
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

ITALY



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This VET in Europe report is part of a series prepared by Cedefop's ReferNet network. VET in Europe reports provide an overview of national vocational education and training (VET) systems of the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. The reports help to understand VET's main features and role within countries' overall education and training systems from a lifelong learning perspective, and VET's relevance to and interaction with the labour market.

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ReferNet is a network of institutions across Europe representing the 28 Member States, plus Iceland and Norway. The network provides Cedefop with information and analysis on national vocational education and training. ReferNet also disseminates information on European VET and Cedefop's work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

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

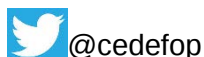


Table of Contents

List of figures and tables	3
1. External factors influencing VET	4
1.1. Demographics	4
1.2. Economics and labour market trends	4
1.2.1. Employment	5
1.2.2. Unemployment	6
1.2.3. Self-employment	9
1.3. Participation in education and attainment	10
1.4. Matching qualifications and jobs	12
1.4.1. An in-depth study of the educational mismatch	13
1.5. Labour market policies influencing VET	14
2. Providing VET in a lifelong learning perspective	16
2.1. General education and vocational education and training	16
2.2. VET governance	18
2.3. VET at upper secondary level	19
2.3.1. Technical and vocational school programmes	19
2.3.2. Three- and four-year Regional Education and Vocational training programmes (leFP)	20
2.4. Post-secondary VET	27
2.5. Post-higher education VET	30
2.6. Apprenticeship-type schemes	30
2.7. CVET supporting policies and their financing system	34
2.8. Training provided by employers	36
2.9. Adult education	39
2.9.1. Adults demand for non-formal and informal learning	40
2.10. Other forms of training	43
2.10.1. Non-formal learning	43
2.11. Teachers and trainers qualifications, roles and responsibilities	45
3. Shaping VET qualifications	49
3.1. Improving the match between labour market need and VET provision	49
3.1.1. Excelsior Information System for employment and training	49
3.1.2. Information system on professions	50
3.2. Assessment, recognition of competences within formal learning and validation of non-formal and informal learning	51

3.2.1. The new legal national framework of qualifications and its state of implementing.....	51
4. Promoting participation in VET	53
4.1. Financial and regulatory framework for CVET	53
4.2. Guidance and counselling structures and services	54
4.3. Challenges and policy developments.....	55
List of acronyms and abbreviations	57
List of references	58

List of figures and tables

Figures

1. Employment rate by gender	5
2. Real GDP growth compared to the previous year.....	6
3. Unemployment rate, including youth and those not in employment or education (NEET) in EU28 and Italy in 2015 (%)	6
4. Unemployment rates by age in Italy, 2015 (%)	7
5. Unemployment rates (15 to 64 years) by educational attainment level, 2015 (%)	8
6. Unemployment rates (15 to 64 years) by and educational attainment level, Italy 2006-15 (%)	8
7. Self-employed and employees in 2011-15 (index)	9
8. Early leavers from education and training in 2008, 2013 and 2015 (%)	11
9. Tertiary education attainment in 2008, 2013 and 2015 (%).....	12
10. Employment rates of young people (20 to 34 years) not in education and training by educational attainment level (%)	12
11. VET in the education and training system in Italy	18
12. People enrolled to leFP (I-III year) in the last 4 years, by typology	22
13. Distribution of centralised and delegated management of resources for the 'right / duty', according to territorial circumscriptions - 2014 (provided funding)(%)	25
14. Committed resources for leFP by Regions Ministries and Community resources in 2014 (%)	25
15. Funded resources by Regions, Ministries and Community resources 2014(%)	26
16. Training enterprises (%) by size class (Italy, 1993-2010).....	36
17. Training enterprises (%) by size class (Italy, 2012).....	37
18. Innovative and not innovative companies wishing to hire workers for dimension class (% , 2013-2014)	38
19. Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks – aged 25-64; Italy, EU-28; 2007-2016).....	41
20. Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by occupation (Italy, 2015-2016).....	43

Tables

1. List of qualifications and diplomas in leFP VET three and four years programmes	21
2. Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks – aged 25-64, total and employed) broken down for gender, age and geographical area (% , Italy average 2015)	41

1. External factors influencing VET

1.1. Demographics

In January 2016, the population of Italy was 60.6 million, including 8.3% foreign residents. Life expectancy decreased from 80.3 in 2014 to 80.1 years for men and from 85 to 84.7 years for women.

The population is ageing with an average of 44.6 years, 0.2% higher than in 2015. Age dependency ratio was 56% ⁽¹⁾. In 2016, the share of population up to age 24 was less than 25% ⁽²⁾. The working age (15-64) population shrinks and is 64.3% of the total population, while the share of children (up to age 14) is 13.7% and of seniors (60+) 22%. In 2016, the share of youth (24 or less) was below 25%.

Demographic trends have an impact on school population, which was decreased between September 2014 and June 2015, especially at lower secondary level (by 0.7%). In the same period, upper secondary school level population has increased by 0.8%, including both Italian (+0.6%) and foreign learners (+2.8%).

Since 2007, immigration has been a prevailing demographic growth factor. In 2016, it has halved, while emigration has nearly tripled.

The share of foreign learners has increased by 20.9% between 2009/10 and 2014/15 (from 673 592 to 814 187) ⁽³⁾, compared to a 2.7% decrease of Italian learners (from 8 283 493 to 8 058 397). The share of foreign female learners was 48%.

In 2014/15, 55.3% of learners with foreign nationality were born in Italy (84.8% in pre-primary education). In 2015, 7.3% of foreign learners declared to have repeated one or more school years ⁽⁴⁾, especially those not born in Italy (31%). Foreign learners often have lower marks in secondary education programmes.

1.2. Economics and labour market trends

The gap between well-off and at-risk groups (women, children, immigrants and minority communities) grows. The risk of poverty and social exclusion in the country is higher than before the crisis. In 2015, the incidence of absolute household poverty was 6.1%.

⁽¹⁾ $[Population\ ages\ 0-15] + [Population\ ages\ 65-plus] \div [Population\ ages\ 16-64] \times 100$;
source : <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND?locations=IT>.

⁽²⁾ For example, in France it was 30.4%.

⁽³⁾ Foundation for initiatives and studies on multi ethnicity (2016) National Report 2014-15 on students with non-Italian citizenship.

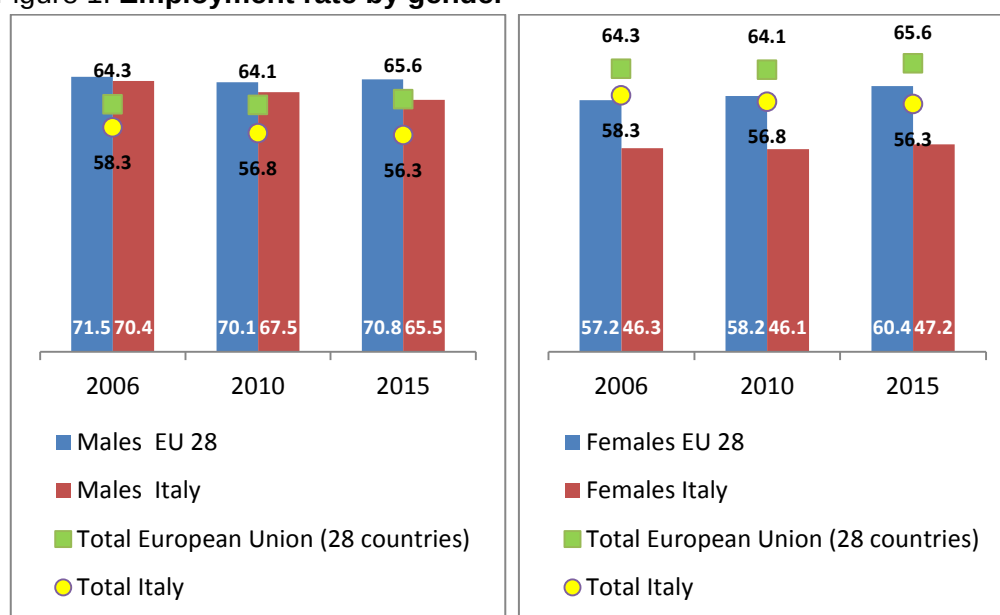
⁽⁴⁾ According to the 2015 survey on integration of the second generation by ISTAT.

1.2.1. Employment

The 2008 economic crisis resulted in lower employment. Since then, there was a decline of permanent jobs, especially for young people, and increase in part time and temporary jobs

In 2015, the employment rate of age group 20-64 was 60.5% (0.6 percentage points more than in 2014). It was not gender balanced. The employment rate of age group 55-64 was 56.3 % (2 percentage points more than in 2014, and 9.2 points more than 2007). The increase of the employment was evident especially among temporary employees, with a share of 14% (0.5 percentage points more than in 2014). The share of part-time employees' also increased, especially among women. Also the share of full time jobs has increased. The size of undeclared labour was 12.8% in 2013, mainly in specific areas (mostly in southern regions) and production sectors characterised by a relevant turnover also on a seasonal base (for example building, social care, and tourism sectors).

Figure 1. **Employment rate by gender**

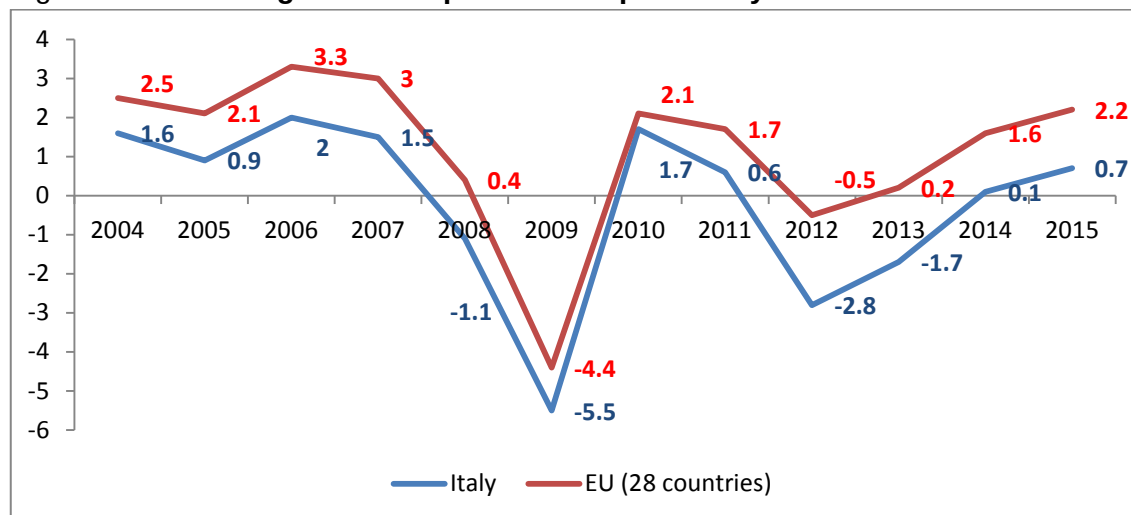


NB: 15 to 64 years, all ISCED 2011 levels
Source: Eurostat, table lfsa_ergaed; extracted on 18.11.2016

Since 2006, the Italian employment rate remains below the EU average. It is also gender imbalanced. In 2015-16, the employment rate in all age groups increased except the 25-34 year-olds (-0.3%). Growth was particularly strong among those over 50 (1.9 %).

Since 2015, an increase in employment signals the beginning of recovery from the economic recession.

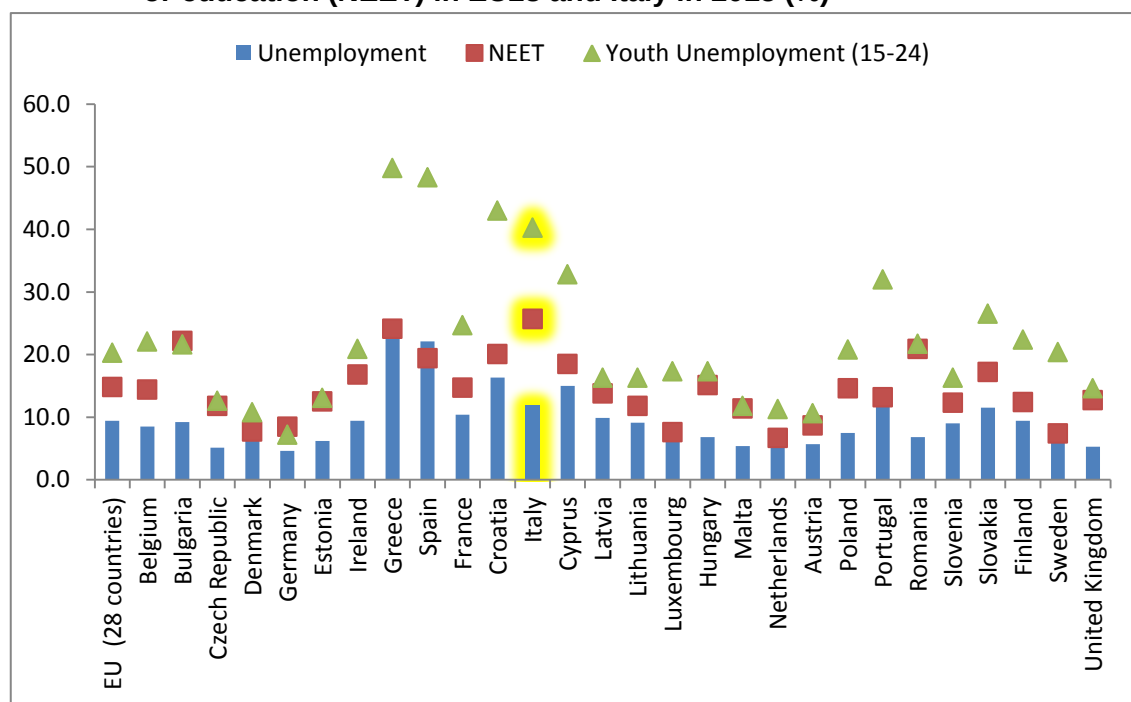
Figure 2. **Real GDP growth compared to the previous year**



Source: Eurostat, table tec00115, extracted on 18.11.2016.

1.2.2. Unemployment

Figure 3. **Unemployment rate, including youth and those not in employment or education (NEET) in EU28 and Italy in 2015 (%)**

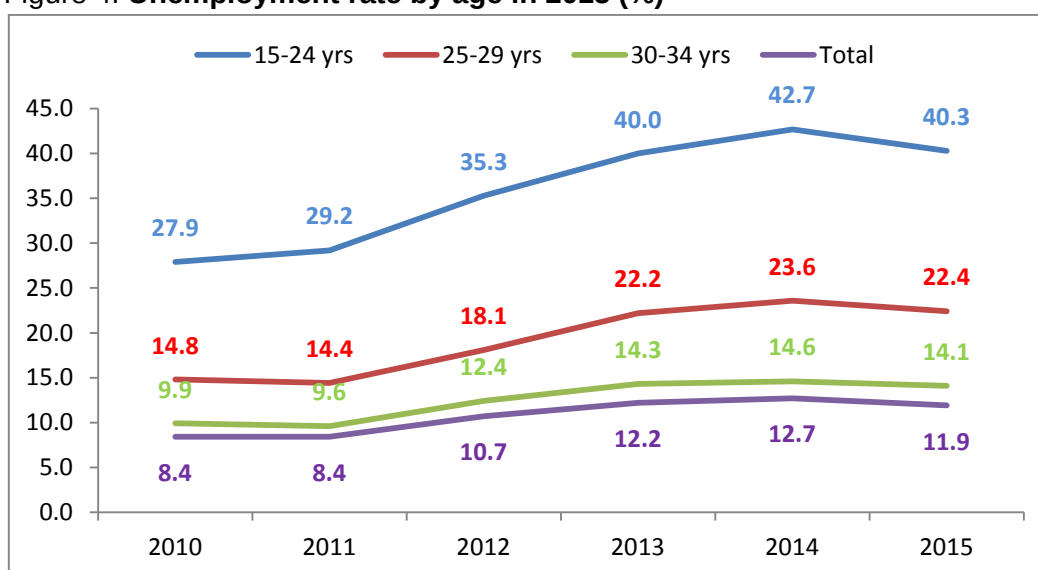


NB: Break in series for NEET values in LU and HU

Source: Eurostat ([edat_ifse_20] and [ifsa_urgan]); extracted on 20.12.2016.

In Figure 3, the share of young people aged 15-29 not in employment and education or training (NEET) was 25.7% in 2015. The share of youth unemployment was 40.3% that is almost four times more than the total unemployment rate in the country (11.9%).

Figure 4. **Unemployment rate by age in 2015 (%)**



Source: Eurostat, [lfsa_urgan], extracted on 20.12.2016.

In 2015, the unemployment rate was decreased by 0.8pp (Figure 4) compared the previous year. The decrease was more evident for the 15-24 age group (2.4pp).

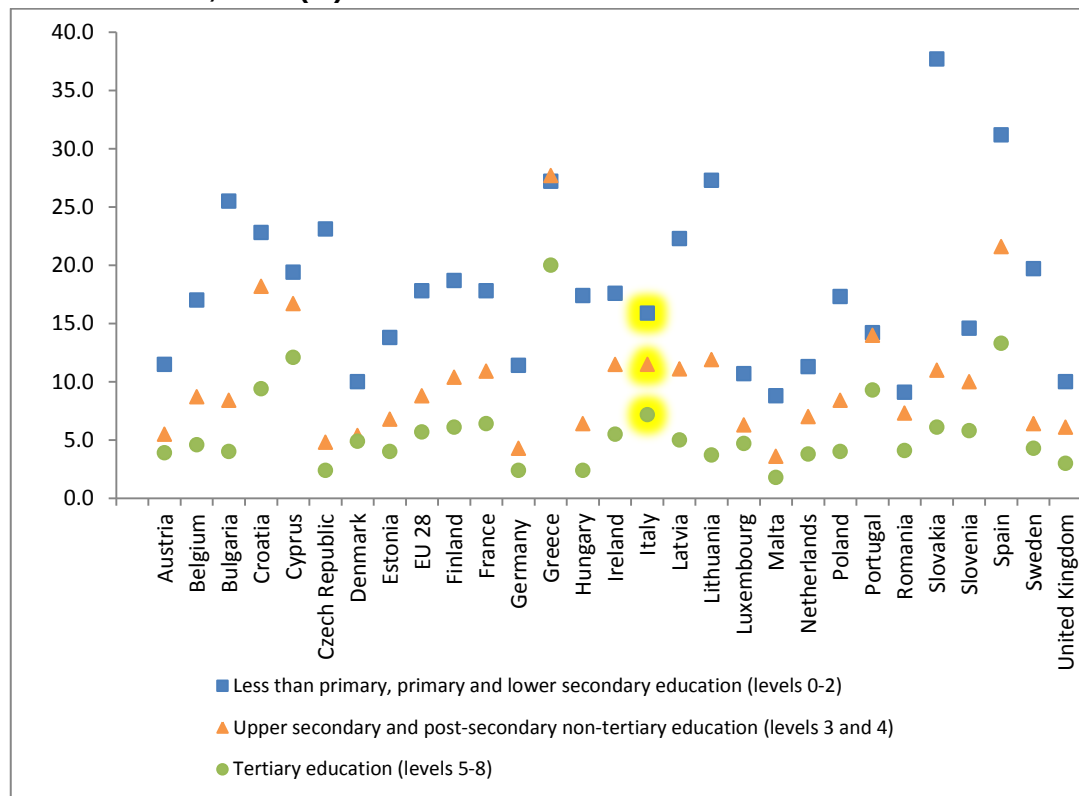
In 2014, six unemployed out of ten (60.7%) could not find a job longer than one year. The non-participation rate, i.e. unemployed not searching for a job, decreased for the first time since 2006 (0.4 pp less than in 2014). According to ISTAT ⁽⁵⁾, education had a protective role against unemployment during the crisis.

The average unemployment rate in the country 2016 was similar to the EU28 average. The Italian rate of youth unemployment is constantly growing: from 20% in 2007 to more than 42% in 2016.

Figure 5 demonstrates that the lower the education level is the higher unemployment and vice versa. The latter is not true for Italy. High education levels do not necessarily mean better employability.

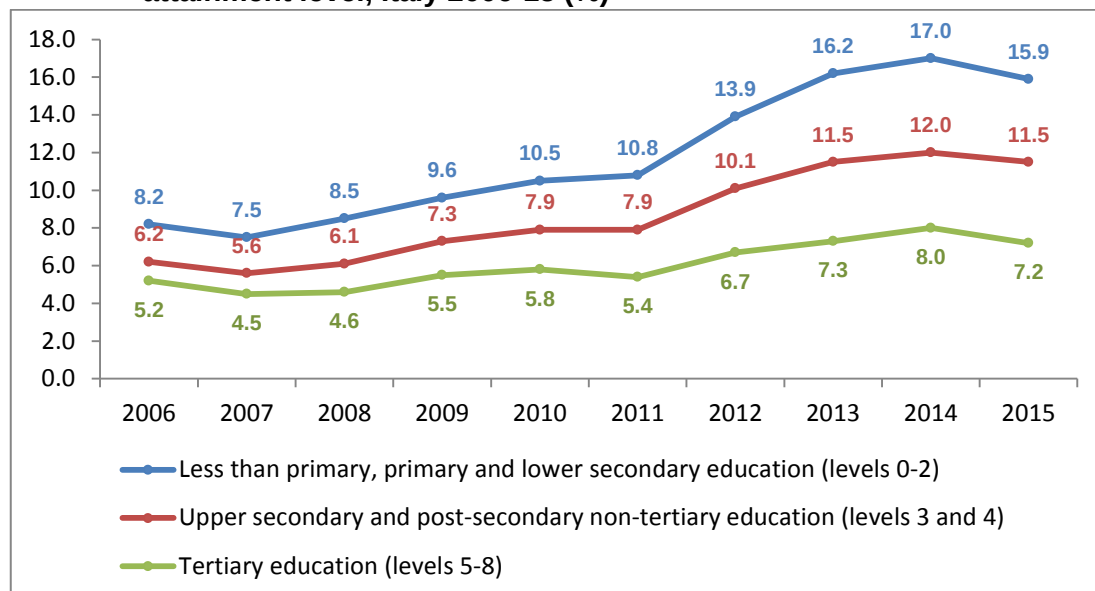
⁽⁵⁾ Source: ISTAT. *Rapporto Annuale 2016: la situazione del Paese*

Figure 5. Unemployment rates (15 to 64 years) by educational attainment level, 2015 (%)



Source: Eurostat, lfsa_urgaed; extracted on 18.11.2016

Figure 6. Unemployment rates (15 to 64 years) by and educational attainment level, Italy 2006-15 (%)

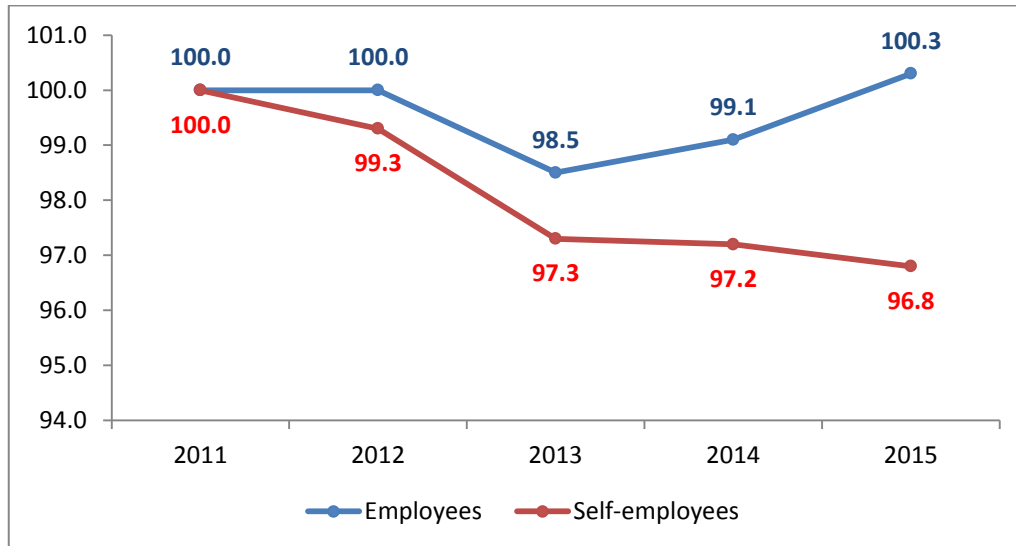


Source: Eurostat, lfsa_urgaed; extracted on 18.11.2016

1.2.3. Self-employment

Self-employment is historically fragmented in Italy. It includes occupations mentioned in various regulations, including regulated professions and independent workers.

Figure 7. **Self-employed and employees in 2011-15 (index)**



Source: Isfol elaboration on EUROSTAT data

In 2015, self-employment was 24% of the total employment. It is more than in EU on average (16%). The fragmented structure of self-employment confirmed its weakness, particularly during the crisis period. In 2015, self-employment decreased by 3.2pp, while the share of employees slightly increased compared to 2011 (Figure 7).

Self-employees can be divided into three categories:

- (a) professions for the exercise of which a compulsory membership in associations is needed ;
- (b) professions which are organised in professional associations, thus disciplined by law anyway, but no compulsory membership in associations is needed; and;
- (c) professions that are 'unregulated' or not organised in any order or college, usually, but not exclusively new professions whose possible aggregation in groups is not contained in the list provided by the relevant law.

A professional can also be a person that is employed by a firm, is enrolled in registers or professional orders, but is not self-employed with a VAT. For this category of professionals, training support follows the policy provided by the law for all other non-professional employees and has also access to refresher courses provided by registers and orders.

The professionals mentioned in point (a) have to follow the rules dictated by registers and orders, which usually request that they attend refresher courses

and other training initiatives, often utilising the so-called 'training credits'. The aim is to reach a certain compulsory minimum credit score within a specific period of years (usually within 3 years).

The latest amendments Law 4/2013 on measures for non-organised professions has provided a regulatory framework for professions defined in point (b).

The participation of self-employed persons in education and training is related on professionals' academic background and if their profession is regulated by law. If their profession is regulated by law, the participation to training activities in 2015 is above the average; on the other side, other 'low skilled' categories of self-employed are significantly below the average rate. The participation is also higher for professionals with academic background (with a university degree) rather than the ones that had obtained diplomas after their compulsory education.

The above mentioned law also recognises the role of professional associations (as well as 'aggregations' of associations ⁽⁶⁾), which, among other tasks, organise specific training activities, thus ensuring a permanent education process. Another fundamental aspect of the law covers the competence certification process, based on a collaborative model between the Associations of representation, the Uni ⁽⁷⁾ and 'Accredia (the national organisation aimed at validating the assessment bodies). This model contributes to consumers' protection; because they can chose only certified professionals.

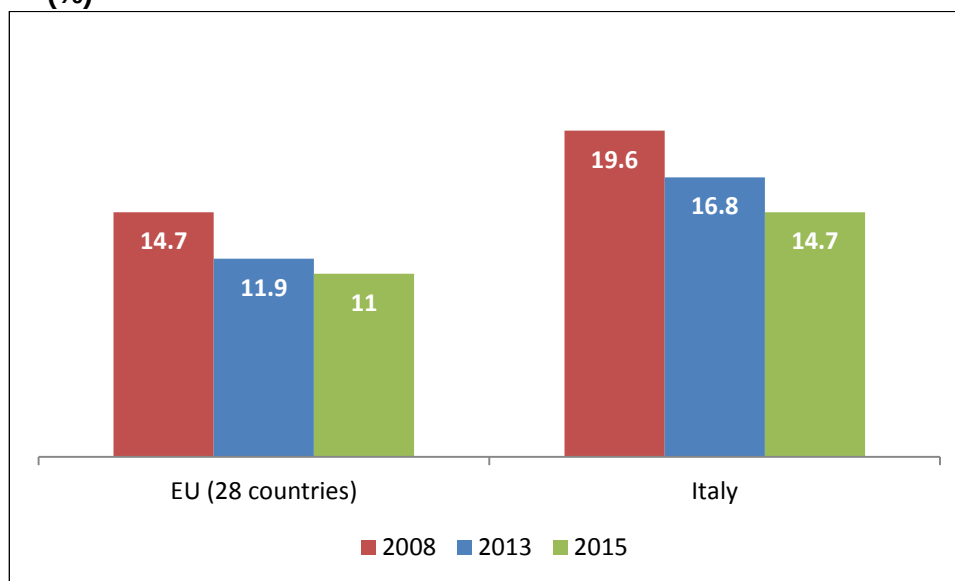
1.3. Participation in education and attainment

More than half of young people (15-24 years old) are enrolled in higher education in Italy. Eight percent of 24-65 year-olds participate in lifelong learning. In 2015, the share of early leavers from education was 15.0% (Figure 8) (national target 2020 is 16%). In vocational training nearly half of the students are one year late in their training, an indication that academic 'weaker' students choose vocational training. Based on previous experience, this increases the likelihood of an early exit – drop out completely in some cases. Progress has been made in many areas but still Italy is in the last positions compared to the benchmark of 2020 and behind other more economically advanced countries.

⁽⁶⁾ Both typologies are shown in a list at the Ministry of Economic Development. In August 2016 they have been recognised 132.

⁽⁷⁾ UNI - Italian Organisation for Standardisation - is a private non-profit organisation recognised by the State and by the European Union (list of national standard bodies in accordance with Section 27 of European Regulation no. 1025/2012), that from nearly 100 years has been developing and publishing voluntary techniques - UNI laws - in all industrial, commercial and service sectors.

Figure 8. **Early leavers from education and training in 2008, 2013 and 2015 (%)**

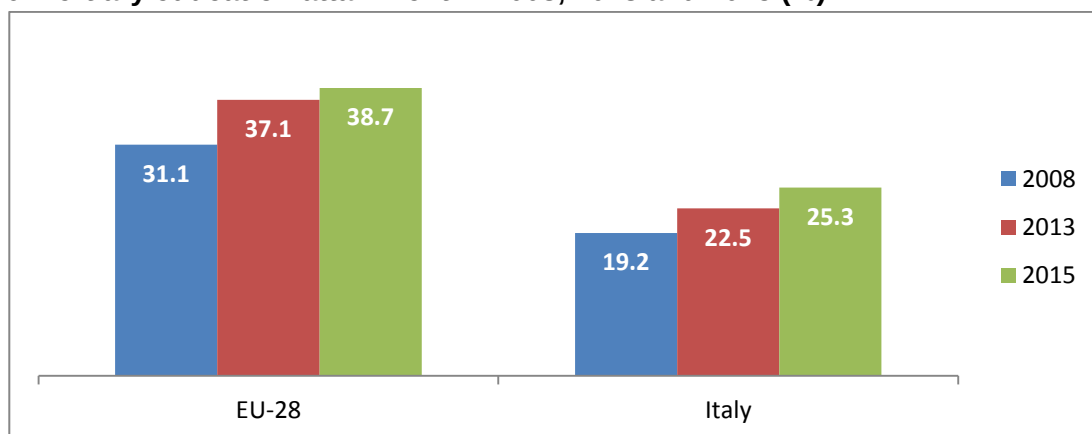


Source: Eurostat, table t2020_40; extracted on 18.11.2016

Italy implements policies linked to the Job Act reforms and the 'Buona Scuola law' that integrate young VET learners in the labour market. They reduce early school leaving through training (apprenticeships) and help validate learner's skills. These policies and new legislations are also aimed at enhancing upper secondary qualifications. In fact the proportion of young people aged between 20 and 24 who obtained at least a high school diploma is lower than EU28 average level: in 2015 they were 81.1% compared with 82.7% but with a diminishing gap comparing to the data registered in 2008, when they were 76.6% compared to 78.6% and particularly in comparison to 2013, when the Italian figure was 78.1% against the European market at 81.1%

Also tertiary education attainment has increased to 25.3% among the 30-34 year-olds (Figure 9) (national target 2020 is 26%); which is still considerably less than the EU average (38.7%).

Figure 9. **Tertiary education attainment in 2008, 2013 and 2015 (%)**

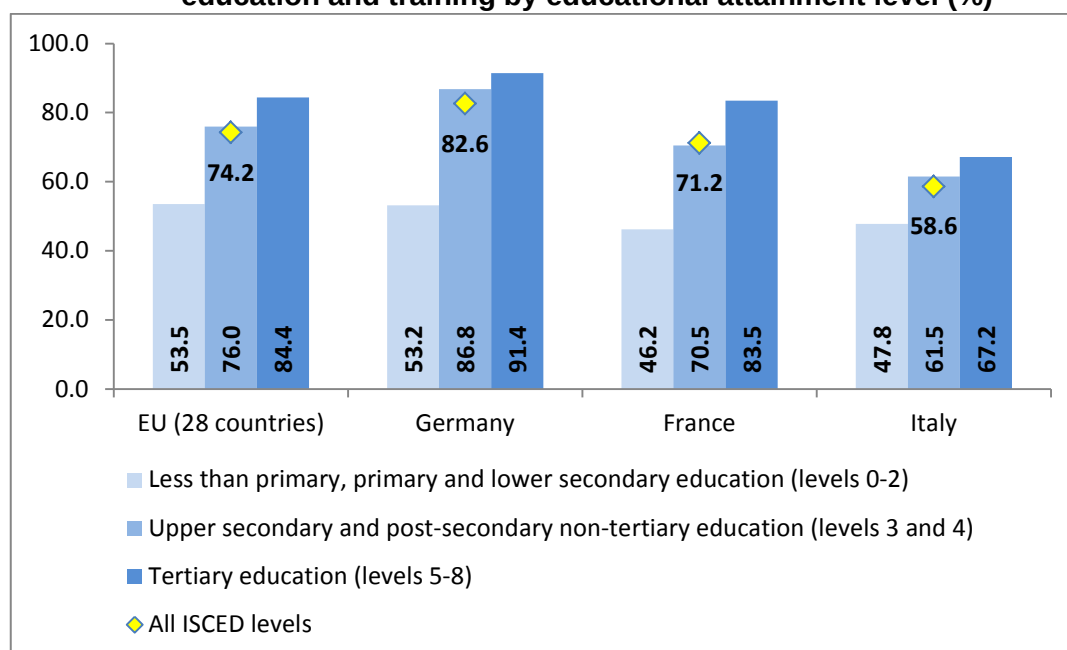


Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS: Data code: t2020_41. Extraction date: 11.7.2016

1.4. Matching qualifications and jobs

In EU28, people with primary education have an employment rate of 53.5%; with secondary education – 74.2%; those with tertiary education –84.4%. In Italy the figures are 47.8, 61.5% and 67.2% respectively.

Figure 10. **Employment rates of young people (20 to 34 years) not in education and training by educational attainment level (%)**



Source: Eurostat, [edat_lfse_24] extraction date: 21.12.2016

As shown in Figure 10, employment rates for young people (20 to 34 years) in Italy are considerably below than EU average and the respective rates in Germany and France; especially, when it comes to young employees with tertiary education level.

Although, various actions and reforms have helped learners to access easier higher and tertiary education, this was not accompanied by a greater absorption of the higher educated workforce in the production system. In many cases the supply growth was not followed by a growth in demand for skilled employment. Even though, the demand for qualified employment is modest and the number of graduates is still very low compared to other European countries, phenomena such as over-educated workers was not observed.

1.4.1. An in-depth study of the educational mismatch

The ISFOL-PLUS survey, realised in 2014, differs from other surveys due to the absence of indirect respondents (proxy interviews) and for directly targeting the respondents that fit the characteristics of the survey ⁽⁸⁾. This approach made it possible to prepare and use a detailed questionnaire on the nature of employment, education and household conditions, allowing – through dedicated modules - the analysis of the actual situation of the labour market, as it is perceived by respondents, with a particular attention to the difficulties experienced by youth, women, and people over age 50.

The analysis of the dynamic aspects of such phenomena was supported by the longitudinal design of the survey ⁽⁹⁾, which consists of a share of the interviews that is repeated for the same subjects (panel), tracing with precision the trajectories in the labour market over time. The best match between level of education and professional employment is observed for women, who choose jobs with higher security with guaranteed paid maternity leave.

The phenomenon of over-education varies by age, qualification and gender. The educational mismatch decreases with age, suggesting that over time, even if slowly and partially, an adjustment between human capital and work eventually occurs. At age 40-49, more than 42% of employed individuals report no factor of mismatch (36% at age 18-39), and the share increases to 47% for those over 50. The only mismatch of over skilled is difficult to be absorbed over time; in fact, there are no significant variations between different age groups. The gender analysis shows that mismatch is higher for men. The analysis of indicators of over-education per educational qualification highlights that, roughly

⁽⁸⁾ The first consequence is that the characteristics of PLUS occupation are cleaned from the component of non-prevailing employed (i.e. those individuals that are considered as employed according to the official ISTAT definition having worked for at least one hour over the last week, but with an economic activity not so substantial that they can be considered as employed 'tout court') and include some other categories of unemployed (o job-seekers) that, on the contrary, are not considered in the official ISTAT definition (potential workforce). However, it is always possible to retrace the labour force aggregates defined by ISTAT-EUROSTAT from PLUS data, by using *ad hoc* queries.

⁽⁹⁾ Panel data on a two and three-year basis are available for those waves of ISFOL-PLUS (2005- 2006-2008-2010-2011-2014) for which weights have been defined for the longitudinal population.

speaking an upper secondary school graduate is generally less overqualified than a university graduate.

It seems evident that negative judgements on job satisfaction are connected to a higher over-education, reinforcing the interpretation that a bad matching fosters a growing work discomfort. The gap is a structural one: workers with higher work dissatisfaction report 10 extra percentage points of over-education the gap related to career prospects and economic treatment is less severe.

Over-education seems to be structural and a relevant share of individuals is mismatched even after many years in employment. Skills that are wasted often generate work discomfort, while a missing educational qualification is often superseded by the acquired professionalism.

Overall, the analysis confirms the presence of important determinants not only from the supply side, as often underlined in most contributions on the matter, but also from the demand side.

Further analysis shows that over-education is associated with a lower return both in terms of labour income and job satisfaction.

1.5. Labour market policies influencing VET

The Italian welfare system has been substantially modified by the legislative reforms implemented in the end of the 1990s, inspired by the European flexicurity concept and aimed to reduce rigidity of the labour market policy. This first generation of reforms ⁽¹⁰⁾ have allowed employers use short-term and part-time contracts and to dismiss employees with greater flexibility. The reforms also guarantee support services to workers (mobility and replacement opportunities). The most recent reforms are based on the articulated implementing process of the Jobs Act law (L.183/2014). The subsequent nine legislative decrees that are setting the different issues covered by the Law greatly expand the reform course opened by Law 92/2012 and draw a new framework of law work. In particular, the legislative process under way intervenes in the field of labour market flexibility, both inbound and outbound, the review of social safety nets in the event of involuntary unemployment and in persistence of employment, provides new services and active labour market policies, increases the protection of maternity and the reconciliation of life and work.

One of the most relevant innovations compared with the previous reforms are typologies of national job contracts. The market of labour policies introduced by the new Job Act legal framework aim at simplifying and limiting the huge number of the so called atypical or temporary employment contracts introduced

⁽¹⁰⁾ Minister Biagi reform law (L. 276/2003) about new form of more flexible and short term employment contracts , Minister Fornero Leg. Decree (LD 92/2012) about retirement and market of labour reform

by the previous reforms and seek to stimulate enterprises to favour the employee work, through a system of increasing protections from temporary to permanent recruitments. To be noticed that increasing of competences and training experiences (also to be acquired through apprenticeship) are considered fundamental along this pathway toward a more stable and better employment.

2. Providing VET in a lifelong learning perspective

2.1. General education and vocational education and training

All young people have the right/duty (*diritto/dovere*) (Law 53/2003, p. 7) to pursue their education and training for at least 12 years before reaching age 18 and should not leave education and training without a qualification. Compulsory education lasts 10 years, up to 16, and includes the first two years of upper secondary general education or VET.

Young people complete lower secondary education at age 14. At this stage, learners sit a state exam to acquire a certificate (EQF level 1) which grants admission to the upper secondary level where young people have the opportunity to choose between general education and VET.

At upper secondary level, young people may opt for:

- (a) five-year programmes which include the two last years of compulsory education and three years (under the right/duty of education and training) in:

- (i) high schools (*licei*). These provide general education programmes at upper secondary level;
- (ii) technical schools;
- (iii) vocational schools.

High schools (*licei*) offer artistic, classical, linguistic, scientific, human sciences, music and dance strands. Within the artistic strand, learners can specialise in figurative arts, architecture and environment, design, audio visual and multimedia, graphics or stage design in the second period.

The qualifications awarded after successful completion of high school, technical and vocational school are at EQF level 4 and a state leaving exam at the end of them gives access to higher education;

- (b) Regional Education and Vocational training courses (leFP) (3 or 4 years - EQF 3 or 4 respectively)
- (c) an apprenticeship-type scheme (EQF 3 or 4).

At post-secondary level, the Italian system features higher technical training (IFTS, ITS) and short programmes or courses (post-leFP and others). VET courses also exist at higher education level.

Tertiary education (ISCED levels 665, 667, 766, 767, 768, 864) is divided into higher education programmes at the university and higher education programmes at non-university institutions:

- (a) universities: can be public or private and follow the three cycles of the Bologna structure: bachelor (*laurea*); master (*laurea specialistica/magistrale*); and specialisation or PhD programmes (*masters universitario di secondo livello, dottore di ricerca*);

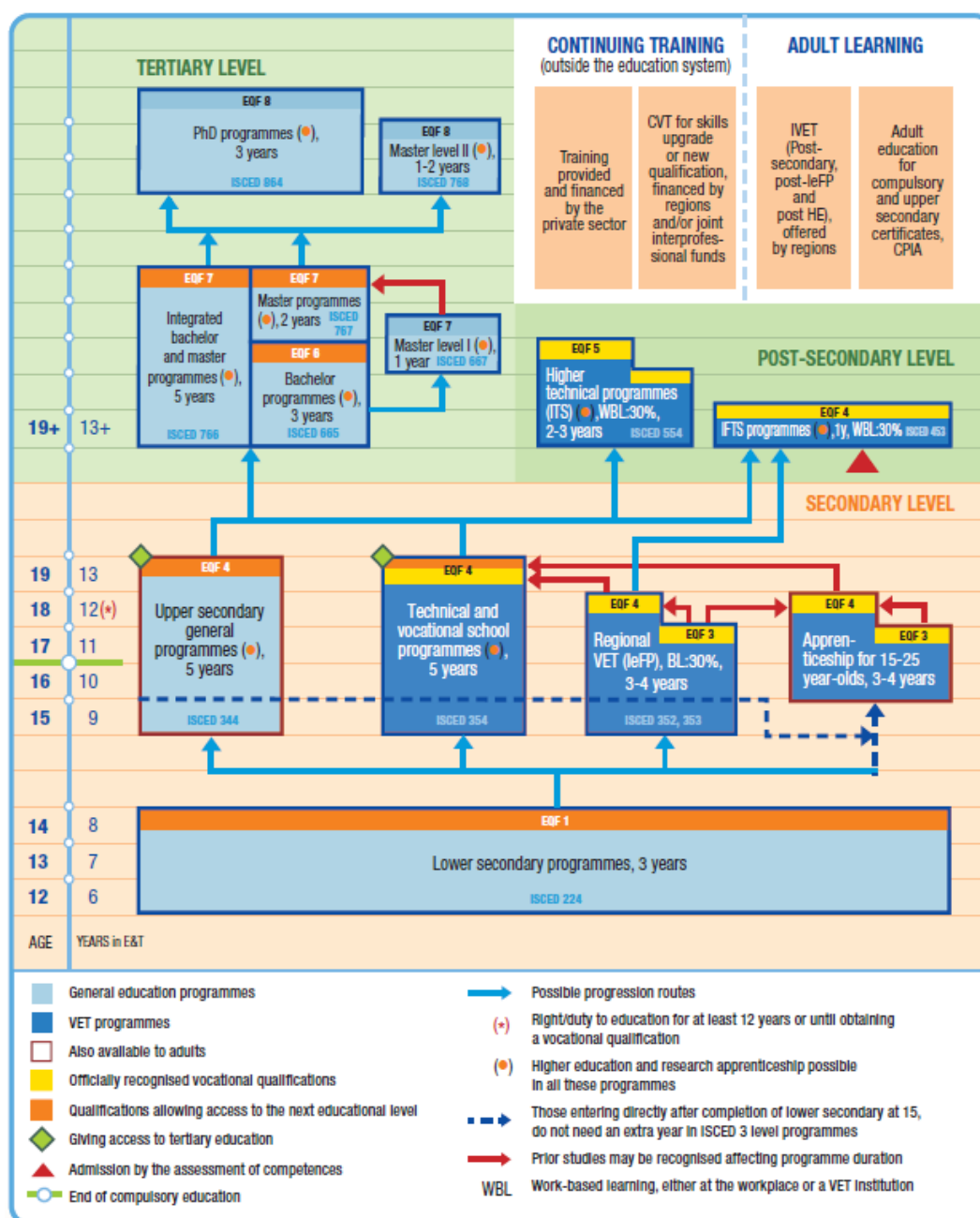
- (b) higher artistic and musical programmes (*alta formazione artistica e musicale*) which are non-university programmes based on the three-cycle structure.

Italian VET also offers adult education and Continuing Vocational Training (CVT)

In Italy, the term vocational education and training is reserved for specific programmes primarily under the remit of the regions and autonomous provinces (such as leFP).

From a European perspective the term 'education and training' comprises all types and levels of general and education and vocational education and training (VET). Irrespective of the provider or governance scheme, VET can take place at secondary, post-secondary or tertiary level in formal education and training or non-formal settings including active labour market measures. VET addresses young people and adults and can be school-based, company-based or combine school- and company-based learning (apprenticeships). Therefore, the term VET also covers the technical and vocational schools.

Figure 11. VET in the education and training system in Italy



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Italy.

2.2. VET governance

Responsibilities are shared among the different actors involved in planning and organising VET as follows:

- the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) sets the framework for VET in national school programmes (technical and vocational schools) for higher technical training;

- the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLPS) sets the framework for Regional Education and Vocational training courses (leFP), while the regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of planning, organisation and provision;
- regions and autonomous provinces are also in charge of planning, organisation and provision of ITS, IFTS, post leFP, post-higher education, and most of the apprenticeship-type schemes;
- goals of Continuing Vocational Training (CVT) under the public system are set by the labour ministry, while CVT activities are managed by either regions and autonomous provinces or social partners;
- social partners play an important role in promoting company-level training plans (single or group of companies) to be financed by the regions or by the joint interprofessional funds;
- social partners have a general advisory role in VET policy, from which VET provision is then defined;

2.3. VET at upper secondary level

2.3.1. Technical and vocational school programmes

In technical school programmes (*istituti tecnici*) learners can acquire knowledge, skills and competences to carry out technical and administrative tasks. These programmes start at the age of 14 and finish at 19. They offer an upper secondary education diploma – Technical schools EQF 4 (such as: tourism, graphics and communication, administration, finance and marketing)

In vocational school programmes (*istituti professionali*) learners acquire specific theoretical and practical preparation enabling them to carry out qualified tasks in production fields of national interest. These programmes start at the age of 14 and finish at 19. They offer an upper secondary education diploma – Vocational schools EQF 4 (such as: services for agriculture and rural development, social and health services, etc.)

The certificate awarded mentions the branch and length of the studies, the final marks, the points assigned through 'school credit', the points assigned through training credits and the additional points given by the examination board (if applicable), the subjects included in the curriculum and the total number of teaching hours dedicated to each subject.

The certification models are drawn up by the Ministry of Education (MIUR). Diplomas and certificates are written in four Community languages so that they can be understood in the different Member States. In 2016 Europass Certificate Supplements were produced by Ministry of Education together with NEC Italy located in Isfol, and issued to all students together with the final Diploma.

2.3.2. Three- and four-year Regional Education and Vocational training programmes (leFP)

The leFP programmes (*percorsi triennali e quadriennali di istruzione e formazione professionale*) are designed and organised by the regions.

Starting from age 15, students can study even by means of the apprenticeship to achieve a qualification and a professional diploma, upon attendance of a pre-established number of training hours.

The dual system experimentation is currently being launched (State-Regions Agreement dated September 24th 2015) and it will give young people the possibility to achieve a qualification and/or a professional diploma through training courses characterised by a real alternation between training and work. In particular, such courses could take the form of:

- (a) an apprenticeship for achieving a qualification and a professional diploma and the higher technical specialisation certificate;
- (b) school - work alternation;
- (c) simulated training enterprise.

Access to leFP courses is possible only after completion of the lower secondary school (former *scuola media* in Italian) and after passing the related State exam.

Since experimental period in 2011, such courses have now become official. They are now a regional matter and can be organised by the accredited training agencies and starting from 2011/12, following the State-Regions Agreement in Unified Conference of 16 December 2010 and the MIUR Decree n. 4 of January 18th 2011, they can also take place at the Professional Institutes under the subsidiarity system, both as 'supplementary' and 'complementary' typology.

Under 'supplementary subsidiarity' in the third year, the students attending 5-year courses can achieve one of the 22 professional qualifications corresponding to the specialisation chosen.

In the case of courses under 'complementary subsidiarity', students can achieve, in the same school institutions, 3-year professional qualifications and 4-year diploma for leFP courses. To this purpose, institutes create classes with the same training standards and system regulation of leFP courses.

The educational methodology used in leFP courses is of active nature, namely based on experience and work. The programme includes elements of general knowledge, but focuses also on the specific professional areas chosen.

Upon completion of the 3-year leFP courses, a qualification of professional operator is granted (EQF Level 3); while at the end of the fourth year a technician professional diploma is achieved (EQF Level 4).

Regions issue qualifications and diplomas recognised at a national level, as defined in the National Classification of Professional Roles. In the following table the 22 qualifications and 21 diplomas are listed.

Table 1. List of qualifications and diplomas in leFP VET three and four years programmes

Vet Qualifications	Vet Diplomas
1.Clothing Operator	1.Building Specialist
2.Shoe Operator	2.Electrical Specialist
3.Chemical production Operator	3.Electronic Specialist
4. Building Operator	4.Graphic Specialist
5.Electrical Operator	5. Artistic works Specialist
6. Electronic Operator	6.Wood Specialist
7.Graphic Operator	7. Motor vehicles repair Specialist
8.Thermohydraulic plants Operator	8.Specialist in running and maintaining automated systems
9.Artistic works Operator	9.Industrial automation Specialist
10.Wood Operator	10.Beauty Treatment Specialist
11.Pleasure boats assembly and maintenance Operator	11.Catering services Specialist
12.Motor vehicles repair Operator	12.Enterprise services Specialist
13.Mechanical Operator	13.Sales Specialist
14.Wellness Operator	14.Agriculture Specialist
15.Catering Operator	15.Tourist-Sport entertainment and spare time services Specialist
16.Operator for tourist incoming and promotional services	16.Clothing Specialist
17.Secretarial administrative Operator	17.Hairstyle Specialist
18.Sales services Operator	18.Cooking Specialist
19.Logistics services and systems Operator	19.Thermal plants Specialist
20.Food processing Operator	20.Incoming and Promotional Services Specialist
21.Agricultural Operator	21.Food processing Specialist
22.Sea and fresh water Operator	

Source: Regional State Accord July 27, 2011 Attachment 4: Reference figures for professional diplomas referred to in the national directory of education and training offer

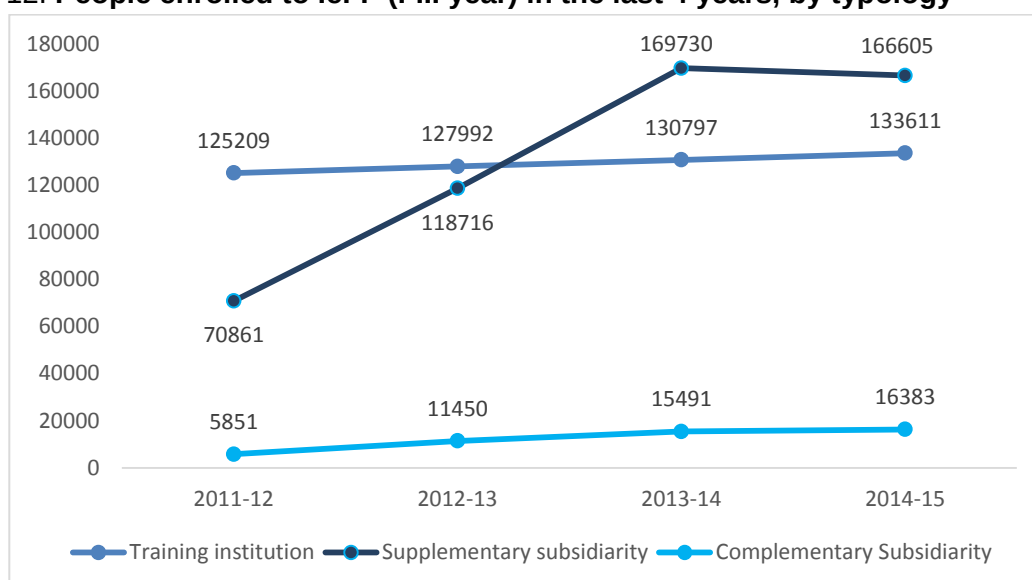
In Italy leFP courses are regularly monitored. An annual survey implemented by INAPP, in association with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Ministry of Education, is the main instrument for the monitor

activities. The results of the survey are included in a monitoring report describing the progress of the system, which is produced by Isfol on behalf of the Ministry of Labour. The last survey was made in 2015 and recorded the data for 2014/15.

The latest results effectively describe the general structure, the recent dynamics of leFP system as well as the classification of its users and the kind of professional areas chosen. In particular, the results show stabilisation in the number of people enrolled, after several years of increase.

As shown in Figure 12, in 2014-15, 316 599 persons were enrolled in leFP 3-year courses. The majority of them (166 605) were enrolled under supplementary subsidiary courses, 3 000 less compared to the previous period (-1.8%). A positive trend was recorded for courses under complementary subsidiarity (+5.76%, total 16 383) and those in training institutions (+2.15, total 133 611).

Figure 12. **People enrolled to leFP (I-III year) in the last 4 years, by typology**



Source: Isfol, based on regional and provincial data, MLPS-MIUR survey

Taking into consideration the learners enrolled in the fourth year under complementary subsidiarity (2 490 students) and in training Institutions (10 298) students, the total amount of people enrolled in the leFP system totals to 329 387, approximately 1 200 students more than the previous period (2013/14).

The fourth year is active in nine Regions/Autonomous Provinces (Piemonte, Trento, Bolzano, Lombardy, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Molise, Calabria and Sicilia) while the 12 remaining ones still do not provide such training possibility, either by choice or due to financial difficulties of the leFP system. As usual, Lombardy has the leading role, hosting 68% of the total students enrolled at national level.

Analysing data by gender distribution, in the whole leFP system, no relevant changes are recorded if compared with the previous year (61.3% males vs 38.7% females),

As the typology of users is concerned, in 2014/15, the percentage of those who have opted for leFP as their first choice, increased both in centres and in schools, while the number of those who make this choice following a previous school or training failure decreased.

For example: in the accredited centres the share of 14-year old students enrolled in the first year rose to 45.1% (+4.3%) out of the total number of enrolled people, close to 50% in the courses under supplementary subsidiarity (+4.3) and reaches 32.8% in the case of complementary subsidiarity (+2.2%). Nevertheless, 'second opportunity' choices are still numerous in the courses provided by accredited centres and, even more, in the courses under complementary subsidiarity.

In 2015 the share of students of foreign origin enrolled continued to be significant (13.9%). The highest figures refer to the training institutes (17.3%) and to supplementary subsidiarity (11.9%). In the contrary, in the case of complementary subsidiarity, such value decreases, going below 5%. A particular difference is recorded in the four years: in the case of accredited centres the figure goes from 17.6% of the three-year period to 13.5%, while, in the case of complementary subsidiarity, the percentage goes from 5.6% to 0.3% in the fourth year, highlighting unequal opportunities in completing the courses between native people and those of foreign origin.

If the professional area chosen is considered, the hotel and tourist sector is still the favourite one in all the 3 types of courses provided, claiming almost 100 thousand people enrolled (approximately 34% of the total).

The vast majority of those enrolled in accredited centres prefer to specialise as 'wellness operator' (more than 34 thousand out of the 37 thousand people enrolled in total), with the female participants being the vast majority (90-93%), depending on the different typologies.

In regards to the four-year courses, more than 900 people were enrolled in the 6 diploma-courses offered. The first choice was, as usual, the 'cooking specialist', followed by, the specialist in 'beauty treatments' and 'hairstyle'. The 'motor vehicles repair specialist' recorded a positive trend during the last training year, with 1 093 people enrolled, mainly in training institutes. Lastly the enterprise services specialist and electronic specialist with, respectively, 944 and 938 enrolments.

In 2014-15, 71 308 people earned a qualification after three years of training programme 45.6% of which were enrolled in accredited centres, 48.8% in schools under supplementary subsidiarity, while the remaining 5.6% were under complementary subsidiarity.

The number of students achieving a diploma (our years programmes) has reached 9 825, increasing approximately by 6% if compared to 2013-14. Almost 8 thousand of these have graduated (achieved the diploma) in the accredited training institutes (80% of the total), with 1 907 graduating under complementary subsidiarity.

In 2012-15, a further increase in the gap between the accredited centres and the professional institutes has been recorded. The percentage of qualified young people in training institutes, out of those enrolled in the training year 2012-13, was 70.6%, rising by 5 percentage points compared with the previous year. The success rate in the case of complementary subsidiarity courses records a slight decline, reaching 60% (from 61.2% in 2014) and 54% in the case of supplementary subsidiarity (from 56.9%).

It is clear that accredited centres tackle the problem of school leaving better than structured interventions in schools, mainly thanks to the didactical approach, work based learning and the connection with the labour market which are typical of training institutes.

In addition to the methodological factor, a primary role is also played by the trainers' professionalism in the centres, which are experienced in working with rehabilitation of people 'at risk of social exclusion'. They are skilled enough to motivate, guide and involve even the most demotivated students, namely those having experienced a previous school failure.

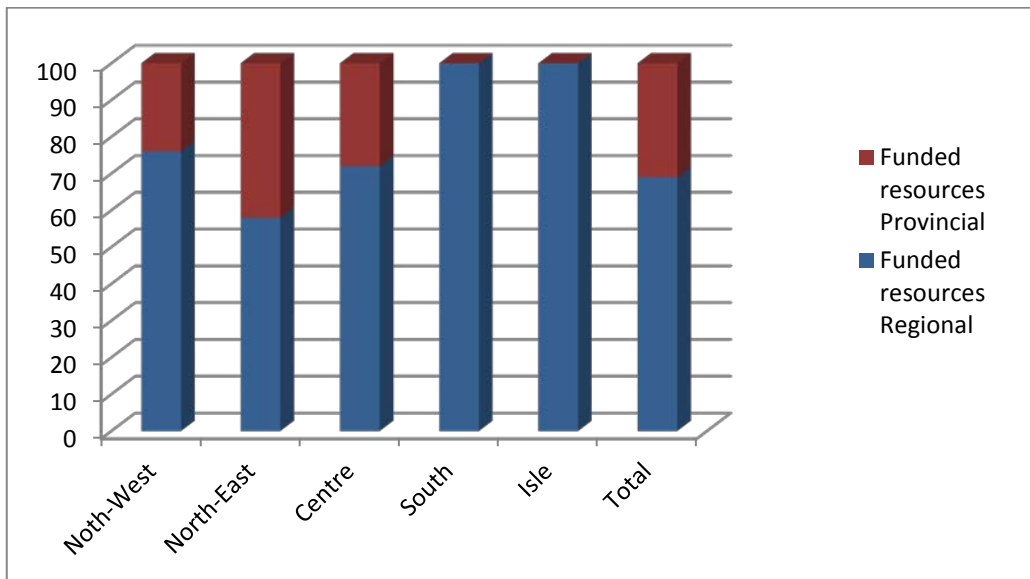
Financing leFP courses

The financial data have been provided by the regional institutions through the annual monitoring on education and vocational training. The figure of financial resources refers to 2014 (latest available data). The data analysis shows that, overall, the committed resources were EUR 516 171 765, which indicate a 20% decrease compared to last year financial commitment. The national data on total funding amount to EUR 486 399 972 and they also encountered a decrease compared to the previous year total national data (-17%).

Figure 13 shows macro-regions funding distribution and confirms a national trend, already recorded the previous year, towards a greater centralisation of resources at a regional level, with a variation concerning the south of the country. In fact, if in 2013 there was an even distribution of funding among regions and provinces, in 2014 the South opted instead for an exclusive regional administration of resources.

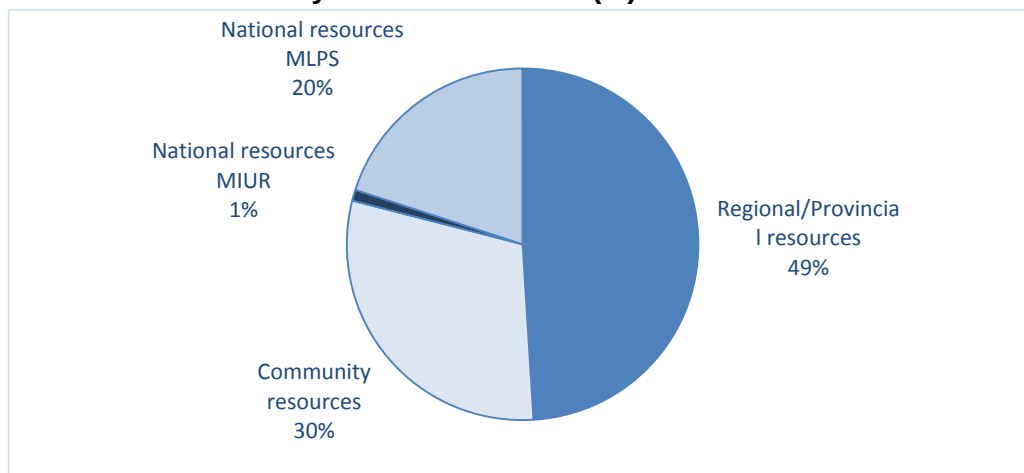
Figure 14 and Figure 15 show the committed resources and funding are disjointed from sources.

Figure 13. **Distribution of centralised and delegated management of resources for the 'right / duty', according to territorial circumscriptions - 2014 (provided funding) (%)**



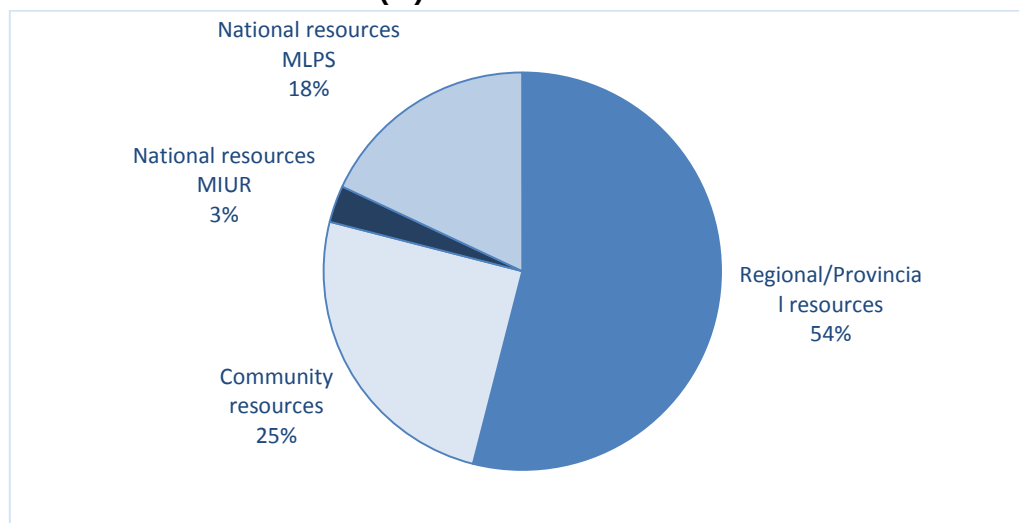
Source: Isfol elaboration on regional and provincial data, MLPS-MIUR Survey

Figure 14. **Committed resources for leFP by Regions Ministries and Community resources in 2014 (%)**



Source: Isfol elaboration on regional and provincial data, MLPS-MIUR Survey

Figure 15. **Funded resources by Regions, Ministries and Community resources 2014(%)**



Source: Isfol elaboration on regional and provincial data, MLPS-MIUR Survey

Most of resources come from regional/provincial sources, specifically (53.6%). The resources allocated by the labour and education ministries were decreased, while community resources were increased. In particular for what it may concern funded resources, they have been registered lower percentages coming from labour ministry and EU resources.

Therefore it emerges a significant financial effort coming from regional institutions to compensate for the decrease of national economic resources (almost entirely supported by the labour ministry) which constitute the 20% of the necessary budget. This situation leads to a great difficulty, at a regional level, to cover and satisfy the leFP training requests by young people and their families.

Taking into consideration the macro-region division, it has been underlined that in the North the majority of committed resources and funding comes from local institutions. The Centre has a preponderance of committed resources coming from MLPS, in contrary to funding derived by regional and provincial sources. The South, both committed resources and funding (respectively 58.1% and 50.7% come mainly from *MLPS*). The Islands, on the other hand, mainly receive the committed resources from EU funds, whereas funding comes from local government. At a national level, compared to the previous survey, there was an increase in regional, provincial resources (+9.2%) and the EU ones (+9.3%) and a decrease for the funding coming from the labour (-7.1%) and the education (-11.4%) ministries.

It has been confirmed that the majority of committed resources and funding coming from Regions and Autonomous Provinces are for training activities conducted at the accredited centres. On a general point of view, there

has been a further decrease of resources allocated to schools in favour of those allocated to accredited centres.

2.4. Post-secondary VET

The post-secondary VET programmes were reorganised in 2008 (DPCM 25.1.2008) and mainly aim at developing professional specialisations at post-secondary level to meet the requirements of the labour market in the public and private sectors. There are two different options:

- higher technical education and training programmes (*istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore*, IFTS);
- programmes at the higher technical institutes (*istituti tecnici superiori*, ITS).

They are organised by four educational and vocational stakeholders: schools, vocational institutions, universities and companies)

The specific course planning is coordinated by the regions and autonomous provinces in the context of the territorial plans adopted every three years and their provision varies across the regions. The IFTS and ITS programmes provide all qualifications available at national and EU level.

The Higher Technical pathways (IFTS)

IFTS, established in 1999 and then revised to the current configuration defined by the Interministerial Decree of 2013, are higher technical training courses, regulated as follows: 800-1000 hours of courses (of which at least 30% to be spent in the form of internship at a company), at the end of which one obtains a higher technical specialisation certificate - the IFTS with national validity and equal to EQF level 4.

IFTS Programming is defined by regions and the autonomous provinces terms of provision, curricula, internship and job placement, within specific planning documents called Three-Year Plans. Three-Year Plans are the instrument through which regions and Public Administration define their strategy in terms of post-secondary training, therefore they do not relate exclusively to technical training but also *ITS* and training centres. Local governments are therefore asked to have a full knowledge of their territory and, through an integrated approach, to incorporate both local firm requests and training needs expressed by the territory.

Regional programs are defined by the *IFTS* National Repertory, which is a catalogue of 20 technical specialisations, related to specific professional areas (mechanics, IT, tourism). People can access to these courses holding or not a diploma but the latter ones can do it only following a specific assessment of candidate's skills done by its teachers. *IFTS* are to be provided by various subjects, among which they have to be necessarily present a school, a university, an accredited training institution and a company that aggregate into ATI or ATS

⁽¹¹⁾. The presence of the companies and the high number of internship hours are the precondition key to an education closely related to local production system dynamics.

The Higher Technical Training Institutes Pathways (ITS)

Higher Technical Education is the post-secondary training offer parallel to academic paths.

The chain was established by the Prime Ministerial Decree of 25 January 2008 and, as for the IFTS, revised through the aforementioned Inter-Ministerial Decree of 2013.

The Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) are classified as 'high technological specialisation schools' that, similar to IFTS, promote a high specialised education in order to offer students attractive technical skills for the labour market. In line with this, ITS programming approach is defined by regional administrations according to their productive and economic characteristics.

As it regards course characteristics, they last 4 semesters, in other words 1800/2000 hours of which at least 30% have to be spent in a company as a form of training and 50% of teachers must come from business and profession world. Successful completion of the course leads to a Higher Technical Diploma with an indication of the technological area and the national reference figure, related to EQF level 5.

Technological areas identified for ITS, are:

- Energy efficiency
- Sustainable mobility
- New technologies of life
- New technologies for Made in Italy (mechanical systems, fashion, food, home, business services)
- Innovative technologies for art and cultural activities
- ICT.

A strong element of distinctiveness compared to IFTS is given by the nature of the party issuing the paths: although IFTS vet providers are a partnership between several entities (schools, training institutions, enterprises, universities, research centres and local authorities), for ITS this partnership must be structured according to Foundation participation model.

The motivation of such a governance model is the fact that Foundation ensures greater stability and recognition of the subject by the institutions and territorial actors, as well as by potential students.

The two channels share the same cultural approach based on the centrality of technical and technological culture; the connection with the economy and productivity context of the area and the ability to combine in-classroom classical training with direct experience in companies. However, there are even

⁽¹¹⁾ Temporary Association of Companies (ATI); Temporary Purpose Association (ATS)

some differentiation elements: the Ministry of reference (Education for ITS, Labour and Social Policy for IFTS) and the governance model adopted (Foundation for ITS, ATI or ATS for IFTS). The recent government regulatory interventions on labour market and education - Apprenticeship Reform within the Jobs Act (Legislative Decree 81/2015) and the School Reform (Law 107/2015 'Good School') - have on the one hand confirmed the importance and specificity of the technical training and on the other given impetus to the development of the so-called 'long chain of vocational training', in other words an integrated training system that makes the leFP (education and professional training) be coherent with IFTS and ITS and allows a young leFP graduate to continue its path of specialisation up to obtaining a Higher Technical diploma.

With regard to the school reform, the law allows young leFP graduates, through the attendance of a higher technical training course, to access to ITS courses. According to legislature intentions, IFTS becomes a fifth year that helps those young people who want to continue their studies and access to higher technical education, which represents the top of the long chain of vocational training. In parallel, the new discipline of apprenticeship identifies one of the possible cases for the apprenticeship qualification and the professional degree in high school and higher technical specialisation certificate. Specifically, the reform allows the employer to sign a three/four-year apprenticeship contract with 15-25 year old people, which is useful to obtain the qualification / professional degree. Moreover, it provides the possibility both for the employer and the apprentice to extend by one year the contract of apprenticeship and thus enabling the young person to acquire a higher technical specialisation certificate. If at central level, it has been worked on defining the legislative framework, it is good to remind the central role of Regions in the definition of both kinds of training through the approval of specific planning documents defined 'Triennial Regional Plan'. So far, with different timing and modalities, IFTS courses have been planned and implemented by a small number of regions: Abruzzo, Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, Liguria, Marche, Tuscany, Puglia, Friuli Venezia Giulia, and Campania. On the contrary, the higher technical education sector, , has had a greater spread though out the country, so much that almost all regions have at least one ITS Foundation⁽¹²⁾.

Even though there was a great interest in the qualitative and content aspects of these chains, there is still need to increase the number of participants.

In fact so far IFTS and ITS participant number has been low, considering that in last ISFOL IFTS monitoring in 2015 1 500 qualified students were

⁽¹²⁾ Higher technical education monitoring is entrusted to *INDIRE*, search public authority controlled by the Ministry of Education. *ISFOL* takes part in *ITS* monitoring and evaluation body.

registered in 75 programmed courses⁽¹³⁾. In regards to ITS, INDIRE (Istituto Nazionale per la Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca educativa- .National Institution for the documentation the innovation and educational research) recorded data, show that there is still a low number of participants, not in line neither with chain potential nor with institution expectations. Since 2010 the total number of students enrolled in ITS courses that have completed their studies is 5 702, of which 4 166 obtained their diploma⁽¹⁴⁾.

To summarise, the work done by institutions creating a system where different training chains could interact, both between them and with school world, represents an essential element that however constitutes a starting point.

Improving these aspects is even more necessary if we consider the importance of IFTS and ITS performances in the occupation field. On this theme ISFOL and INDIRE, as MIUR and MLPS scientific assistants have deepened the analysis on the occupational outcomes of these two chains (in particular ISFOL has analysed IFTS⁽¹⁵⁾ and INDIRE ITS⁽¹⁶⁾). The analysis underlined the high possibilities for the students graduated from these two chains to enter the labour market and demonstrated how programming high specialised training courses are a useful option for young people as well as an added value for local productive systems.

2.5. Post-higher education VET

Those who have completed a university degree can access post-higher education courses offering a specialisation in a given field. These are organised by regions or the autonomous provinces and last between 400 and 600 hours (rarely two years), leading to a regional qualification that corresponds to specific occupation areas not listed in the national register of qualifications. At times these courses may be exclusively addressed to disadvantaged groups (such as migrants, Roma population, disabled people, certain age groups) with the aim of increasing their labour market integration.

2.6. Apprenticeship-type schemes

Apprenticeship in Italy designates a work contract with a specific training purpose; it includes both on-the-job and classroom training. The apprenticeship contract, which is distinct from other work-based learning, must be drafted in a

⁽¹³⁾ With the aim of making monitoring activity more systematic during the years, in order to create the basis for the implementation of an historical series on the theme, monitoring activity has taken into consideration only courses ended in 2014. With this choice they have been excluded those courses between 2014 and 2015.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Data updated to 17 March 2016 – source: *INDIRE-ITS* national database.

⁽¹⁵⁾ ISFOL (2015). *'Higher Technical Training: the occupational outcomes of IFTS courses'*. Benedetta Torchia (ed.).

⁽¹⁶⁾ Cf. note no.1

written form. It defines the roles and responsibilities of all parties as well as terms and conditions of the apprenticeship, the probationary period, the occupation tasks, wage increases, both the entry and final grade levels and the qualification to be obtained. The training programme is an integral part of the contract. Both the contract and the training programme must be signed by the employer and the apprentice.

Since apprentices are considered employees, they are entitled to insurance benefits for job injuries and accidents, occupational diseases, health reasons, ageing and disability, maternity, household allowance, and, since 1 January 2013, labour social security insurance.

Apprenticeship-type schemes were reformed in 2011⁽¹⁷⁾ aiming to promote the integration of young people into the labour market. Workers registered in so-called 'mobility lists' ⁽¹⁸⁾ can participate in this scheme to qualify or requalify (usually they are offered a place in the 'professional' apprenticeship scheme, see paragraph (b) below).

Employers willing to offer apprenticeships can benefit from several incentives. They can hire an apprentice at an entry grade level up to two levels lower than the final qualification to be obtained and/or pay a salary equal to a percentage of the salary of a qualified worker, according to the provisions of the collective agreement applied. They can take advantage of a reduction in social security contributions, according to the enterprise size. Companies with up to nine employees (micro enterprises) are exempt from paying social security contributions (100%) for the first three years of the contract ⁽¹⁹⁾; in the fourth year they will pay 10% of taxable social security contributions. Companies with more than nine employees pay a contribution, for the entire duration of the apprenticeship, equal to 10% of the taxable social security contribution.

Companies recruiting apprentices registered in the mobility lists, can benefit from a subsidised contributory scheme, corresponding to 10% of the salary for 18 months of the contract and, in addition, receive an incentive equal to 50% of the mobility allowance, if received by the employee, for a period of 12 months (24 months if the employee is older than 50 years).

The Jobs Act (Law 78/2014) introduced a new feature only for those employed under the apprenticeship leading to a professional operator certificate and a professional technician diploma contract (point (a) below). These apprentices receive a salary on the basis of the number of hours spent in training, calculated at 35% of the total number of training hours, unless differently decided

⁽¹⁷⁾ Consolidated act on apprenticeships (Legislative Decree No 167/2011) approved on 25 October 2011 and entered into force on 25 April 2012.

⁽¹⁸⁾ 'Mobility list' refers to collectively dismissed workers waiting to be placed in other jobs.

⁽¹⁹⁾ This measure was introduced by Law 92/2012 and refers to apprentices hired from 1 January 2012 until 31 December 2016.

via collective bargaining. The social security contribution paid by the apprentice is also reduced at 5.84%.

The Jobs Act established that only enterprises with up to 50 employees, can hire an apprentice if, in the previous 36 months, they have retained 20% of the previous apprentices.

Social partners, beyond their advisory task at national and local levels, perform a crucial role in professional apprenticeship regulation. They define, through collective bargaining, contents, provisions related to specific occupations, and tools to carry out training. They also establish the professional qualification to be acquired and the certification procedures, as well as setting out the necessary requirements for tutors/trainers at the enterprise.

Apprenticeship is one of the main educational instruments used to integrate young people in the labour market. In particular, apprenticeship is a permanent labour contract aimed at training young people and giving them an employment and it is one of the cornerstones of the Italian dual system. The training provided during the apprenticeship is managed by the Regions and Autonomous Provinces. Within the Jobs Act framework, Legislative Decree n. 81/2015 has deeply reviewed the related regulations. These innovations are mainly voted to enhance the attractiveness of apprenticeship contracts in companies and institutions because the application performances are not yet satisfactory, in coherence with the general difficulties of the national economic and productive system.

The apprenticeship system includes three types of contract:

- (a) apprenticeships leading to a professional operator certificate and a professional technician diploma (*apprendistato per la qualifica ed il diploma professionale*):

These schemes allow young people aged 15 to 25 to fulfil their right/duty to education and training. There are no specific entry requirements but learners need to bridge the year between the end of lower secondary and the start of apprenticeship in an upper secondary school programme or in leFP, unless they are already 15 years old. These schemes are regulated by the regions and autonomous provinces through specific State-Regions conference agreements. Content, shared between theoretical and practical learning, the specific qualifications offered and the number of training hours are established by the regions and autonomous provinces according to minimum standards agreed at national level. The duration of the contract is determined according to the certificate or diploma to be achieved: it may not exceed the three- or four-year training period nor be less than the national minimum standard set at 400 hours per year, though further training at enterprises can be agreed through collective bargaining. These apprenticeship schemes last three or four years and

offer the possibility to acquire qualifications at operator or technician level (in 22 and 21 occupation fields respectively: *attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale* (EQF level 3) or *diploma professionale di tecnico* (EQF level 4). These qualifications are part of the national qualifications register. After obtaining the operator certificate the apprentice may proceed to the fourth year to obtain a technician diploma, in the same occupation. Access to university is possible after successful completion of secondary education and an additional one-year course at an education institute;

(b) professional apprenticeships (*apprendistato professionalizzante o contratto di mestiere*):

It targets 18 to 29 year-olds who want to acquire a qualification provided for in the collective bargaining agreements and required on the labour market. Training comprises two parts:

- i) acquisition of key skills (120 hours over a three-year period) regulated by the regions and autonomous provinces and provided by training centres;
- ii) acquisition of vocational skills for specific occupation areas provided directly by companies. The occupation areas and the training content are defined by collective bargaining agreements.

These programmes have a maximum duration of three years (exceptionally five years for the crafts sector) and award a regional qualification.

(c) 'higher education and research' apprenticeships (*apprendistato di alta formazione e ricerca*):

Despite its name, this scheme leads to an array of qualification levels encompassing EQF levels 4-8. It targets 18 to 29 year-olds and fulfils various purposes. Learners can acquire qualifications that are normally offered through school-based programmes, in higher education or at universities, including a doctoral degree. Apprentices can also engage in research activities in private companies or pursue traineeship required to access the liberal professions (lawyer, architect, business consultant); this has not yet been regulated by collective bargaining.

Regions and autonomous provinces, in agreement with the social partners and public education and training centres, decide the duration of contracts, the organisation of programmes, and ensure that they are compatible with fully school-based curricula. They also define higher education credits (*crediti formativi universitari*) learners obtain at schools, universities or training centres and the skills to be acquired through on-the-job training at the enterprise. In the absence of a regional regulation, ad hoc arrangements between education institutions and enterprises are

possible. Training cost allocation is defined by the local authorities, according to the national, regional and European Social Fund regulations

2.7. CVET supporting policies and their financing system

The current measures which help to regulate the continuous training in Italy had been ratified since 1993, although some principles lie in Law 845/1978 (Framework law on vocational training). In purely chronological order, hereinafter follow the most relevant rules:

- Law 236/1993, the national law on continuous training, which attributed to Regions and Provinces the responsibility to plan and define the priorities of training interventions to support businesses and workers in the private sector;
- Law 53/2000, regulation that recognised the worker's right to continuous training throughout his/her whole life and the possibility of taking a permit for training purposes. Section 6, paragraph 4 reserved resources of approximately EUR 15 million per year to be distributed to regions, that with different modalities have both funded training projects developed by companies (that would provide for reductions in working hours on the basis of contractual agreements) and proposals for individual workers that would require the allocation of individual on-demand vouchers;
- Law 388/2000 (Section 118), as amended, provides for the establishment of inter-professional funds that are bilateral associations, constituted on the basis of agreements between trade union organisations of employers and workers that are most representative at a national level for the main sectors of economic activity. They manage 0.3% of resources from employers that choose to join the Fund at the time of payment;
- Regional operational plans for the ESF: funding based on strategic lines approved by the European Commission, training addressed to the widest audience of employed people (employees and self-employed), unemployed and inactive, as well as businesses. It is the adaptability axis, with a total annual average availability for the entire country of just under EUR 180 million, the one that finances the target of continuous education.

The structure of the described system was indirectly redefined in 2015, following the new active welfare policies. It's still unclear though, how the relation between State and Regions will function, taking into consideration the employment and training policies.

The Jobs Act implementation decree (Legislative decree 150/2015) has entered the inter-professional funds under the national network of services for

active employment policies. This was helpful in recognising the important role of the funds as providers of funding for training activities and as a relevant tool for addressing labour market needs. It had also helped in inserting the funds in a composite system that involves a process of coordinated governance.

In October 2015, the total number of companies adhering to the 19 operating inter-professional funds was approximately 930 000 units, reaching an audience of nearly 9.6 million employees.

Much of the financial support for continuous education comes from the compulsory contribution of the so-called '0.30%' of the payroll costs, paid by the private sector companies to INPS (Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale – National Institute for the Social Insurance). This contribution was introduced by Law 845/1978, which provided for an increase of 0.30% on wages which were subject to ordinary compulsory contributions (due by employers to compulsory insurance against involuntary unemployment). It represents an additional quota of the contribution that the enterprises pay to INPS for the compulsory insurance against involuntary unemployment, which is equal to 1.61% of the total wages. Then INPS transfers the 0.30 % contribution paid by one firm to the training fund chosen by this firm. The 0.30 % contributions of enterprises not joining any training fund are utilised to finance some specific programmes in continuing training and related to the Law 263/1993 and Law 53/2000.

The Regions were defined as the legal entities that managed and provided funding for continuous training activities. The financial resources were provided through three main channels:

- (a) Law 236/93 that has at its disposal the majority of revenues derived from 0.30%;
- (b) Law 53/2000 which provided for annual funding of nearly EUR 15 million;
- (c) Funding by ESF, partly financed by 0.30% tax (part of the share was allocated at the Ministry of Economy and Finance).

In 2004 the INPS started financing the joint inter-professional funds, with companies choosing which fund(s) to join. This led to a progressive reduction of regional financial resources in favour of the inter-professional funds.

As a consequence of the financial crisis, the resources dedicated for continuous VET activities, have been shifted towards passive policy measures, such as supporting workers whose income was affected by crisis.

Due to the crisis, in the period 2009-15, EUR 1 040 billion that was originally planned to be spent for continuous training activities, was used for law enforcement measures. In 2016, EUR 200 million from inter-professional funds and Regions' budget, intended for continuous training activities, will be used for other purpose.

This situation has led both Regions and Inter-professional funds to better focus their objectives on training interventions and at the same time decrease

their resources, especially Inter-professional funds, otherwise intended for system support and consolidation activities.

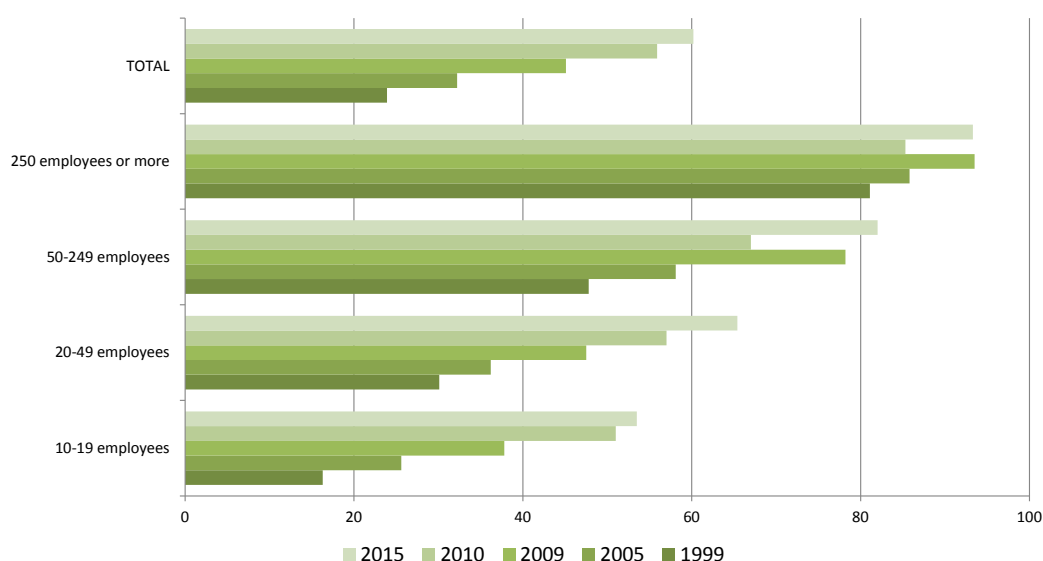
In 2014 the total revenue coming from the 0.30% taxation, reached its peak with over EUR 870 million.

Since 2004, inter-professional funds have managed about EUR 5.2 billion, which is approximately EUR 450 million per year. Additional to these resources, the first three years of activity the MLPS had contributed, as an initial capital, approximately EUR 192 million, which was used by inter professional funds by 2006.

2.8. Training provided by employers

Contrary to the decreasing funds and participation in other forms of CVET, training provided by employers in the period 1999-2015, had registered a gradual and consistent growth. Regardless the size of the company, statistical indicators measuring the development and spreading of on-the-job training had registered a continuous increase.

Figure 16. **Training enterprises (%) by size class (Italy, 1999-2015)**



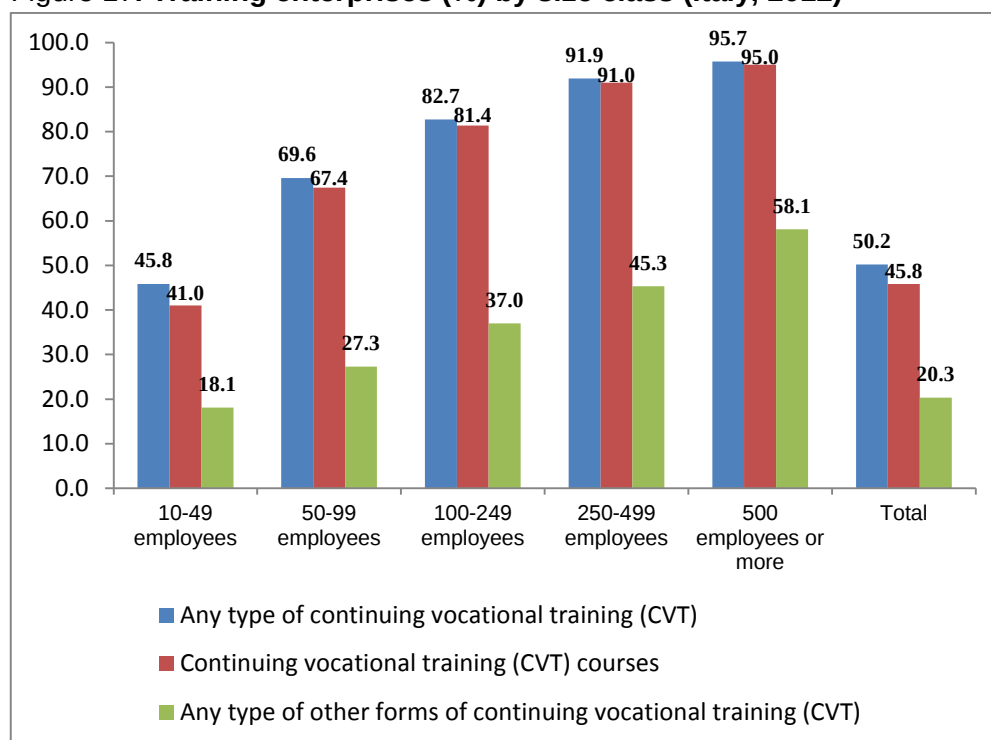
Source: ISTAT CVTS, ISFOL INDACO-CVTS survey

Regarding the impact of the economic and occupational crisis, according to ISFOL INDACO-CVTS survey, (Angotti, 2013⁽²⁰⁾), during the initial period of the economic crisis, 2008-10, the number of enterprises providing training figure was still increasing. A slight reduction was observed during 2010-13 period,

⁽²⁰⁾ Angotti R., ed. (2013), *Structural Features and Development of Corporate Training in 2005-2010. INDACO-CVTS data, ISFOL*, Research Paper, 6/2013, Rome
<http://sbnlo2.cilea.it/bw5ne2/opac.aspx?web=ISFL&opac=Default&ids=19290>

which came to a halt in 2014. Since then an increasing trend was observed, with recent data suggesting a stabilisation in the-job training investments.

Figure 17. Training enterprises (%) by size class (Italy, 2012)



Source: ISFOL, Intangible Assets Survey

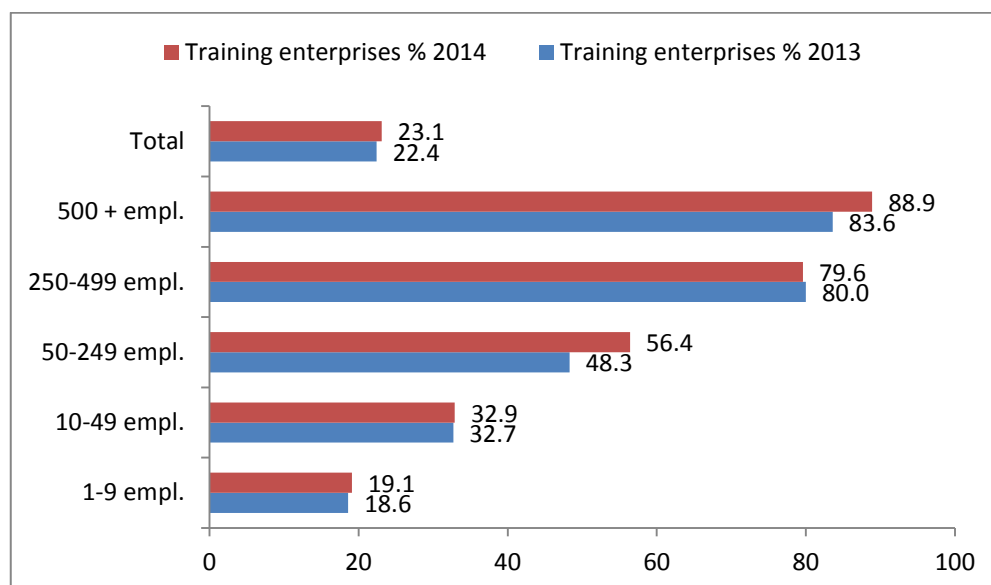
Some fundamental issues continue to exist, which do not allow a homogeneous distribution of provided services throughout the country. In fact, training offered by the enterprises varies a lot between the North and the South of Italy, the big and the small companies and the economic sectors.

Companies mainly invest in training to update existing skills (+2.4% compared to 2013) and less for training newly-employed personnel and for acquiring new skills.

Comparing to previous years, the quality level of training activities provided by employers has been significantly improved. Companies continue to prefer traditional education activities, like off-the-job training and buying pre-packaged training, instead of organising on-the-job training and linking it to their organisational development. Mandatory courses such as on occupational safety are still the most common courses offered. Investment in innovation is predominately done by larger companies, especially by inserting new resources or new competences. Starting from organisations with more than 50 employees it was registered a gradual increase in training designed for new employees or relevant to the execution of new tasks. This is confirmed by the hiring data

provided by innovative companies, which hire more as their size increases, in contrast to those companies that do not innovate.

Figure 18. **Innovative and not innovative companies wishing to hire workers for dimension class (% , 2013-2014)**



Source: Unioncamere Excelsior

The 'Intangible Assets Survey' was conducted by ISFOL in 2013 on the role played in Italian companies training and intangible investments (research and development, software, branding, organisational innovation, design) in 2012. The results had shown that intangible factors have an increasing positive impact on both companies and economy development. It was also interesting to observe that the expected benefits deriving from intangible investments increases with firm size. Taking into consideration the various Regions, it was noted that southern regions registered the lowest rates in all kinds of intangible investment. The survey also revealed that the companies chose a mixture of knowledge strategies for training and intangible investments: 38% of them choose to invest in a single intangible category, 25.3% in two of them, 18.4% in three of them, 10.9% in four of them and 7.5% in five-six categories. The three main investments included: business training (37.8%), followed by investments in image and branding (34.4%), and finally by investments in software (32.2%). The remaining activities have lower percentages notwithstanding the high percentage of companies that invest in training; the amount of resources spent is quite modest; whereas R&D activity, although uncommon, has the highest average expenditure.

2.9. Adult education

Adult education is a set of programmes/courses or education and training activities aiming to update adult vocational skills or improve their literacy. Under the remit of the Ministry of Education (MIUR), it is provided by provincial centres for adult education (*centri provinciali per l'istruzione degli adulti*, CPIA). The new centres have taken the functions so far carried out by the Permanent Territorial Centres (CTP) and school institutions evening courses where take place.

The following target groups can enrol in CPIAs:

- Adults, including foreigners, who have not fulfilled their obligation of education and who want to obtain the first cycle title;
- Adults, including foreigners, who have attained their first cycle title and intend to achieve their second cycle title;
- Adult foreigners who wish to enrol in Italian as foreign language courses;
- Young people who are 16 years-old, in possession of their first cycle title demonstrating that they cannot attend day classes.

In school year 2014/15, 56 pilot schools have activated the organisation of the CPIAs. In 2015, 126 CPIAs were active. INDIRE is responsible of the monitoring of the new CPIAs.

The centres are organised to establish a close link with local governments, the business world and the regulated professions, and to provide education according to learning levels:

- (a) first-level programmes, delivered by the CPIA, leading to a first-cycle qualification (a compulsory education certificate) and certification attesting basic skills related to compulsory education (*certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione*);

These programmes are broken down into two semesters. During the first semester (400 hours) the aim is for the participants to obtain the first-cycle qualification. When the candidate is not in possession of the primary-school title, the total number of hours may be increased up to an additional 200 hours. The second semester has a total number of hours of 924 (which represents the 70% of the total number of hours provided by general education in the first two years of technical or vocational schools) and it is aimed at the attainment of the certificate attesting basic skills related to compulsory education (normally acquired at the age of 16) (Ministerial Decree 139/2007). Additionally, 200 hours of teaching are dedicated to Italian as foreign language courses where learners are foreigners.

- (b) second-level programmes, delivered by education institutions offering technical, vocational and artistic programmes, leading to an upper secondary education diploma: these may be technical schools,

professional schools and artistic *licei* (*diploma di istruzione tecnica, professionale e di licei artistici*). These programmes are divided into the following three semesters:

- first semester, for the acquisition of the certification required for the admission to the second biennial cycle of technical, vocational or art schools, depending on the curriculum chosen by the student;
- second semester, aimed at acquiring the necessary certification for being admitted to technical, vocational, or art school final year;
- third semester, aimed at acquiring the technical, vocational or art education.

The second-level courses have, respectively, a total of 70% (924 hours) of the total number of hours provided by the general education in the first two years of technical, vocational or art institutes, with reference to the general education and the specific address areas;

- (c) Italian language courses, delivered by the CPIA for working age foreign adults, holding a qualification obtained in the home country. These courses lead to a certificate stating at least A2 level mastery of the Italian language according to the common European framework for languages designed by the Council of Europe.

School directors appointed in the new centres have at their disposal an electronic platform that offers several didactic tools and material to foster the activities of the CPIAs. This platform has been designed by the National Working Group, composed by representatives from the local and central offices of the Ministry of Education, and researchers from the national institutes of research *INDIRE* and *INVALSI*.

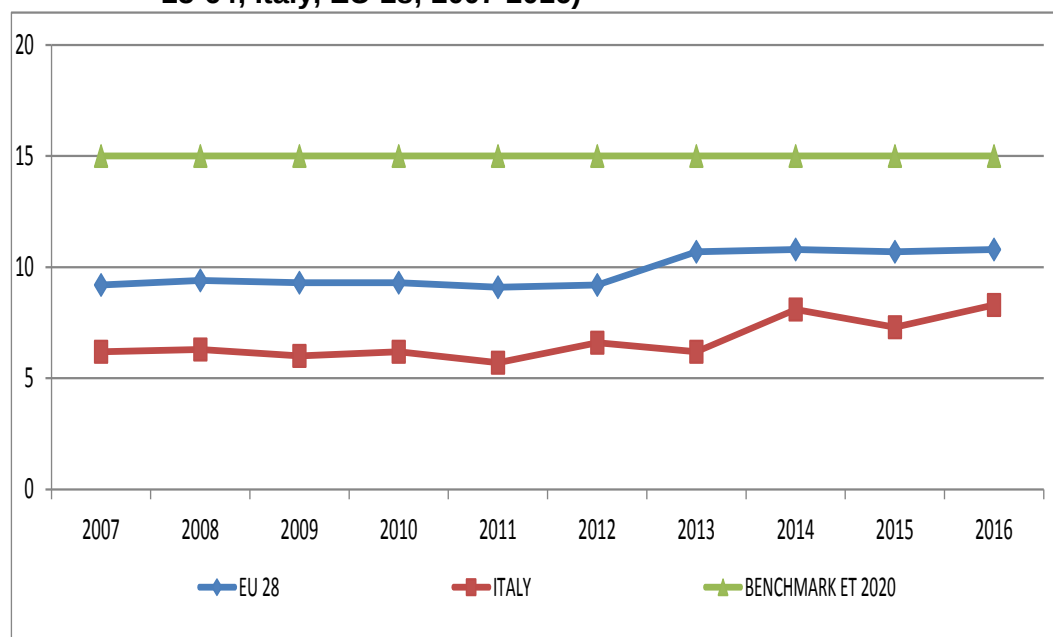
Different kind of material for the development of skills and for the recognition of prior learning is available on the platform:

- (a) The design of the Learning Unit (*unità di apprendimento*);
- (b) The design of Distance Learning courses;
- (c) The design of 'Agorà environment' (interactive environment for the provision of adult education).

2.9.1. Adults demand for non-formal and informal learning

In 2016 adult participation rate for population aged 25 to 64 years old to educational and training activities in Italy reached 8,3%. Despite the still existing gap with the EU-28 average (10.8%), the trend is positive with an increase over the previous year by 1.8% (Fig. 18). moreover, the Italian position in the European ranking on lifelong learning spread improved: going from 20th position in 2013 to the 14th position in 2014.

Figure 19. **Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks – aged 25-64; Italy, EU-28; 2007-2016)**



Source: EUROSTAT LFS

In line with previous years, more women (8.3%) than men were involved in education and training activities and the majority more people were between 25 and 34 years old (14.9%). Also, more graduates (18.7%) than those who had a lower education title and more employed (8.7%) than unemployed and inactive ones, had participated in training courses. Territorially speaking, the Centre-North region confirmed its trend of being the region with the highest participation.

Table 2. **Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks – aged 25-64, total and employed) broken down for gender, age and geographical area (% , Italy average 2015)**

	Employed			TOTAL		
	Males	Females	Males and Females	Males	Females	Males and Females
Classification based on age						
25-34	8.2	11.0	9.4	13.0	15.3	14.1
35-44	6.7	9.1	7.7	6.2	6.9	6.6
45-54	6.0	8.5	7	5.2	5.9	5.6
55-64	5.4	7.1	6.1	3.8	4.2	4.0
Total	6.5	8.9	7.6	6.8	7.7	7.3
Geographic Area						
North-	7.3	9.8	8.4	7.4	8.7	8.0

West						
North-East	7.6	9.3	8.3	8.1	8.6	8.3
Centre	4.5	6.5	5.2	5.4	5.9	5.6
South and Isles	7.3	9.8	8.4	7.4	8.7	8.0
Italy	6.5	8.9	7.5	6.8	7.7	7.3

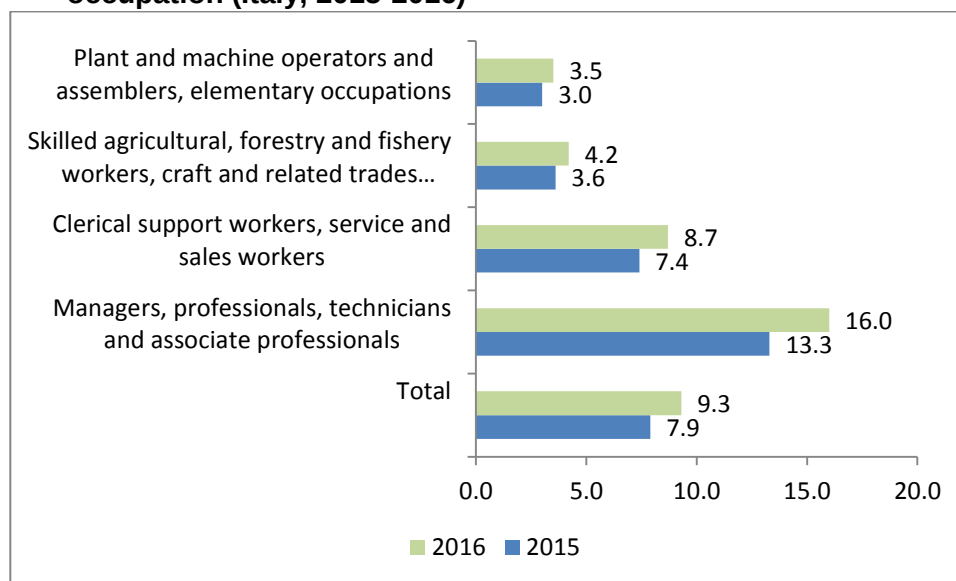
Source : EUROSTAT LFS

The system growth covered the whole training spectrum, vocational branch, business one and lifelong learning, the increase was mainly attributed to the growth of vocational training and non-formal learning. Fifty four per cent of participants attended vocational courses (more than half paid by their employers). A reduction was registered in learning region disparities and age gaps. However, an uneven distribution of educational opportunities still exists, affecting negatively the access of some disadvantaged groups, such as low-skilled people and southern region residents.

In 2014, 66.4% of participants who were between 25 and 64 years old stated that were driven by professional reasons, whereas 33.6% for personal reasons. Motivations for attending a course are influenced by professional status or position in the labour market. The proportion of people motivated by vocational interests falls to 56.8% for those seeking employment and to 20.8% for those who are inactive in the labour market.

Among employed people, especially high profile candidates attended training courses. For what it may concern low-skilled professions, updating and/or acquisition of new competence courses occur very rarely.

Figure 20. **Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by occupation (Italy, 2015-2016)**



Source: EUROSTAT LFS

Company recruitment forecasts are focused on low qualification professionals. In fact, high-skilled-occupation training takes place primarily for professional reasons and during working hours, whereas for people in low-skilled professions, training occurs rarely. Low level qualification holders have less access to qualified jobs, and it is also less likely to receive adequate training and improve their careers.

In general, there is in Italy a wide mismatch between skills' supply and demand, as well as a risk of unemployment for high-skilled young people and a growing ageing of the workforce, which will in the coming years lead to an increasing deterioration of skills for low-skilled individuals.

2.10. Other forms of training

2.10.1. Non-formal learning

The current institutional and financial system, which promotes non-formal learning, has developed in Italy over the past 20 years. The legislation foresees the development of publicly financed continuing vocational education and training (CVET). Compared to employer-provided training, the current system can be more responsive to business, sector, and regional needs, as well as vulnerable workers.

In early ninety 1990s, simultaneously to the ESF (European Social Fund) a national legislation was developed (Law 236/1993 and Law 53/2000) that allowed the financing of training activities both planned and implemented at regional level with the support of social partners. Subsequently, starting from Law 388/2000, sectorial training funds called 'Joint Inter-professional Funds for

Continuing Training' were launched. They are directly planned and managed by social partners.

However, over the last few years, an amendment on national laws changed the structure of supporting policies on continuing education, both from institutional and financial point of view. The amendment was a result of the extraordinary financial crisis which forced the adoption of counter-action measures. Another reason was the emanation of Job-Act implementing decree (Legislative Decree 150/2015). As a result, over the past few years financial support for continuing-training activities had been significantly reduced, as it was allocated in anti-crisis measures. Nowadays, inter-professional funds are the only residual funding instrument at national level but are less important than in the past (Chamber of Deputies, ISFOL, 2016 ⁽²¹⁾).

In a context of an increasing reduction of CVET public funding, market-driven private financing system has remained rather stable and mainly characterised by spontaneous behaviours of workers and enterprises, influenced by adult training needs (not only of employed ones) and training-provider growth strategies (Angotti, Del Cimmuto, Dordit, 2015 ⁽²²⁾).

Therefore, if in 2013 it was estimated (Cedefop 2014) ⁽²³⁾ that Italian public funding share for non-formal learning activities was already very low (equal to one fifth of total spending), and it can be assumed that today it has been further reduced, to the benefit of privately financed education. In fact in 2013 only 20% of the total spending on non-formal learning activities carried out in Italy in a year (approximately EUR 5 billion) was supported by public financing. In particular 10% of it was committed to the ESF, laws 236/1993 and 53/2000, and another 10% to inter-professional funds. The remaining 80% was spent by companies to train their employees (Cedefop 2014, p. 53).

Training main features can be analysed through the results of the latest available survey (OFP Survey: ISFOL 2015) ⁽²⁴⁾. They show that two-thirds of the training providers are engaged in continuing education and training activities and only one-third in initial training activities. The majority of providers work exclusively in the field of vocational training, but several of them have a very diversified-service portfolio. They mostly have a limited turnover (30% of them

⁽²¹⁾ Chamber of Deputies (2016). *Report on Continuing Learning in Italy, 2014 and 2015*. Doc. XLII, No. 3. Rome, ISFOL. <http://goo.gl/yXRC1K>

⁽²²⁾ Angotti R., Del Cimmuto A., Dordit L. (2015). The Structure of Public Vocational Education and Training Provision in Italy. In: *Democratic School*, n. 3/2015, Bologna, Il Mulino.

⁽²³⁾ Cedefop; ReferNet Italy (2014) *The Developments of VET Systems in Italy*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe Country Report 2013. Rome: ISFOL, 2014.

⁽²⁴⁾ On ISFOL OFP Survey, cf.: <http://goo.gl/4X43Ls>. See also: <http://goo.gl/Ef6zJW>. *The Offer of Professional Training in the Italian Regions, Survey Results Isfol-OPF*. Volume II - The Quantitative Survey, ESF Books, Rome, ISFOL, 2015. <http://bw5.cilea.it/bw5ne2/opac.aspx?web=ISFL&opac=Default&ids=20393>

charge less than EUR 100 000 and 60% of them less than EUR 500 000) and utilise both public and private funds. Public financing is particularly distributed among bigger (in terms of employees and turnover) providers.

Most of training providers have limited dimensions: on average, each agency has 5 classrooms, 150 workstations for students and 82% of them offer its students a laboratory.

On average, each provider organises 16 courses per year. It is estimated that among a total of 668 211 professional training users, more than half (384 343) attends continuing education and training courses. The average number of students attending continuing training courses amounted to 271 units per provider. The average number of training hours provided per year by each agency is 1 629 hours. The average number of training hours per course is 98 hours. The particular courses involved an average of 12 students per course. Lifelong learning courses for adults last longer (129 hours) and show a greater attractiveness on users (on average 17 students per course), whereas the compulsory ones (occupational safety, craft licenses) last 48 hours, and they are addressed to an average of 14 students per course. Apart from training activities, continuing education providers offer a wide range of services to both people and businesses such as guidance and counselling (60% of them), skill audit (44%), tutoring (55%), customised training pathways (47%), certification of learning outcomes (46%), business services / on-demand training course management (35%).

Most of training courses concern the acquisition of basic ITC skills (37.4%), environmental protection, occupational safety and other contents required by law (29.1%). Training activities aimed at developing personal skills or teaching techniques and technologies to workers are less frequent, as well as those in accounting and finance, personal services, transports, office work and secretary services.

2.11. Teachers and trainers qualifications, roles and responsibilities

In Italy VET teachers and trainers have very different features. The professional profile of teachers is much more clearly defined and regulated than trainers as far as training, recruitment, duties and skills are concerned. Additionally, when it comes to the actual teaching part of their activities, teachers are mainly defined as 'content experts', whereas trainers are 'process experts' who can play a variety of roles depending on the situation (e.g. tutors, trainers, group leaders, coaches, etc.). In fact, trainers are mainly required to support the learning process by guiding and motivating trainees, to strengthen the link between training and work and to update trainees' working skills.

Teachers are employed by the Ministry of Education and work in State vocational schools and in centres for adult education (*Centri per l'istruzione degli*

adulti - CPIA). Some also work at higher technical institutes. Trainers mainly work in vocational training centres that are managed directly by the regional/provincial/municipal authorities, as well as in private vocational training centres accredited by regions. Some trainers also work in businesses, consultancy agencies, non-profit organisations and public employment services.

For what concerns VET teachers' pre-service training, Universities provide teachers' initial training on behalf of the Ministry of Education and in collaboration with the schools. Following a long period of reforms⁽²⁵⁾, the minimum requirement for accessing the teaching profession is now a five-year bachelor degree in specific teaching subjects (math, chemistry, foreign languages) , followed by a one-year traineeship (Active Teaching Traineeship, *Tirocinio Formativo Attivo* – TFA) in schools. TFA courses have a restricted access (admission test) last 1500 hours (EQF7) and are managed by private and state universities, in collaboration with the schools. The TFA includes face-to-face learning, workshop activities and practical work experience in schools under the supervision of a teacher acting as a tutor. Its aim is to cover both content and methodological/didactic aspects within a specific learning environment. During and at the end of the traineeship, students are required to take theoretical and practical tests. More generally, the pre-service training of VET teachers should be aimed at strengthening their knowledge of mathematics and the natural and physical sciences, as well as at improving their teaching, psychological, pedagogical, organisational and social skills. Special attention is also given to improving their languages and digital skills in compliance with EU recommendations. Educators who wish to teach disabled people must attend a specific course of study in formal education. At the end of this training pathway, teachers must pass a State exam in order to be admitted to State schools (both for public ones and private institutes accredited by national authorities). VET teachers' continuous training was considered as an individual right under the National Collective Work Agreement since many years ago, but now is compulsory and regulated by law (Law 107/2015, the so-called 'The Good School'. This Law 'establishes that permanent training is compulsory for teachers in service and provides both incentives to support teachers' continuous training and systematic need analysis mechanisms. The teachers' in-service training must be in line with the school plan and with the Ministry of Education priorities. This training must involve all open-ended contract teachers.

VET trainers' initial training is not regulated at a national level; there is no nationally recognised register of trainers or formal recruitment procedures. As regards access requirements to the training profession, the National Collective Work Contract only sets minimum requirements: a degree or an upper secondary school diploma plus professional experience in the relevant sector. Additionally, it

⁽²⁵⁾ Decrees of Ministry 249/2010 and 487/2014 define the requirements and the characteristics of teachers' pre-service training.

establishes that – regardless of the role played in the different training contexts (tutor, counsellor, trainer coordinator, etc.) - trainers should regularly participate in professional refresher programs, either within or outside the institutions at which they work.

Although no specific requirements apply to obtaining the qualification to access the trainer profession, the number of university graduates has increased, thus showing that greater attention is paid to the entry requirements in the recruitment process. In addition, in recent years a number of education faculties have been offering university degrees and masters' programmes for trainers. Within this national framework, each Region and autonomous province established its own standards for trainers' training with a view to ensuring high quality VET services financed by public funds. To access these funds, the training organisations must be accredited by the competent authorities (regions and autonomous provinces) on the basis of quality standards, which also affect the skills of trainers, as indicated by the new national accreditation system of training and guidance providers (March 2008)⁽²⁶⁾. Private VET Centre, which does not use public funds, can regulate the matter of learning facilitators' training autonomously and do not have to respect specific laws.

VET trainers' in-service training is not formalised varies greatly and participation is discretionary. Activities are mainly promoted by the regional authorities and funded by the ESF and more recently by Joint Inter-Professional Funds for Continuing Training (*Fondi paritetici inter-professionali*)⁽²⁷⁾. However, in-service training is not widespread across Italy and varies from region to region (e.g. in-service training services tend to be more structured in the northern and central regions). The learning facilitators' training supply is determined by the free market and the most important providers are public and private training bodies and consortia, consultancy firms, professional associations, universities, social partners, Chambers of Commerce and some business schools. Trainers' training is mainly designed to enhance the skills required by technological innovation and market globalisation, foster the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and establish reliable standards for the validation procedures, adjust training interventions to local needs, create local, national and international networks and develop relationships between training systems and the labour market via traineeship experiences.

⁽²⁶⁾ Decree of the Ministry of Labor 166/2001, 'Provisions for Accrediting VET and Guidance Providers' (*Accreditamento delle sedi formative e delle sedi orientative*); State-Regions Agreement 'The New Accreditation System' (*Nuovo sistema di accreditamento*) implemented by the Ministry of Labor and approved in March 2008 by the State-Regions Conference.

⁽²⁷⁾ These funds are managed by the social partners and supervised by the Ministry of Labour.

VET Trainers also hold an important role for training courses implemented within the field of adult education centres. The most recent national regulations establishing the general rules for restructuring the learning organisation within adult education centres, including evening courses for acquiring a school diploma (Decree 263/2012 of the President of the Republic), tends to support the construction and consolidation of a lifelong learning 'system' via the transformation of old adult education centres into autonomous schools, with a specific educational and organisational structure and governing bodies, based on a provincial basis. The move to the new arrangement was accompanied by Guidelines for 2015 associated with the new criteria concerning the educational and organisational structure (credit recognition, study program personalisation, distance learning, individual reception and guidance for the purpose of defining the learning agreement and the active involvement of Regional service networks). The trainer must have communication skills for reception, linguistic and/or mediation abilities for guiding groups at risk of exclusion (people with low educational attainment or without qualifications, elderly workers, disabled people, migrant workers, and people employed in fragile economic sectors and in companies with a risk of unemployment).

3. Shaping VET qualifications

3.1. Improving the match between labour market need and VET provision

3.1.1. Excelsior Information System for employment and training

Since 1997, the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Craft and Agriculture (Unioncamere), in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and the European Union (ESF funding), created the Excelsior Information System for employment and training. On a quarterly and annual basis, such system retraces the forecast concerning job offer and demand as well as professional and educational requirements of companies, providing extremely useful directions to support the planning of training, guidance and job policies.

The survey is conducted in each Italian province by the Chamber of Commerce network through almost 300 000 direct and phone interviews per year (approximately 100 000 for the annual surveys and 180 000 for the 4 quarterly surveys), involving companies of all sizes and economic sectors. Therefore, Excelsior is considered one of the most extensive surveys provided by the National Statistical Programme and it represents the most comprehensive information tool available in Italy for the knowledge of professional and training needs of companies.

For each company participating in the annual survey, hiring programs and outflows related to the next twelve months will be measured. In the quarterly survey, the same will be measured considering the following quarter. The available information is a fundamental support for:

- measuring the actual demand for jobs in the different employment areas, in order to provide information support to those - public or private - are engaged in directing the supply of labour toward the needs expressed by the demand or in favouring direct and precise matching of labour demand and supply;
- the tendency of institutional decision-makers' choices on policies and planning of educational and vocational training, as well as those of training providers at all levels, providing detailed information about the occupational short and medium term needs of companies;
- the tendency of young people who, at the end of their training course, require immediate useful information on the general labour market trends and on the most popular professions.

The Excelsior's surveys feed the Excelsior Database, which contains statistics about the needs of companies according to job, sector and educational qualification ⁽²⁸⁾. It also contains the analytical report about the latest forecasts regarding the 2016 - 20 period, detailed by sector, type of employment, jobs, education levels and major fields of study. The model allows to predict the

⁽²⁸⁾ <http://excelsior.unioncamere.net/>

evolution of employment in 28 sectors (including Public Administration) and to deduce the employment requirement in each of them ⁽²⁹⁾.

3.1.2. Information system on professions

In order to meet the information needs representing the basis of a proper planning process, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, through the ESF, promoted and funded a number of surveys (random survey on professions, audit on professional needs, firms' recruitment forecasts - Excelsior). The results will converge into an information system that networks the information provided by institutional entities generating and/or delivering information on professions (Ministry of Labour, Isfol, Ista, Unioncamere, Inps (national Institute for social security), Inail, National Institute for insurance on occupational accidents etc.). Such system is constantly updated and contains different types of information related with each other:

- analytical representation of professions features and job content;
- vocational enhancement needs manifested by companies;
- forecasts on companies recruitment;
- anticipation of the changes in professional features and labour content;
- economic and occupational scenarios of business segments for the foreseeable future.

To ensure comparability and complementarity of these different sources of information, the system uses, as communication protocol, the classification of professions (CP2011) transposing the updates introduced by the International Standard Classification of Occupations.

The system, which is constantly evolving to meet multiple information needs, is also equipped with different tools already in use both for matching purposes (job services) and inform/guiding users to access to training activities.

The information is first intended for the stakeholders of basic education and training and subsequently for the planning of courses aimed at meeting and anticipating vocational and skills needs of companies and business sectors. The information is disseminated in a web environment designed to facilitate consultation to other types of users:

- policy makers who need information to adopt targeted strategies and measures for employment and increase in human capital;
- labour market operators who need to know the professions and skills needed for their activity in order to facilitate the matching of job demand and supply and to guide the users (workers and companies);
- companies with direct access to information about the type of skills acquired by the workers and about actions required in order to adapt to changes imposed by technology and economic competition;

⁽²⁹⁾ <http://excelsior.unioncamere.net/images/publicazioni2016/Report-analitico-2016-2020.pdf>

- public institutions wishing to monitor the professional requirements and the skills of the staff working in their organisations;
- jobseekers, especially young people, interested in understanding what new knowledges or skills are requested to join the labour market;
- Those who are interested in understanding how to boost their own job performance.

3.2. Assessment, recognition of competences within formal learning and validation of non-formal and informal learning

3.2.1. The new legal national framework of qualifications and its state of implementing

After years of debate and initiatives, since 2012, a national legal framework on validation of non-formal and informal learning has been progressively developed in Italy, according to following main steps:

- the National Law 92/2012, reforming the Labour market, foresees the immediate institution of a national system of competence certification and validation of non-formal and informal learning and delegates the Government to adopt legislative decrees to define general standards for assessment and recognition of competences, available at regional, national and European level;
- Subsequently on January 16, 2013 the Legislative Decree on the national certification of competence and validation of non-formal and informal learning was promulgated and it was based on two main operational lines: 1) the building of the National Repertory of educational and vocational qualifications ; 2) the setting up of minimum standards for certification services (mainly about process and assessment of the NQF)
- Moreover on 30 June 2015 an Inter-ministerial Decree (ID) among Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education defined the National Framework of Regional Qualifications and related Competences (QNQR), according to Decree 13/2013.

In particular the National Framework of Regional Qualifications is considered as a fundamental 'building block' of the national Repertory of Qualifications and establishes:

- a) a mechanism of mutual recognition among the regional qualifications;
- b) process, attestation and system standard procedures for the services of identification /validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification of competences.

One year after the approval of this Decree, the Regions are engaged to adopt officially and implement completely the provisions of the National Framework of Regional Qualifications. This implies that by 2016 validation services should be available across the 21 Regions according to the same methodological and system standard and the outcomes of validation processes

will be related to the official Qualification Framework and recognised at a national level.

The process of establishing the QNQR will directly affect employment dynamics as it aims to facilitate and develop:

- the matching between labour demand and supply and the planning of the training activities linked to employment;
- the process of identification of skills acquired in non-formal and informal learning pathways;
- the creation of the learning assessment tests for the certification of the acquired skills;
- occupational mobility at a national and Community level.

Once completed, the QNQR will be accessible on institutional website of Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and will be periodically implemented.

4. Promoting participation in VET

4.1. Financial and regulatory framework for CVET

As the updated policy framework is concerned, it can be underlined that:

- The CVET activities model is always a mixed one, with a co-management between 'State-Regions and Social Partners', but with less resources;
- The role of Regions, under a financial point of view, is weakened and both the funding in Law 235/93 and Law 53/00 (the two traditional Laws for CVET funding launched in pre-crisis periods) were suspended/abolished. The need to respond to the impact of the crisis has led to the transfer of substantial shares from continuous training to special redundancy arrangements, for a total amount which in the period 2009-15, reached over EUR 1 billion. Even after the mitigation of economical emergencies caused by the crisis, the reduction process of public funding for CVET will continue. In particular EUR 120 million will be deducted from 2016 onwards in a stable way. In such a context, Inter-professional Funds have strengthened their role and currently represent the only financial instrument, at a national level, for subsidising continuous training. As of October 2015, approximately 930 thousand companies and 9.6 million workers joined inter-professional funds. In some regions and in some sectors, an almost full representation of all active enterprises is recorded.
- **Inter-professional Funds** enhanced their fundamental role in CVET funding. The main goals of this instrument, which was introduced by Law 388/2000, in effect starting from September 2003, are:
 - (a) foster continuous training practices among Italian enterprises through a structural and established policy;
 - (b) subsidise training initiatives, which are closely linked to the real needs of enterprises, through a dialogue with the social partners being part of the Funds;
 - (c) make a proper use of the amount paid by enterprises and workers (0.30% of their salary). This contribution is transferred by the enterprises to the Funds (0.30% of the total salaries) and is paid by the worker (one-third), and the enterprises (two thirds).

The financing of Funds covers all the expenses connected with the implementation of those training schemes, which were selected as eligible for funding. From a managerial point of view, Inter-professional Funds are set up as associations through inter confederal agreements among the social partners and are licensed to operate by the Ministry of Labour. The Funds subsidise continuous training initiatives, which are specifically and exclusively addressed to the employees working in those

companies contributing to the Fund. Currently, 19 Funds operate which include about 870 000 enterprises (70% of the total amount). The companies in the Funds employ, in total, about 9.6 million workers, who represent therefore the potential target of such training initiatives. From 2004 to 2015, Inter-professional Funds have collected approximately EUR 5.2 billion, with an average annual amount of EUR 450 million. About 85% of such amount has been allocated to training schemes, while the remaining 15% was used to cover administration expenses. The annual amount of the contribution varies according to two factors: contractual dynamics (since it is a percentage of the salary) and the employment level. Since the performances of these two variables were not brilliant over the last 5 years, a decrease in the annual volume of Funds was recorded.

- Active services for labour are going to be strengthened, while continuous training is an essential part of them. Finally a closer connection between initial training and companies (school-work and dual system), is to be remarked.

4.2. Guidance and counselling structures and services

The agreement between the Government, the Regions and local Bodies concerning the definition of the national system on lifelong guidance in 2012 provides a national reference framework that aids and consolidates common language and culture between guidance workers. In the framework of this agreement, an *Inter-institutional and National Working Group for Lifelong Guidance (Gruppo di lavoro nazionale e interistituzionale per l'orientamento permanente)* was established in 2012 with the purpose of defining minimum standards for guidance services and worker's professional skills, with reference to the guidance services and functions that exist within different Regional VET and working systems.

In September 2015, at the State-Regions-Autonomous Provinces Conference, an agreement was signed for the trial project - 'Support, Development and Reinforcement of the Dual System within Vocational Education and Training' (*Azioni di accompagnamento, sviluppo e rafforzamento del sistema duale nell'ambito dell'Istruzione e Formazione Professionale*) -.The project was proposed by the Ministry of Labour and subsequently completed and accepted by the Regions and autonomous Provinces. This trial, which begins in the 2015/2016 training year, represents an opportunity to further develop the Italian dual educational system, able to create integration between education/training and the fundamental task of actively combating the strong youth unemployment crisis.

The trial includes:

- a) support for the organisation of guidance services and placements (vocational guidance, balance and certification of competence, matching among companies and students, organising school-work alternation courses and placement and managing protocols with companies);
- b) training of vocational training centres' workers on the legislative and operational features of the new apprenticeship;
- c) design of the educational and vocational courses in which school-work alternation pathways or apprenticeship training are reinforced.

4.3. Challenges and policy developments

The national policy agenda is concerned with the enhancing OECD evaluations which indicate that the education attainments rates, skills level of adult population and early school leaving still remain significantly below the EU average.

Also entry into the labour market is difficult for young people, including the high-skilled.

The mismatch between demand and supply of qualified people and the low economic return of higher education represent some of the most critical points of the relationship between the labour market and the educational and vocational system.

In this framework, the main challenges to be faced concern:

- increasing the level of competence of students, including key competences ,
- enhancing policies for the recovery of NEET and for the integration of subjects which are at risk of social exclusion,
- enhancing the level of public spending on education, especially in favour of schools, University and Research investments,
- increasing teachers and trainers' qualification with particular reference to the achievement of digital culture for learning and new job skills and
- accelerating the integration process of the different levels of LLL systems into a coherent national qualification system,

As an example of innovative measures that will take place in next months, it is worth to mention the forthcoming launch of the new National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies (ANPAL), which was established in 2015 with the Legislative Decree n. 150/2015, in compliance with the Jobs Act (L. n. 183/2014). The main objective of ANPAL shall be setting out policies for the promotion of employment in order to foster employment and redeployment of workers by providing services that are currently being offered by the Ministry of Labour. The

National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies shall be structured on a regional scale and receive support from INPS (National Institute for Social Security,) employment centres and all the stakeholders currently accredited for intermediation, training authorities, Italia Lavoro and INAPP (ex ISFOL). ANPAL shall coordinate the Service network for Labour policies through its many purposes, some of which have a strategic importance for the management of the job market, such as:

- coordination of the management of unemployment benefits (Assicurazione sociale per l'impiego), of public employment services and of activation policies for the unemployed, particularly for recipients of income support benefits related to termination of employment;

- defining methods for user profiling, for service standards of employment centres established by regions and their relative standard expenses; determining working methods, as well as the amount of individual redeployment benefits and further strategies to involve private accredited stakeholders;

- accrediting private stakeholders which may operate in employment services; defining and managing programmes to adjust the areas in which essential performance requirements were not met for active labour policies or where at risk of compliance with the aforementioned performance levels exists; supporting the regions where the essential performance requirements are not ensured, through direct management of employment services and active labour policies;

- monitoring and evaluating the management of active policies and employment services, as well as the results obtained by public or private accredited stakeholders, through the labour policies single information system (sistema informativo unico delle politiche del lavoro).

Further responsibilities for the direct management of employment services and active labour policies may be allocated to ANPAL by the means of specific agreements with regions and autonomous provinces, whereas the decree allocates the administrative management of employment centres and active labour policies to regions and autonomous provinces.

List of acronyms and abbreviations

ANPAL	Agenzia Nazionale Politiche Attive del Lavoro-National Agency for active labour policies
CPIA	Centri provinciali per l'istruzione degli adulti – Province Centres for adult education
IeFP	Istruzione e formazione professionale- Vocational Education and Training
MLPS	Ministry of Labour and Social Policies
IFTS	Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore- Higher Technical Education and Training
ITS	Istruzione Tecnica Superiore- Higher Technical Education
MIUR	Ministero dell'Istruzione Università e Ricerca- Ministry of Education, University and Research

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