



*Maailma Tutuksi ry – Get to Know the World Assoc.*

Mare Balticum – Mare Nostrum program



***Senior Citizens in Europe:***  
*attitudes, lifestyles and everyday use of ICT*  
*in Finland and Italy*

***Giuseppe Lugano, Paul Lwoff***

*In cooperation with:*  
*University of Molise (Italy)*  
*Adult Education Centre of the City of Helsinki (Finland)*



# Acknowledgements



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# Introduction

- Contemporary information societies are **ageing societies**
- In EU, as elsewhere, the ageing phenomenon requires **changing policies**, laws and ways of working and living together
- **Empirical studies** can supporting policy-making by shedding useful insight on the current situation, attitudes, needs, and lifestyles of senior citizens
- Although EU policies are the same, the role and condition of senior citizens differs much in European member States: therefore, it is important to take into account the **international dimension** of the problem



# Data and methods

- **Questionnaire** distributed to Italian and Finnish schools in 2007 with the support of
  - Università degli Studi del Molise (Italy)
  - Helsingin työväenopisto (Finland)
- Structured questionnaire - **37 questions** divided in three sections:
  1. Attitudes towards life
  2. Personal lifestyle
  3. ICT use
- Measurement: 5-point **Likert scale**
  - "1: Never; 2: Rarely; 3: Sometimes; 4: Often; 5: Always"
- Sample
  - **Italian**: 115 answers (100% valid)
  - **Finnish**: 52 answers (100% valid)
- The **results** of this presentation include a selection of the answers to the most significant 13 questions



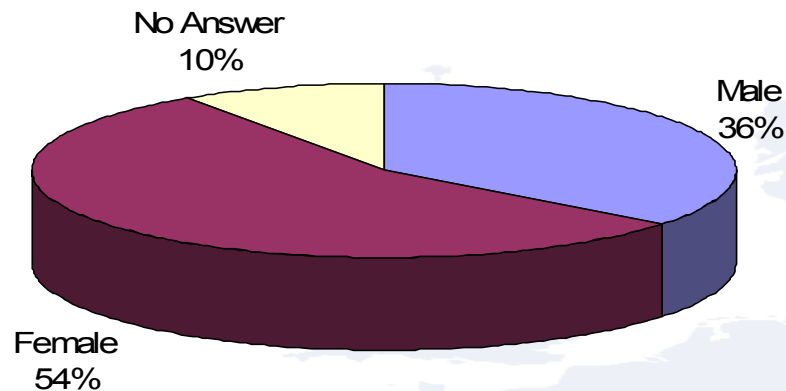
# *Demographics*

- Gender
- Age
- Education level



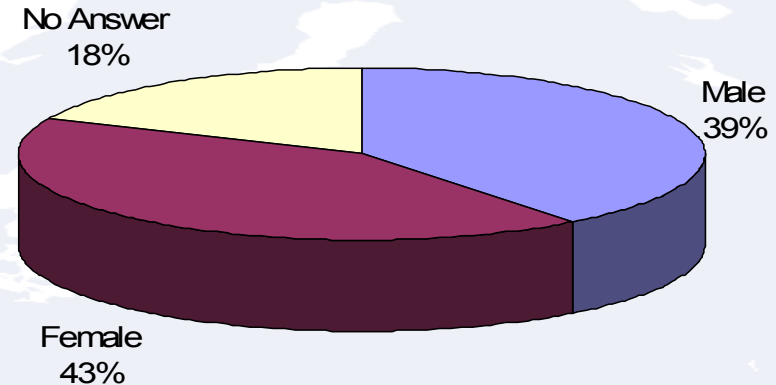
# Demographics - gender distribution

Italy



Male Female No Answer

Finland



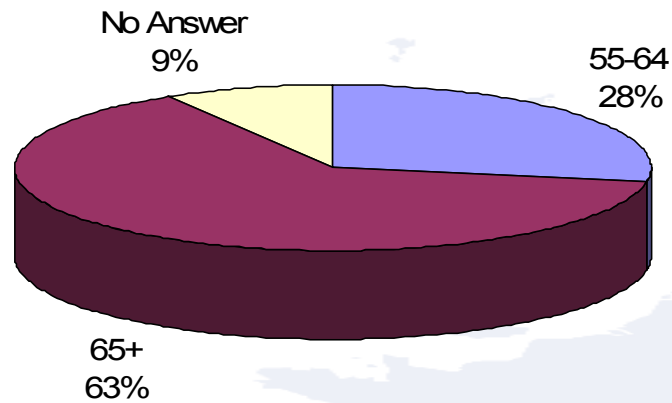
Male Female No Answer

- In both countries, the majority of respondents was female
- In Finland, almost a fifth of the respondents did not answer



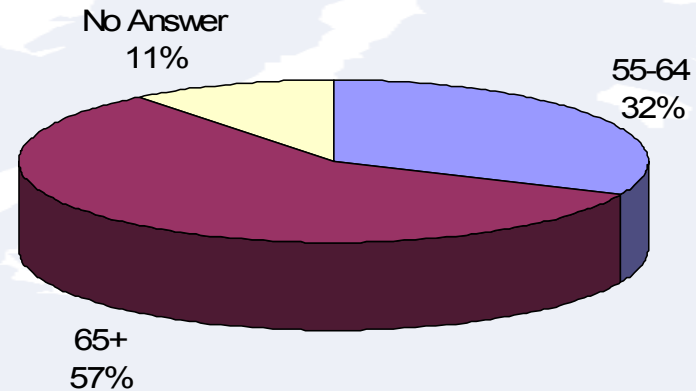
# Demographics - age distribution

Italy



■ 55-64 ■ 65+ ■ No Answer

Finland



■ 55-64 ■ 65+ ■ No Answer

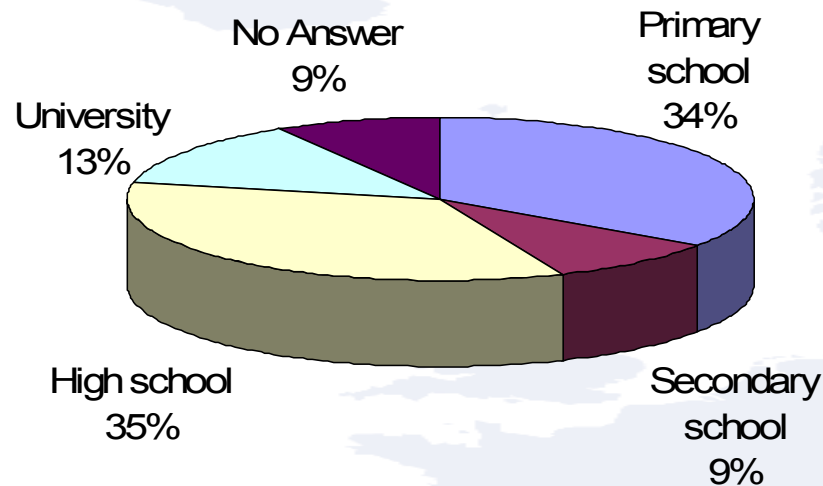
- In both countries
  - the majority of respondents was in the 65+ age group
  - about a tenth of the respondents did not answer



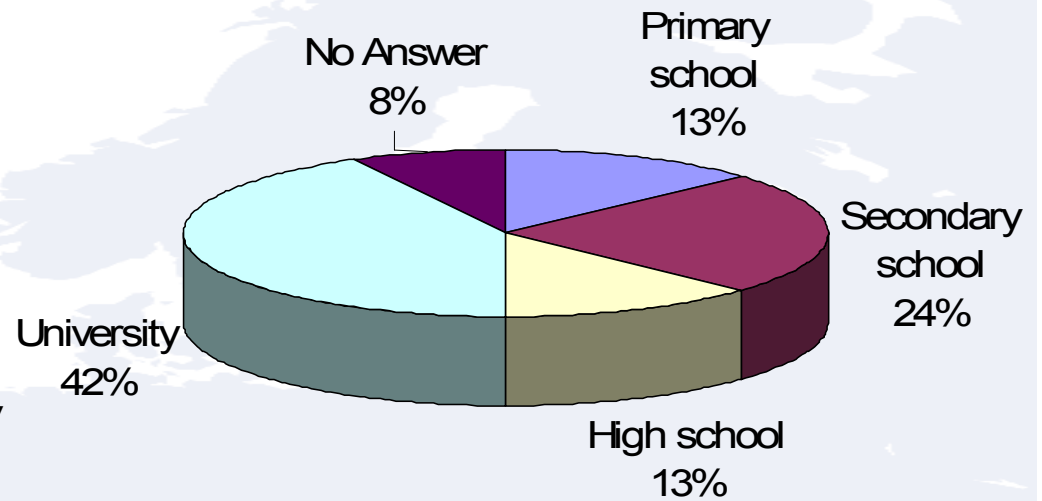
# Demographics – education level



Italy



Finland



■ Primary school ■ Secondary school ■ High school ■ University ■ No Answer

■ Primary school ■ Secondary school ■ High school ■ University ■ No Answer

- The number of respondents with university background was high in Finland (42%) and low in Italy (13%)
- 34% of Italian respondents had only basic education (primary school)



# *Current situation*

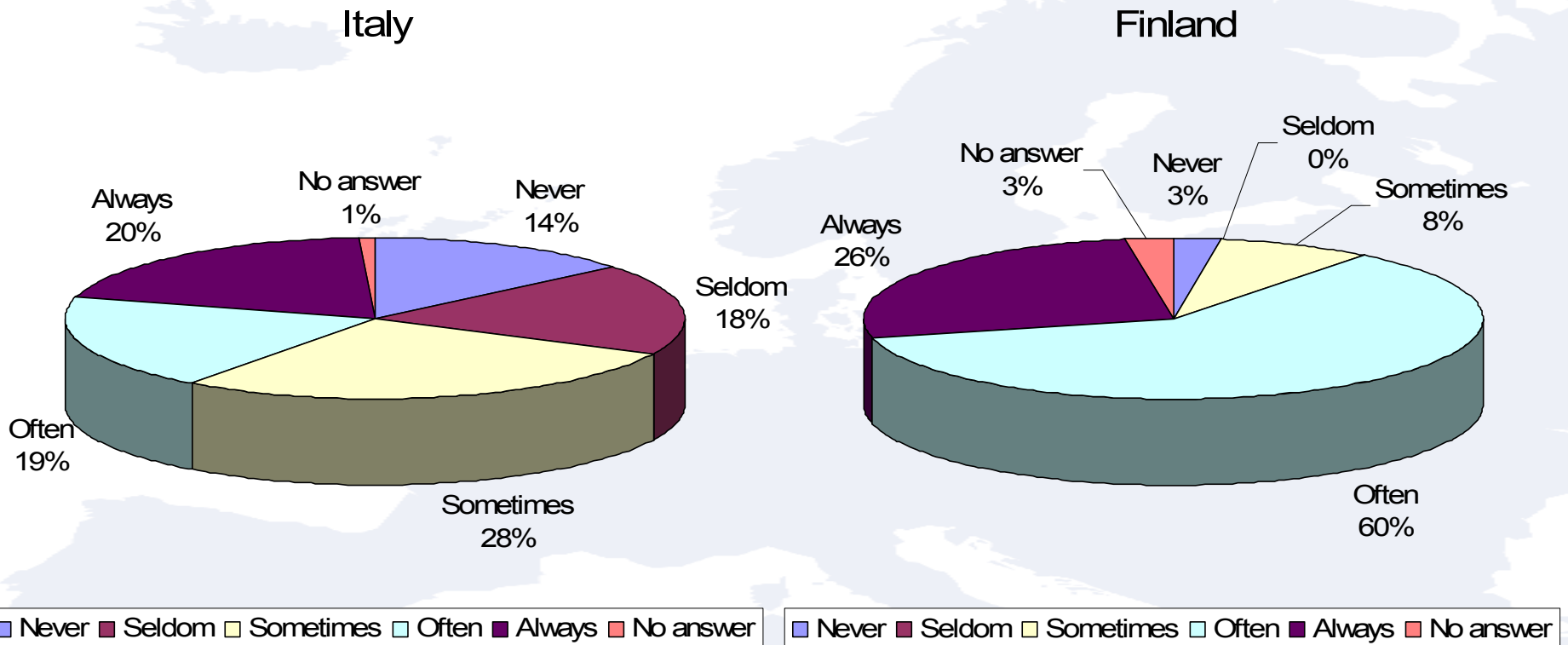
1. Optimism for the future
2. Economic condition
3. Satisfaction of public services
4. Satisfaction of private services
5. Attitude towards immigrants



# Optimism about the future of one's own country



## I am optimist about the future of my own country

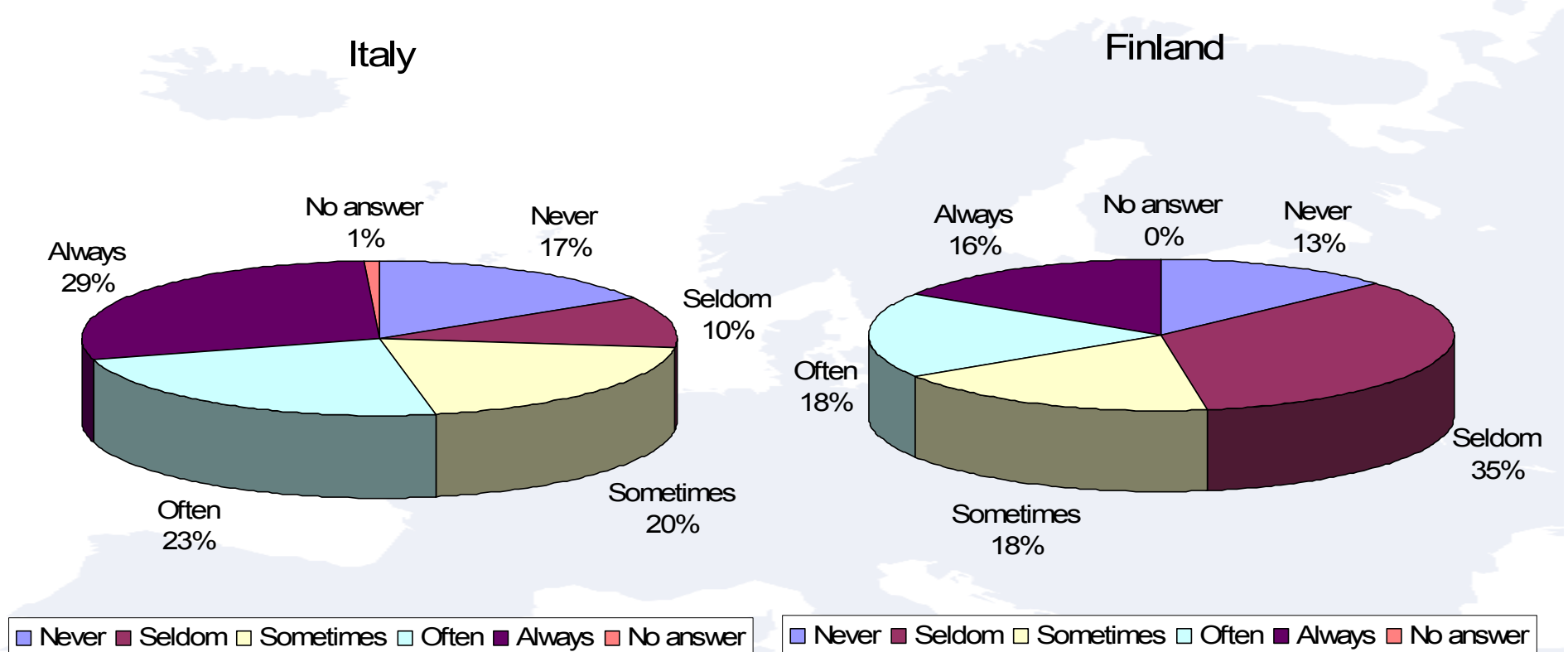


➤ Finnish respondents are much more optimist than Italians for the future of their country



# Economic condition

**I feel that my salary/pension is not sufficient to cover my expenses**



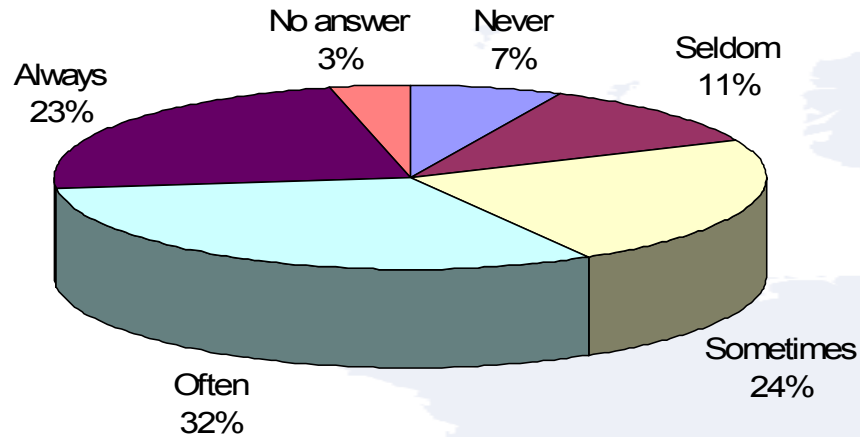
➤ Finnish respondents feel to have a more secure economic condition than Italians, even if only a minority is never worried with the problem



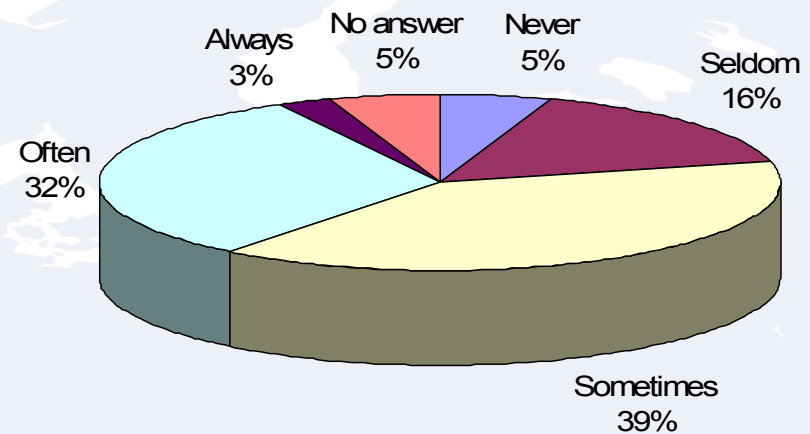
# Satisfaction of public services

## I think that institutions are not doing enough for people of my age

Italy



Finland



Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always No answer

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always No answer

➤ Finnish respondents are more satisfied than Italian one on how public institutions take into account their needs.

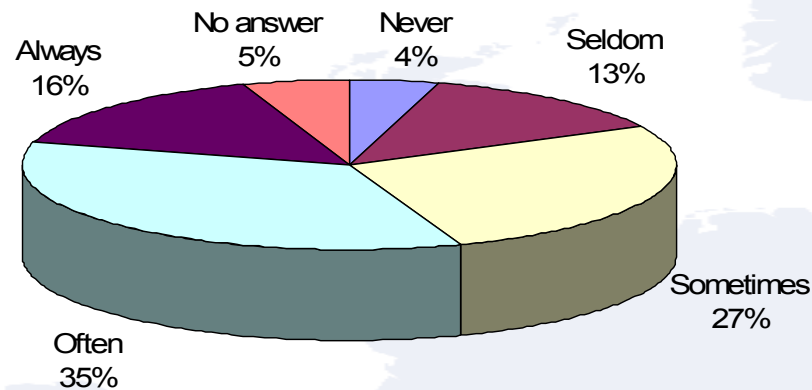
➤ However, the high number of respondents not entirely satisfied suggests that in both countries there is still place for much improvement.



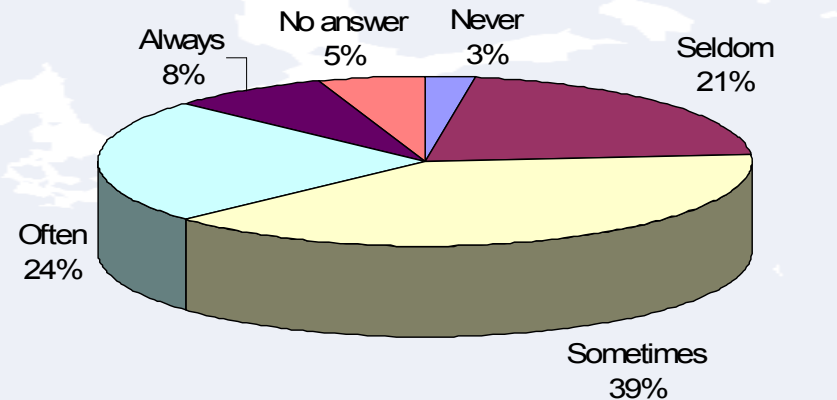
# Satisfaction of private services

**I think that companies do not consider my needs when developing their new products / services**

Italy



Finland



Legend: Never (blue), Seldom (maroon), Sometimes (yellow), Often (cyan), Always (purple), No answer (red)

Legend: Never (blue), Seldom (maroon), Sometimes (yellow), Often (cyan), Always (purple), No answer (red)

➤ In both countries, only a minority of respondents has high satisfaction for the way companies take into account their needs in product and service development

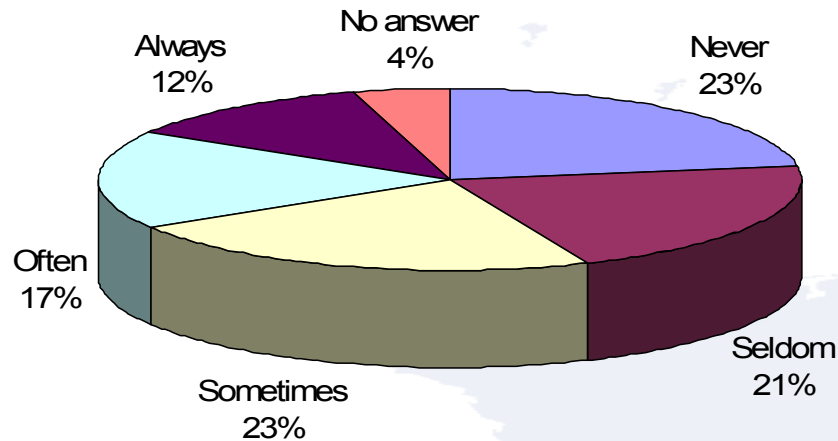
➤ Finnish and Italian situation is rather similar



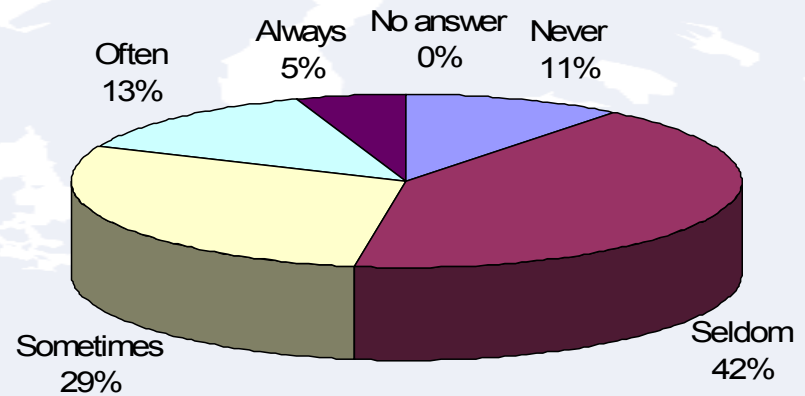
# Attitude towards immigrants

**I think that immigrants are one of the causes of cities getting less safe**

Italy



Finland



■ Never ■ Seldom ■ Sometimes ■ Often ■ Always ■ No answer

■ Never ■ Seldom ■ Sometimes ■ Often ■ Always ■ No answer

➤ Finnish respondents have a slightly more positive attitude towards immigrants than Italians. Such position might reflect the perceived level of security that exist in Finland



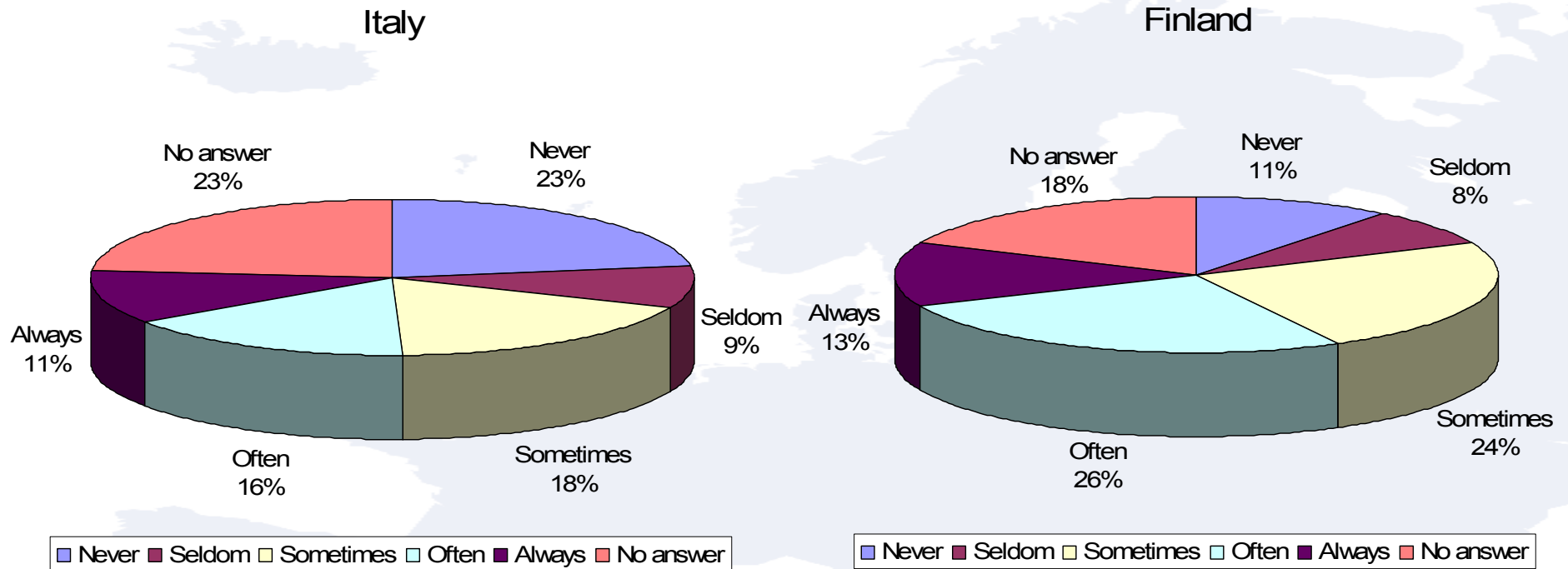
## *Leisure time and social life*

1. Level of sexual attraction with partner
2. Need of romantic relationships
3. Meetings with friends/acquaintances



# Level of sexual attraction with partner

## I still feel sexually attracted by the person I live with

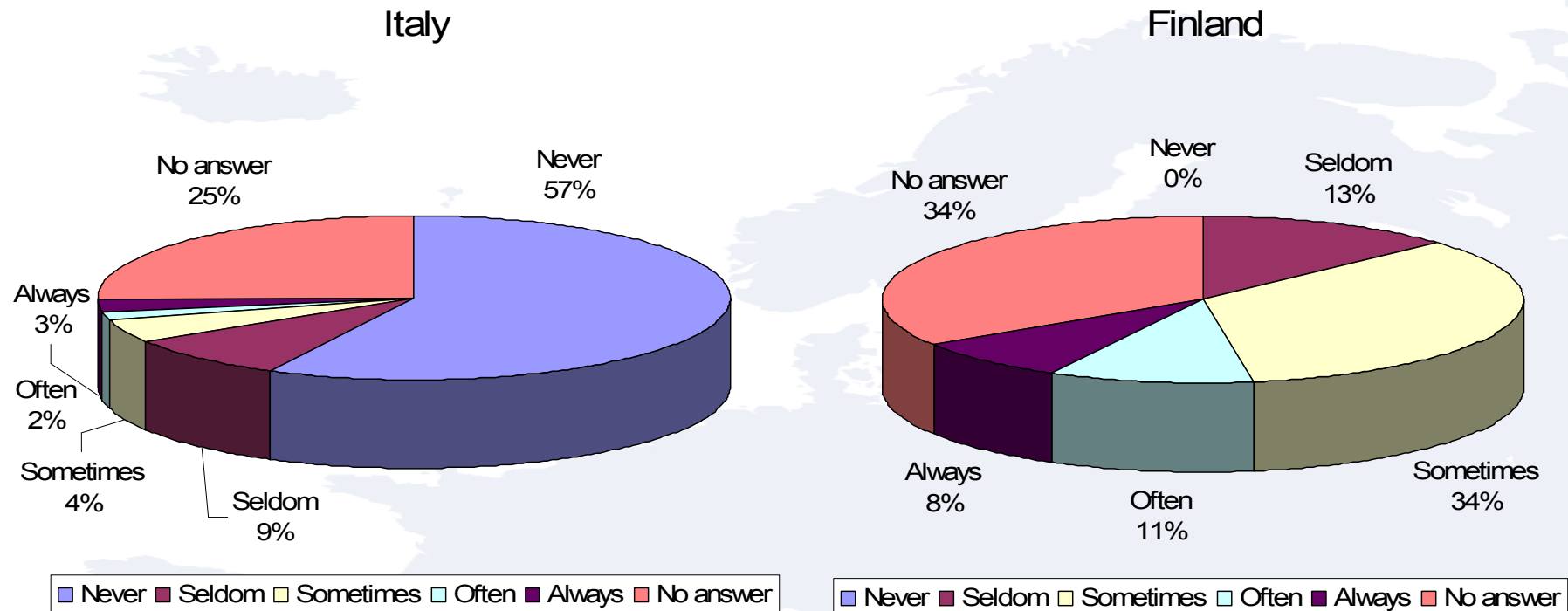


- Finnish respondents feel more sexually attracted to their partners than Italians
- The question was probably considered too sensitive, because in both countries about a fifth of the respondents did not answer



# Need of romantic relationships

## If widow/not married – I feel the need of romantic relationships



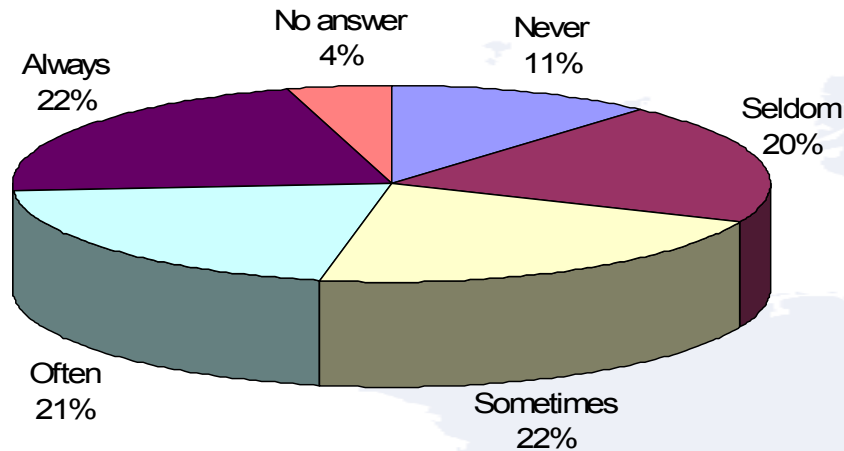
- Almost 60% of Italian respondents do not feel the need of a romantic relationship
- The question was probably considered too sensitive, because in both countries a significant number of respondents did not answer. It is also possible that many people did not answer because the question did not include "divorced" status



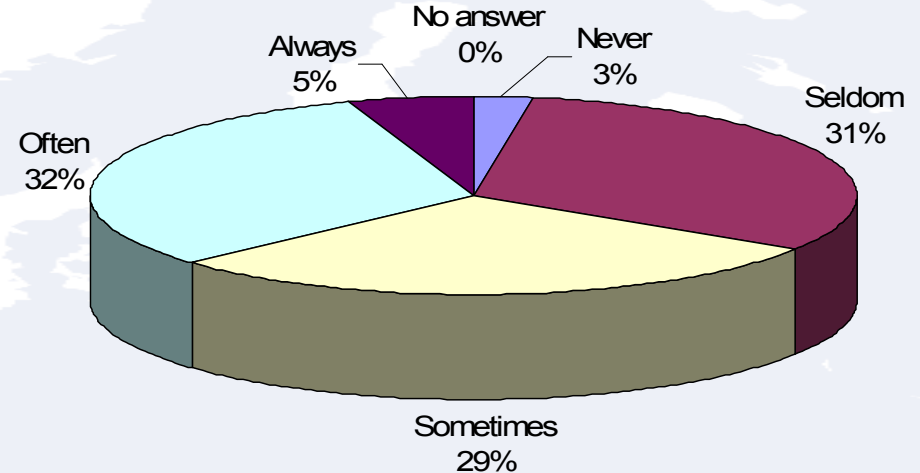
# Meetings with friends / acquaintances

## I regularly meet friends and acquaintances in bars or social places

Italy



Finland



Legend: Never (blue), Seldom (maroon), Sometimes (yellow), Often (cyan), Always (purple), No answer (red)

Legend: Never (blue), Seldom (maroon), Sometimes (yellow), Often (cyan), Always (purple), No answer (red)

➤ Italian respondents are more social but also more lonely than Finns; indeed, one fifth of them *always* meet friends and acquaintances in bars or social spaces, but more than 10% never meet them in such places



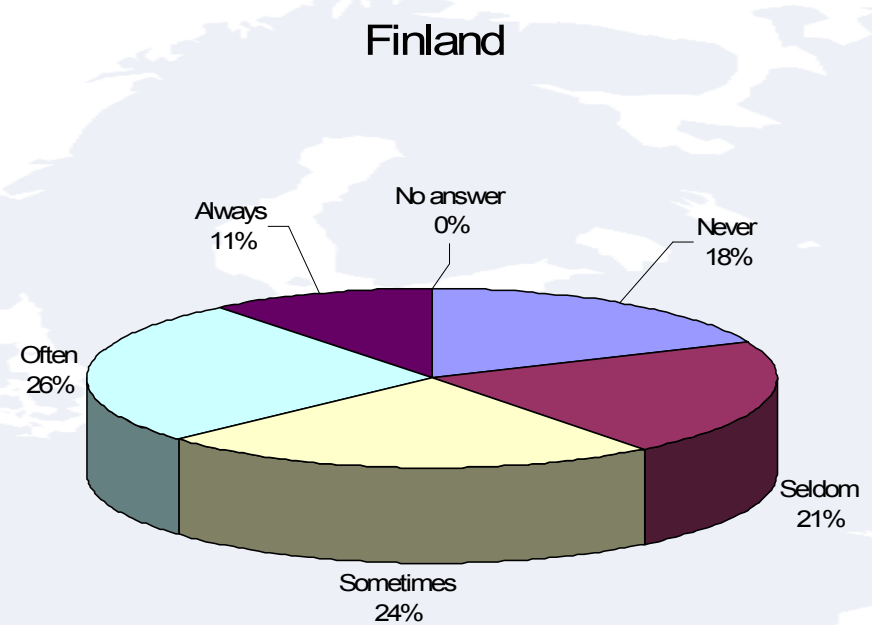
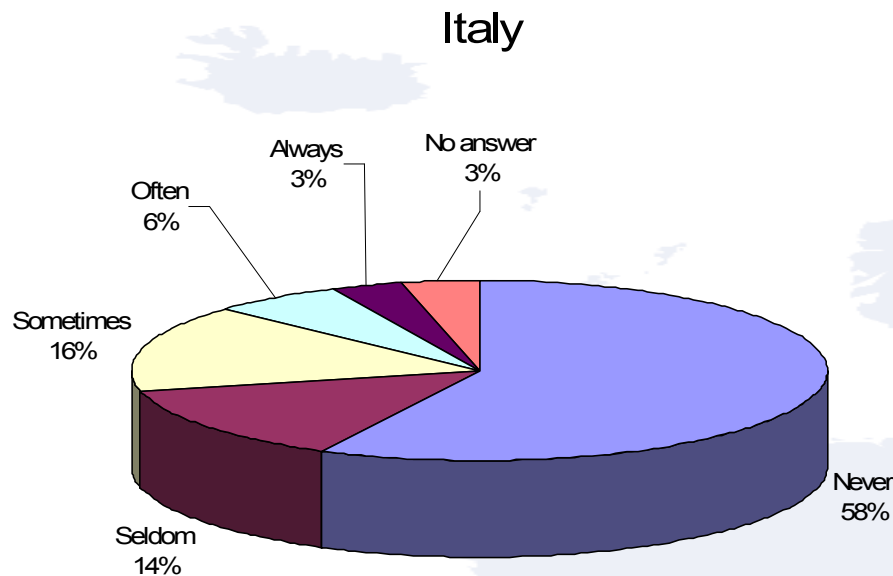
# *ICT: attitude and use*

1. ICT-related training
2. Importance of mobile communication
3. Email in family/friends communication
4. Internet use for health information
5. Use of e-banking services



# ICT Training

## I take courses to update my skills and competences in ICT



■ Never ■ Seldom ■ Sometimes ■ Often ■ Always ■ No answer

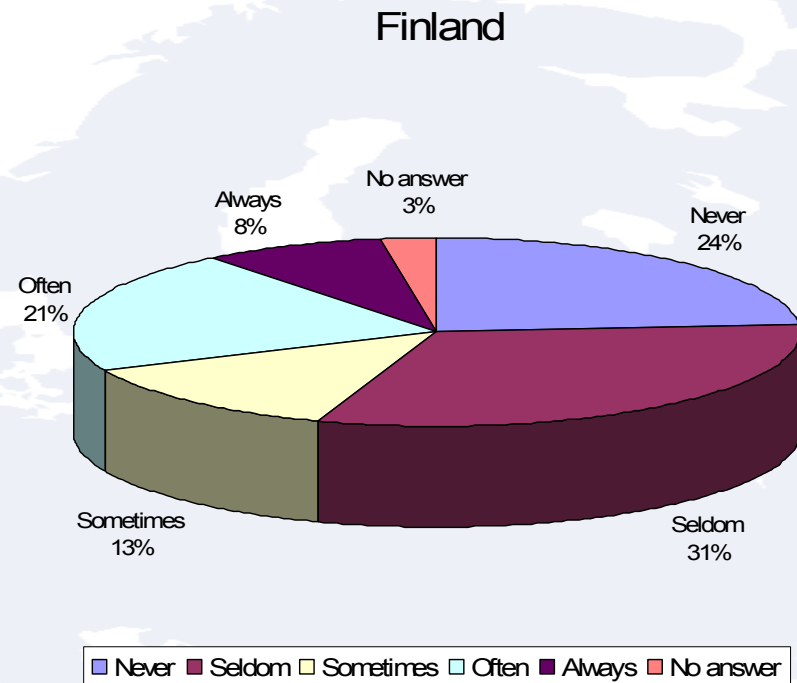
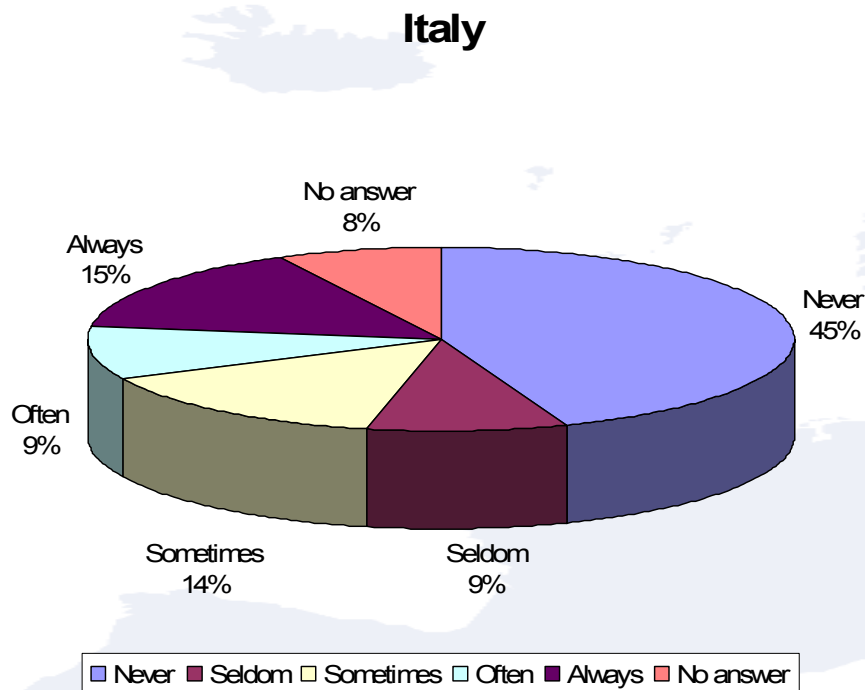
■ Never ■ Seldom ■ Sometimes ■ Often ■ Always ■ No answer

➤ Updating competences in ICT through training courses is much more common in Finland than in Italy



# Importance of mobile communication

## I think that a mobile phone is of no use at all for my activities

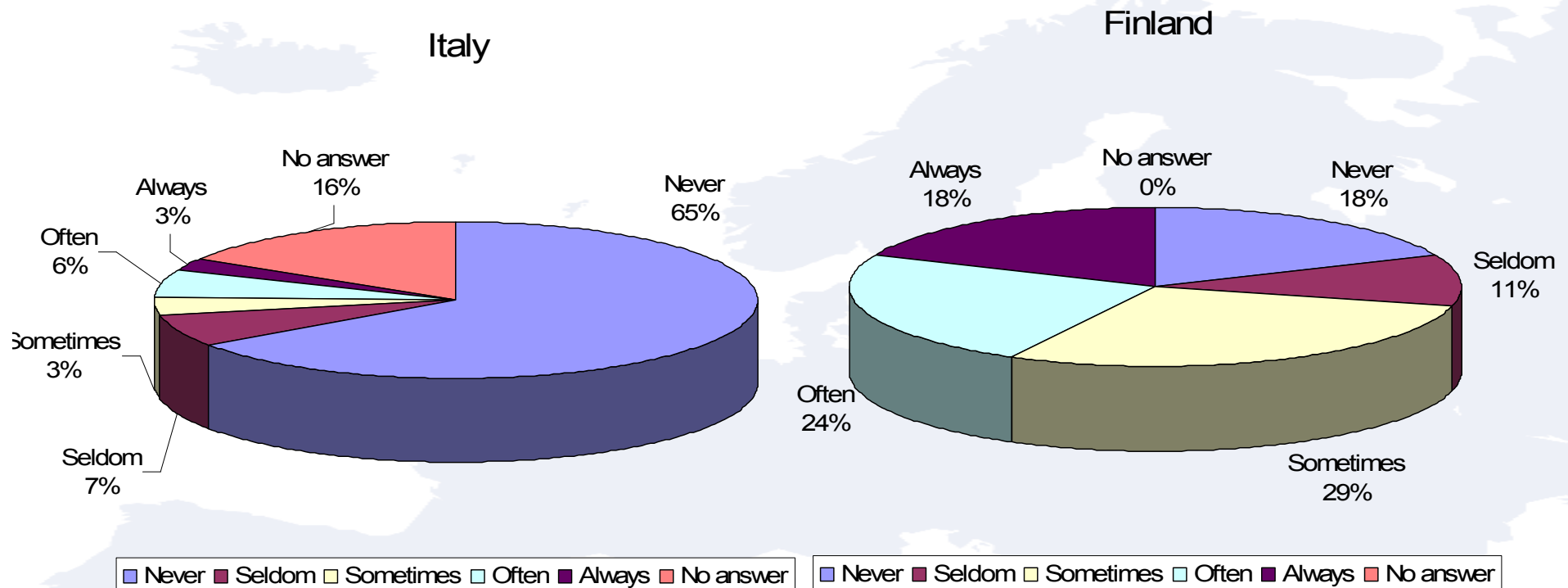


➤ Although more than half of respondents consider the mobile phone important, almost 30% of Finns and 24% of Italians think that mobiles have little or no use for their activities



# Everyday use of email

## I use email to communicate with family and friends



- Two thirds of Italian respondents never use email for social communication
- In Finland email is commonly used by the majority of respondents

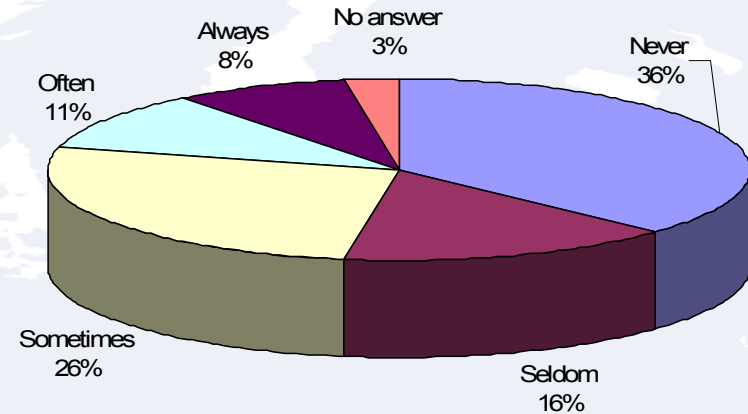
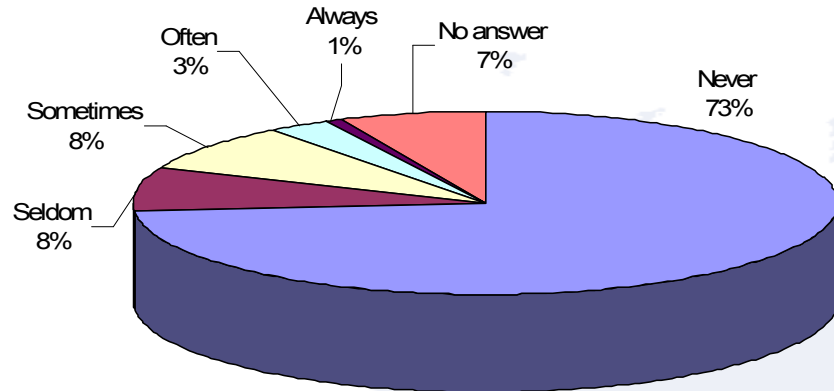


# Use of WWW to search information

## I use web-sites to search/ask advices about health issues

Italy

Finland



■ Never ■ Seldom ■ Sometimes ■ Often ■ Always ■ No answer

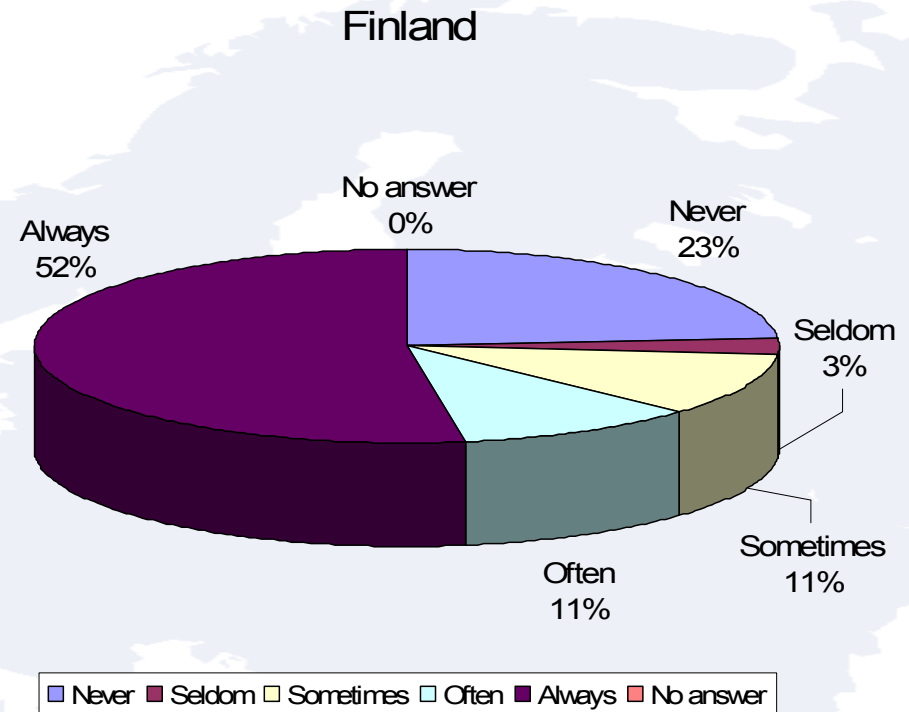
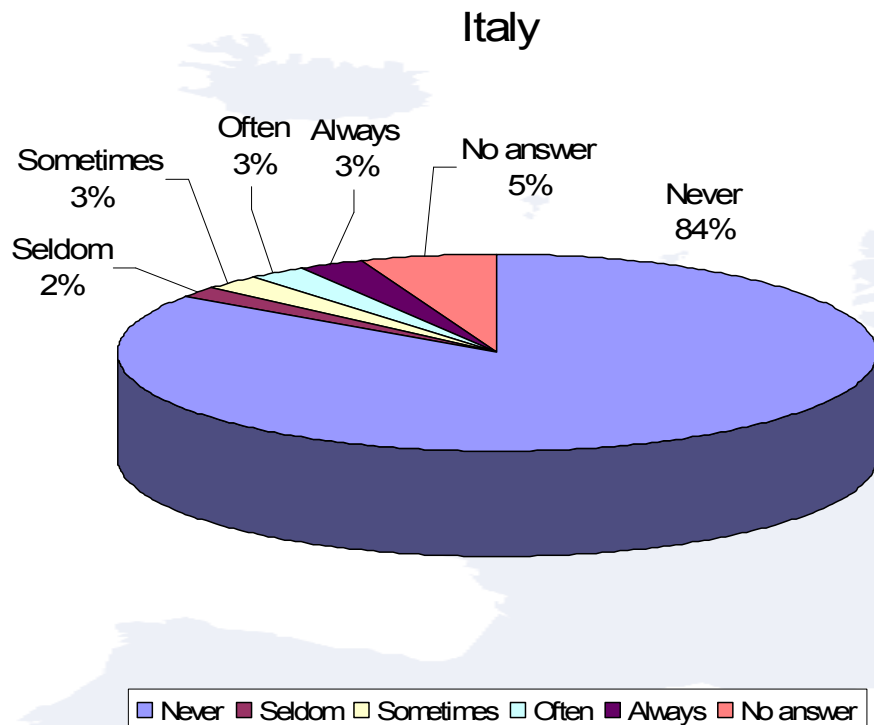
■ Never ■ Seldom ■ Sometimes ■ Often ■ Always ■ No answer

➤ More than 70% of Italian respondents and more than a third of Finnish respondents have never used the WWW in searching health-related information and/or advices



# Use of eBanking services

## I use the web-site of my bank to manage my expenses



- eBanking services are not used by the 84% of Italian respondents
- More than half of Finnish respondents always use eBanking services



## *Conclusion: summary of the main findings*



- The answers to the questionnaire suggest that **Finnish senior citizens seem to enjoy a more pleasant and active ageing than Italians.**
- Finnish seniors' answers provide evidence to this general trend through higher levels of optimism, economic security and satisfaction for public and private services, and by the weaker fear of immigrants.
- Concerning patterns of social lives, a larger number of Italians reveal constant connectivity with friends and acquaintances, but a large number also experience loneliness. It was somehow surprising that Finns showed a higher level of sexual attraction for their partners and a stronger need of romantic relationships.
- **ICT** can represent an effective tool for reducing isolation and disconnection from reality by providing chances for learning, social communication and for access to public and private services. In this respect, **Italy currently lags behind Finland.**



## *Conclusion: education matters*



- The **education level** of the respondents which was much higher in the Finnish sample than in the Italian one, can partially **explain the many differences** in current condition, lifestyles and everyday uses of ICT.
- **Adult education** facilities are available in Italy, but they are not as popular as in Finland. In addition, the Finnish government invests more than the Italian in maintaining and updating education systems.
- More pleasant and active ageing would be possible also in Italy if more resources were invested in education.