

Italy

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: Italy: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2006

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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 2006. Later editions can be viewed from August 2007 onwards 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 and has 20 Regions, 103 Provinces and 8.100 local authorities.

The State 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

AREAS	AGE GROUPS		
	0-14	15-64	65 +
North	13.1	66.2	20.7
Centre	13.1	65.9	21.0
South	16.1	66.8	17.1
ITALY	14.2	66.4	19.5

Source: ISTAT

Click on the link below to see Figure 1: [Resident population by age group on 1 January of each year \(2005 and forecasts for 2012 and 2020, in %\)](#)

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

The national statistical office (ISTAT) data register a resident population, on 1 January 2005, of 58.462.375 inhabitants, distributed over an area of 301,328.45 km² with a density of 194 inhabitants per km². 45.3% of Italians live in the northern regions, 35,5% in the southern regions and 19.2% in the central regions. The birth rate is continuing to fall (except for the 0-5 age class), 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 1: Main Economic and Labour Market Indicators in Italy.	
INDICATORS	2004
Percentage of workers employed in agriculture	4.4
Percentage of workers employed in industry	30.7
Percentage of workers employed in services	64.9
Employment rate	45.4
Male employment rate	57.4
Female employment rate	34.3
Unemployment rate	8.0
Male unemployment rate	6.4
Female unemployment rate	10.5
Youth unemployment rate (up to 25 years of age)	23.5
Public expenditure for education and training in relation to GDP (a)	4.98
Public expenditure for education and training in relation to total public expenditure (b)	10.21

(a) 2003. Istat and Miur data processed by the Isfol "Training Systems" Area

Table 2: Employment rates by gender and by geographical area (in 2004, in %)			
	AREAS		
	NORTH	CENTRE	SOUTH
TOTAL	50.8	47.3	37.4
MEN	61.5	58.1	51.6
WOMEN	40.7	37.4	24.1

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

Table 3: Unemployment rates by geographical area (2004, in %)			
	AREAS		
	NORTH	CENTRE	SOUTH
TOTAL	4.3	6.5	15.0
MEN	3.0	4.9	11.9
WOMEN	5.9	8.7	20.5
YOUNG PEOPLE (UP TO 25)	12.6	21.4	37.6

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

In 2004, according to the average annual data recorded by the Istat, the number of employed persons accounted for 45.4% of the population aged over 15. This percentage rises to 57.4% if we consider the male employment rate, and remains at a lower level for the female population (33.4%).

Reflecting a characteristic common to the economically developed countries, most of the employed labour force has been absorbed by the services sector (64.9%), while 30.7% are employed in industry, and another 4.4% in agriculture.

The unemployment rate has been steadily falling over recent years, reaching 8.0% in 2004, with a fall of 1,2% compared to 2001 and 0.7 percent point if compared to 2003. Compared to the overall average value, the male unemployment rate is lower (6.4%). Female unemployment accounts for 10.5% of the workforce, while the worst situation is recorded for young people aged under 25, as shown by the youth unemployment rate of 23.5%.

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.

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

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 2004, analysing the population aged over 15, 26.0% of the Italians had at most a primary-school certificate. Holders of an upper secondary certificate accounted for 40.9% of the total, while 8.6% attained a university qualification. (for similar data on the previous years see table 5).

Table 1: 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.

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%. (table 6)

Table 2: Distribution of population (25-64) by educational level attained (2004, in %)	
ISCED LEVELS (A)	2004
ISCED 0-1 (no qualification or primary certificate)	26.0
ISCED 2 (lower secondary certificate)	33.1
ISCED 3 (upper secondary certificate)	32.3
ISCED 5-6 (university qualification)	8.6
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

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 23.5% in 2004.

Table 3: Percentage of the population, aged 18 to 24 years having left education and training with low level of education (2003-2004 in %)	
YEAR	%
2003	23.5
2004	23.5

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey.

Table 4: Educational attainment of the population aged 25-64 by ISCED level, % (2003)			
LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU-15			
ITALY	53.5%	36%	10.5%

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

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 citizen 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 (IFTTS);
- 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

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 schools 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 in 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 3/01)

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 and sets the minimum service levels for the vocational training system. It maintains an active role in defining the legal framework and the Repertoire of qualifications for apprenticeship contract and in approving and addressing the Sectoral Training Funds for continuing vocational training.

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 a unitary manner of context regulation, 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;
- 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 (IFTTS).

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).

As a consequence of all the reforms at national level, Constitutional reform n. 3/01 included, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces are defining new laws, fixing the regulation framework for the vocational training systems at regional level.

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'.

At a national level, the social partners play a key role, which is set to become strategic, in apprenticeship, defining the objectives of the training held outside the workplace, and on the job, since, following the establishment of the *Fondi interprofessionali* (see [GLOSSARY](#) attached), they have become planners of training.

At regional level, the social partners take part in tripartite committees which approve the Regional employment plans, that comprise the strategy for the development of the vocational training system.

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.

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities of social partners by type of role.		
	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

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](#)

Education is compulsory from the age of 6 to 15. Law 53/03 (see 0201) introduced, subject to legal consequences, the concept of *diritto-dovere all'istruzione e alla formazione professionale* (right-duty to participate in education and vocational training) for 12 years or at least until students obtain an educational or training qualification. The *diritto-dovere* starts from the first class of primary school up to the age of 18. It can be satisfied, even if young people have not reach the age of 18, either by obtaining the Diploma of upper secondary school, passing a State exam or obtaining a vocational qualification of three year. This reform, in coherence with Community principles and guidelines in education and training, is aimed at the development of knowledge and the full development of the individual.

This goes beyond the distinction, between the obligation to stay in the school system up to the age of 14 and the obligation to attend training up to the age of 18. The *diritto – dovere* can be satisfied either in schools or in vocational institutions.

After *la scuola dell'infanzia* (pre-primary school, three years), the system consists of two subsequent cycles.

The first cycle is structured as *scuola primaria* (primary school, five years) and lower secondary school (three years). Primary school starts at the age of 5,5 or 6 and has the purpose of ensuring the acquisition and the development of basic knowledge and abilities. Lower secondary school starts at 10,5 or 11. The first cycle of study terminates at the age of 13,5 or 14 (according to the starting age). It ends with a State exam leaving a certificate (*Certificato di Licenza Media*), useful for the access to the second cycle.

The reform has organised the second cycle in 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 system, 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) (see 0406) 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. The partial completion of whichever pathway or part of pathway provides 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.

At the age of 15, students can decide to satisfy the *diritto-dovere* following a pathway to obtain diplomas and qualifications by school-work alternance (see 0403) or entering in *apprendistato* (apprenticeship) (see 0404)

The reform regarding the lycée system will be tested during the 2006/07 school year, after the new curricula would be defined and all the new regulation agreed with the Regions, while at the moment VET system pathway is effective, although under testing.

Nowadays (school year 2005/2006) young people of 14 years at the end of the first cycle have done their choice according to the old system of upper secondary education or to experimental VET system. Synthetically the old system organised the second cycle in :

Licei (Lycées): liceo classico, liceo scientifico, liceo linguistico, artistico (classical lycée, scientific lycée, language lycée, arts lycée)

Liceo delle scienze della formazione (Lycée of training science)

Istituti d'arte (schools of applied arts)

Istituti tecnici (technical schools)

Istituti professionali (vocational schools)

The lasting of Lycées and Technical schools is 5 years; at the end students obtain the Diploma of upper secondary school, which pave for university entrance; the lasting of Schools of applied arts and Vocational schools is 3 years plus 2 optional years. At the end of 3 years pathways students obtain a *licenza di maestro d'arte* (Master of Arts licence) in the first case and a certificate of vocational qualification in the second. The certificate allows the access to 4th year of IVET system; at the end of this students obtain a diploma of vocational qualification recognised at national level and useful for entry in labour market. A further year of training aims to prepare students for the State Exam and obtain Diploma of upper secondary school.

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Generally speaking IVET is not provided at this level. Lower secondary school, of a three-year duration, has only one education pathway common to all students aged between 11 and 14. The curricula include above all general subjects and have not work-based training. This because Italian law (see 0404) forbids engaging young people aged less than 15 in work. Students learn a second European foreign language and further study of ITCs.

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) and have to continue their studies by enrolling in and attending upper secondary education. (See 0403)

At this level the reform bill of the school system (Law 53/03) envisages important changes. 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).

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

Click on the following link to see Figure 1: [Distribution of students in upper secondary schools, by type of school and programme orientation \(school year 2004/2005\)](#)

Table 1: Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (general/vocational). Year 2003. Isced level 3		
PROGRAMME	TOTAL	%
Upper secondary education general and pre-vocational programmes	1 991 752	74.0
Upper secondary education vocational programmes	698 717	26.0
Upper secondary education total enrolment	2 690 469	100.0

Source: Eurostat, UOE, Newcronos, Education statistics based on Isced 97 release date 29/06/2005

At the end of the First cycle students of 14 (13,5) years enter in upper secondary education and they can choose between two channels: the school system (Lycée system) or the VET system.

From the 2006/2007 school year on, schools or group of schools will start with the testing of the lycée system. The lycée system proposes several pathways with the duration of 5 years; the curricula develops in two biennium plus one year. The lycées system is organised in: artistic, classical, economic, linguistic, musical, scientific, technological, humanities. At the end of the stream, students have to pass a State exam to obtain a Diploma of Upper Secondary school allowing access to University, advanced artistic, musical and dance training and “*alla Istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore (IFTS)*” - Higher Technical Education and Training (see 0406). Admission to the 5th year of pathway allows access to IFTS training.

IVET, for which the regional authorities are responsible, can be attended in *Istituti professionali* (Vocational schools) or in Vocational Centres and is organised in:

- four year pathways leading to the diploma of vocational qualification, recognised at national and European level, useful for entry in labour market or to continue training into IFTS - Higher technical education and training. Attending a supplementary year and passing the State exam to obtain Diploma of upper secondary education students can also enter into university system. This kind of pathway is provided by Vocational schools.
- triennial pathways – supplied by Vocational centres - 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 at the 4th year of IVET system.

Students who have reached the age of 15 can also choose to undertake the entire training 'till 18 years through a pathway based on school/work alternance. This kind of training can be followed both in the *licei* system and in VET system and ensures that young people acquire basic skills but also competences useful in the labour market. The path is designed, implemented and evaluated under the responsibility of the school or training organisation and is the result of an agreement between school-training institutions, enterprises, chambers of commerce, public and private institutions. There is a module based organisation of activities involving alternance between theoretical and technical-practical training and a tutorial system in which two training tutors, one inside the school and one outside it, work in cooperation.

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.

Students can furthermore undertake practical work in Italy or abroad, recognised with specific skills certification awarded by the schools or the training organisation.

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

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Young people aged 15 or more can enter the labour market via alternance methods such as *apprendistato* (apprenticeship), a contract which offers a combination of training and occupational experience. The maximum age limit for apprenticeship contracts is 24, 26 in the Southern part of Italy (Objective 1 of the European Social Fund - ESF); the age limit can be extended to 29 for craft apprentices and always has to be over two years for disabled young people.

Contracts last from 18 months to four years. Enterprises in all sectors may use these types of contract.

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. Moreover 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.

Apprentices receive a salary equal to a percentage, set by collective labour agreements, of the salary of an employed worker with the same qualification.

A new system has been set up by Law 30/03 and the following legislative decree 276/03, but it needs to be regulated by Regions and Autonomous Provinces and by the collective agreements. So, for a long period both the former and the new system will live together.

The apprenticeship contract is split in three forms:

- apprenticeship 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 secondary or university diploma or a higher qualification, also for young people aged from 18 to 29.

Apprenticeship for fulfilling the right/duty to participate in vocational education and training lasts no more than three years and it is aimed to get a vocational qualification certificate. This form of apprenticeship will be regulated after completion of the Education system reform.

The duration of the contract for the occupationally-based apprenticeship is set by collective agreements, and cannot be less than two years and more than six years. The Regions and the Autonomous Provinces are competent for regulating the training aspects of the contract in accordance with the local employers' and workers' associations. Up to now only 7 regional laws have been approved.

In this form of apprenticeship a formal training of at least 120 hours per year is compulsory. This formal training can take place in schools or training centres, or in the workplace. Usually, in the regulations issued up to now, the enterprises need to fulfil specific requirements (in terms of teachers, utilities and locations availability) to hold the formal training inside the workplace.

The apprenticeship for the acquisition of secondary or university diploma or a higher qualification is regulated by local agreements among the Region, the employers' and workers' associations, the university or school or training centre involved according to the diploma that apprentices will acquire. The same agreement sets the length of the contract, the balance between on the job and school-based training. In 2005 some Regions in the northern part of Italy have signed agreements with the Ministry of Labour to implement pilot projects of this form of apprenticeship.

According to the new system, all apprenticeship contracts must be set down in writing, with an indication of the work performance covered by the contract, the individual training plan, and the qualification or diploma that has to be attained at the end of the employment, on the basis of the outcomes of both on-the-job and off-the-job training. The results attained within the training pathway are recorded in the citizen's training portfolio and can be recognised as credits for entering any education or training segment.

With regard to salary, apprentices may be graded up to two contractual levels below that of an employed worker with the same qualification, according to collective agreements. [For further details, reference should be made to: ISFOL – *La transizione dall'apprendistato agli apprendistati. Rapporto Apprendistato 2004-05* [The transition from apprenticeship to apprenticeships. 2004-05 apprenticeship report]. Rome: Isfol, 2006].

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

There are no youth programmes or alternative pathways aimed at retaining young people in education and training up to a certain age, as the concept of *diritto-dovere all'istruzione e alla formazione professionale* (right-duty to participate in education and vocational training) for 12 years (from 6 to 18) introduced by the Reform ensures maintaining of young people in VET at least until they obtain an educational or training qualification (see 0401).

Moreover *i Centri per l'impiego* - CPI (Employment centres), in charge for the retrieval of dropouts or young people at risk of exclusion from VET system, run tutoring, counselling and orientation actions, aimed to fight exclusion.

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

At the end of upper secondary education young people (18 years) can decide to continue their education in VET. At this level there are two VET pathways :

- The regional VET courses of II level,
- The Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTS) pathways

The regional VET courses level II, length 600 hours and lead to a regional qualification They are managed by the Regional Authorities and aim at providing students with specialised training. The curricula are based on 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 immediately valid in the labour market.

The Higher Technical Education and Training pathway has the objective of train senior technicians. The world of work demands highly skilled professional profiles and this path can ensure that young people attain a high cultural level and in depth technical and vocational training. It is characterised by a strong integration, both at a system-governance and operational level, among the various institutional actors involved. The pathways are designed and managed by a consortium composed by at least four actors: school, VET organisation, university, enterprise.

The IFTS pathways can be accessed by those possessing an upper secondary school-leaving certificate, or the admission to the 5th year IVET system or by those who, lacking it, possess certifiable skills acquired during previous education, training and work pathways following the completion of compulsory-education, also taking into account the qualification obtained for the purpose of fulfilling the compulsory-training requirement. The length is of at least 1,200 hours and no more than 2,400. Curricula, whose minimum standards have been set at a national level, aims, 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). The on-the-job training activity equals to 30% of the overall hours amount. Each training experience is certified in credits useful in further education/training or work pathways anywhere in the country..

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 of higher technical specialisation 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 and consisting of the university sector and the non university sector.

University sector is made up by Universities (State or private legally recognised by the State), State polytechnics (Politecnici Statali), Higher education schools (Scuole Superiori), and different private institutions recognised by State.

The university system provides:

Corso di Laurea (university-degree course), of a three-year duration. 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.

Corso di Laurea Specialistica (specialist university-degree course), 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.

Non university sector includes institutions providing education and training for the practice of various professions. They can be State institutions or private foundations and are specialised in a specific fields like e.g. Arts, Design, Dance, Drama, and Restoration. They can set up and run or 1st level programmes (for students with school leaving qualification and by a competitive entrance exam), or advanced and specialisation courses and master. The length of courses is different according to the level of course as well as the type of certification awarded (specialisation diplomas or statement of advanced specialised education and training)

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

"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:

- 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;
- "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.

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.

The reference context of lifelong learning (systems of education, training and labour) has been recently affected by wide-ranging reform processes.

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.

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. 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, the Ministry of Education, the Regional and Provincial Authorities, and the Social Partners.

The reform of Title V of the Constitution (Constitutional Law No. 3/2001) transfers to the Regional Authorities competencies of vocational education (State vocational education schools), and the functions previously attributed to the Ministry of Education in the sector of adult education.

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.

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 "Sectoral Funds" (*Fondi Paritetici Inteprofessionali per la Formazione Continua - FPI*), which contributes to extending the variety of the available measures. The 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 Sectoral Funds were set up under Law 388/2000 (amended by the Article 48 of Law 289/2002) and starting in 2004 finance corporate, sectoral, local and individual training plans to benefit the enterprises participating in the funds. The plans are 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 Sectoral Funds (twelve 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 Sectoral 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 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

CVT is provided through different instruments:

- The European Social Fund (ESF);
- The National instruments and resources for the CVT:
 - Adult Education Centres (Centri territoriali permanenti);
 - Law 236/93;
 - Law 53/00;
 - Sectoral Funds for Continuing Training (Fondi Paritetici Interprofessionali per la Formazione Continua), managed by the Social Partners, and organised at regional and local level. (See 0504).

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The composition of the CVT administrative structure is composed of:

- the Ministry of Labour and the Social Partners - at national level;
- regional administrations, autonomous provinces and the Social partners - at regional level;
- provincial administrations - at local level.

With regard to the ESF and national Laws 236/93 and 53/00, the authorities having jurisdiction are: the Ministry of Labour, the regional administrations and autonomous provinces, as well as the provincial administrations where a delegation measure is applicable.

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

1) THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND (ESF).

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;

The programming period 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.

2) THE NATIONAL LAWS FOR THE CVT:

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 Adult Education Centres and 'Level II' schools - evening courses) or informal off-the-job contexts (e.g., Popular and Third Age Universities).

The Ministry of Education Order No. 455 of 29 July 1997, *Educazione in età adulta - Istruzione e Formazione* set up the "Adult Education 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 Adult Education 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 Adult Education Centres has been considerable, rising from 25 in the first year of their foundation (1997) to 540 in 2003-2004.

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

For the first time the monitorino has concerned also the secondary school institutes with evening classes (675 in 2003/2004), with an offer of courses finalised to obtain the secondary school qualification.

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 Adult Education 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 Adult Education 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 and social integration of foreigners;
- Short and modular courses for functional literacy.

Law 236/93 established a fund for vocational training (available each year through a call of the Ministry of Labour for the Regions) 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

The financial resources of Law 236/93, as evident from statistical surveys, have been used in the companies mainly to provide CVT for workers with good professional positions, young and better educated. So, in the last 3 years the Ministry of Labour has provided the allocation of about 300 million euros to the Regional Authorities for financing Training Plans, company vouchers and individual vouchers especially to extend the target of workers (in particular older workers and self-employed workers) involved in CVT.

Target groups of the actions financed by the Law 236/93 are:

- 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. Even in the case of workers and unemployed people, their right to lifelong learning and education is thus formally recognised.

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 (104 million euros) (Inter-ministerial Decrees 167/01 and 136/04) 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.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

One of the most important ways to assure good quality CVET provision in Italy is the accreditation system for providers. All providers whether public or private must be accredited to deliver publicly-funded training and guidance (as legislated in Law 59/97). All regional and local authorities must follow the national criteria outlined in the legislation. In 2002, the legislation was extended to cover minimum standards for vocational qualifications as well as training structures.

Accreditation is necessary for providers wanting to deliver the continuing training of workers employed and unemployed.

To receive accreditation, the operational facilities of public or private providers must have:

- management and logistical capacities;
- teachers with appropriate vocational skills;
- proven record of effectiveness and efficiency;
- links with local groups and enterprises.

The accredited operational facilities must offer services to all categories of users and provide the following:

- ability to provide Information on training and employment opportunities;
- provision of guidance on job-seeking techniques and strategies, new forms of work and the market of professions;
- provision of individualised career guidance in order to enable people to discover their aptitudes, interests and motivations and to define their own professional project.

Accreditation is undertaken by the regional authorities and autonomous provincial authorities on the basis of on-site inspections and an evaluation of documentation. Checks are made on an annual basis to ensure that standards are maintained: accreditation can be removed if they are not.

0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN 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:

- Creating a transparent and efficient labour market;
- Introducing contract types useful for extending participation in the labour market, also for individuals at risk of social exclusion;
- Pursuing effective employment policies, by increasing investments in training;
- 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.

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.

TARGET GROUPS AND PROVISION

a) The unemployed (Job-seekers and the long-term unemployed)

National policies enhancing the employability of job-seekers and increasing their prospects for occupational integration are focused on measures designed to provide incentives for new recruitments through the reduction of tax and social-security payments.

b) Others vulnerable to exclusion in the labour market

The NAP (National Action Plan) provides for various actions aimed at promoting the integration of the disadvantaged and to combat their discrimination. These actions regard the following social groups: older workers, disabled people, immigrants, women, drop-outs, ex-convicts and drug addicts.

b1) Extension of the working age

Among the strategic objectives of the new EES (European Employment Strategy), there is the aim of pursuing full employment, with intermediate objectives for 2005, quantified in an average EU employment rate of 50% for older workers, i.e. those aged between 55 and 64.

b2) Measures to reduce the unemployment of disadvantaged people

Despite the legislative innovations regarding occupational integration (Law 68/99) and the initiatives activated also considering the European projects and funding, the employment levels among the disabled are still low (employment rate amounting to 21%). Women with disabilities are disadvantaged with respect to men, with the former having an employment rate amounting to 11% and the latter totalling 29%.

b3) Measures to reduce the unemployment gap between non-EU and EU citizens

In 2003 Italy implemented a measure for the legalisation of illegal immigration concerning over 700,000 workers, and approved a law regulating the entry of non-EU citizens, linking the residence permit with the employment contract.

The immigrant workforce, involved mainly in sectors with low qualifications, has acquired a structural presence in the Italian economy. Despite this aspect, the active immigrant population evidences significant areas of unemployment, which make measures for vocational re-qualification particularly necessary.

In this regard, the Government's policy is based on four guidelines:

- Simplification of administrative procedures for occupational integration
- Ranking criteria for the matching between labour supply and demand
- Guidance, training and re-qualification of unemployed workers
- Training actions for foreign students
- Combating all forms of discrimination.

Projects for the social integration of immigrant communities have also been started up. These initiatives include:

- Services for language and cultural mediation in the school and health-care sectors and at police stations;
- Assistance to the disadvantaged through the setting-up of centres for hospitality and nursing homes for individuals without a social support network, for the ill and the homeless, and the provision of opportunities for the reformation of juvenile convicts;
- Information, consultancy, guidance and legal-assistance desks;
- Agreements for the evaluation and certification of Italian language skills acquired by immigrants.

b4) Measures for equal opportunities

The following measures are planned for this purpose:

- Guidance activities, both continuing and tailor-made, through the creation of Women's Desks on the provincial level, in order to provide information, guidance and counselling on opportunities for jobs, training, practical work and technical assistance for setting up businesses;
- Support and incentives to new businesses and self-employment;
- Integrated actions for continuing training and permanent updating of women's skills, based on alternating in-company and individual training;
- Introduction of specialised skills in the context of employment services for the social and occupational integration of women who are disadvantaged and at risk of social exclusion;
- Targeted actions in favour of women who are victims of violence, trafficking and enforced prostitution;
- Experimentation of innovative instruments for reconciling professional and family life;
- Incentives for adopting organisational models and the use of flexible forms of work (telework, part-time, job rotation, job sharing and other types of employment integrated with training activities) in order to favour reconciliation;
- Design and definition of quality trademarks to certify the application of innovative organisational solutions for gender issues;
- Actions to support family management, through the development of infrastructures and the reinforcement of the network of social care services (crèches, family and corporate crèches, working-hour and time schedules, time banks, neighbourhood services);
- Development of replacement services for self-employed women such as temporary assignment of self-employed work and tutoring of specific professional profiles in periods of abstention from work;
- Setting-up of observatories on the status of women, in agreement with information systems and databases on the national level;
- Development of women's networks in associations, enterprises and the professions, to promote gender culture among women entrepreneurs and to foster the exchange of best practices;

- Actions to foster the regularisation of illegal work.

b5) Actions to prevent/combat school drop-out

The policies for this action regard:

- The design of new places for aggregation;
- Participation in events to disseminate a new culture of guidance and aimed at school personnel, students and families;
- The development of guidance actions against exclusion, dropping-out and other forms of discomfort through the integration of all the actors;
- The enhancement of the role of the family in projects and initiatives favouring the active participation of families;
- Links between schools and other training systems;
- The promotion and implementation of volunteer initiatives in schools.

A number of system actions are also being developed, including:

- Vocational Education and Training pathways for young people aged 15-18, aimed at recovering the current large numbers of school drop-outs and failures (over 2,000 young people).
- Integrated projects for education and training, in 6 production sectors (2,600 courses organised locally, with approximately 38,000 students).
- Action aimed at facilitating the transition of young people from school to the world of work, financing in-company practical periods (1,294 practical periods undertaken).
- Development of the Programme “The Simulated Training Enterprise” (386 initiatives involving 7,720 students).
- Development of higher technical education and training (IFTS) courses, an integrated channel between schools, universities, training bodies and social partners.
- Extraordinary programme for “weak degrees”.
- Extraordinary programme against youth unemployment, with the launch of ICT Masters for “weak degrees”.
- Extraordinary measures in Southern Italy (financed by the ESF), for training 800 young people, and experimentation of minimum standards of technical and vocational skills of the ‘Higher Technical Schools’ personnel.

b6) Social reintegration of convicts sentenced to penalties outside prison

Work plays a primary role in the path for the social reintegration of convicts. This favours the process of social inclusion and the adoption of socially acceptable models of life. To this end, the following will be promoted:

- Employment, guidance and business start-up for the post-prison future, thus stimulating the participation of the public, private and third sectors, with actions to provide incentives to occupational investment within the prison environment;
- Actions to guarantee lifelong-learning pathways;
- Initiatives for those in prison and those condemned to alternative sentences;
- Knowledge of the occupational needs of this restricted category;
- A database to define the professional and occupational positions of convicts.

b7) Occupational integration of drug addicts

An activity providing guidelines, programming and co-ordination is being developed to overcome the current fragmentation of the actions.

The following actions are also planned:

- Actions to co-ordinate the activity of the Employment Services, the Services for Drug Addiction Recovery, the third sector, the system of social co-operatives, trade unions and enterprises so as to promote programmes for the occupational integration and reintegration;
- Targeted actions for drug addicts in prison (in 2002, a total of 973,521.25 euros was assigned to the Regional Superintendencies of the Penitentiary Administration for projects of social reintegration, such as: job insertion, job grants, vocational training).

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Among the various aims, the ESF finances actions to foster equal opportunities for all in access to the labour market, with particular focus on individuals at risk of social exclusion, and measures to improve the access and participation of women in the labour market and to reduce gender-based vertical and horizontal segregation in the labour market.

Specific measures for the various user targets are identified through the programming of the Community Support Framework for Objective 1 and Objective 3.

0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

The demand for continuing training by Italian enterprises has increased considerably over the recent years, together with the start-up of support policies: the percentage of training-providing enterprises rose from 15% (1993) to 23.9% (1999) among the enterprises with at least ten employees (*Istat*, 2002), and reached 24.7% in 2002 for enterprises with at least one employee (*Unioncamere*, 2003).

A quarter of the Italian enterprises therefore provide training every year for their employees; this represents a relevant achievement, while also showing much lower rates compared to those in the countries of North and Central Europe. There are still some difficulties related with the Italian production structure, characterised by a large number of small-sized enterprises, for which it is too expensive and often not useful to invest in training, which provides benefits that are deferred with respect to the immediate costs. Consequently, the levels of training increase proportionally to the size of the enterprise, and only the large enterprises have a high tendency to provide training.

The prevalence of small-sized enterprises in the Italian production system is thus a 'block' on the development of training practices in Italian enterprises.

Despite these difficulties, on the whole, the tendency to train is increasing, and encouraging signals are also appearing in both Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises and micro-enterprises. Here, the following factors are significantly important: the use of informal learning processes, together with traditional training courses; factors such as geographical proximity, the existence of enterprise networks (consortiums, industrial districts and local production systems), the membership of trade associations, which often promote training services for small-sized enterprises.

Sample surveys on the demand for continuing training of workers, conducted to evaluate their attitudes and behaviour with regard to training, [Cf. The results of the 'Isfol-Continuing Training Project' Survey on "Attitudes and Behaviour of Workers regarding Continuing Training. National sample survey conducted by Isfol-Abacus 2001-2002 (PSN Sistan 2004-2006 ISF 0021), of which a summary is in the Chamber of Deputies (2004).], record growing training levels. In the 2-year period 2000-2001, 31.8% of subordinate workers in the private sector and 42.6% of self-employed workers participated in training activities.

With regard to the Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises, there are positive trends in the enterprises acting as training providers, also in the Southern Regions, despite some difficulties, in particular the inclusion of the professional objectives of the worker in training design.

One structural difficulty is due to the fact that a major role has not yet been assigned to the training plan. The enterprises draw up plans above all as internal communication instruments or designed for the sharing and structuring of relationships between employees and the enterprise, rather than to actually plan training activities.

There seems to be a greater role played by public training policies. In fact, in 2002 over one third of Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises providing training utilised public funds specifically allocated to training, while 43% of the enterprises consider the role of public action to be vital, and training would often not take place without this support.

In order to foster the use of public funding, the enterprises have called for simplification and streamlining of the procedures for receiving funds.

Training courses are still the main procedure by which the enterprises organise training activities, however there is a growing impact of non-structured or informal learning

(training periods for personnel, participation in conferences and seminars, participation in exhibitions and fairs, etc.). The use of distance learning and training as well as of learning by participation in practical periods at other enterprises and/or universities is significantly low.

In the large enterprises, the role of public funding for continuing training plays considerable importance. In 2001, 50% of the enterprises utilised public funds. The high bureaucratic costs and the lack of sufficient information on existing opportunities are the main reasons why the enterprises fail to use public funding.

STATISTICS

According to the percentage of training-providing enterprises in Europe (CVTS survey 1999), Italy comes within the group of countries belonging to the Euro-Mediterranean area, where the training rate is less than 40%, ranging from 18% in Greece and 36% in Spain. A feature common to all the enterprises of Southern Europe is the considerable variation in terms of sector and size. (Eurostat, 2002) (see [Table 1](#))

Also in Italy, the distribution of the training-providing enterprises shows considerable differences, mainly in terms of size and sector. From the sectoral point of view, according to the *Istat*-Eurostat CVTS2 Survey, 23.3% of the enterprises active in industry, 23.7% in building and 24.8% in services conducted training. The insurance (97%) and banking (92.1%) sectors reveal a greater tendency to train. While the large training-providing enterprises account for 81.2%, the rates in the small training-providing enterprises range from 16.3% to 30.1%. (*Istat*, 2002)

The training-providing enterprises are mainly located in the North (26.6%), and represent almost double the training-providing enterprises in the South (15.4%). Among the southern enterprises, those with the highest rate are industrial enterprises (17%); in Central and Northern Italy, the service enterprises prevail.

With regard to the extension, i.e. the diffusion of training processes within the enterprises, in 1999 approximately 1,952,000 workers participated in continuing-training courses. This figure represents 25.9% of the employees in Italian enterprises (with over 9 employees) and over 47.2% of the total workers employed by the training-providing enterprises. The latter figure rose significantly from 31.1% in 1993. At the same time, a decrease was recorded in the duration of the activities, with average course hours attended by each participant falling from 41 to 32.

The average profile of the trainees shows a net majority of men: 72% of the trainees are male and 28% female. Approximately half the trainees are employed in large enterprises.

In 1999, the hours dedicated to on-the-job training courses totalled over 62 million. Of these, 39 million regarded courses undertaken in large enterprises.

The enterprises seem to prefer traditional training methods, with classroom lessons totalling 80%, followed by seminars (66%) and on-the-job training (62%).

In general, the highest growth between 1993 and 1999 regarded the external courses, followed by in-house courses and on-the-job training courses. The use of self-learning declined.

The thematic areas most often covered in the courses were as follows: development of personal abilities, corporate management, IT, production techniques, environment and safety. The subjects most frequently dealt with during training courses in industrial enterprises concerned production techniques; in the building sector, environmental and

occupational safety-related themes prevailed, while in the services sector, the development of personal abilities was more prevalent.

In 1999, the enterprises spent over a total of 2,595 million euros (direct costs) for training courses. The remuneration of the working time dedicated to training courses can be estimated at 1,391 million euros. The sum of these amounts results in a total expenditure figure for training courses amounting to 3,986 million euros. This figure corresponds to 2.8% of the cost of labour in the training-providing enterprises. It should also be observed that 53.1% of the total expenditure was accounted for by the large enterprises, with a total of 2,277 million euros.

The average cost for each hour of training courses for the Italian enterprises is 63.7 euros. Even in this case, the figure varies considerably by sector and size; the average cost of one hour of training is higher in the building sector (71 euros), and less in the services (64 euros) and industry sectors (62 euros). The differences are also significant between the enterprises with over 250 workers and other enterprises, especially those employing 10-19 workers. In the former case, one hour of course costs 58 euros and in the latter up to 74 euros. (*Istat*, 2002)

The percentage of training-providing enterprises is measured by the CVTS as the *rate of enterprises that conduct continuing training activities*, i.e. the percentage of enterprises that have conducted training activities compared to the total enterprises operating in each country.

This indicator shows that a quarter of the Italian enterprises (23.9%) with over 9 employees conducted training activities in 1999 for their employees, while in 1993 this rate was only 15%. The distribution of these training-providing enterprises is not homogeneous, with considerable differentiation mainly by size and sector.

With regard to the workers, considerable difficulties emerged in access to training processes, inside and outside the workplace; training is likewise characterised by high levels of repetition in training activities experienced by the stronger categories. Significant gaps in learning and training opportunities particularly occur due to the rates of training investments for workers belonging to some categories related to social and demographic (gender, age, level of education, geographic area and size of the town of residence) or socio-economic factors (the size of the enterprise where they work, membership of strong professional categories, contractual flexibility).

The 2003 Finance Law provided for the operational launch of Sectoral Funds. The setting-up of these Funds, and their operational launch represent a great novelty; 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.

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 Sectoral 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.

With regard to the adult education, in recent years, non-formal training has also observed a substantial growth, being provided by a number of public and private actors and by third-sector associations, obviously linked with the increase in the training-course demand from some sectors of the adult world. It is worthy to mention that mostly classroom or distance-learning courses are provided (in particular in major cities, but in also increasingly in smaller towns) by the popular universities, third-age universities, civic networks for cultural promotion (civic schools for adult education, municipal libraries, museums, etc.), agencies, bodies and social volunteer associations, often in agreement with the Regional or Local Authorities or project managers, and are financed with ESF resources. In many cases, the training opportunities are similar in contents and methods to those offered by the Adult Education Centres, and to those linked to 'continuing training on individual demand' (for example, courses in English and other foreign languages, Italian courses for foreigners, computer and multimedia courses). However, for the purposes of lifelong learning, the aim of these courses is above all to provide opportunities absolutely different from traditional school/training schemes and thus more "reassuring" and "free" for individuals who are diffident towards training. It may often occur that these pathways contribute to rebuild an interest and motivation for learning.

In this field too, involving an increasing number of users – in 2002, the popular universities account for over 180,000 students –, most of trainees belong to the younger age groups, and mainly already hold medium-high educational qualifications.

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Since 1973 employed workers can attend training courses as a result of a national labour agreement clause which provides workers with approximately 150 hours of leave. Initially the contracts stated that this number of hours was to be linked to needs of school recovery (for example to obtain a lower-education certificate), or to attend educational and university courses. Some agreement also include the opportunity of attending vocational training courses. More recently, financial incentives to the individual training of workers were experimented, by some Regional Authorities, through the introduction of voucher.

The "voucher" tool partly translates into reality the workers' right to make an individual vocational training and updating choice. Vouchers are not training coupons that workers use to pay for training themselves. It is the cost that can be financed for each workers.

The main feature of this measure is that company intermediation is not necessarily required, since the workers' subjective rights to training according to their needs (which may not always coincide with those of others working in the same sector) are duly recognised. 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 (up to 20% of the total amount). Training is normally undertaken outside of working hours.

The system of training supply through vouchers is on a "catalogue basis". Each Regional Authority (or provinces in those cases where this subject matter is decentralised) adopts its own system in creating the training catalogue, which contains the various types of vocational training supply available by the training bodies. This should assist workers in choosing a specific training pathway based on their own individual needs. Individual training measures for employees have been tested since 1999 by the regional authorities using vouchers.

The Regional authorities have assigned different economic value to the vouchers, ranging from up to 500 euro to up to around 1,300 euro, and they are issued by the regional or provincial authorities to training bodies in respect of each learner. If the cost of the training is less than the value of the voucher, some regional authorities will accept applications by a worker to participate in several courses on condition that the various activities form an organic training pathway (as, for example the region of Emilia-Romagna has decreed). Other regional or provincial authorities have accepted applications to participate in courses disbursed under the following call, up to the threshold value. Piedmont, Lombardy and Veneto have introduced a system for workers to share in the cost of training, although not over 20% of the total, to increase their motivation to attend. In some regions (Emilia-Romagna for one) the training provider can only cash in the voucher if the worker has attended at least 70% of the total number of hours envisaged in the training project.

Many Regional Authorities have gradually extended and diversified the target groups, which include not only workers employed by enterprises required to pay the contribution of 0,30%, but the following types of contract: - Workers with fixed-term and part-time contracts, - Partners of co-operatives receiving wages, - Workers in the wage supplementation fund or registered on mobility lists, - Workers with a mixed-cause contract (training/work and apprenticeship) as long as the course requested is additional with respect to the training activities considered compulsory by law.

The provider can obtain protection by asking worker to pay a deposit when they enrol, which is returned to them at the end of training. The voucher system allows regional or provincial authorities to achieve two objectives: to introduce a market approach among vocational training bodies and to increase learners' sense of responsibility and motivation towards the investment in training.

The main financial instrument to support the vouchers is Law 236/93. Since 1998, the Regional Authorities can reserve a quota of the resources assigned by Law 236/93 for continuing training in order to experiment training actions for workers "on individual application". This quota rises up to a maximum of 25% of the resources deriving from the 0.30% withholding contribution on the total wages paid by enterprises as an additional contribution for compulsory insurance against involuntary unemployment.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, in agreement with the Regional Administrations, has diversified the resources allocated to training actions "on individual application" through two other financial instruments: Law 53/00 with "Provisions in support of maternity and paternity, the right to care and the coordination of city hours"; the European Social Fund. In particular, Law 53/00 lays down a general principle on the basis of which the State, Regional and Local Authorities must provide training aimed at enabling workers to create tailor-made pathways certified and recognised with training credits at the national and European level.

The training can either be an independent choice of the worker or arranged by the employer, through Training Plans agreed between the social partners. (Article 6). It also establishes that, without prejudice to provisions concerning the right to study, permanent employees can apply for a "suspension of their work contract for leave to train for a period not exceeding 11 working months, either continuous or distributed over the whole of their working lives" (Article 5). The allocations under the law are aimed at funding two types of projects: - Projects for worker training that according to contract agreements involve quotas of working-hour reductions; - Training projects submitted by the workers themselves.

With reference to the European Social Fund, in the context of the programming for 2000-2006, the issue of vouchers was included for all the programming strands involving actions targeted to individuals.

An analysis of the vouchers supplied via national funding (Law no. 236/93 and 53/2000 category B) with the resources allocated in 2000 and 2001 showed how the number of workers involved total almost 24,000 for Law no. 236/93 and approximately 11,700 for Law no. 53/2000. Among the emerging training options, special attention is being paid to corporate vouchers which can be defined as personalised financial incentives to fund certifiable training activities chosen by the beneficiaries (company workers).

Individual continuing training provisions are also envisaged by the sectoral training funds.

In addition, training schemes for adults are provided by The "Permanent Territorial Centre for Adult Education" which 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.

The activities of the Adult Education 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. The growth of the Adult Education Centres has been considerable, rising from 25 in the first year of their foundation (1997) to 546 in 2001-2002. The Adult Education Centres are located throughout Italy with an average of five centres per Province (the highest concentration is observed in the Regions with the largest geographical size). They have been set up in the compulsory-education schools (in management departments, comprehensive schools or lower secondary schools, without any distinction) which co-ordinate them from the

organisational and administrative point of view, with a significant prevalence of 'Level I' secondary schools (approximately 2/3 of the total).

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

Teachers, trainers and other learning facilitators in Italy are differently regulated. The tasks, functions and skills of IVET teachers and trainers are much more clearly defined than for CVET teachers and trainers.

PLACE OF WORK – JOB CONTEXT	MAIN PROFILES
IVET	
State Vocational Schools	Teacher (docente) · Teacher-tutor (docente tutor)
Vocational Training Centres	Trainer (formatore) · Trainer-tutor (formatore-tutor) · Coordinator
Apprenticeship	Trainer -tutor · Teacher-tutor · Company tutor (tutor d'impresa)
CVET	
Vocational Training Centres	Trainer · Tutor
Enterprises	Teacher · Company trainer · Coach, tutor, mentor, supervisor
<i>Centri Territoriali Permanenti</i> (Permanent Regional Centres for Adult Education)	Teacher
Employment services	Tutor

Recent reforms of the VET system (see Law 53/2003) and the labour market (see Law 30/2003) have had an impact on the teachers and trainers' role in Italy. The decentralisation of education and training to regional/provincial level and individual school, the reform of school curricula and the introduction of accreditation and quality-control (DM 166/2001) have all had an impact, mostly on teachers and trainers in IVET (as teachers and trainers in CVET generally are not regulated by the State). In particular, we can individuate the following main changes:

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 (ICT);
- balance recruitment policies in terms of numbers of teachers on fixed and open-term contracts;
- introduction of new *Scuole di specializzazione per l'insegnamento secondario (SSIS -Specialised Schools for Teaching in Secondary Education)*, managed by Universities.

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 some 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;
- 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;
- a significant programme was launched after Law 197/1997 to improve trainer skills not least to ensure compliance with the newly introduced accreditation framework for training providers. 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.

Policy implications for trainers and other learning facilitators in Continuing vocational training (CVET):

- the creation of new multi-sectoral funds (fondi interprofessionali) for continuing vocational training (beginning in 2004) could 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.
- the negotiation among social parties and public institutions could lead to:
 - address the training towards the local development and innovation;
 - improve the quality of the training service taking into account the labour market demand.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

IVET Teachers work in State Vocational Schools (47,270 teachers with open-ended contracts in the years 2004/2005) and are mainly employed by the Ministry of Education, University and Research. They are normally involved in the classroom teaching of scientific, technical and general subjects. Teachers can be supported by technical and practical lab assistants.

IVET Trainers work generally in Vocational Training Centres (managed by regional/provincial/municipal authorities) and private vocational training centres accredited by regions. There are approximately 18,000 trainers who perform various roles: classroom teaching, design, tutoring, guidance, needs analysis, monitoring and evaluation, etc. The functions are defined in detail by the National Collective Agreement for the sector (the last contract was signed for 2003-2005).

A new profile has recently been introduced for the training of young apprentices: the company tutor. The company tutors for apprenticeship are regulated by laws or contracts.

Apprenticeship training comprises various training approaches (e.g. work simulation, observation, etc.) which take place under the constant supervision either of a company tutor, who accompanies the student, or of the teacher and trainer tutor (see table below).

IVET teachers and trainers have different types of recruitment, career progress and contractual position (see the table below).

TABLE 1: THE NEW TUTORIAL ROLES IN IVET

	CONTEXT		
	APPRENTICESHIP	VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES	STATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
PROFILE	In-company- tutor	Trainer-tutor	Teacher-tutor
REGULATION	Legislative Decree No. 276/2003	National Collective Labour Contract applying to vocational training bodies (2003-2005)	Law 53/2003, Art.4
ROLE	<p>Manages reception and placement of young apprentices - Plans and tutors learning and in-service socialisation pathways, thus facilitating the acquisition of skills requested for performing work activity - Manages relations with external training structures, to enable positive integration between outdoor training and in-service experiences - Assesses progress and results achieved by the apprentice during the process of integration and professional growth</p>	<p>Provides tutoring within training services, guidance and job tutoring - Integrates and enriches training process with individual and collective work, in the three following “operational areas”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) support to learning b) job training c) job placement of weaker categories and/or those lacking of opportunities 	<p>Ensures an approximate weekly schedule of 18-21 hours of face-to-face teaching - Ensures educational and teaching continuity - Ensures coherence of training pathways for students, thus facilitating and increasing interpersonal and educational relationships - Coordinates team of teachers and tutors for students and creates the skill portfolio, in agreement with other teachers and with families</p>

Table 2: General characteristics of IVET teachers and trainers and other main learning facilitators

CHARACTERISTICS	TEACHERS	TRAINERS	OTHER MAIN LEARNING FACILITATORS
PLACE OF WORK	State Vocational Schools	Vocational training centres (managed by regional/provincial/municipal authorities) and private vocational training centres accredited by regions	Vocational training centres (managed by regional/provincial/municipal authorities) and private vocational training centres accredited by regions - Enterprises
ROLE	Docente (Teacher) involved in classroom teaching of scientific, technical and general subjects	<i>Formatore docente</i> (Trainer) subdivided by type of teaching (cultural, scientific and technical/practical) or operational areas (pre-service training, higher training, training for disadvantaged people) - Coordinator (face-to-face or distance learning activities; projects for disadvantaged people; projects integrated with vocational education and/or employment services) -	<i>Formatore-tutor</i> (Trainers-tutor) subdivided by operational areas: a) animation and individual or collective b) learning facilitation, c) alternance training, d) job insertion for disadvantaged people - Company apprenticeship tutor
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT	Teachers are State employee and may have open-ended or fixed-term contracts	Employee with open-ended, fixed-term and atypical contracts	Employee with open-ended, fixed-term and atypical contracts
FORMS OF BARGAINING	Collective bargaining on national and school level	Collective bargaining on national and regional level	Collective bargaining on national and regional level
SALARY RATE	Teachers are compensated under two headings: a) basic compensation: fixed and includes salary and a special integrating indemnity b) additional compensation: varies proportionally with additional tasks (i.e. coordination, guidance, etc. but not for more than 6 working hours) Open-ended contract teachers have a salary regulated by collective national agreement	Open-ended contract trainers have a salary regulated partly by the collective national agreement and partly by regional collective agreements (20%)	Salary varies with respect to the type of National Collective Labour Agreement
TYPES OF RECRUITMENT	State exam	Direct: recruitment and selection are without legal constraints	Direct: recruitment and selection are without legal constraints
PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS	Specific subject degree	Certificate (secondary education) or degree and professional	Certificate (secondary education) or degree and

		experience	professional experience
PRE-SERVICE TRAINING	2 years after a university degree: new Law 53/2003 will standardise pre-service training of teachers and trainers	Not compulsory at the moment. The new Law 53/2003 will standardise pre-service training of teachers and trainers	Not compulsory
IN-SERVICE TRAINING	Not compulsory. Law 53/2003 makes provision for a new system of in-service training to ensure closer links between training, performance assessment and career progress.	Not compulsory. Law 53/2003 makes provision for a new system of in-service training to ensure closer links between training, performance assessment and career progress.	Not compulsory. Law 53/2003 makes provision for a new system of in-service training to ensure closer links between training, performance assessment and career progress.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR IVET TEACHERS

A teaching certificate is necessary to qualify the teaching professions. Open-ended and fixed-term teachers are recruited exclusively through a State selection exam.

Table 3: Summary of pre-service training for IVET teachers			
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	TRAINING PROVIDERS	COURSE STRUCTURE	QUALIFICATIONS/CERTIFICATES
DEGREE (3 OR 5 YEARS)	<i>Scuole di specializzazione per l'Insegnamento Secondario (SSISs - Specialised Schools for Teaching in Secondary Education)</i> set up by Ministerial Decree (26.5.1998) provide post-graduate courses to prepare for the <i>abilitazione</i> (national examination) (= for a permanent position, thereby becoming a civil servant)	Academic courses, teaching practice and practical work in school	<i>Certificato di abilitazione all'insegnamento</i> (National teaching certificate)

A *laurea* (university degree) has always been required to teach in both lower and upper secondary schools (for most subjects). Additionally, some form of post-graduate teaching certificate with practical work experience has also been required. According to 1990 legislation (implementation decrees of 1997), secondary-school teacher training is provided at *Scuole di Specializzazione per l'Insegnamento Secondario* (SSISs - Specialised Schools for Teaching in Secondary Education), which are managed by the universities. The number of available teaching jobs is nationally planned according to schools requirements.

The new reform Law 53/2003 will change existing arrangements whereby initial teacher training will be provided by the university (*Laurea Specialistica* - a two-year specialised degree or Level II Degree).

On completion of the SS/SSs, trainee teachers take an final exam that provides a *abilitazione all'insegnamento* (teaching qualification) for specific teaching classes. The exam covers the results obtained both for individual disciplines (based on teachers' assessments) and the outcome of teaching practice (based on school's assessment).

IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR IVET TEACHERS

In-service training of teaching staff has been consolidated over the years as a result of initiatives from the Ministry of Education, University and Research (*MIUR*), the *Istituti Regionali di Ricerca Educativa (IRRE* - Regional Institutes for Educational Research), the *Istituto nazionale documentazione informazione e ricerca educativa (INDIRE* - National Institutes for Educational Documentation and Innovation in Education Research) and individual schools.

Law 53/2003 states that the management of in-service training for teachers is assigned to universities in collaboration with public and private research institutions, accredited and qualified organisations and teachers' professional associations.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR IVET TRAINERS AND OTHER LEARNING FACILITATORS

IVET trainers have to be professionally accredited. To meet these requirements specialisation pathways will have to be created for pre-service training for IVET trainers. In addition, some regional authorities have started to introduce more in-service training pathways.

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF PRE-SERVICE TRAINING OF IVET TRAINERS

PROFILE	ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	TRAINING PROVIDERS	COURSE STRUCTURE	QUALIFICATIONS/CERTIFICATES
TRAINER COORDINATOR TRAINERS TUTORS	<i>Laurea</i> (degree) or <i>diploma di maturità</i> (upper secondary-education certificate) coherent with the requirements of training design	Universities, public bodies, training centres, business schools, professional associations	Modular pathways generally medium-long with practical work and project work in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree or University Master's qualification • Certificate of attendance • Training credits can be utilised along university pathways
COMPANY APPRENTICESHIP TUTOR	Work qualified experience evaluated by enterprise (educational qualification not compulsory)	Regions or Provinces through training centres, training bodies of the Social Partners	8 compulsory training hours, to acquire the tools indispensable for facing the teaching-learning problems	Certificate of attendance

TRAINER, TRAINER TUTOR AND COORDINATOR (MOSTLY IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES)

In regional vocational training centres, there are no particular procedures for recruiting trainers and other learning facilitators. Recruitment takes place through informal channels such as a response to job-offers by vocational training bodies, as former students, etc. Formal recruitment procedures are in the minority and take place mainly in public VET centres (e.g. by public examination). To become a vocational trainer, a formal educational qualification is not binding; previous work experience is considered more relevant.

There are no consolidated assessment mechanisms (although some organisations apply their own competence-based instruments) and no common basis for recognising non-formal and informal skills.

In terms of career progress, there are no formal mechanisms except for those training bodies which apply the National Collective Agreement for Vocational Training. This provides for:

- recognition of educational qualifications, such as degrees, research doctorates or other post-graduate specialisations;
- opportunities for career progress towards professional functions (generally from tutor or teacher towards specialised roles centred on design and coordination).

With regard to the assessment and quality monitoring, trainers (mostly within vocational training centres) attending university courses will obtain the qualifications as set forth by law: 3 year degree (*laurea triennale*), specialised degree, Level I or II master's degree and other specialised qualifications. Other non-university organisations award certificates of attendance which can be sometimes used for registering in university pathways and for meeting criteria within regional tools for the accreditation of training bodies.

COMPANY APPRENTICESHIP TUTORS

Company tutors must have the following prerequisites:

- a contractual position equal to or higher than the one that apprentices achieve at the end of the apprenticeship period;
- undertake work activities coherent with those of the apprentice;
- at least three years of work experience.

There are no requirements for course admission except company nomination. A specific certificate is issued for company apprenticeship tutors after at least 8 hours of compulsory training.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR IVET TRAINERS AND OTHER LEARNING FACILITATORS

Trainer, tutor-trainer and coordinator (mostly in regional vocational training centres)

In-service training activities for IVET trainers are various and participation is on a voluntary basis. Activities are mainly promoted by regional authorities and are supported

by funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) in compliance with guidelines set forth in the Regional Operational Programmes (*ROP* 2000-2006) within Italy's Community Support Framework.

In-service training is, however, not widely diffused throughout Italy, and varies according to region (e.g. there are more structured in-service training systems within Northern and Central regions). Private training providers also provided more in-service training.

The in-service training of trainers has been mainly aimed at supporting: organisational restructuring of vocational training bodies (e.g. after the introduction of quality assurance and management systems); accreditation of training facilities (e.g. to introduce new roles and skills in the field of evaluation, tutoring, and guidance); reform of the employment services (specifically focusing on adult re-guidance and vocational re-qualification); use of new learning technologies (*e-Learning*); management of alternance and apprenticeship activities (particularly to strengthen or develop collaboration with enterprises); design and implementation of integrated actions for the development of lifelong learning, training and vocational counselling, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of training actions.

In the past decade, the innovation of in-service training has also received considerable impulse from the European programmes (such as Leonardo) or from Community Initiatives (such as Adapt, Employment, Phare and Now and Equal).

COMPANY APPRENTICESHIP TUTORS

In-service training for company apprenticeship tutors hardly exists, as there is a reluctance from many enterprises (especially small) to participate in external training activities.

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

The main difference between CVET trainers and teachers regards the relationship between the training methodology and contents. Teachers are mainly content experts (e.g. experts in language, marketing, accounting, ITC experts, etc.), while trainers are process experts (e.g., experts playing different roles such as tutors, learning facilitators, group leaders, coaches, etc.). The role of State CVET teachers is defined by National Collective Labour Agreement; the role of CVET trainers and other learning facilitators (tutor...) is defined by National Collective Agreement or has no formal definition.

The professional profiles of CVET teachers and trainers have only recently been consolidated, since Italy does not yet have a definite institutional framework. Some general characteristics are outlined in the table below:

Table 1: General characteristics of CVET teachers, trainers and other learning facilitators			
CHARACTERISTICS	TEACHERS	TRAINERS	OTHER LEARNING FACILITATORS
PLACE OF WORK	<i>Centri territoriali di educazione permanente</i> (CTPs - Permanent regional Centres for Adult Education) - Enterprises - Vocational training centres	Enterprises - Vocational training centres (managed by regional/provincial/municipal authorities) and private vocational training centres accredited by regions	Enterprises - Employment services
ROLES	CTP teacher - Content teacher	Trainer involved in teaching of technical or organizational subjects.	Tutor - Company trainer - Coach, tutor, mentor, supervisor
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	Above all open-ended contract	Above all fixed-term and atypical contract	Above all fixed-term contract
SALARY RATES	Equivalent to lower secondary school teachers	Equivalent to trainers in vocational training	Generally qualified workers and managers. They can have increases as “functional allowances”
FORMS OF BARGAINING	National, regional and school-level collective bargaining (the latter only for teachers employed by the Ministry of Education, University and Research). For all the others, consultancy or fixed-term contracts.	For employees of Vocational Training Bodies, bargaining. For all the others, consultancy or fixed-term contracts.	For employees of Vocational training Bodies: national and regional collective bargaining For employees of enterprises: national, trade and additional corporate collective bargaining
TYPES OF RECRUITMENT	State exam	Direct	Direct
PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS	Specific subject degree	Certificate (secondary education) or degree and professional experience	Certificate (secondary education) or degree and professional experience

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR CVET TEACHERS

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 *Centri Territoriali Permanenti* (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 (See summary in the table below).

Table 2: Summary of pre-service training of CVET teachers

TYPE	ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	TRAINING PROVIDERS	COURSE STRUCTURE	QUALIFICATIONS/CERTIFICATES
CONTENT TEACHER	Certificate or degree according to specialised contents required and professional experience	Training centres, professional associations, consultancy firms, IT providers	Short-term training modules or courses	<i>Certificato di frequenza</i> (Certificate of attendance)
TEACHER	Degree and qualification in the subjects involved in the curricula provided by the <i>Centri Territoriali Permanenti</i>	Universities (S/SSs - Specialised schools for teaching in secondary education)	Academic courses, teaching practices and practical work in school.	<i>Certificato di abilitazione all'insegnamento</i> (National Teaching Certificate)

CONTENT CVET TEACHERS

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). Generally, participation in pre-service training has formal accreditation only in the case of the training provided by universities or authorised consortia for higher education.

In all the other cases, the *certificati di frequenza* (certificates of attendance) are issued, recognised on the market and by the enterprises according to the 'prestige' of the providers.

Teachers in the Centri Territoriali Permanenti (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.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR CVET TEACHERS CONTENT CVET 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 *CENTRI TERRITORIALI PERMANENTI*(PERMANENT REGIONAL CENTRES FOR ADULT EDUCATION)

In-service, continuing training is regulated in a similar way as for IVET teachers.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR CVET TRAINERS AND OTHER FACILITATORS

Table 3: Summary of pre-service training for CVET trainers

ROLES	ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	MAIN TRAINING PROVIDERS	COURSE STRUCTURE	QUALIFICATIONS /CERTIFICATES
TRAINER TUTOR COMPANY TRAINER	<i>Laurea</i> (degree) or <i>Diploma di maturità</i> (upper secondary-education certificate) coherent with the requisites of training design	Universities, business schools, training bodies and agencies, professional associations of trainers	University courses: 'Master' (equal to 60 25-hour credits) or specialisations (generally between 60-150 hours). Residential or semi-residential modules with a 60-300 hour duration are usually applied, plus practical and project work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>IFTS</i> certificate 'Level I' or 'Level II' Master's certificate Specialisation certificate Certificate of attendance
COACH, MENTOR, SUPERVIS OR	They are classified in management, co-ordination or specialised-technician roles. Educational qualifications in higher services training are generally required	Universities, training centres, consultancy firms, management schools, professional associations of trainers and Human Resources managers	Seminars or single modules with an average 16-40 hours duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate of attendance In some cases, there are special schools awarding specific qualifications, though without legal value

The profession of CVET trainer is not legally regulated by recognised associations and/or State exams. 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);
- intensive courses provided by various higher non-university education institutions or training agencies, with their own particular regulations.

CVET trainers working outside enterprises (trainers, tutors, etc.)

For CVET trainers working outside enterprises (trainers, tutors, etc.), access to the profession implies specific requirements only for those involved in publicly funded training activities.

Participation in pre-service training activities has formal accreditation only for training provided by universities or authorised consortia as for *IFTS* (Higher Technical Education and Training) courses training. In most cases, only certificates of attendance are issued. Some regional authorities have nevertheless introduced procedures to certify skills and recognise training credits.

CVET in-company trainers

For CVET in-company trainers, recruitment and selection take place at enterprise discretion. Generally, enterprises attribute more value to professional experience than to educational qualifications. This does not apply to trainers working in the public administration, where access is allowed only through specific public examinations.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR CVET TRAINERS (AND OTHER LEARNING FACILITATORS)

CVET trainers working outside enterprises (trainers, tutors, etc.)

The supply of in-service training is governed by the free market, although there is substantial public funding through support to continuing training of trainers working in training bodies and agencies, enterprises and public administration departments, as well as through the tool of individual training vouchers (with pilot programmes operating since 2001). The government has also introduced tax-relief measures (tax credit) to foster access to training.

The most important providers are training agencies and consultancy firms, professional associations, universities, training bodies and their consortia, social partners, public bodies such as regions and provinces, Chambers of Commerce, and some business schools. Special incentives to encourage continuing training are assigned to certain sectors (e.g. for trainers of medical and nursing staff in the health-care sector).

CVET in-company trainers

In-service training for CVET trainers is wholly voluntary and generally paid for by the trainers themselves. It usually involves self-training. Some organisations (e.g. large

companies or public administration departments with permanent internal training services) can decide to participate or invest directly in the continuing training of trainers.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

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, apart from the “horizontal” prospect of integration between systems, there is a “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 functioning in the country.

The implementation of Law No. 53/2003, i.e. a new framework law (Delegated Law), is reforming the whole VET system (all the education and training levels) according to the basic principles mentioned above. It divides the VET system into two different main pathways: the first one is nationally managed and composed by higher school (5 years) and university (3+2 years); the second one is regionally managed and composed by initial vocational education and training (that can be made of three or four years courses or apprenticeship) and of Higher Technical Education and Training - *IFTS* (one or two years). Moreover, within this law 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 is reaffirmed.

Concerning the regional VET system (the second main pathway mentioned above) there are some recent provisions:

- 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;
- the Agreement signed on 28 October 2004 on “Certification and validation of learning credits”. This agreement allows individuals to access at education and training paths and to affirm that people have the right to spend the certification acquired and the right to validation for learning credits in VET system.

EDUCATION

Ministry of Education is responsible for developing and setting school and university curricula.

Moreover Regions may integrate the school curricula with local specifications and each University may be considered autonomous in developing contents and didactical processes.

Legal provisions:

- Law No. 53/2003 *“Delega al Governo in materia norme generali sull’educazione e dei livelli essenziali delle prestazioni in materia di educazione and formazione professionale”* [Delegation to the Government to draw up general standards for education and minimum service levels in education and training].

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AAND TRAINING

Regions are responsible for developing and setting VET curricula. Moreover there are some nationally agreed provisions aimed to ensure a minimum quality of the training supply provided throughout the country.

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.

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 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 (see chapter 0401).

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.

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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

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

Ministry of Education and Regions are the institutional framework for assessment and accreditation of learning.

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:

- The provision specific devices (or instruments) of certification or recognition of the skills of individuals for the access or re-entry to the various training pathways;
- 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 of February 2000 between the State and the Regions, and subsequent Decree No. 174/2001 issued by the Ministry of Labour have provided key elements in the 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-training 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.

It should be observed that in Italy, unlike in 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).

SEE [GLOSSARY](#) FOR KEY DEFINITIONS

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.

The training booklet is still under experimentation, so there are no data or comments available from the users

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. Under the institutional decentralisation, new decision-making and management powers have been entrusted to the Regional Authorities and Local Bodies, with the dissemination of a culture based on the local integration and deep 'rooting' of actions. Current legislation - Law 469/97 on the decentralisation of employment policies to the Regional Authorities and the corresponding regional laws as well as the Legislative Decree 181/2000 with provisions on the matching between labour supply and demand - delegates responsibilities on guidance, as an active employment policy, to the Employment Services, i.e. the main facilities for conducting processes of guidance, reception and skills audit.

Currently, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education have been implementing a policy for the co-ordination of guidance policies. In particular, the Ministry of Labour has produced a technical-scientific document which provides the basis for the implementation of a national guidance system.

The specific institutional responsibilities can be classified as follows:

a) Services for educational guidance under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (MIUR)

Educational guidance is an integral part of the educational process starting from the pre-primary school (Directive No. 487/97). In this perspective, information and guidance play an essential primary role in the process aimed at creating an education and training system as provided for by Law 53/2003 ('Moratti' Reform). Therefore, the new reform of the educational systems thus opens up further to guidance (Art. 3 Para. h). The Implementation Regulation 257/2000 states also that schools must ensure the implementation of initiatives designed for an educational and vocational guidance co-ordinated with those initiatives which may be undertaken by the Local Bodies so as to guarantee successful training for each student.

b) Services for vocational guidance under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour

The main objective of vocational guidance, related to the world of training and work, is the support to the occupational integration in the world of work and career reconversion/development also through continuing training activities.

In particular, the guidance services provide information on the local production, the professional profiles and related training pathways, the labour market and its specific local aspects as well as on the changes currently under way. The Employment Services (SP/s) play a remarkable role on the provincial level as a result of the Legislative Decree

of 23 December 1997, No. 469, which besides the basic services (reception and management of administrative procedures) aims at:

- Promoting the intermediation and the matching between labour and enterprises;
- Preventing the unemployment;
- Promoting the employability and the extension of participation in the labour market, and in particular, of female labour and other under-represented segments.

The Employment Centres, which are the local operational structures of the *SPIs*, disburse the following services:

- Reception and guidance information
- Management of administrative procedures
- Guidance and counselling
- Promotion of the labour-market segments to support weak categories
- Matching of labour supply and demand.

With regard to the general guidelines of services, two types of actions are particularly significant:

- Calling the individuals with an ascertained status of unemployment to a *guidance interview*;
- Formulating an opportunity for job insertion or a training/vocational retraining proposal.

The promotion of the labour supply and demand matching is further defined in *Law of 19 December 2002, No. 297*, which is a more organic and complete measure compared to the previous provisions because this law takes into due account the constitutional innovations (Reform of Title V), the new guidelines (White Paper on the Labour Market) and the results of an initial practical experience of the previous Legislative Decree 181/2000.

In a context oriented towards the quality and functional status of the employment services, the guidance and training systems are also greatly involved. *The State-Region Agreement of 18 February 2000* envisages the need to guarantee the quality and structuring of the activities provided by guidance structures (and those structures for vocational training and integrated training actions) on the basis of reference standards defined at the national level.

Accreditation, managed by the Regional Authorities, involves those public and private structures receiving public funding to conduct training and guidance activities. With the perspective to implement this agreement, the Ministry of Labour issued the *Ministerial Decree 166 of 25 May 2001* identifying the stakeholders involved, the context as well as the types of and criteria for accreditation.

The guidance services involve a variety of information, training and counselling activities aimed at “promoting self-guidance and supporting the definition of personal training and work projects and the support to occupational integration”.

Furthermore, it is worthy to mention a variety of structures, promoted by the Local Bodies as well as by private and third sector organisations, which provide a targeted service mainly designed for the career guidance of both young people and adults. Among these structures, we can point out:

- The *Informagiovani* centres, mainly promoted by the Municipal Authorities. These structures provide a wide range of information to young people.
- The *guidance centres* organised by the third-sector associations (in particular religious and trade-union associations) which interact with the other training centres, or directly with students, in career guidance for the unemployed, adults and disadvantaged categories. The main functions regard both *information, support to choices, and technical assistance* in relation to institutional and other actors for the programming and design of targeted guidance actions within the education and VT systems, and the *linking and co-ordination activities* with other structures.
- The *CILO* (Centres for Local Employment Initiatives) promoted by the Municipal Authorities and schools in order to provide information for young people; technical assistance for youth entrepreneurs; and positive actions for the weaker and marginal categories of the labour market.

In addition, the private agencies basically undertake individual or collective support actions. In some cases, these agencies operate under agreements with Public Bodies.

We should finally recall that the joint bodies, managed by the Social Partners and the corresponding trade associations, organise research studies on the development of vocational needs in order to provide indications to the training and guidance systems.

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.

In the case of adults, guidance is provided (although to an extent which is still partial) by the CPI (Public Employment Centers), 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

GUIDANCE WITHIN THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Since 1990, school teachers have had the provision of guidance services integrated into their responsibilities and professional profiles. Some teachers are designated as guidance service coordinators which means they have to support their colleagues' guidance activities as well as establish links with local guidance services and other relevant bodies (e.g. local enterprises). Guidance activities are usually organised by these teachers in cooperation with external experts.

GUIDANCE WITHIN THE REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM

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.

GUIDANCE WITHIN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The employment services usually re-train staff with experience in employment services or from the vocational training sector.

The "Second 1998 National Survey on Guidance Services" (Seconda indagine nazionale sui servizi di orientamento 1998), showed that most guidance services are provided by 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).

One important policy debate in Italy regarding guidance personnel is whether or not they should have a clear professional profile. Various methodological and theoretic approaches have identified the types and skills possessed by operators employed in different services. Definitions have been made of the body of knowledge, abilities, and skills associated with the activities of the counsellor (i.e. career counsellor, guidance counsellor), and their relationship to other professional profiles (employment service and job counsellors, demand/supply matchers, teachers), and possible training pathways.

Post-graduate specialisation courses do exist and have been organised for counsellors usually for people with humanities degrees (especially in psychology). A Ministerial Decree (2001) on the accreditation of guidance structures also defines the necessary skills. Subsequent to this decree more specific guidance activities have been defined, including:

- diagnosing individual guidance needs;
- designing appropriate actions for individual needs;
- providing and identifying the services needed;
- monitoring and evaluating the services provided;
- promoting coordination between guidance providers and other local bodies (enterprises, etc.);
- research to improve the services provided;
- co-ordination and management of guidance services;
- administration of guidance services.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

VET policies are in a process of *devolution* of competences from the State to the Regions (and from resources from Regions to the Provinces), which are having a fundamental political and financial role as the constitution (as reformed in 2001) has conferred to them the governance of the vocational training system.

Financing of training involves a series of subjects: EU, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Regions, Local authorities, private companies, and other private bodies.

EU contribution is mainly through ESF (16 billion euro for the 2000-2006 period with the national co-financing). Leonardo resources have contributed with 50 millions euro in the period 2000-2002.

Ministry of Labour is the central institution competent in vocational training but the constitutional reform of 2001 and the new national and regional legislation in application of the reform are devolving more and more competences in VET policies to the Regions, which can also delegate to operate the Provinces.

Until now the Ministry of Labour has been the principal actor in financing Vocational training.

Ministry of Education provides and finances education in schools and vocational activities inside secondary schools.

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 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 Joint Multi-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 for Continuing Training (ESF, L. 236/93, L. 53/00), with the framework being revised as the Joint Multi-sectoral Funds for Continuing Training are introduced.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

IVET is mostly financed by the Ministry of Education, the Regions and the Provinces (competences for school buildings) and the total expenditure in 2002 was around 5.000 million euro.

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 2003 (data from Isfol Report 2005), the total public expenditure for education and vocational training was 65 billions euro (4.98 % of GDP). 78 % of this are for schools (IVET), and the State has contributed to that for 82% , Regions for 3.5% and local authorities for 14.5% .

Regional expenditure for initial vocational training has been in 2002 around 1.5 billion euro.

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.

At the moment, 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 (in 2002 the State has contributed through social security contributions with 1.7 million euro according to INPS – National Social security institute) ;
- 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. Recently Regions are starting to use also a part of their own funds.

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 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.

The total amount of resources available for 2003 was 4.2 millions euro, while the total expenditure has been 2.4 million euro. (data from Isfol Report 2005).

Finally, since a gradual devolution from the Regions 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

PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVT AND ADULT LEARNING

CVET represents 20% of the total regional expenditure for vocational training (in 2002, 575.58 million euro)

The regional authorities are responsible for continuing vocational training, and they are financed in their actions by the State and the ESF in the following ways:

- 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, and training for the Public administration personnel;
- 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;
- A part of the financing of the Multi-sectoral Funds.
- 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. The type of training can be chosen independently by the

worker or arranged by the company. The vouchers are delivered by the Regions with the State financing: The Ministry of Labour has allocated for the first 4 years 60 million euros.

- Some Regions are experimenting the financemnt (within ESF OP, and funds of Law 236/1993) for individualised workers' training, as the workers since 1973 have the right to 150 hours' leave to take part in courses each year.
- 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.

PRIVATE FUNDING FOR CVT

The private companies contribute to the funding of CVT:

- by the 0.30% of their wage bill to contribute to fund training activities;
- by the contribution (20%) to the total costs (direct and not, as labour cost) for CVT cofinanced by the ESF;
- by the organisation with own resources of training activities for their employees..

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

Main financial resources for funding training for unemployed people and other groups excluded from the labour market are:

- The European Social fund, which in the period 2000-2006 allocates funds for all Regional Operational Programmes for training projects for unemployed and other groups excluded from the labour market;
- 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.

Regions and Provinces organise calls for proposal direct to VET institutions to organise training courses for unemployed.

Regional expenditure for training for unemployed and groups excluded from the labour market has been in 2002 around 812 million euro.

SEE also 1002, as the same sources finance both IVET and training for unemployed people, in fact data concerning public expenditure for vocational training includes both type of training.

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 chapter 02 and 04), 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).

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 0201) and in the National Action Plan (NAP) for employment.

The priorities of the *Patto per l'Italia* are: activate update training for human resources, promote economic growth, step up employment and the ability to stay in the labour market, promote social inclusion.

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 2004.

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 trans-national partnerships and networks entailing cooperation by European partners and involvement of the local, national and trans-national 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, Italy has promoted politics of “welfare to work” and developed actions to increase the value of the human capital.

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.

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.

The progressive application of the Law 53/03 has involved Regions in several initiatives as the Citizen’s Training Portfolio. (SEE chapter 07 and 08).

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 Lisbon process

considers e-learning as the best investment for human capital. Until today is still difficult to define the contribution and the effectiveness of the e-learning for lifelong learning as in Italy the use and the adoption of ICT is systematic only for the *early adopter*, social groups which have more financial possibilities and better competences to understand the potential of ICT.

A reflect of the influence of EU action can be see also in the individual training initiatives, with the vouchers and the new inter regional project on "Individual Learning Account - ILA- *Carta prepagata di Credito Formativo Individuale*". The project is carried out by 3 Regions (Tuscany, Piedmont, Umbria) to experiment the new initiative for unemployed people and/or free-lance workers acting as employees (*lavoratori atipici*). Ministry of Labour supports the experimentation of the ILA and the transfer of experiences.

Concerning EU Commission indicators to monitor Lisbon process, in 2004 the level of participation of adult population to training activities is 6.8%, 2 % more then 2003.

Investment in lifelong learning is fundamental as 43,6% of work force has only the lower secondary level certificate and only 13.6% of the active population has a university degree. More, in CVT it has been observed that the majority of people involved are medium-high level professionals, so in the next future it will be necessary to involve in CVT less educated and qualified workers as in general this are the individual less interested and involved in participating in VET.

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Publications by the Ministry of Labour and Social security : www.welfare.gov.it

Databases and thematic data series of the Italian Statistical Office (ISTAT):
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Statistical data on vocational training by ISFOL: <http://www.isfol.it>, path: → ricerche e progetti → sistemi formativi → sistema statistico della formazione professionale

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The European Training Village, Cedefop's interactive website on vocational training in Europe: <http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/default.asp>

Eurydice, the information network on education in Europe: <http://www.eurydice.org>

Glossary

Apprendistato (Apprenticeship): a type of employment contract (one of the 'mixed' contracts; see below). Under the contract, employers call on the work of apprentices, but at the same time are responsible for passing on the concepts and techniques that apprentices need to become skilled workers. Apprentices must attend training schemes (of a minimum of 240 hours per year under the age of 18 and 120 hours per year thereafter) provided by services outside the workplace. Apprenticeship is part of the vocational training system.

Azioni di sistema (Systems actions): actions promoted by the ESF to develop and improve vocational education and training systems.

Certificato di qualifica professionale (Vocational qualification certificate): certification awarded by Regions. It is awarded at the end of vocational training schemes, certifies that the competences required for a trade have been acquired and makes it possible to practise a specific trade. It is awarded after passing a final examination.

Certificato di specializzazione (Specialisation certificate): certification awarded by the Regions. It is awarded at the end of vocational training schemes for people already possessing a certificato di qualifica professionale (vocational qualification, see above). It is awarded after passing a final examination.

Competenze di base (Basic competences): are competences widely felt to be new 'citizens' rights' in the labour market and society. They include competences common to all education and vocational training pathways and are designed both to supplement people's training as individuals and as citizens and to qualify them to carry on an occupation.

Abilità di base (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.

Competenze tecnico-professionali (Technical and vocational skills): are those skills needed for the efficient performance of specific occupations in the various sectors and industries. 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.

Competenze trasversali (Transversal skills): are those individual practices and functions which come into play when people have to interact with organisational environments and which are essential in achieving professional conduct where 'knowledge' is transformed into the effective performance of work. (Psychological and social resources such as work habits and identity, as well as abilities in diagnosis, communications, decision-making, problem-solving, etc.).

Contratto «a causa mista» ('Mixed' contract): the term used to define those employment contracts under which employers have to provide workers, in return for the work that they provide, with both pay and appropriate occupational training, which may include attendance of particular training schemes.

Contratto di formazione e lavoro (Work/training contract): type of employment contract (one of the 'mixed' contracts; see above). Under this contract, employers have to provide young people not only with pay but with appropriate vocational training in return for the work that they provide.

Corsi post-qualifica (Post-qualification courses): training for people who have already obtained a diploma di qualifica professionale (vocational qualification) in which they can work towards the diploma di maturità professionale (upper secondary certificate in vocational studies) needed for university entrance, regional specialisation courses and other post-secondary options.

Crediti (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.

Credito formativo (Training credit): value attached to the competences acquired by attending a training segment (for instance a teaching module) or from individual experience (for instance work or voluntary work) that may be recognised for entry into a subsequent education or training pathway. The institution which the person is entering recognises the training credit, taking account of the features of the new pathway (for instance academic credits are recognised by universities nationally and/or between the universities of countries taking part in the European ECTS programme; training credits acquired in vocational training may be recognised in the case of people wishing to return to school pathways).

Diploma di maturità professionale (Upper secondary certificate in vocational studies): qualification awarded to people who have successfully passed a two-year post-qualification course at istituti professionali di Stato (State-run vocational schools). It can be used to enter the working world or to continue education at a post-secondary level.

Diploma di qualifica professionale (Vocational qualification diploma): qualification awarded to people who have successfully passed the three-year course run by istituti professionali di Stato. It can be used to enter the working world or to continue secondary education.

Diritto-dovere all'istruzione e alla formazione professionale (Right/duty to participate in education and vocational training): introduced in Italy by Law 53/03, it is compulsory for young people, subject to legal consequences, to attend education and vocational training for at least 12 years (which can be completed with the vocational qualification). It replaces the previous distinction between compulsory education, subject to legal consequences, in the school system to the age of 15 and compulsory training to the age of 18, not subject to legal consequences.

Fondi interprofessionali (Multi-sectoral funds): 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. Set up by Law 388/00, the multi-sectoral funds are managed by the social partners and supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Fondo sociale europeo – FSE (European Social Fund – ESF): set up in 1960, this is the European Union’s main instrument of social policy. It provides financial assistance for vocational training programmes and for job creation. The ESF also promotes equal opportunities, helping workers to adapt to changes in industry and production systems.

Formazione professionale (Vocational training): provides the basic knowledge and occupational skills needed to work in skilled occupations. Courses are run and managed by public and private facilities which are approved by the Regions to carry on this work. Apprenticeship is also part of the vocational training system.

Formazione professionale di base (o di I livello) (Initial – or level I – vocational training): training generally targeted at young people leaving lower secondary education and designed to help them to gain a foothold in the labour market.

Formazione professionale di II livello (Level II vocational training): training for people who have already acquired a medium-to-high-level qualification (for instance, vocational qualification certificates, upper secondary certificates, laurea) to help them to find work immediately in a particular labour market.

Istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore – IFTS (Higher technical education and training – IFTS): training for people who have acquired an upper secondary certificate or who possess certifiable competences acquired from previous education, training and work experience. It is designed to prepare senior technicians in order to meet the demand for skills from the public and private working worlds.

Istruzione professionale (Vocational education): provides the occupational competences needed to enter the working world in the form of the basic competences needed to continue on to secondary or university education or to enter civil society. It is currently administered by the MIUR. Following the reform of the Constitution, it will be transferred to the Regions.

Libretto formativo (Training record): used to document the competences that people acquire over time.

Piano d’azione nazionale (National Action Plan – NAP): document setting out the action priorities for the development of employment in Italy.

Unità capitalizzabile (Credit unit): set of independently significant (consistent) competences identifiable as the outcome expected at the end of a training segment. 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.