



## Italian Youth Guarantee: a reality check\*

by Lilli Casano, Carmen Di Stani, Lidia Petruzzo, Giulia Rosolen

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**It could have been a different May Day, a European May Day.** We followed the matter through the end, never giving up hope. It had to be the Youth Guarantee May Day, the one of absolute commitment. Not the May Day of rhetorical intentions, unable alone to build the future of a country.

**The Youth Guarantee was expected to be the first response to the employment emergency,** a response that had to come at a specific time on a special day. It should have been celebrated as an encouragement to those 5 million young people under 25, who are still jobless in Italy. But it did not turn out this way.

**Although the Ministry of Labour, through a press release issued on 29<sup>th</sup> April, announced the launch of the Youth Guarantee on May Day, ensuring that the measures had to be directed to young people up to the age of 30, the website ([www.garanziagiovani.gov.it](http://www.garanziagiovani.gov.it)) aimed at implementing the Guarantee, is still not fully functional. Furthermore, the communication campaign has not started yet and only few regions have already signed the agreement with the Ministry of Labour.**

**Nevertheless, much of the available budget has already been spent to set up the website.** No information is provided by official sources: some say that it cost around 200 million Euros (see T. Boeri, *E adesso non spredate quei soldi per i giovani*, La Repubblica 5 marzo 2014), the Ministry of Labour says 1 million. In any case, too much money for what it is worth. Beside some information on the Youth Guarantee, the web platform merely includes the registration procedures. After filling in your personal information, you receive an email with username and password to access a private area where it is possible to upload your CV and complete the registration procedure to the Guarantee Fund selecting the Region you would like to be contacted from. Within 60 days, the Region will contact you to schedule a meeting in order to discuss career opportunities for labour market inclusion or a vocational training programme.

**However, by now, only a few Regions have launched the Youth Guarantee programme.** The National Implementation Plan establishes that the Regions are responsible for the implementation of active policies, with the exclusion of guidance activities. In other words, without a regional implementation plan, the web platform is an empty box that does not offer any services.

**The kick-start of the Youth Guarantee depends on the introduction and enforcement of specific agreements between the Ministry of Labour and the Regions,** as well as on the creation of an Implementation Plan laying down the detailed actions, budget, procedures, and so on.

**By now, agreements with the Ministry of Labour have been signed only with the Emilia Romagna, Valle d'Aosta, Sardinia, Lazio, Veneto Region, while in Umbria, Sicily, Campania, Apulia, Friuli Venezia Giulia the signing of the agreement seems to be under way.**

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**The measures are fragmented and inconsistent both in terms of content as well as in terms of information accessibility:** only in a few cases, it is possible to have access to the relevant enforcement agreement between the Region and the Ministry of Labour and the Implementation Plan. For instance, in the Lombardy Region, Tuscany and Marche, the programme seems to have started, yet the relevant agreements as well as the implementation plans are not publicly available. In some regions, the documents issued by the Ministry of Labour are not included in the implementation plans and in other cases (Campania, Province of Trento), although the agreement between the Region and the Ministry has not been signed (or published) yet, progress has been made in the implementation of the Guarantee. Whereas in Calabria, Molise, Abruzzo, Basilicata, Liguria it is still not possible to access the relevant information and a lot remains to be done. Despite all that, both the Regions and Government talk of a “fair collaboration” in the implementation of the Guarantee, which everyone defines as an “opportunity not to be missed”. Facts, however – as outlined above – prove the contrary, yet with some exceptions. In the Lombardy Region, the system called “Dote” launched on October 2013 anticipated to a large extent the Youth Guarantee objectives. The Region has not yet signed the agreement with the Ministry, as some issues need to be solved beforehand (such as co-financing, the possibility of not including these resources in the so-called “Patto di Stabilità”, or the introduction of technical procedures to regulate the issue). The Piedmont Region has already launched an extraordinary plan for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, with a view to putting in practice the National Plan. The Region has already issued a multiannual framework regulation for the implementation of the Project “Piedmont Youth Guarantee” (GGP) 2014-2015; it has issued a document called *Carta dei Servizi* listing all the services provided by means of a 5.550.000 Euros spending plan focusing on the various items of the 2014 budget; it has launched a call to identify a pool of providers as well as training programmes to be carried out within the framework of the “Piedmont Youth Guarantee”; it has drafted detailed guidelines directed to Provinces.

**The launch of the Youth Guarantee on May Day had – or should have had – also a symbolic meaning:** it should have conveyed the idea that in Italy people still believe in the future and invest in those generations that can still take action and reverse the course of short-sighted policies. The Youth Guarantee was not meant to be the silver bullet, nor will it be enough to give Italy a shot in the arm. But it would have been a first step forward. The Youth Guarantee is a forward- rather than backward-looking concept, and this is important. But on May Day another opportunity was wasted because of the lack of courage among policy-makers who made promises to 6 million young people in Italy but did not live up to them.

**Lilli Casano**

ADAPT Research Fellow

 @lillicasano

**Carmen Di Stani**

Scuola internazionale di dottorato in Formazione della persona e mercato del lavoro  
ADAPT-CQIA, Università degli Studi di Bergamo

 @Carmendst89

**Lidia Petruzzo**

ADAPT Research Fellow

 @PetruzzoLidia

**Giulia Rosolen**

ADAPT Research Fellow

 @GiuliaRosolen