

Italy

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

May 2005

Title: Italy: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2005

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Author: ReferNet Italy

Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Italy. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2005. Later editions can be viewed at http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

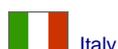
Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Italy

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Italy is a democratic Republic founded on labour (Art. 1 of the Constitution), and thus acknowledges that all citizens have the right to work, and promotes the conditions to implement this right (Art. 4).

The Republic, one and indivisible, recognises and promotes local autonomies, and implements in those services which depend on the State the fullest measure of administrative decentralisation (Art. 5).

The Italian State has 20 Regions, 103 Provinces and 8.100 local authorities. It has exclusive legislative powers over most of the main issues, including general rules on education and the setting of minimum service levels (Article 117 of the Constitution). Five Regions (Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Valle d'Aosta, Sicily and Sardinia) have special status and are given greater autonomy under the Constitution in various areas including education. The Trentino-Alto Adige Region, moreover, has two autonomous provinces (Trento and Bolzano) which in turn have considerable autonomy over education and vocational training.

The Regions have 'exclusive' legislative powers over vocational education and training, apart from tasks connected with the European Union, and parallel legislative powers over general education, although the State is responsible for deciding the basic principles (Article 117, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Constitution).

Provinces and local authorities provide school buildings and infrastructure, and carry out tasks in the area of adult education and guidance, including the management of employment services. Steps are currently being taken to delegate the management of vocational training from the Regions to the Provinces.

Italy is one of the six signatory countries of the 1957 'Treaty of Rome' Agreements which founded - among others - the EEC, and its European vocation has been confirmed with the signature of the various Treaties that have progressively led to the development of the present-day EU. Italy has also adopted the Euro as its currency.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1: Structure of the population at 1 January 2003 (by age group and geographical areas, in%)

AREAS	AGE GROUPS		
	0-14	15-64	65 +
North	12.8	66.9	20.3
Centre	13.0	66.4	20.6
South	16.6	66.8	16.6
ITALY	14.2	66.8	19.0

Source: ISTAT

Click on the link below to see Figure 1: [Resident population by age group on 1 January of each year \(2001 and forecasts for 2006, 2012 and 2020, in %\)](#)

Source: ISFOL-"Training Systems" Area processing of ISTAT data

The XIVth General Census by the national statistical office (ISTAT) registered a resident population of 56,995,744 on 21 October 2001, distributed over an area of 301,328.45 km² with a density of 189.1 inhabitants per km². 44.9% of Italians live in the northern regions, 36% in the southern regions and 19.1% in the central regions. The birth rate is continuing to fall, more sharply in Italy's northern and central regions than in its southern regions. Forecasts bear out the gradual aging of the population, as in other EU Member States.

The demographic trends (average rate) of the population up to 2025 show an overall growth in the resident population up to 2012 (58,586,642), after which the trend will reverse, and in 2025 the estimated population will be 57,629,679. Population ageing will also take place. The group aged between 0-24, will constantly fall in the years considered, while the group aged between 25-59 will grow up to 2006, and then fall in the subsequent years. Finally, the group aged 60 and over will grow constantly up to 2025. The short-term gain of residents (up to 2012), considering the negative balance of natural dynamics, is due to migration.

The reduction of the demographic categories of reference involves a quantitative reduction of the number of young people involved in the school system and in initial vocational training activities. On the other hand, the number of the potential users of continuing vocational training activities continues to grow, due to the needs of the labour market - and in the broader sense - of lifelong learning.

These dynamics must be taken into account for structuring the training policies of the coming years, in order to determine the necessary structural requirements and to adjust the education and training system as a whole.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Table 2: Main Economic and Labour Market Indicators in Italy.

INDICATORS	2002
Percentage of workers employed in agriculture	4.9
Percentage of workers employed in industry	31.8
Percentage of workers employed in services	63.3
Employment rate	44.8
Male employment rate	57.8
Female employment rate	32.8
Unemployment rate	8.7
Male unemployment rate	6.8
Female unemployment rate	11.6
Youth unemployment rate (up to 25 years of age)	27.1
Public expenditure for education and training in relation to GDP (a)	4.8
Public expenditure for education and training in relation to total public expenditure (b)	10.2

(a)

(b) 2002. Not definitive data.

2002.

Istat and Miur data processed by the Isfol "Training Systems" Area

Table 3: Employment rates by gender and by geographical area (in 2003, in %)

	AREAS		
	NORTH	CENTRE	SOUTH
TOTAL	50.7	46.5	36.2
MEN	62.0	58.5	51.9
WOMEN	40.2	35.4	21.5

Source: ISFOL-"Training Systems" Area processing of ISTAT data.

Table 4: Unemployment rates by geographical area (2003, in %)

	AREAS		
	NORTH	CENTRE	SOUTH
TOTAL	3.4	6.5	17.7
MEN	2.6	4.5	13.8
WOMEN	5.4	9.3	25.3
YOUNG PEOPLE (UP TO 25)	11.5	22.4	49.1

Source: ISFOL-"Training Systems" Area processing of ISTAT data.

In 2003, according to the average annual data recorded by the Istat, the number of employed persons accounted for 44.8% of the population aged over 15. This percentage rises to 57.8% if we consider the male employment rate, and remains at a lower level for the female population (32.8%).

Reflecting a characteristic common to the economically developed countries, most of the employed labour force has been absorbed by the services sector (63.3%), while 31.8% are employed in industry, and another 4.9% in agriculture.

The unemployment rate has been steadily falling over recent years, reaching 8.7% in 2003, with a fall of half a percent point compared to 2001 and 0.3 percent point if compared to 2002. Compared to the overall average value, the male unemployment rate is lower (6.8%). Female unemployment accounts for 11.6% of the workforce, while the worst situation is recorded for young people aged under 25, as shown by the youth unemployment rate of 27.1%.

Overall, men encounter fewer difficulties in the insertion in the labour market with respect to women in all areas of the country and in any age group.

Historically, Southern Italy has had the greatest employment problems, as shown by the significant gap between the indicators regarding the South of Italy and those for other areas of the country, especially the North.

Table 5: Distribution of population (15+) by educational level attained (2002,2003 in %)

ISCED LEVELS (A)	2002	2003
ISCED 1 at most (no qualification or primary certificate)	30.0	27.9
ISCED 2 (lower secondary certificate)	32.9	33.0
ISCED 3 (upper secondary certificate)	29.6	31.4
ISCED 5 (university qualification)	7.5	7.7
Total	100.0	100.0

International standard classification of education Qualifications at the ISCED 4 level are statistically insignificant at present

Source: ISFOL-"Training Systems" Area processing of ISTAT data.

Table 6: Distribution of population (25-64) by educational level attained (2003, in %)

ISCED LEVELS (A)	2003
ISCED 0-2 (at most lower secondary certificate)	53.5
ISCED 3 (upper secondary certificate)	36.0
ISCED 5-6 (university qualification)	10.5
Total	100.0

International standard classification of education Qualifications at the ISCED 4 level are statistically insignificant at present

Source: ISFOL - "Training systems" Area processing of ISTAT data

Table 7: Percentage of the population, aged 18 to 24 years having left education and training with low level of education (2000, 2002 in %)

YEAR	%
2000	25.3
2002	23.8

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey.

For over a decade, Italy has been involved in an intensive qualification process of its population and workforce. Above all with regard to the younger generations, the gap with the other economically advanced countries has been partly narrowed. However, this does not mean that the country has reached satisfactory educational levels for the population as a whole. In 2003, analysing the population aged over 15, 27.9% of the Italians had at most a primary-school certificate. Holders of an upper secondary certificate accounted for 39.1% of the total, while 7.7% attained a university qualification.

Considering that the process of schooling has occurred with a delay compared to many other advanced countries, and that the younger generations involved are less numerous than the previous less qualified generations, the effects produced are more evident when analysing the educational levels of the population aged between 25-64, in which the percentage of holders of an upper secondary certificate rises to 46.5% and the university graduates to 10.5%.

Progress has also been recorded in dealing with early school leavers, as shown by the fall in the percentage of young people aged 18-24 who drop out of school with low levels of education. In the early 1990s, they represented 38% of the reference generation. In 2000, the rate fell to 25.3% and then fell further to 23.8% in 2002.

Educational attainment of the population aged 25-64 by ISCED level, % (2002)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU-15	35%	43%	22%
ITALY	56%	34%	10%

ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education
 ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education
 ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

Percentage of the population, aged 18 to 24 years having left education and training with a low level of education (2000, 2002)

ITALY		
2000	2002	2003
25.3	23.8	not available

Low level of education: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2 (ISCED 1997)

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

As defined by the Framework Law on Vocational Training 1978, No. 845 of 21 December 1978, "The [Italian] Republic promotes the training and professional improvement [of the population] in implementation of Articles 3, 4, 35 and 38 of the Constitution, in order to make effective the right to work and to choose it freely, and to foster the growth of workers' personalities through the acquisition of a professional culture" (Art.1). Considered as an employability-measure instrument, vocational training aims "to foster employment, production, and the evolution of work organisation in line with scientific and technological progress". According to this view, "vocational training initiatives are a public-interest service intended to ensure a system of training actions aimed at disseminating the theoretical and practical knowledge required so as to perform professional roles, and at focusing on the initial placement, training, retraining, specialisation, updating, and further training of workers, in a lifelong learning framework" (Art.2). This means that "vocational training initiatives address all citizens [...]. Moreover, the foreigners hosted in the country for work or training purposes are also eligible to participate in vocational training initiatives under the international agreements and the laws in force" (Art.2).

The current government drew up the objectives and priorities for vocational training in a White Paper on the Italian labour market (October 2001).

The strategy outlined in the White Paper sees vocational training as the main way of bringing about an increased employment rate which is predicted to reach 70% by 2010. Proposals to develop the training system in particular include encouragement for alternance training, which can help to remedy the problems and the length of the transition between school and work, and continuing training to safeguard and improve human resource qualifications.

These objectives were endorsed and fleshed out in the Patto per l'Italia (Pact for Italy) of July 2002, an agreement between the government and the main employers' and trade union organisations (apart from the Confederazione generale italiana del lavoro (CGIL - General Confederation of Italian Labour). Building on the guidelines set out in the National Action Plan for employment (NAP, 2002), [The NAP sets out the priorities for action to improve employment in Italy with reference to the European Employment Strategy.], the government undertakes, among other things, to give fresh impetus to research and innovation, to finance the reform of the education and training

system and to support the development of the adult education system in which 700,000 people are set to take part in 2003.

The main objectives which should be achieved by the educational system concern the following:

- The reform of the education and training system with the introduction of the right-duty to training for at least 12 years;
- The strengthening of the alternance and Higher Technical Training and Education (IFTS);
- The development of the adult-education system shall involve 700,000 people in 2003 in order to foster the dissemination of a higher level of basic skills.

In order to implement the government's development strategies, two reform laws have recently been approved:

- Law 53/03 reforming the education and training system;
- Law 30/03 on the labour market and employment.

Law 53/03 brings the two traditionally separate systems of education and vocational training under the same umbrella, recognising that they have the same goals: promoting the growth and advancement of persons and citizens. To this end, the various segments are being reorganised and redefined, in order to ensure that all young people obtain at least a qualification, through the introduction of the diritto-dovere all'istruzione e alla formazione professionale (right-duty to education and training) for at least 12 years, before entering the labour market.

The provisions adopted by Law 30/03 and the following legislative decree 276/03 cover, in particular: the reform of the employment services, the reform of apprenticeship contracts, the replacement of contratti di formazione e lavoro (work/training contracts) by contratti di inserimento (integration contracts), the reform of part-time work and the introduction of new types of contract (for instance, work on call contracts, staff leasing contracts).

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

1. ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Constitution approved in 1948 gave the Regions powers over 'vocational and craft education'. The State education system, however, has continued to provide vocationally-oriented courses in its istituti professionali (State vocational schools).

Therefore the Italian vocational training system is made up of two segments:

- Vocational education, supplied within the educational system;
- Vocational training, under the responsibility of the Regional Authorities.

Framework Law 845/78 on Vocational training, defining vocational training as an employability tool, comprises in a single regulatory scheme both initial and continuing training. According to the framework law the Regional Authorities are exclusively responsible for the programming process, and in such process are joined by the social partners, local and training bodies having consultancy and promotion functions. Regarding the guidelines established at national level, the Regional Authorities' tasks include the identification of medium- and long-term objectives through the analysis of needs, activity-administrative management, monitoring and evaluation of the training-activities' efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, the Regional Authorities are exclusively responsible for both initial and continuing-vocational training, and on occasion this power is exercised by delegating or transferring a number of functions to the Provincial Authorities whose contribution varies in the different areas, even though it has increased in the past few years, in the wake of the drive towards responsibility decentralisation which marked many of the policies adopted at the end of the 1990's, and which is at the basis of the Constitution's reform.

In recent years there have been many regulatory changes, including amendments to the text of the Constitution (Constitutional Law 3/02)

Under the new arrangements, the State retains exclusive power over 'general rules on education', sets minimum service levels and looks after relations with the European Union.

The Regions have exclusive powers over vocational education and training, but must abide by European law and international obligations; they have exclusive responsibility for planning. In performing their tasks, the Regions may delegate or transfer some tasks to the Provinces.

School and university education is the task of the Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (MIUR - Ministry of Education, University and Research) which governs and steers public education, coordinates the work of the Regional Education Offices and is responsible for inspection tasks, the proper award of school and university qualifications of every type and level and their certification. Under recent regulations, schools and universities have gained greater autonomy and responsibility.

The Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali (MLPS - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) governs and steers labour policies, within which vocational training occupies a key place as an 'active policy'.

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Framework Law 845/78, issued following the transfer to the Regions of responsibilities regarding vocational training (Decree No. 616 of 24 July 1977), allowed to regulate in a unitary manner the context within which the

Regional Authorities may act autonomously, in order to create a flexible vocational training system close to local needs.

During the following decade, the recognition of training as a strategic resource for young people, workers, and enterprises called attention to the need for a re-qualification of the entire vocational education and training system. A first step towards this direction is the approval of Law 236/93, which allowed to launch the structuring of a national continuing-training system.

With the Labour Agreement signed by the Government and the Social Partners in September 1996, a real strategy of innovation of the system was envisaged, focusing on a series of specific objectives, including access to lifelong learning and an overall redefinition of the training system, also through a strong institutional renewal. With specific reference to initial vocational education and training, among the Agreement's objectives are worthy of note:

- The overall increase of the schooling level (quantitative and qualitative) by raising the compulsory schooling age and introducing the right to training;
- The consolidation of an integrated system for the certification and recognition of training credits
- The definition of a system of permanent recognition of the quantity/quality of the training supply.

Consistent with the indications of the above Agreement, Law 196/97 has introduced:

- The identification of requirements for the "accreditation" of training providers to be entrusted with managing the activity; to the re-launching of apprenticeship training;
- The introduction of "guidance" and "training" practical work or experience;
- The definition of criteria for skill certification and the creation of a system for the credit recognition.

Afterwards, Law 144/99 on initial training introduced the institution of obbligo formativo (compulsory training), i.e. the compulsory requirement to remain within one of the three strands of the education system (education, vocational training, apprenticeship) until the age of 18. This provision led to a reform of initial training. The law also introduced the new strand of Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTS).

Law 53/00 introduced the right for workers to take 'training leave' to realise training plans drawn up by workers themselves either individually or under collective agreements; in the latter case, provision is made for a reduction in working hours.

At the same time, Law 388/00 (amended by Law 289/02), led to the establishment of Fondi interprofessionali (multi-sectoral funds) for continuing training. Financed by a contribution of 0.30% of the wage bill paid by employers, these funds support company, sectoral and regional training plans, supplementing the regional authorities' work in the continuing training system. These multi-sectoral funds are managed by the social partners and supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

In order to guarantee the quality of the vocational-training system, Ministerial Decree 166/01 introduced a procedure for "accrediting" all the operational facilities of public and private bodies organising and implementing vocational training and guidance activities, by the use of public resources.

Recently Law 53/03 set out the reform of the education and training system, while Law 30/03, and the following legislative decree 276/03, set out a reform of apprenticeship and introduced new and more flexible employment contracts (see Theme 2 & Theme 4).

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

Framework Law 845/78 gave the social partners a major role to play in the vocational training system, recognising them as partners of the Regions for the planning of training, as well as potential providers of training schemes.

Thereafter, consolidation of the principle of 'concertation' meant that the social partners were not just 'partners' but 'joint deciders'. The national inter-confederation agreements signed between 1985 and 1991 were significant here and paved the way for the establishment of many joint bodies, in particular the bilateral bodies which are playing an important part in promoting training activities. The trilateral agreements of 1993, 1996 and 1998 stressed the importance of concertation and recognised it as a basic instrument for planning and formulating action strategies.

The White Paper on the Italian labour market (2001) paved the way for new relations between the government and the social partners, with a shift away from 'concertation' towards 'social dialogue'.

The social partners play a key role, which is set to become strategic, in apprenticeship, defining the objectives of the courses held outside the workplace, and in continuing training, since, following the establishment of the Fondi interprofessionali, they have become planners of training.

At enterprise level, workers representatives are involved in decisions about the continuing training activities provided by the employer and, in some cases, they may play a more active role in elaborating training plans.

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS	TYPE OF ROLE (ADVISORY/DECISION-MAKING, DIRECT/INDIRECT)
NATIONAL LEVEL	Definition of the institutional framework	ADVISORY
	Fondi interprofessionali (multi-sectoral funds)	DIRECT
REGIONAL LEVEL	Definition of the institutional framework	ADVISORY
	Fondi interprofessionali (multi-sectoral funds)	DIRECT
	Provision of learning opportunity	INDIRECT
ENTERPRISE LEVEL	Definition of training activities	ADVISORY
	Elaboration of training plans	DIRECT

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Click on the links below as to see the diagrams of the Italian education and training system before the reform and after.

[The Italian education and training system before the reform](#)

[The Italian education and training system as reformed](#)

Law 53/03 (see Theme 2) introduced the diritto-dovere all'istruzione e alla formazione professionale (right/duty to participate in education and vocational training) in Italy for at least 12 years, subject to legal consequences. The diritto-dovere can in all cases be satisfied by obtaining a vocational qualification. This goes beyond the distinction, in force up to now, between the obligation to stay in the school system up to the age of 15 (compulsory education, Law 9/99) and the obligation to attend training up to the age of 18 (obbligo formativo, see Theme 3).

Under the new arrangements, schooling includes scuola dell'infanzia (pre-primary school, three years) and two subsequent cycles. The first cycle is structured as scuola primaria (primary school, five years) and lower secondary school (three years). The second cycle includes two channels (see diagram of the Italian system following the reform):

- the licei (lycée) system, for which the State is responsible, lasting five years, at the end of which students take the State examination paving the way for university entrance;
- vocational education and training, for which the regional authorities are responsible, lasting at least three years, and leading to the award of a certificato di qualifica professionale (vocational qualification certificate) recognised nationally and within Europe. The qualification can be used to enter the labour market or to enter post-qualification courses leading to the award of an upper secondary vocational diploma. This diploma is required for entry into istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore (IFTS - higher technical education and training) or, after attending a supplementary year, for entry into universities.

In both channels there are strong links with higher education, higher vocational training, and the world of work. Provision is also made for the recognition of certified credits which can be used to return to education after a break or to move between the various channels. It is also possible in practice to switch streams within licei and vocational education and training establishments and to move from one system to the other.

On reaching the age of 15, students can obtain diplomas and qualifications by school-work alternance or apprendistato (apprenticeship).

Law 30/03 (see Theme 2) sets out a reform of apprenticeship, giving greater margins of freedom to the Regions to regulate training and to the social partners to run this training; a line is also drawn between a form of apprenticeship

which is for young people aged between 15 and 18 and which has broader educational aims, a more strictly occupationally-based form of apprenticeship for young people aged 18 to 29, and one which is for the award of higher qualifications.

Three-year vocational education and training channels, which are among the main innovations introduced by the reform, will be tested during the 2003/04 school year.

Therefore the structure of the education system prior to the enactment of the reform law will be described here since it will remain in force until the implementing decrees have been approved (see the diagram of the Italian education system prior to the reform).

The system is structured as: scuola materna (pre-primary school), three years, scuola elementare (primary school), five years, and scuola media (lower secondary school), three years. Disabled children, if their parents so request, are entitled to assistance from a special needs teacher.

Education pathways, which are the same for all children up to completion of lower secondary education, are differentiated on entry into upper secondary education which includes licei, five years, istituti tecnici (technical schools), five years, and istituti professionali (vocational schools), three years + 2, all of which are run by the State.

Pre-primary education at scuola materna, established by Law 44/68, is optional and for children aged 3 to 6. State pre-primary schools, falling under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR), are managed by the relevant Local Authorities responsible for education which are delegated by the former to perform the relative tasks. Although admission is free, parents are often asked to contribute to transportation and canteen services provided by the Municipal Authorities. On the contrary, non-State pre-primary schools generally require tuition fees. Also in this case, parents are required to contribute to transportation and canteen services. From an organisational point of view, pre-primary schools are divided into sections including children of same age groups. However, in some cases, sections can also include children of different age.

According to the reform (Law 53/03), the opportunity has been envisaged of admitting to pre-primary schools children aged 2 years and six months. In this regard, new organisational methods and the introduction of specific professional profiles have been foreseen.

Primary education is provided by State and legally recognised private primary schools which, if providing services substituting or integrating those supplied by the State, are entitled to public subsidies. Primary school, of a five-year duration, is for children aged 6 (or who will be 6 by 31 December of the same school year) and is free of charge. However, parents are required to contribute to transportation and canteen services provided by the Municipal Authorities. Attendance is compulsory. On parental request, disabled children are entitled to a support teacher. At the end of the five-year cycle, children are required to take a State examination in order to obtain their primary-school certificate (Certificato di Licenza Elementare). In private primary schools, parents are generally required to pay a tuition fee. For organisational reasons, the Municipal Authorities can establish comprehensive schools including pre-primary, primary and lower-secondary schools, managed by a single schoolmaster.

Law 53/03 envisages an early admission to primary school for those children who will become six years old by April 30 of the reference school year. The teaching of both a foreign language and computer science, and the suppression of the State examination have also been foreseen.

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Lower secondary school, of a three-year duration, has only one education pathway common to all students aged between 11 and 14. Admission is free and is subject to the attainment of a primary-school certificate. Legally recognised private lower-secondary schools are entitled to State subsidies and generally require parents to pay tuition fees. Following the schools' organisational and teaching autonomy provided by Legislative Decree 112/98, lessons can be spread over a period of 5 or 6 days per week, usually in the morning. It is also possible to modify both the duration of individual lessons and the weekly timetable depending on local needs and on teaching and educational programmes. On parental request, disabled children are entitled to a support teacher.

At the end of the three-year cycle, students are required to take a State examination in order to obtain a lower secondary school-leaving certificate (Certificato di Licenza Media). By virtue of the present compulsory-schooling requirement (until the 15th year of age), students have to continue their studies by enrolling in and attending the first year of upper secondary school (presently including both upper secondary schools (Licei) and technical and vocational schools).

In this regard, the reform bill of the school system (Law 53/03) envisages important changes. Regarding curriculum-related aspects, the teaching of a second foreign language and computer science are being introduced. The State examination for obtaining the lower secondary school-leaving certificate is being replaced by a "new" State examination closing the first educational cycle (comprising pre-primary, primary and lower-secondary school). Then, with the introduction of the notion of diritto-dovere all'istruzione e alla formazione professionale (right-duty to education and training) for at least 12 years, replacing the current compulsory-schooling requirement, at the end of the lower secondary education cycle students must enrol in licei or vocational education and training pathway (see § 4).

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

Click on the link below to see Figure 2: [Distribution of students in upper secondary schools, by type of school and programme orientation \(academic year 2003/04: vocational 58%, general 42%\)](#)

Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (general/vocational). Year 2000.
Isced level 3

PROGRAMME	V.A	%
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES	1.942.961	75,0
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES	647.654	25,0
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION TOTAL ENROLMENT	2.590.615	100,0

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Education statistics based on Isced 97

Upper secondary education, to which access with the attainment of a lower secondary school-leaving certificate is required, is open to students between 14 and 19 years of age. State upper secondary schools require parents to pay - unless fee exemptions apply - an enrolment fee, while legally recognised upper secondary schools require parents to pay a tuition fee.

Upper secondary education includes classical lycées, scientific lycées, arts lycées, teacher training institutes, language lycées, schools of applied arts, technical schools and vocational schools. All the five-year streams pave the way for university entrance.

The liceo classico (classical lycée) and the liceo scientifico (scientific lycée), both five years, prepare students for post-secondary or university education following the award of the diploma di liceo classico or scientifico (upper secondary certificate in classics or sciences).

The liceo linguistico (language lycée), five years, provides particular education in the field of foreign languages. The diploma di liceo linguistico provides access to employment in the sectors of tourism, conferences, etc.

The istituto magistrale (teacher training institute), five years, which can be found in many experimental forms, educates students to work in the education and welfare fields. The diploma di istituto magistrale can be used to enter the working world.

The liceo artistico (arts lycée), four years, offers general education in the arts and paves the way for entrance into the Accademia di Belle Arti (Academy of Fine Arts) or, following a supplementary year, university.

Istituti d'arte (schools of applied arts), three years, prepare students for work and production in artistic fields (paint decoration, ceramic arts, plastic decoration, etc.). Students passing licenza di maestro d'arte can enter the Accademia di Belle Arti. Students passing the diploma di maestro d'arte applicata, after attending a supplementary two years, can enter the working world or continue their education.

The new arrangements make provision for the following licei: arts, classical, economic, language, music, scientific, technological, human sciences.

Within the State school system, at upper-secondary level, vocational education and training are provided by Istituti tecnici (technical schools) and Istituti professionali (vocational schools). The purpose of these Vocationally-oriented streams in education, is to provide students with a specific theoretical-practical preparation for performing skilled jobs in various professional sectors. In particular:

- Istituti tecnici (technical schools), five years, leads to the award, following a State examination, of the diploma di istituto tecnico enabling students to carry on middle-level occupations in a whole range of sectors (agriculture, commerce, tourism, surveying, industry, naval); the certificate also allows university entrance or entry into post-secondary education. Courses comprise a two-year and a three-year cycle. The curriculum includes subjects (Italian language, foreign language, mathematics, history, sciences, etc.) common to all the various specialisations and subjects specific to each specialisation.
- Istituti professionali (vocational schools, e.g. in agriculture, industry and crafts, services sectors), leads to the award of the diploma di qualifica professionale, three years. The diploma can be used to enter the working world, to continue on to the corsi post-qualifica (post-certificate courses), two years, run by istituti professionali or to attend the level II vocational training courses run by the Regions. The corsi post-qualifica lead to the award of the diploma di istituto professionale which can be used for university entrance or to attend regional advanced training courses and other post-secondary options. In the two-year post-qualifica course, the common general and sector- and option-specific subjects are supplemented by a vocationally-oriented module run by the Regions (300/450 hours per year) which leads to the qualifica professionale paving the way for entry into the working world or further advanced courses. A proportion of these hours is set aside for work experience in enterprise.

Then, young people, undergo the training outside the workplace also within the framework of the regionally-run vocational training, the upper secondary preparation is provided in the initial vocational training courses. These courses, which last at least two years and require compulsory attendance, teach specific occupational skills that entail a high theoretical and technical level, also through practical work and experience in enterprise. Under the old system, students could attend courses after the age of 15. Courses had to last at least two years, had to be structured as certifiable cycles, and had to include reception, guidance and mentoring modules, work experience in enterprise and the possibility of a third year of specialisation at the end of which a certificato di specializzazione was awarded.

Under the new system, these courses are part of the vocational education and training strand, can start after the licenza media (lower secondary certificate) has been awarded and must last at least three years. Courses cover almost all sectors of the economy.

Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (general / vocational), 2000	
ITALY	
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION TOTAL ENROLMENT	2590615
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (%)	25%
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (%)	75%

Upper secondary education: ISCED 97 level 3

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Education statistics based on ISCED 97

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Young people aged 15 or more can enter the labour market via alternance methods such as apprendistato (apprenticeship). Enterprises in all sectors may use these types of contract.

The apprendistato contract offers a wide-ranging combination of training and occupational experience. The enterprise provides on-the-job training by setting the apprentice to work alongside skilled employees and by appointing an enterprise tutor whose task is to link up on- the-job and off-the-job training.

Apprentices must attend training courses outside the workplace, which are free of charge, for a minimum of 120 paid hours per year. Apprentices subject to obbligo formativo (see Theme 3, section 2) have to attend a supplementary module of 120 hours per year.

Under the old system, the maximum age limit for apprenticeship contracts is 24, 26 in Objective 1 and 2 areas of the European Social Fund (ESF), [For the period 2000-06, Community regional policy is focusing on three areas of action: Objective 1 is intended to promote economic recovery in regions whose development is lagging behind; Objective 2 is intended to support the economic and social rehabilitation of regions with structural problems; Objective 3 is intended to support the improvement and modernisation of education, training and employment policies and systems. The ESF is the financial instrument for all three objectives.] can be extended to 29 for craft apprentices and always had to be over two years for disabled young people. Contracts lasted from 18 months to four years. A new system, has been set up by Law 30/03 and the following legislative decree 276/03, apprenticeship is split between:

- a form of apprenticeship which is for young people aged 15 to 18 who are subject to the diritto-dovere all'istruzione e alla formazione professionale (right-duty to education and training) and which has broader educational aims;
- a more strictly occupationally-based form of apprenticeship for young people aged 18 to 29;
- apprenticeship for the acquisition of a diploma leading to a secondary or university qualification, also for young people aged from 18 to 29.

According to the new system, the apprenticeship contract must be set down in writing, with an indication of the work performance covered by the contract, the individual training plan, and the qualification that may be attained at the end of the employment, on the basis of the outcomes of both on-the-job and off-the-job training. As for the length of the contract in the case of apprenticeship for fulfilling the right/duty to participate in vocational education and training, it can last no more than 3 years. The length of the occupationally-based apprenticeship contract cannot be less than 2 years or more than 6.

Each Region is responsible for regulating the contract and duration of the apprenticeship for the acquisition of a diploma or for higher education pathways.

According to the legislative decree 276/03, the task of regulating the training profiles of the apprenticeship for fulfilling the diritto-dovere all'istruzione e alla formazione professionale is assigned to the Regions and Autonomous Provinces, in agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Ministry of Education, University and Research, after consulting the employers' and workers' associations.

The Regions and Autonomous Provinces are also responsible for regulating the training profiles of the occupationally-based apprenticeships, in agreement with the employers' associations.

Lastly, the regulation of the training profiles of the apprenticeship for acquisition of a diploma or for higher education pathways is the responsibility of the Regions and, only for the training profiles, in accordance with the local employers' and workers' associations, the universities and other training centres.

With regard to the apprenticeship for young people under 18 years of age, as well as for young people who do not hold an upper secondary certificate, they may enter the IFTS pathway after the attainment of certain basic skills has been certified.

Under the new system, the results attained within the training pathway are recorded in the citizen's training portfolio and can be recognised as credits for entering any training segment.

Up to now, apprentices have received a salary equal to a percentage, set by collective labour agreements, of the salary of an employed worker with the same qualification. Under the new system, apprentices may be graded, in employment contracts, up to two contractual levels below that of an employed worker with the same qualification. [For further details, reference should be made to: ISFOL-"Training Systems" Area. La sfida dell'alternanza. Rapporto apprendistato 2002 [The challenge of alternance. 2002 apprenticeship report]. Rome: Franco Angeli, 2002].

In order to facilitate the job insertion of young people through structured actions of alternance between school/training pathways and entry into the production world, Law 196/97 introduced the instrument of training on the job. In particular, the law envisages two types of training on the job:

- Training on the job for those still in education, promoted by training institutions for the purpose of creating opportunities for alternance between study and work (at every secondary school level, including the technical schools and vocational schools);
- Training on the job for those who have completed their education, promoted by individuals and institutions that operate in the field of employment policies to facilitate professional choices, through their direct knowledge of the working world.

In both cases, these are training experiences of limited duration, intended for individuals who hold a lower secondary school certificate, aiming to foster the matching between young people and the working world and help them gain direct, field experience. The training on the job is the result of an agreement between the promoting body, the host enterprise, and the trainee, complete with a training and guidance project arranged by the enterprise together with the trainee. It is not in any way considered employment and, as such, it is not necessarily paid. Therefore there is also no obligation for the enterprise to recruit the person either.

Promoters may be universities and school establishments, the Provincial Education Offices, Training and Guidance Centres, Employment Services, bilateral bodies, employers' and trade-union associations, therapeutic communities, social cooperatives, and services for the job placement of the disabled. The host enterprises may be either private or public.

As envisaged in Law 30/03, the duration of the training on the job may vary in relation to the level of education, the characteristics of the work activity, and the territory involved, from a minimum of 1 month to a maximum of 12 months. This limit may be extended to 24 months for disabled people.

The activities undertaken during the training on the job may count as training credit and, where duly certified by the promoters, may be added to the curriculum of the student or worker for the purpose of providing services for fostering the matching of labour supply and demand by the public structures in charge.

The enterprises, as the users, accept the agreements and training projects, guaranteeing vocational training and work experience in their structures and facilities for the young people assigned to them. In particular, they must indicate a company tutor, that is a person in charge of the placement of the trainees to whom to refer.

Another instrument for facilitating entry of young people over the age of 15 into the working world was the work/training contract, also called a contratto a causa mista (mixed contract), since it envisaged the obligation for the employer to provide the worker with both pay and appropriate vocational training in return for the work he/she provided, also through the participation in specific training activities.

The work/training contract could be used to recruit young people with upper secondary school-leaving certificates, between 18 and 25 years of age. This limit could be raised to 29 for those with university degrees and to 32 years in the 'Objective 1' areas, where an unemployment rate higher than the national average was observed.

With the new system (Law 30/03), this type of contract is incorporated into the contratti di inserimento (integration contracts).

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS SEE O401 FOR "OBBLIGO FORMATIVO"

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL Among the post-secondary pathways, there are:

- The regionally-run post-secondary vocational training pathways, focusing directly on teaching specific occupational skills, having a high theoretical,

technical, technological and management content, also through practical work and experience in enterprise;

- The Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTS) pathways, focusing on the preparation of senior technicians to meet the qualification demand coming from the public and private working world. In fact, the objective of the IFTS pathways is to train senior technicians to meet the demand coming from the public and private working world.

Post-secondary vocational training pathways, managed by the Regional Authorities, directly aims at providing students with specific vocational skills having a high theoretical, technical, technological and managerial content, also through practical exercises and on-the-job training periods. Post-secondary training can be accessed by those having an upper secondary school-leaving certificate or having an upper secondary-education level, generally unemployed, and wishing to obtain a certificate or a vocational qualification valid to immediately spend in the labour market. The organisation of courses is linked to the training requirements of the local entrepreneurial fabric, and often represents a response to the enterprises' requirements. The courses are generally divided into short cycles of a one-year duration, and seldom, of a two-year duration. As far as the disabled people's right to vocational training is concerned, the former is sanctioned both by Law 845/78 and Law 104/92, the latter empowering the Regional Authorities with the task of promoting vocational qualification and guidance for the disabled, depending on their abilities and opportunities.

With the enactment of Law No.144/99, Article 69, the supply of post-secondary non-tertiary training has increased as a result of the creation of the Higher Technical Training and Education (IFTS) pathways characterised by a strong integration, both at a system-governance and operational level, among the various institutional actors involved. This integration is guaranteed at national level and on the single project. In fact, when the action is being designed, in order to have access to State subsidies, a consortium including School, University, Vocational-training and labour market representatives has to be established.

The objective of the IFTS pathways consists in training intermediate technicians to meet private- and public-sector labour demand, particularly in those production sectors marked by technological innovations and by market internationalisation. The IFTS pathways planned by the Regional Authorities can be accessed by those possessing an upper secondary school-leaving certificate, or by those who, lacking it, possess certifiable skills acquired during previous education, training and work pathways following the completion of their compulsory-schooling cycle, also taking into account the qualification obtained for the purpose of fulfilling the compulsory-training requirement.

Participation is free and has no age limit. Curricula, whose minimum standards have been set at a national level, aim, on the one hand, at strengthening the cultural knowledge and basic skills and, on the other hand, at providing people with in-depth transversal and technical-vocational skills (as envisaged by EU Level 4). Pathways between 1,200 and 2,400 hours envisage an on-the-job training activity equal to 30% of the overall hour amount. An important element concerning vertical and horizontal mobility is represented by the recognition of training credits which can take place a) upon accessing the pathway through the assessment of the skills acquired by an individual during a previous training and/or work experience or b) upon completing the pathway, providing for the opportunity of spending the skills acquired during the IFTS pathway in subsequent education, training and work pathways.

At the end of the IFTS pathway, students who successfully pass all the exams - aiming at assessing the skills they have acquired - obtain a final certificate recognised at national level and issued by the Regional Authorities. In case of partial completion of the pathway, students are provided with an intermediate statement (Dichiarazione Intermedia) defining the skills acquired for the purpose of training-credit recognition by further education, training and work pathways.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Tertiary education is provided by various public and private institutions. The following belong to the public sector: State universities (Università Statali), State polytechnics (Politecnici Statali), and University institutes (Istituti Universitari), Higher education schools (Scuole Superiori), Universities for foreigners (Università per Stranieri). Open universities (Libere Università) and Open-university institutes (Liberi Istituti Universitari) belong to the private sector. Moreover, there are Ecclesiastical universities (Università Ecclesiastiche) and Theological faculties (Facoltà Teologiche), recognised by the State. After the university reform started by the Ministerial Decree No. 509/99, the following types of courses have been envisaged:

- Corso di Laurea (university-degree programme), of a three-year duration, aims at providing a basic theoretical knowledge on the study subjects chosen by students, concomitantly with a skill-providing training, which enables them to enter the labour market. In order to attend a degree course, students are required to provide a five-year upper secondary school-leaving certificate (Diploma di Scuola Superiore) or an equivalent certificate obtained abroad. In some cases, students are required to take an entry test to prove that their initial knowledge is in line with the university-degree programme they have chosen. By virtue of teaching autonomy recognised by the Ministerial Decree 509/99, individual faculties have the right to set the required prerequisites to access university courses, and the methods to assess them. Course attendance is compulsory, with special exceptions. Specific teaching activities for working students are usually envisaged.
- Corso di Laurea Specialistica (specialist university-degree programme), of a two-year duration, is a pathway following a degree course aiming at providing students with specialised knowledge and skills enabling them to practise specific professions requiring a higher qualification level.

'Vocational education and training at tertiary level' is carried out within public and private university institutions, which organise 'Level I and II' Master's courses, both lasting one year.

For access to the 'Level I' Master's courses, it is necessary to hold a degree certificate (three-year course), while access to the 'Level II' Master's courses requires a specialist degree certificate (two years, following the three-year degree course). In both cases, it is however required to pass an admission interview.

The 'Level I and II' Master's courses for young degree holders, who intend to continue their preparation, and professionals, who experience the need for retraining, provide knowledge and skills of a professional nature as well as of a technical-operational or design level.

The courses, with compulsory attendance requirement, are structured to include classroom lessons, individual study, practical work, and lab activities, and are completed with a training period within institutions, bodies or enterprises. These may be organised in collaboration with public or private bodies or institutions. During the 'Level I and II' Master's courses, it is envisaged periodic checks to ascertain the skills acquired, and a final test which does not resort to scores.

Following the approval of Ministerial Decree 509/99 introducing the system of university training credits in Italy [The University training credit is a measure of the workload done by the student to acquire knowledge and skills in a certain subject. The "workload" is the sum of the hours employed by the student in assisted study (face-to-face lessons, practical work, labs, etc.) and individual study (self-learning) activities. Conventionally, a credit is equivalent to a total of 25 hours of work.], at least 60 credits are necessary to earn the university qualification issued at the end of the 'Level I and II' Master's courses.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND AND MAIN TYPES OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

"Continuing Education" or "Lifelong Learning or Training" includes a complex set of educational solutions and learning forms ranging from initial to adult training, both vocational or addressed to workers.

If we focus attention on adults, two types of activities may be identified:
1) Continuing education and training addressed to all citizens; whereas the former implies the acquisition of basic and general skills, the latter refers to pre-vocational skills showing a stronger link to the world of work;
2) "Continuing training" activities, including both vocational retraining and updating of workers.

In Italy, the implementation of lifelong-learning strategies tends to have a transversal impact on the process of reform within the education and training systems with regard to legislative, organisational and operational aspects.

This approach is based on the principle by which the learner becomes the focus of the various training and education environments. It is therefore a dynamic concept that does not involve a standard set of lifelong-learning strategies, but considers them to be present in the various configurations and aspects characterising each system, through models of interaction between the systems, and between different institutions and social partners, each having - in their own specific sphere - the common aim of fostering the training development of the individual.

Lifelong learning in Italy is thus "disseminated" through the education, training and labour systems, and therefore the institutional jurisdiction in the programming, management and evaluation of the actions regarding lifelong learning is highly specialised.

Currently, the reference context of lifelong learning, in other words the systems of education, training and labour, is affected by wide-ranging reform processes.

The reform of Title V of the Constitution (Constitutional Law No. 3/2001) involves the greater inclusion of institutional jurisdiction in the reference areas. Besides the transfer to the Regional Authorities of vocational education (State vocational education schools), there is reference to the transfer of functions previously attributed to the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR), also in the sector of adult education, as a consequence of the insertion of education among the topics of legislation jointly covered by the Regional Authorities.

Currently, lifelong learning is handled by all the administrative levels (Central, Regional, Provincial and Municipal Authorities). The Provincial Authorities have tasks of local programming of school education while the Municipal Authorities have jurisdiction in adult education, integrated measures of educational and vocational guidance, and in support actions to promote vertical and horizontal coherence and continuity between the various types and levels of schools.

Another factor changing the context of lifelong learning is the law reforming the national school system (Law 53/2003), and ensuring the right to education and training "for at least twelve years or in any case until a qualification is obtained by the age of eighteen" (Art. 2, Para. c).

With regard to the segment of the adult population, we should distinguish between continuing training, in which technical, vocational and transversal skills are acquired on the job and adult education or learning, where the basic skills and the skills that in general refer to the active population, are acquired in formal (at Permanent Territorial Centres and 'Level II' schools - evening courses) or informal off-the-job contexts (e.g., Popular and Third Age Universities).

Beginning from the 1990s, in Italy a new definition of "continuing vocational training" gained popularity, including all the training activities making up (or allowing) learning pathways focusing on knowledge and skills following (and differing from) initial training. Based on this notion, the typical features of continuing training are represented first and foremost by its being different from initial training, and secondly, by the fact that it is addressed to adult individuals belonging to the workforce, and - in particular, but not limited - to employed workers.

This concept was strengthened and finalised towards the mid-1990s, as a result of the combination of two elements which changed the policy framework in force at the time: the definition of a national-level legislative pathway supporting the continuing training, with the issue of Law 236/93, and the start of the European Social Fund 'Objective 4'.

In particular, Labour-Ministry provisions implementing Law 236 consider as continuing-training activities those addressed to employed or unemployed adults, which workers may choose to participate in, or those organised by enterprises in order to adapt or improve expertise and skills linked to the technological and organisational innovation of the production processes.

The support provided by Law 236 made it possible to design a system by means of resources allocated in favour of thousands of in-company training actions organised by enterprises, of trainers' training, and system actions. In addition, the experimentation of sectoral and local in-company training plans, promoted by the Social Partners in order to comply with the provisions set forth in Article 17 of Law 196/97, and the first experimentation of individual-demand-based training were launched.

Article 17 of Law 196/97 stated that one or more private funds should be set up, managed by the social partners, with the task of financing corporate and local training plans agreed upon with the workers' and employers' representatives.

At the same time, the ESF 'Objective' 4 for 1994-99 made it possible to finance not only training activities addressed to workers, but also actions aimed at providing the system with a support infrastructure.

Remarkable new legislation was introduced in the period 2000-2003 with the aim of creating an integrated and coherent policy system for continuing training, which also takes into account the strategic aims of the Lisbon process with regard to lifelong learning and the EES.

Another important measure is the new instrument for financing continuing training, the "Multi-sectoral Funds" (Fondi Paritetici Interprofessionali per la Formazione Continua - FPI), which contributes to extending the variety of the available measures. The Multi-sectoral Funds are managed by the social partners. The social partners, besides the usual tasks of negotiation and programming of training activities, can thus also deal with the management of extremely large resources.

The Multi-sectoral Funds were set up under Law 388/2000 (amended by the Article 48 of Law 289/2002) and starting in 2004 will finance corporate, sectoral, local and individual training plans to benefit the enterprises participating in the funds. The plans will be financed through the financial resources deriving from the annual income of the 0.30% contribution of the salaries paid by the enterprises to the INPS (Istituto Nazionale di Previdenza Sociale - National Social Security Institute) as a contribution for the compulsory insurance against involuntary unemployment. Every year the enterprises can decide whether to join one of the Multi-sectoral Funds (nine have currently been set up), and in this case they will either take advantage of this opportunity, or continue to pay to the INPS.

In 2003, the Ministry of Labour conferred operational status to the Interprofessional Funds through a series of measures.

In the past three years, the CVT funding continued through the development of Law 236/93, which also extended funding of training plans to small-sized enterprises (with less than 15 employees) and to disadvantaged categories, such as older workers or those at risk of professional obsolescence, workers receiving redundancy benefits, workers on mobility lists or with atypical contracts (fixed-term contracts, co-ordinated and continuous collaboration).

The national Law 53/2000 on training leave allows above all for funding through vouchers for the continuing training of workers, together with the Regional Operational Programmes and the National System Actions of the Ministry of Labour falling under the ESF 2000-2006.

0502 - PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF LEARNING

In the September 1996 Labour Pact (Patto per il Lavoro), and in the December 1998 Social Pact for Development and Employment (Patto Sociale per lo Sviluppo e l'Occupazione), the Government and the Social Partners emphasised the key role to be played by lifelong learning, also with reference to the changes underway in the competitive sector and in the labour market, marked by mobility and new expertise requiring individuals to be always ready and capable of learning new skills. The Pact for Italy (Patto per l'Italia) signed in July 2002 confirms and supports this perspective, establishing that youth and adult education and training levels are to be increased, heading towards a lifelong learning and employability-focused education perspective aimed at improving basic knowledge and at acquiring specific skills related to working or social life. Taking into account the need for an effective primary literacy, and a re-literacy of adults focusing on the acquisition of the new skills required by the labour market, the agreement envisages a permanent human-resource enhancement, promoted by reforming the educational system, and streamlining co-ordination between public and private resources responsible for lifelong learning, as a result of negotiations and co-operation between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (Mlps), the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR), the Regional and Provincial Authorities, and the Social Partners. The reform of the educational system will ensure: a better basic and cultural background, the raise of the right-duty to education and training for at least 12 years; stronger computer literacy; opportunities for alternating school and work; communication between school and training pathways. In this perspective, also the IFTS (Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore - Higher Technical Training and Education) channel, established by Article 69 of Law 144/99 is strengthened, in conjunction with adult lifelong learning, considered by the Tripartite Agreement as an effective professional-growth instrument, aimed at favouring employability, human and professional resource adaptability, and social integration.

To this effect, various instruments introduced by previous pieces of legislation should be mentioned:

- The setting-up of Permanent Territorial Centres (Centri Territoriali Permanenti) (Ministerial Order 455/97) and their subsequent development, also supported by the 'State-Regional Authorities' Conference' Agreement (Accordo della Conferenza Stato-Regioni) of 2 March 2000 on the reorganisation and enhancement of adult lifelong learning, and by its ministerial implementation directive (Ministerial Decree 22/01);
- The reform of Employment Services (Servizi per l'Impiego) (Law 59/97, and Legislative Decree 469/97).

The Ministry of Education Order No. 455 of 29 July 1997, Educazione in età adulta - Istruzione e Formazione set up the "Permanent Territorial Centres (Centri Territoriali Permanenti - CTP), defined as "places for interpreting needs, designing, co-ordinating, activating and governing education and training initiatives [...], as well as for the collection and dissemination of documentation" aimed at establishing agreements, understandings and conventions with all

the organisations, bodies and/or agencies providing adult-education initiatives, in order to favour their local affirmation.

Under Article 5 of the Order, the activities of the Permanent Territorial Centres are aimed not only at courses for the attainment of educational qualifications, but also for the reception, listening and guidance, as well as the primary, functional and adult literacy, the learning of language skills, the development and consolidation of basic skills and know-how, the recovery and development of cultural and relational skills both suited to the activity of participation in social life, and to the return to training of persons in marginal conditions.

Order No. 22 dated 6 February 2001 of the Ministry of Education "Sull'educazione degli adulti", states that the educational system must act according to procedures agreed with the vocational training and informal-education system, in order to "accompany the development of the individual, thus guaranteeing lifelong learning" in the full exercise of the right of citizenship. The right to lifelong learning, as a right of citizenship, is understood as an instrument of targeted action on social exclusion.

The growth of the Permanent Territorial Centres has been considerable, rising from 25 in the first year of their foundation (1997) to 546 in 2001-2002.

The Permanent Territorial Centres are located throughout Italy with an average of five centres per Province (the highest concentration is observed in Lombardy and Sicily).

The schools hosting the organisational and administrative co-ordination are mainly 'Level I' secondary education schools (approximately 2/3 of the total). In 2002-03, the Permanent Territorial Centres were pinpointed for the first time in the 'Level II' secondary education schools, though to a limited extent.

The following activities are provided at each Permanent Territorial Centre:

- Reception, listening and guidance;
- Primary, functional and adult literacy, also aimed at possible access to higher levels of education and vocational training;
- Learning of language skills;
- Development and consolidation of basic skills and specific know-how;
- Recovery and development of practical, cultural and relational skills suited to the active participation in social life;
- Acquisition and development of initial training or vocational re-qualification in collaboration with the vocational training agencies and private non-profit bodies.

Since the first year of the start-up of the Permanent Territorial Centres, training has undergone enormous expansion in quality and quantity, and now provides an ample response to the requirements of users throughout the country, also providing the programming of activities to prison schools attached to the Permanent Territorial Centres. Training involves three types of courses:

- Courses aimed at attaining an educational qualification (primary and lower secondary school-leaving certificates);
- Courses for the language integration of foreigners;
- Short and modular courses for functional literacy.

On the national level, the training situation highlights a significant tendency to the attendance of functional-literacy courses, representing about 72% of the total compared to 15% for basic literacy courses and to 13% of courses aimed for the language integration of foreigners.

With reference to the workers' continuing-training system, as already mentioned in Point 1, it found momentum as a result of the reform and most importantly, thanks to the issue of Laws 236/93 and 196/97.

As regards CVT as well, the basis for the system development has been defined by the Labour Pact (Patto per il Lavoro, September 1996), the Social Pact for Development and Employment (Patto Sociale per lo Sviluppo e l'Occupazione, December 1998), and the Pact for Italy (Patto per l'Italia, July 2002).

In Italy, the continuing-training system supported by public funding today has four main financial tools at its disposal:

- The European Social Fund in the 2000-2006 Programming envisages that for all the Regions funds will be allocated for training actions and the organisational development of enterprises, with a special focus on SMEs; Equal, a Community initiative is also worth mentioning;
- Law 236/93, establishing a fund for vocational training which so far has funded not only in-company training actions, but also the experimentation of individual training pathways, and training plans negotiated at company, sectoral, and local level by the Social Partners;

- Law 53/00, recognising the general right to lifelong learning, and to this effect providing financing for training leave linked to working-time rescheduling; the establishment of individual training leave, aimed at the acquisition of a qualification, or at participating in training actions other than those established or financed by the employer. Even in the case of workers and unemployed people, their right to lifelong learning and education is thus formally recognised;
- Sectoral training Funds for Continuing Training (Fondi Paritetici Interprofessionali per la Formazione Continua), managed by the Social Partners, and organised at regional and local level.

In addition, between 2001 and 2002, Law 383/01, Article 4 ("Tremonti bis") entered into force, introducing facilities for enterprises investing in training, whereby, the State's Financial Administration awards enterprises investing in training for their employees by offering them tax benefits.

The 2003 Finance Law provides for the operational launch of Sectoral training Funds. The setting-up of these Funds, and their operational launch represent a great novelty for this country; after a global funding experience, it is the first time that substantial public funds are entrusted to private actors who, in agreement with the Ministry and the Regional Authorities, are called upon to define a new system of rules regulating access to benefits, with unique features differing from those used so far in connection with the ESF and Law 236/93, in a general scenario in which the various public policy fields in favour of the continuing training of employed workers were developed and reconsidered.

Under Article 48 of Law 289/2002 (and under a 'directive decree' of the Ministry of Labour of December 2003), a "National Observatory for CVT" consisting of representatives of the Regional Authorities, the Social Partners, the Ministry of Labour and the equal-opportunity advisor of the Central Commission for Employment was set up in 2004. The Isfol technical assistance provides guidelines and has the task of expressing opinions and evaluations regarding the activities of the Sectoral training Funds.

Statistical surveys show how the Italian enterprises have up to now preferred individuals with good professional positions and who are younger and better educated for vocational training activities.

In order to avoid this problem, the need has recently arisen to "specialise" and "harmonise" the financial instruments available to avoid the overlapping between the measures and to try to achieve targets up to now not very involved in public and private measures, such as older workers and self-employed workers.

An example of this approach are the recent Directive Decrees of the Ministry of Labour (28 October 2003) providing for the allocation of 100 million euros to the Regional Authorities on the basis of a new definition of the target of workers to be involved in training activities, in order to ensure the involvement of the beneficiaries of continuing training actions not yet covered by the Vocational Training funds. Among the beneficiaries of the Training Plans to be funded, we can identify dependent workers of enterprises subject to the additional contribution for compulsory insurance against involuntary unemployment having the following conditions:

- Workers of private enterprises with less than 15 employees;
- Workers of any private enterprise with part-time, fixed-term or co-ordinated and continuous collaboration labour contracts and those belonging to types of contracts with reduced, modular or flexible working hours under work projects provided for in Law No. 30 of 23 February 2003;
- Workers of any private enterprise subjected to ordinary or extraordinary layoff conditions;
- Workers of any private enterprise aged over 45;
- Workers of any private enterprise who only have an primary school or compulsory-education certificate.

Law 53/00 ("Provisions in support of maternity and paternity, the right to care and the co-ordination of city hours") recognises the worker rights to lifelong learning, thus providing the opportunity to utilise specific leave for continuing training.

The law establishes a general principle according to which the State, Regional and Local Authorities must provide workers with a targeted training supply so as to create tailor-made pathways that are certified and recognised as training credits both on the national and European level. Training can be both an independent choice by the worker, and provided by the enterprises through Training Plans agreed with social partners. (Article 6)

These resources (60 million euros) of the first four years (Interministerial Decree 167/01) have already been made available by the Ministry of Labour and distributed among the Regional Authorities to finance the two types of actions provided by the law:

- Worker-training projects which, on the basis of contract agreements, envisage partial reductions of working hours;
- Training projects presented directly by the workers themselves".

With regard to the ESF and national Laws 236/93 and 53/00, the authorities having jurisdiction are: the Ministry of Labour-Ucofpl (Head Bureau for Workers' Vocational Training and Guidance), the regional administrations and autonomous provinces, as well as the provincial administrations where a delegation measure is applicable.

With regard to Sectoral training Funds, the system is managed by the social partners and supervised by the Ministry of Labour.

0503 - DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND PROVIDERS

In Italy, the lifelong-learning supply is strongly diversified. In identifying the various types of lifelong-learning providers/promoters, it was therefore decided to resort to the breakdown adopted in the Memorandum for Lifelong learning (2000) between formal and non-formal continuing education system.

A first national-level mapping of the lifelong-learning supply carried out by Isfol has focused both on the "institutional", and "formal" context of the continuing-education and lifelong-learning supply, and on the "non-formal" one, represented by the third-sector world (NGO), with its various elements.

From the standpoint of the institutional supply, various types of institutions operate in this field:

- Schools,
- Vocational training centres,
- CTPs (Centri Territoriali Permanenti - Permanent Territorial Centres) devoted to adult education,
- Municipal educational structures,
- Universities.

From the standpoint of the non-formal supply, the following organisations are especially active:

- Popular universities, third-age universities, free-age universities, etc.
- Social voluntary associations, recreational-cultural associations
- Co-operatives
- Non-Governmental Organisations
- Libraries
- Museums
- Theatres.

The formal/institutional lifelong-learning activities were made to include not only activities implemented within the context of the vocational-training system, with special reference to activities co-funded by the ESF by means of the Measure C.4 "Lifelong Learning", but also the supply provided by the educational world, linked to the Permanent Territorial Centres, to evening classes provided in State technical and vocational schools, and to other training actions promoted by the Regional, Provincial, and Municipal Authorities, such as civic schools or networks providing services to citizens.

With special reference to the supply provided by the 546 Permanent Territorial Centres during the period 2002-03, this is divided into 3 course types: education, language and social integration for foreigners, short/modular courses. Overall, more than half of the userpool was made up of males, mainly Italian, aged between 24 and 40 (47%), mainly holding an upper secondary school-leaving certificate.

In the school year 2002-03 over 20.100 courses were held for a total of approximately 415.000 adult users.

With reference to the supply of continuing training, activities are carried out by a wide range of actors and institutions that may be summed up into three categories:

- Public and private enterprises and organisations, programming training activities for their employees;
- Training and joint bodies, trade associations, professional associations and professional registers, etc.
- Institutional organisms (universities, employment centres, etc.).

On the contrary in medium- and large-sized enterprises, employee training is planned by means of training plans, often funded by means of dedicated budget, and carried out by resorting to external and, sometimes, to internal training providers. In micro- and small-sized enterprises, mainly non-structured and non-formalised skill transfer and learning methods are resorted to. One of the most frequently used methods is, for example, represented not only by on-the-job training, but by a know-how transfer from the company owner to his/her employee. Therefore, the training experience taking place within an autonomous and independent business activity, which may often also have a fallout in subordinate employment, are becoming increasingly common.

Research studies conducted in the past few years by Istat, Isfol and Unioncamere have confirmed how enterprises are showing a strong interest in these matters, despite strong unbalances linked to company size and sectoral and local variables.

For example, the Istat-Eurostat CVTS2 survey (Continuing Vocational Training Survey) has shown that between 1993 and 1999, the percentage of Italian enterprises with ten workers or more having carried out training activities passed from 15% to 24%, this percentage being however much lower compared to most European countries.

In Italy, the slight inclination towards training is a consequence of company size, mainly small, while in large enterprises percentages are closer to the European average.

In addition:

- Training concerned 27% of enterprises located in Northern Italy, 22% in Central Italy, and 15% in Southern Italy;
- In 1999, participants in training courses were 72% men and 28% women;
- In 1999, some 1,952,000 industrial and service workers participated in training courses, equal to 26% of workers in Italian enterprises with ten workers or more;
- Total expenditure was 2.8% of the cost of labour for the enterprises which provided training courses.

In addition, the surveys conducted by the Isfol [Sample surveys on enterprises carried out by the Isfol Continuing Training Project are: "Le politiche di formazione nelle grandi imprese italiane" (Training Policies in Large Italian Enterprises). Isfol Survey 2002-2004; "La formazione continua nelle Piccole e Medie Imprese. Comportamenti, atteggiamenti, ruolo del territorio" (Continuing Training in Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises. Behaviour, Attitudes, the Role of the Local Area). Isfol Survey 2002-2004; "Atteggiamenti e comportamenti delle micro-imprese verso la formazione continua" (Attitudes and Behaviour of Micro-Enterprises Towards Continuing Training). Isfol Survey 2002-2004"] on micro-enterprises (with less than ten workers) highlight fairly high participation levels, with percentages as high as 20%. This value grows if we also consider informal and non-traditional learning processes.

In the Italian micro-enterprises, the difficulties involved in organising or ensuring employee participation in structured training activities such as courses are often faced by utilising those alternative procedures for knowledge transfer. The employees who have participated in a course or seminar often transfer the knowledge and skills acquired to other untrained individuals, thus guaranteeing a multiplier effect in the acquisition or updating of skills and knowledge purposely useful for the enterprise. This type of transfer took place at a growing percentage rate from 2002 to 2003 (+2%).

Table 0503.a – Micro-enterprises involved in the transfer of information/knowledge acquired by the owners/personnel to other employees through specific training sessions, by year, production sector and number of employees (Value and Change, %)

YEAR	PRODUCTION SECTORS			NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES			TOTAL
	INDUSTRY	COMMERCE	SERVICES	1-2	3-5	6-9	
2002	17.5	13.2	25.9	13.8	21.3	25.1	18.0
2003	20.7	14.4	27.4	15.9	23.9	25.4	20.0
CHANGE (%)	+3.2	+1.2	+1.5	+2.1	+2.6	+0.3	+2.0

Source: Isfol, 2004 Survey on continuing training within micro-enterprises in Southern Italy

The practice of transferring knowledge and skills has mainly involved the services enterprises and the larger enterprises, while growth of this *internal* activity over the 2-year period mostly regarded *industrial* enterprises and those with 3-5 employees.

As far as this aspect of *internal training* is concerned, it is interesting to observe the procedures for the transfer of knowledge and skills to the individuals not involved in specific training activities. The data contained in the following Table show that in most cases these were not structured training activities aimed at transferring skills to the other personnel in the enterprise. The main two procedures for transferring the results of training are moreover forms of job tutoring, particularly if specific problems are involved.

PROCEDURE	PRODUCTION SECTORS			NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES			TOTAL
	INDUSTRY	COMMERCE	SERVICES	1-2	3-5	6-9	
THE EMPLOYEES HAVE RECEIVED NEW INFORMATION/KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS AS THE PROBLEMS ARISE	65.6	60.2	53.7	61.1	61.3	55.6	60.2
THE OWNER/PARTNERS OR EMPLOYEES ALREADY TRAINED HAVE TUTORED OTHER EMPLOYEES DURING WORK	59.4	51.2	51.6	56.3	51.5	58.4	54.6
THE OWNER/PARTNERS OR EMPLOYEES HAVE PROVIDED ONE OR MORE COURSES FOR THE OTHER EMPLOYEES ON THE SUBJECT FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED EXTERNAL TRAINING	20.6	25.1	28.4	22.4	25.8	25.2	24.3
THE OWNER/PARTNERS OR EMPLOYEES HAVE PROVIDED ONE OR MORE COURSES FOR THE EMPLOYEES ON TOPICS WHERE THEY ARE EXPERTS	20.7	17.5	25.9	19.0	20.0	31.3	21.5
OTHER	0.5	-	-	-	-	1.3	0.2

Source: *Isfol*, 2004 Survey on continuing training within micro-enterprises in Southern Italy

The studies conducted on workers' attitudes and behaviour [*Isfol* Survey 2001/2002/2004 Surveys, "Attitudes and Behaviours of Workers on Continuing Vocational Training"] also highlight a relevant increase interest towards training. In 2003, 28.8% of employed workers, and 29.2% of self-employed workers have undertaken training activities.

With regard to the funded training activities, it is estimated that during 2000-2003 over 57,000 training actions were financed through the ESF, L. 236/93 and L. 53/00, involving over 850,000 workers.

0504 - ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROGRAMMES

The 2000-2006 Regional and National ESF Operational Programmes devote considerable attention to Continuing Training.

The new programming provides for the definition of a comprehensive action scenario in favour of employed workers: continuing-training actions co-funded by the ESF have been envisaged in various Operational Programme Strands and Measures. Most actions are focused on the measure pertaining to "development of the continuing training, flexible labour market, public and private enterprise competitiveness, with a special focus on SMEs" (Strand D of the CSF 'Objective 3').

Strand D promotes the support aimed at increasing employment rates and raising the competitiveness of production systems through a human-resource enhancement within the framework of working-time rescheduling and reduction policies, flexible labour market, entrepreneurship and self-employment development, and research and technology development.

The Complements to the Autonomous Regional and Provincial Authorities' Regional Operational Programmes (P.O.R. - Programmi Operativi Regionali) cite various types of actions: they range from traditional classroom-based training, to more flexible and tailor-made forms of training, to training vouchers, to the capitalisation and transfer of know-how from workers about to retire to new recruits. Tutoring actions, as well training actions tutoring weaker categories, or people at risk of production marginalisation have been envisaged.

The beneficiaries on which actions are focused is rather diversified as well. Several categories of beneficiaries exist: besides workers (employed, self-employed, atypical, returnees, elderly people, socially-useful-job and social-buffer beneficiaries, but also the members of co-operatives, and civil servants), there are enterprises and entrepreneurs, including company owners and managers; there follows non-profit organisations, linked to the social economy, training bodies (including trainers), employment centres, and last but not least the social and institutional partners, especially when involved in local-development actions through the instruments of negotiated programming.

With reference to support for enterprises, the Ministry of Labour, by means of eight provisions implementing Law 236/93, funded hundreds of sectoral and local in-company training plans, i.e. those complex training initiatives

aimed at establishing relations with specific local or sectoral development contexts, in which the social partners play a central role in planning, programming, and implementation of the action. This tool, which is expected to favour SMEs' access to continuing training, beginning from 2003 ought to represent the main policy field of the Interprofessional Funds.

As far as workers are concerned, beginning in 1999, employed workers' individual training actions began to be experimented. The "voucher" tool partly translates into reality the workers' right to make an individual vocational training and updating choice.

Law 53/00, recognising the workers' right to lifelong learning, provides for the opportunity of using training leave for continuing-training purposes through:

- Workers' training projects which, based on contract agreements, provide for working-hour reduction;
- Training projects directly submitted by workers themselves.

Today, the so-called Individual Continuing Training (ICT) is one of the procedures used for the organisation of training that is spreading rapidly in some Regions. This work-oriented training to which the worker can access on the basis of individual projects. Generally, the financing of training activities takes place through the granting of individual vouchers and with the joint financial participation by the workers requesting the voucher. Training is normally undertaken outside of working hours.

Through the ICT, workers can create their own vocational and training pathways, also outside the enterprise where they work, with an evident consequence in terms of strengthening the "individual responsibility for their own employability" called for by the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning of the European Commission.

The ICT supply financed under Law 236/93 by the Regional Authorities is organised through catalogues and vouchers. The catalogues (printed or via the web) list the courses available by the training bodies, while the vouchers, which may have a value ranging from 500 to 5,000 euros according to the Region, are generally accredited to the training bodies on the basis of the documentation showing that the worker has attended at least 70 of the hours planned for the course, and requires a joint financial participation of up to 20% of the expenditure. ICT procedures are also envisaged by the ESF, Law 53/00, and the Interprofessional Funds.

0505 - BRIDGING INITIAL AND POST INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

After the approval of the Legislative Decree 297/94, experiments for the "integrated 2-year periods" were introduced in the State school system to foster the return to training by young people and adults holding an upper secondary school-leaving certificate, but without adequate educational qualifications, in order to allow for their vocational re-qualification.

The positive results of these experiments (started up in the Regions of Lombardy, Piedmont, Tuscany and Umbria) have led to the development, starting from school year 1996/97, of a specific didactic proposal, valid on the national level, called the 'Sirio' Project.

The Project allows technical schools to start up various types of courses aimed at the return of young people and adults to training:

- 2-year courses under State management, organised by the technical schools and designed for the attainment of qualifications for the third level of the technical schools;
- 2-year integrated courses, organised by the technical schools to integrate the regional vocational training system, leading to the attainment of two qualifications: qualifications for the third level of the technical schools and the vocational-qualification certificate;
- 3-year courses under State management, organised by the technical schools only, for the attainment of the technical-school certificate.

These three types of courses are characterised by the reduction of the weekly hours of lessons, the recognition of training credits, the start-up of a tutoring service, the use of adequate teaching methods in order to fully enhance the cultural and vocational background of the students, as well as by distance-learning procedures.

In particular:

- The 2-year courses under State management include 25 hours of lessons per week distributed over 5 days and subdivided between the common area (17 hours) and the specialised area (8 hours), with the latter including three sectors, i.e. commerce, surveying and industry;
- The 2-year integrated courses provide for 25 hours of lessons per week, of which 10 for the areas pertaining to the State system and 15 for those areas pertaining to the regional system, save for any changes to be made by agreements between the Regional administration government and the Ministry of Education, University and Research;
- The 3-year courses under State management include a minimum of 25 hours per week of lessons (for the commerce sector), and up to a maximum of 28 (for the 'surveying' and 'industry' sectors).

For all three courses, in addition to the hours for the curriculum, the Class Council has an additional number of hours (maximum 5 hours per week) to be used for the recovery of basic skills, and in the 2-year courses, for the improvement of skills leading to a possible continuation in the third year.

With regard to the recognition of credits, this is automatic in the case of "formal credits" (studies completed and qualification certificates attained in State or legally recognised schools), while for "non-formal credits" (experience gained on the job or personal studies coherent with formal studies), a careful evaluation is made on the basis of specific checking.

The tutoring service is conducted by one of the teachers in the Class Council, and provides for:

- Support to individual students for an adequate insertion in the school system;
- Activation of strategies designed to bridge any significant cultural gaps among students;
- Assistance to individual students in case of difficulties arising in relation to the choice of studies or the training pathway followed.

Finally, distance-learning procedures are encouraged, above all, when aimed at fostering tailor-made learning and at reducing everyday difficulties in reaching the school establishments.

With Law 53/03, reforming the school system, the vocational education and training system is set up. Therefore, istituti tecnici should be included, to an extent which has yet to be defined, within the system.

0506 - RE-EDUCATION AND RE-TRAINING NEEDS DUE TO LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENTS AND MOBILITY

With regard to re-qualification or re-training according to the terminology used in other countries, the measures are mainly inserted in the more general category of continuing training.

See 0504 and 0504.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Recent systemic changes to the VET structure (see Law No 53/2003) and to Labour market services (see Law No 30/2003) have had an important impact on the roles of teachers and trainers in Italy, mostly in IVET (as teachers and trainers in CVET are not regulated by the State). After Law No 197/1997 a significant programme was launched to improve trainer skills not least to ensure compliance with the newly introduced accreditation framework for training providers. In particular, the accreditation of private vocational training bodies is regulated by the Ministerial Decree 166/2001 with some fundamental requirements, including the requirement concerning the subordinate employees' vocational skills.

These changes have involved all the main categories of stakeholders.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS IN STATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (IVET):

- decentralisation has meant that the management of teaching staff has been transferred from the central to the regional government level;
- increased autonomy for State vocational schools has enabled schools to manage their own teaching programmes and choice of teaching methods, to organise their own teaching times, class composition, partnerships with other schools, pedagogical innovations, etc;
- increased autonomy has extended to the management of in-service training including the introduction of updating teacher skills in information and communication technologies (ICTs);
- balance recruitment policies in terms of numbers of teachers on fixed and open-term contracts.

With regard to the teachers, there could be a need for the future rebalancing of training opportunities for vocational education teachers, by reducing investments in the more traditional continuing training in favour of more innovative solutions. Greater attention should be focused on the updating plans regarding the relational and communication aspects of the teacher-student relationship. There are major training needs in this respect that have failed to gain an adequate response in the current panorama of the training supply. A similar consideration also regards continuing training with respect to the organisational and management aspects.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINERS IN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING (IVET)

- the strengthened role of regional authorities in relation to vocational education and training, vocational guidance and employment policies has led to privatise their training services or at least to introduce a formal accreditation system for training providers (after Law 196/1997) which has had an impact on trainers (especially regarding the public regulation of the professional profiles and vocational skills);

- while there has been employment growth, it has tended to be of atypical and fixed-term contracts;
- more targeted vocational updating and development of trainers.

With regard to the trainers, the recent evolution of VET system will involve profound changes and differentiation in the profile of trainer.

The new contexts for IVET show that today, the training action tends to become a pathway involving a variety of skills and roles. The necessary condition for the achievement of the results envisaged by the reform processes in the IVET system is the capacity to enhance the trainers and their potential through innovative models and pathways.

The number of trainers has increased considerably recently. According to a recent research (see Gaudio F., Come cambiano i formatori: profili, competenze, fabbisogni, in Osservatorio Isfol n.6, 2003) over 36.7% of training staff were recruited after the 1990s (specifically in the latter half of the 1990s and in the privately owned training schools). Nevertheless the population of trainers is gradually ageing (average age 43, see Isfol, I Formatori, 1992) especially amongst male trainers.

Moreover, the effect of the dissemination of New Information and Communication Technologies should be taken into account as they are changing the nature of many skills and introducing new professional profiles (See Isfol, Monitoraggio Formativo del progetto FaDol, Final report, 2003).

The new generations now represent over a third of practitioners in training services, and consist above all of young women with high educational qualifications and flexible employment contracts. They work with the "older" generations of trainers, who are generally male certificate holders with more stable employment contracts. This highlights how the professional identity of trainer is heterogeneous and in constant transition.

In the final analysis, it also implies a highly dynamic and flexible character of TT, with pathways characterised by the differentiation of skills corresponding to the roles. In this respect, a wider contribution can be provided by the definition of the skill-certification tool, which is still being discussed.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR APPRENTICESHIP TUTORS

With Legislative Decree No. 276/2003, the apprenticeship is regulated within a new regulatory framework being created pursuant to the reform of both the labour market and vocational education and training. Currently, it is obviously impossible to forecast what type of situation will develop in the apprenticeship course following the latest regulatory changes. It is important, however, to stress that there is an overall reinforcement of the principle by which apprenticeship is a stream for work and training alternance, with a potential for making the training conducted directly by enterprises a more responsible process.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINERS AND OTHERS LEARNING FACILITATORS IN CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING (CVET):

In Italy, CVET teachers and trainers are facing important challenges. Emerging issues particularly regard the following:

- overcoming the traditional separation between lifelong learning and CVET due to differences in access and learning settings;
- a weakening in several enterprises of distinctions between professional trainers and other training personnel within human resource management;
- specialisation of external training, in particular with regard to new, emerging training methods (e.g. e-learning, self-training, etc.).

The creation of new multi-sectoral funds for continuing vocational training (beginning in 2004) should provide new forms of regulations, especially with regard to:

- raising the qualification levels required to company trainers through the definition of professional standards;
- increasing the number of investments for the training of the trainers and the educational research.

Another fast expanding phenomenon in many Italian enterprises and organisations is the increase of training-related skills. This often leads to a decline in traditional sectors of in-house human resources and to their loss of professional status. It leads to:

- a weak identity of trainers, whose "professional community";
- the crisis of specific trainer-training supply, leading to the transformation in pathways aimed at developing more general skills in the "HR Management".

CVET trainers should be able to deal with new skill-related issues such as:

- relationship between CVET and organisational learning;
- promotion of CVET in Small and Medium Enterprises;
- new Forms of on-the-job training;
- new prospects for individual training;

- new prospects opened by distance and online learning.

Therefore, the new training pathways for CVET trainers are characterised by:

- inclusion of these issues, beyond the traditional modules for classroom management;
- increasing use of non-classroom techniques and methods (e.g., action learning, mentoring and coaching, outdoor training, learning audit, etc.).

Regarding the recruiting of teachers and trainers, currently in the Italian Education and Training System teachers and trainers have different types of recruitment, carrier progress and contractual position. In particular, IVET and CVET teachers are recruited exclusively through a State selection Exam while the IVET and CVET trainers and other main learning facilitators are recruited directly without legal constraints.

0602 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS/TRAINERS IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Pre-service teacher training is currently handled by the University Specialisation Schools for Secondary Teaching (S/SS), which students enter after completing a 5-year degree course. This training involves both a common session providing general psychological and teaching skills and a more specialised session on the topics of the discipline. There is also a specific section for training teachers working with the mentally or physically disabled.

In-service training specifically targeted to teaching personnel has become a consolidated practice over the years as a result of the initiatives of the Directorates-General and the Regional Directorates of the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) as well as of the Regional Institutes for Educational Research (IRRE) and the individual schools.

Currently, the teacher-training initiatives are mainly aimed at the vocational updating and requalification, not only in the strict technical and disciplinary sense, but also in more innovative areas regarding skills and more precisely: methodological (monitoring-evaluation), communication/relational (with families, local enterprises and institutions, etc.), language, organisational, managerial (in relation to school autonomy, new support, tutoring as well as to didactic, educational and managerial co-ordination) and technological (ICT literacy and the use of new didactic technologies) skills.

The recent law on the new vocational education and training system (Law 53/2003) states that in the future the management of in-service teacher training will be entrusted directly to the Universities, in collaboration with public and private research institutions, accredited and qualified bodies and professional associations, in order to place the national aims in context with the different local training needs.

With regard to pre-service teacher training in initial VET and continuing VET, there is no specific initial training pathway aimed at the creation of specific skills. This type of training is oriented towards the strengthening of both technical skills and skills in the field of teaching methods, also supported by ICTs.

The in-service training for vocational-training teachers is mainly promoted by the Regional Authorities, in accordance with their institutional role concerning training skills. The role of the Regional Authorities has been further strengthened by direct ESF transfers to the Regional Authorities for improving the VT systems, the guidelines of which are contained in the Regional Operational Plans (2000-2006).

In recent years, in-service teacher training has been mainly oriented towards the support of the organisational restructuring of VT bodies, the certification of trainer's skills, the accreditation of training facilities, the reform of the Employment Services, the use of new learning technologies (e-Learning), the management of alternance and apprenticeship, the design and implementation of integrated actions for the development of Lifelong Learning, vocational and training counselling as well as the monitoring and evaluation of training actions. In recent years, the vocational education and training system has also experienced a major expansion of distance learning, both for vocational education teachers ('FOR-TIC' Project) and vocational training teachers ('FaDoI' Project).

The online 'FaDoI' distance learning project under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies is an interesting trainers' training initiative involving teachers and non-teaching staff (tutors, co-ordinators, designers, guidance counsellors, evaluators, training-need analysts, etc.) from vocational-training centres. In particular, the professional profiles addressed by FaDoI are those involved in the Vocational Training and Employment reform process, from the various vocational fields (Vocational Training, Employment Services, Lifelong Learning, Compulsory Schooling, Apprenticeship, Continuing Training).

The project objective consists in developing an innovative continuing-training and distance-learning system to develop and update the vocational skills of public and recognised vocational-training operators, based on methodological and technological standards shared at national and regional level, based on contents answering the needs of the production world, the new technological potentials, and integrating the various Education, Training, and Employment systems. Until 2001, FaDoI reached some 7 thousand beneficiaries, and is currently being redesigned in order to reach a wider target group, to update its methodological models, and to ensure transition towards e-learning (the Internet). The 'FOR-TIC' Project, coming under the Ministry of Education, University and Research, aims at disseminating Information and Communication Technologies, targeting approximately 170,000 teachers in all levels and types specifically involved in three training pathways: basic computer skills; teaching and technology; management of technological infrastructures.

0603 - TRAINING OF TRAINERS/TEACHERS AT THE WORKPLACE (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING AND CVET IN ENTERPRISES)

In the context of continuing and initial training conducted by private enterprises, the main profiles are the company trainer and the company tutor for apprenticeship.

In particular, company trainers are involved in continuing-training initiatives conducted by the enterprise for the updating, requalification and specialisation of human resources. They may be a company employee or a free-lance expert.

The profession of CVET trainer is not legally regulated by recognised associations and/or State exams.

There is no training pathway designed for the creation of specific skills for the initial and continuing training of CVET trainers, and these latter are not generally subject to a regular skill evaluation. Access to the profession of company trainer (*formatore aziendale*) is not publicly regulated; occasionally, company-level contracts may envisage access forms and requirements, and career development. No compulsory curriculum exists, nor a national-level recognised professional register. On some occasions, sectoral professional associations through selective accreditation criteria or autonomous training initiatives have played the role of accreditation bodies for trainers operating in the company- and management-training private market.

Usually, in the case of company trainers, the academic qualifications required are a university degree, or a technical-disciplinary qualification, as well as a long experience in the reference sector.

Numerous streams exist for the preparation of CVET trainers such as university Master courses and specialised courses. The latter includes:

- brief post-secondary training courses provided by the vocational training system;
- Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore courses (*IFTS* - Higher Technical Education and Training). The *IFTS* involves the partnership between universities, enterprises, vocational training centres and State vocational schools. The *IFTS* courses have a limited attendance, are free of charge, and open to unemployed or employed individuals. The average duration is 1,200 hours. The curricula, methodology and system for certification and recognition of the training credits and skills are regulated by Directives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and by the Regional Authorities;
- intensive courses provided by various higher non-university education institutions or training agencies, with their own particular structure, regulations and organisation. Among these organisations, an important role is played by business schools or specialised schools, professional associations and public consortia (e.g., the Chamber of Commerce, AIF- Italian Trainers Association, ...).
- With reference to the specific company-tutor for apprenticeship (*tutor aziendale per l'apprendistato*) profile, operating in the new apprenticeship scenario - whose aim consists in strengthening the role of the alternating training within the context of initial training - the Decree n° 22/00 issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies defines his/her features, tasks, and skills, as a profile playing a central role in ensuring on-the-job training quality.

In particular, the company tutor for apprenticeship has the task of tutoring the apprentices during the apprenticeship period, of transferring the skills necessary for performing the tasks, and fostering integration between training actions conducted outside the enterprise and training conducted on the job. Besides, the company tutor for apprenticeship evaluates the skills acquired by the apprentice for the purpose of final certification issued at the end of the apprenticeship period.

The basic contents of the 8-hour compulsory courses are regulated by Legislative Decree No. 276/2003, and refer to the key functions required of company tutors, in particular:

- managing the reception and integration of the young apprentice;
- planning and tutoring the learning and in-service socialisation pathways, thus facilitating the acquisition of skills requested for performing the work activity;
- managing relations with external training structures, to enable the positive integration between external training and in-service experiences
- assess progress and results achieved by the apprentice during the process of integration and professional growth.

0604 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (OUTSIDE ENTERPRISES)

There are few structured pathways or legal obligations for pre-service training for CVET teachers. Most practitioners have a professional status as freelance or occasional trainer, i.e. a professional or middle/top manager temporarily assigned to specialised technical or vocational teaching. For teachers working in CTPs (Permanent Regional Centres for Adult Education), pre-service training is regulated in a similar way as for IVET teachers. For content teachers, pre-service training is mainly non-systematic and based on short-term modules or courses sometimes provided by universities and training centres. At local level, some professional associations of trainers provide short-term and intensive courses.

For content teachers, there is no predefined qualification level to practice this profession. For publicly funded courses, there are some pre-defined requirements, such as a degree and/or appropriate professional experience. For some technical content teachers (e.g., software applications) specific certification is required (generally issued by the software houses or authorised training agencies). Some Regional Authorities have nevertheless introduced procedures for the certification of skills and the recognition of training credits which could also involve pre-service training pathways for the content teachers.

For content teachers, in-service training is completely voluntary (as would be expected given the freelance nature of many within the profession).

Numerous streams exist for the preparation of CVET teachers such as university Master courses and specialised courses. The latter includes:

- brief post-secondary training courses provided by the vocational training system;
- intensive courses provided by various business schools or training agencies, with their own particular structure, regulations and organisation. Among these organisations, an important role is played by technological suppliers (e.g., the software or hardware companies,...).

TEACHERS IN CTPS (PERMANENT REGIONAL CENTRES FOR ADULT EDUCATION)

These teachers must hold at least a degree, a teaching qualification for subjects taught and the level of lower educational school teachers (lower secondary education). Teachers are selected on the basis of both teaching and professional experience. On completion of the SISs, trainee teachers take an exam in accordance with the university regulations of the specific SSIS. The final exam provides the *abilitazione all'insegnamento* (teaching qualification) for specific teaching classes. Examination boards are divided by category of teaching qualification and are appointed by the Ministry of Education, University and Research; they are usually chaired by a university professor.

In-service, continuing training is both a teachers' right and duty. It is aimed to provide: vocational updating in individual subjects and links between subjects; more detailed knowledge of teaching practices; participation opportunities in research and innovation activities in teaching practice and educational sciences. While participation is usually voluntary, it is encouraged through several national and local programmes relating to innovation and change (such as the National ITC Plan, the national plan for the dissemination of foreign languages, etc.). Law 53/2003 makes provision for a new system of in-service training (including an increase in funding) to ensure closer links between training, performance assessment and career progress.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

GLOSSARY

BASIC SKILLS

(E.g., basic computer skills, foreign languages, economics, organisation, labour legislation and law) These are skills widely recognised as new "rights of citizenship" in the labour market and society, that is, genuine "requirements for employability" and for professional development.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS

(General and specific *know-what*, and *know-how*). This is the knowledge and the range of operational skills for activities regarding specific work processes or functions.

TRANSVERSAL SKILLS

(Psychological and social resources such as work habits and identity, as well as abilities in diagnosis, communications, decision-making, problem-solving, etc.). These are the characteristics and individual procedures that come into play when a person interacts with organisational demands, and are essential for producing a professional behaviour that converts "knowledge" into an effective work performance.

CAPITALISABLE UNITS

Capitalisable Unit is a standard reference unit for achieving or recognising vocational skills.

Capitalisable Unit is thus conceived to create a codified instrument for the planning of training actions aimed at the acquisition of vocational skills. In the context of lifelong learning, the same set of skills can be achieved, and is thus detectable and certifiable, also by other paths (work experience, training curricula, educational pathways, etc.).

The Capitalisable Units consist of basic, technical and vocational and transversal skills, and are clustered according to the various training pathways aimed at professional profiles, or at the requirements of updating, alternance and continuing training.

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

In the context of the reforms of the education and training systems in Italy started up in recent years, we can see a constant commitment to endow the VET systems with innovation, quality and integration in the approach of lifelong learning.

These reforms explicitly aim at enabling both a constant dialogue between VET systems and socio-economic contexts, and the concrete opportunity for individuals to capitalise their learning experience accrued in different sites, times and training contexts.

Furthermore, in the context of flexibility and respect for local initiatives, to the "horizontal" prospect of integration between systems, we can add the "vertical" aspect of the redefinition of relationships between central and local authorities (Regions, Provinces and local services) included in the broader reform process for the decentralisation of the levels of government taking place in the country.

Since 1996 the constant dialogue between the national Government, the Regional Authorities and the Social Partners has led to a consistent innovation and has explicitly introduced in the VET system keywords such as: quality improvement and diversification of supply, administrative decentralisation, lifelong learning and the right and duty to initial training for all.

Another result of social dialogue (the agreements of 1993 and 1996) has been also the setting-up of bilateral bodies (these exist on the national level by economic sector as well as on the regional level), which are joint associations in which trade unions and employers' organisations have the task of developing continuing training, monitoring and analysing the needs for skills and expertise in the labour market, participating in the definition of policies and guidelines, and supporting negotiation and the development of new opportunities.

One of the main fields of action for the bilateral bodies is the "Needs Analysis" Project, started up in '97, with the aim of "interpreting" the labour market and defining the general lines of professional development, creating local surveying and monitoring networks designed to last over time and to dialogue with the systems aimed at governing the training supply, the labour market and negotiation.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Between 1998 and 2003, several framework laws for reform regarding Education and the Universities aimed at the integration between systems have been proposed and largely implemented. In this context, we can say that all the pathways for the educational supply, especially the ones that have been most extensively overhauled or newly created (as in the case of Higher Technical Education and Training - *IFTS*), have developed innovative proposals for educational supply on the basis of the principles of lifelong learning, alternance between study and work, and integration.

We can mention the recent implementation of Law No. 53/2003, a new framework law (Delegated Law) for the reform of all the education and training levels according to the basic principles mentioned above, reaffirming the need to consolidate regional jurisdiction in the VET systems, and the functions of national co-ordination within the approach of a minimum quality assurance of a training supply provided throughout the country.

As an example of the Italian approach to the integration between VET systems, we can recall the two new integrated VET institutions set up in 1999 under Law No. 144: compulsory training requirement up to the age of 18 (now launched again under Law 53/2003 as the right-duty to training) and IFTS pathways in the context of the Integrated Higher Training (*FIS*) system.

The IFTS channel plays a key role in this system. It consists of educational pathways aimed at training professional profiles at the post-secondary school level to respond to the demand from enterprises affected by technological innovation and the internationalisation of markets according to the priorities indicated by regional economic programming. The aim of these pathways is to enable young people and adults, whether employed or not, with more specific skills and more in-depth and targeted technical and vocational training.

The conception of the IFTS system is based on an integrated education and training model that is flexible and tailor-made (aimed at young people and adults whether employed or not) by principles such as the module-based structure, learning by skills, and credits. This pathway provides an interesting opportunity for practicing and developing the principles that still inspire the legislation for the reform and re-qualification of the education and training systems in Italy, and is guided by a National Committee formed by the Ministry of Education and University, the Ministry of Labour, the Regional Authorities and the Social Partners.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

In 2004, the Agreement signed on 15 January 2004 between the Minister of Education and University, the Minister of Labour and Social Policies, the Regional Authorities, and the Autonomous Provincial Authorities of Trento and Bolzano held great importance. This Agreement identifies some standard features on the national level regarding the supply of the 3-year experimental pathways for attaining vocational qualifications in the 'right-duty' segment.

As far as the methodology is concerned, the initial standards to implement subsequently have been identified, with regard to four areas:

- The language area;
- The scientific area;
- The technological area;
- The historical, social and economic area.

These standards therefore concern a delicate context like the 'right-duty' segment, conceived not only with regard to ensuring employability, but also guaranteeing the full rights of citizenship, starting from a cultural initial-training background.

A key aspect of the Agreement is the definition of a pathway for the governance of the national and local system, involving a chain of 'cascade' functions.

On the national level, it is envisaged:

- The definition of the general system for the classification of vocational skills;
- The definition of standard general criteria for certifying skills (training booklet);
- The definition of standard general criteria for ascertaining credits (training/training, training/education, education/training);
- The definition of the minimum skill training standards;
- The identification of the minimum accreditation standards for the facilities providing vocational education and training courses.

On the regional level, it is envisaged:

- The governance of the skill and credit system as well as the related support services;
- The adaptation of skills to the local context;
- The methods and procedures for assessment, evaluation and certification of skills and credits before, during and after the pathways;
- The design standards;
- The detailed definition of the indispensable requisites required from facilities providing vocational education and training pathways.

It should be pointed out that together with and subsequent to this important Agreement, an Interregional Project entitled "Description and Certification by Vocational Skills and Families – Minimum Standards with a View to Integration between Education, Vocational Training and Work" aimed at proposing "an initial reference model for a national skill standard system with a view to integration between education, vocational training and work" was successfully launched. The Regional Authorities are thus performing considerable work to provide a contribution co-ordinated with the process of a gradual definition of the national standard and certification system.

The process of implementation and experimentation is also under way for the skill standards in the Higher Technical Education and Training (*IFTS*) pathways.

The *IFTS* standards are organised in SUs (Skill Units or UC – unità competenze) which, like the experiments conducted in other European countries (e.g., in the UK or more recently in Spain), represent sets of skills certifiable as such, and valid as training credits for transfer to other pathways (other *IFTS* schools, VT courses, university) on the basis of specific agreements between the various training bodies which co-operate in the *IFTS* pathways. The skills described in the standard *IFTS* SUs involve a qualitative credit, also considering the detailed description of the composition of the skills and the indicators of mastery of these skills, though no specific workload or number of hours of training is cited. Nevertheless, on the basis of conversion mechanisms already successfully used in some locations, these credits are comparable with the quantitative system of ECTS credits widely used in all the Italian Universities.

It should finally be stressed that on the local level, there is an intensive activity under way by the Regional Authorities to utilise transparent reference systems both for the training supply and certification to be awarded.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

GLOSSARY

CREDITS. In the context of Italian legislation and the current debate, we can propose the following definition: the training credit is a value assigned to a segment of training (for example a teaching module, an capitalisable unit, an academic year, etc.) or to an individual experience (work experience, volunteer activities, etc.) that can be utilised in a pathway or sub-system as a skill already acquired at the individual level.

In particular, we can recall the distinction between:

- **Certification** of a training credit: this is the declaration that an individual with a usable skill is allowed to continue a training pathway; it is formally issued by an authorised organisation;
- **Recognition** of a credit: an act having a social and individual rather than a legal value. This means that it has a limited scope for a specifically identified set of organisations, according to a mutually defined procedure, and this without a general value.

As we can observe in the general definition, there are a number of possible operational interpretations of the concept of credit, just as many meanings can be assigned to the expressions "assigned value" and "training segment".

For example, we can distinguish between:

- Academic credits, recognised in the university sector, at the national level and/or by the universities of the countries participating in the European ECTS programme;
- Training credits recognised within the vocational training system and usable for the re-entry in educational pathways.

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

The already consistent effort for the reform of the education and training systems in Italy, with the aim of creating the conditions for the effective implementation of lifelong learning, is all the more complex if we refer to the validation of learning and above all if this validation is also extended to the skills acquired outside of so-called formal training. This type of opportunity involves the relationship between the education and training systems as a whole and what can be learned on the job or in daily life, thus requiring the creation of forms of correspondence (and an implicitly circular path) between substantially different experiences requiring different interpretation.

Despite its complexity, increasing priority has been given to this approach by the institutions, so that together with skill standards it is in top position in the agendas of agreements between the institutions and the social partners. It

has sometimes anticipated EU strategies in terms of transparency and recognition (cf. the 2000 EC Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and the Copenhagen Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Education of the EU countries signed in November 2002).

We should first of all stress that in Italy, unlike other European countries, formal qualifications still have great value, both legal and social; furthermore, a stable supply for education/short training or adult education has not yet been consolidated. In Italy, it is therefore especially difficult to find a method to make learning - other than that acquired in formal qualifications - transparent and thus recognisable (the formal qualifications are basically school-leaving certificates, university degrees and qualifications in regional vocational training).

Nevertheless, in the past three years much legislation has tended to open the way to new opportunities as has occurred in various EU countries (e.g. VAE in France or APL in the UK). In particular, the following has occurred in Italy:

- By providing specific devices (or instruments) of certification or recognition of the skills of individuals for the access or re-entry to the various training pathways;
- By actions regarding the definition and the interpretation of the training supply and the creation of common languages for the recognition of credits.

In this respect, the Agreement between the State and the Regions of February 2000, and subsequent Decree No. 174/2001 issued by the Ministry of Labour have provided key elements in the new system of certification:

- The focus of the new system for skill certification on providing transparency to training pathways and the enhancement of individual experiences and training credits in the European prospect of lifelong learning;
- The start-up of a definition process of minimum skill-certification standards;
- The definition of the various devices of certification (certificates, work- or self-training based validation procedures and the Citizen's Training Portfolio) representing the resources which the system must utilise gradually in order to standardise;
- The start-up of an experimental phase in which these criteria and skill-certification procedures must be inserted at the regional context and throughout the pathway, interacting with the local situation.

The mechanisms and implementation timing for this new system have not yet been defined, but the Training Portfolio is the first item being prepared.

With regard to the various pathways, transparency devices have been ensured in the last years almost to all. In many cases, such as the IFTS, EDA (Adult Education System) and compulsory training (as well as the Universities), there are also procedures for the recognition of work- or experience-based training credits. In particular, the IFTS system was one of the first to apply different forms of skill certification in the phase of access to the courses, in the intermediate and conclusive stage.

The "Certificate of higher technical specialisation", an initial national hypothesis of skill certification, aims at connecting certified skills, interpreted as the outcome of the training pathway, both to those involving employment with reference to a professional profile, and to the training units or modules forming the pathway.

The intermediate device called "Declaration of Pathway" has a similar basis, with the certification of skills acquired being closely related to the model of definition and design of the pathways, and more specifically to the design model for the capitalisable skill units.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

According to all the above described scenarios it seems quite clear that the certification of non-formal and informal learning is a major and widely shared priority in the social and institutional Italian debate.

In the context of the current requirements and experiments on the national, regional and Community level, there is considerable focus on the training booklet. This is mostly considered as a key tool to document the skills in whatever way they have been acquired by individuals and workers, and at the same time to foster the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning credits.

Decree 276/203 provides for the creation of the training book, recalling the State-Regions Agreement signed in February 2000, and defines the booklet as follows:

"The citizen's training booklet is the personal booklet of the worker, defined pursuant to the State-Regions Agreement dated 18 February 2000, with the co—ordination between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Ministry of Education, University and Research, after an understanding with the Joint State-Regions Conference and having consulted the Social Partners. The booklet registers the skills acquired during apprenticeship training, training with work—entry contracts, specialised training and continuing training activities undertaken throughout the lifecycle and conducted by bodies accredited by the Regional Authorities, as well as the skills acquired in a non-formal and informal manner according to the guidelines of the European Union on Lifelong Learning, as long as these skills are recognised and certified"

According to the State—Regions Agreement signed in February 2000 "...in order to document the training curriculum and the skills acquired, the Regional Authorities shall establish the citizen's training booklet, in which training credits can be recorded and recognised in order to attain an educational qualification or for insertion in an

educational pathway on the basis of specific understandings between the ministries having jurisdiction, training agencies and the Regional Authorities concerned...”.

The conceptual basis is therefore coherent, with the booklet being considered as being directly linked to the individuals, their personal learning pathway and career (lifelong learning) and their option/right to convert the whole of their experience into an identifiable and valuable resource.

This basic career outlook, with advanced and strategic aims, was implemented in 2004 when the Ministry of Labour started up technical discussions on the training booklet with the Ministry of Education and University, the Regional Authorities and the Social Partners. In these discussions, taking into account the numerous regional experiments conducted in recent years and the compliance with European transparency requirements, a standard model and shared regulations have been achieved for the training booklet, also complying with the European Curriculum Vitae.

The training booklet proposed by the Ministry of Labour is arranged in three sections structured in a dynamic and selective way according to the specific user's needs. The first section contains the CV elements and the basic outline of the skills acquired, with details on the acquisition and supporting documentation. The structure of this section is in accordance with the professional information form for the 'Continuous Labour Exchange' and with the European CV. This allows the transferability of information, though not automatic, but accompanied by adequate support actions.

The second and third section contain a list of the certificates and documents available to support the information contained in the booklet and which can be placed in a portfolio attached to the booklet.

The booklet is also a flexible instrument so that each of the sections can have a different length and variable composition (a sort of "accordion") according to the prevalent and most significant type of information on the individual, though within a single interpretation context.

Accordingly, the booklet can also be used in an electronic format, in accordance with the 'Continuous Labour Exchange', subject to updating over the years and open to consultation on a confidential basis.

In the future, the training booklet will be an important national device, thereby providing an essential link for dialogue with Europe as well as organising within a single framework the various devices experimented or adopted in various Regions and sectors.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The guidance system is currently marked by a decentralisation process that is changing the traditional relational/power balance between central and peripheral government. As a result of the institutional decentralisation, new decision-making and management powers were entrusted to the Regional Authorities and Local Bodies, thus disseminating a culture based on action integration and root-taking in the local area.

Guidance is provided by a range of regional and institutional services in Italy. Guidance is also used in vocational training as a measure to support training pathways.

The MIUR (Ministry of Education, University and Research) decides on guidance policies in respect of the education and training programmes offered in schools (from primary school onwards) and the services provided by local schools authorities and universities.

The MLPS (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy), the Regions and the Provinces are responsible for all activities connected with vocational training and jobseeking at local level.

Under the current regulations, the Servizi per l'impiego (SPIs - employment services), through the local Centri per l'impiego (CPIs), are responsible for guidance work, as an active labour policy. They have tasks of information, guidance and monitoring of the pathways of young people in obbligo formativo (see 0302).

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

Guidance is available for young people and adults, whether employed or unemployed.

Guidance for young people takes place:

- in schools, as an educational process managed by teachers to help students to make informed choices, leading ultimately to the guidance counselling offered at the end of lower secondary education; this process is often supported by supplementary services (diagnostic interviews, information sessions, distribution of materials, etc.);
- in vocational training centres, as an educational process to help students to make informed occupational choices; supplementary services are also used to help with this process.

In addition to the help available within education and training, young people can obtain guidance services at public Informagiovani centres run by the Regions, Provinces and local authorities and at private social-sector centres.

The CPIs offer information, guidance and tutoring services for young people aged 15 to 18.

In the case of adults, guidance is provided (although to an extent which is still partial) by the CPIs, in particular for the unemployed, and by the Centri di orientamento al lavoro (COLs - Work Guidance Centres) run by local authorities (information and guidance interviews).

Regions also run schemes to guide and train particular target groups (women returning to work, young people at risk, the disabled, immigrants, etc.).

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

Occupational profiles may vary widely in terms of tasks and training work in the various areas.

Schools require teachers of all subjects to educate their pupils to make informed choices. Some teachers also have a range of responsibilities in relation to particular activities and projects.

A key guidance role is entrusted to the new professional profiles that have been introduced in the school system starting from the school year 1989/90. These include the profile of the guidance service co-ordinator, whose task consists in supporting his/her colleagues in their guidance activities, establishing a link with the local services and enterprises, co-operating with other Bodies responsible for guidance in order to provide students and their families with adequate information. Specific guidance activities are usually organised by these teachers in cooperation with outside experts.

Tutoring has been introduced into universities; expert staff (university centres and placement services) are also assisted in many cases by lecturers and administrative staff, especially for information activities.

Guidance and counselling in the vocational training system is often provided by trainers and tutors with particular professional skills acquired from experience in the field.

The employment services make use of retrained staff from the former placement offices, the vocational training system, the Informagiovani centres (under service contracts) and, to a lesser extent, dedicated public services normally set up by Provinces and Regions.

Last but not least, Employment Services usually resort to re-qualified staff coming from former employment offices, from the vocational training sector, from Informagiovani centres (through service bids for tenders) and, to a lesser extent, from dedicated public services usually set up by the Provincial Authorities. With reference to vocational guidance counsellors, these profiles are mixed both in terms of the role they play and of the training pathways they have followed.

Based on the already mentioned "Second 1998 National Survey on Guidance Services" (Seconda indagine nazionale sui servizi di orientamento 1998), in terms of role and tasks performed, operators mainly consist in guidance counsellors (62.3%), psychologists (7.1%), sociologists (3.5%), educationalists (4.2%, especially in school-system structures), statisticians, computer scientists (4.2%, especially in Ministerial structures), social workers (1.6%), economists (3.8%), and documentalists (6.8% in organisations belonging to the Local Bodies and school establishments). In addition, some structures already resorted to external collaborators as consultants (university professors, school managers and teachers, trainers, economists, etc).

In Italy, the definition of the professional profile of counsellors is still under debate. Various methodological and theoretic approaches have identified the types and skills possessed by operators employed in various services, and have also identified and divided their potential beneficiaries.

The scientific community and that of the operators working on the field have defined an effective body of knowledge, abilities, and skills associated with the professional profile of the counsellor, showing its possible inner breakdown (career counsellor, guidance counsellor), and their relationship to other adjoining professional profiles (Employment service and Job account counsellors, Demand/supply matchers, Teachers), and possible training pathways.

With reference to training activities, post-graduate specialisation courses have been organised for counsellors. These include courses promoted by the University of Padua, Venice's Isre, addressed to young people holding humanistic degrees, preferably in Psychology, thus making Italy fall in line with other European countries and the United States.

In addition, Milan's Catholic University is organising "Level 1" masters' degrees for three-year university degree holders.

Finally, the Ministerial Decree No. 166/01 on the accreditation of guidance structures defines the skills required for undertaking the functions/processes needed in guidance.

Skill certification will take place subsequently. According to the regulations, a guidance structure eligible for accreditation is defined as: "the operational facility providing information, training and counselling services aimed at promoting self-guidance and supporting the definition of personal training and work projects".

This Ministerial Decree defines the following operational processes to support guidance facilities, such as:

- **Diagnosis:** analysis of the needs and of individual demand and differentiated targets;
- **Design:** planning of actions and instruments;
- **Provision:** reception, screening of users as well as information, training and consultancy services;
- **Monitoring and evaluation of actions, programmes and services;**
- **Promotion:** management of relationships with the actors of the institutional, social and production system in the reference area;
- **Quality and research:** management of the quality system and identification of the improvement actions;
- **Co-ordination and management;**
- **Administration.**

On the basis of this distinction, we can identify the following functions/profiles:

OPERATIONAL PROCESSES AND AREAS	FUNCTIONS/PROFILES
<p style="text-align: center;">A. Diagnosis</p> <p>AO1 - Diagnosis of needs, individual demand and guidance target</p>	<p>Needs analysis/ Needs analyst - Guidance/ Guidance counsellor</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">B. Design</p> <p>BO1 - Planning of programmes and services for information and guidance</p> <p>BO2 - Design of individual and/or group guidance actions</p> <p>BO3 - Design and production of guidance instruments</p>	<p>Design/ Designer - Guidance/ Guidance counsellor</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">C. Provision</p> <p>CO1 - Management of reception and screening of users</p> <p>CO2 - Guidance information</p> <p>CO3 - Guidance training</p> <p>CO4 - Guidance counselling</p> <p>CO5 - Management of skill balances</p> <p>CO6 - Guidance counselling</p>	<p>Guidance/ Guidance counsellor</p> <p>- Guidance/ Guidance counsellor</p> <p>- Training/ Trainer- Tutor</p> <p>Guidance/ Guidance counsellor</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">D. Monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>DO1 - Monitoring of actions</p>	<p>Evaluation/Evaluator</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Promotion</p> <p>EO1 - Management of local relationships with enterprises, employment services, local bodies and actors</p> <p>EO2 - Promotion and marketing of guidance services provided by the structure</p>	<p>Promotion/Communication expert</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">F. Quality and research</p>	<p>Quality and research/quality-assurance expert</p>

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

The major changes that have taken place in recent years in the management and disbursement of financing for initial and continuing vocational training are:

- the decision to accord school establishments legal personality and autonomy regarding the organisation of teaching and financial management, as part of an overall reform of the governance of the school system set in motion by Law 59/1997;
- the creation of the Fund for the Improvement and Enlargement of Training Supply and for Equalizing Measures (Law 440/1997);
- the drafting of a new model of apprenticeship (Law 196/1997), designed to strengthen the aspect relating to training outside the workplace;

- the attribution of new competences concerning upper secondary education to the provincial authorities as part of a broad devolutionary process, in which the administrative functions of central government are transferred to regional and local authorities (Legislative Decree 112/1998);
- the introduction of the compulsory requirement to attend training activities until the age of 18 (Law 144/1999), enactment of which will entail the disbursement by central government of additional financing to the regional authorities;
- the creation of the sectoral training funds for continuing training (Law 388/2000, amended by Law 289/2002);
- the amendment of Article 117 of the Constitution (Constitutional Law 3/2001), vesting in the regional authorities the exclusive power to legislate on matters of education and vocational training, with the exclusion of the task of liaising with the European Union.
- the creation of the Sectoral Funds for Continuing Training (*Fondi Paritetici Interprofessionali per la Formazione Continua*) (Law 388/2000, amended by Law 289/2002), which modifies the framework of funding continuing training by introducing the direct management by the Social Partners, and affects the mechanisms for funding vocational training activities;
- the new guiding line of national tools for financing continuing training (ESF, L. 236/93, L. 53/00), with the framework being revised as the Sectoral Funds are introduced.

For the future it will very probably become necessary to reform flows of funds and expenditure and financing mechanisms in the education and initial and continuing vocational training systems after the introduction of Law 53/2003, instituting the education and initial vocational training system, and of Law 30/2003 and subsequent Legislative Decree 276/2003, reintroducing apprenticeship as the only form of contract for the work placement of young people that entitles firms to obtain relief from social security contributions because it enhances the instructional aspects, and the start-up of the Sectoral training Funds.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In the case of state-run *vocationally oriented streams in education* (technical and vocational colleges) financing is basically provided out of funds belonging to the Ministry of Education, University and Research and the provincial authorities.

The regional authorities also play a crucial role in this sector, particularly in the Centre and North of the country, by means of the European Social Fund. In fact they can finance specialisation courses that are part of the so-called "terza area" of two-year post-qualification study (4th and 5th years), as well as integrated school and vocational training and any integrated post-diploma/education and higher technical training courses. Moreover, the regional authorities can also use ESF to contribute to measures aimed at reducing school dropout rates, teacher training and refresher courses and other activities.

Overall, therefore, apart from the regional authorities, the centres of responsibility for spending on vocational training are:

- nationally, the Ministry of Education, University and Research;
- regionally, the regional school boards, to which the Ministry of Education must transfer most of its budget allocations under the current reforms;
- locally, the administrative service centres, CSA (formerly, the provincial education offices) and the provincial authorities;
- each technical and vocational colleges.

The provincial authorities are responsible for school buildings, including the payment of utility charges. To cut down on delays and simplify formalities, and to apply the principle of individual school autonomy, some provincial authorities have transferred to the schools themselves the funds needed to cover office and operating expenses (i.e. those of an administrative nature, not connected with teaching) and small-scale everyday maintenance work.

Part of the allocations for refresher training for personnel are managed centrally (by the Ministry of Education) and part are transferred locally or to individual establishments.

In the future, responsibility for vocational training will be transferred to the regional authorities.

Figures for 2002 show that expenditure on vocationally oriented school streams totalled €7,4 billion, which represents an increase of around 17.1% compared with the previous year.

As for apprenticeship, after the reform enacted by Law 196/1997, the system of relief from social security contributions is retained, but only applies if the apprentice effectively takes part in training outside the workplace. As a result there has been a gradual increase in regional funding for this type of training.

As things stand, the responsibilities for financing apprenticeship are shared as follows:

- the state grants relief from social security contributions to firms offering apprenticeship contracts and to apprentices, who pay a reduced rate. The measure cost the government an estimated €1769 million in lost revenue in 2002;
- the regional authorities finance training courses outside the workplace introduced in 1997, partly using funds provided by the state and the European Social Fund. In 2002, €127,7 million were pledged for this purpose.

The regional authorities are responsible for *vocational training*, which they finance from the following sources:

- the Common Regional Fund,
- the Fund for Vocational Training and Access to the European Social Fund,
- the European Social Fund,
- funds disbursed by the state for specific activities.

The Common Regional Fund collects all the monetary transfers from the state to cover total expenditure incurred by the regional authorities. The amounts are calculated as a fixed percentage of certain state tax revenues and are distributed among the 15 ordinary regions according to established parameters. The 5 regions with special charters cannot access the Common Fund because they are able to levy taxes directly from their resident population.

The Fund for Vocational Training and Access to the European Social Fund consists of contributions from the state and from firms, which pay in 0.30 % of their total wage bill; two thirds of the sum go towards the national quota of funding of activities eligible for contributions from the European Social Fund. The Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE) [The CIPE is an interministerial body responsible for economic planning and hence for the assignment of disposable resources] establishes the mechanisms used to transfer funds from the state to the regional authorities, on a proposal by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Ministry of the Treasury.

The European Social Fund finances regional training projects according to the Operational Plans of the local authorities and in this respect constitutes a major source of funding for regionally run vocational training.

The regional authorities receive additional financing from the state under specific legislation, such as Law 144/1999 and Law 236/1993.

These sources finance both initial regional training and training for unemployed workers.

Finally, since a gradual devolution to the provincial authorities is currently under way, the regional authorities that have already completed the transfer of functions establish the amount of resources available for each province on the basis of agreed parameters, and if necessary hold back quotas for projects of regional importance.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

A - PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVT AND ADULT LEARNING

The financial framework for the promotion of continuing vocational training projects in Italy is somewhat complex, since it involves a multitude of devices developed as part of a policy scenario that been constantly evolving in recent years.

At present, the main providers are:

1. The European Social fund, which in the period 2000-2006 allocates funds for all Regional Operational Programmes for training projects and projects for company organisational development, prioritising SMEs;
2. State transfers to the Common Regional Fund for regions with ordinary charters of part of the revenue from social security contributions and regional taxes; these revenues are not destined exclusively for use in vocational training;
3. The Multi-sectoral Funds, which according to law 236/1993 compulsorily allocates to CVT one third of the financial resources that stem from the 0.30% of their wage bill that firms contribute to fund training activities. The JIFs are run by the social partners and companies can choose whether to participate or not.

Approximately 300,000 enterprises with a total of 4,260,000 employees have joined the Funds. By the end of 2004, numerous funds will issue public announcements addressed to the enterprises.

Law 53/2000 on training leave allows the funding of CVT vouchers for workers. It recognises the right of workers to lifelong learning by granting specific leave for training.

It also establishes the general principle that the state, the regional and local authorities must guarantee a supply of training to allow workers to build personalised pathways that are certified and recognised at national and European level. The type of training can be chosen independently by the worker or arranged by the company.

The Ministry of Labour has already allocated the resources (60 million euros for the first 4 years, distributed among the regional authorities to fund the two types of action envisaged:

- training projects for workers that entail proportional reductions in working hours in accordance with contractual agreements;
- training projects submitted by the workers themselves.

Since 1973 workers have had the right to approximately 150 hours' leave to take part in courses. More recently, financial incentives for individualised workers' training have been experimented in a number of regions, as part of

ESF financed actions, in the form of training vouchers that can be spent in a private establishment of choice. Finally, in the last two years, Law 236/1993 has funded guidance, counselling, skills audits and similar activities.

The "Permanent Territorial Centres for Adult Education" have recently been instituted under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, University and Research. Their objective is to identify and fulfil individual demand for vocational education and training. This is usually free of charge and mainly geared to remedial or first time acquisition of basic skills (languages, computer studies, Italian for foreigners, and so on) or to basic vocational training (pre-vocationally oriented training). They address young people and adults, employed or unemployed workers, without distinction. The centres mainly operate with funding from the Ministry of Education, but they may also receive contributions from the local authorities.

Between 2001 and 2002 Law 383/2001 has introduced subsidies for firms investing in training; by taking over part of their social security contribution liability.

The regional authorities are responsible for continuing vocational training.

The vocational training system finances:

- continuing training programmed by firms for their employees;
- continuing training conducted by training bodies, bilateral organisations, trade associations and so on, for employees of one or more firms or for workers with mobility status or subsidised by the Wage Supplementation Fund;
- individualised training projects and individual training plans;
- training projects which, under the terms of labour agreements, envisage reduced working hours
- training projects presented by workers themselves;
- trainer training;
- continuing training actions designed to set innovative processes in motion.

Self-employed workers, craft workers, owners of SMEs and members of co-operatives are not beneficiaries of training actions financed through the Multi sectoral Training Funds. Therefore the Ministry of Labour has provided for the distribution of 100 million euros to the Regional authorities.

Separate consideration has been given to staff training in the public administration, which has increased substantially. Here, the European Social Fund has again played a crucial role

LEVELS OF FUNDING

Since 1996, the measures enacting Law 236 have pledged over 830 million euros. The ESF programming for 2000-2006 allocates 1,846,759,151.3 euros to continuing training, split between actions addressing public sector employees and actions targeting private sector employees. Continuing training for private sector employees involves substantially more funds, accounting for 82.6% of all financing during the programming period.

One of the first points for consideration regarding the training of public administration employees concerns the overall funds allocated to activities at different levels of government. Although the data show an increase in the proportion of expenditure on training relative to total wages between 2000 and 2002, the average threshold of 1% of earnings, set as one of the short to medium term programming objectives, has not yet been achieved.

Public spending on training in the public administration (% of total wages)

	1999	2000	2001	2002
TOTAL	0.82	0.81	0.98	0.98

Source: ISFOL, based on data from the Report on Training in the Public Administration, various years.

In central government departments spending has decreased in absolute terms. In particular, it has dropped from 122 million euros in 2000 to 152 million euros 2001 and finally to just 119 million euros in 2002.

Participation in training activities in central government					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002

% OF TOTAL PERSONNEL	37	40	53	71	66
ACTUAL PARTICIPANTS	-	-	230,000	282,894	302,629

Source: ISFOL, based on data from the Report on Training in the Public Administration, various years.

The table below data on regional expenditure on personnel training shows that in 1995-2001, there was a substantial increase in the amount of funding and in the proportion of expenditure in relation to the total wage bill. In 2001, expenditure on training totalled 20.6 million euros. To this must be added indirect costs, such as transfer expenses, personnel costs and the costs of any in-house facilities. If these items are included, total expenditure rises to just over 28 million euros.

An indirect indicator of the effect of ESF funding on the figures quoted so far is provided by forecasts of regional expenditure for the period 2002-2004. These have been increasing rapidly, to reach more than 25 million euros in 2004, an increase of 24.2% with respect to 2001.

Regional expenditure on personnel training. Annual budget allocations (Euros000)		
	EXPENDITURE ON TRAINING - ABSOLUTE VALUE	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON WAGES (*)
1995	7698	0.29
1998	13464	0.45
2000	18388	0.55
2001	20556	0.64
2001 INCLUDING INDIRECT COSTS	28100	0.88
2002	23133	0.64
	FORECASTS 2002-2005	
2003	23505	
2004	25532	
2005	26825	

(*) Expressed as the sum of: union wage, back charges, charges paid by the public administration, career grade allowance and Article 31 accessory benefits, quota of severance pay fund.

Source: 5th Report on Training in the Public Administration 2001.

91.5% of municipal authorities and 98.2% of provincial authorities conducted at least one training session for their employees in 2001. The trend is for this figure to increase in both cases, although between 2000 and 2001 there was a reduction of 1.3% in the percentage of "municipalities engaged in training".

Municipalities and provinces: magnitude of the training phenomenon (%)						
	MUNICIPALITIES			PROVINCES		
	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
BODIES THAT CONDUCTED TRAINING	92.8	91.5	99.1	92.5	98.2	98.5
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PERSONNEL THAT RECEIVED TRAINING	30.0	50.6	53.0	67.1	62.9	69.1
EXPENDITURE ON TRAINING AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WAGE BILL	0.46	0.61	0.6	0.80	0.80	0.9

Source: ISFOL, based on the Report on Personnel Training in the Public Administration, various years.

Expenditure on training is increasing slowly but is heading towards the objective of 1% of the total wage bill. The provincial authorities have already reached 0.9%, after two years during which the proportion did not move from 0.8%. The percentage for the municipal authorities is 0.6%, up from 0.5% in 2000.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING: RECIPIENTS AND CRITERIA

Central government transfers a part of tax revenue to the Common Fund allocated to the regional authorities.

Regional authorities are in charge of managing and programming continuing training activities and therefore administer most of the funding. They select continuing vocational training projects and distribute funding according to their assessment.

A criterion has been established for the distribution of funding among the Multi-sectoral Funds according to the percentage representation of employers' organisations based on the number of employees and managers in the firms belonging to the ones that set up the Multi-sectoral Funds. Nine Multi-sectoral Funds were set up in 2003.

COMPANY-BASED CONTINUING TRAINING

ADMINISTRATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Multi-sectoral Funds for Continuing Training		
FUND NAME	SECTOR	ALLOCATIONS (*) (EUROS)
FONDO PER LE IMPRESE - FONDIMPRESA	Industry	41,307,178.55
FONDO FORMAZIONE PMI	Industry (SMEs)	11,313,014.08
FONDO PER IL TERZIARIO - FOR.TE	Service sector: trade-tourism-services, banking and finance, insurance and logistics-shipping-transport	24,553,964.25
FONDO PER IL TERZIARIO - FON.TER	Service sector: tourism and distribution-services	2,723,231.04
FONDO ARTIGIANATO - FART	- Craft industries - SMEs	7,919,109.86

FONDO PER LE IMPRESE COOPERATIVE - FONCOOP	Co-operatives	4,671,729.02
FONDO DEI DIRIGENTI DELL'INDUSTRIA - FONDIRIGENTI	Industry (management)	2,625,568.37
FONDO DEI DIRIGENTI DEL TERZIARIO - FON.DIR	Service sector: trade-tourism-services, banking and finance, insurance and logistics-shipping-transport	869,719.52

(*) First distribution of funds per Article. 118, Law 388/2000, ordered by Decree of the Ministry of Labour 148/I/2003.

LEVELS OF FUNDING

Data compiled by the National Institute for Statistics (ISTAT) as part of an ad hoc survey [ISTAT-Eurostat, CVTS1, Continuing Vocational Training Survey] for 1993 and subsequent estimates based on the number of employees participating in training activities point to a constant increase, in terms of direct and indirect costs, in the investment made in personnel training.

Total expenditure by firms on employee training (Lit. billion; million euros)					
	1993	1995	1996	1997	1999
DIRECT COSTS (NET OF SUBSIDIES)	542.8	601.8	873.0	970.0	
INDIRECT COSTS (1)	1,901.6	2,362.7	2,951.9	3,355.2	
TOTAL	2,264.4	2,964.5	3,824.9	4,325.2	
TOTAL IN EUROS	1,169.5	1,531.0	1,975.4	2,233.8	3,986

1) Labour costs for trainees and in-house trainers and other overheads.
Source: ISFOL, based on National Institute for Statistics and Eurostat data.

The trends are:

- large companies, those with over 1,000 employees, which represent only 1% of firms providing employee training, nonetheless account for 49.1% of trainees.
- the total cost of training, of which nearly 40% is borne by large companies, has increased substantially with respect to the estimate for 1997, from 2,233.8 million euros to 3,986 million euros in 1999, an increase of 78%.

The number of participants in continuing training projects totalled around 1,952,000 in 1999 (72% men and 28% women), or 47.2% of the total staff of firms organising training courses (and 25.9% of total workers in private companies in the non-farm sector with more than 10 employees). Each participant attended an average of 32 hours of training. Expenditure amounted to about 2,595 million euros for direct training costs alone. Adding to this the compensation of work time spent in training activities, which can be estimated at 1,391 million euros, the aggregate cost reaches the above figure of 3,986 million euros (at least 53% of which is borne by large companies), corresponding to 2.8% of the labour costs of the firms concerned.

The table below shows the main indicators relating to courses run by Italian firms in 1999. It emerges that labour costs, that is the indirect costs borne by firms, represent 34.9% of total costs, with a peak in the case of firms with more than 1,000 employees.

According to a national survey [Unioncamere, 'Excelsior' Survey, 2003.] the cost of continuing training for Italian firms increased by 46% in the three years from 2000 to 2002, but 40% of that is borne exclusively by large firms and only 23.8% by very small ones, while the remaining 36% is spread among SMEs. Public funds also represent a greater percentage of aggregate expenditure on continuing training in the case of large firms; the proportion ranges from 4.7% for firms with 1 to 9 employees to 20.4% for firms with more than 250, again illustrating how difficult it is for very small companies to obtain public funds for continuing training, particularly those in the service sector.

Nonetheless, in the wholesale and retail trade and in business services it is precisely firms with 1 to 9 employees that have the greatest propensity to invest in personnel training.

The results of the recent 2003 survey by ISFOL and the Turin Polytechnic, show that the role of public funding in training is by no means negligible among these firms: 45% of those studied used public funds in 2000 to carry out training projects. The figure for 2001 indicates a tendency for this proportion to increase, with approximately 50% of the sample tapping the source.

The same survey indicates that, as far as the main forms of support are concerned, in 2000-2001 there was little change in the volume of funds obtained under Law 236/1993, which continued to stand at around 24% of the total, while use of the ESF increased from 21.2% in 2000 to 32.2% in 2001, as did that of other forms of support, such as the second "Tremonti 2" Law, which came into force at the end 2001 and was used by some 7% of the sample during that year.

The impact of public funding on company training policies also reflects its strategic role: according to the majority of firms that used public funding between 2000 and 2001 (around 53%), its availability was a determining factor in the decision to carry out the training projects.

Turning to the link between availability of public funding, company size and sector, the survey confirms that the likelihood of accessing this source improves with company size. This can be attributed to the fact that larger companies are also the ones most likely to programme training with detailed plans and specific budgets. Moreover, many of the projects that received financing required the sort of programming capacity that smaller firms generally do have to the same extent. Apart from this significant relationship with company size, the use of public funding is also closely linked to the sector of production. Service and mass production companies are very much keener to use public support, unlike those operating in the advanced tertiary sector, which resort to this source less frequently.

For the firms that have never made use of public funds at all, the survey reports that the enormous bureaucratic formalities to which they are constrained effectively discourage recourse. In fact, 67% of such companies put this reason first, while the remaining 40% place particular emphasis on the lack of adequate information about financing opportunities.

Main indicators of personnel training courses in Italian companies with more than 10 workers by size category. Year 1999

COMPANY SIZE BY STAFF NUMBER	FIRMS ENGAGED IN TRAINING	N° PARTICIPANTS	HOURS OF COURSE ATTENDANCE	TOTAL COSTS (THOUSAND EURO)	% OF LABOUR COSTS IN TOTAL COST	AVERAGE COURSE HOURS PER PARTICIPANT	AVERAGE COST OF 1 HOUR OF COURSE
10-19	18,005	120,820	5,218,428	386,072	20.3	43.2	74.0
20-49	14,530	198,266	6,855,673	494,665	24.7	34.6	72.2
50-249	8,087	344,051	11,426,173	827,593	27.8	33.2	72.4
250-499	1,265	176,321	4,761,360	329,422	33.7	27.0	72.4
500-999	515	154,244	5,127,414	375,908	34.8	33.2	73.3
1000 and over	427	958,649	29,195,892	1,572,326	45.6	30.5	53.9
Total	42,829	1,952,351	62,584,940	3,985,986	34.9	32.1	63.7

Source: National Institute for Statistics-Eurostat CVTS2

Data on expenditure are not encouraging, however. Private spending amounts to 0.4% of GDP while in Europe it is 0.6%. Company expenditure on continuing training points to a growth in this investment from 1993 to 1999, which rose from 0.8% to 1.1% of GDP. However, the current level of funding is clearly still well below the level of recent EU objectives. On average, 62% of European firms allow their staff to take advantage of opportunities for training, but only 47% of workers take part in continuing training projects. In Italy the figure is much lower, equalling 23.9%.

In addition, national surveys of firms indicate that there are wide differences in learning and training opportunities for employees. The rates of access to knowledge in companies differ greatly between workers in low positions and with poor levels of education and those in higher positions and with better education, between the young and the old, between men and women.

Cost of CVT courses as % of total labour cost (all enterprises), by type of cost (1999)

	TOTAL COSTS	DIRECT COSTS	LABOUR COSTS OF PARTICIPANTS
EU-15	2.3	1.4	0.8
ITALY	1.7	1.2	0.6

Total costs: sum of direct costs, staff time costs and balance of contributions to national or regional training funds and receipts from national or other funding arrangements
Direct costs: costs of CVT courses

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, 2nd continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS)

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

The reforms introduced in Italy in recent years for the labour market, the social security and the Vocational Education and Training system involve an overall system oriented towards "Welfare to Work". One of the main objectives of this system is to foster the integration or reintegration in the labour market for the unemployed, the weaker categories or those at risk of exclusion.

In order to achieve these results, the action of the Government and the Regional Authorities, in agreement with the social partners, is aimed at:

- a) Creating a transparent and efficient labour market;
- b) Introducing contract types useful for extending participation in the labour market, also for individuals at risk of social exclusion;
- c) Pursuing effective employment policies, by increasing investments in training;
- d) Rationalising and re-formulating the system of social buffers, in order to replace protection at the workplace with protection in the labour market.

The "Welfare to Work" strategy for the period 2003-2006 has the purpose of promoting policies for the integration or reintegration of job-seekers in the labour market, aimed at raising the overall employment rate and based on an effective and virtuous combination between employment policy (employment service, guidance and training) and income support for the unemployed.

The instruments to achieve "Welfare to Work" policies are directed on the one hand at giving greater fluidity to the market, freeing it from excessive regulation, and on the other at reforming the income-support system, thus enhancing training actions and increasing personal responsibility. Law 30/03, the reform of ordinary job placement and the forthcoming reform of social buffers should allow:

- The restructuring of the job-placement regulations, the setting-up of the registry of workers, a new definition of the unemployment status and the connection between rights and duties (guidance interview and proposal for training or work within certain times);
- The regulated liberalisation of employment services in order to give greater fluidity to the market;
- The activation of the Continuous Labour Exchange;
- The reform of the income-support system, with an increase in unemployment benefits and the strict definition of procedures for access, duration and loss of forms of income support based on the responsibility of the beneficiary.

With regard to the activation and prevention of unemployment, the reform of the labour market has the following aims:

- To foster the integration of women, young and older workers in the labour market, increasing the employment rate, developing a more efficient and transparent system for the labour supply and demand matching;
- To guarantee the rapid reintegration in the labour market of those who have lost their job;
- To define a solid training system for 'lifelong' support;

- To shift protection from the single job to the labour market.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

The Italian government investment policies to support the growth of human resources were initially illustrated in the White Paper on Labour Market in Italy (October 2001) that identified vocational training as one of the main instruments to foster the increase of the employment rate in Italy.

Subsequently, a more accurate definition of the path being followed to achieve the objective has been described in the "Pact for Italy" (June 2002), thus highlighting the need for greater investment in the training of human resources as one of the key points for fostering social integration of the population and increasing the competitiveness of the Italian system (See Theme 2).

In this context, the Government, with the approval of Law 53/03 (See Theme 2 & Theme 4), has started up a general review of the entire framework of the national education and training system, in order to improve the employability and social integration of people by raising the cultural and professional level of young people and adults. In this regard, the law provides for a specific long-term financial plan to support the implementation of the reform, which includes funding to support adult education and Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTS).

Further measures in national policy for increasing investments in human capital were undertaken with the approval of Law 30/03 reforming the employment and labour market (See Theme 2 & Theme 4), thus giving a new stimulus to the apprenticeship contracts. The latter are recognised as the only type of contract for the job insertion of young people which, as a result of the training aims characterising it, entitles the enterprises to tax deductions.

Finally, another major aspect for supporting the growth of human resources is the gradual setting-up of the interprofessional funds for continuing training (established under Law 388/00). In compliance with regional programming and the guidelines of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the interprofessional funds (See Theme 3) will specifically provide the main financial instrument to support the vocational training of workers, in the context of the competitiveness of enterprises and the guarantee for the employability of workers in the years to come.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

National education and training strategies, in line with the European Employment Strategy, are set out in the Patto per l'Italia (see Chapter 2) and in the National Action Plan (NAP) for employment.

The Patto per l'Italia considers the priority to be to upgrade human resources to promote economic growth, step up employment and the ability to stay in the labour market and promote social inclusion, closing the gap between those who are promoters of development and those who are excluded from such development.

A priority goal is the widespread acquisition of a higher level of basic skills and competences (languages, mathematics, technology, social skills) through lifelong education initiatives for adults able to satisfy the demand from 700 000 people from 2003 onwards. Making the most of human resources is a particular priority in the strategy to develop southern Italy and the government has undertaken to pay more attention to lifelong education initiatives for adults. The reforms of the education system and the labour market under way in 2003 are part and parcel of the current European scene.

The aim of the NAP for employment (2003) is to increase the employment rate, by highlighting the ways in which social inclusion and employability are interrelated with education and training; its action priorities include better general education and occupational qualification of young people and adults to make it easier for them to enter and stay in the labour market, reducing the current divide between the north and south of Italy.

In particular, with regard to measures to deal with and prevent unemployment, the reform of the labour market aims - among other things - at defining a solid lifelong learning system, as stated in the NAP 2003.

Policies will mainly aim at securing an increase in investments in human resources, above all by the enterprises so as to try to achieve the parameter of 12.5% participation of the adult working-age population interested in lifelong learning activities.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This is to be found chiefly in:

- mobility and the measures taken to promote innovations (for instance recognition of qualifications and occupations, the European Europass system, the European curriculum vitae and Community programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates (Grundtvig, Erasmus);
- systems innovation through transfers of results and best practices in the areas of methodology, models, training tools, teaching aids, etc.;
- the creation of transnational partnerships and networks entailing cooperation by European partners and involvement of the local, national and transnational actors from the systems of education, vocational training and the working world in order to speed up and facilitate horizontal and vertical mainstreaming processes.

Perhaps the most significant impact of Community policies regards the debate under way in Italy on the procedures for recognising the knowledge and skills acquired on a non-formal basis (e.g. using the training booklet).

As regards the various Lisbon benchmarks, policies are being applied to ensure the attainment of the Community objectives for education and training (for example, Law 53/03 mentioned previously, is aimed at raising the percentage of the younger populations obtaining a certificate or a qualification), and a monitoring system is currently being created.

The Europeanisation process has also had a positive impact on the process for the development, dissemination and use of new communications technologies (ICT) within the education and training sector. The growing focus on the development of e-learning by the Italian public institutions is evidenced by the expansion of the literacy courses in schools and universities (the so-called on-line universities have also been authorised), the fiscal incentives for the purchase of personal computers by the students, and the policy aimed at providing computer literacy courses for civil servants. The aim for 2004 is to disburse 30% of literacy training specifically targeted to civil servants via e-learning.

List of authors, sources and references

General coordination: **Isfol - 'Research on Information and Documentation' Area:** Colombo Conti - Maria Elena Moro - Alessandra Pedone

Authors:

Theme 1: Claudio Franzosi (Isfol - 'Training Systems' Area)

Theme 2: Sandra D'Agostino (Isfol - 'Training Systems' Area)

Theme 3: Sandra D'Agostino (points 1, 2, 3) (Isfol - 'Training Systems' Area), Roberto Maini (point 4.) (Isfol - 'Training Systems' Area)

Theme 4: Marcella Milana (Isfol - 'Training Systems' Area)

Theme 5: Paola Nicoletti (points 1, 2, 3) (Isfol - 'Training Systems' Area), Roberto Angotti (points: 1, 2, 3, 4) (Isfol - 'Continuing Training' Project)

Theme 6: Giulia Governatori (Isfol - 'Training Experimentation' Area), Vincenza Infante (Isfol - 'Training Experimentation' Area)

Theme 7: Elisabetta Perulli (Isfol - 'Training Methods' Area)

Theme 8: Elisabetta Perulli (Isfol - 'Training Methods' Area)

Theme 9: Daniela Pavoncello (Isfol - 'Training Systems' Area)

Theme 10: Costantino Massari (Isfol - 'Training Systems' Area)

Theme 11: Paola Nicoletti (Isfol - 'Training Systems' Area)

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