

# Italy

## **Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System**

**2007**

**eKnowVet – Thematic Overviews**

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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 vocational education and training
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
6. Training VET teachers and trainers
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy
8. Accumulating, transferring and validating learning
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: the reference year of this report is, 2006. Later editions can be viewed from December 2008 onwards at: [http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information\\_resources/NationalVet/](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, 107 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.

Italy has a diversified industrial economy with roughly the same total and per capita output as France and the UK. This capitalistic economy remains divided into a developed industrial north, dominated by private companies, and a less-developed, welfare-dependent, agricultural south, with about 20% unemployment. Most raw materials needed by industry and more than 75% of energy requirements are imported.

Over the past decade, Italy has pursued a tight fiscal policy in order to meet the requirements of the Economic and Monetary Unions and has benefited from lower interest and inflation rates. Moreover, the current government has enacted numerous short-term reforms aimed at improving competitiveness and long-term growth. Italy has moved slowly, however, on implementing needed structural reforms, such as lightening the high tax burden and overhauling Italy's rigid labour market and over-generous pension system, because of the current economic slowdown and opposition from labour unions. But the leadership faces a severe economic constraint: the budget deficit has breached the 3% EU ceiling. The economy experienced low growth in 2006, and unemployment remained at a high level.

## 0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The National statistical office (*ISTAT*) data register a resident population, on 1 January 2006, of 58,751,711 inhabitants, distributed over an area of 301,328.45 km<sup>2</sup> with a density of about 195 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> (the fifth highest population density in all of Europe). The highest density is in Northwestern Italy, as two regions out of twenty (Lombardy and Piedmont) combined, contain one quarter of the Italian population.

Table 1: Structure of the population at 1 July 2006 (by age group and geographical areas)

GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS	AGE GROUPS (%) AND MEDIAN AGE (YEARS)			
	0-14	15-64	65 +	M. AGE
NORTH	13.2	65.7	21.1	43.9
CENTRE	13.1	65.6	21.3	43.9
SOUTH	15.7	66.8	17.5	40.7
ITALY	14.1	66.1	19.9	42.8

Source: ISTAT

Trends and expected demographic developments (2005-2020) - (See [here](#) for Figure 1)

The demographic trends (average rate) of the population up to 2020 show an overall growth in the resident population up to 2012, mainly supplemented by immigrants; then, the trend is expected to reverse (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 is expected to fall after 2006. Finally, the group aged 60 and over will grow constantly up to 2025. The short-term gain of residents (up to 2012), considering the negative balance of natural dynamics, is due to migration.

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

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

## 0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Table 2: Main Economic and Labour Market Indicators in Italy	
INDICATORS	2006
Percentage of workers employed in agriculture	4.3
Percentage of workers employed in industry	30.1
Percentage of workers employed in services	65.6
Employment rate	58.4
Male employment rate	70.5
Female employment rate	46.3
Unemployment rate	6.8
Male unemployment rate	5.4
Female unemployment rate	8.8
Youth unemployment rate (from 15 to 24 years of age)	21.6
Public expenditure for education and training in relation to GDP (a)	(a) 4.7*
Public expenditure for education and training in relation to total public expenditure (b)	(b) 9.7*

\* Data 2005  
Source: ISTAT

Table 3: Employment and Unemployment rates by gender and geographical area (2006, in %)

		EMPLOYMENT RATE	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
GENDER	MEN	70.5	5.4
	WOMEN	46.3	8.8
TOTAL		58.4	6.8
GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS	NORTH	66.2	3.8
	CENTRE	62.0	6.1
	SOUTH	46.6	12.2

Source: ISTAT

In 2006, according to the average annual data recorded by the *Istat*, the number of employed persons accounted for 58.4% of the population aged over 15. This percentage rises to 70.5% if we consider the male employment rate, and remains at a lower level for the female population (46.3%).

Reflecting a characteristic common to the economically developed countries, most of the employed labour force has been absorbed by the services sector (65.6%), while 30.1% are employed in industry, and another 4.3% in agriculture.

The unemployment rate – which has been falling over recent years, reaching 8.0% in 2004 – seems to reverse its trend, decreasing over the last two years: 7.7 % in 2005 and 6.8 in 2006. Compared to the overall average value, the male unemployment rate is lower (5.4%). Female unemployment accounts for 8.8% of the workforce, while the worst situation is recorded for young people aged under 25, as shown by the youth unemployment rate of 21.6%.

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 2006, as shown by the table below (taking into account the population aged over 15) 22.4% of the Italians had at most a primary-school certificate (*licenza elementare*). Holders of a lower secondary certificate (*licenza media*) were

35.2%, while those who attained an upper secondary certificate (*maturità*) accounted for 27.7% of the total. Finally, 9.2% attained a university qualification (including first-level degree, second-level degree, and doctorate).

Table 4: Distribution of population (15+) by educational level attained according ISCED\* levels A (2006 in %)

<b>ISCED 1 AT MOST (NO QUALIFICATION OR PRIMARY CERTIFICATE)</b>	22.4
<b>ISCED 2 (LOWER SECONDARY CERTIFICATE)</b>	35.2
<b>ISCED 3 (UPPER SECONDARY CERTIFICATE)</b>	27.7
<b>ISCED 5 AND ISCED 6 (FIRST STAGE AND SECONDARY STAGE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION)</b>	9.2

\* International standard classification of education (Data which can be included within ISCED 4 level are statistically insignificant at present).

Source: ISTAT

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 29.87% and the university graduates to 11.95%.

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 20.8% in 2006. Despite this positive trend, Italian data keep on being under the EU average.

Table 5: Percentage of the population, aged 18 to 24 years having left education and training with low level of education (2000-2006 in %) in comparison to UE average

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>ITALY</b>	25.3	26.4	24.3	23.5	22.3	21.9	20.8
<b>EU (27 COUNTRIES)</b>	17.6	17.3	17.1	16.5	16.0	15.6	15.3

<b>EU (25 COUNTRIES)</b>	17.3	17.0	16.6	16.0	15.5	15.2	15.1
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Source: Eurostat, 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).

Objectives and priorities for vocational training have been set 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<sup>[1]</sup> for employment (NAP, 2002), 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.

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 school-work alternance and Higher Technical Training and Education (*IFTS*);
- The development of the adult-education system 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 been approved in 2003:

- Law 53/03 reforming the education and training system (*Moratti Law*);

- [Law 30/03 on the labour market and employment \(Biagi Law\)](#).

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).

[1] The NAP sets out the priorities for action to improve employment in Italy with reference to the European Employment Strategy.

### 03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

#### 0301 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The right to «training and vocational improvement of workers» is expressly set by the Italian Constitution (1948); in defining the distribution of responsibilities between the State and the Regions, it assigns these latter with exclusive jurisdiction in the vocational training field. The State education system, however, has continued to provide vocationally-oriented schools in its *istituti professionali* (State vocational schools), contributing to maintain a system made up of two segments:

- [Vocational education, supplied within the educational system;](#)
- [Vocational training, under the responsibility of the Regional Authorities.](#)

Framework Law 845/78 on Vocational training, defining vocational training as an employability tool, comprises in a single regulatory scheme both initial and continuing training. According to the framework law the Regional Authorities are exclusively responsible for the programming process, and in such process are joined by the social and economic partners [1], local and training bodies having consultancy and promotion functions. Following 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 [2].

The renewal process of the Italian VET system is recognisable starting from the first 1990's, through the recognition of training as a strategic resource for all people, in particular for young people, workers, and enterprises.

A first step towards this direction is the approval of Law 236/93, which allowed to launch the structuring of a national continuing-training system.

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

- [the overall increase of the schooling level \(quantitative and qualitative\) by raising the compulsory schooling age and introducing the right to training;](#)

- the consolidation of an integrated system for the certification and recognition of training credits
- the definition of a system of permanent recognition of the quantity/quality of the training supply.

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

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

Afterwards, Law 144/99 on initial training introduced the institution of the so called *obbligo formativo* (compulsory training), i.e. the compulsory requirement to remain within one of the three strands of the education system (education, vocational training, apprenticeship) until the age of 18. This provision led to a reform of initial training. The law also introduced the new strand of Higher Technical Education and Training (*IFTS*) [3].

To give workers further chances to improve their training, 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* (joint multi-sectoral funds) supporting 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[4] set out the reform of the education and training system, while Law 30/03 (and the following legislative decree 276/03), in the context of the general renewal involving the labour market, set out a reform of apprenticeship and introduced new and more flexible employment contracts. Law 53/03 introduced the *diritto-dovere all'istruzione e alla formazione professionale* (right/duty to participate in education and vocational training) in Italy for at least 12 years, subject to legal consequences[5].

In December 2006, new legislation was introduced to further extend the duration of compulsory education, making provision for it to last 10 years, from age 6 to 16. In addition, it stipulates that the final two years of compulsory education (14- to 16-year-olds) must provide general rather than vocational education.

In this context, meaning for the Italian system a period of transition and great changes, the *diritto-dovere* is still operating as it is aimed at achieving a Diploma (Certificate) of upper secondary school (passing a State exam) or a vocational qualification of three year, anyway maintaining the obligation to attend training at least up to the age of 18.

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[1] Following the way opened by Framework Law 845/78, through the consolidation of the principle of '*concertation*', these actors became more and more 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'

[2] The increasing empowerment of the Regions has been confirmed by the Constitutional Law 3/01 (which has revised Title V of the Second Part of the Italian Constitution); this Law has assigned the Regional Authorities with an exclusive responsibility regarding vocational education and training, in accordance with the constraints deriving from European rules and international agreements. They are acknowledged to have the exclusive responsibility for the programming process. The Regional Authorities exercise their responsibility in the sector by delegating or transferring some functions to the Provincial Authorities. In the new framework, the State retains exclusive responsibility over "general rules on education", determines the minimum levels of services and deals with relationships with the European Union. See also Item 0302.

[3] *IFTS* pathways are conducted by specific consortiums representing the Schools, University, Vocational Training Centres and the world of work. Training activities can thus be provided within the schools, vocational training centres or university facilities forming part of the consortium. In any case, 30% of the total hours is assigned to work experience to be carried out within the enterprise.

[4] The implementation of the Reform (called "*Moratti*", by name of the former Minister of Education) has been partly delayed - as regards for instance the planned "reform of the 2nd cycle" - and partly amended by the current Government (in charge starting from the second half of 2006).

[5] Nevertheless, a decree aimed at implementing the *Moratti* Reform (Legislative decree 76/05, setting general rules on *diritto-dovere*) reduced the years to 10, while education came back to be compulsory for students only until 14 years (Law 9/99, instead, had previously fixed the obligation to stay in the school system up to the age of 15).

### **0302 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: IVET**

The vocational training system in Italy is historically arranged into two segments:

- Vocational training under the responsibility of the Regional Authorities;
- Vocational education provided in the educational system [1].

Currently, overall responsibility for school education lies within the Ministry of Public Education (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione), which is represented at local level by regional and provincial education offices. The Ministry of University and Research (*Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca*), is responsible for higher education and for scientific and technological research [2].

As expressly set forth in the Constitution approved in 1948, the Regional Authorities have jurisdiction in vocational training. This jurisdiction, following the amendments to the Title V by the Constitutional Law 3/2001, has become exclusive, whereas it was previously envisaged in centrally-formulated framework laws and general guidelines.

- The situation after the approval of the Constitutional Law 3/2001 is that: the State retains exclusive jurisdiction only over the "general regulations on education", as well as the right to determine the "minimum levels of services", i.e. the minimum common requisites with which the regional systems (included the VT ones) must comply, and to maintain relationships with the European Union;
- the Regional Authorities, due to their exclusive jurisdiction, can now legislate independently on vocational training and not on the basis of principles defined by the central government. The only limitation on regional jurisdiction is the respect for constraints deriving from the Community regulations and international requirements. The Regional Authorities exercise their function by delegating or transferring functions to the Provincial Authorities. The contribution of the Provincial Authorities is variously defined on the local level, though it is growing in recent years, as a result of the

tendency towards the decentralisation of jurisdiction characterising policies in 1990s and underlying the reform of the Constitution.

Until the definition of the rules implementing the new constitutional set-up is completed, the vocational training system will remain linked to the previous legislative framework based on the Framework Law 845/78 (see Item 0301), from which various regional implementation laws are derived. Up to now the Ministry of Labour has provided direction and co-ordination to the Regional Authorities in vocational training field, besides performing specific tasks in apprenticeship, in identifying the standards of vocational qualifications and in the definition of the minimum standards for the accreditation of the structures. It is expected that the Ministry of Labour will remain a key reference point in the national training system.

The Social Partners also have played an increasing role. Since Framework Law 845/78, the Social Partners have been identified both as stakeholders of the Regional Authorities in the programming and control phases concerning the activities and as possible training providers. This role has increased over time. In fact, over 1980s and early 1990s, the extension of the principle of "co-ordination" has led the Social Partners to be considered not only as "stakeholders" but rather as "co-decision makers", directly and fully involved in the management and programming of active employment policies, especially in the vocational training field.

Major examples of the extension of the process of participation by the Social Partners are the agreements signed by the employers' associations and trade union confederations between 1985 and 1991; these agreements represent a prelude to the creation of numerous joint and bilateral bodies with the aim of ensuring that the discussion of themes of primary interest to the parties be based on stable, reliable relationships, and now increasingly include the topic of training, with the undertaking of direct financial and programming responsibilities.

However, the three Trilateral Agreements signed in the 1990s (1993, 1996 and 1998) especially highlight the relevance of co-ordination in vocational training, and in general, in employment policies; this co-ordination is considered as a basic instrument for the programming and definition of strategies for action. All the main legislation issued in 1990s originates from these agreements [3].

The publication of the Government's White Paper in 2001 inaugurated a new phase of relationships between the Government and the Social Partners, and has influenced the definition of all subsequent legislation. The White Paper announced the transition from "co-ordination" to "social dialogue", a new phase with a clearer distinction of mutual responsibilities, so that negotiation shifts from the macro policy level to the micro policy level based on specific agreements, strictly monitored in the implementation phase.

This new discussion method led to the Pact for Italy, signed in June 2001, envisaging three specific objectives: the tax reform, the employment welfare state and the development of the South.

The Social Partners also play a major role in the vocational training system as VT providers through their own training structures. This role will become increasingly strategic with particular reference to continuing training after the recent setting-up of joint multi-sectoral funds [4] intended for the promotion of actions targeted specifically to the workers with the additional support of the resources deriving from the 0.30% paid by the enterprises.

As outlined above, the political and institutional context appears characterised by shared responsibilities between State, Regions and other local authorities, Social Partners.

To summarise this context, the following is a list of the actors involved according to their institutional level and function.

Table 1: Institutional framework for Education and Vocational Training

<b>MINISTRY OF EDUCATION</b>	Definition of the general principles of the educational system.
<b>MINISTRY FOR UNIVERSITY AND RESEARCH</b>	Definition of university and research policies.
<b>MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY</b>	Definition and guarantee of the “essential levels of services” for the vocational training system.
<b>REGIONS AND AUTONOMOUS PROVINCES</b>	Exclusive jurisdiction for VT (definition and implementation of strategies).
<b>OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES (PROVINCES AND MUNICIPALITIES):</b>	Definition of plans for the implementation of VT strategies when delegated by the Regions.
<b>SOCIAL PARTNERS</b>	Management and programming of active employment policies, especially in the vocational training field. VT providers.

In particular, the role played by the Social Partners, can be summarised according the following levels:

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 the establishment of the Joint Multi-Sectoral Funds (see footnote [\[4\]](#))

At a 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 2: Roles and responsibilities of social partners by type of role

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS</b>	<b>TYPE OF ROLE (ADVISORY/DECISION-MAKING, DIRECT/INDIRECT)</b>
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Definition of the institutional framework	ADVISORY

<b>LEVEL</b>	<i>Fondi interprofessionali</i> (joint multi-sectoral funds)	DIRECT
<b>REGIONAL LEVEL</b>	Definition of the institutional framework <i>Fondi interprofessionali</i> (joint multi-sectoral funds) Provision of learning opportunity	ADVISORY DIRECT INDIRECT
<b>ENTERPRISE LEVEL</b>	Definition of training activities Elaboration of training plans	ADVISORY DIRECT

Regarding IVET providers, apart from the State Vocational Schools, the main providers of initial and post-secondary vocational training are the religious training bodies or those managed by the social partners. They are followed by the public training bodies, managed by the Regional and Provincial Authorities, and the training bodies managed by non-profit associations or co-operatives.

Furthermore, Schools, University, Vocational Training Centres and the world of work can build specific consortia in order to conduct IFTS (Higher Technical Education and Training) pathways. Training activities can thus be provided within the schools, vocational training centres or university facilities forming part of the consortium. In any case, 30% of the total hours is assigned to work experience to be carried out within the enterprise.

The regionally-run activities of external training for young people with apprenticeship contracts mainly take place in Vocational Training centres. In some cases, the training centres and non-profit associations and organisations can set up temporary consortium of enterprises with schools.

In order to obtain public funding, the operational facilities of public and private bodies organising and conducting guidance and vocational training activities, financed with public resources, have to follow the “accreditation” procedures (Ministerial Decree 166/01). Accreditation, issued on the basis of three major forms of training (compulsory training, higher training and continuing training), is thus the compulsory requirement needed to be able to conduct training and guidance actions. In the years before the definition of the “accreditation” procedures, different facilities providing training or guidance activities already had obtained the ‘ISO 9000’ certification.

[1] Until now the segment of vocational education provided within the educational system has been managed by the Ministry of Education in the State Vocational Schools, that is one of the types of upper secondary school accessed by young people after obtaining their lower-secondary education certificate (normally at the age of 14). The Vocational Schools last 5 years and are divided into streams.

[2]As a result of the parliamentary elections of April 2006 and of the installation of the government, the Ministry of Education, University and Research (*Ministero*

dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca – MIUR), has been again divided into two separate ministries.

[3]Starting from Law 236/93, which recognises the key role of co-ordination in the identification of needs, training periods and continuing-training actions, and Law 196/97 for the reform of the entire vocational training system to the introduction of compulsory education and the new pathway of higher technical education and training.

[4]Art. 118 of Law No. 388 of 23 December 2000, subsequently amended by Art. 48 of Law No. 289 of 27 December 2002, provides for the setting up of funds for continuing training in order to promote their development, in a context of competitiveness of the enterprises, and to guarantee employability for workers. They are association type bodies promoted by the representative organisations of the social partners, through specific inter-confederation agreements stipulated by the most representative national trade unions and employers' organisations. These Funds receive the 0.3% payroll contribution levied on employers and employees; this is the financial source through which these funds can finance corporate, sector and local training plans which the enterprises decide to implement, on an individual or joint basis, for their employees. They can also finance individual training plans and other activities preparatory to, or related to, the training initiatives.

### **0303 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET**

For the Institutional Framework related to CVET, see item 0302.

Continuing Vocational Education and Training in Italy consists of the following elements:

- lifelong learning activities for the acquisition of basic, general and pre-vocationally-oriented skills;
- lifelong learning activities for the enhancement of cultural background, and the attainment of skills for social life and active citizenship;
- continuing training activities for the updating and re-qualification of the workers' vocational skills.

[These definitions don't have the status of recognition at a legal level. In recent years, a number of changes have been made to promote a coherent system for financing and managing continuing vocational education and training (CVET) and general adult education initiatives in Italy. The aim has been to establish a more coherent supply structure to achieve the objectives of employability, active citizenship, social inclusion and personal development. It is not an easy task to provide a complete description of the continuing vocational education and training system in Italy because it is quite complex and fragmentary since it is based on a variety of instruments referring to a policy and legislative scenario in constant evolution over recent years. In Italy there isn't yet a national law on CVET. The tools used to promote CVET have been developed with different aims and in a long period of time; that's why we cannot say that they constitute a coherent framework.]

With reference to the supply of continuing training, activities are carried out by a wide range of providers that may be summed up as follows:

public and private enterprises and organisations, programming training activities for their employees;

- training bodies and agencies as well as accredited organisations (*enti di formazione ed agenzie formative accreditate*);
- joint bodies, trade associations (social partners);
- professional associations and professional registers;
- Institutional organisms (universities, employment centres, etc.);
- Institutional bodies (universities, employment centres, etc.).

The European Social Fund [1] as well as the national/regional programmes and funds [2], and more recently (since 2004) the Joint Multi-sectoral Funds for continuing vocational training (*Fondi paritetici interprofessionali per la formazione continua*, see item 0302), are parts of the existing CVET system.

From the more specific point of view of the so called Adult Education, various types of institutions operate in this field:

- Schools;
- Vocational training centres;
- Adult Education Centres (*CTP, Centri Territoriali Permanenti per l'Educazione degli Adulti*) devoted to adult education;
- Municipal educational structures;
- Universities.

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

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

The formal/institutional lifelong-learning activities were made to include not only activities implemented within the context of the vocational-training system, with special reference to activities co-funded by the ESF, but also the supply provided by the educational world, linked to the Adult Education Centres (*Centri Territoriali Permanenti per l'Educazione degli Adulti - CTP*), to evening classes provided in State technical and vocational schools, and to other training actions promoted by the Regional, Provincial, and Municipal Authorities, such as civic schools or networks providing services to citizens.

Training activities for adults are provided in the formal sector by the Adult Education Centres under the supervision of the Ministry of Education; schools; vocational training centres; municipal educational facilities and universities.

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[1] The ESF Regional and National Operational Programmes 2000-2006 include provisions for CVET for employees to improve competitiveness with a specific focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to develop entrepreneurship. The governing/administrative bodies are the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (*Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali - MLPS*) and the Regional Authorities (*Amministrazioni regionali*).

[2] Law 236/93 establishing a fund for vocational training (the governing/administrative bodies are the Ministry of Labour and the Regional Authorities); Law 53/00 recognising the general right to lifelong learning, and to this effect providing financing for training leave linked to working-time rescheduling.

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 2003 reform](#)

[The Italian education and training system according to the provisions of the 2003 reform](#)

In Italy, schooling is not compulsory, but education (as a fundamental right) is. Until 1999, compulsory education lasted eight years (students aged 6 to 14 years). In September 1999, with the raising of the school leaving age to 15, compulsory education was extended to nine years. Subsequently, the *Moratti Reform* (Law 53/03, see item 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 [1]. Nevertheless, a decree aimed at implementing the Moratti Reform (Legislative decree 76/05, setting general rules on diritto-dovere) reduced the years to 10, while education came back to be compulsory for students only until 14 years. In December 2006, new legislation was introduced to further extend the duration of compulsory education, making provision for it to last 10 years, from age 6 to 16. In addition, it stipulates that the final two years of compulsory education (14- to 16-year-olds) must provide general rather than vocational education. In this context, the diritto-dovere is still operating as it is aimed at achieving a Diploma (Certificate) of upper secondary school (passing a State exam) or a vocational qualification of three year.

The following is an attempt to briefly summarize the Italian system of education, considering that it is experiencing a period of transition in which both the old and the reformed elements coexist.

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

The first cycle is structured as primary school (five years) and lower secondary school (three years). The first 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. The latter starts at 10,5 or 11 and terminates at the age of 13,5 or 14 (depending upon the starting age), ending with a State exam leaving a certificate (*Certificato di Licenza Media*), useful for the access to the second cycle.

The *Moratti 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 pathways of *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)

While the VET system pathway, although still under testing, has been put into practice, the reform regarding the *lycée system* (that should have been tested during the 2006/07 school year) has been suspended by the current Government (in charge after the political elections held in April 2006).

Nowadays (school year 2006/2007) 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 the labour market. A further year of training aims to prepare students for the State Exam and obtain Diploma of upper secondary school.

[1] The *diritto-dovere*, compulsory and therefore subject to legal consequences, can be satisfied either in schools or in vocational institutions; in fact, from the first class of primary school up to the age of 18, the *diritto-dovere* can be carried out, even if young people have not reached the age of 18, either by obtaining the Diploma (Certificate) of upper secondary school (passing a State exam) or obtaining a vocational qualification of three year. This concept had been at first intended to replace the previous distinction between compulsory education, (expected until the age of 15, subject to legal consequences) and compulsory training (expected until to the age of 18, not subject to legal consequences).

#### **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. 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 (*Diploma di Licenza Media*) and have to continue their studies by enrolling in and attending upper secondary education (See 0403).

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

Table 1: Students in upper secondary education (Isced level 3) by programme orientation (general/vocational). School Year 2006-2007.

PROGRAMME	TOTAL	%
Upper secondary education general programmes	1.233.198	45.2
Upper secondary education vocational programmes	1.495.812	54.8
Upper secondary education total enrolment	2.729.010	100.0

Source: Ministry of Education [www.istruzione.it](http://www.istruzione.it)

Please see [here](#) for the distribution of students in upper secondary school (by type of school and programme orientation).

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 or the VET system.

The second cycle's completion entails for students to pass a State exam to obtain a Diploma of Upper Secondary school allowing access to University, advanced artistic, musical and dance training and to the Higher Technical Education and Training (*IFTTS, Istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore* - see 0406). Admission to the 5th year of pathway allows access to IFTTS 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 IFTTS. 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.
- three-year 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 the 4th year of IVET system.

Students who have reached the age of 15 can also chose 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 altenance 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 for apprenticeship has been set up by Law 30/03 (Biagi Reform of the Labour Market) 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 (as outlined above) and the new system will live together.

The following is a brief description of the three forms in which the apprenticeship contract is envisaged within the new system:

- 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.

The first type of apprenticeship is aimed at allowing young people to fulfill the right-duty to participate in vocational education and training; it lasts no more than three years and it is aimed to get a vocational qualification certificate.

The second type is an apprenticeship with a specialist professional bias targeted at young people between 18 and 29 and aimed at conferring an occupational qualification through on-the-job training and the acquisition of basic, transverse and technical/occupational skills. This apprenticeship may last between two and six years. 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. 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 third type of apprenticeship (for the acquisition of secondary or university diploma or a higher qualification) is regulated by local agreements among the Regions, 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<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] For further details on the new apprenticeship, see: Isfol, *La transizione dall'apprendistato agli apprendistati. Rapporto Apprendistato 2004-05* (The transition from apprenticeship to apprenticeships. 2004-05 apprenticeship report), Roma, Isfol, 2006; see also: *Isfol, L'apprendistato fra regolamentazioni regionali e discipline contrattuali. Monitoraggio sul 2005-2006* (The apprenticeship between Regional rules and negotiation agreements. Monitoring over 2005-2006), Roma, 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 (IFTTS) 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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**

In Italy, there are two systems that provide adult education. The first falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The second, which provides continuing

vocational training (*Formazione Professionale Continua*) for adult workers, is organised by the regional authorities.

The general system of Adult Education is financially supported on the base of resources allocated by the State, the Regions, and the local authorities; other funding can be provided by a number of public and private agencies, as well as by EU resources.

Continuing training activities in Italy are implemented by a variety of agencies and institutions. These can be basically summarize into three main categories:

- enterprises and organisations (public and private) which lay on training activities for their own staff, consortia of companies, etc.;
- training agencies and bodies (accredited or otherwise), consultancy firms, bilateral bodies and other agencies, i.e. the social partners, industrial trade associations operating in categories or sectors, consultancy firms linked to the industrial districts or to the local productive systems or to the territorial agreements, professional associations, professional bodies, technology supply companies, etc.;
- institutional-type bodies (universities, job centres, permanent territorial centres, schools, etc.).

#### **0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

"Continuing Education" or "Lifelong Learning for 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 "Joint Multi 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.

These 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 Joint Multi Sectoral Funds for CVT 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:
  - a. Adult Education Centres (*Centri territoriali permanenti*);
  - b. Law 236/93;
  - c. Law 53/00;
  - d. Joint Multi 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 - 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 Joint Multi 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, the ESF 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 (Small and Medium Enterprises); 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 (EUR 104 million) (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 VET 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 is based on a three-year planning (2003-2006) having 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 (Law no. 30/2003 and subsequent Decrees of implementation) 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) 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 renewed 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, neighborhood 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:

- VET 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 Ob. 1 and Ob. 3.

### 0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

According to the most recent Excelsior survey carried out by *Unioncamere*<sup>[1]</sup>, Italian enterprises have nowadays more awareness of their fundamental role in training their employees, especially in the starting phase of their job. This fact confirms an existing gap between formal/school training and real vocational needs expressed by the productive system.

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. As a result, 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 data available for the year 2006 reflect this feature; in fact, as shown in the table below, the chance of training for a person working in a company with 500 (or more) employees, is about of 5/1 in comparison to one working in a company with less than 10 employees.

Table 1: Percentage of enterprises (by size) which have provided training (calculated over the total amount of enterprise at the date of 31 Dec. 2006)

<b>SIZE OF ENTERPRISES (MEASURED BY NO. OF EMPLOYEES)</b>					
<b>AVERAGE %</b>	<b>1-9</b>	<b>10-49</b>	<b>50-249</b>	<b>250-499</b>	<b>500 AND MORE</b>
<b>19,8</b>	16,6	27,5	42,6	66,3	79,2

Source: Unioncamere

The average percentage shows that about 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.

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 (see Table 9), 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.

Table 2: Enterprises (by size) which have provided training to their employees (% over years 2000-2006)

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>AVERAGE %</b>	18,9	17,5	24,7	22,4	20,0	18,8	19,8
<b>1-9 EMPLOYEES</b>	13,8	12,6	19,8	17,3	17,1	15,6	16,6
<b>10-49 EMPLOYEES</b>	39,1	38,5	45,3	37,8	26,4	26,6	27,5
<b>50-249 EMPLOYEES</b>	38,0	41,5	54,6	55,2	37,1	43,1	42,6

<b>&gt;=250 EMPLOYEES</b>	57,8	55,2	63,6	72,2	71,3	74,2	74,5
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Source: Unioncamere

With respect to 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.

Beside the dissimilarity related to the company's size, it is to be mentioned that the distribution of the training-providing enterprises shows considerable differences also in terms of sector of activity.

Table 3: Enterprises (by sector) which have provided training to their employees (% over years 2000-2006)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>AVERAGE %</b>	18,9	17,5	24,7	22,4	20,0	18,8	19,8
<b>INDUSTRY</b>	20,2	19,3	24,6	22,0	16,2	16,1	15,3
<b>BUILDINGS</b>	14,6	13,6	19,6	15,6	17,3	16,0	18,5
<b>TRADE</b>	18,9	17,3	23,8	21,1	18,2	16,4	17,5
<b>OTHER SERVICES</b>	19,7	18,0	27,7	26,3	24,9	23,3	24,4

Source: Unioncamere

From the sectoral point of view, Industry keeps to be the sector showing the lower rates of training (rates also decreasing over the last three years). Buildings and Trade are under the average, too; nevertheless, these sectors seem raising over 2006. Among the "other services", which play the major part in providing training, a great portion is represented by the banking sector and by all those innovative activities focused on ICT new technologies.

As regards the attitude of workers to take part in training activities provided by their companies, a sample survey on the issue<sup>[2]</sup> (data related to 2004) record growing training levels. The distribution of the training opportunities (see Table 12) shows considerable differences, if we take into account the kind of employment: public employees (whose rate of participation in training is very high: 53,1%) are twice as much self employees (27,6%) and private employees (26,7%) if considered jointly.

Table 4. Percentage of workers who have taken part to training

provided by their companies (by type of employment, gender, age, geographical area). Year 2004.

	WORKERS TRAINED BY TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT			AVERAGE % (TOTAL % OF WORKERS TRAINED AND SINGLE % BY GENDER, AGE AND GEOGR.AREA)
	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	SELF-EMPLOYEES	
AVERAGE % (TOTAL % OF WORKERS TRAINED AND SINGLE % BY TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT)	26,7	53,1	27,6	32,7
<b>GENDER</b>				
MALE	28,7	49,2	29,0	31,9
FEMALE	23,3	56,2	24,3	33,9
<b>AGE</b>				
> = 24 YEARS	16,7	29,0	13,5	16,9
25-34 YEARS	31,4	59,5	33,8	36,2
35-44 YEARS	27,6	52,8	29,7	34,2
45-54 YEARS	23,2	54,1	26,9	33,4
< = 55 YEARS	26,6	45,4	21,0	28,8
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL AREA</b>				

<b>NORTH-WEST</b>	29,7	57,0	27,6	33,5
<b>NORTH- EAST</b>	27,8	58,7	29,3	33,5
<b>CENTRE</b>	22,7	52,8	30,1	31,5
<b>SOUTH PLUS ISLANDS</b>	24,6	48,6	24,3	32,1

Source: Isfol/INDACO 2005

Two factors worthy of mention are related to gender and age; in the first case, despite the great participation of women employed in the public sector, some elements of gender discrimination clearly exist for women working for the private sector or for those self-employed. As regards the age, it is quite worrying the composition of the workers trained that shows a major concentration in the central categories of age (from 25 to 54 years), with a decrease for the over-55 and an hard falling down for the youngest workers.

Data regarding the geographical distribution of workers trained are quite explicit and reflect the fact that the major part of enterprises providing training are situated in the North of the Country.

Speaking in terms of overall expenditure addressed to continuing training, we must record a positive trend over last years: from EUR 895 million in 2000 to EUR 1.600 million in 2004. Nevertheless, this trend is to be considered as closely dependant from the largest companies' contribution in providing training, since the public funding for the year 2004 (6,5%) is lower in comparison to the previous years.

As regards the qualitative aspect of the training provided, some elements can be summarised: 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.). In fact, the enterprises seem to prefer traditional training methods, with classroom lessons first of all, followed by seminars and on-the-job training. 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.

Moreover, the thematic areas most often covered in the courses are 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 is more prevalent.

A great novelty in the Italian system of continuing training has been set in 2003, when the Finance Law provided for the operational launch of Joint Multi Sectoral Funds. 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.

Finally, it is to be reminded that under Art. 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 Joint Multi Sectoral 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 Joint Multi 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.

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[1] *Unioncamere (Progetto Excelsior), La formazione continua nelle imprese. Principali risultati*, Roma, Unioncamere, 2007.

[2] See *Isfol/INDACO-Lavoratori 2005, Indagine campionaria "Atteggiamenti e comportamenti dei lavoratori verso la formazione continua"* (Sample Survey on "Attitudes and Behaviour of Workers regarding Continuing Training"), Roma, Isfol, 2005; see also *Isfol, Rapporto sulla formazione continua* (Report on continuing training 2005), Roma, Isfol, 2005.

#### **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, 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.

Table 1: Main VET teachers and trainers profiles in Italy

PLACE OF WORK – JOB CONTEXT	MAIN PROFILES
<b>IVET</b>	
State Vocational Schools	Teacher ( <i>docente</i> ) · Teacher-tutor ( <i>docente tutor</i> )
Vocational Training Centres	Trainer ( <i>formatore</i> ) · Trainer-tutor ( <i>formatore-tutor</i> ) · Coordinator
Apprenticeship	Trainer -tutor · Teacher-tutor · Company tutor ( <i>tutor d'impresa</i> )
<b>CVET</b>	
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:
  - a. raising the qualification levels required to company trainers through the definition of professional standards;
  - b. 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:
  - a. address the training towards the local development and innovation;
  - b. 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. 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).

Table 1: The new tutorial roles in IVET			
	CONTEXT		
	APPRENTICESHIP	VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES	STATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
<b>PROFILE</b>	In-company- tutor	Trainer-tutor	Teacher-tutor
<b>REGULATION</b>	Legislative Decree No. 276/2003	National Collective Labour Contract applying to vocational training bodies (2003-2005)	Law 53/2003, Art.4
<b>ROLE</b>	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 -	Provides tutoring within training services, guidance and job tutoring - Integrates and enriches	Ensures an approximate weekly schedule of 18-21 hours of face-to-face teaching - Ensures educational and teaching continuity - Ensures coherence of

	<p>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>training process with individual and collective work, in the three following “operational areas”:</p> <p>a) support to learning b) job training c) job placement of weaker categories and/or those lacking of opportunities</p>	<p>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>
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IVET teachers and trainers have different types of recruitment, career progress and contractual position (see the table below).

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	<i>Docente</i> (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	<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

		with vocational education and/or employment services) -	
<b>TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT</b>	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
<b>FORMS OF BARGAINING</b>	Collective bargaining on national and school level	Collective bargaining on national and regional level	Collective bargaining on national and regional level
<b>SALARY RATE</b>	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
<b>TYPES OF RECRUITMENT</b>	State exam	Direct: recruitment and selection are without legal constraints	Direct: recruitment and selection are without legal constraints

<b>PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS</b>	Specific subject degree	Certificate (secondary education) or degree and professional experience	Certificate (secondary education) or degree and professional experience
<b>PRE-SERVICE TRAINING</b>	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
<b>IN-SERVICE TRAINING</b>	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

<b>ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>TRAINING PROVIDERS</b>	<b>COURSE STRUCTURE</b>	<b>QUALIFICATIONS/CERTIFICATES</b>
<b>DEGREE (3 OR 5 YEARS)</b>	<i>Scuole di specializzazione per l'insegnamento Secondario</i> (SSISs - Specialised Schools for Teaching in Secondary	Academic courses, teaching practice and practical work in school	<i>Certificato di abilitazione all'insegnamento</i> (National teaching certificate)

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

**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

<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>TEACHERS</b>	<b>TRAINERS</b>	<b>OTHER LEARNING FACILITATORS</b>

<b>PLACE OF WORK</b>	<p><i>Centri territoriali di educazione permanente</i> (CTPs - Permanent regional Centres for Adult Education) - Enterprises - Vocational training centres</p>	<p>Enterprises - Vocational training centres (managed by regional/provincial/municipal authorities) and private vocational training centres accredited by regions</p>	<p>Enterprises - Employment services</p>
<b>ROLES</b>	<p>CTP teacher - Content teacher</p>	<p>Trainer involved in teaching of technical or organizational subjects.</p>	<p>Tutor - Company trainer - Coach, tutor, mentor, supervisor</p>
<b>TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT</b>	<p>Above all open-ended contract</p>	<p>Above all fixed-term and atypical contract</p>	<p>Above all fixed-term contract</p>
<b>SALARY RATES</b>	<p>Equivalent to lower secondary school teachers</p>	<p>Equivalent to trainers in vocational training</p>	<p>Generally qualified workers and managers. They can have increases as "functional allowances"</p>
<b>FORMS OF BARGAINING</b>	<p>National, regional and school-level collective bargaining (the latter only for teachers employed by the Ministry of Education, University and Research). For all the</p>	<p>For employees of Vocational Training Bodies, bargaining. For all the others, consultancy or fixed-term contracts.</p>	<p>For employees of Vocational training Bodies: national and regional collective bargaining For employees of enterprises: national, trade and additional corporate collective bargaining</p>

	others, consultancy or fixed-term contracts.		
<b>TYPES OF RECRUITMENT</b>	State exam	Direct	Direct
<b>PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS</b>	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

<b>TYPE</b>	<b>ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>TRAINING PROVIDERS</b>	<b>COURSE STRUCTURE</b>	<b>QUALIFICATIONS/CERTIFICATES</b>
<b>CONTENT TEACHER</b>	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)
<b>TEACHER</b>	Degree and qualification in the subjects involved in the curricula provided by the <i>Centri Territoriali Permanenti</i>	Universities (SISSs - 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

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.

Table 3: Summary of pre-service training for IVET teachers

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	TRAINING PROVIDERS	COURSE STRUCTURE	QUALIFICATIONS/CERTIFICATES
DEGREE (3 OR	<i>Scuole di specializzazione per l'Insegnamento</i>	Academic courses,	<i>Certificato di abilitazione all'insegnamento</i> (National teaching

5 YEARS)	<i>Secondario</i> (SSISs - Specialised Schools for Teaching in Secondary Education) 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)	teaching practice and practical work in school	certificate)
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### 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 Italy, the need of defining active education and training policies able to face the demand coming both from the regional and the economic level, has become stronger since the 1980s. The Observatories of the Labour Market (OLMs), being present both within Regions and Provinces, have been the first bodies in carrying out surveys in the field of skill needs' anticipation. Nevertheless, the main developments on the issue date later. In 1993, when – mainly depending on some important directives given by European Union's Recommendations and then adopted by the Italian legislation – a new period started with a great number of initiatives (both at a national and at a local level), up to the year 1996, when ad hoc surveys began to be started up in order to detect the skill needs.

The Central Government's aim – to realize within the Pact on Labour of September 1996 – was to create the bases for a continuous and updated national survey system on the vocational and training needs; a functional instrument, which was able to support the Government in planning all those activities (and the related financial allocation) addressed to improve employment and employability. Such a system has been strongly improved during the last ESF planning period (2000-2006). Among the System Actions, in fact, the Ministry of Labour laid down the one concerning the building of a "National system for permanent observation of the vocational needs": "permanent", because the needs speedily change and therefore the monitoring action has to be able to detect them just in time or even in advance, if possible; and "national", because skill and training needs have to be set within a common terminology, in a perspective of mobility involving the labour market as a whole, avoiding regional or any other kind of drawbacks and barriers.

With regard to the national level, in 2000, the Ministry of Labour instructed ISFOL to arrange a proper observing system on vocational needs. The result is a network system, available on-line<sup>[1]</sup> as an interface designed to provide a flow of information (qualitative, quantitative and estimates) on the training needs emerging from the economic system, in order to provide support to the training system for the identification and development of the aspects useful for planning the measures required to update the training supply.

The link between the various types of information available is provided by the use of official classifications of economic activities (Ateco 91 national classification) and of the professions (Cpi 2001 national ISTAT classification).

The system's main purpose is to support the decision processes, by providing data and information to the following target groups:

#### 1. Decision makers (to plan the education and training supply)

The System provides information on developments and changes which can be reasonably expected within the several economic sectors; moreover, it gives quantitative and qualitative information about:

- 1.1. immediate needs (requiring actions of feedback directly related to critical situations);
- 1.2. potential needs (requiring actions able to face and balance all those elements which are expected to cause changes within the professional systems)
- 1.3. expected needs (requiring anticipation actions based on the dimension of the stock regarding the professions searched within a specific period of time)

#### 2. Education and training operators and practitioners (to develop the education and training supply)

The System provides reference information with regard to:

- 2.1. the evolution of the labour market's contents;
  - 2.2. the development of skills and competences.
- #### 3. Guidance practitioners and operators (to guide towards education and training curricula and towards professional choices)

The System provides information about:

3.1. features of the professions (specific activities; identification of resources and typical organizational contexts in which the activity is carried out; level of education, skills and competences required for the position, trends concerning likely professional changes), in order to allow people to enter, or to re-access the labour market also by choosing the most appropriate education and training pathways;

3.2. description of the several profession and employment expectations at a medium and long term.

The function of such a System – operating since 2003 – goes beyond the above mentioned usefulness; in fact, it constitutes a general resource to increase information and awareness among all the labour market stakeholders (institutional, economical and social ones) involved in the definition of the policies concerning the labour market and the vocational development of human resources.

The national mission of the System allows to collect information and data on skill needs coming from the whole country, but also to provide methodological and standard pathways to be taken as a reference for projects and activities carried out at regional level.

With regard to the ESF planning for the years 2000-2006, some Regions have addressed specific allocation, within their own Operative Plans, to the constitution of permanent observing systems aimed to detect and to anticipate the vocational and training needs coming from their own territory. The intention of these Regions was to stimulate, in this way, the matching between labour demand and supply, responding at the same time to the information need of their own VET system.

In other Regions, instead, it has been included models aimed to detect and to anticipate the skill needs, whose results have been addressed to the several users of the labour market; as a matter of fact, it has been possible to describe those models by specific competences able to translate the vocational needs into proper training needs.

The main strength of the Italian system of survey on skill needs can be expressed in the possibility (that it potentially offers) to put on an interaction systemic approach between the central administration and the regional levels.

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[1]<http://fabbisogni.isfol.it>

#### **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 (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.

As regards the school-work alternance, an important and innovative education pathway is constituted by the so called Advanced Apprenticeship, one of the three types of apprenticeship envisaged in the Legislative Decree No.276/03 (under Art. 50 as subsequently integrated by the Ministry of Labour Circular No. 40/2004 and by the more recent Circular No. 2/2006, which have clarified some important regulatory aspects and defined the field of application in detail). This type of employment contract, in any sector of activity, provides apprentices with work in order to obtain an upper secondary-education, university or advanced-training qualification, as well as to acquire a higher technical specialisation. In other words, with the signing of this kind of apprenticeship contract, the enterprise jointly commits itself with a training provider to ensure that the young apprentice, through formal and non-formal on-the-job or off-the-job actions, receives the training necessary to obtain a qualification. Therefore, the training pathways for obtaining the qualification are carried out in an employment situation and therefore apprentices receive regular wages. The innovation of this type of apprenticeship contract is the active participation, as soon as the employment contract is signed, of the training provider entitled to award the educational qualification or the advanced training certificate. The training structures actually participate, together with other actors, in the definition of the project within which the apprenticeship contracts will be applied.

The regulation of apprenticeship for acquiring a certificate or for undertaking advanced training pathways, as stated in Art. 50 of Legislative Decree No. 276/03, falls under the responsibility of the single local authorities. Nevertheless, the introduction of this type of apprenticeship is occurring through experimental projects promoted and financed by the Ministry of Labour, which has made available the resources of the National Operational Plan (NOP) "System Actions". For the launch of the experimentation, each government administration must follow a specific procedure starting from a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labour and the Regional Authority concerned. This agreement sets the objectives, procedures and terms of the relationship between the two institutional actors and the conditions for funding the regional initiative.

Finally, it is also to be noted that Art. 49 of Legislative Decree No. 276/03 allows students to fulfil the right-duty through a dedicated kind of apprenticeship. It lasts no more than three years and it is aimed to get a vocational qualification certificate.

#### **0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA**

The Italian VET system is constituted, on the one hand by the school education (whose rules are mainly given at a national level), on the other hand by the vocational training (whose responsibility is entrusted to the Regions).

As regards curricula, the school education is focused on programmes set out by the Ministry of Education. The initial vocational training for young people under 18 years, which leads to a first level qualification, is traditionally based on approaches focused on competences. Vocational training, practised on the regional level, didn't allow (at least, up to 2004) formal connections among the several areas of the Country. Therefore, there were qualifications and curricula which could be also very different from Region to Region, unlike the school curricula, much more easy to renew and to up date.

Nevertheless, some new rules have been recently approved:

- The Agreement undertaken within the State-Regions Conference, on January 15th, has set the minimal standards for the basic competences within the three-year experimental pathways;
- The Agreement undertaken within the State-Regions Conference, on October 5th, has set the minimal training standards for the technical-vocational competences within the the three-year experimental pathways.

With these rules, some minimal standards are given to be respected all over the Country, even if Regions keep to maintain a certain autonomy in defining those specific competences to acquire in order to gain vocational qualifications the most suitable to the as much specific needs expressed by the regional productive systems.

In the attempt to make school programmes and VET curricula more coherent in comparison to European standards, some step forward have been taken also in Italy, though the use of innovative pedagogies is still not sufficient.

Many initiatives held on this topic in Italy can be referred to the introduction and enhancement of other European languages and ICT within the VET curricula and programmes. Those disciplines have been significantly increased within the last 3/5 years in all the school and vocational training programmes according to ruling provision or to very common and diffused VET agencies practices and initiatives. The ECDL programmes, for instance, is available in almost the totality of high schools, universities and initial and higher VET programmes.

Moreover almost all the present VET curricula (both managed at a national and regional level) are structured in basic, transversal and technical competences. The basic and transversal competences always include those defined by UE as Key Competences in the Recommendation n. 2006/962/CE.

For instance in 2004, the agreement signed on 15 January 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 defined the basic competence to be pursued within all the Regional initial VET programmes.

In fact this agreement identifies some features providing national standardisation for the three-year experimental pathways for attaining vocational qualifications within the compulsory education and training system.

As far as the methodology is concerned, the first standards to be implemented subsequently have been clustered into four areas:

- Linguistic;
- Scientific;
- Technological;
- Historical, social and economic.

These standards, regarding the delicate segment of the compulsory education and training, are conceived not only with reference to the employability of individuals but also in order to guarantee the full rights of citizenship, starting from a cultural background of basic training.

## 08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

### 0801 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING FORMAL LEARNING

#### BACKGROUND

Vocational training in Italy mainly takes place in formalised contexts aimed at obtaining qualifications rather than competences.

Historically, the Italian situation on the matter reflects a number of elements, which play a decisive role in giving direction to the debate ongoing and to actions carried out up to now.

More specifically, the enormous formal and juridical value of educational qualifications linked to formal education paths and the fact that there is little or no tradition of brief or adult training, have created a situation in which it is difficult to make visible the social and cultural value of training in itself and of their related certification.

Also the professions and career regulation is by now largely based on formal qualification and on the juridical values of education or academic title. At the present time, we can estimate a 50% of regulated professions.

The legal framework regulating formal learning – and, under some points of view, informal and non-formal learning, considering the overarching strategy undertaken by the Country (since the 1990's) in dealing with Education, VET and Labour market as strictly linked issues – is set by two main acts: Law 53/03 (Moratti Reform), reforming the education and training system, and the Law 30/03 (Biagi Reform), on the labour market and employment system, which are strictly connected.

In fact, Law 53/03 brought the 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. In the system outlined by the Reform<sup>[1]</sup>, young people completing lower secondary education can continue their education in licei (*lycées*)<sup>[2]</sup> or in vocational education and training, which are considered to have equal status, while each having their own identity and specific objectives. The aim is to ensure that all young people obtain at least a diploma or qualification before entering the labour market.

The provisions adopted by Law 30/03 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). As regards the recognition of work experience learning, this law and the subsequent Legislative Decree 276/03 for its implementation deeply modify the employment relations with a training content, such as apprenticeships.

#### MECHANISMS, CERTIFICATES AND QUALIFICATIONS

In Italy, it is possible to obtain formal certifications and qualifications within the two systems of School Education (Upper secondary, vocationally oriented) and Vocational Education and Training (under Regional management).

As regards School Education, waiting for the final definition of the II cycle reform, the current system still refers to previous dispositions (set by art 191 of Legislative Decree No. 297/1994) which set for General and Vocational Upper Secondary Education.

At the end of the Upper Secondary Education, students can access:

- University education;
- not University HE;
- IFTS<sup>[3]</sup> courses;
- Post-secondary VT courses.

### UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION - GENERAL

It is constituted by three kinds of Liceo respectively focused Humanities (Classico), Sciences (Scientifico) and Arts (Artistico). In addition to these, the Liceo socio-psico-pedagogico (focused on pedagogy and training methodologies) has recently replaced, though experimentally, the former Istituto magistrale.

All the courses last five years – except the Liceo Artistico (four years) – and are certified after a final exam. Starting from school year 2007-2008, the first two year of the Upper Secondary Education will become compulsory[4].

### UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION – VOCATIONAL

In this strand are included courses realised in Technical, Vocational, and Art Institutes.

Technical Institute's courses last five years; while Vocational Institute's courses are shared in two pathways: after the first three years, students can obtain a Diploma di qualifica (Qualification Certificate), after which they can choose either to complete the final two years (obtaining a Diploma of Upper secondary education, after a final exam), or to enter the Labour market.

Such a structure is foreseen too for the Arts Institutes: Diploma di Maestro d'Arte after three years; Diploma of Upper secondary education, once completed all the five years and passed the final exam.

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

It takes places within the pathways of Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTTS) and within the courses of vocational training (both under the Regions management).

These latter (lasting 6-12 months) are addressed to over-18 young people (thus not subject to training obligation), leading to obtain a specific skill or expertise.

At the end of the courses, people obtain a vocational certificate usable to access the labour market, but also to improve a career level.

The IFTTS pathways – established (art. 69 of Law No. 144/99[5]) within the Higher Integrated Training (FIS, Formazione Superiore Integrata) system – have been developed by the Regions according to modalities aimed at assuring the integration among the training systems. The IFTTS courses' goals are to provide young people and adults (employed or unemployed, owning or not a Diploma of Upper secondary education[6]) with more specific cultural knowledge and with the most appropriate technical and vocational training. The final certification (that is released after an evaluation of the training outcomes carried out by a specific commission) is constituted by Certificate of higher technical specialisation attesting the competences acquired. This certification is structured in a way aiming at making easier the recognition and the equivalence of competences and qualifications acquired, also in comparison to those acquired through Regional VT courses.

At the end of the IFTTS pathways, students can access the labour market, but also the first step of the University education[7].

### HIGHER EDUCATION

This sector in Italy has recently undergone deep changes in the attempt to put the National system in line with the European model outlined by the European Agreements undertaken in Sorbonne (1998), Bologna (1999), in Prague (2001), in Berlin (2003), and in Bergen (2005).

To this extent, the Italian Reform of the Higher Education has provided for a system structured into three main sectors, institutionally and functionally distinct: University education; Higher Training in Arts and Music (AFAM); IFTTS and other non-University HE pathways.

It must be noticed that most of the regulated professions in Italy are still strictly linked to academic degrees, obtainable through the University education.

Though still undergoing revisions and implementations, the Italian system providing Education and IVET allows for mechanisms of mutual transition between levels and channels, based upon specific issues (as, for instance, the possibility to accomplish the compulsory education and training the VT courses of the Regions, but also to accomplish the right-duty to education and training through the new apprenticeship[8])

or credits<sup>[9]</sup> recognition (as, for instance, the possibility to enter University after evaluation of credits released to a person who have attended to IFTS courses).

Please see [here](#) for an exemplification of the transition possibilities.

#### IMPACT OF POLICY

The two Reforms of the VET system and of the Labour Market have put formal learning closer to informal and non-formal learning, contributing at dealing with these issues in a more coherent and global perspective.

Furthermore, the effort towards the integration among the systems, in a perspective of LLL, has led to an increasing awareness about the need to foster the recognition and valorisation of knowledge and competences acquired, independently from contexts and settings.

As a result, the establishment of a validation system for non-formal and informal learning has become a strong and widely shared priority in last years in Italy. All social and political stakeholders, irrespective of their institutional aims and background (Ministries, Regions, Trade Unions, Employers Representatives, VET system providers, Universities, Youth Association and voluntary sector), actually agree regarding the need of validation of non formal learning through formalized recognition pathways or certification procedures.

To this aim, many forms of partnership have been constituted by the different actors involved (see the IFTS, for instance), whose joint work has been directed towards an higher qualitative level of the training supply, able to encounter the real needs of people also in terms of recognition of previous learning, certification of competences acquired, and transition among the systems.

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[1] Whose implementation has been stopped or, in some cases, postponed (e.g. the Reform of the Second Cycle of Education, delayed to school year 2009-2010) by the current Government established after the last 2006 elections.

[2] Among these, technological and economic *lycées* had replaced the traditional Technical and Vocational Institutes; these have been now reintroduced by the current Government in the vocational education channel of the Upper Secondary School.

[3] Nevertheless, it is possible to access the IFTS also after a successful completion of the fourth year of upper secondary education.

[4] Though maintaining the possibility of accomplishing the obligation also through the experimental three-year pathways of education and vocational training set forth by the State-Regions Agreement signed in 2004. Meanwhile, a new regulation of these pathways is being defined in order to assure the equivalence of training courses.

[5] The IFTS system has been re-launched by the Ministries of Education and Labour in 2004 through an important Agreement with Regions and Local Autonomies setting so called Poli Formativi (Training Hubs), made up of all the actors involved in this kind of training, and related to specific productive sectors, in order to strengthen the link between training, labour market and research. Recently, the Budget Law for 2007 has made provisions for the reorganisation of the IFTS system, in the context of a general improvement expected for the Higher Vocational Education and for the technical and scientific strand. As a result, art. 13 of Law No. 40/2007 has now set the IFTS activity within Istituti tecnici superiori (Higher Technical Institutes), giving provisions for their inclusion in the new Technical-Vocational Hubs (Poli Tecnico-Professionali), together with Technical Institutes, Vocational Institutes and VT structures accredited by the Regions.

[6] See also footnote 3.

[7] These IFTS standards, in fact, 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 (at least a school, a VET agency, a University,

a labour market actor). 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.

[8] See also Item 0404.

[9] 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.

## **0802 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING NON-FORMAL/INFORMAL LEARNING**

### **BACKGROUND**

In Italy a formalised or institutionalised national validation system is still lacking; at the present, nothing comparable to APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) in the UK or to VAE (*Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience*) in France has been established, due to social, political and historical-cultural factors such as the relevant formal and legal value of educational qualifications obtained through formal education pathways and the traditional weakness of short-term and adult education and training.

Nevertheless, there is a rich socio-institutional debate and many experiences (in regional or local contexts or in specific sectors or enterprise-level situations) are currently being developed.

The awareness about the need to promote and improve individuals' competences in their different life stages and in different contexts (school, work, civil life, etc.) has been more and more seen as a basic condition to increase labour market participation, social inclusion and competitiveness in economic systems. As a result, the establishment of a validation system for non-formal and informal learning has become a strong and widely shared priority in the last ten years in Italy.

Since 1996 (Employment Agreement between Government and Social Partners) several strategic guidelines for reforming the training system have identified among its core points the determination of "a certification system as a suitable instrument to assure a unitary and visible pathway of lifelong learning to every single individual, to allow the recognition of training credits, and to register the effectively acquired competences".

An important step has been then the Agreement of February 2000 between State and Regions, and subsequent Decree No. 174/2001 issued by the Ministry of Labour which have provided key elements in the system of certification:

- focus on skills and competences certification and enhancement of individual experiences as training credits;
- start-up of a definition process of minimum skill-certification standards;
- definition of various certification devices (e.g. the *Libretto formativo del cittadino* (see next item "Mechanisms and devices") in order to facilitate the recognition of formal,

non-formal and informal learning credits as well as to standardise the validation procedures;

Over the last years, the question of learning validation has been put among the issues dealt in the context of the most recent reforms<sup>[1]</sup> concerning education, vocational training and labour (trying to focus on knowledge and competences whenever acquired).

As institutional responsibility for VET belongs to the Regions, to ensure minimum standard of quality to the training supply provided throughout the Country, some recent provisions have intervened:

- Agreement signed on 15 January 2004 by the Minister of Education and University, the Minister of Labour, and the Regional Authorities. It 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;
- Agreement signed on 28 October 2004 on "Certification and validation of learning credits" <sup>[2]</sup>. It allows individuals to access education as well as training paths affirming that people have the right to use the certification acquired and to get their obtained learning credits validated in the VET system.

More recently (April 2006) a Technical Table promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for the national standards system has been established with particular reference to the evaluation and value allocation of competences held and acquired in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

In addition, reference should be made to the recent bill (3 August 2007) which will undergo parliamentary approval; it sets up for the first time a system of lifelong learning aiming at defining, recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning

All this work, still on-going, will make it possible to address as yet unresolved questions such as:

- the definition of validation criteria and procedures, in order to give value and to allow spendability to "mixed" learning experiences or to those developed in different places and contexts (especially in the sphere of school/work alternation, apprenticeships, or lifelong learning);
- the clear and unambiguous definition of the institutional procedure to be followed to bring the Citizen's Training Booklet fully into operation;
- the provision of a common framework of reference for the many experiences and policies on the issue activated in recent years at the local level and more specifically by Regional Governments.

The Italian universities are also moving in the direction of validating non-formal and informal learning. To regulate this subject, the Ministry for Universities and Research has set up a working group to draw up Guidelines for the accreditation of previous learning. It will enable the universities to use quality-based methodologies to introduce mechanisms for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in university courses.

#### **MECHANISMS AND DEVICES**

There are few, effectively implemented institutional practices at National level even if all social and political stakeholders, irrespective of their institutional role (Ministries, Regions, Trade Unions, Employers Representatives, VET system providers, Universities, Youth Association and voluntary sector), actually agree regarding the need of validation of non formal learning through formalized recognition pathways or certification procedures.

The only really implemented national and institutional practice so far seems to be the IFTS (Higher Technical Education and Training).

The IFTS system was created, according to its establishing law (Law 144/99) "to qualify and broaden the training supply for young people and adults, both employed

and not-employed”, in the view of being promptly responding to the changing needs of local markets. Following these principles a concrete device of validation of previous learning has been designed in IFTS through specific guidelines jointly approved by Government and Regions (1st August 2002). In such guidelines validation is meant to facilitate the access to IFTS pathways as well as the transfer from a system to another; furthermore, the planning of validation process is articulated into three sequential steps:

- guidance/counselling, aimed at allowing the active involvement of individuals in self-analysis and in the identification of their own specific training needs;
- assessment, aimed at collecting evidences of prior learning in a systematic way and at checking the acquisition of specific competences;
- certification/recognition, allowing the access (or crediting a bonus) to a specific training pathway.

Another good example is the National Civil Service: the national regulation (Law No. 64/2001) states that competences acquired through the social service can be recognised as credits towards vocational training pathways or valuable access requirements to regulated professions.

As regards 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 276/03 provides for the creation of the training booklet, recalling the State-Regions Agreement signed in February 2000 and defining it as follows:

“The citizen’s training 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”

The booklet is 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, 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. The first one contains the CV elements and the basic outline of the skills acquired, with details on the acquisition and supporting documentation.

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 Training Portfolio has been officially approved by the Inter-ministerial Decree on 10 October 2005, as an instrument exclusively managed and issued by the Regional Authorities.

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 Regional or sectoral contexts.

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

#### IMPACT OF POLICY

See the same issue under item 0801.

[1] Law 53/03 (Moratti Reform), reforming the education and training system, and the Law 30/03 (Biagi Reform), on the labour market and employment system, which are strictly connected.

[2] 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.

#### 0803 - IMPACT OF EU POLICY COOPERATION

The Copenhagen Declaration (November 2002) stresses mutual cooperation among the various countries as a key factor in order to maximise the transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications as well as promote mobility and continuing vocational training. Regarding the recognition of competences and qualification, within the *Biagi Reform* of the Labour Market (e.g. Law No. 30/2003 and subsequent decrees) some steps forward have been taken, reformulating policies governing employment, reaffirming and enhancing the value of school/training/work alternance and the need to endow value and mutual recognition to competences regardless of how these have been acquired. In this context, the Training Portfolio (see item 0802) has been developed as a key instrument for documenting competences, however acquired by citizens/workers and, at the same time, for fostering the recognition of credits from formal, nonformal and informal learning. The Training Portfolio is currently (2006) being experimented within the Regions (with methods of application varying in the single Regions, but according to a common and shared work plan. In the long term, the Training Portfolio will be a key national instrument, providing the necessary link for dialogue with Europe and for the organisation, within a common framework, of the numerous instruments which have been experimented or adopted in various Regions and sectors. The Training Portfolio can be considered as the Italian version of Europass (see Item 0804), a portfolio of documents designed to facilitate the geographical and occupational mobility of European citizens by enhancing the resources of experience and the theoretical and practical knowledge acquired over time.

Another key-factor on which national policies are trying to achieve high standards - following the indication given at the European level - is the quality of the VET system.

From this point of view, the Ministry of Education and its structures have to:

- support the periodic assessment about both the VET national System's outcomes and the single scholastic institutions, by realizing studies, statistic analyses, assessment instruments, jointly defined with the INVALSI (which is the national institute in charge to evaluate the education systems) and promoting, at the same time, the coordination among the different activities concerning the VET system's analysis and monitoring;
- monitor the relation between costs and results of the education system, considering all its levels, both organizational and territorial;
- cooperate with the organisms facing the comparison among the VET systems existing in the different Countries, in order to monitor the convergence between the European goals and the performed national strategies, ensuring their coherence within the European dimension.

Speaking of quality, it is also worth to mention the establishment of the Italian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training.

In fact, in the context of the activities promoted by the European Network on Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ENQA-VET), ISFOL has been entrusted to host the National Reference Point for quality, which conducts the following tasks:

- to inform the main national stakeholders about the activities of the ENQA-VET;
- to provide active support for the development of the ENQA programme;
- to promote the application of methods to ensure and develop quality in vocational education and training, for example through the development of guides and other instruments to provide technical and methodological support;
- to raise awareness among the stakeholders of the benefits of quality assurance tools;
- to coordinate the organisation of national activities conducted in relation with participation in the ENQA.

The Board of the Reference Point includes representatives from the Ministries of Education and Labour, Regions, training bodies, schools, trade unions and enterprises.

The technical support activities for the establishment of the National Reference Point, include:

- the drawing-up of “The Initial Vocational Training Quality Charter”, a document describing the requirements for quality in training activities signed by all the main training bodies and distributed to all the trainers;
- the drawing-up and experimentation of a guide for the self-assessment.

Finally, some considerations have to be remarked with regard to the proposal of an ECVET system; it is hard to think about a quick adoption of ECVET in Italy; nevertheless, it should need to undergo a consultation process and then also a test phase.

More importantly, Italy still has to build its own National Credit System for VET which is the necessary pre-requisite for the implementation of ECVET.

#### **0804 - FACILITATING EU MOBILITY**

The following are some of the relevant activities carried out in order to facilitate EU mobility.

##### **LEONARDO PROGRAMME**

At the end of the II Phase (2000-2006) of Leonardo<sup>[1]</sup>, it can be said that the impact of the programme on the national context is surely noticeable. More than 36.000 Italian citizens (for an overall expenditure exceeding 50 million euro) have been the beneficiaries of a scholarship to spend for a work experience (or, simply, a vocational enrichment) abroad. For the major part of the people participating, Leonardo has represented an exceptional opportunity to achieve qualifications, skills and competences otherwise not achievable. Moreover, they have had the possibility to relate themselves to other VET and labour systems, increasing their chances of personal and professional growth<sup>[2]</sup>. Beyond undeniable advantages for beneficiaries, it is also to be noticed that the national VET system as a whole has taken advantage from the participation to the Leonardo Programme, which has meant most of all: improvement of the trans-national mobility; development of pilot projects and experimentations; transfer of good practices. Added value for the national context is also the establishment of networks of trans-national partnerships based on cooperation and mutual supporting and exchange. The experience gained within the first two Phases of the Programme will be the base to improve the effectiveness of Leonardo for the next period, over which it will be included, as a sectoral arrangement, under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) 2007-2013<sup>[3]</sup>. Among the five thematic groups established by the EC in the framework of Thematic Monitoring activities, ISFOL –

Institute for the Development of Workers' Training (as the Italian Leonardo da Vinci National Agency) is entrusted with the management of the Thematic Group on Transparency of qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning, credit transfer. The purpose of the group is to facilitate the exchange of best practices and experiences throughout Europe in these fields, so as to improve transnational cooperation and highlight the results and achievements of innovative projects carried out in the framework of the Programme. The National Agencies from Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Norway, Romania, Slovak Republic, Sweden, the Netherlands, as well as an organisation representing relevant stakeholders in the Crafts sector take part in this Thematic Group's activities. The management group also includes the EC (DG for Education and Culture and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency).

#### **NATIONAL EUROPASS CENTRE (NEC)**

Established in 2004<sup>[4]</sup>, Europass is targeted to:

- European citizens who intend to work or study in a European country other than their country of origin, who have obtained an educational qualification abroad or gained job experience in different countries;
- Citizens who, though intending to remain in their own country of origin, wish to provide information on their competences acquired outside of formal training and not documented by educational qualifications and certificates;
- Employers willing to hire skilled personnel with the motivation to perform requested tasks;
- Schools and training structures in various European countries which, through the instruments contained in the portfolio, can obtain information useful for integrating individuals in the various training pathways.

In May 2005, the National Europass Centre (NEC) was established at ISFOL (Institute for the Development of Workers' Training) in order to promote the application of the Europass and to guarantee access by all citizens to the possibilities available. With reference to the work plan submitted to the European Commission, the core tasks that the NEC is called upon to conduct basically concern the management of the Europass documents<sup>[5]</sup> and the promotion of Europass, while the support tasks regard the development of a website and a national IT system and the cooperation with the guidance centres and other European NECs. The organisational structure of the NEC has been established in order to respond to the requirements of all the key actors concerned (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Regions, Universities, schools and training providers, etc.) and to guarantee the necessary links with agencies and structures involved in themes concerning mobility.

The Italian NEC has launched activities to promote public access to the various instruments (see the preceding footnote). In order to coordinate the activities for promoting and disseminating these instruments, contacts with the structures promoting mobility have already been established. The current challenges regard the application of the Europass instruments. In fact, there is a primary need to ensure all the conditions necessary to guarantee access by the users to the instruments. Furthermore, while the use of personal documents, such as CVs, does not involve particular problems of interpretation, there is still ambiguity in coordinating national documents and the European supplements. This is first of all due to the language used as well as to the great variety of systems and methods used in Europe in the design and description of training pathways.

#### **EUROGUIDANCE ITALY - NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE**

Minister of Labour and the Minister of Public Education, in conjunction with the European Committee, have entrusted ISFOL with the creation of a National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (Centro Nazionale Risorse sull'Orientamento – CNRO). Established in Benevento (June 2003), the CNRO aim is to support the development of guidance in a European framework and to promote mobility within the countries of the European Union, disseminating useful information to people desiring to

undertake a course of studies or work experience abroad, or to those who want to undertake a similar experience in Italy. It carries out its activity through the elaboration of informative materials on themes related to the opportunities of study, training and work at a national and transnational level. It disseminates information regarding services of guidance within the countries of the European Union and within new accession countries and experiments models and innovative experiences in the field of educational and professional guidance. The Resource Centre is a member of the Euroguidance Network[6], through which it interacts, for its activities, with the Resource Centres of all the other European countries. On the contrary, at a national level, it works through the coordination of the National Dissemination Network. The website "Studying and working in Europe" ([www.centrorisorse.org](http://www.centrorisorse.org)) is the main information tool of the Resource Centre. It offers, in structured paths, all the contents of the accomplished informative products, and it is addressed both to operators of the sector interested in the acquisition of information concerning Europe and to people intending to undertake a study or work experience abroad. Together with ad hoc information and documentation areas, the website allows access to Stage Space, a system allowing CV registration of aspiring trainees and detailed data of companies in order to favour on line contact between demand and supply for stages. Documentation is at the disposal of the users, which includes suggestions and practical information to individuate and organize study and work experience opportunities in a European Country.

#### EURES ITALY

EURES (European Employment Services) is a cooperation network to which the public employment services of the European Economic Space (EES) take part together with other stakeholders (regional, national and international; sectoral and economic bodies; social partners), concerning and operating in the employment field. EURES in Italy is a service managed by the Ministry of Labour (DG Labour Market, Guidance and Training) which coordinates a national network of experts and consultants distributed over the whole Country; their main task is to provide information, guidance and support to all those persons interested in mobility, trying to match their needs with the needs of the enterprises offering employment at an international level.

This network makes publicly available a database (continually updating) with employment offers coming from several Country. Another database provides general information on life and work conditions in the EES Countries. Both these databases are available within the European on-line portal dedicated to mobility (<http://europa.eu.int/eures>).

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[1] Council Decision 1999/382/EC of 26 April 1999.

[2] Isfol, Rapporto 2006, Roma, Isfol, 2006.

[3] Decision No.1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006, establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning.

[4] By the Decision 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and the Council on a Single Community Framework for the Transparency of Qualifications and Competences.

[5] In fact, Europass is a portfolio of documents designed to facilitate the geographical and occupational mobility of European citizens by enhancing the resources of experience and the theoretical and practical knowledge acquired over time. Europass provides a "single framework" for the existing European transparency instruments which have been developed by the European institutions (and the Council of Europe and UNESCO) to promote the "legibility" of national certificates. Some of these instruments, such as the Europass Curriculum Vitae (CVE) and Europass Language Passport (PEL), are personal and purely descriptive documents. Others, like the Diploma Supplement, Europass Mobility and the Certificate Supplement, are documents issued by awarding bodies that accredit training and are therefore official. These serve to rationalise and make more explicit some key information contained in the national certificates, providing integration so as to make the pathways involved more legible (for example, in terms of acquired competences or access to the labour

market). The added value of Europass, with respect to the existing instruments, lies in its strong communicability and credibility, which has a common trademark and logo defined on the Community level. The Training Portfolio (see Item 0802) which is still under experimentation can be considered the Italian version of the Europass.

[6] The European Network of Resource Centres gathers each Member State's identified centres which, in unison favour and promote the collection, production and distribution of information regarding education and training, mobility opportunities, qualifications and certificates, guidance systems in Europe. The Euroguidance network is the network of European Resource Centres, which aims at linking together the European Career Guidance systems. The aim of Euroguidance is to promote mobility and develop the European dimension of guidance, helping individuals and guidance counsellors to better understand the opportunities available for European citizens throughout Europe. There are Euroguidance Centres in all the EU/EEA and pre-accession countries, and also in Switzerland. The network in cooperation with the DG for Education and Culture of the European Commission manages Ploteus: the portal on learning opportunities throughout the European Space.

## 09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

### 0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The Italian guidance system - as the VET system as a whole - is currently marked by a decentralisation process that is changing the traditional relational/power balance between central and regional/local 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 (as amended by the subsequent Decree 297/2002) 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, trying to make them coherent within the new framework set out by the 2003 reforms ("Moratti" as regards the educational system, and "Biagi" as regards the Labour market). 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 Public Employment Services (*SPIs - Servizi Pubblici per l'Impiego*) 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**

The types of staff and personnel employed in guidance and counselling activities greatly differ in terms of tasks and initial training, most depending upon the context in which the same activities take place.

The following is an attempt to briefly summarise the profiles of the staff working in the fields of guidance in the several contexts.

#### GUIDANCE WITHIN THE EDUCATION 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. A recent Isfol survey (Perspectives of development towards a National System of Guidance - *Prospettive di sviluppo di un sistema nazionale di Orientamento, Roma, 2004*) has taken into account the situation and the state-of-the-art of the guidance services provided by the *Centri per l'Impiego* (CPIs, Employment Centres). With regard to the personnel involved, some profiles emerge in particular. The operator providing the users with first reception and information about the services available (in and out of the centre) is the figure mainly employed (95,7% of the cases observed), followed by a more specialised guidance counsellor (78,6%, with a major prevalence of psychologists acting as this figure) with competences of counselling about vocational choices. Among the staff employed in the front-office activities, the tutor (55,2%) seems to be the figure more concerned in supporting persons who are about to enter the labour market. Only in few cases, data entry operators (41,7%) - or other kind of operators supporting the services supply: documentalists (36%), database operators, and nets administrators (16,9%) - are employed in the CPIs. The lack of these figures is to be linked also to the limited availability of ICT supplies at disposal of the Centres. Lack of attention to quality evaluation of the services provided is also shown by the low percentage (15,2%) of professions employed in activities of evaluation and monitoring.

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).

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 EUR 5.000 million.

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 2004 (data from Ministry of Education), the total public expenditure for education and vocational training was about EUR 65 billion (4.66 % of GDP). 78,5 % of this are for schools (IVET), and the State has contributed to that for 82%, Regions for 2.7% and local authorities for 16%.

Regional expenditure for initial vocational training has been in 2004 around EUR 1.5 billion.

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;
- the regional authorities finance training courses outside the workplace introduced in 1997, partly using funds provided by the state and the European Social Fund. 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 2004 (data from Isfol Report 2006) was EUR 4 billion (200 million less than 2003), while the total real expenditure has been EUR 2.653 billion (showing an increasing rate of 10,9% in comparison to 2003).

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, EUR 575.58 million).

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 financement (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.

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**

Noticeable impact of Community policies on the national context can be seen in several fields:

- 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 Europeanisation 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 than 2003). Nevertheless, in 2005 the percentage is newly decreased (6.2%).

Investment in lifelong learning keeps to be fundamental as still in 2005 (data by OECD Statistics) 32% of work force has only the lower secondary level certificate and only 13% 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.

## **1103 - AUTHORS, SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **110301 - AUTHORS**

#### **AUTHORS**

##### **THEME 1:**

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Map of the Italian Training System: Roberto Maini (Isfol - 'Lifelong learning and initial training policies and provision'- Training Policies and Systems Area)

**110302 - SOURCES, REFERENCES AND WEBSITES**

[Sources, references and websites](#)