

ABSTRACT

"The European youth policy and its perception in Italy: a path between lights and shadows".

The doctoral work pursued the objective of deepening the knowledge of how the European youth policy has been perceived in Italy. In order to develop this topic, it was necessary to preliminarily deepen the characteristics of the European youth policy and those of the Italian youth policy. On the basis of these insights, it was possible to verify the connection between the two policies. The area of connections was also developed through a specific focus on two pillars of European youth policy: active participation and citizenship of young people.

Furthermore, since youth policy in Italy is one of the subjects whose competences are shared between central state and regional authorities, it was necessary to extend the work to regional youth policy as well.

The context of the national youth policy in Italy has been analyzed also through some deep interviews given by five important stakeholders and decision maker on Italian youth policy.

In order to enrich the knowledge and for the sake of completeness of the work, a focus on the European context was also developed, which concerned the characteristics of youth policies through 4 case studies: Estonia, Germany, France and Malta, highlighting their national approach in implementation of the EU guidelines.

The investigations revealed that European youth policy has only been partially delegated to the European Union and has essentially remained within national competences: each Member State promotes its own youth policies independently.

Having said this, the EU's capacity to intervene was very focused and circumscribed both in terms of scope and in terms of legal and planning instruments that can be approved at European level. Basically, the EU intervenes in order to strengthen cooperation between States and in this area, it can also approve programming interventions financed by the EU budget. The two most important programs in this regard are Erasmus and the European Solidarity Corps. Finally, the EU can adopt political guidelines whose implementation the States remain free to comply with or not (soft law).

In this approach, Italy is still unprepared, especially with reference to national policies; some light emerges at the level of a few regions.

The reconstruction of the state of the art of Italy's capacity to transpose European youth guidelines reveals a country substantially unprepared for the challenge proposed by the EU.

The doctoral work concludes by opening up some avenues for reflection aimed at shortening this distance. In this perspective, an original reading of European youth policy is provided and a change in the paradigm of the comparison between the two policies is proposed. The main conclusion of the doctoral work is that the framing of the relationship between these two policies needs to be changed: the most appropriate approach of this framework is the construction of the European identity, within which European youth policy is placed.

For this reason, European youth policy is something quite different from traditionally understood youth policy.