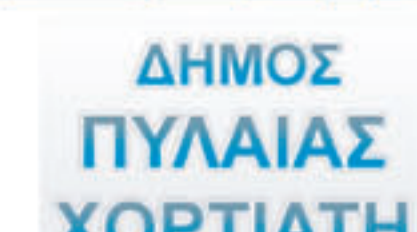
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Comune di
Castelbuono



YOUTHORAMA



ΔΗΜΟΣ
ΠΥΛΑΙΑΣ
ΧΟΡΤΙΑΤΗ
Municipality Pylaias-Hortiati
Greek



Casa d'Europa
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Description of activity

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 Agorà: 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!!





Our Experience

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. We were also present with 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.

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. 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. 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. I loved the meeting in the town because it helped me to understand and learn many new things of municipal organization.

Lucilla

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!

Noemi

The activity of the referendum was very creative, it allowed us to exchange ideas with other guys of our age and understand their needs. 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, 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.



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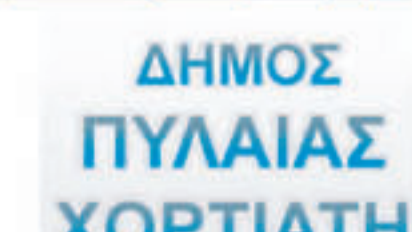
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Our Experience

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 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.

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!

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. I expected a greater sharing with the citizens and more decision-makers because I think that a referendum regards everybody. It was a positive experience.

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.

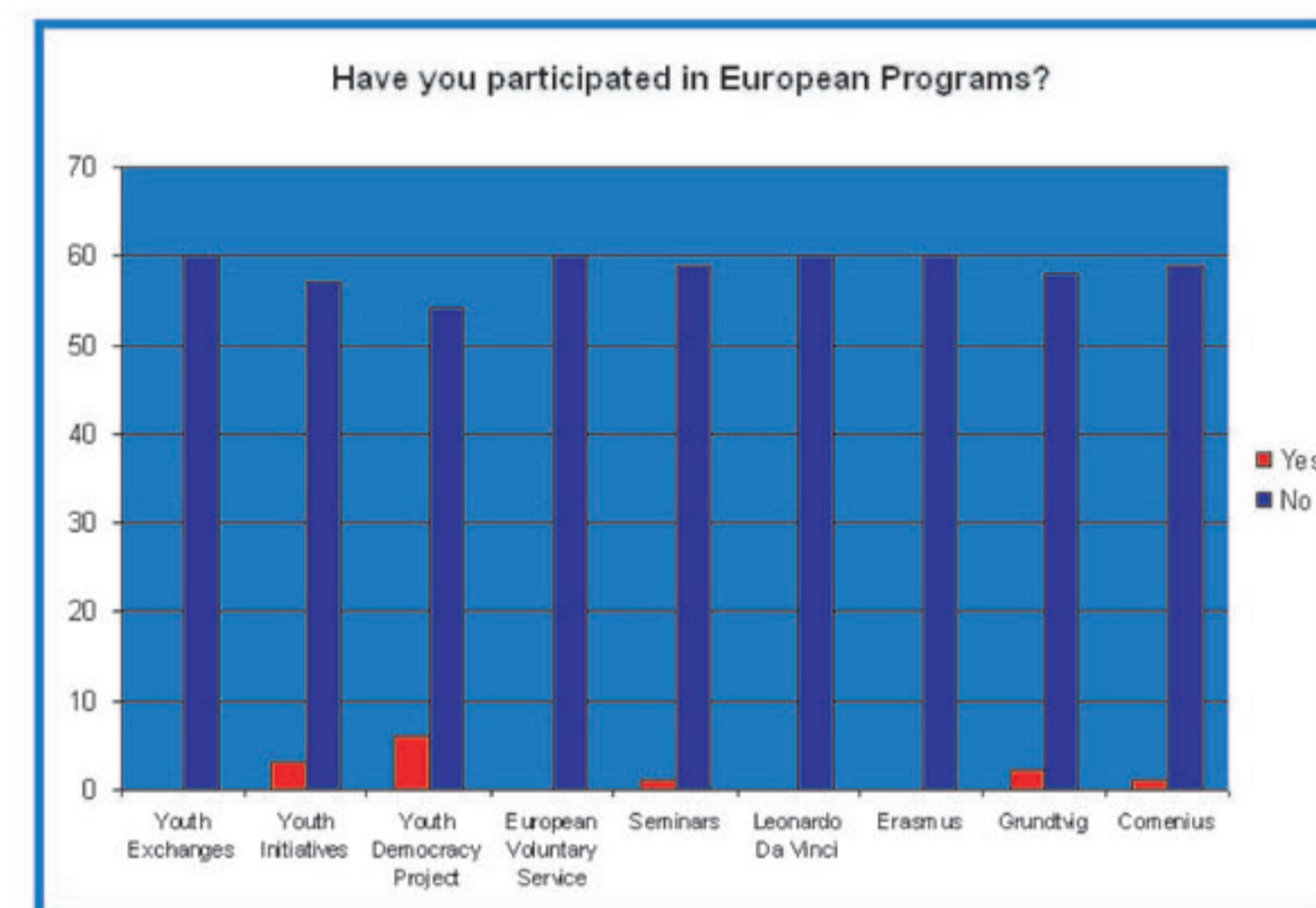
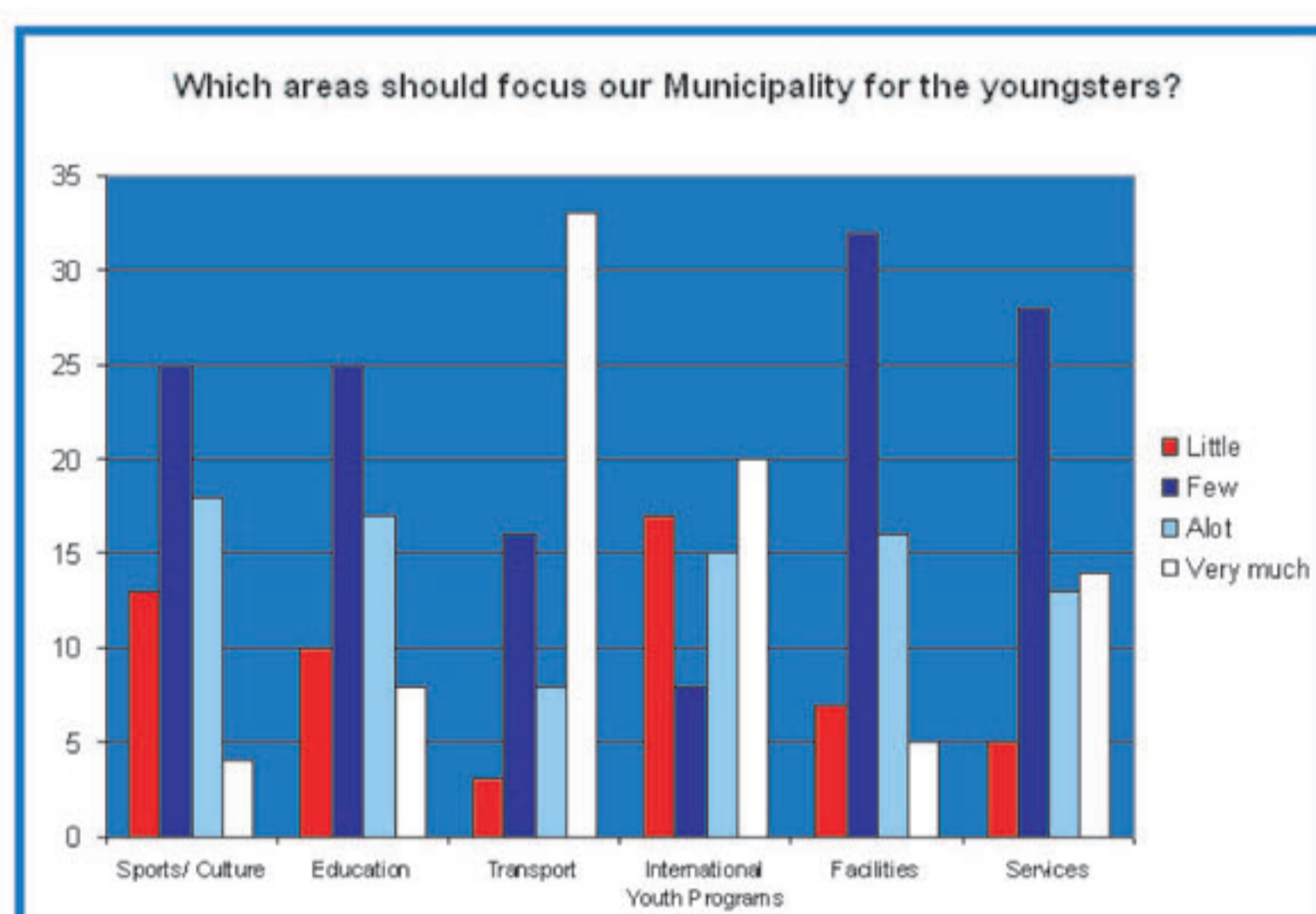
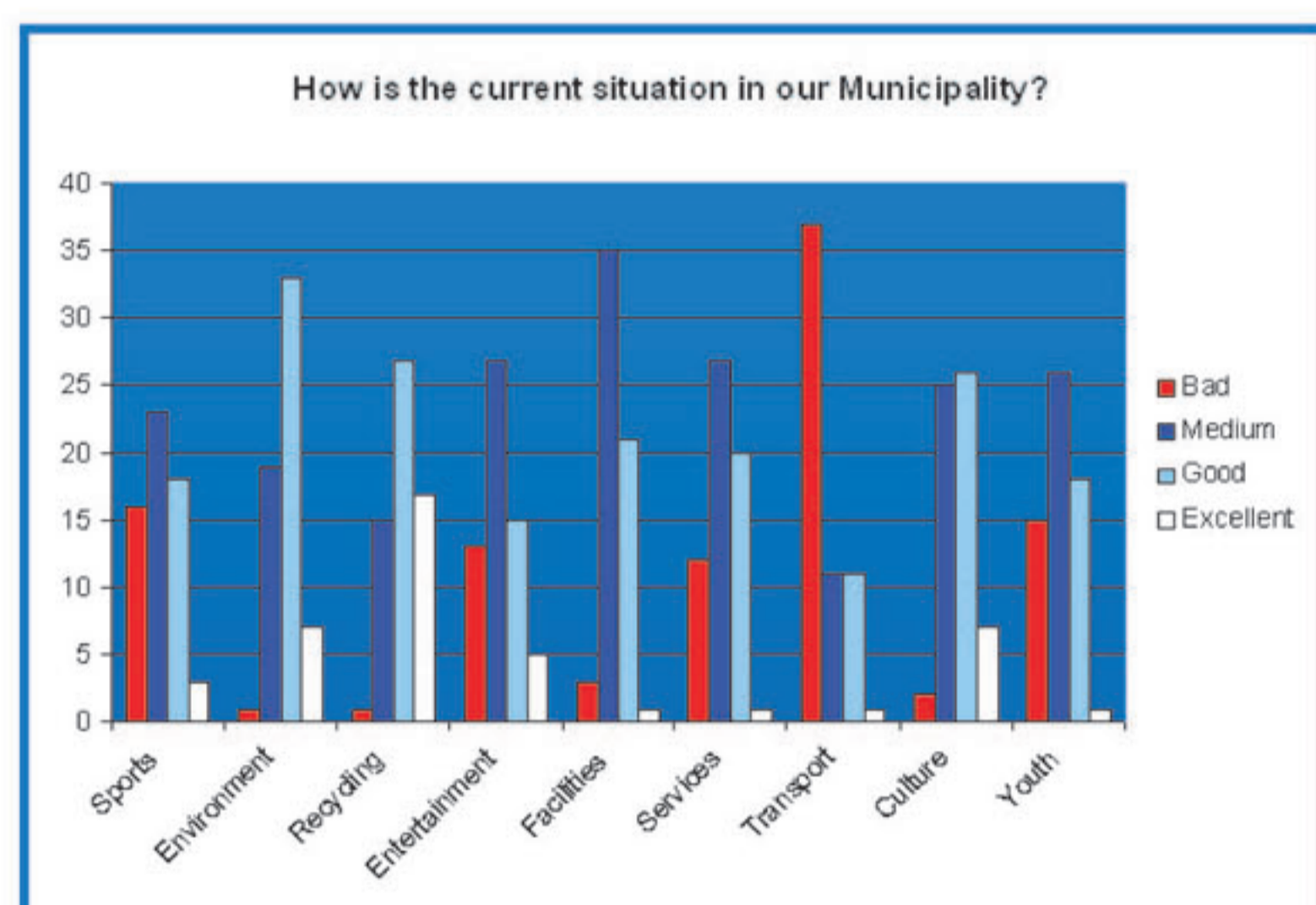




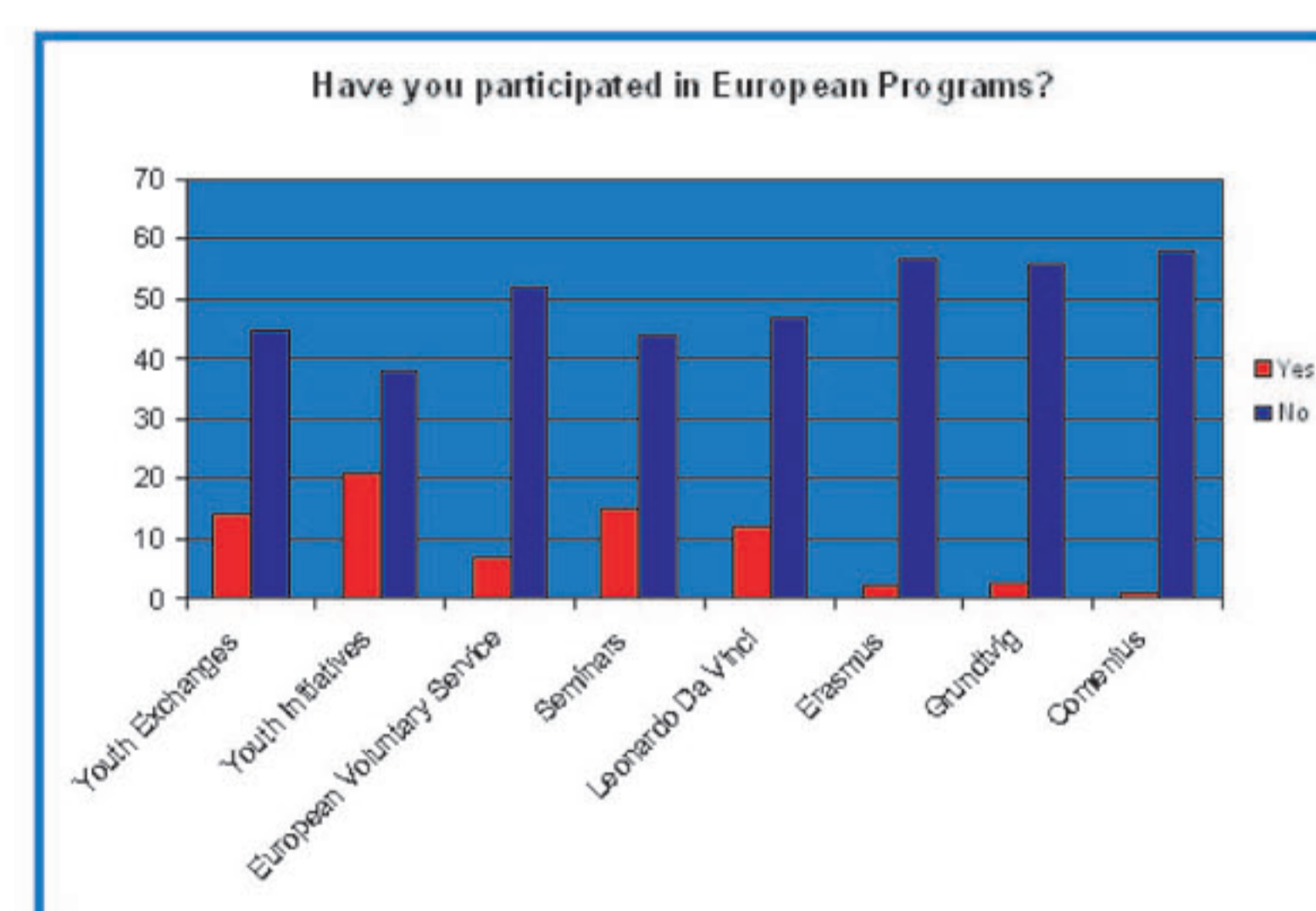
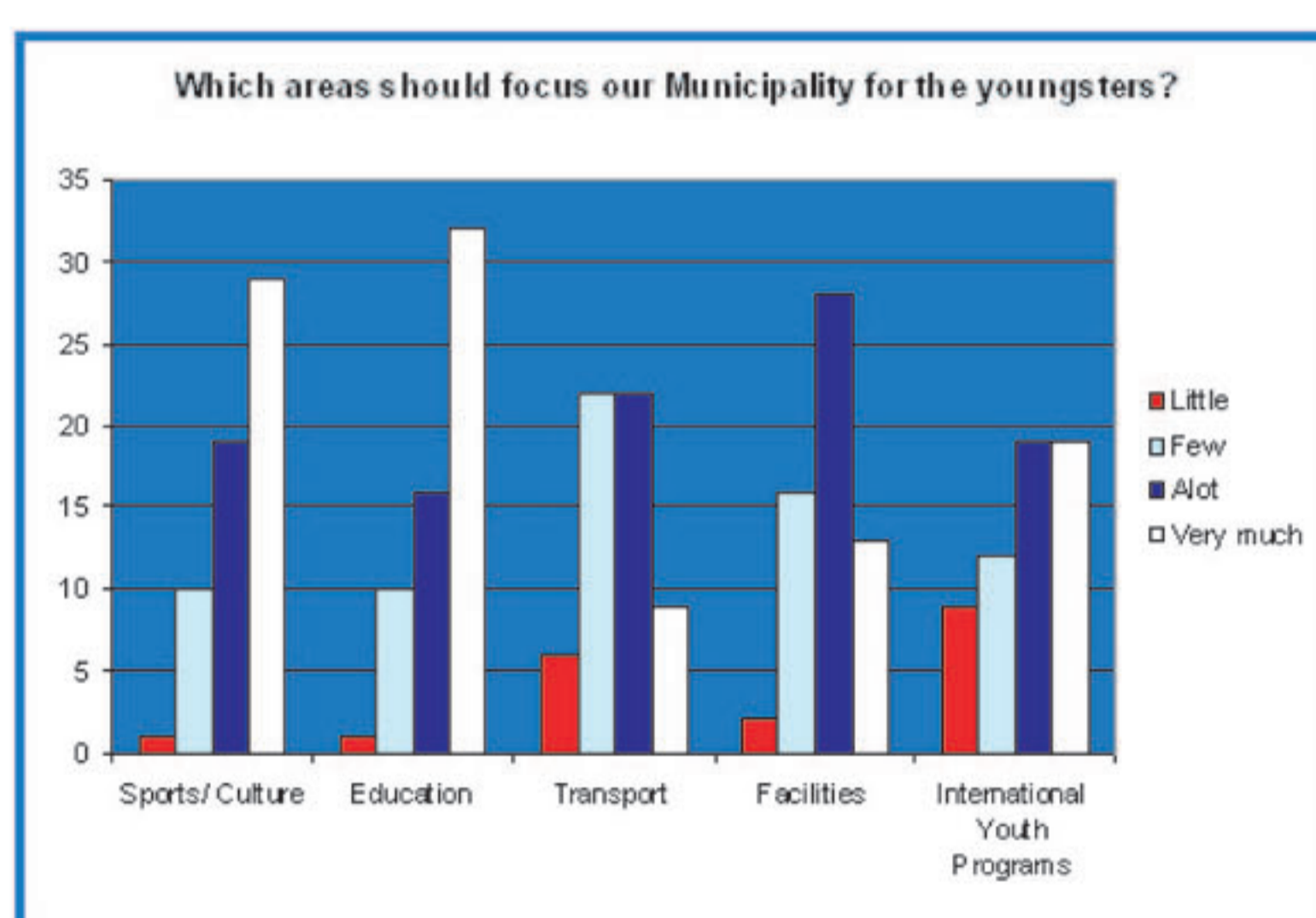
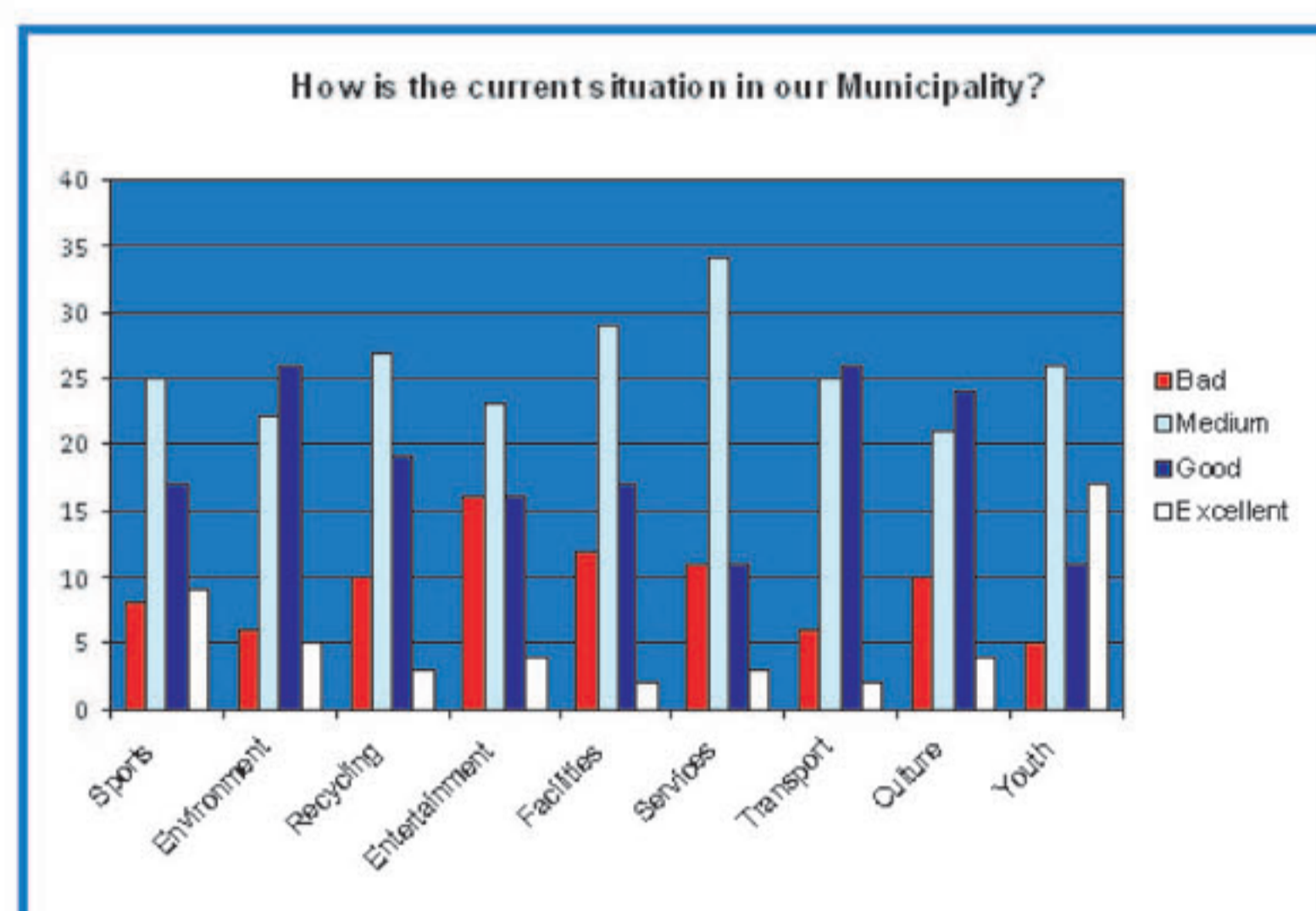
Referendum

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





Partners



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

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.

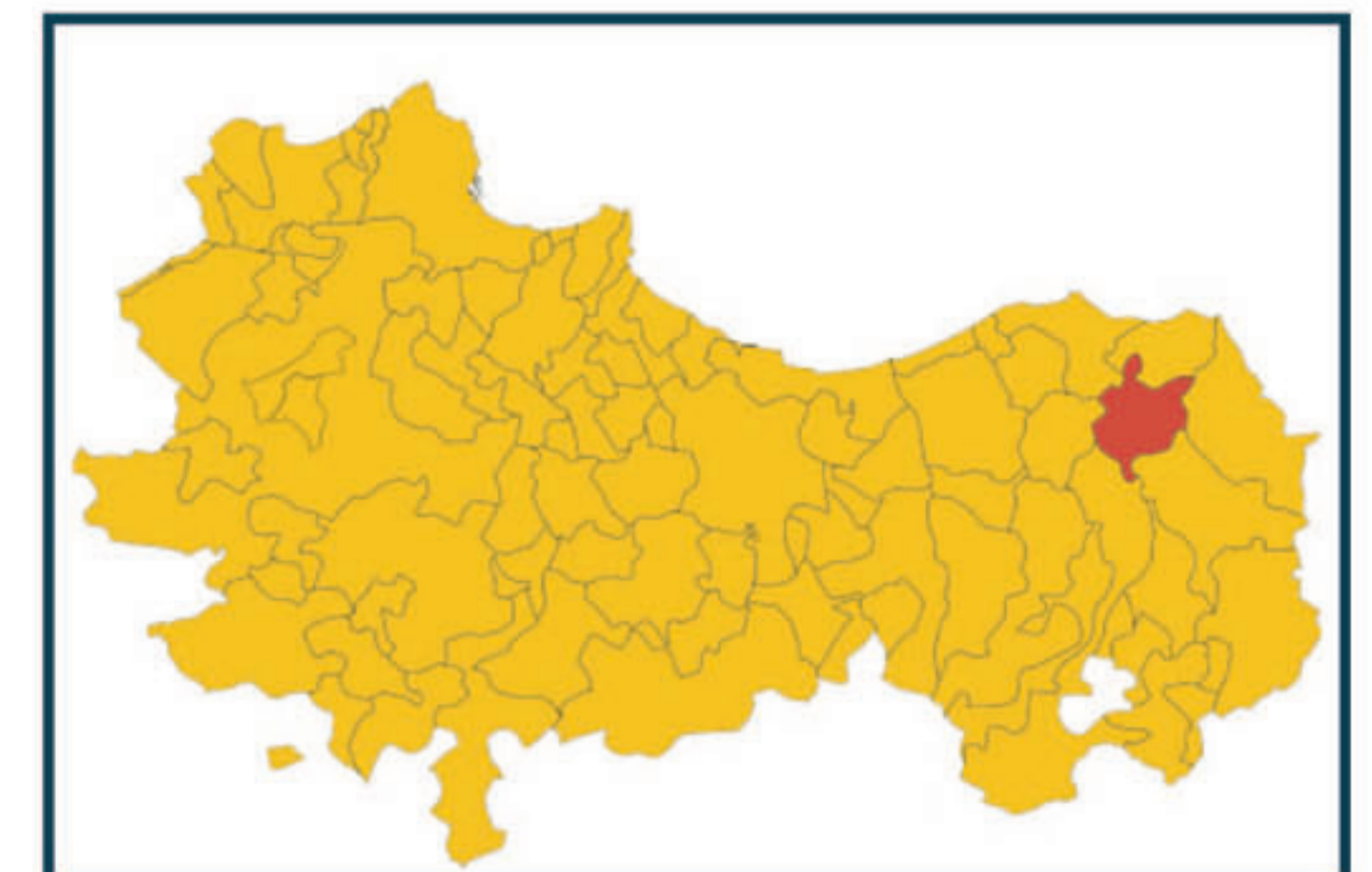
In the town, in 1282, there were about three hundred inhabitants and in the early fourteenth century there were three churches and it was a center of some importance. To this period dates back the domain of the family Ventimiglia on County Ypsigro, which lasted until the twentieth century.

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.



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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

