

Vocational education and training in Italy

CEDEFOP

Vocational education and training in Italy

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Coordinator: **Giorgio Alluli** with the collaboration of Simone Casadei, Sandra d'Agostino, Claudio Franzosi, Rosangela Lodigiani, Roberto Maini, Costantino Massari, Paola Nicoletti

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Project coordinators: Michael Adams, Reinhard Nöbauer
under the responsibility of Stavros Stavrou, Deputy Director

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Europe 123, GR-57001 Thessaloniki (Pylea)

Postal address:

PO Box 22427, GR-55102 Thessaloniki

Tel. (30) 310 490 111


Fax (30) 310 490 020

E-mail: info@cedefop.eu.int

Homepage: www.cedefop.eu.int

Interactive web site: www.trainingvillage.gr

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Cedefop introduction

Objective and target groups

The publication of this description of the vocational education and training system in Italy is a step towards updating and extending the series of descriptions of the (then 12) Member States published by Cedefop between 1993 and 1996. The series now includes Austria, Sweden and Finland and the countries covered by the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement. The objective is to present an overview of vocational education and training activities in Italy so that it is easily understood by interested 'foreigners'. The target group includes those who may be responsible for, and concerned with, VET policy issues, researchers in this field, directors of vocational training departments or institutions, and trainers and teachers, whether they work at EU or Member State level, or for a governmental or social partner organisation. Some may be using the text at their desks as a reference document, others may be visiting the country concerned either on a study visit or to plan or execute a bi- or multi-lateral project and more likely to wish to read the document from beginning to end.

Content and structure

The volumes in this series set out to describe initial and continuing vocational education and training (VET). As far as initial VET is concerned, this means including provision which is in some cases the responsibility of ministries of education and in others of ministries of employment or social affairs. As far as continuing VET is concerned, it requires coverage of provision for both the employed and unemployed, usually by a wide range of governmental bodies and ministries, by private and social partner organisations.

The structure of the report (see the list of contents) has been laid down in some detail by Cedefop, which has also placed limits on how long it should be. This is to make it easier for readers to make comparisons between the training systems in various EU Member States. The structure is, in general terms, similar to that adopted for the reports on the Member States commissioned in 1992, but there have been some changes such as the addition of a chapter on what we have called 'qualitative aspects', including information on certification, training of trainers and guidance. We are requiring the authors of all monographs, including those updating the existing ones, to follow this amended structure, so as to facilitate readers who wish to try to make comparisons between the systems.

Choice of author and consultation procedures

For this series Cedefop has tried to achieve a product which in some ways is impossible. We wished to have a report written by an insider of the system concerned, but easily comprehensible to the outsider. It followed that the person/institution chosen as an author is an insider, located in the country being described and, unless they choose not to do so, writing in their mother tongue. A further corollary of this was that Cedefop has tried to play the role of 'outsider' in discussions on the draft text, in order to draw authors' attention to places where the report was likely not to be easily understood by the public for which it is intended.

Cedefop has also stipulated that the authors must carry out a consultation on the draft with the main parties involved in VET in their country. This has meant their sending the draft not only to the various public bodies responsible for organising the system and providing VET, but also to the principal representative bodies of the social partners. The assistance of the members of Cedefop's management board in the country concerned has in particular been requested in this connection.

Publishing and updating

It is Cedefop's intention, as long as the necessary resources are available, to publish these monographs in paper form in their original language and in English, French and German. In occasional and exceptional circumstances it may publish some monographs in additional languages. Experience has however shown that the timescale involved in translating and publishing in hard-copy form and the rate of change in the systems described means that the reports can almost never be entirely up to date. Cedefop intends therefore also to use electronic means of publishing, including making summaries and updates of the texts available on its interactive Internet site (www.trainingvillage.gr).

Comments and feedback

As indicated above, Cedefop is conscious that in preparing this series it has had to make choices. We would very much appreciate having readers' views as to whether we have made the right ones concerning the scope, content and structure of the report. We would be pleased to have your comments by letter, fax or e-mail.

Vocational training in Italy

The regions have competence for vocational training in Italy, whereas education is a matter for the State. Participation in the school-based general education system is high. Around 70 % of students obtain the State diploma (*maturità*). The majority obtain it by following the vocational stream.

So far a lower proportion of students has participated in initial vocational training in the strict sense (regional VET and apprenticeship), but increasing that proportion is one of the main points of the process of reform and dynamic development currently under way.

In January 1999 it was decided to increase the duration of compulsory school education from eight to nine years. In May of the same year, compulsory training until the age of 18 was introduced. That requirement can be fulfilled not just in upper secondary school but also by attending regional vocational training or an apprenticeship. A 1998 law completed the process of transferring competences for vocational training to the regions. At the same time the regions are delegating competences to the provinces.

Important reforms seek to expand apprenticeship, which should facilitate the transition to working life, and to introduce higher technical education and training (*istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore — IFTS*) to qualify young diploma-holders with a subsequent integrated path between school and training.

Opportunities for post-secondary and university training are currently being expanded.

Cofunding by the ESF is of major importance for the purposes of regional vocational training in Italy, equivalent to around 70 %.

We are grateful to ISFOL for its fruitful collaboration with Cedefop. We hope that together we have provided the reader with a useful document containing a wealth of information.



Stavros Stavrou
Deputy Director

Thessaloniki, July 1999



J. Michael Adams



Reinhard Nöbauer
Project coordinators

Contents

Cedefop introduction	3
Author's preface	7
Chapter 1. Background information	11
1.1. Political and administrative structures	11
1.2. Population	13
1.2.1. The Italian population	13
1.2.2. Level of education of the population	17
1.2.3. Immigration	19
1.3. The economy and the labour force	20
1.3.1. The economy	20
1.3.2. The labour force	22
1.3.2.1. <i>Employment</i>	22
1.3.2.2. <i>Unemployment</i>	24
Chapter 2. History and the laws and regulations governing the system	29
2.1. The historical development of the system	29
2.1.1. Education	29
2.1.2. Vocational training	30
2.2. The structure of responsibilities	36
2.2.1. Education	36
2.2.2. Initial and continuing vocational training	36
2.2.3. Delegation to the provinces	38
2.3. The present state of the vocational training system	43
2.3.1. The planning of measures	43
2.3.2. Management of activities	44
2.3.3. The role of the social partners	45
2.3.4. The role of the European Social Fund	46
Chapter 3. The structure of the vocational education and training system	49
3.1. The general education system and its role in training	49
3.2. Initial vocational training	57
3.2.1. A general picture	57
3.2.2. Vocational streams in school education	60
(a) Vocational education	62
(b) Technical education	63
(c) Teacher training	65
(d) Art education	66
3.2.3. University level vocational training	66
3.2.4. The initial training system of the regions	68
(a) General characteristics	68
(b) The structural characteristics of training provided by the regions	70
(c) Participation in regional training	73
(d) Multi-regional activities	75
3.3. Apprenticeship and training/work contracts	78
3.3.1. General characteristics	78
(a) Training/work contracts	78
(b) Apprenticeship	78
(c) Reform of alternance training	79
3.3.2. The evolution of the number of person with training contracts	79
3.4. Continuing vocational training	81
3.4.1. Schemes promoted by the regions	81
3.4.2. Continuing vocational training measures pursuant to Law 236 of 1993	84
3.4.3. Measures promoted at national level under the European Social Fund	85
3.4.4. Training activities in the workplace	85
3.4.5. The provision of training by the public administration for its own employees	89
3.4.6. Initiatives promoted by the chambers of commerce	89
Chapter 4. The funding of education and vocational training	91
4.1. The funding of general education	91
4.2. The funding of vocational education	92

4.2.1.	Regional spending on vocational training	92
4.2.2.	Ministry of Labour spending	96
4.2.3.	Ministry of Education spending	97
4.2.4.	Public administration spending on the continuing vocational training of its employees	98
4.2.5.	Funding for alternance training	99
4.2.6.	A summary of public spending on vocational training	100
4.3.	The contribution of European Community funds	101
4.4.	Expenditure by employers	104
4.5.	Individual expenditure	105
4.6.	International comparisons	106
Chapter 5. Qualitative aspects		109
5.1.	Certification and qualifications	109
5.1.1.	Two certification systems	109
5.1.2.	Certification in the school and university system	109
5.1.3.	Certification in the vocational training system	110
5.2.	The training of trainers	112
5.2.1.	Teachers and trainers in the educational and vocational training systems	112
5.2.2.	The profile of teachers and trainers: normative and professional aspects	113
5.3.	Vocational guidance	113
5.3.1.	The legislative framework	113
5.3.2.	The existing structures	114
5.3.3.	The outlook	115
5.3.4.	Some innovative experiments	116
Chapter 6. Trends, perspectives and innovation		119
6.1.	General strategy	119
6.2.	Existing normative measures	121
6.3.	Innovative aspects	123
6.3.1.	Towards integration of the systems	123
6.3.2.	Higher technical vocational training	124
6.3.3.	Apprenticeship	125
6.3.4.	Training and guidance placements	126
6.3.5.	The development of the certification system	128
6.3.6.	The accreditation of training bodies	136
Annexes		139
Annex 1	Acronyms and abbreviations	141
Annex 2	Important organisations	145
Annex 3	Basic glossary	151
Annex 4	Bibliography (1997–98)	153

Author's preface

This monograph, commissioned by Cedefop, describes the general reference context for the Italian vocational education and training system and its qualitative and quantitative development.

It consists of six chapters:

- The first outlines the general context of the training system, covering both institutions and social and economic aspects. In particular it gives the most significant facts and figures on demographic trends in Italy, the employment and unemployment rates with a breakdown between the major geographical areas, migration processes, etc. The geographical breakdown is particularly important because there is a very great imbalance between central/northern Italy and southern Italy.
- The second describes the institutional framework of the vocational training system. This highly structured system is the product of Italy's historical development, which is described in outline, and a division of responsibilities between the State and the regions that has only recently begun to be established on a wider scale.
- The third is devoted to a description of the structure of the system, embodied in its laws and regulations and in the quantitative aspects. It sets out the main facts and figures on the vocational training system coming under the regions, as well as the vocational education system coming under the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research.
- The fourth describes expenditure on training. Here again the whole of spending on both public and private vocational training from various sources has been taken into account.
- The fifth is devoted to an analysis of certain qualitative aspects of particular relevance to the vocational training system: certification procedures, guidance and the training of trainers.
- The sixth and last chapter looks at the main innovations occurring within the Italian system.

Among the various factors to be highlighted, there are two in particular that need to be borne in mind if we want to see the Italian vocational training system in its proper context:

- **The provision of vocational education and training by various institutional bodies:** besides vocational training in the strict sense, which comes under the regions, there is provision of a vocational education nature which is administered by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research. The picture that emerges is then a composite one, so much so that in recent years most of the effort has been directed towards integrating the school system and the training system in the strict sense.
- **The vigorous innovation process promoted by the labour agreement of September 1996,** which is the basis on which a massive body of reform measures has been adopted over the last few years. In this period great concern for innovation, qualification and the development of the training system has emerged. Recent evidence of this has been the 'Social pact for development and employment' (*patto sociale per lo sviluppo e l'occupazione*) signed in December 1998 by the government and the social partners. One of the results of this agreement was approval for the introduction of compulsory training up to the age of 18. The sixth chapter gives an overview of the more significant aspects of this process, but it should be borne in mind that the situation is constantly evolving.

This monograph has been produced from statistics, documentation and research material accumulated by ISFOL, combined with other statistical sources (ISTAT, the Ministry of Labour and the regional authorities) and with further documentation of an international, national and regional nature. The draft text has been discussed and reviewed jointly with the social partners and with Cedefop.



Michele Colasanto
President, ISFOL
Rome, July 1999