



Italy

VET in Europe - Country Report

2009

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Abstract:

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

1. General context - framework for the knowledge society
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities
3. Legislative and Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities
4. Initial vocational education and training
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
6. Training VET teachers and trainers
7. Matching VET provision with labour market needs
8. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment
9. Financing - investment in human resources
10. National VET statistics - allocation of programmes

This overview has been prepared in 2009 and its reference year is 2008. Similar overviews of previous years can be viewed at:

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/

More detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can also be found at: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/analysis.asp

Keywords:

vocational education and training (VET) systems; initial vocational training; continuing vocational training; lifelong learning; VET policy development; financial crisis and VET policies; VET legislative and institutional frameworks; validation of non-formal and informal education; teachers and trainers; anticipation of skill needs; vocational guidance and counselling; VET financing mechanisms; allocation of national VET programmes; national and international qualification systems.

Geographic term:

Italy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. GENERAL CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY	6
1.1 Political And Socio-Economic Context.....	6
1.2 Population And Demographics	6
1.3 Economy And Labour Market Indicators.....	7
1.4 Educational Attainment Of Population	10
1.5 Definitions	12
2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES.....	15
2.1 Objectives And Priorities Of The National Policy Development Areas Of VET	15
2.2 The Latest Developments In The Field Of European Tools	20
2.3 Possible Projections Of The Financial Crisis On VET Policies	21
3. LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ..	24
3.1 Legislative Framework For IVET	24
3.2 Institutional Framework: IVET	25
3.3 Legislative Framework For CVET	27
3.4 Institutional Framework: CVET	28
4. INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	30
4.1 Background To The Initial Vocational Education And Training System And Diagram Of The Education And Training System	30
4.2 IVET At Lower Secondary Level.....	34
4.3 IVET At Upper Secondary Level (School-Based And Alternance)	35
4.4 Apprenticeship Training	39
4.5 Other Youth Programmes And Alternative Pathways.....	40
4.6 Vocational Education And Training At Post-Secondary (Non Tertiary) Level.....	40
4.7 Vocational Education And Training At Tertiary Level	42

5. CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS	45
5.1 Formal Education	45
5.2 Non-Formal Education	48
5.3 Measures To Help Job-Seekers And People Vulnerable To Exclusion From The Labour Market	52
6. TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS	55
6.1 Types Of Teacher And Trainer Occupations In VET	55
6.2 Types Of Teachers And Trainers In IVET	58
6.3 Types Of Teachers And Trainers In CVET.....	62
7. MATCHING VET PROVISION WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS	64
7.1 Systems And Mechanisms For The Anticipation Of Skill Needs (In Sectors, Occupations, Education Level).....	64
7.2 Practices To Match VET Provision With Skill Needs	66
8. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT	68
8.1 Strategy And Provision	68
8.2 Target Groups And Modes Of Delivery	69
8.3 Guidance And Counselling Personnel	70
9. FINANCING: INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES	72
9.1 Funding For Initial Vocational Education And Training	72
9.2 Funding For Continuing Vocational Education And Training, And Adult Learning	74
9.3 Funding For Training For Unemployed People And Other Groups Excluded From The Labour Market	78
9.4 General Funding Arrangements And Mechanisms	79
10. NATIONAL VET STATISTICS - ALLOCATION OF PROGRAMMES.....	80
10.1 Classification Of National VET Programmes.....	80
10.2 Fields Of Education And Training	81
10.3 Links Between National Qualifications And International Qualifications Or Classifications.....	83
11. AUTHORS, SOURCES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	85

1. GENERAL CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

1.1 POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Italy is a democratic Republic and has 20 Regions, 107 Provinces and 8.100 local authorities.

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

The Regions have 'exclusive' legislative powers over vocational education and training, apart from tasks connected with the European Union, and parallel legislative powers over general education, although the State is responsible for deciding the basic principles. In fact, Law no. 3 of 2001, reformed the Title V of the Constitution. In particular, art. 117 makes a distinction between: a) general education, which falls under the exclusive competence of the State as for general rules, essential levels of performance and fundamental principles of legislation at regional level; b) vocational education and training, which falls under the responsibility of the Regions, although the essential levels of performance remain under the responsibility of the State. Provinces and local authorities provide school buildings and infrastructure, and carry out tasks in the area of adult education and guidance, including the management of employment services.

Italy has a diversified industrial economy with roughly the same total and per capita output as France and the UK. This capitalistic economy remains divided into a developed industrial north, dominated by private companies, and a less-developed, welfare-dependent, agricultural south, with about 6, 7% unemployment for 2008 in Italy. Most raw materials needed by industry and more than 75% of energy requirements are imported. Over the past decade, Italy has pursued a tight fiscal policy in order to meet the requirements of the Economic and Monetary Unions and has benefited from lower interest and inflation rates. Moreover, the current government has enacted numerous short-term reforms aimed at improving competitiveness and long-term growth. Italy has moved slowly, however, on implementing needed structural reforms, such as lightening the high tax burden and overhauling Italy's rigid labour market and over-generous pension system, because of the current economic slowdown and opposition from labour unions. But the leadership faces a severe economic constraint, following also the global trend of recession: the budget deficit still breaching the 3% EU ceiling. The economy experienced in 2008 a period of recession with a reduction GDP by -2, 9% in of the fourth semester of the year, unemployment remained at a high level and anyway higher than 2007 (+0.6%).

1.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

According to Eurostat, Italian population in 2009 is over 60 millions registering an increase by 1, 7% compared to 2005 (*see table 1*). This population increase is mainly due to the migratory flows occurred in Italy during the last years, thus balancing in a certain way birth decline and the ageing of population. In fact, as showed in table 2, projections on the dependency ratio for aged people underline as the value of this indicator is slightly superior (30,99%) compared to the corresponding value for EU27 already in 2010, while progressively increasing during the years, maintaining always a positive gap compared to

the European population in its complex, then rising to 50% in 2040.

TABLE 1 - TOTAL POPULATION				
		2002	2005	2009
EU (27 COUNTRIES)	(b)	491023535	495090294	499673325(s)
EU (25 COUNTRIES)	(b)	461603958	465845885	470574546(s)
ITALY		58462375	59131287	60090430(s)

b = Break in series s=Eurostat estimate

Source of Data: Eurostat - Last Update: 18.02.2009 Date of extraction: 26 Feb 2009

TABLE 2 - PROJECTED OLD-AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO %											
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060
EU (27)	25,9	28,26	31,05	34,23	38,04	42,07	45,36	48	50,42	52,45	53,47
ITALY	30,99	33,6	35,47	37,97	42,45	48,29	54,07	57,89	59,24	59,43	59,32

Source: Eurostat; Date of data extraction: 10/03/2009

These dynamics underline the need of a progressive perspective change in the organization and distribution of resources among different sub-system composing the global National lifelong Learning system, to promote the socio-cultural integration of immigrants on one side and the active ageing of population on the other.

1.3 ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS.

Data for 2008 on employment by economic activity (*Table 1*) confirm the major manufacturing vocation of Italy compared to the EU average: 20, 6 of employed in the sector compared to the 15, 6% of UE27. Employment indicators in the distribution and transport sector (Italy: 25, 6%; UE27: 22, 2%) and business and other services (Italy: 20, 8%; UE27: 17, 1%) is higher than the European average, while primary sector and utilities (4, 4%) and the non market services (20, 0%) have the lowest ratio for employed and for values under EU27 rates.

TABLE 1: EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, AGE 15+, MALE AND FEMALE, NACE REV. 1.1 - (1000) - 2008 Q2

CLASSIFICATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES -	PRIMARY SECTOR AND UTILITIES		MANUFACTURING		CONSTRUCTION		DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSPORT		BUSINESS AND OTHER SERVICES		NON MARKETED SERVICES		TOTAL
	A_B_C_E		D		F		G_H_I		J_K_O_P_Q		L_M_N		
EU27	11508,8	5,2%	34500,5	15,5%	16225,2	7,3%	49200,5	22,2%	38025,2	17,1%	47045,7	21,2%	221873,1
IT	1029,1	4,4%	4857,5	20,6%	1970,8	8,4%	6107,3	25,9%	4909,7	20,8%	4706,7	20%	23581

As underlined in the table below (*table 2*), the dissociation of the employment rate by age groups and highest level of education, highlights for Italy an employment rate lower than the EU average for all age groups examined. The difference with the European data is particularly high for age group 15-24 (12, 7%) and worse than 2005 data. Among 50-64 age group, although a significant increase of the employment rate (from 40, 7% in 2000 to 46, 5% of 2007), the difference with EU27 is by 9 percentage points.

In Italy, as in EU27, employment rates for adult population, proportionally increase with the education level; most of the criticalities concerning entrance into the job market, can be observed for under 25 age group possessing isced 5-6 (26.6%), especially if we compare this data with the 35.5% of employed age group 15-24 possessing isced 3-4.

TABLE 2 - EMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%)

		2002			2005			2007		
		15_24	25_49	50_64	15_24	25_49	50_64	15_24	25_49	50_64
EU (27)	TOTAL	36.7(i)	77.3(i)	50.2(i)	36,1	78,1	53,3	37,4	80	55,6
	ISCED0_2	25.7(i)	65.9(i)	40.5(i)	24,7	66,2	42,5	25,3	67,5	44,2
	ISCED3_4	47.8(i)	79.1(i)	54.3(i)	47,1	79,4	56,8	48,9	81,4	59,2
	ISCED5_6	61.7(i)	88.2(i)	71.8(i)	60,5	88	73,6	62	89	74,9
	NO ANSWER	15.3(i)	73.4(i)	37.9(i)	4,6	73,7	5	5,1	74,6	6,6
ITALY	TOTAL	25,7	71,4	40,7	25,7	73,2	43,7	24,7	74	46,5
	ISCED0_2	19,8	64,1	32,5	18,2	65,8	33,2	16	66	35,2
	ISCED3_4	33,6	75,9	57,6	35,1	77,6	58,5	35,5	78,8	60,7
	ISCED5_6	41,5	84,8	74,9	27,3	81,5	77,3	26,6	81,5	76,2

Source Eurostat Date of extraction 17 mar 09 - Last update 4 nov. 08

At the same time, indicators on unemployed people (*table 3 below*) show an unemployment rate that is generally higher compared to the correspondent EU27 values

for the age group 15-24 at all educational attainment levels, whereas is lower at age groups 25-49 and 50-64 at all educational levels, except for isced 5_6, age group 25-49 (i.e 5.2 in Italy as compared to 3.7 in the UE in 2007).

TABLE 3 - UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%)										
		2002			2005			2007		
		15_24	25_49	50_64	15_24	25_49	50_64	15_24	25_49	50_64
EU (27)	TOTAL	17.8 (i)	8.2 (i)	6.6(i)	18,5	8	6,7	15,4	6,4	5,5
	ISCED0_2	19.8 (i)	11.3 (i)	7.4 (i)	21,7	11,6	7,8	19,9	10,3	6,9
	ISCED3_4	17.5(i)	8.4 (i)	7.5 (i)	17,2	8,2	7,6	13,3	6,1	5,8
	ISCED5_6	12.5 (i)	4.5 (i)	3.5 (i)	14,1	4,7	3,8	11,3	3,7	3,2
	NO ANSWER	14 (i)	7.1(i)	6.7(i)	27,5	:	:	20,1	:	:
ITALY	TOTAL	27,1	8,3	4,1	24	7,1	3,5	20,3	5,8	2,5
	ISCED0_2	28,4	10,2	5,8	26,2	8,7	5	22,5	7,2	3,9
	ISCED3_4	25,8	7,1	2,2	22	5,8	2,5	19	4,8	1,5
	ISCED5_6	35,8	6,6	:	31,2	7,1	1 (u)	19,3	5,2	0.5(u)

Date of extraction: 10 Mar 09 / Last update: 04 Nov 08 ; Source of information: Eurostat

As for total public expenditure (data 2005) for secondary and post secondary non tertiary level, the Italian indicator, although lower of 0,2 percentage points, is quite close to that of EU 25 (2,3%), as showed in table 4.

TABLE 4 - TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION, AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION, 2005									
	ISC 234			ISC 234_GEN			ISC 234_PVVOG		
	IN MILLION EUR PPS	AS % OF GDP	AS % OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	IN MILLION EUR PPS	AS % OF GDP	AS % OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	IN MILLION EUR PPS	AS % OF GDP	AS % OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE
EU25	247.426,0	2,3	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
IT	29.282,6	2,1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Source Eurostat

The number of students who are not Italian citizens and who attend Italian school system is increasing progressively. In school year 2007/08, they were 574 133, equal to 6.4% of all students.

The majority of foreign students are enrolled in primary and lower secondary schools, the percentage being the 7.7% and 7.3% of the whole school population, respectively. Although the pre-primary level is not part of compulsory education, foreign population is equal to 6.7%, while at upper secondary level it is of 4.3%. Most pupil come from Romania (92 734 pupils, equal to 16,15% of all foreign students). After Romania has joined the EU, the

number of Romanian pupils has strongly increased, now exceeding the number of pupils coming from Albania (85 195 pupils, equal to 14, 84%), the most represented country over the last few years. In the last school year, data on foreign students has been enriched with data collection about the number of students who are born in Italy, the so called 'second generation' and the number of pupils who enrolled for the first time in the Italian school system. Foreign children and youngsters who are born in Italy and attending schools, are the 35% of all foreign students, equal to the 2, 2% of all students. Their presence is higher at pre-primary and primary levels (71,2% and 41,1% of foreign pupils, respectively). The percentage decreases at 17, 8% in lower secondary schools and to 6 and 8% in upper secondary schools¹.

1.4 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Although gradually diminishing from 2002 to 2007 (thanks to the education policies implemented in the 90s), Italian percentage of early school leavers, (19.3% in 2007), is definitively above to the European average and still far from reaching the Lisbon goals, as also expressed in *table 1*. For this reason, active policies, especially for young people, are strongly oriented to fight against dropout/early school leavers, trying to supply alternative training opportunities and tools for the exploitation of skills possessed. In the school system, school drop outs are particularly widespread, especially in the vocational training pathways, with the 45% of registered resulting at least 1 year behind of their own training pathway.

TABLE 1 - EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS: PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 18-24 WITH AT MOST LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION AND NOT IN FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
EU (27 COUNTRIES)	17,1	16,6	15,9	15,5	15,2	14,8
EU (25 COUNTRIES)	16,6	16,1	15,4	15,1	15	14,5
ITALY	24,3	23,5	22,3	21,9	20,8	19,3

Source/Eurostat; EU Labour Force Survey; Date of extraction: 29 May 2008

As underlined in table 2 above, annual fluctuations in the number isced 3, 4 and 5-6 graduates, are mainly due to different factors:

Young generations' demographic drop is partially compensated by the general increase of higher school attendance.

The attainment of isced 3 and higher qualifications, has also suffered because of the different reforms programmes of the education system, as for example the raising of compulsory school and the introduction of the right-duty to education and training till 18 years old.

On the other hand, the decrease in the number of graduates at 4 and 5 ISCED levels in 2006 can be explained with a reduction of the attractiveness of three years degree

¹Source: MIUR, *Gli alunni stranieri nel sistema scolastico italiano, school year 2007/08*; available at http://www.pubblica.istruzione.it/dg_studentiprogrammazione/notiziario_stranieri_0708.pdf.

pathways, that on their beginning had attracted a lots of +21 years old students, also thanks to the possibility of the recognition of previous studies or the working experience.

TABLE 2 - GRADUATES IN ISCED 3-6 3-6 BY FIELD OF EDUCATION AND SEX										
COUNTRY	SEX	2002			2004			2006		
		ISCED3 VPV	ISCED4 VPV	ISCED5 _6	ISCED3 VPV	ISCED4 VPV	ISCED5 _6	ISCED3 VPV	ISCED4 VPV	ISCED5 _6
EU(27)	T	2293348 (s)	379912 (s)	3165155 (s)	2366669 (s)	421341 (s)	3595504 (s)	2853434 (s)	428945 (s)	3846498 (s)
	M	1244986 (s)	171634 (s)	1335544 (s)	1263141 (s)	195713 (s)	1482590 (s)	1545275 (s)	199261 (s)	1573072 (s)
	F	1063240 (s)	208279 (s)	1829612 (s)	1103528 (s)	225628 (s)	2112914 (s)	1308159 (s)	229685 (s)	2273425 (s)
ITALY	T	394898	32914	248710	400674	37193	350125	398358	39438	279492
	M	222336	12836	107607	225595	14505	143264	224472	15381	117135
	F	172562	20078	141103	175079	22688	206861	173886	24057	162357

Source of information: Eurostat - Date of extraction: 9 Mar 09

The trend concerning the elevation of school attendance levels is however confirmed by the rate for population aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education (table 3): from 69,6% in 2002 to 76,3% in 2007. This aspect is particularly stressed by the percentage of females that in 2007 have acquired an upper secondary school diploma (80,0% compared to the EU27 80.8%).

Besides dropout/ school leaver's issues, another critical aspect is represented by the low participation of adult population to lifelong learning activities, still below the European average. In particular, between 2002 and 2007, although the percentage of population aged 25-64 participating to training and education over the four week prior the survey has increased (from 4,4% in 2002 to 6,2% in 2007), there is still a significant distance with the European average (7,2% in 2002 and 9,5% in 2007), as clearly emerging from table 4.

TABLE 3 - YOUTH EDUCATION ATTAINMENT LEVEL - PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 20 TO 24 HAVING COMPLETED AT LEAST UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION									
	2002			2005			2007		
	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES
EUROPEAN UNION (27 COUNTRIES)	76,7	79,3	74	77,5	80,2	74,9	78,1	80,8	75,5
ITALY	69,6	74,3	64,8	73,6	78,1	69,2	76,3	80	72,7

Source of information: Eurostat - Date of extraction: 27 Feb 09 Last update: 14 Nov 08

TABLE 4 - LIFE-LONG LEARNING (ADULT PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING) - PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 25-64 PARTICIPATING IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING OVER THE FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY									
	2002			2005			2007		
	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES
EUROPEAN UNION (27 COUNTRIES)	7,2	7,8	6,6	9,8	10,5	9	9,5	10,3	8,6
ITALY	4,4	4,6	4,2	5,8	6,2	5,4	6,2	6,6	5,9

Source of information: Eurostat - Date of extraction: 27 Feb 09 - Last update: 14 Nov 08

Most recent policy strategies are mainly focused on the strengthening of training offer for adults, also with the contribution of the European social fund, through: lifelong learning activities for employed, through a better coordination and improvement of the financial tools, a simplification of the access procedures to these funds and a greater promotion among enterprises and workers increasing the attractiveness of VET in the framework of active citizenship.

1.5 DEFINITIONS

EDUCAZIONE GENERALISTA (GENERAL EDUCATION):

This definition mainly concerns the lycée system, *id est* pathways not particularly planned for the exercise of specific professions. General education differs from vocational training.

EDUCAZIONE PRE-PROFESSIONALE (PRE-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION):

Education mainly designed to introduce participants to the world of work and to prepare them for entry into vocational or technical programmes. For the Italian specific case, Technical Institutes are comprised in this category.

EDUCAZIONE TECNICO PROFESSIONALE (VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION):

Vocational education aims at providing a specific theoretical and practical preparation to carry out qualified functions in the trade, services, industry, artisanship, agriculture and navigation sector.

Vocational and technical education is referred to *Istituti Tecnici* (technical schools) and *Istituto professionale e Istituti d'arte* (respectively vocational and art schools).

ISTRUZIONE SUPERIORE (TERTIARY OR HIGHER EDUCATION)

Higher education promotes science progress and supplies the necessary scientific culture for the professional practice. Higher education system provides a system subdivided into three separate sectors: University education; non-university higher education offered by the Higher level Arts and Music Education system; (Afam) and non-university higher education offered by other institutions.

FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE SUPERIORE (POST - SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION)

Training pathway of higher level, non-university, aimed at the training of practitioners able to act in a context characterized by a high organizational and technological complexity.

FORMAZIONE (TRAINING)

The definition of training includes education, learning, education and practice.

ISTRUZIONE E FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE INIZIALE (INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING)

The definition includes:

- first level (or basic) training pathways, addressed to those who have completed the first cycle of education;
- second level training pathways addressed to those who have completed the upper secondary level of education or who have obtained a first-level vocational qualification.

ISTRUZIONE E FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE CONTINUA (CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING)

Training pathways not immediately linked to the productive process, aimed at permanent training and at the improvement of professional and employability levels, involving individuals in a lifelong learning pathway.

PROGRAMMI SCOLASTICI (SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMMES)

A strict definition is not possible, as majority of vocational education programmes, apart from apprenticeship, are implemented partly in educational institutions.

ALTERNANZA SCUOLA LAVORO (ALTERNANCE TRAINING)

Alternance training is mainly intended in the framework of education and vocational training pathways, as an effective tool for guidance and assistance to enter the labor market.

APPRENDISTATO (APPRENTICESHIP)

Systematic, long-term training alternating periods in a school or training centre and at the workplace; the apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation. There is also an apprenticeship (addressed to students between 18 and 29 years old) enabling the student to obtain a second level diploma or higher education qualifications.

QUALIFICA PROFESSIONALE (QUALIFICATION)

No significant differences with the given definition (source EQF). Qualification is intended as a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

CURRICULO (CURRICULUM)

The term is frequently referred as “education programme”, which is a document indicating the goals to be achieved for the development of competences and learning objectives.

ABILITÀ (SKILLS)

The Italian definition for the term is similar to the international definition, i.e the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems, also acquired through interactions with the training context.

COMPETENZE (COMPETENCE)

The national definition is similar to the given international one: an ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/ or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

2.1 OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OF VET

2.1.1 NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY

MAIN OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY	MAIN ACTIONS/MEASURES TO ACHIEVE THEM AND VET RELATED ASPECTS
<p>Development of key competences for lifelong learning in the wider context of building up a framework for vocational qualifications, also according to European guidelines (Recommendation of 23 April 2008 on the constitution of EQF and recommendation of 9 April 2008 on ECVET)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitution of a Technical Board for the building of a <i>“National System of minimum training standards, of recognition and validation of competences and training standard”</i>, set up by the initiative of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, with the aim of promoting a wider access to the opportunities of development of competences for employability and active citizenship. The “Technical Board” involves institutional actors (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, Regions and Autonomous Provinces and Social Partners, together with the technical support of ISFOL and Tecnostruttura) and the main objective is the building of a <i>“National Standard System”</i> constituting the main structure of the future National Qualification Framework. - Adhesion to PIACC 2008-2013 (<i>Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies</i>), an international survey managed by OCSE to which ISFOL will participate on behalf of the Ministry of Labour, aimed at evaluating and assessing adult population competencies.
<p>Continuous commitment by the Ministry of Labour towards the improvement of the accreditation system as a major tool to assure high quality VET standards, also following what has been established in the Proposal of Recommendation of European Parliament and the Council on the quality of VET.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up of a new accreditation system, implemented by the Ministry of Labour (approved in March 2008, by State-Regions Conference and published in the Italian official Journal <i>/Gazzetta Ufficiale</i> on the 23/01/2009) through the adaptation of regional tools. The regions, through the 2007-2013 Operational Programmes of the European Social Fund, have committed to supporting the perfection of the system according to a precise timetable agreed with the EU Commission.

MAIN OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY	MAIN ACTIONS/MEASURES TO ACHIEVE THEM AND VET RELATED ASPECTS
<p>Reinforcing the attractiveness of VET systems and make them respondent to labour market needs ; promoting training initiatives for employed workers and improvement in the quality of training offered; training and placement of young people in the labour market</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institution of the “Italian Reference Point for Quality (established in 2006, providing information to the main stakeholders in relation to the activities of the European Network for quality in Education and Professional Training), which includes the participation of Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Regions, Social Partners and VET institutions’ representatives) supplying active support for the developments of the network programme and promoting the use of methods for developing quality - Definition of professional, training and recognition and certification standards for skills, which represents a priority for the National Operating Programmes (PON) and for 2007-2013 ESF planning. <p>The technical committee activated by the Ministry of Labour, with the participation of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, in collaboration with Regions and Social partner, is developing an initial set of minimum professional standards at a national level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening the role of apprenticeship contracts (as defined by Law 276/2003) as a link between education and the business world, underscoring the role of firms and trainers and considering apprenticeship a “high level training”, giving employers the possibility of implementing agreements with universities.
<p>Improve continuing training for teachers as a tool to increase quality of VET provision; development of skills and competences for teachers/trainers</p>	<p>Development of the “<i>Permanent System for on line training</i>” (<i>Sistema permanente di formazione on line- SFP on line</i>), promoted by the <i>Ministry of Labour</i>, and implemented through the technical assistance of ISFOL and ItaliaLavoro.</p> <p>The aim of the project consists of supporting the reform processes ongoing in Italy within the systems of Education, Vocational Training and Labour market, ensuring a proper supply of ICT-based continuing training, addressed to qualify or re-qualify all the human resources involved in the provision of education, training and employment services.</p>
<p>Reorganization of Employment Services, exploiting the role of the public sector as the “director” of employment services at the level of the organization of the entire labour market</p>	<p>Improving Employment Services capacity for properly providing assistance, increasing the relationship between Permanent Employment Centres (CPIs) and professional training. With the exercise of the authority delegated by Law 247/2007 with respect to Employment Services, CPIs will be a tool for managing the active labour market policy measures.</p>

2.1.2 POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAIN VET POLICY AREAS

Law no. 3 of 2001, reformed the Title V of the Constitution, in particular new article 117 distributes the legislative power as follows:

- the State has exclusive legislative power over a specific series of subjects, including the definition of the general rules on education and of the basic provisions concerning civil and social rights to be guaranteed all over the national territory;
- the Regions have exclusive legislative power on all subjects not expressly reserved to the State legislation by the Constitution, like vocational education and training;
- as for certain subjects, which are expressly listed, the regions have concurrent legislative power; it means that they have law making power in the respect of general rules, fundamental principles and essential benefits reserved to the State legislation; education falls within the concurrent legislation; in this respect, the regional legislation should respect school autonomy.

In view of this framework, it is worth noting the significant commitment of the regional administrations with regard:

- to strengthening the education and training system in order to elevate its quality;
- to ensure certification or qualification to the greatest number of people possible.

The most significant example of shared responsibility includes the National Strategic Framework for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 and its practical implementation. In fact the 2007-2013 National Strategic Framework (Quadro Strategico Nazionale - QSN) includes education among the "public service objectives".

The Regions are also contributing to the objectives via co-financing initiatives to leverage human capital involving the European Social Fund, and Regional Operational Programme (ROPs.). In this regard, the accent is placed on the qualification of the education and training system in order to raise the public's skills level and to reduce, particularly in the Convergence objective area, the ratio of young people dropping out of school. The priority in question has been addressed differently in the two Convergence and Competitiveness areas in light of the different possible measures available under the European Social Fund's Regulations.

In the Competitiveness objective Regions, the initiatives are primarily focused on the targets most exposed to the risk of dropout (e.g. immigrants). In the Convergence Regions, a specific, dedicated objective is contemplated, and initiatives complementary to those initiated at a national level have been planned through specific Operational Programmes. The emphasis is thus placed on improving the quality of the school system through instructional programmes for teachers (to raise skills levels) and for students (to make it possible for young people to earn a diploma or professional training and education certification).

In order to allow a better activation of integrated guidance services, ISFOL - on behalf of the Ministry of Labour, is setting up a number of guidance initiatives focused mainly on the southern regions (Convergence Objective) in order to promote the development of a national guidance system, considering regional disparities but, at the same time, ensuring effectiveness and efficiency of services (*please, for a wider framework for guidance and counselling, refer to theme 8*).

Strategies for the professional development and vocational retraining of teachers and

trainers operating in the Vocational Education and Training and adult education systems have been financed mainly under the ESF NOPs and ROPs. Training initiatives addressed to trainers are mainly intended to provide an essential contribution towards strengthening skills and competences with respect to: new learning methodologies and new expertise related to training credit and competence certification; use of new technologies for the development of educational settings; e-learning; accreditation of guidance/VT bodies; and design of tailored-made training pathways.

To update and improve teachers and trainers' skills, a project based on a 'blended' methodology has been set up in collaboration with the Italian MLPS, Regions, Universities, Isfol and Social Partners. The aim is to foster the updating and retraining of VT practitioners by creating and experimenting a vocational training course within the three-year degree course in education sciences².

Validation of non formal and informal learning is at the core of the socio-institutional debate and to this regard there have been implemented several validation experiences acquired in regional local and sectoral context in the framework of specific pathways. Some Regions (Basilicata, Emilia Romagna, Piemonte, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Veneto, and Valle d'Aosta) have defined policies and strategies towards the validation of non-formal and informal learning for the recognition of training credits inside specific formal learning pathways or for the acquisition of official qualifications³.

CURRICULA REFORM

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

Nevertheless, some new rules have been recently approved:

- The Agreement undertaken within the State-Regions Conference, on January 15th 2004, has set the minimal standards for the basic competences within the three-year experimental pathways;
- The Agreement undertaken within the State-Regions Conference, on October 5th 2006, has set the minimal training standards for the technical-vocational competences within the three-year experimental pathways.

With these rules, some minimal standards are given to be respected all over the Country, even if Regions keep maintaining certain autonomy in defining those specific competences so that vocational qualifications could be in line with the specific needs of the regional productive systems. Moreover almost all the present VET curricula (both managed at a national and regional level) are structured in basic, transversal and technical competences. The basic and transversal competences always include those defined by UE

² For teachers and trainers training, please refer to chapter 6.

³ Main tools and strategies for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (for example the National Board for the construction of a National System of Standards and the "Citizen Training Booklet") are explained in chapter 5.

as Key Competences in the Recommendation n. 2006/962/CE. As far as the methodology is concerned, the first standards to be implemented subsequently have been clustered into four areas: Linguistic; Scientific; Technological; Historical, social and economic. These standards, regarding the delicate segment of the compulsory education and training, are conceived not only with reference to the employability of individuals but also in order to guarantee the full rights of citizenship, starting from a cultural background of basic training.

2.1.3 CURRENT DEBATES

As also underlined by the recent “*White Book on Welfare*”, realized by the Ministry of Labour in May 2009, VET system in Italy should adapt to individual needs, strengthen the integration with the labour market, make transparent and clear qualifications, improve the recognition of informal and non-formal learning, more connected with labour market collective agreement and valorised through learning models acquired in work environments. In schools, knowledge is still separated from know-how and Italy’s productive system has difficulty in incorporating and producing knowledge: new job demand is mostly for positions with low-level qualifications and investments in research and innovation are not sufficient. For this reason, the current debate also concerns the necessity to place training needs of the productive system at the centre of governmental agenda. A decisive factor is the planning of training based on the analysis of the needs for professional profiles and skills⁴. Education system is actually undertaking a phase of reform debate, addressing the entire regulatory, legal, organizational and operational framework; after the reform of the Italian education system was launched with Law No. 53/2003, the following issues are still under debate:

- The reform law had provided that teachers at all education levels must hold a *Laurea magistrale* (3 + 2 years). This disposition has never been implemented. At the moment, teachers' initial training is under debate, together with the reorganisation of the whole teachers' recruitment system;
- The National Guidelines for the personalised study plans in the lower secondary school, annexed to Legislative Decree 59/2004, are under revision. Starting from school year 2007/08 and for two years, they will be replaced by the Guidelines for the curriculum, which will be applied on a trial basis. According to the new Guidelines, the school is mainly aimed at promoting the development of human being, by helping pupils to understand the meaning of what they are experiencing, at promoting active citizenship, at achieving the learning objectives necessary for the developing the competences as foreseen by the Guidelines themselves;
- The reform of the second cycle has not been applied yet. At the moment, some amendments to the reform itself are under debate. A reorganisation of this level of education is expected, in particular for the reduction of branches of study and the annual amount of hours.

Following Law no. 53/2003, law 133/2008 defines the basis for the revision of the organisation of the whole system. On its basis, law 169/2008 has established, starting from school year 2009/10, a reorganisation of school time at primary level. In fact, it has been introduced the possibility to organise the teaching time in 24 hours a week, with only one teacher in a class. However, the procedures for the implementation of this disposition are still under debate.

⁴ ISFOL is running a project co-financed by the ESF about the analysis of short and medium professional needs.

Also the higher education level has been under reform, always in the general purpose of reducing public expenditure. In fact, law No. 133/2008 provides that universities have the opportunity to change their status from state universities to private foundations.

2.2 THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EUROPEAN TOOLS

NQF

As also stressed in the National LLL strategies, Italy is working for the implementation of a Technical Board involving institutional actors (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, Regions and Autonomous Provinces and Social Partners, together with the technical support of ISFOL and Tecnostruttura) in order to build a “National Standard System” constituting the main structure of the future National Qualification Framework⁵.

PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY

During the last years, the Ministry of Labour and Education, together with the Regions, have cooperated to facilitate transfer and students mobility between the education and vocational training systems, both through horizontal and vertical pathways (from vocational training and apprenticeship to school and vice versa), through intermediate and final tools regarding the recognition of competences and skills acquired in training pathways.

QUALITY ASSURANCE THROUGH THE ACCREDITATION OF THE TRAINING PROVIDERS

The State and the Regions guarantee the quality of the training offered with public financing. The State-Regions Conference held on 20 March 2008 set the national minimum standard for the providers. The Regions, through the 2007-2013 Operational Programmes of the European Social Fund, have committed to supporting the improvement of the system according to a precise timetable agreed with the European Commission.

GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY

A great attention has been put on the implementation of community programmes and tools, especially those like Europass, supporting geographical mobility in VET, through the activities of the Europass National Centre (NEC).

During 2008 the NEC Italy worked with the aim of improving the quality of promotion and dissemination of the Europass Portfolio. Within this general aim, several core activities were carried out: the implementation of a new promotion strategy more articulated with regard to the specific target groups of each Europass document and closer to the needs of local VET and labour market operators. Within 2009 this new strategy will continue through the following activities:

- strengthening the new promotion plan started in 2008 with more targeted activities supporting local VET operators networks;

⁵ As regards the progress made towards the setting of the National qualification framework, please refer to chapter 10.3

- a closer link to enterprises and job matching agencies in order to address promotion initiatives and to evaluate impact and efficacy of Europass within the labour market;
- development and improvement of data collecting activities and of impact evaluation concerning all the 5 Europass documents;
- support and promotion of a number of pilot experiences concerning the use of the Certificate Supplement;
- more frequent and effective cooperation activities within the NEC network;
- the starting of the new central web system for issuing Europass Mobility;
- a focus on Europass Language Portfolio with the involvement of General and language Schools.

In 2009, the NEC will intensify the communication with those educational and vocational institutions to which targeted communications and formative products will be dedicated for a better and wider knowledge of the EM document. Such an activity will involve the Eurodesk network, with whom the NEC has already started mutual co-operation and collaboration.

In relation to the new software for the issuing of the EM, as developed by Cedefop, the NEC will continue to be part of the technical working group (inside the Cedefop) for the definition and implementation of the new system and will continue to participate in training session. Moreover, the NEC will start the testing phase of the system on the basis of the technical requirements of Cedefop.

2.3 POSSIBLE PROJECTIONS OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS ON VET POLICIES

2.3.1 THE FORESEEN CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRISIS ON VET

The actual global economic crisis, which can be considered as one of the worst crisis in the last half century, has had a deep negative impact on the current Italian economy, modifying productive processes and work environments. This, combined with birth declining, demographic change, less investments and jobs, are all factors requiring new organizational models towards an economy of information and knowledge. At the moment, also because the public nature of the Italian school system, there are no significant differences in pupils' school registrations; also the number of applicants for education in general, but especially for VET, has not registered, till the present moment, significant variations due to the crisis.

Anyway the government is undertaking initiatives aimed at the rational and effective use of the economic resources (within the broader based framework of an overall restructuring of public spending) focusing on the implementation of new territorial governance of VET.

To face the crisis, there is a firm governmental willingness to create a stronger cooperation between enterprises and schools, also strengthening the role of technical education; in fact, according to the Ministry of Education data, on a basis of an enterprises request of 335.000 technical specialized profiles, there have been a supply of 170.000 unities. It is for this reason that it will be more and more important to promote the importance of technical schools, integrating VET systems and labour market, valorising learning models in work environments, so that to increase the link between school and enterprises.

In this sense, the role of apprenticeship contracts is going to be emphasized as a mechanism that makes it possible for many young people entering the job market, also providing a high-level training.

2.3.2 THE MEASURES ALREADY TAKEN OR ENVISAGED TO BE TAKEN AS RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

One of the main important points of the Italian strategy to face the present financial crisis, also following what is underlined at communitarian level, is to promote the creation of active “social shock absorbers” (*ammortizzatori sociali*). Law Decree 185/2008 - converted by Law n. 2/2009 - has focused the attention on measures towards the protection of workers, enterprises and families from the effects of the crisis and the core aspect is represented by the enhancement and extension of actions for income supporting. At the end of December 2008, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies created a specific “Unit for Employment protection” with the aim of being a sort of steering committee (*Cabina di Regia*) for activating resources and initiatives.

On February 12th 2009, Government, Regions and Autonomous Provinces signed an agreement aimed at activating actions to support income, skills and competences and the share and transfer of funds supporting social shock absorbers, widening the number of beneficiaries (productive sectors, enterprises and also socio-economic actors not considered in the national legislation). In some cases the funds might be integrated by the Joint interprofessional funds (see chapter 9 for a more detailed description of the interprofessional funds).

Furthermore, it has been established a “Social Fund for employment and training” (a social shock absorber) whose resources are addressed to “training activities and income support”, with a combination of active and passive policies. Modalities of resources allocation of this Social Fund take into consideration different situations of local job markets, foreseeing the possibility to modulate and differentiate measures also on the basis of financial partnerships at local or regional level or also to compensate through the use of European funds.

On February 12th 2009, Government, Regions and Autonomous Provinces signed an agreement aimed at activating actions to support income, skills and competences and the share and transfer of funds supporting social shock absorbers, widening the number of beneficiaries (productive sectors, enterprises and also socio-economic actors not considered in the national legislation). In some cases the funds might be integrated by the Joint interprofessional funds.

The access to measures for income support is related on the declaration of immediate availability to work or to undertake a path of retraining courses, thus strictly connecting a plan of professional training with measures of active labour market policies.

The Ministry of Labour, within the Unit of Employment Protection, developed a proposal for accompanying and supporting measures for implementing an Agreement State - Regions. The proposal “Active policies to face crisis within ESF as strengthening process for human capital skills” is a guideline for methods and actions that can be implemented at the regional level by the different institutional actors involved in the planning of the interventions and funds allocation. The regional institutional actors are organised, at regional level, in the Institutional Boards (*Tavoli istituzionali*) with Regions and social partners, formulating and validating agreements for conceding social shock absorbers and management plans (for companies, districts, territories, etc.) for the relaunch of productive activity and safeguard of employment production, thus individuating an articulated system of measures and tools.

Active policies actions assume as their reference target people excluded or suspended

from the labour market, taking into consideration the valorisation of active policies based on different practices and learning model not exclusively related to conventional courses. To this end, many concrete actions have been set up:

- ad-hoc training modules, composed by a set of integrated tools which can be synthesized in *"Dote personale di attivazione"* , which is a virtual credit enabling single beneficiaries to accede services for the development of acquired skills and defined according to a *"Patto di attivazione del percorso"* (Start up pathway statement);
- development (acquirement, maintenance or updating) of individual skills for an effective employability in the enterprise system;
- increasing the so-called key competences (information technology, languages, management, social and organizational competences, support to enterprise) through the provision of short "kits" including actions like:
 1. supporting employment;
 2. module-based pathways even blended and complementary;
 3. professional training managed by the enterprise itself;
 4. specific training plans set together with enterprises and tutorial actions based on consultancy or training to promote self- employment;
- strengthening the role of employment centres as crucial node for the re-location of those workers who are the most exposed to the crisis, thus supporting them and maintaining their skills updated. Employment centres will also have a fundamental role for supporting active labour market policies for individual workers.

3. LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR IVET

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	MAIN LAWS	MAIN SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE LAW
LOWER AND UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL	Law no.53/2003	Reform law of the education and training system
	Financial law 2007 (Law no.296/2006)	It foresees mainly what follows: extension of compulsory education to ten years, starting from school year 2007-2008, and extension to 16 years of age for access to the labour market
	Law no.40/2007	It provides for the postponement of the reform of the second cycle in school year 2009-2010
	Law no.1/2007	It reforms the state exam at the end of the upper secondary education (former <i>esame di maturità</i>)
	Law. No. 169/2008	Reorganisation of school time at primary level
FIRST-LEVEL INITIAL VOCATIONAL LEVEL	Italian Constitution	It assigns exclusive competences to the Regions on vocational education and training
	Framework law no.845/1978	While waiting for the implementation decrees of 2001 Constitutional reform law, this framework law represents the legislative reference for the vocational education and training system
	Law no.196/1997	It reorganises the vocational training system
	Law no.53/2003	It foresees the fulfilment of the right/duty (<i>diritto/dovere</i>) to continue their training within the education system for at least 12 years or up to the obtainment of a qualification (three years) within the vocational education and training system within 18 years of age
	Law no.30/2003 (Reform law 'Biagi') and Legislative decree no.276/2003	They foresee the introduction of three types of apprenticeship
	Financial law 2007 (Law no.296/2006)	It raises the work access age from 15 to 16 years of age, and it foresees the length of compulsory education up to 10 years (16 years of age), to be fulfilled at school or in the three years vocational education and training pathways. The right/duty to education and training is still valid
	Ministerial decree no.139/2007	It provides for the raising of the length of compulsory education up to 10 years

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	MAIN LAWS	MAIN SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE LAW
POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING: HIGHER TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM (IFTS AND ITS COURSES)	Law no.144/1999	It institutes the Higher technical education and training (Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore - IFTS) courses
	Interministerial decree no.436/2000	It regulates the Higher technical education and training system (IFTS)courses
	Agreement of the Unified Conference 19 November 2002	It approves the minimum standards for basic and cross-curricular competences
	Agreement of the Unified Conference - 29 April 2004	It establishes the minimum standards for the technical-professional competences for the 37 professional profiles defined at national level by a previous Agreement of the Unified Conference (1 August 2002)
	Agreement of the Unified Conference - 25 November 2004	It establishes Formative centres of Higher technical education and training system (IFTS)
	Agreement of the Unified Conference - 16 March 2006	It defines the minimum standards of the technical-professional competences related to new professional profiles with regard to transport services
	Financial law 2007 (Law no.296/2006)	It foresees the re-organisation of the Higher level technical education and training (IFTS) to strengthen the high level vocational training and to improve the technical-scientific sector
	Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 25 January 2008	It establishes guidelines for the new organisation of the Higher technical education and training system and the institution of the Higher technical institutes (ITS)

3.2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: IVET

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

- Vocational training under the responsibility of the Regional Authorities;
- Vocational and technical education (i.e. Istituti tecnici, Istituti professionali, Istituti d'arte) provided in the educational system under State's responsibility.

The situation after the approval of the Constitutional Law 3/2001⁶ is that: the State retains exclusive jurisdiction only over the “general regulations on education”, including vocational education and technical education, as well as the right to determine the “minimum levels of services”, i.e. the minimum common requisites with which the regional systems (included the vocational training ones) must comply, and to maintain relationships with the European Union. The Regional Authorities, due to their exclusive jurisdiction, can now legislate independently on vocational training and not on the basis of principles defined by the central government. The three Trilateral Agreements signed in the 1990s (1993, 1996 and 1998) especially highlight the relevance of co-ordination in vocational training, and in employment policies in general; this co-ordination is considered as a basic instrument for the programming and definition of strategies for action. All the main legislation issued in 1990s originates from these agreements⁷.

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

TABLE 1 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING	
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY AND RESEARCH	Definition of the general principles of the educational system Definition of university and research policies
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Definition and guarantee of the “essential levels of services” for the vocational training system
REGIONS AND AUTONOMOUS PROVINCES	Exclusive jurisdiction for VT (definition and implementation of strategies)
OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES (PROVINCES AND MUNICIPALITIES):	Definition of plans for the implementation of VT strategies when delegated by the Regions
SOCIAL PARTNERS	Management and programming of active employment policies, especially in the vocational training field. VT providers

⁶ *Constitutional Law 3/2001 transfers to the various Regions the formulation of their own statutes. As a consequence, every Region, provided that it will be in accordance with the Constitution, decides its own form of government and the fundamental principles of its organisation and functioning.*

⁷ *Starting from Law 236/93, which recognizes the key role of co-ordination in the identification of needs, training periods and continuing-training actions, and Law 196/97 conducted to the reform of the entire vocational training system to the introduction of compulsory education and the new pathway of higher technical education and training.*

TABLE 2 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS BY TYPE OF ROLE		
	RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS	TYPE OF ROLE (ADVISORY/DECISION-MAKING, DIRECT/INDIRECT)
NATIONAL LEVEL	Definition of the institutional framework <i>Fondi interprofessionali</i> (joint multi-sectoral funds)	ADVISORY DIRECT
REGIONAL LEVEL	Definition of the institutional framework <i>Fondi interprofessionali</i> (joint multi-sectoral funds) Provision of learning opportunity	ADVISORY DIRECT INDIRECT
ENTERPRISE LEVEL	Definition of training activities Elaboration of training plans	ADVISORY DIRECT

Furthermore, Schools, University, Vocational Training Centres and the world of work can build specific consortia in order to conduct IFTS (Higher Technical Education and Training) pathways (please refer to chapter 4).

3.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CVET

The right to «training and vocational improvement of workers» is expressly set by the Italian Constitution (1948); in defining the distribution of responsibilities between the State and the Regions, it assigns these latter with exclusive jurisdiction in the vocational training field.

Reform law 53/2003 introduced 'lifelong learning' among the principles and directive criteria of the education and training system. For its implementation, the reform law provided a programmatic plan to fund 'interventions for the development of higher level technical education and training and adult education'.

The local training bodies have consultancy and promotion functions. Following the guidelines established at national level, the Regional Authorities' tasks include the identification of medium- and long-term objectives through the analysis of training needs, activity-administrative management, monitoring and evaluation of the training-activities' efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, the Regional Authorities are exclusively responsible for both initial and continuing-vocational training, and, on occasions, this power is exercised by delegating or transferring a number of functions to the Provincial Authorities.

A first step towards recognition of training as a strategic resource for all people, in particular for young people, workers, and enterprises, is the approval of Law 236/93, which allowed launching the structuring of a national continuing-training system. With the Labour Agreement signed by the Government and the Social Partners in September 1996, a real strategy of innovation of the system was envisaged. With specific reference to initial vocational education and training, among the Agreement's objectives are worthy of note:

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

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

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

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

The next step was the introducing of Law 53/00 (recognizing the right to training leave for workers) and Law 388/00 (amended by Law 289/02) which established the *Fondi interprofessionali* (joint interprofessional funds) supporting continuing training. Financed by a contribution of 0.30% of the wage bill paid by employers, these funds support company, sectoral and regional training plans, supplementing the regional authorities' work in the continuing training system. These funds are managed by the social partners and supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

3.4 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET

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

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

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

The administrative structure for continuous training is composed as follows:

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	National level
MINISTRY OF LABOUR	National level
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS, AUTONOMOUS PROVINCES AND THE SOCIAL PARTNERS	Regional Level
PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS	Local level

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

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

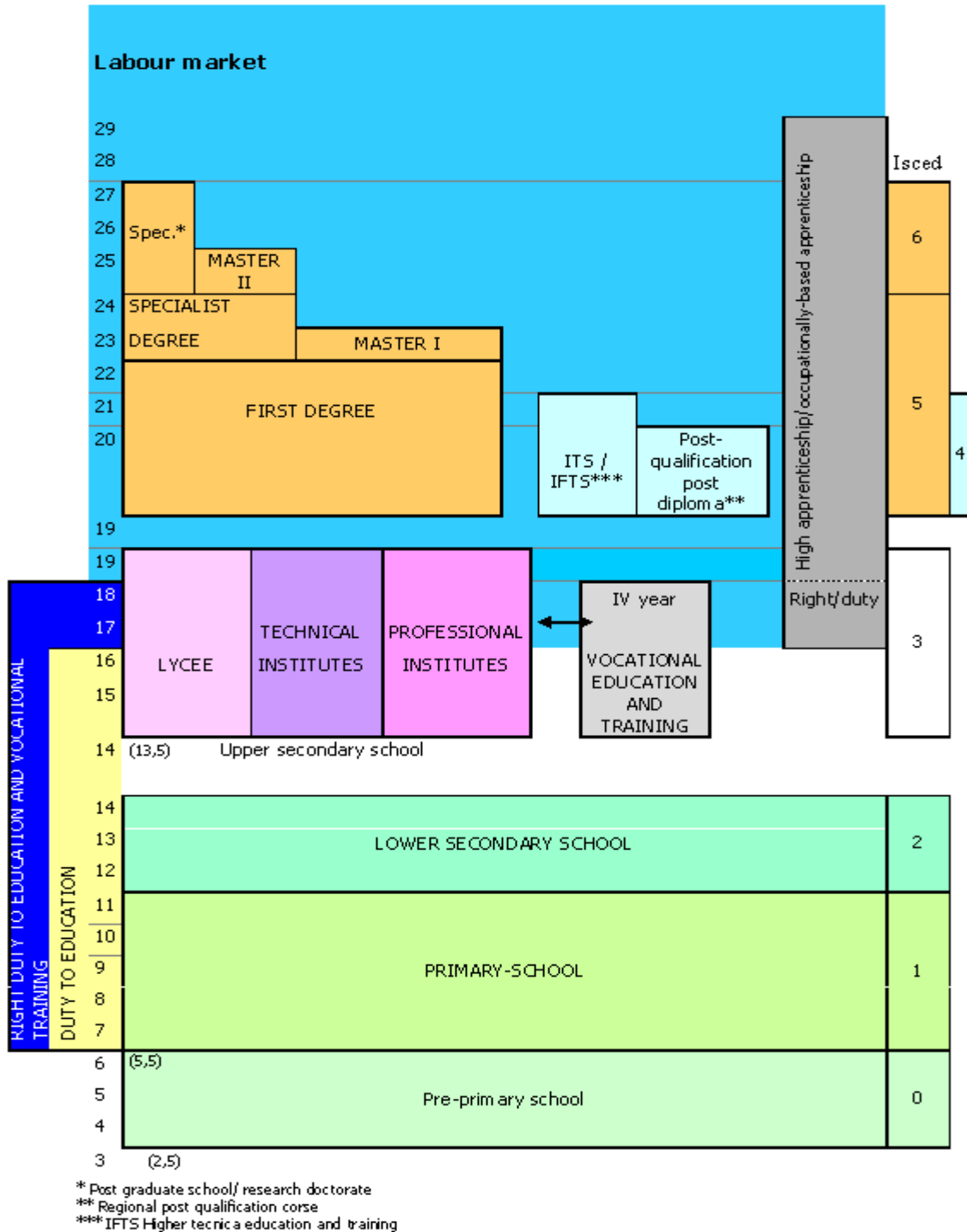
- public and private enterprises and organisations, programming training activities for their employees;
- training bodies and agencies as well as accredited organisations (*enti di formazione ed agenzie formative accreditate*);
- joint bodies, trade associations (social partners);
- professional associations and professional registers;
- institutional organisms (universities, employment centres, etc.);
- institutional bodies (universities, employment centres, etc.).

4. INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4.1 BACKGROUND TO THE INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Italian education and training system

(October 2009)



Source: ISFOL

The reform of the Italian educational system started with Law no.53/2003, since then the education system has been subject to various changes; further amendments have been introduced, for example the extension of compulsory education up to 16 years of age,

some other issues are still under debate, such as the reform of the second cycle (a reorganisation of this level of education is expected in the near future, also by way of new legislative dispositions).

Education is compulsory from 6 up to 16 years of age⁸. However, students have the right/duty (*diritto/dovere*) to continue their training within the education system for at least 12 years or up to the obtainment of a qualification (three years) within the vocational education and training system within 18 years of age.

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Italian educational system is divided into two cycles of education: the first cycle of education (*primo ciclo di istruzione*) is composed by primary school (pupils aged 6-11) and by the lower secondary school (*scuola secondaria di secondo grado*), which is attended by pupils from 11 to 14 years of age.

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL (GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL)

The *Moratti Reform* (Law 53/2003 reforming the education and training system) has organized the second cycle in two channels:

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

The second cycle of education (*secondo ciclo di istruzione*) includes the following types of institutes:

- *Liceo classico* (classical upper secondary school);
- *Liceo scientifico* (scientific upper secondary school);
- *Liceo linguistico* (linguistic upper secondary school);
- *Liceo socio-psico pedagogico* (upper secondary school with a sociological-psychological- and pedagogical orientation).

⁸ The Constitution establishes that education is compulsory up to 14 years of age. The length of compulsory education has been prolonged up to 16 years of age in school year 2007/2008, according to Financial law for the year 2007.

They are attended by pupils aged 14-19, and the *Liceo artistico* (artistic upper secondary school) attended by pupils aged 14-18/19⁹. These are the schools foreseen for general upper secondary education.

Vocational upper secondary education includes:

- technical education, i.e. *istituto tecnico* (technical school), attended by pupils aged 14-19;
- vocational education, i.e. *istituto professionale* (vocational schools) pupils aged 14-19; and
- *istituti d'arte* (art schools), attended by pupils aged 14-17/19.

Both in the *licei* and in the technical institutes, the overall length of study is 5 years, except for the *liceo artistico*, which offers a course of study of 4 years plus an additional year. Vocational institutes offer courses lasting either 3 or 5 years.

According to D.Lgs. 297/1994, education offered by the *licei* specialising in classical and scientific studies aims at preparing students to university studies, whereas education offered by the *liceo* specialising in arts subjects aims at teaching art, independently from its industrial applications. Financial law 2007, which has provided for the extension of compulsory education up to 10 years (16 years of age), has at the same time established that the first two years of upper secondary education are aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and competences common to all types of education and training (general and vocational). These knowledge and competences have been included in the Decree no.139/2007, issued for the implementation of the extension of compulsory education and are organised into 4 'cultural areas': languages, mathematical, scientific-technological, historical-social. Knowledge and competences are then the basis for building learning pathways aimed at acquiring key competences that can help students for their adult lives and for the lifelong learning. Key competences are: learning to learn, planning, communicating, collaborating and participating, acting autonomously, problem solving, creating connections and relations, acquiring and interpreting information. According to the same Decree, technical education aims at preparing to carry out technical and administrative functions as well as some professions in the trade, services, industry, building, agriculture, navigation and aeronautics sectors.

Vocational education and training system, for which the regional authorities are responsible, lasts at least three years, and leading to the award of a *certificato di qualifica professionale* (vocational qualification certificate) recognised nationally and within Europe. The qualification can be used to enter the labour market or to enter post-qualification courses leading to the award of an upper secondary vocational diploma. This diploma is required for entry into pathways of *istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore* (IFTS - higher technical education and training) or, after attending a supplementary year, for entry into universities

Vocational education aims at providing a specific theoretical and practical preparation to carry out qualified functions in the trade, services, industry, artisanship, agriculture and navigation sectors. Art education aims at preparing to artistic work and production according to the local industry tradition and typical raw materials.

⁹ Courses last four years, but it's worth it to note that almost all *licei* in arts subjects offer now a five-year course of study on an experimental basis which allows the enrolment in the university without having to attend the one-year complementary course.

As for the redefinition at the national level of the aims and general objectives, it is necessary for both educational pathways (general and vocational upper secondary education), to wait for the possible amendments to D. Lgs. 226/2005¹⁰.

At the end of the upper secondary school (general and vocational upper secondary education), students take a state examination. Those, who successfully pass the examination obtain an upper secondary school leaving diploma, which allows them to continue their studies at a higher level.

The certificate mentions the branch and duration of their studies, the subjects and courses included in the curriculum in addition to the total duration of the course, the grade awarded in written tests and in the oral examination, along with their school credits and training credits. The training credits are awarded based on the pupil's experience outside of school in different aspects of social life.

The certification models are drawn up by the Ministry of education. Diplomas and certificates are written in four Community languages so that they can be understood in the different countries of the EU.

INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Initial Vocational Training (*formazione professionale iniziale* - FPI), is offered by the recognised formative agencies operating nationwide. The FPI provides for:

- First-level (or basic) training pathways, addressed to those who have completed the first cycle of education (2.4.). These paths have a three-year length and lead to the obtainment of a regional qualification certificate or to the qualification diploma;
- Second-level training pathways addressed to those who have completed the upper secondary level of education or who have obtained a first-level vocational qualification;
- Apprenticeship.

Law 30/2003 has introduced some reforms in the apprenticeships system, now organised as follows:

- an apprenticeship aimed at the fulfilment of the *diritto/dovere* to education and training: young people who have reached 16 years of age can be enrolled for all the fields of activity. The contract lasts a maximum of three years and is aimed at helping students obtain a vocational qualification;
- a profession-oriented apprenticeship: students aged between 18 and 29 years can be enrolled.

Depending on the type of qualification to be obtained, the collective contracts define the duration of the contract which, however, cannot be less than two years or more than six years. There is also a minimum quota of 120 hours of formal worker training (internal and external); an apprenticeship enabling the student to obtain a second level diploma (within

¹⁰ Legislative Decree 226/2005 and the annexed National guidelines have redefined the aims and general objectives of the educational process and the specific learning objectives of the *licei*; however, this Decree has not come into effect and is still waiting for possible amendments.

the Initial vocational training) or higher education qualifications. It is addressed to students between 18 and 29 years of age.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION (NON TERTIARY)

Post-secondary education and training is organised both in the higher technical education and training system and in the second-level vocational training courses managed by the Regions.

1. HIGHER TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

The Higher technical education and training (IFTS) courses have been instituted through Law of 17 May 1999, no. 144, and are regulated through Interministerial decree of 31 October 2000, no. 436.

Based on the above mentioned provisions, Regions plan the institution of IFTS courses in order to assure integration among educational systems, on the basis of guidelines defined by a National Committee and approved by the Unified Conference.

In 2008, the guidelines for the reorganisation of the whole higher technical education and training system have been issued. This reorganisation is meant at spreading the higher technical and scientific culture and at supporting the development and competitiveness of the economic and productive Italian system. One of the main goals is to make both young people and adults obtain a higher level technical specialisation, together with specific cultural knowledge coming from both the private and public labour market, and referred in particular to small and medium enterprises and to those sectors that are more interested by technological innovations and internationalization of markets.

According to this recent reorganisation, there are two types of offer within the higher technical educational and training system:

- the formative offer and the programmes organised by the Higher Technical Institutes (Istituti Tecnici Superiori, ITS) leading to a higher level technical diploma in one of the following areas: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies in life, new technologies for the 'made in Italy', innovative technologies for arts and cultural activities, ICT. Courses last 4 semesters for a total of 1800/2000 hours and, for specific subjects, up to a maximum of 6 semesters;
- the formative offer of the IFTS courses organised by the Regions. Courses last 2 semesters, for a total of 800/1000 hours, and lead to a higher technical specialisation certificate.

2. SECOND LEVEL OF INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING- *THE REGIONAL VET COURSES*

They are managed by the Regional Authorities and aim at providing students with specialized training. The curricula are based on vocational skills having a high theoretical, technical, technological and managerial content, also through practical exercises and on-the-job training periods. Post-secondary training can be accessed by those having an upper secondary school-leaving certificate or having an upper secondary-education level, generally unemployed, and wishing to obtain a certificate or a vocational qualification immediately valid on the labor market.

4.2 IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Generally speaking IVET is not provided at this level. Lower secondary school, of three-

year duration, has only one education pathway common to all students aged between 11 and 14. The curricula include above all general subjects and have not work-based training. Students learn a second European foreign language and further study of ICTs. Admission is free and is subject to the attainment of a primary-school certificate. Legally recognized private lower-secondary schools are entitled to State subsidies and generally require parents to pay tuition fees. Following the schools' organizational and teaching autonomy provided by Legislative Decree 112/98, lessons can be spread over a period of 5 or 6 days per week, usually in the morning. It is also possible to modify both the duration of individual lessons and the weekly timetable depending on local needs and on teaching and educational programmes. On parental request, disabled children are entitled to a support teacher.

At the end of the three-year cycle, students are required to take a State examination in order to obtain a lower secondary school-leaving certificate (*Diploma di Licenza Media*) and have to continue their studies by enrolling in and attending upper secondary education.

4.3 IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

Law 53/2003 and D.Lgs. 226/2005 separated the *licei* system and the vocational education and training system respectively under the state and the regions responsibility.

D.Lgs. 226/2005 established, in fact, that 'All vocational qualifications are under the regions and autonomous provinces responsibility and are exclusively released by the schools and training institutes of the vocational education and training system'. It establishes also that the two systems have equal dignity and that '*it is granted the possibility to pass from the licei system to the vocational education and training system and viceversa, through specific teaching initiatives aimed at offering an adequate preparation for the new study path*'.

Specific agreements of the State/Regions unified Conference, upon proposals of the Minister of education in accordance with the Minister of labour and welfare, should have defined correspondence and recognition procedures for credits obtained both in the *licei* study and in the vocational education and training in view of the possibility of transition between these two systems.

However, in the meantime, Law 40/2007 has established that the second cycle is made up of the upper secondary education system (*licei*, technical institutes and vocational institutes) and the vocational education and training system.

Furthermore, law allows 15 to 18 year-old students to attend second-level courses through alternation of study and work periods, under the responsibility of schools or training institutions, on the basis of agreements with enterprises or associations of professional classes, public or private bodies, or to attend integrated courses organised at vocational education and training institutes offering study programmes planned by the two systems together. Following the extension of the length of compulsory education to 10 years, up to 16 years of age, the minimum age required to enter the labour market is now fixed at 16 years of age and, therefore, this is also the minimum age limit for starting alternance training activities.

MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL / ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • catering • wellness • tourist promotion and reception • installation • maintenance of electric installations • Mechanic 	II level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% cultural subjects (key competences for citizenship, maths, scientific, technological subjects) • 60 % vocational training subjects (technological-vocational skills, stage, laboratories) 	Depending on the kind of pathways (if provided by schools or training agencies)	1100 hours per year	It is made possible by several tools and mechanism at National level, enabling students to transfer to other pathways, maintaining credits earned.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Schools offering vocational secondary education are the following:

- **Technical institutes:** their duration is subdivided into a common basic two-year cycle and a three year cycle with more branches of study and specialisations teaching programs are established by the decrees that authorised experimental projects and are based on strengthening the study of humanities, scientific and technical subjects to the detriment of practical exercises. Programs of the two-year period are the same and change in the three year period according to the different specialisations; subjects of the two-year period, except from religion or alternative subject (optional subject), are Italian, history , foreign language, mathematics, physics, natural sciences, chemistry and geography, and some specialisation subjects (for example, technical drawing in the Industrial technical institute) and practical exercises. As for the three-year period, the subjects typical of the branch of study will be added to the subjects of the two-year period; weekly timetable foresees 32-38 hours, according to the different classes and branches of study.
- **Vocational institutes:** their duration is subdivided into a three-year cycle, leading to obtain a qualification diploma, and, according to Law of 27 October 1969, no. 754, a post qualification two-year cycle (4th and 5th years) that grants admission to the university.

Subjects are divided into:

a) common area: Italian, History, Foreign Language, Law and Economics, Mathematics and Computer Science, Earth Science and Biology, Physical Education, Religion (upon request), for a total of 22 hours per week in the first and second year, 12-15 hours per week in the third year; as far as history is concerned, D.M. of 4 November 1996, no. 682, establishes that 'the knowledge of the events occurred in the current century will be studied in depth'. D.M. - of 31 January 197 has then amended the study programmes of the first three years leading to the qualification and of the post-qualification two years; the same decree also amended the study programme of Italian in the third year of the post-qualification courses;

b) specialisation area: technological and vocational subjects for 14 hours per week in the first and second class, 21-24 hours per week in the third class; in-depth area: 4 hours per week in each class. As the weekly timetable has been reduced from 40 to 36 hours, schools will have to adopt a flexible organisation of their teachings according to their autonomy.

Curricula outline standards and contents for the common area and the specialisation area, while teachers have the broadest planning powers, since teaching must be focused on the goals of the institutes. The latter depend on the vocational training sector, as well as on local reality and on the evolving cultural, economic and productive traditions. The in-depth area is entrusted to the autonomous planning of each school in order to reach the general goals established. All students must attend compulsory courses, but the class groups can be divided based on specific training targets.

Arts institutes: they foresee courses lasting three years and structured in sections depending on the art specialisation's: ornamental painting, ornamental sculpture, graphics, wood, ceramic and metal applied arts, etc.. At the end of these courses students obtain the certificate of Master of Art. Applied art courses include practice in the laboratory. Law 27 October 1969, no. 754 has instituted in arts institutes further courses lasting two years, granting admission to University, upon attainment of the upper secondary school leaving certificate in applied arts. Specific teaching programs have not been established at national level. They are elaborated at school level.

INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Initial Vocational Training (FPI), is offered by the recognised formative agencies operating nationwide. The FPI provides for:

- First-level (or basic) training pathways, addressed to those who have completed the first cycle of education. These paths have a three-year length and lead to the obtainment of a regional qualification certificate or to the qualification diploma;
- Second-level training pathways addressed to those who have completed the upper secondary level of education or who have obtained a first-level vocational qualification;
- Apprenticeship.

FIRST LEVEL INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

First-level initial vocational training (FPI), which is under the competence of the Regions, is intended to provide a qualification to those who have finished the first cycle of education and want to fulfil the compulsory education (16 years of age) within the vocational training, or to acquire a three-year qualification by the 18th year of age

(fulfilment of the diritto/dovere). Three-year courses are organised according to two types:

- vocational training courses organised by accredited training agencies and aimed at helping students obtain a vocational qualification certificate. Teachers are employed by the training agencies;
- education courses combined with vocational training modules organised by schools and aimed at the obtainment of the qualifications required by the mainstream education system.

SECOND LEVEL INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Second-level vocational training courses aim at acquiring vocational skills with a high theoretical, technical and managerial content, also through practical work and stages in enterprises. These are full-time courses leading to a second-level vocational qualification.

Italy has a strong vocationally oriented upper secondary education system: around 60% of upper secondary students are enrolled pre-vocational or vocational programmes, notably higher than the OECD average rate of 48%¹¹; as also showed in the table 1 below for general and prevocational programme. Even though historically significantly lagging in terms of the level of education of the population, Italy has made important progress in recent years: the number of students enrolled in Italy's school system - from elementary to upper secondary school - was up by 0.5% for the 2006-2007 academic year. In terms of macro areas, the northern regions experienced a very significant increase of 1.8%; the increase in the central regions was about half of that, or 0.8%; and in the southern regions, the enrolment fell by 0.9%. The growth of the school-age population in the northern and central regions is related to immigration (which has affected the more developed areas of the country).

TABLE 1 - STUDENTS IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION 2006							
	TOTAL ISCED3	ISCED3GEN	%	ISCED3PV	%	ISCED3VOC	%
EUROPEAN UNION (27 COUNTRIES)	22205390	10723395	48	1185480	5	10296515	46
EUROPEAN UNION (25 COUNTRIES)	20782183	10183168	49	1185480	6	9413535	45
ITALY	2767341	1091782	39	985186	36	690373	25

Source of information: Eurostat - Date of extraction 26 February 2009

¹¹ Education at glance 2008, OECD, Paris, 2008, p. 22 (Briefing Note Italy)

4.4 APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL / ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
Apprenticeship for the fulfilment of the right-duty to education and training	All	3	Variable	Variable	3 years	On the basis of credits recognized
Higher apprenticeship	All	4-5	Variable	Variable	Variable	On the basis of credits recognized
Profession-oriented apprenticeship	All	3-4-5	Variable	Variable	3-6 years	On the basis of the credits recognised

Law 30/2003 has introduced some reforms in the apprenticeships system, now organized as follows:

An apprenticeship aimed at the fulfillment of the right-duty (*diritto/dovere*) to education and training: young people who have reached 16 years of age can be enrolled for all the fields of activity. The contract lasts a maximum of three years and is aimed at helping students obtain a vocational qualification; at the current moment this kind of apprenticeship needs to be implemented by regional administration. This apprenticeship is not yet available for businesses and young people, as the Regions and Autonomous Provinces do not have issued the specific regulation through an agreement with the Ministry of Education. Therefore the apprenticeship contract for those aged less than 18 years is the one designed by the previous Law No. 196/1997 and relevant implementing decrees.

An apprenticeship enabling the student to obtain a second level diploma (within the Initial vocational training) or higher education qualifications. It is addressed to students between 18 and 29 years of age.

A profession-oriented apprenticeship: students aged between 18 and 29 years can be enrolled¹². Depending on the type of qualification to be obtained, the collective contracts define the duration of the contract which, however, cannot be less than two years or more than six years. There is also a minimum quota of 120 hours of formal worker training (internal and external); This apprenticeship although the contract is not yet available for

¹² For further details, please see: ISFOL, *L'apprendistato fra regolamentazioni regionali e discipline contrattuali. Monitoraggio sul 2005-2006*, Roma, Isfol, 2006.

all companies over the whole national territory, is being gradually implemented both through regulations the collective contracting.

For all the different types of apprenticeships, the definition of the training profiles is referred to the Regions and the institutions involved, according to the type of apprenticeship (Ministries, social partners and universities). The student's Individual Training Plan must be enclosed in the employment contract. This document includes the programme of training that the apprentice will follow throughout the contractual period. In addition, there must be a tutor with sufficient training and competence to monitor the apprentice's progress within the company.

4.5 OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

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

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

Post-secondary non-tertiary education and training is organised both in the higher technical education and training system and in the second-level vocational training courses managed by Regions.

In Italy, two different training pathways are available at post-secondary level, (ISCED 4) within the higher technical education and training system, those offered by the Higher Technical Institutes (*Istituti Tecnici Superiori - ITS*), and those offered by the Higher Technical Education and Training (*Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore - IFTS*).

The above mentioned pathways have been recently reformed through Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 25 January 2008. In 2008, the guidelines for the reorganisation of the whole higher technical education and training system have been issued. This reorganisation is meant at spreading the higher technical and scientific culture and at supporting the development and competitiveness of the economic and productive Italian system. One of the main goals is to make both young people and adults obtain a higher level technical specialisation, together with specific cultural knowledge coming from both the private and public labour market, and referred in particular to small and medium enterprises and to those sectors that are more interested by technological innovations and internationalization of markets.

To access courses organised both by the ITS and within the IFTS system, the possession of an upper secondary school leaving certificate is required. Access to the IFTS courses is allowed also for those who are admitted to the last grade of a liceo, as well as to those who do not hold an upper secondary school certificate, upon recognition of their previously acquired competences (school education, training courses, working experience, etc.).

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The possession of an upper secondary school leaving certificate diploma is required to access the courses organised both by the *ITS* (Higher Technical Institutes) and within the *IFTS* system.

Access to the *IFTS* courses is allowed also to applicants in possession of an upper secondary

technical qualification (four-year courses), to those admitted to the last grade of a *liceo*, as well as to those who are not in possession of an upper secondary school certificate, upon recognition of their competences (school education, training courses, working experiences, etc.), acquired after the fulfilment of compulsory education.

MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM AGE OF STUDENTS

The courses provided by ITS as well as the *IFTS* courses are addressed both to young people and adults too. Courses are not organised according to age levels.

REGISTRATION AND TUITION FEES

IFTS courses and the ITS courses are free of charge and financed through the European Social Fund.

MAIN TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND CORRESPONDING LEVELS OF STUDY

The professional profiles related to the various pathways have a high level of cultural knowledge, basic skills, cross-curricular as well as deep technical-vocational skills corresponding to the IV EEC level (Decision 85/368/EEC). According to the reorganisation of Higher Technical Institutes (*ITS*), the courses offered by these institutes aim at meeting the formative needs referred to the following 6 technological areas: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies in life, new technologies the 'made in Italy', innovative technologies for arts and cultural activities, ICT.

IFTS courses are planned by the Regions, which are responsible for the training programmes.

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMMES AND CORRESPONDING LEVELS OF STUDY

The body responsible for the training can organize part of the course by way of distance learning programmes.

CURRICULA ELEMENTS (PLACE OF DELIVERY, SPECIFIC COMPETENCE-BASED SKILLS TO BE DEVELOPED)

ITS courses can be established by the following institutes: a technical or vocational state or non-state upper secondary school, located in the province where the training is organised; a training institute accredited by the Region for the organisation of this kind of training, located in the province which organises the training; a firm/enterprise of the professional sector related to the Higher Technical Institute; a university department or other body in the scientific and technological research area, and a local authority (province, commune, town, consortium of communes in mountain areas).

IFTS courses are planned and provided by minimum four educational institutes: school, vocational training provider, university, enterprise or another public or private subject, formally associated in the form of a consortium.

Programmes of study of both pathways refer to common competences to be acquired like linguistic, scientific and technological competences, or juridical/legal and economic/financial competences, organizational competences, and competences related to communication at different level, and technical-professional competences related to the specific higher technical professional profile, organised on the basis of the

European Union indicators for certificates and qualifications.

The higher technical education and training system offers courses aiming mainly to develop professional specialisations at post-secondary level which meet the requirements of the labour market, both in the public and private sectors, in particular for what concerns the organisation of services, local bodies and productive sectors undergoing deep technological innovations and by the market's internationalisation according to the priorities indicated by the economic planning at regional level.

ASSESSMENT

The courses end with a final assessment of the competences acquired. Final assessment is carried out by examination boards made up of representatives of school, university, vocational training and experts from the labour market. The Regions can define how to set up the examination boards and they are also responsible for the issue of general indications related to the final assessment of the acquired competences and to the relevant certification, in order to issue titles/qualifications to be recognized at national and European level.

CERTIFICATION

According to the recent reorganisation of this sector, courses offered by Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) lead to the attainment of a Diploma of high level technician, while *IFTS* courses, organised by the Regions, lead to the attainment of a Certificate of high level technical specialisation. Both of them give access to public competitions.

The reorganisation of the system for Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTS) which constitutes a measure aimed at strengthening post-secondary training not of an academic nature; the value of the professional-technical process is also being enhanced by the contribution of the educational hubs set up by the Regions to ensure acquisition of the skills needed for local economic development¹³.

4.7 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

The whole higher education sector in Italy underwent a reform process to align itself with the European model outlined through the following European agreements: Sorbonne (1998), Bologna (1999), Prague (2001), Berlin (2003) and Bergen (2005).

Tertiary education is provided by various public and private institutions and consisting of the university sector and the non university sector.

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

The university system provides:

- *Corso di Laurea* (university-degree course), of a three-year duration. In order to attend a degree course, students are required to provide a five-year upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*Diploma di Scuola Superiore*) or an equivalent certificate obtained abroad;

¹³ See Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 25 January 2008, containing the "guidelines" for implementing the reorganisation.

- *Corso di Laurea Specialistica* (specialist university-degree course), of a two-year duration, is a pathway following a degree course aiming at providing students with specialized knowledge and skills enabling them to practice specific professions requiring a higher qualification level.

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

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

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

Scheme of the University System in Italy (Ministerial Decree 270/04)*

CORSI DI STUDIO DEGREE-COURSES	TITOLI ACCADEMICI DEGREES	CFU CREDITS EARNED	ANNI/ YEARS
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1° ciclo / 1st cycle - undergraduate studies/students

Corso di Laurea - CL Laurea degree course	Laurea-L 1st degree / <i>Laurea</i> degree	180	3
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2° ciclo / 2nd cycle - graduate studies/students

Corso di Laurea Magistrale - CLM 2nd (Laurea) degree course	Laurea Magistrale - LM 2nd degree (Magistrale Degree)	120	2
Corso di Specializzazione di 1° livello-CS1 1st (level) Specialisation degree course	Diploma di Specializzazione di 1° livello -DS1 1st (level) Specialisation degree	120- 180	2-3
Corso di Master Universitario di 1° livello- CMU1 1st (level) University Master degree course	Master Universitario di 1° livello MU1 1st (level) University Master degree	60+	1+

3° ciclo / 3rd cycle - postgraduate studies/students

Corso di Dottorato di Ricerca-CDR Research Doctorate programme	<i>Dottorato di Ricerca-DR</i> Research Doctorate degree		3+
Corso di Specializzazione di 2° livello-CS2 2nd (level) Specialisation degree course	Diploma di Specializzazione di 2° livello-DS2 2nd (level) Specialisation degree	60- 300	1-5
Corso di Master Universitario di 2° livello- CMU2 2nd (level) University Master degree course	Master Universitario di 2° livello -MU2 2nd (level) University Master degree	60+	1+

* Source: Crui – Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane (Conference Rectors Italian Universities)

Italy has made great efforts in expanding tertiary education in recent years doubling the graduation rate from 19% to 39%; the increase can largely be attributed to the 2002 reform that now allows university students enrolled in long programmes to obtain a degree after three years study. As for most OECD countries, the largest concentration of university qualification awarded in 2006 in the combined field of Social sciences, business, law and services followed by humanities, arts and education (22%) and then engineering, manufacturing and construction (15%). The employment advantage for those with a tertiary education remains strong in Italy particularly among older workers but also a key factor explaining employment and earnings advantages for those with tertiary education, is the demand for skilled individuals.

5. CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

5.1 FORMAL EDUCATION

5.1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

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

The reference context of lifelong learning (systems of education, training and labour) has been recently affected by wide-ranging reform processes. An important milestone in this process, has been the definition of a national-level legislative pathway supporting the continuing training, with the issue of Law 236/93, and the start of the European Social Fund 'Objective 4'. In particular, Labour-Ministry provisions implementing Law 236 consider as continuing-training activities those addressed to employed or unemployed adults, which workers may choose to participate in, or those organised by enterprises in order to adapt or improve expertise and skills linked to the technological and organisational innovation of the production processes. (*please for further details on legislations refer to chapter 3.3*).

The "Continuing training" (all the initiatives for retraining and updating skills) represents the majority of training initiatives for adults. The Central and local Administrations and Social Partners provide financial support both for training programs organized by the enterprises and for individual initiatives of workers(*please for further details on financing please refer to chapter 9.2*).

Despite the complex structure and the fragmentation of the learning pathways, the Italian education and training system is "competence-based". This means that the system uses a unique language for the description of standards (occupational standards) to be used for defining the vocational needs and for planning learning supply.

From this perspective, the proper place to build an integrated system education/training/labour market and orientated to give a concrete contribution to the achievement of the lifelong learning is represented by the *National Board for the definition of a National System of Standards*, set up on 2006 and promoted by the Ministry of Labour in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and University, the Board of Regions and Social Partners.

The aim of the National Board is to define, within 2010 a National Framework of minimum standards that will represent the first step to the definition of the National Qualification Framework. Then, the process of setting up of a National system of professional standards, recognition and certification of competencies has evolved, in order to define a national framework coherent with the emerging EU guidelines.

The activity of the National Board is managed by Ministry of Labour and defines the "Sistema Nazionale di Osservazione Permanente dei Fabbisogni Professionali e Formativi" (*National System for the Permanent Observation of skill needs*) within the FSE 2000-2006 Plan. This is a relevant resource of reference for institutional, financial and social partners seeking to understand present or forecast trends in the labour sector so to establish policies governing the Labour sector, its organisation, and the HR management. It is an IT system providing information on needs (sorted by professional and economic activity area) that can be matched to employment opportunity in short term and medium term perspective.

From 2004 to 2007, an obvious prevails of initiatives aimed at teaching languages (mainly

English for Italian workers and Italian for foreigners), IT and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills took place.

Initiatives aimed at Vocational Training had a special relevance, financed by Regional funds by mean of individual vouchers distributed by workers independently on the company involvement. This tool, that will further spread at national level, allowed in Northern and Centre Italy to set up "*lists of training offer*" promptly available on demand (and widely strategically manageable) and including a number of training opportunities. In these, beyond the linguistic and IT skills, there were also initiatives developing skills linked to entrepreneurship.

5.1.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL CVET

In Italy continuing learning may be provided by different institutions; even though sometimes these structures do not set a learning supply specifically addressed to workers, the participation of the world of work is considerably high. In particular:

- Universities and Research Institutes;
- Upper Secondary schools in collaboration with other formative structures;
- Training Agencies as qualified by regional administrative bodies;
- Non qualified training/vocational guidance structures (they cannot release a formal certifications) ;
- Training enterprises.

ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES (*CENTRI TERRITORIALI PERMANENTI*)

The Ministry of Education Order No. 455 of 29 July 1997, *Educazione in età adulta - Istruzione e Formazione* set up the "Adult Education Centres (*Centri Territoriali Permanenti - CTP*), defined as "places for interpreting needs, designing, co-ordinating, activating and governing education and training initiatives [...], as well as for the collection and dissemination of documentation" aimed at establishing agreements, understandings and conventions with all the organisations, bodies and/or agencies providing adult-education initiatives, in order to favour their local affirmation. Under Article 5 of the Order, the activities of the Adult Education Centres are aimed not only at courses for the attainment of educational qualifications, but also for the reception, listening and guidance, as well as the primary, functional and adult literacy, the learning of language skills, the development and consolidation of basic skills and know-how, the recovery and development of cultural and relational skills both suited to the activity of participation in social life, and to the return to training of persons in marginal conditions.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

One of the most important ways to assure good quality CVET provision in Italy is the accreditation system for providers. All providers whether public or private must be accredited to deliver publicly-funded training and guidance (as legislated in Law 59/97). All regional and local authorities must follow the national criteria outlined in the legislation. In 2002, the legislation was extended to cover minimum standards for vocational qualifications as well as training structures. Accreditation is necessary for providers wanting to deliver the continuing training of workers employed and unemployed. To receive accreditation, the operational facilities of public or private providers must have: management and logistical capacities; teachers with appropriate vocational skills;

proven record of effectiveness and efficiency; links with local groups and enterprises.

The “Agreement for the definition of the minimum standards of the new accreditation system of the VET institutions for the quality of services”, signed on 20th March 2008 by the State-Regions Conference is the most recent measure adopted in this field and it aims at guaranteeing a homogeneous qualitative level of the training offer the entire national territory, also following the recommendation proposals on the EQARF. In the Agreement a clear distinction is maintained between the function of control of the process and the role of the actuator institution. Regarding the application of operational tools for the evaluation and self evaluation of the training offer, it has been realized and widespread the Italian guide for the self evaluation of schools and training institutions and of the Peer Review methodology, complementary to the self evaluation, that has find an application both at single training institutions and School network vocational training centres.

Moreover, it is also worth to mention the Institution of the “Italian Reference Point for Quality (established in 2006 (please see 2.2)).

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Adults that have any previous background in VET, can undertake the IFTS system, (Higher Technical Education and Training system introduced in Italy by Law 144/1999); based on “pathways” aimed at allowing youth and employed/unemployed adults to achieve a high cultural level, together with an extensive and deep technical and vocational training. (*for IFTS, please refer to chapter 4.6*).

DISTANCE LEARNING

Till the present moment, it does not exist an integrated system for distance learning programmes; training offers is provided by private institutions and universities consortia - with also the participation of enterprises - that try to meet training needs emerged at territorial and/or sectoral level. From the analysis of the distance learning programmes available, it emerges a wide availability for Office-automation courses, Quality, Operating System, Company Certification (ISO 9000-ISO 14000), Health and Safety at work, e-commerce.

MEASURES AND INSTRUMENTS TO FOSTER ACCESS TO CVET

Moreover, recent measures adopted by the Government to face the crisis (please, refer also to 2.3), extend the training possibilities of Joint interprofessional funds for Continuing Training (*Fondi Paritetici Interprofessionali per la Formazione Continua*), that can be used to finance special training plans. In fact, besides the different activities for supporting income foreseen for workers suspended or excluded from the labour market, there is also the obligatory participation to short and medium-length training initiatives, addressed to the recovery of transversal and basic competencies (also linguistic and information technology competencies).

As for participation in formal education by educational attainment and working status, as showed in the table 1 below, the participation to CVET activities is directly related to the qualification level possessed by the worker.

TABLE 1 - PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL EDUCATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND WORKING STATUS, 2005 [%]												
	ISCEDO_2				ISCED3				ISCED5_6			
	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE
EU	1,4	1,3	2	1,6	5,2	3,8	7	10,3	8,5	7,3	15,1	14,3
ITALY	1,1	1,1	1,4	1,1	8	3,9	10,2	20,7	9,7	7	25,7	20,6

Source of information Eurostat -Date of extraction 9 march 2009

Limitations to access to training activities mainly concern workers with low qualification level, thus confirming a distribution of training opportunities that, *de facto*, causes serious disparities and inequalities in the labour market.

5.2 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

5.2.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

With regard to the segment of the adult population, we should distinguish between continuing training, in which technical, vocational and transversal skills are acquired on the job and adult education or learning, where the basic skills and the skills that in general refer to the active population, are acquired in formal (at Adult education centres and schools-evening courses) or informal off-the-job contexts. Implementation of non formal education and training is an attempt to respond to the need to introduce flexibility, transparency and skills and many efforts are being promoted at national level to promote a more harmonized approach in the process.

Vocational training in Italy mainly takes place in formalized contexts aimed at obtaining qualifications rather than competences. More specifically, the enormous formal and juridical value of educational qualifications linked to formal education paths and the fact that there is little or no tradition of brief or adult training, have created a situation in which it is difficult to make visible the social and cultural value of training in itself and of their related certification.

The legal framework¹⁴ regulating formal learning - and, under some points of view, informal and non-formal learning, considering the overarching strategy undertaken by the

¹⁴For legislations and financing please refer to chapters 3.3, and 9.2 respectively.

Country (since the 1990's) in dealing with Education, VET and Labor market as strictly linked issues - is set by two main acts: Law 53/03 (Moratti Reform), reforming the education and training system, and the Law 30/03 (Biagi Reform), on the labor market and employment system, which are strictly connected.

The Reform Law 53 of 2003 established various general principles on the validation of learning; among these principles, it is particularly relevant the exploitation need of the qualifications obtained at the end of experimental vocational education and training paths and the exploitation extension to those who have reached 18 years of age; this principle aims at allowing the highest number of people to obtain higher educational levels (the agreement includes certification models). In particular, section 9 of the agreement refers to subjects who have to accomplish compulsory education or who have reached 18 years of age, who can be admitted to vocational training paths according to their knowledge and skills acquired in formal, non formal and informal contexts, against recognition of the formative credits through transparent procedures established by the Regions and Autonomous provinces.

5.2.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-FORMAL CVET

With regard to the adult education, in recent years, non-formal training has also observed a substantial growth, being provided by a number of public and private actors and by third-sector associations, obviously linked with the increase in the training-course demand from some sectors of the adult world. It is worth mentioning that mostly classroom or distance-learning courses are provided (in particular in major cities, but in also increasingly in smaller towns) by:

- popular universities;
- third-age universities;
- civic networks for cultural promotion (civic schools for adult education, municipal libraries, museums, etc.);
- agencies, bodies and social volunteer associations, often in agreement with the Regional or Local Authorities or project managers, and are financed with ESF resources.

In many cases, the training opportunities are similar in contents and methods to those offered by the Adult Education Centers, and to those linked to 'continuing training on individual demand' (for example, courses in English and other foreign languages, Italian courses for foreigners, computer and multimedia courses). However, for the purposes of lifelong learning, the aim of these courses is above all to provide opportunities absolutely different from traditional school/training schemes and thus more "reassuring" and "free" for individuals who are diffident towards training. It may often occur that these pathways contribute to rebuild an interest and motivation for learning.

In Italy a formalised or institutionalised national validation system is still lacking, but the establishment of a validation system for non-formal and informal learning has become a strong and widely shared priority in the last ten years in Italy. An important step has been the Agreement of February 2000 between State and Regions, and subsequent Decree No. 174/2001 issued by the ML, providing:

- focus on skills and competences certification and enhancement of individual experiences as training credits;
- start-up of a definition process of minimum skill-certification standards;
- definition of various certification tools (e.g. the Citizen Training Booklet, *Libretto*

formativo del cittadino, see box below.), in order to facilitate the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning as well as to standardise the validation procedures.

Over the last few years, the question of learning validation has been put among the issues dealt in the context of the most recent reforms (L. 30/03 and L.53/03) concerning education, vocational training and labour, trying to focus on knowledge and competences wherever acquired.

Example of project aiming at paving the way to the accreditation of non-formal and informal learning: The "Citizen's Training Booklet".

Objectives:

The Training Booklet is a logbook created to collect, summarise and document the various learning experiences of the working-citizen, as well as the competences and skills acquired - at school, in training, at work, in daily life.

Background:

The creation of a "Training Booklet" has already been envisaged in various national provisions (e.g., Agreement signed on 18 February 2000 between State and Regions and Ministerial Decree DM 174/2001 on skill certification). Later, D.Lgs. no. 276/2003, implementing the 'Biagi' Law (Article 2.1.i), confirmed and integrated the provisions of previous measures by launching the process towards a social and institutional definition and sharing of the "Training Booklet". The process leading to the approval of the "Booklet" ended with an agreement on its format (approved by Interministerial Decree of 10 October 2005) and with the shared decision to begin experimenting on the "Booklet". This experimentation was managed autonomously by each Region under national supervision, and with support and monitoring provided by Isfol. The experimental phase effectively began in the second half of 2006, using proposed candidates from 13 Regions and Autonomous Provinces, involving activities conducted according to the different application methods adopted in each Region.

Key actors involved:

The "Training Booklet" is issued by the Regional and Autonomous Provincial Authorities, who can nevertheless delegate this task to other actors. As holder of the "Booklet", it is the working-citizen's responsibility to update it. The "Booklet" is divided into two sections: the first containing personal details, information about educational background, professional experiences, educational and vocational qualifications, as well as training experiences; the second section describes the specific skills acquired during various learning pathways.

"Training Booklets" provide personal information on individuals, together with their formal and non-formal learning curriculum for the purposes of job-seeking, occupational mobility and transition from one training system to another. For the labour market and business world, the "Training Booklet" facilitates the recognition of individual skills and competences within the context of work placement and occupational mobility, and further describes the worker's training pathway and career progress.

Outcomes:

The "Training Booklet" was effectively experimented in 9 Regions and Autonomous Provinces between 2006 and 2007, where it was issued within employment centres and training bodies. The "Training Booklet" proved above all to be useful to apprentices, workers undergoing continuing training activities, and disadvantaged individuals. On the basis of the results of the experimentation conducted in 2006-2007, ISFOL - that has also provided technical support and managed the monitoring process- is now collecting the results in order to provide the conditions for an effective implementation of the Booklet, thus individuating priority context. At the moment (2009) a first implementation of the tool could concern apprenticeship, continuous training and disadvantaged workers.

More recently (2006) a Technical Table for the national standards system has been established with particular reference to competences held and acquired in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. The Table, aimed at defining and implementing a "National Qualifications System" is composed by MLPS, Ministry of Education,

Regions and Social Partners. This political issue will allow to integrate the different standards at each level and to relate in a common frame the typology of qualifications with the titles, qualifications and diploma delivered by the Ministry of Education, MLPS, Regions and Universities. In this context, it is worth mentioning the role of the Italian universities: the Ministry for Universities and Research that has set up a working group to draw up Guidelines for the accreditation of previous learning, enabling universities to use quality-based methodologies for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in university courses.

The only really implemented national and institutional practice so far seems to be the IFTS; within this channel, in fact, it has been possible to recognize and certify learning and competences through a specific set of minimum standard which is structured in “capitalisable units”. Credit recognition occurs:

1. through the recognition of “incoming credits”;
2. during the training;
3. outside the training, so facilitating the total or partial recognition of competences acquired.

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

Moreover, some regional administrations (Basilicata, Emilia Romagna, Piemonte, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Veneto, Valle d’Aosta) are directly defining and implementing policies and operational strategies towards the validation of non formal and informal learning and for the recognition of training credits within specific formal lifelong learning pathways or for the acquisition of titles and official certificates.

Adult participation in non formal VET in Italy highlights many critical aspects; participation rates in non formal education/training are still below the EU average for all the categories (please, see table 1) regarding educational attainment and working status. Most critical aspects regard the low participation level among isced 0_2 (especially for unemployed: 0,7% participation rate in Italy compared to the 7,6% of EU25). Those who have reached higher education level (isc5_6) participate more in non-formal training pathways, even if the percentage for all type of working status is far below the EU average.

	ISCED0_2				ISCED3_4				ISCED5_6			
	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE
EU (25)	6,5	9	7,6	2,8	16,4	18,9	14,8	6,7	30,9	33,7	22,7	13
ITALY	1,8	3	0,7	0,5	7,3	9,2	3,1	2,3	14,1	15,9	7,7	6

Continuous training is in Italy a tool not properly diffused and promoted among users, especially in comparison with the rest of Europe. European average of enterprises offering training to their workers is 60%, while in Italy is 32%;

5.3 MEASURES TO HELP JOB-SEEKERS AND PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Labour market, social security and vocational education and training system reforms form part of an overall strategy towards “Welfare to Work”. One of its main objectives is to foster the integration or reintegration in the labour market for the unemployed, the weaker categories or those at risk of exclusion.

To this end, the Government and the Regional Authorities, in agreement with the social partners, aim at:

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

The “Welfare to Work” strategy promotes policies for the integration or reintegration of job-seekers on the labour market combining employment policy (employment service, guidance and training) and income support for the unemployed. The instruments are directed on the one hand at reducing the regulation of the labour market and, on the other hand, at reforming the income-support system, thus enhancing training actions and increasing personal responsibility. In this respect, Law 30/03, the reform of job placement and the reform of social buffers should allow to better link rights and duties of the unemployed and to provide guidance interviews and proposals for training or work within a certain period of time.

A special focus will go:

- 1) to enhancing the leading role of training and to using training more for the labour market's specific needs;
- 2) to reforming the system of unemployment benefits, with regard to the levels of compensation and the time period for receipt of the benefits, capitalising on the role of the unions;
- 3) to reforming the role of public and private employment services, with particular reference to the networking the employment centres.

In the implementation of the flexicurity principles, a major focus will go to the existing, concrete (re)employment opportunities that condition the success of the policies and the role of the stakeholders (institutions and unions at the local level), including by taking into account the experience gained through the PARI Programme¹⁵.

In consideration of the insufficient growth of wages and the low productivity seen in Italy in recent period the Government has moved to provide tax relief on a test basis for a six-

¹⁵ *Approved in 2005, the PARI programme is managed by the Italia Lavoro (Italy Work) technical committee, tests the integration between economic-support instruments and active policies (welfare-to-work model) by offering projects differentiated by the type of user and the characteristics of the market served. The programme also takes care of the governance aspects (a particularly relevant issue in a country such as Italy) and the transfer of know-how to the employment centre personnel.*

month period in relation to payments for bonuses and overtime, thereby adding to the provisions for eliminating the social-welfare contributions on the variable elements of compensation that had been introduced with the Budget Law for 2008 (Law 244/2007). In order to promote productivity appropriately, the Government is guaranteeing the support necessary to the independent initiative of the unions on the subject of the reform of collective bargaining¹⁶.

The implementation of Law 236/93 represents an important development for continuous training because it makes application for individual training possible via training vouchers. The preference for the issuance of the vouchers goes to the following categories of workers: those involved in mobility processes, those drawing extraordinary unemployment compensation, those with atypical contracts, those over 45 years old, and those in possession only of the middle school diploma. The resources appropriated and transferred to the Regions amount to €207.5 million (for each of the years of 2006 and 2007).

The regional initiatives on the subject of job flexibility and security likewise need to be considered. Such initiatives unfold along different lines and are specifically aimed at:

- the implementation of measures in the area of flexible labour, as part of the regional system of employment services, with particular reference to the professional skills of workers with atypical contract;
- employment stabilisation and the promotion of the regular, legally binding employment.

Certain basic programmes for protection are to be introduced in relation thereto, among them: promotion of instruments that facilitate access to bank credit; and the assignment of training vouchers.

ACTIONS AND MEASURES:

JOB-SEEKERS AND THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

Policies for job seekers also contain specific programmes for long term unemployed people (those looking for jobs for more than 6 months). Policies are twofold in terms of providing training as well as tax incentives for employers to recruit unemployed people.

OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOR MARKET

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

The Government and the Regional Authorities propose new opportunities for training, and work through the development of a network-based system between the job-insertion services and the education, training and social-assistance services, which includes:

- Integrated network projects;
- Monitoring organization and operational level of services;

¹⁶ For further details, please consult item 2.3.

- Programmes for the integration of disadvantaged peoples, by homogeneous interregional groups as beneficiaries of social and occupational integration;
- Telework;
- Dissemination of best practices for occupational integration experimented as envisaged by Law 68/99;
- Awareness-raising of the opportunities provided through Law 68/99 and the dissemination of innovative and qualified initiatives for occupational integration.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT/COMBAT SCHOOL DROP-OUT

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

- Integrated projects for education and training in 6 production sectors;
- Action aimed at facilitating the transition of young people from school to the world of work, financing in-company placement periods;
- Development of higher technical education and training programmes (*Istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore _ IFTS*), an integrated channel between schools, universities, training bodies and social partners;
- Specific measures in Southern Italy (financed by the ESF), to train young people, and test minimum standards of technical and vocational skills of the 'Higher Technical Schools' personnel.

SOCIAL REINTEGRATION OF CONVICTS SENTENCED TO PENALTIES OUTSIDE PRISON

Work plays a primary role in the path for the social reintegration of convicts. To this end, the following will be promoted:

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

6. TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

6.1 TYPES OF TEACHER AND TRAINER OCCUPATIONS IN VET

6.1.1 TEACHING AND TRAINING OCCUPATIONS IN VET

According to the classification on occupations defined by ISTAT (National Statistics Institution), the professional profiles referring to VET system, as considered in a lifelong learning approach, are set into different groups and categories.

Most of the operators of VET system belong to *intellectual, scientific and specialised occupations*. The group includes the professions requiring a high level of scientific, humanistic and/ or artistic knowledge and experience. In addition to the above, some teacher profiles belonging to *technical occupations* (Primary school teacher, Teacher for disabled and teacher supporting special institutions, Pre-primary school teacher, Tutor, teacher of vocational education and similar).

The profiles of IVET system teachers and trainers are the following:

- Pre-primary School teacher;
- Teacher of first cycle: *Primary School*;
- Teacher of first cycle: Lower Secondary School;
- Teacher of second cycle(both for Istituti and IVT): *Lycée system and VET system*;
- Lecturer: Higher Education;
- Teacher in High non-university Education (IFTS);
- Teacher in *continuing* learning;
- Vocational trainer;
- Tutor.

The minimum requirement for obtaining a teaching contract (unlimited or temporary job) is an academic degree and a teaching qualification that might be obtained either through a competitive state exam or special courses.

For secondary schools, each degree enables to teach specific subjects, which are part of pre-defined branches (*classi di concorso*). Each degree allows to gain access to a range of branches. On the basis of Decree n. 297/1994, modified by Law n. 124/1999, 50% of available places are assigned by means of competitive state exam and 50% of teaching post is assigned via a special list managed by the Provinces.

The current system might completely change if the project of Law n. 953 that is still under discussion will be approved. On the basis of this text, conditions to recruit teachers will be provided by the Degree, paying attention to the acquisition of technical, pedagogical, organizational, social e communication competences. Practical training and workshops within the school will be compulsory. Those that will obtain the teaching qualification will be enrolled within a specific Regional list.

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

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

TABLE 1: MAIN VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS PROFILES IN ITALY	
PLACE OF WORK - JOB CONTEXT	MAIN PROFILES
IVET	
STATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS	Teacher (<i>docente</i>) · Teacher-tutor (<i>docente tutor</i>)
VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES	Trainer (<i>formatore</i>) · Trainer-tutor (<i>formatore-tutor</i>) · Coordinator
APPRENTICESHIP	Trainer-tutor · Teacher-tutor · Company tutor (<i>tutor d'impresa</i>)
CVET	
VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES	Trainer · Tutor
ENTERPRISES	Teacher · Company trainer · Coach, tutor, mentor, supervisor
CENTRI TERRITORIALI PERMANENTI (PERMANENT REGIONAL CENTRES FOR ADULT EDUCATION)	Teacher
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES	Tutor

TRAINERS

According to the new organization of training system, the trainer acts in a complex environment composed of training agencies, enterprise offices, consulting and training companies. In fact, trainers' task is to link training and job and strengthen and update the working skills. Trainers' role is to identify the most suitable training methods for linking demand to offer of job. He plans, turns into action and monitors training activities, fixes objectives, defines contents, methods and procedures and organizes the assessment of training program in relation to the job market.

TEACHERS

The total number of teachers has decreased in the last 10 years (2% reduction); permanent

and temporary teachers show a complementary dynamic: due to lack of assignment between 1990 and 2000, the number of permanent teachers reduced (9%), while temporary teachers rose considerably (from 53.000 units to 107.000 units). Permanent teachers can cover annual or periodical contracts: in this case their position is not to be considered properly full-time.

The reduction of permanent teaching staff is mainly due to the containment policies of public investments which brought to limit recruitment in Public Administration. In particular, as regards the education sector, the rationalization of professorships meant a reduction of posts available. Compared with the period 1995/1999, all educational levels suffered from a reduction in teaching body: this is particularly noted in Lower Secondary School (minus 21, 2%), in Primary School (minus 6, 3%), as well as in Upper Secondary School (minus 4, 5%). Despite the reduction in teaching body, the interest towards students is still high. During the last 10 years the number of students per teacher (not to be confused with the amount of students attending the class) has been much the same. Between 1994 and 1995 the proportion was: 10 students per teacher, but recently the data increased slightly: 11 students per teacher.

The age of teaching body is rather high. This is due to a strong reduction in school-age population registered in the last decade, both in Europe and in Italy. The cut in school-age population slowed down teachers' recruitment and consequently raised their average age.

6.1.2 RESPONSIBLE BODIES

TEACHERS

Initial training of teacher is still provided by University: Pre-primary and Primary School teacher attends a course of studies in *Sciences in Primary Education (Pedagogical Sciences)*; Secondary School teacher attend postgraduate school (*SISS*).

Teacher who intends to train disabled attends specific course of studies within formal education.

In the end, the Degree in *Sciences in Primary Education (Pedagogical Sciences)* and the postgraduate diploma constitute the fundamental requirements for participating in the national examination for teaching in Pre-primary School, Primary School and Lower Secondary School.

As regards university Lecturer and teacher in high non-university education, no specific training is required.

TRAINERS

Because of the present lack of a specific university study for trainers, preferred academic degrees are sociology, psychology, educational science, literature. The national framework contract fixes a minimum high school diploma as minimum requirement. In addition, a training period with a senior operator and updating courses are binding by local authorities and public bodies Enrolling procedures are settled by the National Collective Contract, defining minimum requirements for the profile of the trainer. Some Regional Authorities can regulate the matter autonomously and have established a list of authorized operators to provide training for trainers. Regions and Autonomous provinces have chosen to put the criteria of "professional competencies" in relation to the training bodies and not to the individuals. In this context, the capability of a training structure is ensured by the presence of professionals with professional credentials that are necessary for leading the process and guaranteeing a high level of "management skills". Some Regions have identified and set up prerequisites in order to support and facilitate the transparency of

cognitive biographies concerning the professionals operating within the structure that is asking for accreditation, through the definition of a “minimum documentary standard” that can be defined as “the ensemble of basic descriptors that allows an adequate personal and professional characterisation of human resources paying a particular attention to the key processes, in relation to the transparency of relevant learning outcomes, also finalized to the accreditation of the training institute in which this human resource operates”¹⁷.

6.1.3 RECENT REFORMS TO VET TEACHER/TRAINER TRAINING

TEACHERS

The curricula of teachers and trainers are different in relation to learning pathway in which they provide the service. Law n.53/2003 on the reform of educational system introduced deep changes in initial training of Pre-primary School teacher, Primary School, as well as Lower Secondary School. The Legislative Decree 227/2005 on the development of the reform established new procedure for training and recruiting new teachers and regulates the passage from previous to current system, which came into force in 2006. In relation to the context above, a new changing process is involving both teaching body and education occupation in itself.

The financial law 2008 has provided for new requirements and procedures for initial teachers training and recruitment. The national collective agreement for school staff, signed in November 2007 and valid for the period 2006-2009, has included, in the professional profile of teachers and besides the already existing didactic, pedagogical, organizational and research competences, other competences related to the documentation and assessment. Furthermore, the agreement provides for the allocation of possible additional funds to support both educational-didactic activities and activities of evaluation, which are able to help the development of the innovation processes in order to improve the work in the class and the attainment target.

TRAINERS

During academic year 2008-2009, it has been implemented an important initiative for qualifying knowledge and competences for those involved in vocational training courses (as for example trainers, tutors, coordinators) VT operators who have a qualification but they do not have a Degree. This initiative is represented by the new Degree “Science of vocational training”, promoted and implemented by Isfol, together with the Ministry of Labour, Universities, social partners and accredited training institutions. The aim of this project is that of enabling VT operators with the same professional competences of school operators, also promoting the integration of education and training systems. Moreover, the projects aim at meeting the demands of competences certification for trainers, as requested by the European Qualifications Framework.

6.2 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

6.2.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS IN IVET

IVET Teachers work in State Vocational Schools are mainly employed by the Ministry of Education. They are normally involved in the classroom teaching of scientific, technical

¹⁷This is the case of the Autonomous Region Valle D'Aosta, that has established a minimum documentary standard for the curriculum vitae.

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

TABLE 1. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS AND OTHER MAIN LEARNING FACILITATORS			
CHARACTERISTICS	TEACHERS	TRAINERS	OTHER MAIN LEARNING FACILITATORS
PLACE OF WORK	State Vocational Schools (Istituti tecnici, Istituti professionali, Istituti d'arte)	Vocational training centers _ FPI - (managed by regional/provincial/municipal authorities) and private vocational training centers accredited by regions	Vocational training centers (managed by regional/provincial/municipal authorities) and private vocational training centers accredited by regions - Enterprises
ROLE	Docente (Teacher) involved in classroom teaching of scientific, technical and general subjects	<i>Formatore docente</i> (Trainer) subdivided by type of teaching (cultural, scientific and technical/practical) or operational areas (pre-service training, higher training, training for disadvantaged people) - Coordinator (face-to-face or distance learning activities; projects for disadvantaged people; projects integrated with vocational education and/or employment services) -	<i>Formatore-tutor</i> (Trainers-tutor) subdivided by operational areas: a) animation and individual or collective b) learning facilitation, c) alternance training, d) job insertion for disadvantaged people - Company apprenticeship tutor
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT	Teachers are State employee and may have open-ended or fixed-term contracts	Employee with open-ended, fixed-term and atypical contracts	Collective bargaining at national and school level
FORMS OF BARGAINING	Collective bargaining at national and regional level	Teachers are compensated under two headings: a) basic compensation: fixed and includes salary and a special integrating indemnity b) additional compensation: varies proportionally with additional tasks (i.e. coordination, guidance, etc. but not for more than 6 working hours) Open-ended contract teachers have a salary regulated by collective national agreement	Open-ended contract trainers have a salary regulated partly by the collective national agreement and partly by regional collective agreements (20%)

CHARACTERISTICS	TEACHERS	TRAINERS	OTHER MAIN LEARNING FACILITATORS
SALARY RATE	Teachers are compensated under two headings: a) basic compensation: fixed and includes salary and a special integrating indemnity b) additional compensation: varies proportionally with additional tasks (i.e. coordination, guidance, etc. but not for more than 6 working hours) Open-ended contract teachers have a salary regulated by collective national agreement	Open-ended contract trainers have a salary regulated partly by the collective national agreement and partly by regional collective agreements (20%)	Salary varies with respect to the type of National Collective Labor Agreement
TYPES OF RECRUITMENT	State exam	Direct: recruitment and selection are without legal constraints	Direct: recruitment and selection are without legal constraints
PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS	Specific subject degree	Certificate (secondary education) or degree and professional experience	Certificate (secondary education) or degree and professional experience
PRE-SERVICE TRAINING	2 years after a university degree: new Law 53/2003 will standardize pre-service training of teachers and trainers	Not compulsory at the moment. The new Law 53/2003 will standardize pre-service training of teachers and trainers	Not compulsory
IN-SERVICE TRAINING	Not compulsory. Law 53/2003 makes provision for a new system of in-service training to ensure closer links between training, performance assessment and career progress	Not compulsory. Law 53/2003 makes provision for a new system of in-service training to ensure closer links between training, performance assessment and career progress	Not compulsory. Law 53/2003 makes provision for a new system of in-service training to ensure closer links between training, performance assessment and career progress

6.2.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF IVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

TEACHERS

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

A *laurea* (university degree) has always been required to teach in both lower and upper secondary schools (for most subjects). Additionally, some form of post-graduate teaching

certificate with practical work experience has also been required. According to 1990 legislation (implementation decrees of 1997), secondary-school pre-service teacher training is provided at *Scuole di Specializzazione per l'Insegnamento Secondario* (SSISs - Specialised Schools for Teaching in Secondary Education), which are managed by the universities, but have now been suspended, in view of new recruitments forms actually discussed by the government. The number of available teaching jobs is nationally planned according to schools requirements.

In-service training of teaching staff (IVET teachers) has been consolidated over the years as a result of initiatives from the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR), the *Istituti Regionali di Ricerca Educativa* (IRRE - Regional Institutes for Educational Research), the *Istituto nazionale documentazione informazione e ricerca educativa* (INDIRE - National Institutes for Educational Documentation and Innovation in Education Research) and individual schools. Law 53/2003 states that the management of in-service training for teachers is assigned to universities in collaboration with public and private research institutions, accredited and qualified organisations and teachers' professional associations.

TRAINERS

In-service training activities for IVET trainers (Trainer, tutor-trainer and coordinator, mostly in regional vocational training centres) are various and participation is on a voluntary basis. Activities are mainly promoted by regional authorities and are supported by funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) in compliance with guidelines set forth in the Regional Operational Programmes (ROP 2007-2013) within Italy's Community Support Framework.

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

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

6.3 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

6.3.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS IN CVET

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

6.3.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF CVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

CVET trainers

In Italy there are few structured pathways or legal obligations for CVET trainers pre-service training. Most practitioners have a professional status as freelance or occasional trainer, i.e. a professional or middle/top manager temporarily assigned to specialised technical or vocational teaching.

For CVET trainers, there is no predefined qualification level to practice this profession. For publicly funded courses, there are some pre-defined requirements, such as a degree and/or appropriate professional experience.

CVET teachers

For CVET teachers, working in Centri Territoriali Permanenti (Permanent Regional Centres for Adult Education), pre-service training is regulated in a similar way as for IVET teachers.

They must hold at least a degree, a teaching qualification for subjects taught and the level of lower educational school teachers (lower secondary education). Teachers are selected on the basis of both teaching and professional experience.

For some technical content teachers (e.g., software applications) specific certification is required (generally issued by the software houses or authorised training agencies). Generally, participation in pre-service training has formal accreditation only in the case of the training provided by universities or authorised consortia for higher education. In all the other cases, the certificati di frequenza (certificates of attendance) are issued, recognised on the market and by the enterprises according to the 'prestige' of the providers.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

In-service training for CVET teachers and trainers is completely voluntary (as would be expected given the freelance nature of many within the profession). Numerous streams exist for the preparation of CVET teachers such as university Master courses and specialised courses. The latter includes:

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

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

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

In-service training for CVET trainers is wholly voluntary and generally paid for by the trainers themselves. It usually involves self-training. Some organisations (e.g. large companies or public administration departments with permanent internal training services) can decide to participate or invest directly in the continuing training of trainers.

7. MATCHING VET PROVISION WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

7.1 SYSTEMS AND MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS (IN SECTORS, OCCUPATIONS, EDUCATION LEVEL)

The main instrument for anticipation of skill needs is represented by “The permanent national system for the observation and forecasting of skill and training needs”, promoted by the Ministry of Labour and implemented by Isfol, as part of the ESF 2000-2006 programme. It brings together labour market information from different sources, including surveys by the social partners, outcomes of econometric modelling and the EXCELSIOR survey (project on continuous training in enterprises, carried out by Unioncamere) on short term trends as regards employment by sector, educational / training level and profession, at national and regional level. In 2004, the Ministry of Labour created a Steering Committee, established with a ministerial decree, to enhance the system. This body is composed of representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Regional Authorities, Social Partners, Unioncamere¹⁸ and ISFOL¹⁹. This system for the observation and forecasting of skill and training needs is available on a web platform²⁰, providing information:

On the quantitative side: short term trends as regards occupational needs utilising the dataset of Excelsior; medium term forecast of occupation detailed at the class level (3^o digit) of the national classification;

On the qualitative side: occupational skill needs are derived from the results of national survey lead by social partners. From 1996 until 2003 the Ministry of Labour financed a series of surveys on skill needs. The surveys were carried out by the social partners organised in Organismi Bilaterali (bilateral bodies).

The first action undertaken to improve the system was to develop a new occupational classification- i.e. the Occupational Unit - derived from the official statistical one. Some 800 Occupational Standards were covered in a survey, in which about 16.000 employees took part²¹. The result is a comprehensive description of each Occupational Unit, in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, activities, etc. (indicated by level of importance and complexity) regarded necessary to be able to carry out a job²².

The System provides reference information with regard to: the evolution of the labour market's contents; the development of skills and competences; guidance practitioners and operators (to guide towards education and training curricula and towards professional choices). The System provides also information about: features of the professions (specific activities; identification of resources and typical organizational contexts in which the activity is carried out; level of education, skills and competences required for the position, trends concerning likely professional changes), in order to allow people to enter, or to re-access the labour market also by choosing the most appropriate education and training

¹⁸ *Unione italiana delle Camere di Commercio, Industrie Artigianato e Agricoltura (Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture).*

¹⁹ *Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione dei Lavoratori (Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers, the research body under the Ministry of Labour).*

²⁰ <http://fabbisogni.isfol.it>

²¹ *The methodology utilized is derived from the one used in USA for the O*Net System*

²² *See not n. 1*

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

In the national system for the on-going observation of employment needs, this represent a benchmark for the better assessment of required individual skills. Next steps in improving the system focus on the qualitative side:

- a permanent audit system to point out skill needs in a short time (one year) for the overall national economy;
- using scenarios methodologies to anticipate skill need in a medium term (5 years) with a sectoral approach.

Traditionally, in needs analysis activities, national and local institutions manage labour-market and training policies through promotion, financing and implementation; Social Partners often play an active role in policymaking by conducting surveys. The whole process to establish a national system for vocational needs analysis is guided at the national level through the Steering Committee. The national Steering Committee favours a sectoral approach for the qualitative surveys. To date, the sectoral national-level surveys have been conducted by joint bodies using a variety of methods. Each body publishes the results of their national sectoral needs surveys on its own website and on the website of the National system for the ongoing observation of employment needs. The joint bodies use the results of these surveys to programme continuing training supply within the Joint Multi-Sectoral Funds. As suggested above, the results of the surveys performed by various bodies, once processed by Isfol, can be retrieved from the dedicated website, to which one can access through the ISFOL and Ministry of Labour web portals. As regards example of recent sectoral studies focused on skill needs analysis are the following carried out by:

- Organismo Bilaterale Nazionale per la Formazione, i.e. representatives of medium and large companies, covering twenty manufacturing sectors;
- Ente Bilaterale Nazionale Artigianato, i.e. representatives of handicraft companies, covering eight traditional handicraft sectors;
- Coop-Form, i.e. representatives of the cooperatives, covering three cooperative sectors;
- Agriform, representatives of the farming sector, covering seven traditional farming sectors;
- Ente Bilaterale Nazionale Turismo, i.e. representatives of tourism companies;
- Mastermedia, i.e. representatives of the information and communication industries;
- Chirone 2000, i.e. representatives of the transportation and related services;
- Enfea, i.e. representative of small and medium enterprises, covering five manufacturing sectors;
- Enbicredito, i.e. representatives of banks.

7.2 PRACTICES TO MATCH VET PROVISION WITH SKILL NEEDS

On 2006, thanks to a strong cooperation between Istat and Isfol, the Nomenclatura e classificazione delle unità professionali²³ (NUP06) has been set up in order to describe the activities and tasks related to a specific job. The structure of NUP is based on the international classification ISCO. The NUP has been verified by means of a survey on professions, realized by Istat and Isfol on behalf of Ministry of Labour, in order to constitute a permanent national system for the study of labour market needs.

At the same time, the realization of the National Qualification Framework has been entrusted to the “National Board for Standards”, set up in 2006 and promoted by the Ministry of Labour in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and University, the Board of Regions and Social Partners. The aim of the National Board was to define, by 2010, a National Framework of minimum standards. The activities of the National Board have reached an advanced level of development. The Ministry of Labour entrusted Isfol to set up a technical proposal aimed to define the occupational standards linked to the NUP (Nomenclatura delle Unità Professionali - Nomenclature of Occupational Units), that constitutes a joint between needs analysis and occupational standards. Consequently, the educational standards would be linked to the occupational standards, as well as the curricula.

The set up of occupational standard is directly linked to NUP, that has been built taking into account the labour market needs analysis lately realized.

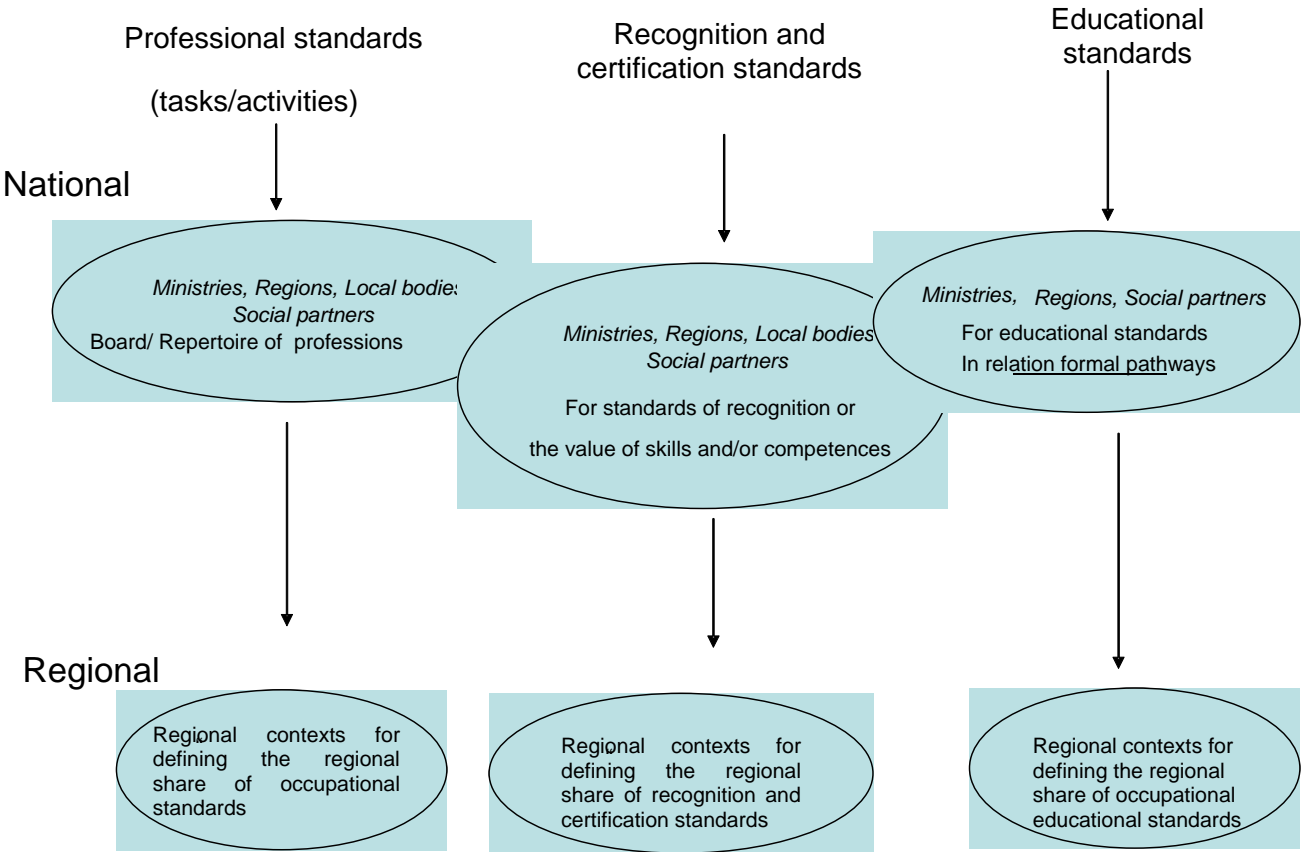
Isfol is also elaborating criteria for the assessment of competences acquired in non formal contexts, directly linked to occupational standards. The assessment of competences acquired in formal pathways is under the responsibility of the Regions and of the Ministry of Education.

The Italian Regions, coordinated by the Board of Regions, are identifying the new qualifications within the VET system²⁴. This proposal is still under examination of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour and will lead to a State-Regions agreement.

²³ *Nomenclature of Occupational Units*

²⁴ *Conferenza Stato-Regioni, Accordo tra il Ministro dell' Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, il Ministro del Lavoro, della Salute e delle Politiche sociali, le Regioni e le Province Autonome di Trento e Bolzano, per la definizione delle condizioni e delle fasi relative alla messa a regime del sistema di secondo ciclo di Istruzione e Formazione Professionale, Repertorio atti n. 17/CSR del 5 febbraio 2009.*

The following scheme describes the different levels of elaboration and presidium of the standard system and the subjects involved.



8.1 STRATEGY AND PROVISION

A well-set national guidance system should function as a wide network connecting independent actors able to:

- integrate and establish meaningful links;
- operate with inclusive and participative methods.

In this sense, Italian experience is inconsistent. There are many pilot projects and practices, but they still do not provide a coherent system.

Although some local actors are able to activate integrated guidance services and to dispense more open and reliable guidance services, many other operators, mostly located in the South, are still far from this organisation framework.

Therefore ISFOL, on behalf of Ministry of Labour, is setting up a number of guidance initiatives focused on these regions (Convergence Objective) in order to promote the development of a national guidance system considering regional disparities but, at the same time, ensuring effectiveness and efficiency of services.

In order to tackle with the scarcity of guidance services, a steering committee will be set up. It will be entrusted to plan the actions - through a strong cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education - in order to enhance the awareness of guidance pathways and tools and develop a better synergy between VET institutions and labour market.

The “National Guidance Report” (“Rapporto Orientamento²⁵”) is the first National survey on the state of the art of guidance provisions in Italy. It is addressed to all the institutions, public and private, providing guidance services. In the next three years (2009-2011) a quantitative (structured questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews, focus groups, case studies) research activities will be carried out and the outcomes will be published in a “National Report” entirely devoted to guidance issues. The Report will allow to collect basic information on the guidance offer existing at regional level and in different fields.

Furthermore, a National Archive on Guidance is under construction, consisting in a data base about the guidance bodies and services. It will be updated every year and will be available on line free of charge. The Archive will host the list of the main features of the structures that offer guidance services in Italy. In some Regions, several guidance tools have been set up to be used in the VET pathways in order to help pupils to analyze their skills, attitudes and interests. The experimental software “*Sorprendo*”²⁶ is particularly interesting. It has been realized by the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, in order to provide the schools and local guidance services operators with a tool allowing the analysis and considerations on professional and personal choices. Another interesting tool for guidance is the data base “Orienta on line²⁷”, realized by Isfol and hosting data a detailed

²⁵ <http://www.rapporto-orientamento.it/>

²⁶ <http://www.sorprendo.info/default/default.php?ca=7>

²⁷ <http://orientaonline.isfol.it/>

information on professions, clustered on the basis of a “Map of Occupational areas” covering the entire Italian productive system.

In Italy, the structures providing guidance services are:

- Schools (secondary schools of first and second level);
- Universities, Academies and other Higher education institutions;
- Vocational training centers;
- Public and private services for guidance and job insertion (Centres for Employment - CPI, Guidance Labour Centres - COL, Agencies for job search by art. 4 del D.Lgs. 276/2003, Informagiovani, etc);
- Medium and big sized enterprises.

The operational (private and public) structures providing guidance services with public resources must be regionally accredited.

8.2 TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

Concerning groups with special needs, some districts (Province) have undertaken specific interventions in order to support the integration and the achievement of training pathways of second-generation immigrated pupils, through the non curricular courses of Italian language. Furthermore, actions aimed to support learning processes and motivate immigrant youngsters through individual counselling have been launched. Specific projects have been undertaken for guidance of immigrant women, in order to reduce gender gap.

Decision makers, researchers and guidance professionals agree on a new idea of curriculum related to a new system of Guidance, beyond any system of pre-set models. The life cycle (considered as evolution to adult age) requires continuous updating under the deep recent social and cultural transformations. Modern Guidance relates to several kinds of beneficiaries and from activities mainly focused on youngster or students, nowadays a relevant number of adults participate (women, foreigners, unemployed or job seekers, temporary contracted, socially marginalized groups).

Therefore, differences in personal and social experiences or planning and satisfaction criteria, are crucial factors in defining the wide span of needs and demands for the Guidance system. In fact, different categories of beneficiaries embed more and more segmented clusters of needs that very often are not met by the present. Guidance system must be analysed in order to get satisfying reply. Within the three years pathways experimentations, most of Regions will have established public services including welcoming, information aimed to guidance, training pathways aimed to guidance, guidance counseling, competence balance, job insertion. All these interventions are aimed to help people to make choices, to strengthen individual professional identity, to put in value the individual specific resources, in order to define a personal and professional project and to prevent early school leaving.

Due to the rise of compulsory education to 16 years, the VET system is aware of the importance of realizing integrated guidance actions, connecting VET systems (school, vocational training and labour market) and institutions at different level.

The reform of the employment agencies (Legislative Decree n. 181/2000) highlighted the liability of all subjects involved: workers, job services, VET agencies. For this reason, job services have to fix up personal and professional data application forms for job search, the

subscription of an engagement to be immediately available for a job. The reform established the following standard steps:

- Enrolment, registration of personal data and statement of immediate availability to work;
- First-level guidance and fulfilment of a “professional form”;
- Second-level guidance (needs diagnosis, individualized action plan).

The approach adopted by the employment agencies is personalized and based on the creation of an individual relationship between guidance professionals and users.

The need to guarantee guidance services based on innovation and quality, has been stated by the regulations concerning the accreditation of training and guidance structures (based on Ministerial Decree n. 166/2001). Regions are responsible for accreditation procedures and must set up a regional model for accreditation. Every year, Regions are commissioned to verify the maintenance of accreditation requirements.

In this framework are placed the manuals, realized by Isfol on 2004, aimed to offer a technical support both for Regional and Provincial administrations and for training and guidance agencies and operators.

8.3 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

The competences and the training of guidance and counselling personnel in Italy have been subject of an animated debate. The legislative framework doesn't consider the relationship among the actors and the structures in which they operate, both at national and local level; this has led to the multiplication of initiatives and actions involving, often in a confuse way, human resources with different competences and qualifications.

At the current moment, guidance and counselling personnel have different competences and qualifications. The Italian regulation has not yet established neither specific training pathways or minimum requirements for functioning as guidance professional. Following the reform of Employment services (1999) most of guidance activities take place within the Centres for Employment (CPI) or the Agencies for job search (Law n. 30/2003). Guidance activities take place also within schools, universities, vocational training centres, voluntary associations' counselling offices (e.g. *Informagiovani*).

In addition, human resources managers, school and university teachers, communication experts. Usually, the minimum required qualification is an high school degree, but empirical evidence are also qualified for providing guidance services. Professionals have, in most cases, an university degree and/or a master's degree.

The Ministerial Decree n. 166/2001 (Accreditation of subjects providing guidance services) regulates the accreditation of training and guidance structures and states (art. 10) the establishment of minimum standards of professional competencies of guidance professionals. The Decree identifies two subjects dealing with guidance:

- The guidance operator, charged with doing needs diagnosis, planning individual and group guidance interventions, managing welcoming initiatives and screening users needs;
- The tutor of job insertion, charged with analysing local Labour market, planning the assistance intervention for job insertion, counselling, tutoring, managing relations with local stakeholders, supporting users in making their own curriculum and applications.

The State-Regions agreement of 2nd August 2002, defined the credentials of guidance professionals, at Regional level. Subsequently, the description system and the certification of competencies would be harmonized at National level. In 2007 only 8 Regions and Autonomous Provinces established criteria concerning guidance professionals' profiles. In 2008 has been set up - by Isfol and the Ministry of Labour - a School for Guidance Professionals (Scuola per Professionisti dell'Orientamento). The School represents a reference point for the set up of an integrated system for training, updating and competence development of guidance professionals and offers a wide range of high-qualified training courses, seminars and workshops. Many courses and masters are offered also by public and private universities.

9.1 FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

IVET is mostly financed by the Ministry of Education, the Regions and the Provinces (competences for school buildings). In 2004 (data from Ministry of Education), the total public expenditure for education and vocational training was about EUR 65 billion (4.66 % of GDP), out of which 78.5 % goes to schools, 23% to adult learning (continuous and permanent training).

For what concerns the school (IVET) financing, the State’s contribution raised to 82% in 2004, the Regions’ contribution raised to 2.7% and the local authorities’ contribution raised to 16%.

In the case of state-run vocationally oriented streams in education (technical and vocational colleges) financing is basically provided out of funds belonging to the Ministry of Education, University and Research and the provincial authorities. The regional authorities also play a crucial role in this sector, particularly in the Centre and North of the country, by means of the European Social Fund. Moreover, the regional authorities can also use ESF to contribute to measures aimed at reducing school dropout rates, teacher training and refresher courses and other activities.

The 2007-2013 Programmes for Education are contributing to Italy's commitment to reduce both the rate of early school dropouts (to 10%) and the percentages of 15-year old students with poor reading skills (from 35% to 20% according to the OECD PISA test) and poor math skills (from 48% to 21%). As far as regional resources are concerned, the Regions have appropriated some €964 million for the 2007-2013 period (inclusive of the financing from the European Social Fund and the related co-financing), "for the purpose of planning and implementing reforms of educational and training systems so as to develop the potential of individuals to secure initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment, thereby making education and training more pertinent to the job market."

TABLE 1 - INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNDING, ACCORDING TO IVET LEVELS	
IVET LEVELS	INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNDING
LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State is responsible for school funding both for educational and administrative purpose - Regions provide directly under delegated power, services and assistance to students out of their own budget - Provinces and Municipalities can be delegated by the Region to provide assistance and services

IVET LEVELS	INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNDING
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION ²⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State responsible for school funding both for educational and administrative purpose - Regions provide directly under delegated power, services and assistance to students out of their own budget - Provinces and Municipalities can be delegated by the Region to provide assistance and services
APPRENTICESHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The State grants relief from social security contributions to firms offering apprenticeship contracts and to apprentices, who pay a reduced rate; - The regional authorities finance training courses outside the workplace introduced in 1997, partly using funds provided by the state and the European Social Fund. Recently Regions are starting to use also a part of their own funds. - The regional authorities are responsible for vocational training, which they finance from the following sources: the Common Regional Fund, the Fund for Vocational Training and Access to the European Social Fund, the European Social Fund, funds disbursed by the state for specific activities.
POST SECONDARY NON TERTIARY EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second-level initial vocational training : Courses addressed to those who have completed the upper secondary level of education or who have obtained a first-level vocational qualification are offered free of charge and are financed through the European Social Fund. - Higher technical education and training system IFTS courses are free of charge. They are co-financed by the Ministry and by the Regions; however, also private financing can be foreseen.

²⁸ Constitutional reform law 3/2001, assigns exclusive competences to the Regions concerning First and second level of initial vocational training (Formazione professionale iniziale, FPI)

IVET LEVELS	INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNDING
TERTIARY EDUCATION (<i>LAUREA DOTTORATO</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The State financially supports universities through funds foreseen by the State budget which are to be subdivided among the various universities as follows: - Fund for the regular financing of the universities (FFO);²⁹ - Fund for university building and great scientific equipment (FEU); - Fund for the development planning of university system (FPS). The Afam system, for its administrative and didactic functioning, receives funds from the Ministry of Treasury.

9.2 FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

Training policies are supported by financial subsidies; the main players and providers supporting CVT public funding system are:

Regions and provinces through:

- European Social fund (Regulation n. 1081/2006);
- National Laws (Law 236/1993 and 53/2000, 105 million euros per year devoted to Regions and Autonomous Provinces, supporting continuous training).

Social Partners through:

Joint interprofessional funds (Fondi paritetici interprofessionali) (Law 388/2000 amended by art. 48 Law 289/20002).

9.2.1 FUNDING FOR PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVET

The continual training system is financially sustained by resources made available by the State, the Regions, public and private parties, to be integrated if necessary with other resources made available by the European Union.

²⁹ The first one (FFO) is made up of financial resources which were distributed among approximately ten budget items until 1993. These financial resources converged on a single budget item, which is subdivided into three parts: a basis share, related to the "historical" transfer (corresponding to the amount received by universities in the previous years); a "re-balance share", to be divided according to criteria related to the standards of the production costs per student and to objectives of research re-qualification; a share destined to "programme agreement" among universities and the MIUR.

The main instruments supporting continuous training currently operating in our country are the following:

1. THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND 2007-2013

Reference framework for continuous training is mainly based on the indications of priority expenditure defined in the Operational programme ESF 2007-2013, assigning the 41% of the planned resources (of €640 million foreseen) to the development of adaptation capacity of enterprises and workers and to the improvement of the human capital³⁰.

Altogether, the European Social Fund's resources amount to roughly €2.1 billion which, if considered annually, constitute a source of financing almost equivalent to that coming from the interprofessional joint funds. Around one-third of these resources are earmarked for adoption of organizational measures designed to increase the productivity and the quality of work, and to policies for anticipating changes and planning and implementing specific services in order to tackle restructuring.

The *Annual Survey on permanent training 2008*, implemented by the Ministry of Labor and conducted by Isfol, underlines also the expenditure for continuous training activities in the framework of European social fund 2000-2006 (financing for workers of the public sector and private enterprises). Globally, the resources for continuous training amount to €1.870 million (1.400 million for the centre-North and 470 million for the southern regions), for the whole planning ESF 2000-2006.

In 2007, Italian expenditure for continuous training amount to €365 million (220 for the North-centre and 145 million for the south). As enlightened in the Report, expenditures for continuous training activities is higher for private enterprises (€263 million) than for continuous training in public administration and other bodies contributing to the governance in continuous training.

2. NATIONAL LAW 236/93, WHICH SET UP A FUND FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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

- in company training;
- teacher training;
- system actions;
- corporate, sectoral and territorial plan promoted by social partner, training on individual choice.

The implementation of Law 236/93 (national resources) represents an important development for continuous training because it makes application for individual training possible via training vouchers. The preference for the issuance of the vouchers goes to the following categories of workers: those involved in mobility processes, those drawing extraordinary unemployment compensation, those with atypical contracts, those over 45 years old, and those in possession only of the middle school diploma. The resources

³⁰ Please, see *Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs; National Reform Programme 2008-2010, prepared by the Interministerial Committee for EU Affairs ("CIACE"), under the coordination of the Department for EU Policies, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Rome, November 2008, p. 97.*

appropriated and transferred to the Regions amount to €207.5 million (for each of the years of 2006 and 2007).

3. NATIONAL LAW 53/00

Law 53/2000 (national resources) on training leave allows the funding of CVT vouchers for workers. It recognizes the right of workers to lifelong learning by granting specific leave for training. The type of training can be chosen independently by the worker or arranged by the company. The vouchers are delivered by the Regions with the State financing: The Ministry of Labor has allocated for the first 4 years €60 million. National Law 53/2000 finances two types of actions:

- Workers training projects which, on the basis of contract agreements, envisage partial reduction of working hour;
- Training projects submitted by the workers themselves.

4. STATE TRANSFERS TO THE COMMON REGIONAL FUND FOR REGIONS with ordinary charters part of the revenue from social security contributions and regional taxes; these revenues are not destined exclusively for use in vocational training;

5. JOINT INTERPROFESSIONAL FUNDS for continual training managed by social parties, set up in 2001 and which became operative starting from 2004.

These funds are entrusted to private actors who, in agreement with the Ministry and Regional Authorities, are called up to define a new system of rules regulating access to benefits in favour of the continuing training of employed workers. They are articulated in 15 funds with a rate of the 42% of private enterprises and 56% of workers adhering to these Funds.

As regards the resources made available by the Joint Interprofessional Funds, they are responsible for directly issuing the notices and invitations to tender. The funds finance company, sectoral, territorial and individual training plans to benefit the member companies. In fact the plans are financed by financial resources deriving from the annual yield of the contribution of 0.30 % of business's contributions to the INPS (national welfare institute) as contribution for obligatory insurance against involuntary unemployment. Each year companies can decide whether to belong to one of the Funds and in this case use such opportunities, or whether to continue paying the INPS contribution.

As for the two national instruments (Law 236/93 and Law 53/00), the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies allocates the resources among the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces and distributes the funds to them, and they in turn issue notices and invitations to tender.

The interprofessional joint funds manage resources of an estimated €350-€400 million per year dedicated to supporting the training programmes proposed by businesses participating in the funds. As of July 2008, around 482,000 firms were participating for total of 6.2 million workers. The training activities financed in this manner involved 580,000 workers and around 30,000 businesses from January 2004 to 30 June 2007. It can be estimated that the volume of total activity as of 30 June 2008 had reached around 6,800 training plans, with involvement of 40,000 firms and 850,000 workers.

It is worth to mention that, in line with the European Social Fund planning, the education and training of business owners has been made a specific objective. A particular emphasis has thus been placed on promoting self-employment and the creation of business by giving

incentives to specific targets (young people, women and immigrants) and capitalising on the value of sectors that are strategic for regional economies. Training initiatives, economic incentives, and advisory services are the tools contemplated for reaching such objective³¹.

6. THE "PERMANENT TERRITORIAL CENTRES FOR ADULT EDUCATION"

CTP have recently been instituted under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, University and Research. Their objective is to identify and fulfill individual demand for vocational education and training. This is usually free of charge and mainly geared to remedial or first time acquisition of basic skills (languages, computer studies, Italian for foreigners, and so on) or to basic vocational training (pre-vocationally oriented training). They address young people and adults, employed or unemployed workers, without distinction.

Expenses for functioning of CTP and evening classes are met through:

- budget funds of the Ministry of education, university and scientific research;
- contributions allocated by the government in accordance with Law 440 of 18 December 1997 on the 'Fund for enrichment and widening of the educational offer and for equalizing interventions', destined to the 'full achievement of school autonomy (...) and development of recurrent and permanent education and training' (section 1, paragraph 1).

In addition:

- CIPE (Interministerial Committee for Prices) funds;
- Contributions from the Regions and local authorities.

9.2.2 FUNDING FOR CVT IN ENTERPRISES:

The private companies contribute to the funding of CVT:

- by the 0.30% of their wage bill to contribute to fund training activities through the joint inter-professional training funds;
- by the contribution (20%) to the total costs (direct and not, as labor cost) for CVT co financed by the ESF;
- by the organization with own resources of training activities for their employees.

Current trend regarding the use of 0, 30%:

- joint inter-professional training funds: the main collector of 0,30% (around 300 Millions Euro);
- Residual funding national Law 236/93;

³¹ The objective is moreover associated with a specific indicator in the Regional Operating Programmes that is aimed at measuring the percentage of initiatives for self-employment and the start-up of businesses.

- ESF co-financing: REGULATION No 1081/2006 on the ESF: *Article 11* - Eligibility of expenditure - “The ESF shall provide support towards eligible expenditure which (...) may include any financial resources collectively contributed by employers and workers”.

Continuous training in Italy is not yet fully exploited, as underlined in the Annual Survey on permanent training 2008: European average of enterprises offering training to their employers is equal to 60%, while in Italy is 32%, with a performance very close to that of new European countries entered in 2004. This result is mainly due to the structure of Italian productive system in some traditional sectors, for example textile, tourism, commerce, in correlation with a reduced enterprise size and a low technological innovation level³². If we focus on the total cost of CVT courses as % of total labour cost (table 1 below), Italian enterprises have devoted 1, 3% of labour cost to continuous training activities. As regards the first indicator for CVTS3 regarding cost of courses as percentage of total labour cost, total cost in Europe represent 1, 6% of labour cost, while in Italy is 1, 3%. In 1999 (CVTS2) this indicator was 1, 7%, therefore registering a decrease (-0, 4 %) mainly concerning small and medium enterprises (as showed in the table, for enterprises with more than 250 employees Italian percentage of 1, 8 for CVTS3 is quite close of that of EU27).

TABLE 1 - TOTAL COST OF CVT COURSES AS % OF TOTAL LABOUR COST (ALL ENTERPRISES) (2005 vs. 1999)								
SIZE CLASS (NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES)								
	TOTAL (%)		10 TO 49 (%)		50 TO 249 (%)		250 OR MORE (%)	
GEO	CVTS3	CVTS2	CVTS3	CVTS2	CVTS3	CVTS2	CVTS3	CVTS2
EU27	1,6	:	1,1	:	1,4	:	1,9	:
EU25	1,6	2,3	1,1	1,5	1,4	2,4	1,9	2,5
IT	1,3	1,7	0,7	1,2	1	1,5	1,8	2,2

Source: Eurostat; 2nd and 3rd continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS2 and CVTS3)

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

Main financial resources for funding for training for unemployed people and other groups excluded from the labor market are: the European Social fund, which in the period 2007-2013 allocates funds for all Regional Operational Programmes for training projects for unemployed and other groups excluded from the labor market; State transfers to the Common Regional Fund for regions with ordinary charters of part of the revenue from social security contributions and regional taxes; these revenues are not destined exclusively for use in vocational training. Regions and Provinces organize calls for proposal direct to VET institutions to organize training courses for unemployed.

³² Annual Survey on permanent training 2008, *Rapporto Annuale formazione continua 2008*, Isfol, Rome 2008, pp. 31-34.

Please, see also chapter 9.1 as the same sources finance both IVET and training for unemployed people. In fact data concerning public expenditure for vocational training includes both type of training.

9.4 GENERAL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND MECHANISMS

The training initiatives for employed workers (continuous training) represent a fundamental part of the Italian lifelong-learning strategy. As for general funding arrangements, we can mention:

- The interprofessional joint funds (see item 5.1.2) manage resources of an estimated €360-€400 million per year dedicated to supporting the training programmes proposed by businesses participating in the funds.
- The implementation of Law 236/93 represents an important development for continuous training because it makes application for individual training possible via training vouchers. The preference for the issuance of the vouchers goes to the following categories of workers: those involved in mobility processes, those drawing extraordinary unemployment compensation, those with atypical contracts, those over 45 years old, and those in possession only of the middle school diploma. The resources appropriated and transferred to the Regions amount to €207.5 million (for each of the years of 2006 and 2007).
- Law 53/2000 on training leave allows the funding of CVT vouchers for workers. It recognizes the right of workers to lifelong learning by granting specific leave for training. The type of training can be chosen independently by the worker or arranged by the company. The vouchers are delivered by the Regions with the State financing (15 million/year).

ILA

An interregional project for the experimentation of the Individual Learning Account (ILA) has recently been launched, following European actions aimed at facilitating demand policies (scaled around the individual and his/her learning needs), as well as the vouchers already experimented in a number of Regions and Provinces as a financial tool for continuing training on individual demand. The ILA experimentation (in the form of a prepaid credit card) conducted in some Italian Regions is part of what is known as “demand policies” (scaled around the individual and learning needs) in the awareness that this type of approach is efficient in relation to specific targets possibly disadvantaged. Those making use of the ILA prepaid credit card are either individual over 18 years of age in unemployment (diploma-holders, degree-holders, immigrants, with transversal priority for women) or workers with atypical work contracts.

With the ILA card a fixed number of citizens, in particular conditions, is given a certain amount of money to be spent on participation in formal and informal learning activities chosen by the individuals themselves, with the assistance of guidance and tutoring services provided by Employment Centres³³.

³³ Further data and information on the project can found on the website dedicated to the ILA experimentation: (provisionally <http://213.92.85.159/ccfi/>).

10. NATIONAL VET STATISTICS - ALLOCATION OF PROGRAMMES

10.1 CLASSIFICATION OF NATIONAL VET PROGRAMMES

10.1.1 MAIN CRITERIA USED TO ALLOCATE VET PROGRAMMES

Classification of Italian qualifications, updated till 2003, has been implemented by the National Institute of Statistics (Istat), the main supplier of official statistical information in Italy. The classification has been implemented after consulting ISTAT, MIUR and INVALSI (National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and training System) surveys till the academic year 2003/2004. The classification is coherent with the last version of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED97) used by OCSE, UNESCO e EUROSTAT in the provision of statistic indicators for the International comparison³⁴.

Classification of vocational education programmes is described in section 4.1.

10.1.2 VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

LEVEL	EQUIVALENT IN ISCED	MINIMUM DURATION	MAXIMUM DURATION	AVERAGE DURATION	TYPICAL STARTING AGE OF PUPILS
LOWER SECONDARY (SCUOLA MEDIA INFERIORE - 2A)	2	3 years	3 years	3	11
UPPER SECONDARY	3	3 years	5 years	4	14
POST SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING	4	1800 hours (ITS courses) 1200 hours (IFTS courses)	2000 hours (ITS courses) 2400 hours (IFTS courses)	2 years (4 semesters)	Courses are not organised according to age levels

³⁴ For a wider framework of Istat classification, please consult: http://www.istat.it/strumenti/definizioni/titoli_di_studio/

LEVEL	EQUIVALENT IN ISCED	MINIMUM DURATION	MAXIMUM DURATION	AVERAGE DURATION	TYPICAL STARTING AGE OF PUPILS
HIGHER EDUCATION					
FIRST DEGREE	5A	3 years		3 years	-
SPECIALIST DEGREE / MASTER DEGREE	5A	2 years	2 years	2 years	-
FIRST LEVEL MASTER DEGREE	5A	1	1	1	
SECOND LEVEL MASTER DEGREE	5A	1	1	1	
POSTGRADUATE/RESEARCH DOCTORATE	6	3 years			-

Please, see 4.1 diagram in section 4.1.

10.2 FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

LEVEL	FIELDS OF EDUCATION/STUDY
UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL: UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL (LYCÉE SYSTEM)	Classical studies, human sciences Scientific studies economics and commercial geometers artistic social-psycho-pedagogical studies

LEVEL	FIELDS OF EDUCATION/STUDY
<p>VOCATIONAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION- TECHNICAL INSTITUTES</p>	<p>Aeronautical sector: air navigation, assistance to air navigation specialisations; Agricultural sector: agricultural and food, agro-industrial, agro-territorial, viticulture and winemaking, breeding, zootechnic specialisations; Commerce: legal-financial-business, business technical expert, qualified accountable specialisations, etc.; Industry: mechanics, electrical engineering, electronics, data processing, chemicals, textiles specialisations, etc; Surveying: building, territorial specialisations Nautical sector: captain, machinery operator, shipbuilder specialisations; Business technical expert and foreign languages correspondent; Tourism; Social studies (the former technical institutes for girls): artistic, chemistry and biology, dietist, Community manager specialisations.</p>
<p>VOCATIONAL INSTITUTES: THE FOLLOWING THREE-YEAR SECTORS AND BRANCHES OF STUDY ARE OFFERED:</p>	<p>Agricultural sector Industry and crafts sector clothing and fashion chemical-biological industry mechanical industry energy systems Service sector Medical assistance sector non-conventional branches of study :bakery, furnishings industry, marble industry, ceramics, graphics industry, nautical-shipping industry audio-visual industry Photography</p>
<p>INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING</p>	<p>Catering wellness tourist promotion and reception installation, maintenance of electric installations Mechanic.</p>
<p>POST SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ITS)</p>	<p>Training pathways concerning: energetic efficiency Mobility Technologies of life New technologies for Made in Italy Technologies for arts and culture Technologies of information and communication</p>

LEVEL	FIELDS OF EDUCATION/STUDY
IFTS	<p style="text-align: center;"> Agriculture Industry and handicraft: I - Manufacturing II - TIC III - Building Trade and tourism, transports I - Transports II - Tourism Public and private social services I - Environment II - Insurance and financial services </p>
HIGHER EDUCATION	<p style="text-align: center;"> Non-university higher education institutes restoration cinematography regulation for the arrangement and keeping of archives to training of army officers and public safety force interpreters and translators training </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Afam institutes: art, with specialisations in painting, sculpture, decoration and set designing; dramatic arts with courses for actors and directors present in the National Academy of Drama; dance, with the specialisations for soloist dancer, choreographer and teacher; Music Conservatoires, now Higher Institutes for Music and Dance. </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> University tertiary education: Courses and classes are organised in study areas: sanitary, scientific, social and classical areas. A complete list of laurea (L) and laurea magistrale classes is accessible on the national data base, regularly updated, on the website http://off.miur.it </p>

Source: Istat classification of Italian qualifications, 2003

10.3 LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR CLASSIFICATIONS

At the current moment, there is no specific national structure in Italy whose aim is to certify knowledge and ability, like the one stated in the European Qualification framework. Regional autonomy influences the certification of professional qualifications; however, a lot of work has been progressing to move this certification into national oversight, with the involvement of all social and professional partners.

To help this implementation process, it is necessary to find a new concept of qualification (certificate, diploma, *laurea*, *attestato*,) based on common language, focused on competences and learning outcomes, as a result of any learning context (formal, informal, non-formal). There is also the need to define common criteria in order to guarantee the legibility, transparency and quality of the qualification and the validation of the certification process, thus distinguishing professional standards, training standards, recognition, validation and certification standards.

For some levels of the National system of VET, the reference to EQF levels has already started, as for the three levels of academic education, directly connected to the last levels of EQF (thanks to the Bologna process). Moreover, for the specific case of IFTS, it has already been agreed (by ministerial decree on the 25th of January 2008) an action to make IFTS more respondent to a learning outcomes approach.

The practical steps to implement the national Qualification framework (2007-2010) are:

- Inventory of the national and regional best practices;
- Definition and validation of the methodological guide: database of standards;
- Testing the methodologies in specific sectors (already tested for Tourism and Engineering);
- Guidelines and instruments for the sectoral group of experts;
- Production and development of professional standards in different sectors by “sectoral group of experts”;
- Each step should be validated by the stakeholders involved in the “National Board” (Committee) set up in 2006 by the Ministry of Labour, aims at defining a NQF and giving a concrete impulse to this process.

The “National Board” involves institutional actors (Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, Regions and Autonomous Provinces and Social Partners, together with the technical support of ISFOL and Tecnostruttura) and the main objective is the building of a “*National Standard System*” constituting the main structure of the future National Qualification Framework.

11. AUTHORS, SOURCES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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11.3 LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFAM - *Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale* - High Artistic and Musical Education

CEDEFOP - Centro europeo per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale - European center for the

development of vocational training

CENSIS - *Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali* - Centre for Social Studies and Policies

CFPs - *Centri di Formazione professionale* - Vocational training centers

CGIL - *Confederazione generale italiana del lavoro* - Italian General Workers' Confederation

CGU - *Confederazione Gilda-Unams (Unione artisti)* - Gilda-Unams (Artists Union) Confederation

CISL - *Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori* - Italian Confederation of Trade Unions

CNR - Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche - National Research Council

CPIA - Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti - Provincial centers for adult education

CPI / JCs - *Centri per l'impiego* - Job centers

CRUI - *Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane* - Conference of the Italian University Rectors

CTP - *Centri permanenti territoriali* - Territorial permanent centers

DM - *Decreto Ministeriale* - Ministerial decree

D. Lgs - *Decreto Legislativo* - Legislative Decree

EUROSTAT - *Ufficio Statistico delle Comunità europee* - Statistical Office of the European Communities.

FSE /ESF - *Fondo Sociale Europeo* - European Social Fund

ICT - Tecnologie dell'informazione e della comunicazione - Information and communication technologies

IFTS - *Istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore* - Higher technical education and training

ILA - *Carta di credito formativo* - Individual Learning Account

INPS - *Istituto Nazionale per la Previdenza Sociale* - National Institute of Social Insurance

INVALSI - Istituto nazionale per la valutazione del sistema educativo di istruzione e di formazione - National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education System

ISFOL - *Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori* - Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers

ISTAT- *Istituto nazionale di statistica* - National Statistical Institute

ITS- *Istituti Tecnici Superiori* - Higher Technical Institutes

MIUR - Ministry of Public Education, Universities and Research

MLPS- used both for:

- Ministero del Lavoro (Ministry of Labour);
- *Ministero del Lavoro, Salute e Politiche Sociali* (Ministry of Labour, Health and social policies - at present)

NAP - *Piano Nazionale per l'Occupazione* - National Action Plan for employment

PA - *Amministrazione Pubblica* - Public Administration

PIAAC - *Programma per la valutazione delle competenze degli Adulti* - Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

PON - *Piano Operativo Nazionale* - National Operative Plan

POR - *Piani Operativi Regionali* - Regional Operative Plan

SPI / PESs - *Servizi pubblici per l'impiego* - Public Employment services

SPF on line - *Sistema permanente di formazione on line* - Permanent System for on line system

UC - *Unità capitalizzabili* - Capitalisable Units

UIL - *Unione Italiana del Lavoro* - Union of Italian Labour