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Shaping AI

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES, STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS, AND POLICY TRENDS IN ITALY

Shaping AI: Youth Perspectives, Stakeholder Insights, and Policy Trends in Italy
Regional White Paper

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Introduction

This report, developed and authored by **ALFA Liguria**—*Agenzia Regionale per il Lavoro, la Formazione e l'Accreditamento*—within the framework of the **Erasmus+ YouthGovAI project**, offers a comprehensive analysis of the current landscape of artificial intelligence (AI) regulation, education, and governance in Italy, with a particular focus on youth engagement and participatory strategies. As the official regional agency responsible for vocational training, guidance, and educational innovation in the Liguria Region, ALFA coordinated this national contribution by drawing upon its extensive expertise in institutional cooperation, educational program design, and strategic outreach to young people, families, schools, and public stakeholders. The report reflects ALFA Liguria's longstanding commitment to bridging the gap between emerging technologies and inclusive, democratic education, and it aims to contribute to a broader European conversation on how youth can be empowered to meaningfully participate in the governance of AI.

In its capacity as a regional public body, ALFA Liguria represents an authoritative institutional reference point in the field of vocational education, training, and guidance. Entrusted with the mission of accompanying young people, families, and educational professionals along the complex trajectories of educational and professional development, ALFA orchestrates an integrated set of actions that span from policy implementation to the design and delivery of educational initiatives. Through its flagship program *Orientamenti – #Progettiamocilfuturo*, ALFA annually engages over 60,000 young people, 12,000 families, and more than 7,000 educators across the region, promoting civic awareness, competence-building, and an informed understanding of educational and labour market opportunities. Its longstanding experience in coordinating guidance-related interventions, its robust institutional partnerships—extending from local actors to international networks—and its strategic role in organising one of Italy's most prominent educational fairs, *Festival Orientamenti*, place ALFA in an ideal position to spearhead regional contributions to transnational projects such as YouthGovAI.

The present report—entitled *YouthGovAI – Italian Report on the Current Status of AI Regulations and Good Practices in the Country*—constitutes a comprehensive and multifaceted analysis of the intersections between artificial intelligence (AI), youth engagement, educational policies, and governance frameworks in the Italian context. Developed under the aegis of the Erasmus+

co-funded project *YouthGovAI*, this document synthesises an extensive body of research, policy analysis, and participatory investigation. It integrates diverse methodological components including a structured review of the national regulatory and strategic framework on AI; a mapping of relevant stakeholders through a power-interest analysis; a detailed assessment of empirical data collected via a national survey targeting Italian youth; and the outcomes of a focus group with key national stakeholders working at the nexus of education, technology, and youth empowerment.

The first section of the report is dedicated to the **National Regulatory Framework on AI**, wherein the Italian approach to artificial intelligence is reconstructed through the lens of legislative initiatives, strategic planning, and institutional configurations. Particular attention is devoted to the *National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence 2022–2024*, a cross-ministerial policy document that articulates Italy's six strategic objectives in the field of AI—ranging from the enhancement of research ecosystems and industrial competitiveness to the promotion of public awareness, ethical safeguards, and inclusive governance. The report also explores the critical role played by Italy's Data Protection Authority (Garante per la Protezione dei Dati Personali) in mediating the ethical implications of AI, particularly in cases of high societal impact such as the suspension of ChatGPT in March 2023. Additional sections trace Italy's efforts to promote AI through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), the annual Budget Law, and the gradual establishment of institutions such as the *Istituto Italiano per l'Intelligenza Artificiale (I3A)*, envisioned as a national center for excellence and coordination in AI research and innovation.

While acknowledging these policy advances, the report offers a critical assessment of **ongoing challenges** and **structural gaps** that continue to hinder the full institutionalisation of AI governance in Italy. Among these are the fragmentation of responsibilities across governmental bodies, the absence of a coherent legislative framework specific to AI, delays in implementing key institutional structures such as the I3A, and significant disparities in digital capacity across Italy's territorial and social landscape. These deficiencies are further contextualised within the Italian political and cultural debate on AI, which is characterised as reactive, uneven, and often disconnected from structured civic engagement. Notwithstanding recent participations in international summits and growing academic interest in issues of algorithmic justice, the report underscores the need for a more integrated, transparent, and participatory governance

architecture capable of aligning technological innovation with democratic values and social inclusion.

In parallel to the regulatory analysis, the document outlines **examples of good practices in AI education**, drawing upon recent pilot projects and national initiatives aimed at embedding AI literacy and digital competence in formal and non-formal education. From AI-assisted teaching tools in schools and AI-based prototyping curricula for students, to the training of teachers on the responsible use of AI platforms such as ChatGPT, the report highlights a series of initiatives that collectively seek to prepare both learners and educators for a technologically saturated future. Nonetheless, the authors caution that these initiatives, while promising, remain fragmented and unevenly distributed, calling for a more systematic integration of AI literacy into national education policies.

A further cornerstone of the report is its extensive **stakeholder analysis**, structured according to a **power-interest matrix**. This section maps a constellation of actors—ranging from ministries, agencies, and regulatory authorities to civil society organisations, research institutes, private sector companies, and youth networks—according to their relative influence and engagement in AI-related policies. Actors with high power and high interest, such as the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy, the Garante, the I3A, and the Ministry of Education, are identified as strategic interlocutors whose engagement is indispensable to any effort aiming to integrate youth perspectives into AI governance. The analysis also illuminates opportunities for collaboration with stakeholders currently under-involved in the debate but possessing high mobilising potential—such as youth organisations, chambers of commerce, and local public actors working on digital education.

Building upon this institutional mapping, the report turns to the **empirical dimension** of the project through the presentation of the **YouthGovAI Survey – Italy**, conducted between March and May 2025 with a sample of 281 young respondents. The survey provides a granular understanding of Italian youths' familiarity with, attitudes toward, and usage patterns of AI technologies. A striking 87.2% of respondents declared that they are able to explain the term "artificial intelligence," and a substantial proportion reported regular use of AI-based tools both in everyday life and academic contexts. Despite this widespread exposure, the survey reveals significant **gaps in critical understanding**, with only a minority expressing high confidence in identifying or evaluating AI systems. The responses also underscore the **ethical ambivalence** surrounding AI: while participants widely recognised the technology's potential to support

efficiency, personal empowerment, and educational innovation, they simultaneously voiced concerns about its risks to cognitive autonomy, employment security, and information reliability. The open-ended responses collected in the survey offer rich qualitative insights into young people's **symbolic associations** with AI, their perceptions of **advantages** and **risks**, and the moral dilemmas that new technologies may entail. Notably, references to tools such as ChatGPT were far more common than abstract or speculative depictions, suggesting that Italian youth conceive of AI as an immediate and embedded presence in their digital lives. The report stresses that this proximity to AI tools does not automatically translate into conceptual mastery or civic agency, reinforcing the importance of educational strategies that combine **technical knowledge** with **ethical reflection** and **participatory governance**.

The final section of the report reflects on the **national focus group** organised as part of the YouthGovAI co-creation process, which convened a diverse group of stakeholders—educators, engineers, cultural facilitators, and guidance professionals—working at the intersection of youth education and technological training. The discussion, framed by a shared concern for the marginalisation of youth voices in digital governance, highlighted a lack of age-appropriate resources, the dominance of technical framings over civic ones, and the structural exclusion of young people from formal decision-making arenas. Participants called for the development of hybrid educational models that combine AI literacy with democratic competencies and proposed the creation of permanent youth forums to bridge the gap between technological innovation and civic inclusion.

In its **conclusions**, the document reaffirms the strategic importance of empowering youth as critical stakeholders in the governance of AI. It calls upon public institutions, educational bodies, and civil society to collaborate in the development of structured, inclusive, and participatory processes that equip younger generations with the skills and spaces needed to influence AI's developmental trajectories. In this regard, **ALFA Liguria's** participation in the YouthGovAI project is not only a testament to the agency's institutional commitment to innovation in guidance and education, but also a concrete step toward aligning regional practices with European priorities in digital and democratic transition.

By integrating policy research, empirical analysis, and participatory consultation, this report aspires to serve as both a diagnostic and a roadmap. It identifies the gaps that hinder the full civic inclusion of youth in AI-related processes, while also outlining the institutional, educational, and cultural infrastructures necessary to ensure that artificial intelligence—

arguably one of the most consequential technologies of our time—develops in a way that is not only technologically robust, but ethically grounded, socially just, and democratically legitimate. Within this framework, the role of actors such as **ALFA Liguria** emerges as fundamental: as a catalyst of institutional cooperation, a convener of multi-stakeholder dialogue, and a disseminator of inclusive educational practices capable of shaping the AI future through the active engagement of those who will inherit it.

National Regulatory Framework on AI

Regulatory Framework: The AI Act and National Adaptation

In recent years, Italy has undertaken a structured approach to address Artificial Intelligence (AI) not only as a technological lever, but as a social and cultural phenomenon that requires active governance. Regulation has developed on multiple levels: strategic, ethical, legal, and operational. The goal is clear: to promote an ecosystem where AI development serves the public interest, industrial competitiveness, and the rights of citizens.

The National Strategy for AI (2022–2024)

The main policy document for Italy's approach to AI is the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence 2022–2024, adopted in November 2021 by the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of University and Research, and the Department for Digital Transformation. This strategy outlines six macro-objectives and eleven priority areas of intervention, following an integrated approach that involves public administration, businesses, academia, and citizens. The six objectives complement each other and provide the framework for national public policies in the AI field.

Strengthening AI Research and Development

The first goal aims to close the gap between Italy and leading countries in AI research. To achieve this, the government proposes strengthening university networks and research centers, creating centers of excellence across the country, and supporting interdisciplinary projects. Key measures include attracting international researchers, encouraging the return of expatriate researchers, promoting public-private partnerships, and funding doctoral programs in collaboration with companies. The aim is to build a competitive research ecosystem capable of generating frontier innovations and retaining talent.

Increasing AI Adoption in Businesses

The second goal is to encourage the adoption of AI in Italy's business sector, particularly among SMEs, which often lag behind in adopting advanced technologies. Initiatives include tax incentives for AI technologies, support through Digital Innovation Hubs, and sector-specific

guidelines for responsible AI adoption. The goal is to enhance productivity and competitiveness while preventing digital exclusion and technological monopolies.

Strengthening AI in the Public Sector

The third objective focuses on utilizing AI in public administration to improve efficiency, service quality, and transparency. Measures include AI systems for document management and performance analysis, simplifying bureaucratic procedures, and pilot projects in justice, health, education, and transport. A key concern is ensuring responsible and transparent AI deployment.

Enhancing Skills and Human Capital

Italy faces a structural digital skills gap. This objective promotes new professional training and continuous worker upskilling. Actions include integrating AI education into schools and universities, creating dedicated degrees and master's programs, reskilling programs for at-risk workers, and public sector training. The aim is to build a qualified workforce capable of steering technological changes.

Creating a Supportive Legal and Ethical Framework

This objective ensures that AI development occurs within a coherent and ethical legal framework. Priorities include aligning with EU ethical principles, promoting algorithm transparency, developing algorithm audit standards, and ensuring GDPR-compliant data protection. The strategy highlights the need for pre-emptive social impact assessments, particularly in decision automation and surveillance.

Public Awareness and Social Dialogue

The final objective addresses the cultural and democratic aspects of AI. It emphasizes the importance of informed citizen participation. Measures include awareness campaigns, participatory initiatives (consultations, hackathons, civic labs), and school-based education on AI ethics. The approach supports AI as a democratic tool fostering trust and social cohesion.

Ethics and AI: The Central Role of the Data Protection Authority (Garante)

AI adoption brings ethical and legal implications, especially regarding fundamental rights. In Italy, the Data Protection Authority plays a central role in regulating algorithmic systems and promoting responsible AI.

Ethical Principles for AI

Although Italy has not enacted a comprehensive AI ethics law, the National Strategy references the seven key principles outlined by the EU High-Level Expert Group on AI (2019), also echoed by the Data Protection Authority:

- Human agency and oversight

- Technical robustness and safety

- Privacy and data governance

- Transparency

- Diversity, non-discrimination, and fairness

- Societal and environmental well-being

- Accountability

Implementing these principles remains challenging in high-risk sectors like surveillance, healthcare, and predictive justice. Tools such as algorithm audits, impact assessments, and mechanisms for explainability and contestability are crucial.

The ChatGPT Case: A Significant Precedent

A notable case was the temporary suspension of ChatGPT in March 2023 by the Data Protection Authority. Reasons included lack of transparency, no legal basis for data processing, risks for minors, and potential dissemination of false or harmful content. The ban was lifted after OpenAI introduced key changes, including Italian-language notices, opt-out forms, and age verification systems. The case sparked EU-wide debate on regulating both AI outputs and training processes.

The Authority as a Promoter of Ethical AI

Beyond ChatGPT, the Authority has issued guidelines on automated systems in public and private sectors, including:

- Predictive welfare algorithms

- Online proctoring platforms

- Facial recognition and smart surveillance

In all cases, the Authority emphasized proportionality, data minimization, and the need for data protection impact assessments (DPIAs). It plays a dual role: regulatory enforcement and promotion of best practices, including partnerships with research institutions and companies.

Recent Legislative and Programmatic Developments

Although there is no standalone AI law in Italy, AI is supported through financial and legal instruments, primarily the annual Budget Law and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR).

Budget Law

The 2021–2024 Budget Laws include direct and indirect AI support, particularly for industrial innovation and applied research. Measures include:

- Tax credits for research and innovation, including AI projects

- Support for the Transition 4.0 Plan, encouraging digital and AI-based technologies

- Funding for innovation ecosystems and high-tech centers focused on AI, such as centers for sustainable AI in Turin and intelligent mobility

These horizontal policies incentivize research and integration of AI into industry and academia.

PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan)

Funded through the EU's Next Generation program, the PNRR is Italy's post-pandemic modernization strategy, with AI as a key enabler. Relevant missions include:

- Mission 1: Digital transformation of public services and businesses, including cloud infrastructure and AI-based services

- Mission 4: Education and research, strengthening digital skills and creating national research centers in AI and cybersecurity

- Mission 6: Health, introducing intelligent tools for telemedicine and predictive health management

Although lacking a dedicated AI legislative line, the PNRR provides a structural foundation for AI integration, though criticisms include fragmented implementation and lack of central coordination.

Limits and Future Prospects

Despite their economic impact, the Budget Law and PNRR do not fill the regulatory gap on AI governance. Their success depends on administrative capacity and public-private collaboration. They can, however, lay the groundwork for a future comprehensive national AI law that combines legal, ethical, and technical dimensions.

Institutions and Centers of Excellence: The Italian Institute for AI (I3A)

The I3A is envisioned as a national hub for advanced AI research, innovation, and technology transfer. Proposed in the National Strategy and legally established in the 2022 Budget Law, it is based in Turin due to its strong research ecosystem.

Goals and Functions

The I3A aims to:

- Coordinate national and EU AI research

- Attract international talent

- Promote technology transfer to SMEs

- Act as a national cooperation hub between academia, research centers, and public institutions

- Support ethical and inclusive AI development

The institute should be organized thematically and regionally, with local hubs on digital health, smart mobility, environment, advanced manufacturing, and public services.

Progress and Challenges

The I3A's implementation has been delayed due to governance and bureaucratic issues. It currently lacks a physical location and legal identity, though pilot projects began in 2024. Critics highlight overlaps with other initiatives and call for transparent, inclusive governance.

Strategic Role

If properly structured, the I3A could:

- Reduce fragmentation in AI initiatives

- Serve as a scientific advisor for national AI legislation

- Boost Italy's leadership in the European AI landscape

The institute's full activation will be a litmus test of Italy's ability to turn strategy into action.

Ongoing Challenges and Prospects for AI Governance in Italy

Despite significant efforts, Italy still faces fragmented regulation and institutional delays in AI governance. Key issues include the absence of a national legal framework, unclear responsibilities, and limited systemic coordination among ministries, regions, universities, and private actors.

Another challenge is the uneven distribution of technical and administrative capacities, particularly in public administration and education systems. There is also the risk of increasing digital inequality across regions and populations.

Three strategic lines are essential:

- Develop a comprehensive AI law integrating ethical, legal, technical, and socio-economic dimensions

- Strengthen educational and cultural initiatives promoting AI literacy and critical awareness

- Enhance institutional coordination through permanent public-private dialogue structures and stable governance for the I3A

Italy has the opportunity to adopt an AI model grounded in fundamental rights, transparency, and social inclusion. The challenge is to guide innovation toward democratic and public-interest goals.

In conclusion, AI regulation and promotion in Italy are at a crossroads. Digital transition must be supported by systemic vision combining technological efficiency with social equity and legal responsibility. Building a trustworthy, transparent, and sustainable Italian AI ecosystem requires not only resources and investments, but also political will and long-term ethical commitment.

The Political and Cultural Debate: Balancing Innovation and Regulation

The Italian discourse surrounding artificial intelligence has, in recent years, become increasingly animated by the complex task of reconciling the promise of technological innovation with the imperative to uphold constitutional values and democratic accountability. Unlike Germany, where a broad coalition of civil society, industry, and academia actively shapes the national stance on AI through structured and often well-funded dialogue, Italy's political and cultural debate appears more fragmented and reactive, with episodic peaks in attention following regulatory interventions or controversies such as the temporary suspension of ChatGPT by the Garante per la Protezione dei Dati Personali in March 2023.

Political authorities in Italy have generally endorsed the development of AI as a strategic national priority, as evidenced by the 2022–2024 National Strategy and the financial investments foreseen in the PNRR. However, concerns remain regarding the coherence of institutional responses and the risk of regulatory gaps or overlaps. The absence of a dedicated national agency for AI—similar to the proposed "digital agency" under discussion in Germany— limits Italy's capacity for coordinated oversight and stakeholder engagement. In the parliamentary sphere, debates have been sporadic and often subsumed under broader discussions of digital transformation, without the establishment of permanent committees or task forces with specific competence in AI governance.

Culturally, the Italian public exhibits a mix of fascination and skepticism towards AI, influenced by media narratives that oscillate between utopian enthusiasm and dystopian alarmism. According to a 2024 Eurobarometer survey, only 39% of Italians expressed trust in AI systems to make fair decisions, compared to 49% in Germany and 54% in the Netherlands (European Commission, 2024). This data suggests a comparatively lower level of public confidence, potentially linked to limited digital literacy and the perceived opacity of algorithmic processes. Civil society organisations—such as Privacy Network, Hermes Center, and AlgorithmWatch Italy—have begun to play a more active role in the national conversation, calling for algorithmic transparency, participatory oversight mechanisms, and robust protections against biometric surveillance and automated discrimination.

At the international level, Italy has expressed alignment with European principles, participating in the February 2025 Paris AI Action Summit alongside other EU leaders. The Italian delegation supported the summit's concluding declaration advocating for inclusive and sustainable AI systems, grounded in human rights and social responsibility. Yet, Italy's contribution lacked the visibility and institutional weight of countries like France or Germany, reflecting the still-evolving maturity of its AI governance architecture.

Notably, debates over foundation models and generative AI have surfaced within Italian universities and research institutes, with scholars from institutions such as the Scuola Normale Superiore and the Politecnico di Milano raising critical questions about the monopolisation of AI infrastructure, the environmental costs of large-scale model training, and the epistemological risks of delegating interpretative tasks to opaque systems. These academic reflections, however, remain largely disconnected from policymaking processes, which tend to privilege economic and innovation-driven framings.

In summary, Italy's political and cultural debate on AI regulation is characterised by a dynamic yet uneven landscape, in which legal, ethical, and social concerns are increasingly recognised but not yet fully institutionalised. To balance innovation with the protection of fundamental rights, a more systematic and participatory model of governance is required—one capable of integrating civic voices, academic expertise, and industrial priorities into a cohesive national vision.

Good Practices – AI for Education in Italy

In the context of Italy's concerted efforts to bridge the digital divide and enhance educational outcomes, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into educational frameworks has emerged as a pivotal strategy. This approach aligns with the national objective of fostering digital competencies among students and educators, thereby preparing them for the demands of a technologically advanced society. Several initiatives exemplify the practical application of AI in educational settings, each contributing uniquely to the overarching goal of modernizing Italy's educational landscape.

One notable initiative is the pilot project launched in September 2024, which introduced AI-assisted teaching in 15 schools across four Italian regions. This project aims to enhance learning experiences by employing AI tools that act as virtual assistants, facilitating personalized education and aiding teachers in identifying effective teaching methodologies. The initiative reflects a proactive approach to addressing Italy's low ranking in digital skills within the European Union, as reported by Eurostat.

Complementing this, the AI-ENTR4YOUTH program offers a 52-hour intensive curriculum where students develop functional AI-based prototypes. This hands-on approach not only imparts technical skills but also encourages innovation and critical thinking among participants. The program's success is attributed to the collaborative efforts of educators and industry experts, notably from Intel, who provide additional training sessions to deepen teachers' understanding of AI.

In Bologna, the "Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT for Teachers" course represents a significant step towards equipping educators with the necessary skills to integrate AI into their teaching practices. Scheduled for June 2025, the course offers practical insights into the use of AI tools in education, addressing both opportunities and challenges. It emphasizes the importance of ethical considerations and responsible use of AI, fostering a mindful and inclusive educational environment.

Further advancing AI education, the International School on Artificial Intelligence for Cognitive Technologies, set to take place in Naples in December 2024, provides an interdisciplinary platform for Master and PhD students, early career researchers, and industry professionals. The program focuses on Human-Computer Interaction, Brain-Computer Interface, and Explainable

AI, offering a comprehensive curriculum that includes workshops, lectures, and collaborative projects. This initiative underscores the importance of combining theoretical knowledge with practical application in the field of AI.

Additionally, the collaboration between the Salesian North-East Italy Province and Google for Education through the integration of "Gemini AI" demonstrates the potential of AI to revolutionize teaching methodologies. By enhancing teaching capabilities and providing innovative tools, this partnership aims to improve educational outcomes across various locations.

Collectively, these initiatives reflect Italy's commitment to embracing AI in education, recognizing its transformative potential to enhance learning experiences, foster innovation, and prepare students and educators for the challenges of the digital age.

Stakeholder Analysis

Policy-Making Institutions

Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy (Ministero delle Imprese e del Made in Italy)

The Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy is a central governmental body responsible for industrial policy, innovation, and the promotion of Italian enterprises. Under the leadership of Minister Adolfo Urso, the ministry has been instrumental in shaping Italy's approach to artificial intelligence (AI). In April 2024, the Italian cabinet approved a bill to establish a comprehensive framework for AI, which includes an initial investment of up to €1 billion to support AI projects and startups, managed by the state lender Cassa Depositi e Prestiti. The legislation also aims to set sanctions for AI-related crimes and emphasizes the importance of human autonomy in AI applications.

Engaging with the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy could be pivotal for YouthGovAI, as the ministry plays a significant role in defining national AI strategies and allocating resources. Collaborating with this institution may provide opportunities to advocate for youth-inclusive policies and ensure that the perspectives of younger generations are considered in the development and implementation of AI initiatives.

Italian Data Protection Authority (Garante per la Protezione dei Dati Personali)

The Italian Data Protection Authority is an independent administrative authority tasked with ensuring the protection of personal data and privacy rights. The Garante has been actively involved in overseeing AI applications, particularly concerning data privacy and ethical considerations. For instance, in January 2025, the authority demanded clarifications from the Chinese AI platform DeepSeek regarding its data handling practices, reflecting its commitment to safeguarding citizens' data in the context of emerging technologies.

Collaborating with the Garante could be beneficial for YouthGovAI, as it would allow for the promotion of youth-centric data protection policies and the inclusion of young people's voices in discussions about AI ethics and privacy. Such engagement could help ensure that AI systems are developed and deployed in ways that respect the rights and interests of younger populations.

Istituto Italiano per l'Intelligenza Artificiale (I3A)

The Istituto Italiano per l'Intelligenza Artificiale (I3A), established as part of Italy's National AI Strategy and supported by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), is envisioned as a national center of excellence for research, development, and innovation in artificial intelligence. Headquartered in Turin, I3A aims to position Italy at the forefront of global AI advancements by fostering interdisciplinary research, promoting public-private partnerships, and supporting the ethical and sustainable deployment of AI technologies across key sectors such as healthcare, industry, environment, and education. While still in its formative stages, I3A is expected to coordinate with universities, research institutes, and enterprises to enhance Italy's competitiveness in the digital economy and ensure that AI innovation is aligned with European values and human rights standards.

Engaging with I3A could prove strategically significant for YouthGovAI. As a future hub of national AI policy and research, I3A offers a critical platform for embedding youth perspectives within the scientific and regulatory discussions shaping Italy's AI trajectory. YouthGovAI could collaborate with I3A in co-designing educational modules, organizing youth-focused consultations, and piloting participatory research on the social impact of AI. Furthermore, the partnership could ensure that young people are not only recipients of AI education but active contributors to Italy's AI ecosystem.

Agency for Digital Italy (Agenzia per l'Italia Digitale - AgID)

The Agency for Digital Italy is a governmental body responsible for coordinating the digital transformation of the public administration and promoting the adoption of digital technologies across the country. AgID plays a crucial role in implementing the national strategy for artificial intelligence, focusing on fostering innovation, ensuring interoperability, and enhancing digital skills among citizens.AgID

Engaging with AgID could provide YouthGovAI with opportunities to influence the digital agenda, particularly in areas related to AI education and digital literacy. By collaborating with AgID, YouthGovAI can advocate for the inclusion of youth perspectives in digital transformation initiatives and promote programs that equip young people with the necessary skills to navigate and shape the AI-driven future.

Ministry of Education and Merit (Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito)

The Ministry of Education and Merit is the central governmental body responsible for the national education system in Italy. It oversees the development and implementation of educational policies, curricula, and programs across all levels of education. In recent years, the ministry has initiated pilot projects to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) into classrooms, aiming to enhance digital skills among students and tailor educational methods to individual learning needs. These initiatives reflect a commitment to modernizing the educational landscape and addressing the digital divide that affects various regions in Italy. Reuters

Engaging with the Ministry of Education and Merit could be instrumental for YouthGovAI, as it would provide a platform to advocate for the inclusion of AI literacy and ethical considerations in the national curriculum. Collaboration with the ministry could also facilitate the development of programs that empower young people to actively participate in discussions and decisions related to AI governance and its impact on education.

Civil Society Organizations

Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK)

Fondazione Bruno Kessler is a renowned research institute based in Trento, Italy, specializing in various scientific domains, including information technology and AI. FBK conducts interdisciplinary research that combines technological innovation with ethical and societal considerations. The foundation has been involved in numerous projects aimed at exploring the implications of AI on society and developing frameworks for responsible AI governance.

Engaging with FBK could provide YouthGovAI with access to cutting-edge research and a platform to collaborate on initiatives that promote ethical AI development. FBK's expertise in integrating technological advancements with societal needs aligns with YouthGovAI's mission to ensure that AI governance includes the perspectives and interests of young people.

Associazione Luca Coscioni

Associazione Luca Coscioni is a civil society organization dedicated to promoting civil liberties and scientific research. The association advocates for the responsible use of technology and has

been active in discussions surrounding AI ethics and regulation. Through its campaigns and policy recommendations, the organization seeks to ensure that technological advancements serve the public interest and uphold fundamental rights.

Collaborating with Associazione Luca Coscioni could enhance YouthGovAI's efforts to advocate for inclusive and ethical AI policies. The organization's experience in engaging with policymakers and the public on complex scientific and ethical issues could be instrumental in amplifying youth voices in AI governance debates.

Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights

The Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights is an Italian civil rights organization dedicated to promoting transparency, accountability, freedom of speech online, and the protection of rights and personal freedoms in the digital age. Established in 2012, the center has been actively involved in advocating for digital rights, developing open-source tools, and conducting research on issues related to privacy and surveillance. Notably, the Hermes Center has been a member of the European Digital Rights (EDRi) network since 2018, reflecting its commitment to digital rights advocacy at both national and European levels. European Digital Rights (EDRi)

Engaging with the Hermes Center could be highly beneficial for YouthGovAI, as the organization possesses extensive expertise in areas such as data protection, surveillance, and digital freedom. Collaborating with the Hermes Center would enable YouthGovAI to leverage this expertise to inform its initiatives aimed at safeguarding the digital rights of young people. Furthermore, the Hermes Center's experience in developing educational resources and conducting advocacy campaigns could support YouthGovAI's efforts to raise awareness among youth about the importance of digital rights and ethical considerations in AI governance.

Fondazione Mondo Digitale

Fondazione Mondo Digitale is a nonprofit organization based in Rome, dedicated to promoting digital inclusion and innovation through education and training. The foundation focuses on fostering digital skills among various segments of the population, including youth, the elderly, and marginalized communities. It implements projects that combine education, technology, and social innovation to bridge the digital divide and prepare citizens for the challenges of the digital

age. One of its notable initiatives includes the "Innovation Gym," a space designed to experiment with new learning models and technologies.ALL DIGITAL+1Alfonso Molina+1

Collaborating with Fondazione Mondo Digitale could enhance YouthGovAI's efforts to promote AI literacy and ethical awareness among young people. The foundation's experience in implementing educational programs and its extensive network of schools and community centers could serve as valuable channels for disseminating information and engaging youth in AI-related discussions and activities.

Technology Companies
Leonardo S.p.A.

Leonardo S.p.A. is a prominent Italian multinational company specializing in aerospace, defense, and security. The company has been investing in AI technologies to enhance its products and services, focusing on areas such as autonomous systems, cybersecurity, and data analytics. Leonardo's commitment to innovation positions it as a key player in the development and application of AI within critical sectors.

Engaging with Leonardo could provide YouthGovAI with insights into the practical applications of AI in high-stakes environments and the ethical considerations involved. Collaboration could also open avenues for youth participation in discussions about the societal impacts of AI technologies and the importance of responsible innovation.

Engineering Ingegneria Informatica S.p.A.

Engineering Ingegneria Informatica is a leading Italian IT services company that offers a wide range of solutions, including AI-driven applications for various industries. The company focuses on digital transformation and has been involved in projects that leverage AI to improve business processes and public services. Engineering's emphasis on innovation and technology integration makes it a significant contributor to Italy's AI landscape.

Collaborating with Engineering could enable YouthGovAI to engage with the private sector's perspective on AI development and deployment. Such partnerships could facilitate the inclusion of youth viewpoints in corporate strategies and promote the adoption of AI solutions that consider the needs and rights of younger populations.

Olivetti S.p.A.

Olivetti S.p.A. is an Italian company with a long-standing history in the technology sector, currently focusing on digital innovation and the development of IoT and AI solutions. As part of the TIM Group, Olivetti plays a significant role in driving digital transformation in various industries, including manufacturing, logistics, and public administration.LinkedIn+6marcomioli.it+6eng.it+6eng.it

Engaging with Olivetti could provide YouthGovAI with opportunities to explore the integration of AI in everyday technologies and services. Collaborating with Olivetti can help ensure that the development of AI applications considers the perspectives and needs of young users, promoting inclusive and user-centric innovation.

CINECA

CINECA is a non-profit consortium consisting of Italian universities, research institutions, and the Ministry of Education, University and Research. It operates as the largest computing center in Italy and one of the most significant in Europe, providing high-performance computing (HPC) resources and services to support scientific research and technological innovation. CINECA plays a crucial role in advancing AI research by offering computational infrastructure and expertise to various projects and collaborations.

Engaging with CINECA could provide YouthGovAI with access to cutting-edge AI research and resources. Partnerships with CINECA could facilitate the development of educational programs and workshops that introduce young people to AI technologies, computational thinking, and the ethical considerations associated with AI applications. Such collaborations could also inspire youth to pursue careers in AI and related fields.

Youth Organizations
Consiglio Nazionale dei Giovani (CNG)

The Consiglio Nazionale dei Giovani is the official advisory body representing Italian youth organizations at the national level. CNG serves as a platform for young people to express their views on various policy issues, including education, employment, and technological innovation.

The council engages with governmental institutions to advocate for youth interests and influence policy decisions.

Partnering with CNG could significantly advance YouthGovAI's mission by providing a direct channel to incorporate youth perspectives into AI governance discussions. CNG's established relationships with policymakers and its representative role could help ensure that the concerns and aspirations of young people are reflected in national AI strategies.

Rete della Conoscenza

Rete della Conoscenza is a network of student and youth organizations in Italy that focuses on promoting knowledge, education, and active citizenship. The network engages in advocacy and public discourse on issues affecting young people, including digital rights and technological developments. Rete della Conoscenza aims to empower youth to participate in shaping policies that impact their lives and futures.

Collaborating with Rete della Conoscenza could enhance YouthGovAI's outreach and engagement efforts by tapping into a broad base of active and informed young individuals. The network's experience in mobilizing youth and fostering critical discussions on technology and society aligns with YouthGovAI's objectives of promoting inclusive and participatory AI governance.

Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani (ANG)

The Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani is a governmental agency responsible for implementing youth policies and programs in Italy, including the European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+ initiatives. ANG focuses on promoting youth participation, non-formal education, and the development of skills relevant to the labor market and active citizenship.

Engaging with ANG could provide YouthGovAI with access to a wide network of youth organizations and resources to support initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy and AI awareness among young people. Collaborating with ANG can help integrate AI-related topics into existing youth programs, fostering a generation of informed and empowered digital citizens.

Rete degli Studenti Medi

Rete degli Studenti Medi is a national student organization representing high school students across Italy. The organization advocates for students' rights, quality education, and active participation in democratic processes. It engages in various initiatives, including campaigns, workshops, and events, to empower students and amplify their voices on issues affecting their education and future. Rete degli Studenti Medi is also involved in international collaborations, promoting solidarity and exchange among student organizations in Europe.Wikipedia

Collaborating with Rete degli Studenti Medi could significantly advance YouthGovAI's mission by providing direct access to a broad network of engaged and motivated young individuals. The organization's experience in mobilizing students and facilitating dialogue on educational and societal issues could be leveraged to raise awareness about AI governance and encourage youth participation in shaping AI policies that affect their lives.

Stakeholders within the Power-Interest-Matrix

High Power / High Interest – Manage Closely
These actors shape and implement AI policy and regulation at both national and EU level. They are key decision-makers or powerful advocates directly involved in designing or enforcing rules.

Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy (Ministero delle Imprese e del Made in Italy): As the governmental body spearheading Italy's industrial and digital innovation strategies, including national AI investment, this Ministry is a key architect of Italy's AI policy landscape. It holds considerable influence over funding, regulatory development, and public-private initiatives in the AI sector. YouthGovAI should prioritize sustained engagement with this Ministry to advocate for youth-inclusive regulatory frameworks and integration of youth perspectives into AI funding and implementation strategies.

Garante per la Protezione dei Dati Personali (Italian Data Protection Authority): The Garante wields significant power in regulating privacy and ethical dimensions of digital technologies, including AI. It plays a pivotal role in interpreting GDPR and shaping national guidance on algorithmic transparency and biometric data. As a strong rights-based actor, it

aligns well with YouthGovAI's ethical priorities. Close collaboration would support the safeguarding of youth rights in AI systems and promote participatory risk assessment mechanisms that include youth input.

Agency for Digital Italy (AgID): AgID coordinates national digital strategy and transformation, including interoperability and digital citizenship. It has the mandate to implement aspects of the EU Digital Agenda in Italy. Its influence on public sector AI applications and e-governance tools makes it an indispensable partner for integrating youth feedback into AI applications in education and public services.

Istituto Italiano per l'Intelligenza Artificiale: has a central role in coordinating national AI research and innovation strategies, as well as its anticipated influence over the implementation of AI policy and ethical guidelines in Italy. Backed by significant public investment and mandated to guide both scientific and regulatory developments in the field, I3A holds institutional authority and agenda-setting power. At the same time, its mission explicitly includes societal impact and education, reflecting a high level of interest in inclusive governance, making it a key actor for YouthGovAI to engage with proactively.

Ministry of Education (Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito): This Ministry is responsible for shaping Italy's national education system, including curriculum development and digital education initiatives. It has launched pilot projects integrating AI into classrooms to address personalization and digital skills. Collaborating with this Ministry would provide YouthGovAI a unique entry point to advocate for ethical AI education and systemic inclusion of youth perspectives in AI-related pedagogy across schools.

Unione degli Industriali: As a federation representing the interests of Italian industrial and business sectors, the Unione degli Industriali plays a critical role in shaping industrial innovation policies, including those involving AI. Their proximity to manufacturing, logistics, and high-tech sectors makes them pivotal actors in influencing AI application at scale. Collaborating with them could support YouthGovAI in embedding youth-centered approaches into future workforce training programs and AI deployment in industry.

Camere di Commercio (Chambers of Commerce): The network of Italian Chambers of Commerce plays a fundamental role in promoting entrepreneurship, supporting innovation, and implementing regional economic development strategies. Their extensive reach within

local business ecosystems and their engagement in digitalization programs place them in a strategic position to advance ethical AI adoption and education. YouthGovAI could leverage this partnership to promote AI literacy among young entrepreneurs and advocate for youth-friendly innovation ecosystems.

High Power / Low Interest – Keep Satisfied

These actors shape and implement AI policy and regulation at both national and EU level. They are key decision-makers or powerful advocates directly involved in designing or enforcing rules.

Leonardo S.p.A.: A key AI innovator in the defense and aerospace sectors, Leonardo is central to Italy's national AI capacity but is less directly involved in youth-oriented AI governance. Nonetheless, their expertise in high-risk AI systems and investment capacity could benefit educational or civic AI literacy campaigns. Keeping Leonardo informed of YouthGovAI's societal and educational initiatives might foster future collaboration, particularly in ethical AI development.

Engineering Ingegneria Informatica S.p.A.: As a leading digital transformation company, Engineering develops AI tools used in various sectors including public administration and health. While their direct interest in youth governance might be limited, their technological expertise and partnerships with public institutions make them strategic allies in ensuring responsible deployment of AI that impacts young people.

CINECA: As one of the largest supercomputing centers in Europe, CINECA plays a central role in supporting AI research through high-performance computing services. Although less directly involved in youth-focused initiatives, collaboration could provide YouthGovAI with technical expertise, infrastructure access, and support for educational workshops in computational thinking and AI literacy.

Civil Society: Italian civil society actors include numerous foundations, associations, and informal networks that promote civic engagement, democratic participation, and digital inclusion. While not always central to regulatory processes, they hold significant social legitimacy and outreach capacity. Ensuring their satisfaction with YouthGovAI's efforts through

co-hosted events and public engagement campaigns could bolster broad-based societal support for youth-centered AI governance.

Low Power / High Interest – Keep Informed

These actors shape and implement AI policy and regulation at both national and EU level. They are key decision-makers or powerful advocates directly involved in designing or enforcing rules.

Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK): FBK is a leading AI research center producing influential research on AI ethics and governance. Despite limited formal policymaking power, FBK's insights shape academic and public discourse on responsible AI. YouthGovAI should inform and involve FBK in youth co-creation spaces and research-policy dialogues, enabling evidence-informed recommendations with youth data and perspectives.

Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights: The Hermes Center is an Italian civil rights organization committed to promoting transparency, accountability, and digital freedoms. With a decade of experience in advocating for privacy rights and developing open-source tools, it is a vital contributor to Italy's civil society landscape. As a member of the European Digital Rights (EDRi) network, the center operates both nationally and transnationally to advance digital rights. Engaging with the Hermes Center would enhance YouthGovAI's reach in digital rights advocacy, particularly around data protection and surveillance. Their experience in education and public engagement makes them a strong ally for developing youth-focused campaigns and pedagogical resources on ethical AI governance.

Associazione Luca Coscioni: This organization is highly engaged in digital rights advocacy and research freedoms. Though lacking regulatory authority, it holds substantial influence over public and ethical debates in Italy. Collaborating with them would amplify awareness of youth digital rights, promote civic campaigns for ethical AI, and integrate young people's voices in public consultations.

Rete della Conoscenza: As a network of politically engaged student and youth organizations, Rete della Conoscenza has strong grassroots presence and a history of engaging in policy advocacy. Their high interest in digital rights and education makes them ideal partners for

YouthGovAI in co-designing training materials, consultation processes, and advocacy campaigns targeting youth inclusion in AI governance.

Fondazione Mondo Digitale: A nonprofit promoting digital inclusion and innovation, Fondazione Mondo Digitale supports digital skills through educational programs and community outreach. Its national network of schools and training hubs provides an excellent channel for reaching young people. Collaboration with YouthGovAI would expand AI literacy initiatives and foster active youth participation in shaping ethical digital futures.

Low Power / Low Interest – Monitor

These actors shape and implement AI policy and regulation at both national and EU level. They are key decision-makers or powerful advocates directly involved in designing or enforcing rules.

Olivetti S.p.A.: While engaged in AI development, Olivetti's current priorities center on commercial IoT and enterprise solutions rather than civic AI engagement or youth empowerment. YouthGovAI may monitor their evolution, particularly if they initiate educational collaborations or begin engaging in digital inclusion campaigns that may intersect with youth interests.

Giovani Democratici: As the youth wing of a major political party, Giovani Democratici may express thematic interest in AI and digital policy depending on parliamentary agendas. At present, their low engagement with the AI governance debate suggests a need for awareness-raising and exploratory engagement to determine future interest alignment with YouthGovAI.

Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani (ANG): While not currently central to AI governance, ANG plays a key role in youth policy, managing national coordination of Erasmus+ and other non-formal learning programs. Monitoring its strategic direction could reveal future opportunities to integrate AI education or digital citizenship frameworks relevant to YouthGovAI's objectives.

Rete degli Studenti Medi: This national high school student union advocates for quality education and youth rights. Though currently not prominent in AI discussions, they could be mobilized as allies in spreading awareness and building AI literacy campaigns within Italy's secondary education system.
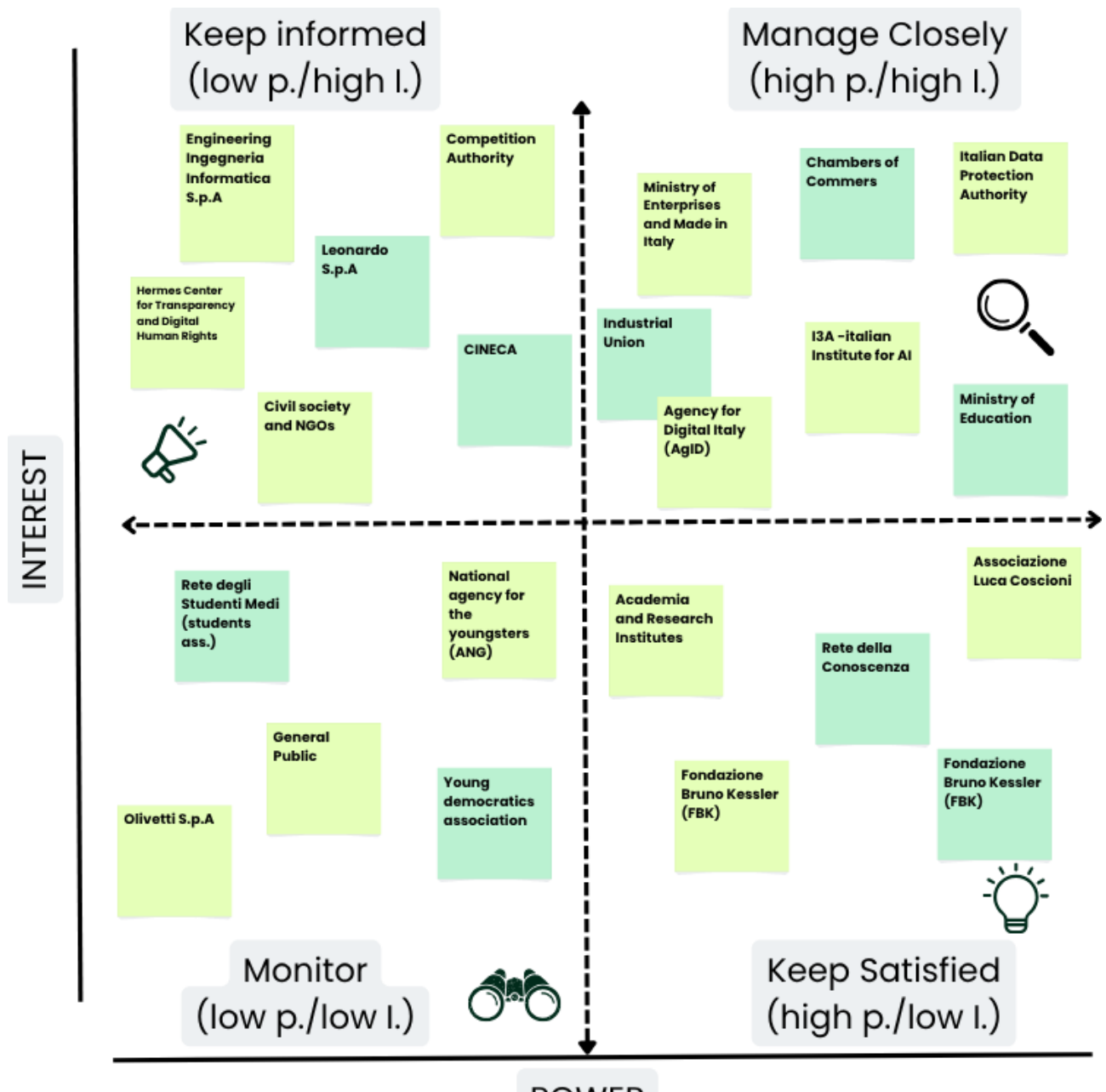
Figura 1_ Italian Stakeholders Matrix

YouthGovAI Survey Report – Italy (March–May 2025)

Demographic Overview

The YouthGovAI survey collected 281 responses from young individuals in Italy between March and May 2025. The vast majority of respondents (77.6%) were aged between 16 and 18, while 17.8% belonged to the 19–21 age group. A smaller segment, comprising 4.6% of the sample, were aged 21 and above. This distribution is consistent with the project's strategic focus on secondary school students and young adults approaching higher education or early employment.

Regarding gender identity, 64.8% of respondents identified as male and 31.7% as female. Additionally, 3.5% identified as non-binary, preferred not to disclose their gender, or selected an alternative option. This gender distribution provides a relatively broad, albeit slightly male-dominated, representation of youth voices. From an educational standpoint, a large share of respondents (over 75%) were still enrolled in secondary school, particularly in technical or vocational programs. A smaller percentage had completed upper secondary education or were pursuing tertiary education, such as bachelor's or master's degrees. This confirms the effectiveness of outreach strategies aimed at younger populations, while also including more advanced learners whose perspectives enrich the analysis of AI familiarity and use. The demographic diversity of the sample provides a meaningful base for interpreting the results with regard to AI literacy, awareness, and ethical sensitivity among Italian youth.

Qual è il tuo livello di istruzione più elevato? (Selezionare uno)
281 risposte

- Attualmente sto frequentando la scuola.
- Qualifica IeFP
- Diploma di scuola superiore
- Laurea triennale
- Laurea Magistrale
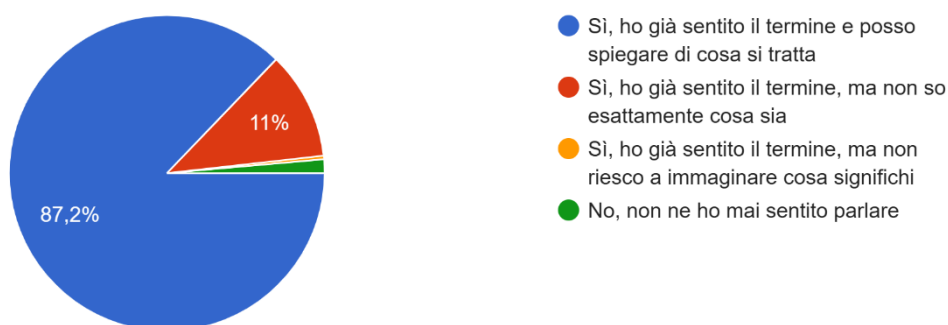- Altro (specificare)

89,7%

Analysis of Survey Responses by Item

When asked whether they were familiar with the term 'artificial intelligence,' 87.2% of the respondents (245 out of 281) reported that they had heard the term and were able to explain what it meant. An additional 11% (31 respondents) stated that they had encountered the term without fully understanding it, while a very small minority (1.4%, or 4 respondents) had either never heard of AI or had no idea of its meaning. These figures highlight the near-universal awareness of AI among youth in Italy, even if depth of understanding varies significantly.

Conosci il termine "intelligenza artificiale"? (Scelta multipla - una sola risposta)
281 risposte

- ● Sì, ho già sentito il termine e posso spiegare di cosa si tratta
- ● Sì, ho già sentito il termine, ma non so esattamente cosa sia
- ● Sì, ho già sentito il termine, ma non riesco a immaginare cosa significhi
- ● No, non ne ho mai sentito parlare

In response to an open question about what first comes to mind when thinking about AI, the most common themes included 'ChatGPT,' 'robots,' 'technology,' 'future,' 'innovation,' and 'machine learning.' While many respondents used terms that expressed curiosity and progress, a noteworthy minority evoked ambiguity or concern, using words like 'doubt,' 'falsehood,' and 'loss of control.' This mix of enthusiasm and skepticism is reflective of the current public discourse surrounding AI and suggests that youth are engaging with both the promises and risks of the technology.

Concerning their self-assessed confidence in understanding how AI works, 39.9% of respondents (112 individuals) described themselves as 'moderately confident,' while 29.9% (84 respondents) felt 'confident' and 11% (31) declared themselves 'very confident.' In contrast, 16.4% expressed lower confidence, with 8 respondents (2.8%) saying they were 'not at all confident' and 46 (16.4%) describing themselves as only 'slightly confident.' These figures

underscore a widespread perception of familiarity, yet reveal significant room for improvement in building technical and conceptual understanding of AI.

Quanto ti sentiti sicuro/a della tua conoscenza dell'IA e del suo funzionamento? (Scelta multipla - una sola risposta)

281 risposte
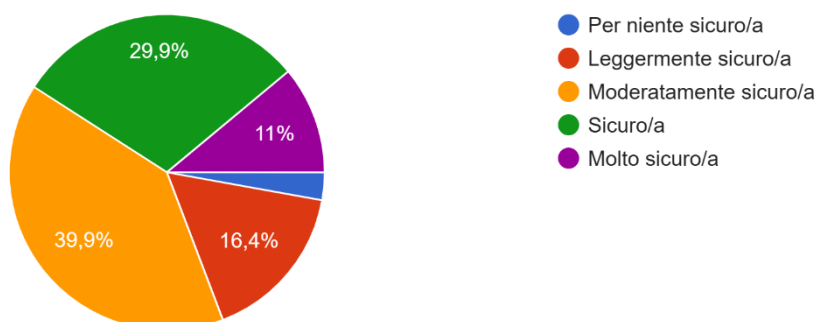
Participants' ability to identify AI technologies was also assessed. Nearly half (49.1%, or 138 respondents) stated they were 'moderately confident,' and 22.4% (63) felt 'confident' in this ability. Another 15.7% (44) said they were only 'slightly confident,' while 3.6% (10) felt 'not at all confident.' These numbers mirror the previous item and reinforce the idea that while exposure to AI is widespread, the ability to critically identify and analyze such tools remains uneven.

Ti senti sicuro/a nell'identificare nell'identificare le tecnologie AI? (Scelta multipla - una sola risposta)
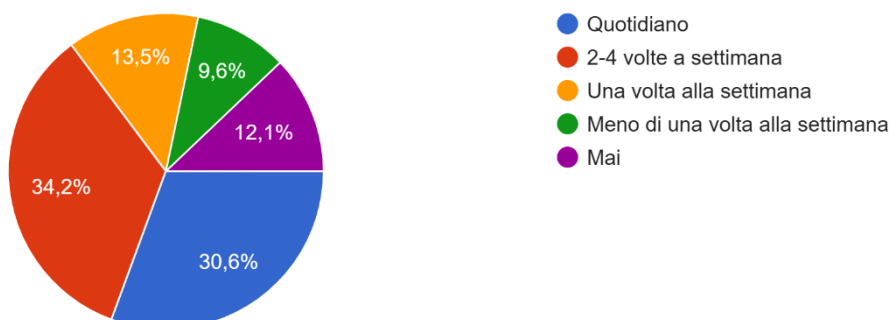
281 risposte
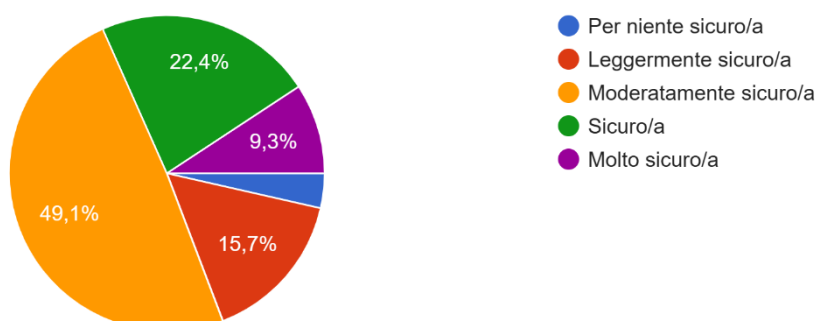
In terms of daily interaction with AI, 36.7% of respondents (103 individuals) said they used AI technologies two to four times per week, while 35.9% (101) reported using them on a daily

basis. Another 12.5% (35) used AI once per week, and 9.3% (26) less than once per week. Only 5.7% (16) claimed they never used AI. These findings confirm the high degree of integration of AI in the everyday digital routines of young people, whether through chatbots, recommendation engines, or voice assistants.

When asked about the use of AI tools for school or academic work, 34.2% (96 respondents) reported using such tools two to four times per week, while 30.6% (86) used them daily. A further 13.5% (38) said they used AI once per week, 9.6% (27) less than weekly, and 12.1% (34) never. This data illustrates the growing reliance on AI-powered educational support tools, but also suggests a digital divide in terms of access or confidence in applying such technologies within formal learning contexts.

Con quale frequenza utilizzi le tecnologie di intelligenza artificiale per aiutarti con i compiti scolastici o lo studio? (Scelta multipla - una risposta)
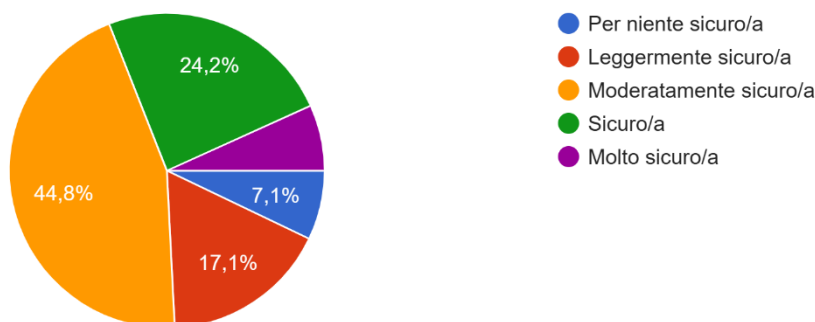281 risposte

- Quotidiano
- 2-4 volte a settimana
- Una volta alla settimana
- Meno di una volta alla settimana
- Mai

In addition to their general familiarity with artificial intelligence, the survey explored young respondents' perceptions of the **accuracy, risks, and ethical alignment** of AI technologies. When asked how confident they felt about the **accuracy of information generated by large language models (LLMs)** such as ChatGPT, 44.8% (126 out of 281) stated they were "moderately confident," while 24.2% (68) felt "confident." Only a small minority reported being "very confident" (6.8%, or 19 respondents). On the other hand, a significant 24.2% expressed low confidence: 17.1% (48) were "slightly confident" and 7.1% (20) "not at all confident." These figures reveal a cautious trust in generative AI, with the majority of respondents falling into a middle band of neither full trust nor complete skepticism.

Se utilizzi LLM (Large Language Models), come chatGPT, quanto ti senti sicuro/a dell'accuratezza delle informazioni che genera? (Scelta multipla - una risposta)
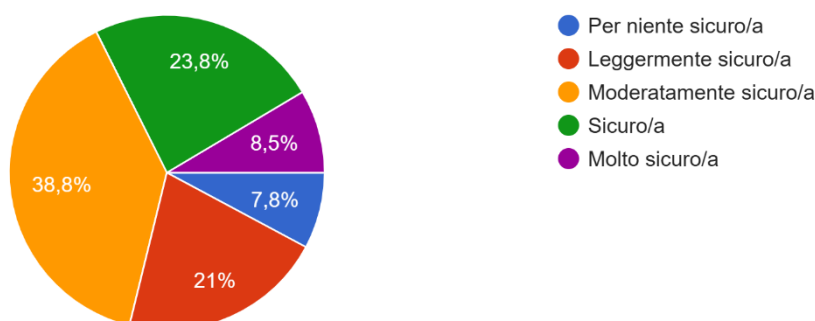281 risposte

- ● Per niente sicuro/a
- ● Leggermente sicuro/a
- ● Moderatamente sicuro/a
- ● Sicuro/a
- ● Molto sicuro/a

A similar pattern emerged in relation to the ability to **recognize AI-generated disinformation**. While 38.8% of participants (109) declared themselves "moderately confident," only 23.8% (67) felt "confident" and just 8.5% (24) "very confident." Meanwhile, 21% (59) were only "slightly confident" and 7.8% (22) reported being "not at all confident." These results highlight a concerning gap between high levels of interaction with AI tools and low levels of critical awareness, especially in an era marked by the rapid spread of synthetic media and deepfakes. This data supports ongoing calls from educational institutions and international bodies like UNESCO and the OECD for stronger media literacy initiatives integrated with AI education.

Quanto ti senti sicuro/a nel riconoscere la disinformazione e/o i falsi generati dall'intelligenza artificiale? (Scelta multipla - una risposta)
281 risposte

- ● Per niente sicuro/a
- ● Leggermente sicuro/a
- ● Moderatamente sicuro/a
- ● Sicuro/a
- ● Molto sicuro/a

The survey also included two **true/false belief-based questions** to gauge youth perceptions of AI's underlying intentions and capabilities. When asked whether **AI always acts in the best**

interests of its users, a plurality of respondents—37.4% (105)—answered "somewhat true," while 34% (95) admitted they were uncertain. Only 15.3% (43) agreed it was "true," and a minority disagreed: 7.5% (21) answered "somewhat false" and 6% (17) "false." These responses suggest that while youth may project some benevolence onto AI systems, there remains substantial ambivalence about whether these technologies are designed—or capable—of aligning with human values.

L'intelligenza artificiale prende sempre le sue decisioni nell'interesse dei suoi utenti. Vero o falso? (Scelta multipla - una risposta)

281 risposte

- ● Vero
- ● Piuttosto vero
- ● Non sono sicuro/a
- ● Piuttosto falso
- ● Falso
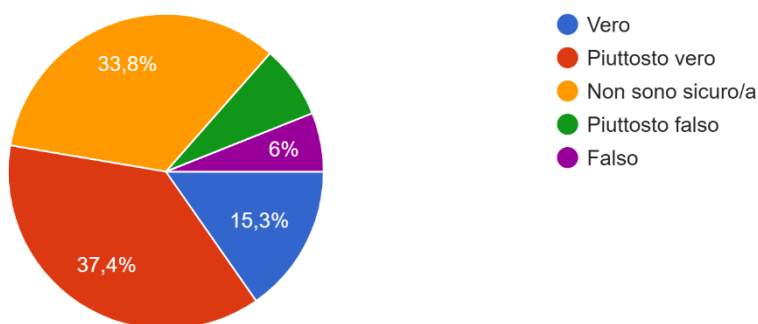
Even more uncertainty surrounded the idea that **AI could elude human control and act against developers' intentions**. 34.2% (96) were unsure, and another 22.1% (62) considered the statement "somewhat true." Meanwhile, 19.9% (56) chose "somewhat false," 14.2% (40) "false," and 9.6% (27) "true." This question elicited the most ambiguous responses of the entire survey, confirming that Italian youth are still forming their judgments on AI's autonomy and potential dangers. The diversity of views expressed here—ranging from technoskepticism to cautious optimism—reaffirms the necessity of fostering structured dialogues that allow youth to navigate these ethical dilemmas with clarity and confidence.

Legend:
- Vero — 9,6%
- Piuttosto vero — 22,1%
- Non sono sicuro/a — 34,2%
- Piuttosto falso — 19,9%
- Falso — 14,2%

Open questions – further analysis

"Se pensi all'IA, qual è la prima cosa che ti viene in mente?"
(*When you think of AI, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?*)

When asked to reflect on their first associations with artificial intelligence (AI), the majority of Italian young respondents participating in the YouthGovAI survey demonstrated a clear and recurring orientation toward contemporary digital tools, particularly those that have rapidly permeated educational and social contexts in recent years. A striking number of answers referred directly to **ChatGPT** and similar AI-powered platforms, which were cited either explicitly by name or described through their functionalities. This suggests that, for a substantial portion of youth, the concept of AI is not an abstract notion but a tangible and frequently used tool embedded in their daily routines. Alongside this pragmatic connection to AI chatbots and generative models, participants also frequently associated AI with concepts such as **"tecnologico progresso"** (*technological progress*), **"innovazione"** (*innovation*), and **"futuro"** (*future*), indicating that young people perceive AI not only as a utility but also as a symbol of broader societal transformation and advancement.

Moreover, the linguistic recurrence of terms such as **"futuro"** (*future*), **"sviluppo"** (*development*), and **"progresso"** (*progress*) reflects an implicit optimism or, at the very least, an acknowledgment of the forward-looking nature of AI-driven innovation. However, this positive framing is often accompanied by a sense of ambivalence. Some respondents mentioned terms

such as **"paura"** (*fear*), **"dubbio"** (*doubt*), or **"rischio"** (*risk*), suggesting a perception of AI as a double-edged sword, capable of both empowering and destabilizing human agency. This ambivalence is also visible in the juxtaposition of terms like **"opportunità"** (*opportunity*) and **"pericolo"** (*danger*) within individual answers. Interestingly, references to robotic imagery and speculative scenarios (such as humanoid machines or hyper-intelligent systems) were far less common than references to current, practical applications—an indication that young people's mental models of AI are more grounded in experience than in science fiction.

From a sociological standpoint, this association between AI and platforms like ChatGPT reflects broader trends across Europe. According to a 2023 Eurobarometer survey, more than 64% of young people in the EU had used an AI-based tool for studying or content creation, with Italy slightly above the European average (European Commission, 2023). This convergence between perceived AI and tools designed for productivity or knowledge access reinforces the idea that for Generation Z, AI is primarily associated with efficiency, access to information, and accelerated learning. The results highlight not only the widespread awareness of AI among youth but also the need to frame AI education and governance dialogues in terms that resonate with their lived experience.

"Secondo te, quali sono i vantaggi dell'intelligenza artificiale?"
(*In your opinion, what are the advantages of artificial intelligence?*)

The responses provided by young people in Italy to the question concerning the advantages of artificial intelligence reveal a prevailing perception of AI as a facilitator of daily life, closely associated with **"velocità"** (*speed*), **"efficienza"** (*efficiency*), and **"supporto cognitivo"** (*cognitive support*). One of the most frequently cited benefits was the ability of AI to provide rapid access to information, often described through expressions such as **"risposte veloci"** (*quick answers*), **"ricerca immediata"** (*instant search*), and **"rapidità nelle risposte"** (*speed in responding*). This reflects a strong recognition of AI as an enabler of knowledge acquisition and problem-solving, particularly in educational and informational contexts. A substantial portion of participants also identified AI's capacity to simplify routine tasks and assist with complex or time-consuming activities, including schoolwork, data analysis, and decision-making processes. In this sense, AI is not viewed as a replacement for human intelligence, but rather as an

augmentation tool that enhances productivity and reduces the mental and temporal load associated with specific activities.

Another prominent theme emerging from the data is the **practical utility of AI in everyday life**, with respondents emphasizing improvements in **"organizzazione del lavoro"** (*work organization*), **"domotica"** (*home automation*), **"trasporti"** (*transportation*), and **"sanità"** (*healthcare*). The concept of AI as a **"compagno efficiente"** (*efficient companion*) capable of offering concrete assistance in both professional and domestic spheres suggests a relatively high level of familiarity with AI-integrated systems and a pragmatic view of its application. Interestingly, this utilitarian vision is often expressed in terms of **"empowerment personale"** (*personal empowerment*), where AI is described as a resource that enables users to accomplish more with less effort, offering both **"comodità"** (*convenience*) and **"flessibilità"** (*flexibility*) in the execution of tasks. Few participants ventured into highly technical or speculative advantages, reinforcing the interpretation that most youth engage with AI primarily through user-facing applications rather than abstract principles or infrastructural innovations.

This aligns with current international literature on youth perceptions of AI, which indicates that young users often value artificial intelligence primarily for its capacity to simplify their lives, provide customized learning experiences, and offer adaptive technological environments (UNESCO, 2021). In this context, it is significant to note that the perception of AI's benefits is largely centered around enhancement rather than substitution: the machine is not replacing the individual, but augmenting their capabilities. This framing of AI as an enabler rather than a competitor could provide fertile ground for building trust-based educational interventions. Moreover, it suggests that young people might be more receptive to regulatory discourses that promote **"innovazione responsabile"** (*responsible innovation*)—regulations that ensure reliability, accessibility, and fairness—if these are framed in terms that reflect and protect the functional benefits they already experience.

"Secondo te, quali sono i rischi dell'intelligenza artificiale?"
(*In your opinion, what are the risks of artificial intelligence?*)

When invited to reflect on the potential risks of artificial intelligence, Italian youth provided responses that reveal a complex and nuanced understanding of the ethical, psychological, and

socio-economic implications tied to its rapid expansion. A dominant theme emerging from the dataset is the **erosione del pensiero critico** (*erosion of critical thinking*) and the risk of **dipendenza mentale** (*mental dependency*) on algorithmic systems. Numerous participants warned against the excessive reliance on AI for information retrieval and decision-making, expressing concern that such dependency could lead to a deterioration of individual cognitive skills, particularly in terms of judgment, reflection, and problem-solving. Phrases like **"impigrire il pensiero critico"** (*to dull critical thinking*), **"perdita di autonomia"** (*loss of autonomy*), and **"diminuzione dell'intelligenza umana"** (*reduction of human intelligence*) were frequent, indicating that young people are acutely aware of the subtle and cumulative cognitive risks posed by constant interaction with predictive and generative technologies.

Equally prominent were fears related to **occupazione e sostituzione lavorativa** (*employment and labor displacement*). Many respondents cited the risk that AI could **"rubare il lavoro"** (*steal jobs*) or render specific professions obsolete, especially in sectors where tasks can be easily automated. This echoes broader global concerns regarding technological unemployment and the restructuring of labor markets due to AI integration. A 2024 report by the OECD, for instance, notes that up to 27% of jobs among young workers in Southern Europe are susceptible to automation-driven transformation, with Italy among the most exposed (OECD, 2024). For the young participants of the YouthGovAI survey, this economic anxiety is not abstract: it directly intersects with their life trajectories, educational paths, and professional aspirations.

In addition, several participants articulated risks pertaining to **disinformazione** (*disinformation*) and **perdita di controllo** (*loss of control*). The ability of AI systems to generate persuasive yet inaccurate content (such as **fake news** or manipulated media) was mentioned with considerable frequency, as was the fear that these tools could **"prendere il sopravvento"** (*take over*) or operate in ways beyond human comprehension and oversight. This anxiety about autonomy and control often translated into moral and philosophical concerns, such as the fear that AI might eventually become so advanced that it would surpass human ethical reasoning or escape regulatory containment. Although relatively few respondents used technical terms, their intuitive grasp of phenomena like "hallucinations," "bias," or "opacity" in AI systems suggests a high level of informal literacy and a strong disposition toward precautionary thinking.

Taken as a whole, these reflections underscore the need to involve young people more systematically in AI governance processes—not only as end-users but as **attori critici** (*critical*

stakeholders) whose lived experiences, anxieties, and ethical intuitions can meaningfully shape the future of AI development and regulation. These responses offer a powerful counter-narrative to the deterministic or techno-solutionist views often found in public discourse, and instead call for a **approccio centrato sull'umano** (*human-centered approach*) that prioritizes **trasparenza, inclusività e sostenibilità sociale e psicologica a lungo termine** (*transparency, inclusiveness, and long-term social and psychological sustainability*).

Key Insights and Comparative Analysis

The YouthGovAI survey highlights several significant trends regarding how Italian youth relate to artificial intelligence, revealing not only a widespread awareness of AI technologies, but also the need for deeper critical engagement and educational support. First and foremost, the survey confirms that AI is a familiar concept among young Italians: 87.2% reported being able to explain what artificial intelligence is, a figure well above the 2024 Eurobarometer average of 67% for European youth. This elevated baseline may be attributed to the growing integration of AI in digital services such as ChatGPT, Spotify, and TikTok, all of which are embedded in daily youth experience.

The survey also reveals an interesting tension between familiarity and understanding. While nearly all respondents were familiar with the term AI, only 29.9% declared themselves 'confident' and 11% 'very confident' in their knowledge of how AI functions. In contrast, a significant 39.9% considered themselves only 'moderately confident,' and 16.4% had low or no confidence. A similar pattern was evident in the responses regarding recognition of AI systems: only 22.4% of youth felt confident in identifying AI technologies, with the largest group (49.1%) again describing themselves as moderately confident. These figures align with OECD and UNESCO concerns that digital natives are often high-frequency users of AI without adequate critical or technical knowledge.

One of the most salient findings is the degree of engagement with AI tools in daily life: 35.9% of participants reported daily use, and an additional 36.7% used AI two to four times per week. This high rate of interaction is likely driven by both explicit tools (such as generative language models) and implicit systems (such as recommender algorithms). Moreover, 64.8% of students

said they used AI tools in their academic work at least weekly. These numbers echo recent ISTAT findings (2023), which reported that over 50% of young Italians interact with AI-enhanced digital platforms, often without realizing the presence of such technologies. When it comes to attitudes, the data reflect a nuanced and ambivalent relationship with AI. Open responses included both optimistic terms such as 'opportunity,' 'progress,' and 'support,' as well as more cautious or critical descriptors such as 'doubt,' 'waste of resources,' and 'falsehoods.' This ambivalence was further echoed in conceptual questions: 33.8% of respondents were uncertain whether AI always acts in users' interests, and 34.2% were unsure whether AI could elude human control. These responses underscore the need to pair technical knowledge with ethical reflection, especially as young people are increasingly exposed to misleading content or overtrust in automation.

These results point clearly to one of the most urgent educational challenges of our time: how to equip young people not only to use AI, but to critically evaluate its functions, intentions, and societal consequences. The findings reinforce the objectives of YouthGovAI, which aims to move beyond mere awareness and facilitate structured, participatory learning processes that empower youth to shape future governance frameworks. If European society intends to include youth in AI policy discussions, it must first support them in acquiring the tools, language, and spaces necessary to act as informed and engaged stakeholders.

Conclusion

The YouthGovAI survey conducted between March and May 2025 among 281 Italian youths reveals a generation that is deeply immersed in artificial intelligence technologies yet still navigating its complexities. The results provide compelling evidence that AI is no longer an abstract or distant subject for young people. Instead, it permeates their everyday digital experiences—from schoolwork to entertainment and social interaction. Yet this familiarity does not always translate into critical literacy or conceptual clarity.

The data show that although 87.2% of youth are able to define AI, only 40% consider themselves moderately confident in their understanding, and a smaller portion report feeling confident or very confident. This discrepancy is mirrored in the identification of AI systems and

understanding of AI-generated misinformation, suggesting a persistent gap between usage and comprehension. Moreover, the high rate of interaction with AI for academic purposes (with 64.8% using AI weekly or more often) raises pedagogical questions about guidance, critical evaluation, and ethical use of such technologies in educational settings.

The mixed emotional tone emerging from open-ended responses—ranging from enthusiasm to skepticism—indicates that Italian youth are not only technologically aware but also sensitive to broader implications such as data privacy, bias, and social impact. These perceptions point to the need for educational interventions that extend beyond technical training and encompass ethical reasoning, media literacy, and civic engagement.

The YouthGovAI project thus emerges as a timely and necessary initiative. The survey findings validate its aim to empower young people to become not passive consumers but active participants in shaping AI governance. To do so, structured and inclusive learning opportunities must be scaled up to ensure that digital fluency is accompanied by democratic agency. Only through this comprehensive approach can we ensure that the next generation contributes meaningfully to the ethical, social, and political futures of artificial intelligence.

Focus Group with national Stakeholders

The Italian national focus group convened a heterogeneous and interdisciplinary cohort of participants, selected for their direct involvement in youth education, technological training, and cultural facilitation. Among them were trainers from the Scuola di Robotica, professionals active in formal and non-formal educational contexts, engineers specialized in the development and application of emerging technologies, and community educators engaged in fostering youth participation through artistic and social initiatives. Their diverse disciplinary backgrounds and professional experiences offered a comprehensive lens through which to examine the intersections of youth, artificial intelligence, and governance. The presence of individuals working in close contact with adolescents—from school environments to extracurricular laboratories—ensured that the dialogue remained firmly anchored in the realities of youth engagement. Furthermore, several participants brought expertise in creative pedagogies and social inclusion, thereby enriching the discussion with reflections on how AI education can be made accessible, participatory, and culturally resonant. This plurality of perspectives enabled a rigorous yet imaginative exploration of the barriers that inhibit youth from participating in AI governance and fostered the emergence of collective insights and actionable recommendations for policy and practice.

The event, conducted within the framework of the YouthGovAI project, served as an intensive platform for dialogue and critical reflection, convening a broad spectrum of stakeholders—from educators and robotics trainers to musicians, engineers, and community organizers—with the shared objective of examining the systemic barriers and potential avenues for enhancing youth participation in AI governance. The conversation unfolded in an atmosphere of interdisciplinary collaboration and mutual concern for the increasing entanglement of AI technologies in the daily lives of young people, and the corresponding lack of structured opportunities for them to influence or even comprehend the socio-technical systems that increasingly shape their futures. It became immediately evident that while adolescents and young adults are among the most active users of AI-driven applications—particularly in the domains of social networking, digital content, and automated learning—they are conspicuously absent from decision-making processes, both formal and informal, that determine the ethical boundaries, regulatory

structures, and developmental trajectories of artificial intelligence. This disconnect was attributed by participants to an education system that is still predominantly technical in its approach to AI, often failing to integrate ethical reasoning, civic engagement, and participatory governance into the curriculum. Teachers and trainers lamented the lack of age-appropriate resources capable of translating complex issues—such as algorithmic bias, data sovereignty, and surveillance capitalism—into content that resonates with young learners and encourages them to engage not only as users but as critical thinkers and political actors.

Furthermore, several voices emphasized that AI literacy must not be reduced to technical fluency; rather, it must be reimagined as an interdisciplinary competency, encompassing technological awareness, social justice, media literacy, and democratic responsibility. In this regard, educators highlighted the need for pedagogical strategies that demystify AI without oversimplifying its implications, drawing connections between abstract concepts and the concrete, lived experiences of students. The trainers from the School of Robotics echoed this need, affirming that many students display curiosity about AI tools but rarely develop a sustained or critical relationship with them due to curricular constraints and the absence of interdisciplinary teaching frameworks. The engineers present further stressed that governance must not be treated as a domain reserved for legal or political elites; rather, it should be embedded within the design phase of AI systems and enriched by participatory mechanisms that include the voices of youth. They argued that youth engagement should begin at the conceptualization and prototyping stages of technological innovation, not as a retrospective ethical audit or a performative consultation. This view aligned closely with the experiences of community managers and cultural educators, who advocated for more inclusive and culturally resonant approaches to participation, including creative methods such as storytelling, music, games, and expressive arts. These forms, they argued, offer unique pathways for marginalized youth to enter the conversation on AI governance, circumventing the linguistic and institutional barriers that often exclude them from formal civic forums.

The session also shed light on the critical, yet under-supported, role of educators and youth workers as mediators between AI technologies and young people. While their proximity to youth makes them ideal facilitators of awareness and engagement, many educators admitted to feeling inadequately prepared to discuss AI in ways that transcend its technical aspects. This points to the urgent necessity of capacity-building initiatives targeted at teachers and facilitators, equipping them not only with technical knowledge but also with ethical and

pedagogical tools to stimulate meaningful dialogue. The cultural educators underscored the role of emotional and aesthetic engagement in enabling young people to navigate the ambiguity and moral complexity of AI, suggesting that artistic practices can generate emotional literacy and imaginative thinking—capacities that are as critical to democratic participation as logical reasoning. Meanwhile, community facilitators highlighted the dangers of tokenism and urged the development of participatory models that offer real agency to youth, making it possible for their contributions to shape not only project outputs but long-term policy frameworks.

Among the more striking reflections was the recognition that many young people experience AI as a force imposed upon them, a "black box" phenomenon which governs their digital environments without their input or understanding. This passivity is compounded by the abstractness of the term "governance," which many youth perceive as opaque and inaccessible. Several participants proposed reframing AI governance in terms that are experiential and tangible—relating, for example, to fairness in school algorithms, the logic behind TikTok recommendations, or the consequences of biometric surveillance in public spaces. These tangible entry points could serve as bridges between personal experience and systemic critique, enabling young people to gradually build a language and framework for civic engagement with AI.

The group concluded by identifying several strategic priorities for the YouthGovAI project and for European educational systems more broadly. These included the creation of interdisciplinary, justice-oriented curricula that link AI to issues of rights, equity, and democratic participation; the establishment of platforms for youth consultation that are accessible and responsive; and the institutionalization of youth participation in AI governance at all levels, from the classroom to the policymaking arena. Participants also recommended the development of cross-sectoral partnerships among schools, civil society organizations, and technology developers, aimed at embedding participatory practices into the AI design cycle. These initiatives, it was argued, would not only improve the legitimacy and inclusivity of governance frameworks but also cultivate a generation of critically literate, ethically grounded, and civically engaged citizens capable of navigating and shaping the technological landscapes of the future.

In sum, the Italian national focus group confirmed the foundational premises of the YouthGovAI project while providing concrete recommendations and cautionary insights into the challenges of fostering meaningful youth participation in AI governance. It revealed that while the interest

and potential of young people are undeniably present, they remain largely untapped due to institutional, pedagogical, and communicative gaps. Addressing these gaps requires a paradigmatic shift in how society conceptualizes both AI and youth engagement—one that embraces complexity, centers ethics, and commits to co-creation as a core principle of technological development. The path forward demands not only new tools and platforms, but also a collective reimagining of governance itself as a space in which all voices—not least those of the young—are heard, valued, and acted upon.

Figura 2 - a snapshot from onw of the discussion tables

Co-creation sessions main takeaways

Within the framework of Work Package 4 on Stakeholder Engagement, Alfa Liguria implemented two national co-creation sessions with the aim of generating qualitative, practice-based insights into the needs, perceptions, and challenges surrounding AI literacy and governance among youth and youth workers. These sessions were conceived not merely as opportunities for consultation, but as dialogical spaces for collective reflection, interdisciplinary exchange, and participatory educational design, aligned with the broader goals of the YouthGovAI project to co-create inclusive and ethically grounded AI literacy courses that empower young people across Europe to understand and influence the development and regulation of artificial intelligence.

The first session, held offline at the School of Robotics in Genoa, convened a small but highly diverse group of professionals, including community managers, trainers in technological education, engineers, and educational project managers. The second session, hosted at La Torretta—an educational center within Cooperativa Agorà, the largest third-sector social service provider in Liguria—brought together youth workers, social workers, artistic educators, and career guidance professionals operating in complex community contexts with a strong emphasis on inclusion, creativity, and transition support. The contrast between the two sessions, both in terms of participant profiles and educational settings, offered a particularly valuable comparative lens for the project, allowing for a richer understanding of how AI literacy intersects with different pedagogical cultures, institutional frameworks, and learner needs.

Both sessions reaffirmed the widespread recognition that while AI technologies have become increasingly pervasive in the daily lives of young people, their presence has not translated into meaningful comprehension, critical reflection, or empowered agency. Across both contexts, participants observed that young people—though often described as "digitally native"—tend to interact with AI through uncritical usage patterns mediated by algorithms in social media, digital entertainment, and increasingly, educational and professional gatekeeping systems such as automated recruitment platforms and recommendation engines. Despite this constant exposure, the actual knowledge of how AI functions, how it is governed, and how it impacts issues of equity, agency, and rights remains worryingly superficial. Youth workers and educators, on the other hand, frequently lack structured opportunities to develop the competencies needed to

address AI in their practice. The sessions converged on the point that the lack of accessible, contextualized, and pedagogically appropriate resources for both groups constitutes a critical obstacle to AI literacy as a democratic goal.

What emerged with particular force in both sessions, albeit articulated through different vocabularies and examples, was the necessity of reframing AI not as a domain reserved for technical specialists, but as a societal and political phenomenon requiring collective reflection and civic engagement. Participants at the School of Robotics emphasized the risk of deterministic and depoliticized narratives that frame AI as inevitable, inscrutable, or entirely benign—narratives which erode young people's sense of agency and foreclose critical debate. Meanwhile, at La Torretta, professionals highlighted how algorithmic systems often intersect with existing patterns of marginalization, especially for youth facing educational disadvantage, digital exclusion, or socio-economic precarity. AI literacy, in this context, must not only convey technical comprehension but must also cultivate ethical sensitivity, democratic competence, and the capacity to interrogate systems of power. In both sessions, participants called for a shift from abstract and top-down instruction to participatory, situated, and dialogic educational approaches that foreground the lived experiences of learners and the civic implications of technological development.

From a curricular perspective, there was remarkable alignment between the two groups regarding the core pillars that should structure an effective AI literacy course. These include a foundational understanding of AI systems (such as algorithms, data, and machine learning), critical engagement with the ethical and legal dimensions of AI (including bias, discrimination, surveillance, and transparency), and an exploration of how AI concretely affects domains relevant to youth—such as employment, education, health, communication, and public life. Methodologically, both sessions stressed the need for multimodal, learner-centered approaches. Participants recommended integrating role-play, storytelling, collaborative problem-solving, and artistic media to make AI education accessible to learners of varying backgrounds and learning styles. Particularly in the La Torretta session, the use of artistic expression, digital storytelling, and performance was proposed not simply as a support tool, but as a transformative pedagogical strategy to reframe AI literacy as a creative and identity-affirming process.

In terms of outreach and sustainability, participants underscored that AI literacy efforts must be embedded within existing educational and social ecosystems, supported by long-term policy

frameworks and intersectoral cooperation. Both sessions pointed to the need for multistakeholder collaboration, in which policymakers, educational authorities, civil society organizations, and technology companies play active roles not just in funding or endorsing initiatives, but in co-developing, disseminating, and institutionalizing AI education. At the same time, a recurring theme in both discussions was the centrality of youth participation—not merely as a rhetorical inclusion, but as a foundational principle of program design and implementation. Young people must be involved in shaping the content, language, methodologies, and evaluation of AI courses to ensure relevance, authenticity, and democratic legitimacy.

In conclusion, the two co-creation sessions facilitated by Alfa Liguria offered a compelling and nuanced picture of the current landscape of AI literacy as experienced by those working most closely with youth in both formal and non-formal educational settings. They demonstrated the urgency of moving beyond content dissemination toward systemic transformation, in which AI literacy becomes a vehicle not only for digital competence, but for civic empowerment and social justice. The sessions provided YouthGovAI with concrete recommendations for content, methodology, and stakeholder engagement, and affirmed the need for participatory, context-sensitive, and institutionally supported approaches to embedding AI education across Europe's youth and educational sectors.

Figura 1- A snapshot from one of the discussion tables at La Torretta

Figura 2 - Participants sharing their thoughts during the Co-creation session

General Conclusions

The present report, developed by ALFA Liguria within the framework of the European Erasmus+ project YouthGovAI, offers a multidimensional and integrated portrait of the current Italian landscape in relation to artificial intelligence, with a particular focus on governance frameworks, youth participation, educational strategies, and institutional capacities. As a regional public agency with longstanding expertise in vocational guidance, educational innovation, and institutional coordination, ALFA Liguria assumes, through this contribution, a pivotal role in translating the broader European vision of youth involvement in AI governance into context-specific insights, grounded in empirical evidence and policy analysis. The document, therefore, serves not only as a national diagnostic tool, but also as a roadmap toward more inclusive, participatory, and ethically aligned forms of technological development and public decision-making.

The findings articulated throughout the white paper underscore both the promise and the fragility of Italy's current approach to artificial intelligence. On the one hand, the Italian regulatory and strategic framework has advanced significantly over the past five years, with the publication of the National Strategy for AI 2022–2024, the inclusion of AI-related priorities in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), and the formal establishment of the Italian Institute for Artificial Intelligence (I3A) in Turin. These developments reflect an institutional recognition of AI as a driver of industrial competitiveness, public innovation, and educational modernization. However, the report simultaneously reveals the limits of such progress: the persistent fragmentation of competences among governmental bodies, the absence of a dedicated legislative framework for AI, the delays in operationalizing national hubs such as the I3A, and the uneven territorial distribution of digital infrastructure and skills all testify to the need for a more systemic and coherent governance architecture.

At the core of this analysis lies the conviction that artificial intelligence cannot be understood—or governed—solely as a technical or economic matter. Rather, it must be approached as a cultural, ethical, and civic challenge, one that demands the active engagement of all societal actors, and especially the younger generations who will inherit its long-term consequences. In this regard, the report pays particular attention to the perceptions, expectations, and critical reflections of Italian youth. Through the administration of a national survey targeting 281 young respondents between the ages of 16 and 21, as well as through the organization of co-

creation sessions and stakeholder focus groups, the research brings to light the nuanced and sometimes ambivalent relationship between youth and AI technologies. While the vast majority of respondents (87.2%) reported being familiar with the term "artificial intelligence," and a significant portion engage with AI-powered tools on a daily basis—particularly in educational and recreational contexts—their self-assessed confidence in understanding AI mechanisms remains modest, with only a minority expressing high levels of conceptual mastery.

This gap between exposure and understanding is particularly salient when it comes to critical digital literacy. The ability to identify AI-generated content, to recognize algorithmic bias or misinformation, and to evaluate the ethical implications of automated systems appears to be limited across the sample, despite high levels of daily interaction with AI-enhanced platforms such as ChatGPT, TikTok, or Spotify. Moreover, the open-ended responses collected in the survey reveal a striking ambivalence: while AI is frequently associated with positive values such as efficiency, support, and progress, it is also linked to fears of cognitive dependency, job displacement, data misuse, and loss of control. Young people express concerns about the erosion of critical thinking, the opacity of decision-making systems, and the risk that AI technologies might escape human oversight or be deployed in ways that undermine democratic accountability. These responses reflect not only a high degree of ethical awareness, but also a clear desire for greater transparency, responsibility, and inclusion in the processes that govern technological development.

In parallel to the survey data, the report analyses the Italian policy debate and institutional discourse surrounding AI, highlighting both its achievements and its lacunae. While national authorities have endorsed the development of AI as a strategic priority and have begun to articulate principles aligned with European ethical frameworks, the political conversation remains fragmented, reactive, and often disconnected from civil society inputs. The absence of a centralized AI agency or inter-ministerial coordination body weakens the country's capacity to engage in coherent policy planning, while the sporadic involvement of youth in formal consultations or public deliberations limits the democratic legitimacy of AI governance processes. The contrast with other European countries—such as Germany or France, where structured multi-stakeholder dialogues and youth engagement platforms have gained visibility—is particularly notable and suggests a need for Italy to strengthen its participatory infrastructure.

The mapping of stakeholders included in the report further illustrates the complex distribution of power, interest, and institutional mandates across the Italian AI ecosystem. Actors such as the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy, the Garante per la Protezione dei Dati Personali, the Ministry of Education and Merit, and the I3A are identified as key players with both high power and high interest, whose involvement is crucial for aligning AI governance with the perspectives and rights of youth. At the same time, the analysis points to a vast array of under-engaged but potentially strategic actors—including civil society organizations, research centers, local authorities, and youth networks—whose mobilization could significantly enrich the democratic and ethical fabric of AI policies. The adoption of a power-interest matrix facilitates a more targeted approach to stakeholder engagement and provides a useful instrument for planning advocacy, partnership, and outreach activities in future project phases.

The educational dimension emerges as a critical lever for shaping AI governance that is not only effective and innovation-driven, but also socially just and future-proof. The white paper catalogues a number of promising initiatives aimed at integrating AI into the Italian education system, from AI-assisted teaching pilots and hands-on prototyping curricula, to training courses for teachers and interdisciplinary workshops for university students. These programs demonstrate that AI can serve as both a subject of instruction and a pedagogical tool, capable of fostering cognitive development, interdisciplinary thinking, and digital citizenship. However, their distribution remains fragmented, and their impact contingent upon local conditions and institutional capacities. The authors call for a more systemic integration of AI literacy into national education policies, anchored in ethical reflection, critical media skills, and participatory methodologies.

Finally, the conclusions of the white paper reaffirm the centrality of youth as legitimate stakeholders in the governance of artificial intelligence. Young people are not merely passive consumers or digital natives, but rather emerging citizens whose voices, experiences, and aspirations can and must inform the design, deployment, and regulation of AI systems. This vision entails a shift from instrumental inclusion—where youth are consulted sporadically or symbolically—to structural participation, where young individuals are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and institutional access required to contribute meaningfully to public deliberation and technological oversight. The establishment of permanent youth forums, the inclusion of youth representatives in national and local AI committees, and the co-design of

educational modules on algorithmic ethics and digital rights are all proposed as concrete steps toward this goal.

In this light, the role of ALFA Liguria as the authoring institution of the present report assumes a paradigmatic significance. As a regional agency with direct operational experience in youth engagement, career guidance, and policy implementation, ALFA demonstrates how local institutions can act as catalysts for systemic innovation, bridging the gap between European directives and local realities, between emerging technologies and the everyday concerns of communities. The report not only consolidates ALFA's strategic positioning within the European educational and digital policy landscape, but also underscores the importance of regional ecosystems in ensuring that the AI transition remains aligned with democratic values and inclusive practices.

Taken together, the findings of this white paper call for a renewed effort to construct a governance model for artificial intelligence that is not only technologically robust, but also ethically grounded, socially legitimate, and responsive to the expectations of younger generations. Such a model must transcend the boundaries of sectors and silos, weaving together public institutions, private actors, civil society, and youth constituencies into a shared architecture of responsibility, transparency, and trust. The path forward is undoubtedly complex, but the urgency of the task—and the clarity of the insights provided by young people themselves—leave little room for postponement. If artificial intelligence is to serve the common good, it must be governed with and by those whose futures it will most profoundly shape.

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