Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Italy

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Contributor:	Giulio Iannis
Reviewed by:	Cedefop

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Introduction

Until 2012, Italy lacked a formal national framework for connecting education, training and guidance. This was mainly because of legal and organisational complexities due to the distribution of institutional competences on vocational guidance between the central level and the regional level and between the different systems of education and services at work. In 2012, the Italian government, together with regional and local authorities, drafted an agreement, which aimed to integrate guidance activities. Its main goals were to promote a common national strategy for lifelong guidance in education, training and employment, as well as to form an interinstitutional working group with extended responsibilities.

In 2013, Italy issued the National guidelines for lifelong guidance (*Accordo tra Governo, Regioni ed Enti locali sul documento recante: Definizione delle linee guida del sistema nazionale sull'orientamento permanente, 5 dicembre 2013*), agreed between the Ministry of Education (*Ministero dell'Istruzione dell'Università e della Ricerca, MIUR*), the Ministry of Labour (*Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali*) and the regions. The main role of programming and coordination belongs to the regions that, since 2001, hold this institutional function, according to the Italian Constitution.

The national guidelines establish the right to lifelong guidance for all citizens and define five main functions that national and regional career guidance systems have to provide:

a. career education: activities for learning career management skills (CMS);
b. information: services and tools for addressing the information needs of citizens and guidance stakeholders with reliable information resources;
c. supporting transitions: services and activities for providing help and advice to citizens to reach learning and career goals and to manage changes and transitions;
d. guidance counselling: interviews and guidance tools focused on the design of new career pathways;
e. functions of management of system: development of networks and quality standards, training and updating of career guidance practitioners.

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Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

In 2014, ministries and regions issued the National standards for lifelong guidance, a technical document that describes services, quality requirements and resources for guidance provision in each main context (education, higher education and employment services). The new guidance system fosters cooperation among national and regional levels, but the National guidelines for lifelong guidance leave the institutions free to organise activities and services with great autonomy.

There is no single body responsible for lifelong guidance and counselling, but several institutions are involved. Career guidance is mainly provided by public employment services, schools, municipal vocational guidance centres and information centres (*Informa-Giovani*). At local level, the role of regions is central to defining regional guidelines, providing funding and supporting local guidance systems.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education issued Guidelines for lifelong guidance to promote the new strategic concept of guidance within the national school system. The document pinpointed some main aspects, including career management skills, the role of a dedicated teacher, the potential of new technologies for career guidance, the relationship with social mobility and social inclusion processes.

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Access to guidance

One of the main aims of the *National guidelines on lifelong guidance* is to improve the accessibility of guidance services to all citizens in Italy. The coordination of main guidance initiatives, campaigns and information events (study fairs and career days) is shared between the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) and Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. Both ministries have developed dedicated webpages (webpage of Ministry of Education, University and Research, webpage of Ministry of Labour and Social Policies) and web portals for supporting information and guidance such as http://www.istruzione.it/orientamento and https://www.cliclavoro.gov.it.

The national public employment services (PES) provide career information and guidance to all citizens, following national standards and guidelines (the labour market reform - Law N. 150 in 2015) and with the support of the national agency for employment (*Agenzia Nazionale Politiche Attive Lavoro - ANPAL*). Each region manages these services at local level through a network of regional employment offices. In Italy there are 556 employment offices, with about 8700 practitioners (though only about 6200 of them are involved in front office activities).

Regional stakeholders have more autonomy in developing projects and programmes which tackle youth unemployment. Career guidance services provided in school focus more on increasing the employability of their graduates and on preparing them for the transition between different education levels and from education to the world of work.

In 2017, the Ministry of Education launched an ESF-funded national programme (*PON Orientamento*) to support the development of innovative guidance services in schools. The programme follows up the development of the above standards, approved in 2014. It includes career education courses and modules, guidance information actions, and support actions for career choice and employability development, linked to the various educational pathways.

Regional stakeholders can be engaged through partnerships which may include central and local administrations, associations, foundations, third sector organisations, universities, research centres and networks. Services provided include tutorage by representatives of the world of work, technical training providers, and universities. Students are acquainted with local job offers, working environments and available training offers. Growing occupations and activities are particularly emphasised. Relevant actions include information to students on all available routes to qualification, acquaintance with changing technologies at work, career workshops to understand the reality of careers and training environments, clarification of stereotypes about careers and VET, as well as clarification of personal preferences in career choices.

Regional governments are also in charge of the management of PES and of the implementation of all active employment measures foreseen by national legislation. For example, the Emilia-Romagna Region is among the Italian regions having the more advanced services (since 2016). Its upskilling strategy includes quantitative and qualitative profiling of unemployed, low-skilled/qualified adults, subscription to a personalised service agreement and provision of guidance activities. These range from general career information to fully tailored support. Clients can be referred to further training leading to a qualification or to labour insertion/re-insertion internships leading to validation of competences acquired. Clients have a personal portfolio which is updated at every stage and is integrated in institutional databases. The guidance and validation can be offered by a variety of services which include the PES and other accredited employment agencies.

Clients receive support in job search, CV and job application drafting. If the PES assesses that clients require further guidance support, more complex methodologies are made available. Clients deemed ready for work after initial screening and guidance support are included in the PES job matching database. Clients with low readiness can also be enrolled in a labour insertion/re-insertion internship (*tirocinio di inserimento/reinserimento al lavoro*) to develop labour market-relevant competences and employability.

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Quality assurance

The national agreement between Ministries and Regions on *Quality standards for lifelong guidance* issued in 2014 (Accordo tra Governo, Regioni ed Enti locali sul documento recante: *Definizione di standard minimi dei servizi e delle competenze professionali degli operatori con riferimento alle funz*ioni ed ai servizi di orientamento attualmente in essere nei diversi contesti territoriali e nei sistemi dell'Istruzione, della Formazione e del Lavoro. -Repertorio atti n. 136/CU del 13 novembre 2014) describes services, quality requirements and resources for guidance provision in each main context (education, higher education and employment services). This technical document supports regions and other guidance providers to design guidance services and allocate resources and staff. It followed and integrated the *National guidelines for lifelong guidance* (2013) (see section Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders). For example, in the context of higher education, universities have to guarantee the presence of guidance services aimed at supporting students at the beginning of their academic career, during the course of their academic career, and at the end of it to prepare them for the labour market. The document defines the aim of these actions (such as promoting the development of soft skills).

The Ministry of Labour and the Regions issued a specific document on quality standards for employment services (*Decreto ministeriale dell'11 gennaio 2018*, n. 4 - LEP), including career information and guidance. This document provides a list of services and references for all public employment offices in Italy and also for private job centres and employment agencies. The standards include ethical treatment of clients, availability of career information and possibility to research job offers to all clients.

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Career management skills

Following the national guidelines (2013) (see section Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders), career learning is one of the five main functions of lifelong guidance. Career learning promotes the acquisition of career management skills (CMS) through the provision of guidance programmes and activities within the education system and the career guidance services.

The *G*uidelines for lifelong guidance issued by the Ministry of Education (2014) also defined CMS as the main learning output of career guidance at school and of other guidance activities and work-related learning experiences. The guidelines provide a short definition of CMS, as presented by Cedefop: '*Career management skills refer to a whole range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self, educational and occupational information as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions*' (Cedefop, 2010, p.8). However, an official and detailed framework for career management skills is still missing.

Some innovative projects and good practices promoted by universities, such as the University of Camerino, and local authorities, such as *Regione Marche*, started in 2015 to provide a methodological proposal and tools for promoting a national CMS framework in Italy.

In 2015, the Erasmus+ project LEADER coordinated by University of Camerino worked to develop a methodological framework for CMS, producing a

series of activities to promote the development of CMS. The model and the activities were designed and tested in Italy with several pilot actions (for further information please see here and here).

Fuoriclasse and *Fuoriclasse in Movimento* are projects coordinated by Save the Children Italy to counter school drop-out. The programme (the 2017-20 edition) involves more than 170 schools and has been developed with the aim of increasing the career management skills and learning skills of at-risk students through career workshops and seminars, formal and non-formal activities and cooperation with the families. The project website sets out the model's components which are considered crucial for sharing tools and guidelines to design guidance activities and interventions based on the CMS framework.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education promoted a document on entrepreneurial skills and learning pathways for students (*Sillabo per l'Educazione all'imprenditorialità nella scuola secondaria*, 2018). It supports secondary education providers in establishing learning pathways to develop entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and competences. It directly reflects the EntreComp model (2016) and is divided into five areas:

a. ways and opportunities for doing business;
b. development of ideas, contexts and addressing social needs;
c. from the idea to the enterprise, resources and skills;
d. the enterprise in action: dealing with the market
e. economic citizenship.

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Evidence, monitoring and assessment

Monitoring and evaluation of lifelong guidance previously carried out at national level, is now a regional responsibility. The Ministry of Education collects and analyses data on the education system, but the data collected do not include specific information or focus on guidance.

The Ministry of Labour has data and reports on the national network of employment services. In the past, the Institute for Studies and Analysis of Public Policies (*Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche, INAPP*, previously ISFOL) used to collect data and produce annual reports on lifelong guidance in Italy, but the current monitoring is carried out by each region in its own territory based on regional models and regional data.

The Friuli Venezia Giulia Region has developed a regional system for monitoring and evaluating guidance activities, based on a web platform that allows schools and guidance centres to collect data and evidence on the quality of guidance provision. Further information can be found here. In addition, Piemonte Region provided analysis of monitoring regional guidance systems through collected data about all regional guidance activities and services funded by ESF (see also here).

Almalaurea, a consortium of 73 Italian universities supported by the Italian Minister for Education, University and Research and industries, presents each year a report on career and study choices of students and graduates in Italy. Other private associations and research institutions provide data and reports on specific aspects and issues, such as the rates of early school leaving and the number of NEETs; see the work of Fondazione Agnelli and Save the Children Italy.

While phenomena such as early school leaving, study choices, employment rates, and social mobility are quantitatively monitored, the effectiveness of career guidance policies and activities is still rarely assessed. The Italian context still lacks a shared system and framework for the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of guidance actions. Although certain quality criteria are described in the national and regional guidance, a proper monitoring system evaluating the impact of guidance actions on rates of employment or early school leaving is not yet in place.

As part of a European consortium, some Italian public and private bodies are now working on indicators and targets that might be relevant for defining an evidence-based system to evaluate guidance actions. The MyFuture project worked towards the same direction. This was a project funded by the Erasmus+ programme that worked to create digital tools to improve quality in career guidance at school. In Italy, the project involved the University of Camerino and Marche Region. The partners created an online checklist to assess the quality of guidance actions in secondary schools. This freely available tool was piloted in Piemonte Region.

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Career information, ICT in guidance

In line with the European framework (European Commission, 2010), the guidelines from the Minister for Education, University and Research (2014) define the use and the development of ICT in career guidance as a priority for the national system. As reported in the guidelines, it is crucial to:

a. guarantee access to web and ICT resources to every student to promote learning of career management skills;

b. promote training of teachers and practitioners;
c. improve the quality and the usefulness of e-guidance tools.

In guidelines texts, ICT tools are reported to be fundamental for allowing access to a wide amount of online information. However, the guidelines highlight the need for cautious use of ICT tools and claim a need to be aware of the risks of ICT tools in a fast-changing society.

In Italy, several examples of online platforms for career information and labour market information are available. For instance, the Ministry of Labour promotes a national web portal *cliclavoro* that collects job vacancies from the public employment services, but also directly from employers and private job agencies. It also collects CVs from job seekers and provides information on main national and regional initiatives in employment, training and labour market policies.

Another public portal on national qualification and careers is the *Atlante del lavoro e delle qualificazioni* (Atlas of work and qualifications). This is available online and is the result of collaboration between the Ministry of Labour, the National Agency for Public Policy Innovation (*Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche, INAPP*) and other stakeholders. It provides a detailed map of work and qualifications, described according to a common language shared between the institutions. The aim of this database of qualifications is to describe nationally each work activity to promote validation services, recognition and training of competences and skills requested by the labour market.

The National Institute of Statistics (*Istituto nazionale di statistica, ISTAT*) provides the official statistics for the country including employment and education, while ISFOL (*Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori*, Institute for the development of vocational training for workers) and INAPP jointly provide information on occupations (*Atlante del lavoro e delle qualificazioni)*. Moreover, *Unioncamere*, the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture, manages an information system that provides forecasts on labour market trends and on the workforce needs of enterprises.

These web portals are not specifically dedicated to guidance, but they are open and could be useful resources for guidance practitioners.

The Ministry of Education offers several online platforms for students and their families: *Scuole in chiaro* (national database of schools in Italy), *Universitaly* (national database of university and higher education, *Sistema ITS* (national database of the training offer from the higher technical education and training system (ITS), *Orientamento* (a web page to present the education system using an infographic, with links to database and info). These platforms are designed to accompany students in their studies (primary, secondary and higher education). Platforms offer information on the structure of education, specific information on schools and on all training pathways available after compulsory studies.

There is also a useful national web tool *Eduscopio*, promoted by the Agnelli Foundation, that collects information on schools with data and statistics for the evaluation of each school and to support student decisions.

Almalaurea offers every year a survey on the occupational outcomes of Italian graduates. It has a database of CVs of new graduates which is made available to employers. The consortium also offers a website with resources and tests to inform students on the available educational possibilities and to support them in the choice.

MiOriento is an online service which offers information about the labour market in Europe and postsecondary opportunities; it aims to help the unemployed, pupils and students gain employment, with assistance with applications and job interviews. Information given to users of the platform includes university offers, guidance for the labour market, tests and work tools. One feature of the site is *Test di Orientamento* (orientation test). This test helps participants have greater awareness of their own resources as it is important to know potential and personal constraints, skills and values when choosing a career. The service is provided by the Action program ProvincEgiovani.

The Excelsior information system is the statistic system of the Commerce Chambers in Italy and constitutes the starting point that provides quarterly employment forecasts at national, regional and provincial level to inform about labour market trends. This information is important as it allows participants to see how the job profile of interest is positioned with respect to the demands of the local region.

Charity organisations and private companies also offer relevant web sites for career information. For example, the *CIOFS-FP e-portfolio* is a user-friendly online tool - built around professional competences - for updating career plans and supporting the matching of clients with the requirements of local businesses. The system was developed by *CIOFS-FP* (Italian Women Centre for Salesian Works) – a non-profit association running training facilities in 15 Italian regions – in collaboration with *CIOFS-FP Piemonte* which operates 11 offices for training and guidance in four provinces. The clients can describe their work experiences using a simple and flexible tool. The e-portfolio can be made available to external parties, or it can be used for private purposes only. Content can be easily published or kept hidden for non-public usage. The system supports clients in becoming self-reliant in terms of information gathering, with files, images, videos. It also supports job search by enabling easy creation of a job profile meeting the requirements of the labour market. Companies can search according to specific criteria, then access the client's pages and decide on whether they wish to contact them for a job interview.

A dedicated training programme is available at *CIOFS-FP* e-portfolio to its users, with about 10 hours of training divided into three phases. The first includes a presentation of the instrument and its methodology to guide clients in designing their own job path and in defining a dedicated professional project. The second focuses on the setting up of a personal e-portfolio. Here, the clients establish a 'mini website' and populate the e-portfolio with content. The third phase focuses on individual vocational counselling to refine the initial mini websites. Also, the completed e-portfolio is remotely monitored after 3-6 months by professional staff. To enable matching labour market demand and supply, businesses can use a dedicated online tool entitled Job opportunities, which is maintained and quality controlled by CIOFS-FP Piemonte.

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Training and qualifications

Currently, there are no formal and stable university programmes on career guidance, and initial training in this field is not yet developed or offered. Most career practitioners have study backgrounds in psychology, economics and business administration, labour law and pedagogy.

The new public portal on national qualifications and careers (*Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni*, managed by INAPP) includes the descriptions of main lifelong guidance activities and the related professional outputs. This database is the official base for the design of standards, skills and training of careers. It also includes the job description for guidance practitioners.

The *National standards for lifelong guidance* issued in 2014 (see sections Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders and Quality assurance) describe services, quality requirements and resources for guidance provision. The document specifies the minimum level of competences needed to provide services for different types of career guidance activities according to the national standards.

Within the education system, there are no specific requirements needed to become the teacher responsible for career guidance. In primary schools there is no single teacher responsible for career guidance. In secondary schools (first and second grade), each school has to nominate a teacher responsible for career guidance activities. This teacher is selected annually regardless of experience, competences and qualifications.

Possibilities of training and support depend on regional guidance systems. As an example, *Marche Region*, within the regional guidelines, introduced a system of training for teachers responsible for career guidance (named *FormaOrienta*). Emilia Romagna Region defined the regional profile of competences required to be a guidance practitioner (*orientatore*) within the regional system of qualifications.

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Funding career guidance

There is no dedicated funding for lifelong guidance. The Ministry of Education provides funding to each school for all activities, but there is no specific funding that is bound and reserved to guidance. Activities are therefore either supported by each school's budget or, in some cases, funded by regional programmes. This is the case of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Marche Region and Liguria Region, which offer a catalogue of activities funded by the region from which schools choose activities they want to be realised in their school context.

In 2017, the Ministry of Education (MIUR) launched a national call (National operative programme, *Programma Operativo Nazionale*, PON) for funding innovative projects in guidance. This initiative aimed at improving the quality standards of guidance services at school.

In the university context, the Ministry of Education has launched a national call (EUR 5 million) for funding guidance and tutoring activities. For the STEM field, the Ministry also offers special funding for activities to counter academic drop-out in STEM faculties and for guidance activities to promote STEM careers (Piano Lauree Scientifiche).

The Ministry of Labour and each region allocate funding for employment services and for promoting active employment politics (including guidance services). These are national and European funds.

Private foundations and charities are increasingly investing in career guidance, offering funding opportunities for relevant projects.

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Career guidance for school pupils

National guidelines on lifelong guidance (2013) (see section Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders) and the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education (2014) (see section Quality assurance) include career learning and guidance at school, starting from primary schools.

Some regions in Italy have issued regional guidelines on the methodological framework for career guidance, on the different types of career guidance services to be provided or on the structure of the activities (see Marche Region, Piemonte Region, Lombardia Region and Friuli Venezia Giulia Region). The regional documents have followed the national guidelines issued in 2013 by the Conference of the State and the Regions.

Following the national guidelines of the Ministry of Education (MIUR 2014), schools are responsible for most of the guidance activities for students; in line with the provisions of the Ministry of Education, each school has to include a plan of guidance activities within the official document that presents the yearly education offer of the school.

Each school also has to appoint a teacher as person responsible for guidance activities (*Figura Strumentale per l'Orientamento*). Career learning is not integrated within the curriculum, but the guidelines of the Ministry of Education invite teachers to support career decisions through career learning and guidance didactics integrated within the study of each single subject.

Education institutes are also responsible for coordinating work-related learning activities. According to the most recent reform of the education system (Law N. 107 in 2015 -), all students, during the last three years of secondary school, are required to attend a work-related learning activity (200 or 400 hours in three years), mainly outside the school. Career guidance is one of the main goals of these learning experiences at workplaces.

At local level, other career information and guidance activities for students are often carried out in cooperation with other schools, training centres, employment services, higher education institutes and universities, employers and managers.

The aim of career guidance activities is to reduce school dropouts, to increase access to internships and work placements, and to support the transition from school/university to the labour market. Furthermore, in 2017, the Ministry of Education has launched an ESF-funded national programme (*PON Orientamento*) to support the development of innovative guidance services basic education schools, including VET (see section Access to guidance).

Services provided include tutorage by representatives of the world of work, technical training providers, and universities. Students are acquainted with local job offers, working environments and available training. Growing occupations and activities are particularly emphasised. Relevant actions include information to students on all available routes to qualification, acquaintance with changing technologies at work, career workshops to understand the reality of careers and training environments, clarification of stereotypes about careers and VET, as well as clarification of personal preferences in career choices.

Mioriento.it is a self-help tool developed with the aim of easing the transition between high school and university and/or high school and the labour market. Young people have access to information about working contracts, labour market, learning, training and employment opportunities available in the country or abroad. Tools for self-assessment of skills are included.

The Ministry of Education promoted in 2018 a document on entrepreneurial skills and learning pathways for students (*Sillabo per l'Educazione all'imprenditorialità nella scuola secondaria* - 2018). This supports secondary education providers in establishing learning pathways to develop entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and competences. It directly reflects the EntreComp model (2016) and is divided into five areas:

a. ways and opportunities for doing business;
b. development of ideas, contexts and addressing social needs;
c. from the idea to the enterprise, resources and skills;
d. the enterprise in action: dealing with the market
e. economic citizenship.

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Guidance for VET participants

In recent years, Italy has reorganised its VET system and improved VET pathways to ensure a better connection between the education systems and the world of work.

The VET system is organised and managed by regions. It includes IEFP courses (initial vocational education and training for the acquisition of specific qualifications) for young students, after compulsory education. The regional VET systems offer higher technical education and training IFTS, higher technical specialisation certificate (released by the region) and higher technical institutes (ITS), higher technical education diploma (EQF 5), after secondary education. The main information and guidance on the VET system is provided by each region and nationally by the Ministry of Education (please see here).

The Ministry of Labour also promoted an apprenticeship programme, inspired by the dual system and connected with the VET system. Furthermore, in 2017, the Ministry of Education has launched an ESF-funded national programme (*PON Orientamento*) to support the development of innovative guidance services basic education schools, including VET (see section Access to guidance).

Services provided include tutorage by representatives of the world of work, technical training providers, and universities. Students are acquainted with local job offers, working environments and available training. Growing occupations and activities are particularly emphasised. Relevant actions include information to students on all available routes to qualification, acquaintance with changing technologies at work, career workshops to understand the reality of careers and training environments, clarification of stereotypes about careers and VET, as well as clarification of personal preferences in career choices.

Please see the description of VET system in Italy here.

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Guidance for higher education students

Every university in Italy has created and organised its own guidance and placement service for students and graduates. Most also include services of tutoring and support for international mobility. Almalaurea (see section Evidence, monitoring and assessment) provides digital tools for labour market information and specifically regarding occupational outcomes of Italian graduates. Their web site also offers a database of CVs of new graduates which is made available to employers (see section ICT in lifelong guidance).

Guidance for adult learners

The main career guidance providers for adults are the public employment services (PES). They are organised by each region, as a national network with the support of the Ministry of Labour and the new National Agency for Active Employment Policies (ANPAL). The public employment services are managed by each region independently. The Ministry of Labour issued national quality standards for the employment services, including career guidance (as defined by the Jobs Act - Law N. 183 in 2014 and the labour market reform - Law N. 150 in 2015.

Providing career information and guidance is one of the main functions of the PES system. According to the labour market reform (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015), the public employment service is responsible for training to qualify or requalify, to align with labour market needs and promote careers that support lifelong learning. The activities are the result of collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners. The aim is to increase access to career information, career training and work-based learning opportunities (see also here).

Despite adult learning being part of the Italian education system (Provincial Center for Adult Education, *Centro Provinciale per l'Istruzione degli Adulti* – CPIA), there is no structured system of career guidance for adult learners (see the 2015 Eurydice report).

The last national research on guidance (2012) describes great heterogeneity in guidance provision for this target group and reports that most guidance actions are provided by private companies and often consist of tutoring services during the learning experience. There is no comprehensive and structured national network of public and private bodies involved in career guidance for adult learners.

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Guidance for the employed

The public employment service (PES) is in charge of career guidance activities for the employed and, according to the labour market reform (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015), also responsible for managing funding for geographic mobility, management of tools for reconciling work and private life in cases of care obligation for children and relatives with disabilities, personalised career guidance, analysis of the individual's needs and of competences.

The activities are often done in collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners.

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Guidance for unemployed adults

The public employment service (PES) oversees career guidance activities for unemployed adults. According to the labour market reform (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015) and the Ministerial Decree 4, 11 January 2018 (LEP, minimum level of service provision), the PES is responsible for career guidance (at a basic and at a more personalised level), analysis of competences in relation to the local labour market demand, analysis of individual needs within the labour market, tutoring, support in undertaking a training opportunity, promotion of internships and information regarding possible funding for active job search, training for starting an enterprise, support and training for active job search.

The reform of the PES organisation decentralised activities to local employment offices and established new local employment centres, which are networked via an employment information system (EIS). Their main activity consists of providing counselling and guidance to the job search activities of the long-term unemployed. Before six months have elapsed from the beginning of an unemployment spell, each registered unemployed person should be given vocational training, requalification initiatives or job opportunities. Those who fail to attend an interview lose their unemployment status; the rejection, if any, of a job in line with the professional status of the unemployed, located within a radius of fifty kilometres from home, entails the loss of unemployment status seniority.

Since 2016, the Italian education system has offered new occasions of further education that concentrate on more practical aspects of work. These educational opportunities are called higher technical institutes (*Istituti Tecnici Superiori, ITS*) and cover production sectors which are considered crucial for Italian economic growth (energy efficiency; sustainable transports; technologies for made in Italy; technologies and innovation for cultural activities; ICT; biotech). At least 30% of the course is done within a company and 50% of trainers come from industry. The courses usually last for four semesters and ends with a final exam.

Upskilling through public employment services (PES) is a regional Italian practice which aims to provide unemployed low skilled/qualified adults with accrued possibilities of entering/re-entering the labour market. The Emilia-Romagna Region oversees PES organisation since 2016 and their management is under the responsibility of the *Agenzia Regionale per il Lavoro Emilia_Romagna* (Regional Agency for Employment Emilia-Romagna). The action is funded by EU funds (ESF) and national ones. The service targets all (low-skilled/qualified) adults who are unemployed and immediately available to work, thus being already registered with and supported by the PES in an active job search process.

The practice includes several stages: the quantitative and qualitative profiling of the unemployed low-skilled/qualified adults; subscription to a personalised service agreement; the provision of guidance activities ranging from informative to specialised ones (also depending on the beneficiary's characteristics); the provision of further training opportunities leading to a qualification or the enrolment in labour insertion/re-insertion internships leading to the validation of the units of competences acquired; a specific validation process (documentation, assessment, certification) for formalising the competences possessed by the individual; an update of the beneficiary's initial profiling at the end of the entire process; and the inclusion of the updated profile in institutional databases. Although the practice follows a standardised path, its approach is an individual-centred one as it is oriented towards individual career development, and specific actions are determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the needs of the beneficiaries.

Guidance and validation are offered by different services all being part of the *Rete Attiva per il Lavoro* (Active network for employment), a sort of 'umbrella operational organisation' which gathers public and private employment services, supervised by the Regional Agency for Employment. Its integration is not fully formalised but is planned to be further implemented in the near future.

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Guidance for older adults

The public employment service (PES) oversees career guidance activities for older adults. According to the labour market reform (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015) and the Ministerial Decree 4, 11 January 2018 (LEP, minimum level of service provision), the PES is responsible for career guidance (at a basic and at a more personalised level), analysis of competences in relation to local labour market demand, analysis of the individual needs within the labour market, tutoring, support in undertaking a training opportunity, promotion of internships and information regarding possible funding for active job search, training for starting an enterprise, support and training for active job search, and management of tools for reconciling work and private life in cases of care obligation (for relatives with disabilities).

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Guidance for early leavers

The public employment service (PES) oversees also career guidance activities for early school leavers according to the labour market reform (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015) and the Ministerial Decree 4, 11 January 2018 (LEP, minimum level of service provision) (see section Guidance for older adults). The activities are the result of collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners. The aim is to increase access to career information, career training and work-based learning opportunities.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education set up the National Registry (*Anagrafe Scolastica*) with the aim of gathering and centralising data on the educational path of students: studies, participation in VET programmes, attendance of career training activities, mobility, and the results of final examinations. From this database, the Ministry of Education collects data on early school leaving and may also allocate funds and resources to schools with highest rates.

A national strategy for youth unemployment has been adopted and an action plan for supporting youth employability has been developed, within the Youth guarantee programme (please see here) launched in 2014. This programme places great significance on guidance and counselling, by focusing on individual's profile. It is aimed at young people belonging to the 15-29 age group and provides a framework and incentives for them to receive training and employment via apprenticeships or contract or return to education within four months of becoming unemployed or dropping out of formal education.

In addition, an inter-institutional unit was created to elaborate and monitor the implementation of the Italian Youth guarantee programme. This unit involves all Italian public administrations responsible for vocational training, apprenticeship and public employment services, in order to guarantee, within four months from the start of unemployment, a job or traineeship opportunity for young unemployed people. The Youth Guarantee Programme funded a newscast (named "*Il posto giusto*") dedicated to the labour market and produced by the national broadcast RAI

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Guidance for NEET

The public employment service (PES) oversees career guidance activities for early school leavers. According to the labour market reform (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015) and the Ministerial Decree 4, 11 January 2018 (LEP, minimum level of service provision), the PES is responsible for career guidance (at a basic and at a more personalised level), analysis of competences in relation to local labour market demand, analysis of the individual needs within the labour market, tutoring, support in undertaking a training opportunity, promotion of internships and information regarding possible funding for active job search, training for starting an enterprise, support and training for active job search. The activities are the result of collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners. The aim is to increase access to career information, career training and work-based learning opportunities.

The Law Decree of 28 June 2013, No. 76 entitled *Primi interventi urgenti per la promozione dell'occupazione, in particolare giovanile, della coesione sociale, nonchè in materia di Imposta sul valore aggiunto (IVA) e altre misure finanziarie urgenti*, provides further funding for existing programmes, such as those aimed at entrepreneurial activation (so-called *auto-imprenditorialità*), self-employment activation and franchising activation (so-called *auto-impiego*). Guidance and short training on these opportunities are provided by PES and by Chamber of Commerce and trade associations. Funding is also provided for training internships for NEETs aged 18-29. Financial support will be provided for social utility projects proposed by young and disadvantaged persons.

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Guidance for young people at risk

The public employment service develops career guidance activities for employed and unemployed individuals, women, older adults, young people and people with special needs. The activities are a result of collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners. The aim is to increase access to career information, career training and work-based learning opportunities.

A specific service of PES is dedicated to young people at risk, with guidance practitioners (named Tutor dell'Obbligo Formativo) that provide information and individual counselling, with the aim of defining a personal plan for qualification within the VET system or the apprenticeship. Further information can be found here and here.

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Guidance for persons with disabilities

The public employment service develops career guidance activities for people with special needs. The activities are the result of collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners. The aim is to increase access to career information, career training and work-based learning opportunities. The Law 68/1999 provided a framework for employment and job integration of people with disabilities and in each public employment office there is a service with practitioners dedicated to supporting people with disabilities to improve their skills and to find a suitable job.

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Guidance for immigrants

The Law Decree 76/2013 introduced simplified procedures in immigration/mobility policy for establishing a work contract with third-country nationals residing abroad. Between 2014 and 2015, Italy updated its legislation in accordance with the EU Directives on international protection; applicants for international protection are now divided into:

a. refugees;
b. beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (third-country nationals or stateless persons who do not qualify as refugees but who would face a real risk of suffering serious harm if they returned to their country of origin or former habitual residence).

These reforms have brought about substantial improvements for both groups:

a. extended residence permits;
b. new rights for family reunification;
c. reduced time for access to employment;
d. better access to social assistance, housing, educational and healthcare services.

The new Decree 113-2018 (*DECRETO-LEGGE 4 ottobre 2018, n. 113*) has changed the protection system for asylum seekers and refugees (SPRAR system), which turns into a system of protection reserved solely for beneficiaries of international protection and foreign unaccompanied minors.

The national fund for Migrants FAMI 2014-2020 (*Fondo Asilo Migrazione ed Integrazione*) was created to foster the integration of migrants and it includes projects and initiatives to provide information, career guidance, tutorship and validation and certification services, also by regional PES.

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Guidance for other groups

The public employment service provides career guidance for ethnic minorities in their own languages (German in Trentino-Alto Adige Region, French in Valle d'Aosta Region and Slovenian in Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, as required by article 6 of the Italian Constitution) and inmates, under the coordination of the Ministry of Justice. Further information can be found here.

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