



Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–17

ITALY



Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies

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policy in 2015-17**

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This report was produced by Cedefop and reflects contributions from Cedefop's VET policy and systems team, and Cedefop experts working on common European tools and principles for education and training, and statistics. It is based on detailed information on VET policy implementation submitted by Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) and other sources.

Table of contents

Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015.....	4
1. MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships	7
1.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20.....	7
1.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17.....	7
1.2.1. The 2015 reform of the apprenticeship system	7
1.2.2. Compulsory school-work alternance in school-based VET	9
1.2.3. Involving employers to support work-based training and apprenticeship	10
2. MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET	11
2.1. Quality assurance in line with EQAVET.....	12
2.2. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET and continuing VET	13
3. MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning	14
3.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20.....	14
3.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17.....	14
3.2.1. National qualifications framework	14
3.2.2. ECVET	15
3.2.3. Validation	15
4. MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET	16
4.1. Baseline	16
4.2. Key competences in initial VET	17
5. MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors	19
5.1. Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools.....	19
5.2. Initial training for trainers and mentors in enterprises	19
5.3. Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools	20
Conclusion	22
List of abbreviations	23
References.....	24

List of tables and figures

Tables

1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Italy and in the EU:
2010, last available year and recent trend5

Figures

1. Use of EQAVET indicators13
2. Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education and VET16
3. Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and
science.....17

Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Italy was above the EU average: 59.4% compared to 48.9% in the EU in 2013 (European Commission, 2015, p. 8); 56.1% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 73); 56% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU ⁽¹⁾. However, the employment rate of recent upper secondary graduates was low: 38.3% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 8) and 40.7% in 2015 (European Commission, 2015, p. 7) compared to 70.8% and 74.1% respectively in the EU. Adult participation in lifelong learning was below the EU average: 8% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 8) and 7.3% in 2015 compared to 10.7% in the EU on average in both years (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 73) (Table 1).

VET in the country faced the challenge of promoting and expanding work-based training and updating the apprenticeship system. In September 2014, school reform (European Commission, 2015, p. 6) introduced compulsory traineeship in the last three years of upper secondary education, i.e. at least 400 hours per student in vocational education (200 hours in general education). Revision of the apprenticeship system was being prepared.

⁽¹⁾ Eurostat, data for 2015.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Italy and in the EU: 2010, last available year and recent trend

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (per year)			
	IT ^f	EU ^f	Yr	IT ^f	EU ^f	Range	IT	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility								
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	56.1 ^b	48.0 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ -3.3	▪ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	0.0 ^z	34.0 ^b _{E2}	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	90.7	69.2 ^{E3}			
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	36.0	38.0 ^e	'10	36.0	38.0 ^e			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	11.0	20.0 ^e	'10	11.0	20.0 ^e			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	6.2		'15	7.3	10.7 ^b	'13-'15	↗ 0.5	→ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	56.0	66.0 ^e	'10	56.0	66.0 ^e			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	44.1 ^b	42.7 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ -4.7	▪ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	21.0	25.0 ^e	'10	21.0	25.0 ^e			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	27.9 ^b	33.0 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 0.4	▪ -0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	3.0	5.3	'15	4.6	6.9	'10-'15	↗ 0.4	↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	1.3		'15	2.0 ^c	4.3 ^b _C	'13-'15	↗ 0.3	↘ -0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	6.3		'15	5.3	9.5 ^b	'13-'15	↗ 0.1	↘ -0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	17.8 ^B	9.5 ^B _E	'11	17.8	9.5 ^e			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	69.9 ^B	80.2 ^B _E	'11	69.9	80.2 ^e			
Skill development and labour market relevance								
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13		0.56 ^b _{E4}			
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13		6.4 ^b _{E5}			
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.4	0.8 ^e	'10	0.4	0.8 ^e			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.5 ^b	1.0 ^b _{E6}	'13-'14	▪ 0.1	▪ 0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14		30.0 ^b _{E7}			
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	0.5	9.3 ^{E8}	'13-'14	▪ 0.1	▪ 0.4
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	31.9	41.5 ^{E9}	'12	33.4	41.6 ^{E9}	'10-'12	▪ 0.8	▪ 0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	63.1 ^b	77.2 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 0.4	▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates			'15	8.2 ^b	5.3 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 2.2	▪ -

Indicator label	2010		Last available year			Recent trend (per year)		
	IT ^f	EU ^f	Yr	IT ^f	EU ^f	Range	IT	EU
(over general stream)								1.0
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	15.3 ^b	23.7 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 0.7	▪ 0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	84.9	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	62.3	55.2	'15	65.0	57.3	'10-'15	▪ 0.5	▪ 0.4
Overall transitions and labour market trends								
Early leavers from education and training (%)	18.6	13.9	'15	14.7 ^c	11.0 ^c	'10-'15	↘ 0.8	↘ 0.6
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	19.9	33.8	'15	25.3 ^c	38.7 ^c	'10-'15	↗ 1.1	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)	24.1	16.6	'15	27.9	15.8	'10-'15	↗ 0.9	↘ 0.1
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)	14.6	13.1	'15	22.0	12.9	'10-'15	↗ 1.9	↗ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	57.8	77.4	'15	48.5 ^c	76.9 ^c	'10-'15	↘ 2.6	↘ 0.2
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	44.9	27.3	'15	40.1 ^c	23.5 ^c	'10-'15	↘ 1.0	↘ 0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)	61.0	68.6	'15	60.5	70.0	'10-'15	↘ 0.2	↗ 0.3
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	49.9	53.4	'15	49.4 ^c	52.6 ^c	'10-'15	↘ 0.2	↘ 0.2
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	73.5 ^d	82.8 ^d			

^(A) UOE (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

^(B) AES (adult education survey) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

^(C) 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

^(D) Forecast made in 2016.

^(E1) Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

^(E2) Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

^(E3) Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

^(E4) Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

^(E5) Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

^(E6) Partial information for NL.

^(E7) Based on 25 countries (missing: HR, IT, UK).

^(E8) Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

^(E9) Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

^(b) Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

^(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

^(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

^(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked ▪. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 73.

CHAPTER 1.

MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

1.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area ⁽²⁾ are to:

- (a) integrate training and employment of young people within a dual system by reinforcing those apprenticeships linked with the education and training system, and particularly within initial vocational education and training (IVET) pathways;
- (b) reinforce apprenticeship for higher training/education and research;
- (c) introduce elements of flexibility to simplify the actual legislation and boost the attractiveness of apprenticeship among enterprises;
- (d) set up a specific pedagogical methodology aimed at reinforcing the school-work alternance.

1.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17

1.2.1. The 2015 reform of the apprenticeship system

The rules governing apprenticeships were amended in 2015 by the *Jobs Act 2* ⁽³⁾, which has entirely reformed the apprenticeship regulations. The new apprenticeship arrangements also feature three different types, with substantial changes made to the first and third type, i.e. the apprenticeships leading to formal qualifications. Following the reform, apprenticeship has been defined as a job contract structured in three different schemes:

- (a) apprenticeship for young people aged 15 to 29 within the dual system framework, which covers three- and four-year programmes involving schools and companies. The scheme leads to a vocational qualification/diploma, higher technical specialisation, the upper secondary school diploma, and entry to vocational tertiary education;

⁽²⁾ According to a survey by Cedefop among Directors General for VET (DGVTs) in early 2016.

⁽³⁾ Legislative Decree No 81, dated 15.6.2015, implementing Law No 183, dated 10.12.2014, known in Italy as the *Jobs Act 2*.

- (b) vocational apprenticeship, for young people aged 18 to 29, which is enterprise-based. It is targeted at young people but also adult workers who have been made redundant. It has a training component, which is marginal however: a maximum 120 hours in three years, to be carried out inside or outside the company. No qualification from the formal education system is awarded upon completion, but the apprentice can become a skilled worker by acquiring a contractual qualification defined and recognised by collective labour agreements;
- (c) higher education and research apprenticeship, which leads to a university degree or fulfils requirements for carrying out research or compulsory traineeship to access liberal professions.

The new features of apprenticeship reform have been set with the aim of improving the on-the job-training component, while assuring, at the same time, apprentices' right to education. The national framework will lead to a dual system in the three and four year vocational training learning pathways for the first and third schemes.

The Decree of 12 October 2015 specifies the framework components for apprenticeship contracts, i.e. the duties and responsibilities of the signatory parties, the employer's requirements, the training standards, the apprentice's rights and obligations, the tasks assigned to the company and workplace tutor and to the tutor at the training institution, skills' assessment and certification modalities. The duration of apprenticeship contracts varies from a minimum of six months to a maximum linked to the period required to achieve the qualification and tasks assigned in the contract. The maximum length of off-the-job training provided by the training institutions is determined by the various types of final qualifications granted in type 1 and type 3 apprenticeships. Internal workplace training is also defined differently, as the difference between the defined length of the learning pathway and off-the-job training. Simplification and flexibility have been introduced for operating apprenticeships:

- (a) administrative requirements: i.e. the individual training plan set by the training institution with the involvement of enterprise;
- (b) salary: as remuneration is proportional to the effective number of hours spent on the job and to the lower contractual placement of apprentices within the job collective agreements;
- (c) financial incentives: in the form of a total social security exemption for the first three years for certain types of enterprises (less than 10 employees, etc.).

1.2.2. Compulsory school-work alternance in school-based VET

On 13 July 2015, the Italian government adopted a reform ⁽⁴⁾ of the national education and training system called *La buona scuola* (The good school), emphasising alternance between classroom work and periods of workplace training. The main objective is to boost school-work transition by increasing employment opportunities and guidance for students. The reform has made it compulsory for all students attending the last three years of upper secondary school to take part in a school-work alternance scheme for at least 200 hours in general education schools (lyceums) and 400 hours in technical and vocational schools. The reform, and operational guidelines' provide definitions and rules for school-work alternance: practical training may take place in an enterprise, or through a virtual training enterprise, or through apprenticeship; companies that have training capacity are listed on a national repository held by the chamber of commerce; a pedagogical design for school-work alternance tasks and pathways is set; tutorship is provided for; and competences acquired in school-work alternance can be assessed and certified. An information guide was circulated to upper secondary schools in 2015.

The reform calls for improved coordination of work-based training between the authorities responsible for VET: the Ministry of Education and the regions (IeFP). Following the state-region agreement of 24 September 2015, a national pilot project, starting from the training year 2015-16, has been carried out throughout the whole country, involving potentially 60 000 students from the third and fourth year of regional vocational training pathways (IeFP). School-work alternance pathways and virtual training enterprises, both for a minimum of 400 hours per year, are among the opportunities offered in the pilot. Accompanying measures are foreseen, such as the strengthening of guidance and placement units within VET Institutions, and tutorship. Within the national pilot project, 23 247 pupils were enrolled on regional vocational training pathways ⁽⁵⁾ by the end of 2016.

⁽⁴⁾ Law No 107 dated 13.7.2015.

⁽⁵⁾ INAPP (*istituto nazionale per l'analisi delle politiche pubbliche*), sperimentazione del sistema duale nella LeFP, analisi dello stato di avanzamento, delle programmazioni regionali 17.7.2017.

1.2.3. Involving employers to support work-based training and apprenticeship

1.2.3.1. Cooperation agreement with industry

A protocol agreement ⁽⁶⁾ was signed in November 2015 between the Ministry of Education and the General Confederation of Italian Industry (*Confindustria*). The protocol has a term of three years (till November 2018) and relates to a cooperation framework aimed, in particular, to support the setting up of alternance training projects involving experts and stakeholders from the various productive sectors and research organisations. This includes curricular and extracurricular internships using existing models such as trainership, technical education programme (T-TEP), and dual system education Italy (DESI).

1.2.3.2. Incentives for companies involved in dual training

Law No 232/2016 introduced financial incentives for companies involved in dual learning. To ease the recruitment of young people on a permanent contract in the same company where they were on alternance or on type 1 or type 3 apprenticeships, some enterprises (less than 10 employees, etc.) are entitled to total social security exemption for the first three years.

⁽⁶⁾ *Rafforzare il rapporto tra scuola e mondo del lavoro* [enhance relationship between school and the labour market].

CHAPTER 2.

MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET ⁽⁷⁾

The Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers (ISFOL, *Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori*) (now INAPP, National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies, *Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche*) was appointed as the quality assurance national reference point (QANRP) in 2006. A quality assurance framework for VET was formally approved in 2012 and partially implemented in 2015. It is consistent with the European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET) recommendation and applies to IVET, continuing vocational education and training (CVET) and related work-based learning. School (including VET schools) evaluation is based on periodic surveys of student learning outcomes, involving all schools and managed centrally. VET schools are required – in compliance with the national evaluation system – to prepare a self-assessment report following a national template and guidelines. In addition, Regions and Autonomous Provinces set standards which have to be met by all training agencies accessing public funding. Those standards refer to a common framework agreed at national level by all Regions and by the State. Accredited

⁽⁷⁾ Sources:

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop):

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

ReferNet: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet>

Priorities reported by Directors General for vocational training for 2016-20;

EQAVET (2016 Secretariat survey, website, newsletters): <http://www.eqavet.eu>

2016 compendium of EQAVET NRP *Erasmus+* funding:

http://www.eqavet.eu/Libraries/Annual_Network_Meeting_2016/Compendium_EQAVET_2016.sflb.ashx

Council recommendations on the 2016 national reform programmes:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/2016/#>

Education and training monitor 2016 country reports:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en

VET providers are registered in a national database according to the data given by Regions.

As in IVET, the most relevant quality assurance tool in CVET is the accreditation of providers. All providers, whether public or private, must be accredited to deliver publicly funded training and guidance. The accreditation process is carried out by the regions and the autonomous provinces in accordance with national criteria outlined in legislation.

Funds for a national survey on school-to-work transition of young people aged 16 to 22 are available. Several data collection initiatives are continuing. By 2015, a national statistical system on VET had been set up and was expected to be further developed through a European Social Fund (ESF) project (2014-20). An inter-university consortium collects data annually about graduate employability. A national VET monitoring report surveys the employability of graduates of VET programmes. A 2015 decree called for all regions to send their IVET monitoring data to QANRP. The data will be used by the Ministry to redefine the allocation of funds.

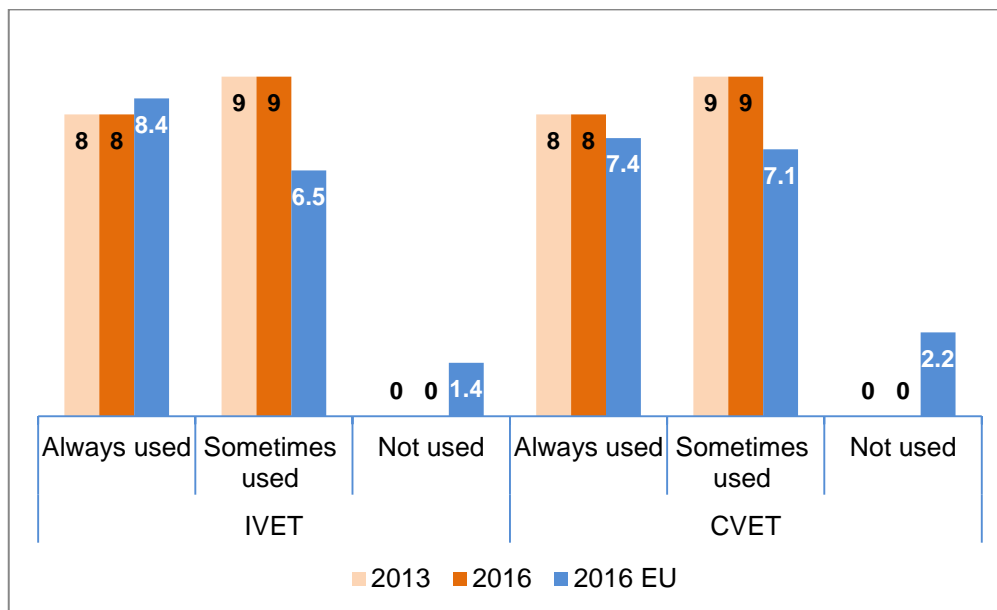
2.1. Quality assurance in line with EQAVET

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this matter is to revise, update and carry out the national approach for quality of education and training. The national approach was approved by the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and the Regions in 2012. Closer cooperation with social partners for the revision of the national approach has been achieved under the umbrella of QANRP and the supervision of the Ministry of Labour.

During the reporting period, the national accreditation system is being reviewed in line with the Legislative Decree No 150 of 2015. QANRP used European and national co-funding to support the update of the national approach to VET quality assurance and to develop instruments and tools to promote a quality assurance culture in national and regional bodies responsible for VET, as well as for teachers, trainers and learners.

The situation in IVET concerning the systematic use of the European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET) indicators to monitor the VET system ('always used' item in Figure 1), has remained unchanged compared to 2013. Italy was below the EU average in IVET and above in CVET in 2016. All EQAVET indicators are used (mostly sometimes) and are part of the national accreditation system for providers applying for public funds.

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, eight were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2016 in Italy compared to 8.4 in the EU on average in 2016.

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretariat surveys for 2013 and 2016 data.

2.2. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET and continuing VET

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this matter are to:

- develop a systemic information mechanism providing data on vocational training pathways, both for IVET and CVET, focusing on individual workers where data on education and training pathways are systematically registered;
- carry out systematic national level monitoring of vocational training and its different pathways, possibly reviewing IVET resource allocation mechanisms.

In the reporting period, several stakeholders are working on setting up an information system that will register all training pathways (both IVET and CVET) delivered and financed with public resources.

CHAPTER 3.

MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

3.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area is to set up a national system for certification of competences to heighten the recognition and transparency of qualifications, and to improve skills in line with the strategy for an integrated education and training system of dual learning.

3.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17

3.2.1. National qualifications framework ⁽⁸⁾

Work on a national qualifications framework is in progress. Self-certification of the higher education framework to the qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) was completed in 2012. The first Italian referencing report was presented to the European qualifications framework (EQF) advisory group in May 2013. A national repertory of education and training qualifications and professional qualifications has been developed since 2013 ⁽⁹⁾ in cooperation with regional authorities. In June 2015, an inter-ministerial decree introduced an operational framework for the recognition of regional qualifications and related skills at a national level (national framework of regional qualifications, QNQR). In 2016, a technical proposal for a comprehensive national qualifications framework was elaborated. The corresponding decree is being developed. A national qualifications database (DBQc), which will contain the qualifications (including EQF levels) issued in the different areas of the lifelong learning system

⁽⁸⁾ Cedefop, 2017b.

⁽⁹⁾ Legislative Decree No 13/2013: *Definition of general rules and basic level of performance for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning and minimum service standards of the national system of competences certification.* http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2013/02/15/13G00043/sg;jsessionid=QtVQDnVhW+1EjOvz7l8GA__.ntc-as1-guri2b

– school, university, vocational education and training, regional vocational training – is being prepared.

3.2.2. ECVET ⁽¹⁰⁾

Education and training providers are engaged in defining units of learning outcomes for mobility. A State-regions agreement of January 2015 defined indicators and procedures to certify competences at regional level and to develop a credit system for IVET and CVET compatible with the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET). The *Erasmus+* national agency trialled ECVET elements within experiences of mobility. A team of experts and a community of practice exist, but the latter needs to be developed. A national coordination point (NCP) for ECVET has not yet been officially nominated.

3.2.3. Validation ⁽¹¹⁾

A legal national framework for validation has been in place since 2012. However, practices are to a large extent governed by regional policies. The degree of development of regional validation systems varies and the approaches are quite different, given, moreover, the lack of a national qualifications framework. Stakeholders reached agreement on an operational common framework for the national recognition of regional qualifications and related skills in 2015. The agreement was endorsed by an inter-ministerial decree signed in June by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education ⁽¹²⁾. Mutual recognition of regional qualifications and standard procedures (including the issuance of final certificates) are established by the operational framework. Standardised validation services were available in most regions by 2016. In those regions, the rules are already being applied: in 2015-16, within the *Youth guarantee* programme, a sample of volunteers in the civil service had their competences validated. The main challenge at this stage is to ensure the sustainability of the new validation practices. To that end, re-qualifying practitioners (counsellors and assessors), and strengthening the capacity of the education system to develop validation tools, are a priority.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The ECVET users' group members.

⁽¹¹⁾ Cedefop, 2017b; Cedefop et al., 2017.

⁽¹²⁾ Inter-ministerial Decree of 30.6.2015 (Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education) defining the operational common framework for national recognition of regional qualifications and related skills.

CHAPTER 4.

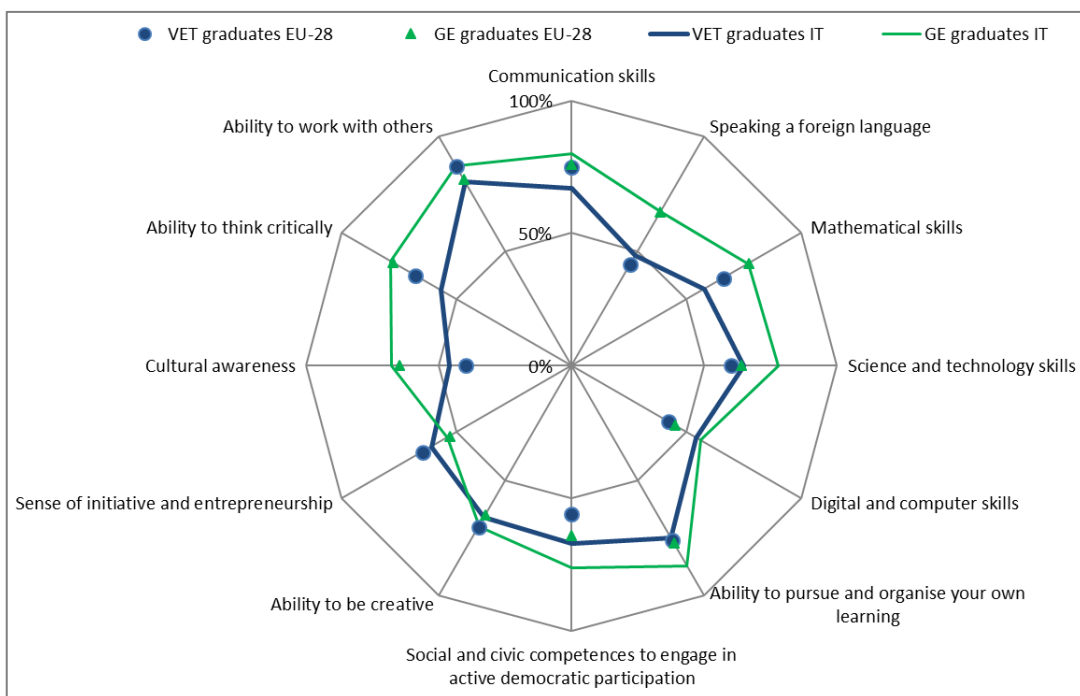
MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

4.1. Baseline

Compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes feel they have a stronger sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and weaker (ranged by priority):

- (a) cultural awareness;
- (b) ability to think critically;
- (c) foreign language speaking;
- (d) mathematical skills (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education and VET



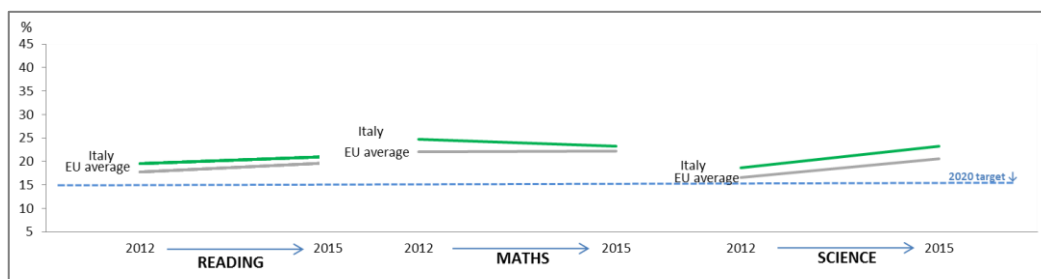
NB: GE stands for general education.

Respondents who attended upper secondary education. Interviewees were asked in summer 2016 about their overall experience in upper secondary education. Aggregated data do not take account of different types and sectors of VET and age groups of respondents.

Source: Cedefop, 2017c.

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in reading and science and a decreasing share in maths compared with 2012 (Figure 3). The share of low achievers in Italy is slightly higher than in the EU average, where the trend is similar.

Figure 3. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing level 2 on the PISA (programme for international student assessment) scale.

Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016.

As VET enrolls 56% of all upper secondary learners in the country (¹³), this trend is likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes. Key citizenship competences (learning to learn; planning; communication; collaborating and participating; acting independently and responsibly; problem solving; identifying connections and relationships; acquiring and interpreting information) are evaluated and certified at the end of the second year of VET programmes (¹⁴).

4.2. Key competences in initial VET

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area are to:

- (a) increase learners' level of competences, including key competences, with priority given to:
 - (i) language and communication skills;
 - (ii) mathematical-logical and scientific skills;
 - (iii) music, art, media and social media skills;
 - (iv) active and democratic citizenship skills;

¹³ Calculated from Eurostat, data for 2015.

¹⁴ For more information on key competences in VET see Bonacci and Santanicchia, 2016.

- (v) development of legal and economic knowledge, and of socially responsible behaviour in relation to culture, the environment and respect of the law;
 - (vi) entrepreneurship skills;
 - (vii) image literacy in the arts, media and web communication;
 - (viii) digital skills, ICT, critical use of social media, particularly in relation to VET, and the world of work;
 - (ix) literacy and Italian language for migrant or foreign students;
- (b) develop a national plan for digital schools to increase the digital skills of students.

To strengthen key competences, Law No 107/2015 provides for a number of measures, including creating a digital identity for students to record and map the competences acquired in different contexts of the real curriculum.

A national strategy for competences/skills has been launched based on the education (*Buona scuola*)⁽¹⁵⁾ and labour (Jobs act) reforms. The reforms aim to improve the competences of young people and adults, including NEETs, and to provide new competences for the (long-term) unemployed and employees. The strategy also links skills with the labour market demand. As a result of the national strategy for competences/skills, cognitive and professional competences (including basic skills) have been promoted through the apprenticeship and alternance systems.

In 2017, subordinate regulations to the *Good school* reform created a national model for evaluation and certification of the key citizenship competences at the first level of secondary education. This decision comes from the results of a national experiment, started in 2014-15, involving around 3 000 education organisations.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Law No 107/2015 on the reform of the national education and training system: the *Good school*.

CHAPTER 5.

MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors

The requirements and the characteristics of teachers' pre-service training were defined in 2014 by ministerial Decrees No 249 of 2010 and No 487. Law No 107/2015 (the *Good school*) stipulated that teachers' in-service training was compulsory and continuing. It provided incentives to support teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) and systematic needs analysis mechanisms.

5.1. Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area is to develop a new strategy and set up new programmes for teacher training and professional development to improve the quality of VET and the success of students on VET pathways by improving the professional skills of teachers.

An April 2017 legislative decree of the council of ministers on the revision of VET defined new criteria for the recruitment of school teachers. Applicants have to be university graduates and must pass bi-annual exams. Estimation of the number of job openings will be based on the needs of each school. Successful candidates will attend a three-year training course of work-based learning and will receive wages after the first year of training.

At regional level, within the framework of the State-regions Agreement of 22 January 2015, each region and autonomous province is responsible for setting its own standards for teacher training to ensure high quality VET services financed by public funds.

5.2. Initial training for trainers and mentors in enterprises

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training (DGVVT), are two-fold:

- (a) recognition of the role and tasks implemented by trainers and mentors in enterprises within apprenticeship pathways;
- (b) support mentors in enterprises as an accompanying measure to the implementation of a dual system in IVET (only regional vocational training pathways, leFP) to ease the transition from vocational training to the labour market.

Legislation on apprenticeship ⁽¹⁶⁾ refers to the role and tasks of mentors and teaching staff. A company tutor is required and will, together with the school tutor, ensure training success for young people. In particular, the company tutor is entrusted with the tasks of: supporting the apprentice's integration in the company; providing assistance to the student-worker during the internal training course; and facilitating the acquisition of the skills needed to work.

Tutoring tasks were trialled within the framework of the national project for piloting alternance in regional VET (Section 1.2.2) including: defining the individual training plan; supporting and monitoring apprentices in correctly implementing their learning path; checking the correct integration between training carried out inside and outside of the enterprise; supporting the deployment of the knowledge acquired in training within the work environment; transferring the essential competences for the implementation of working activities; and supplying useful elements to the training body to assess the apprentice and the effectiveness of training processes.

5.3. Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to increase the skills of teachers involved in planning, programming, managing and evaluating school-work alternance pathways.

VET teachers' CPD has been made compulsory by Law No 107/2015, which introduced a national training and development plan for teachers. The plan is structured on two levels:

- (a) a national level;
- (b) a school/schools network level.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Ministerial Implementation Decree of 12.10.2015 of the Legislative Decree No 81/2015.

The national level consists of the adoption, by the Ministry of Education (MIUR), of the national development plan, which will be renewed every three years. The national plan was adopted after consultation with representative trade unions. The MIUR statement of 7 January 2016 specifies that the strategic areas for the plan in 2016-19 are:

- (c) digital skills for didactic and methodological innovation;
- (d) language skills;
- (e) school-work alternance and entrepreneurship;
- (f) active learning methodologies;
- (g) social inclusion, integration, solidarity, intercultural, global citizenship skills;
- (h) improvement of basic skills, particularly reading and comprehension, logical-argumentative and maths skills of students;
- (i) assessment and evaluation skills.

The school level consists of training and professional development initiatives organised by the school, or by a network of schools, along the policy lines and priorities presented in the school three-year education plan (PTOF), and consistent with the priorities of the national plan, the teachers' needs, and the needs shown in the school's improvement plan, as well as with innovation measures undertaken by the school.

To further support the professional development of teachers, Law No 107/2015 has also established a teachers' training card, which is an electronic card containing a voucher to the value of EUR 500 per school year for each teacher from 2015 onwards. The card can be used to purchase books, digital tools, and to pay for training courses and cultural events.

Conclusion

Since 2015, Italy has taken strong steps to reform its apprenticeship system and introduce compulsory alternance in upper secondary VET, and has taken initiatives to secure employers' involvement in work-based learning through agreements and incentives. Measures have been taken to improve quality assurance mechanisms and the information system which guides the development of initial and continuing VET. A more integrated national approach for the quality of education and training, coherent with the EQAVET framework, is under development. Significant progress has been made towards a national qualifications framework, further implementing ECVET and developing a national common approach to validation. A national strategy was launched to support the development of key competences in initial VET. Legislative measures and pilots are also being implemented to support the initial and continuing training of VET school teachers.

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the country's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed. Yet, information available to Cedefop at the time suggests issues which could benefit from further consideration: developing initiatives to support entrepreneurship education; enhancing guidance; providing groups in need with additional opportunities for training; supporting key competences in CVET; promoting the initial training and continuous professional development of in-company trainers and mentors; and using the EQAVET indicators more systematically to monitor IVET development. Setting out policy priorities on continuous professional development of in-company trainers and mentors for the remaining period until 2020 could also be considered.

List of abbreviations

AES	adult education survey
Confindustria	General Confederation of Italian Industry
CPD	continuing professional development
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DBQc	national qualifications database
DESI	dual system education Italy
DGVT	Director General for vocational education and training
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESF	European Social Fund
Eurostat	statistical office of the European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
GE	general education
leFP	regional vocational training pathways
INAPP	<i>Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche</i> National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies
ISCED	international standard classification of education
ISFOL	<i>Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori</i> Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers
IVET	initial vocational education and training
MIUR	Ministry of Education
NCP	national coordination point
NQF	national qualifications framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
NEET	not in education, employment, or training
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
PTOF	three-year educational plan
QANRP	quality assurance national reference point
QF-EHEA	qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area
QNQR	national framework of regional qualifications
STEM	science, technology, engineering and math programmes
T-TEP	technical education programme
UOE	UNESCO OECD Eurostat
VET	vocational education and training

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