



NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Overview of the structure of the national educational system with main reference on upper secondary technical and vocational education system



The Italian system of education and training is organized as follows:

- Kindergarten (3 to 6 years), not mandatory, it provides for a term of three years;
- First cycle of education, divided into primary school lasts five years and secondary school level, which lasts three years;
- Second cycle, which is composed of the upper secondary education system, which lasts five years, and education and vocational training, with three-year and four-year courses;
- Higher education, university established by the offer, from high art and music education (AFAM), and the offer made by the Technical Colleges (ITS); Education is compulsory and free for 10 years, and includes the first cycle of education and the first two years of the second cycle. The legislation provides for the fulfillment of the right-duty to education and training for at least 12 years, however, until the achievement of a vocational qualification within 18 years of age. Completed their compulsory education, therefore, young people should continue in the second cycle of the education system of education and training.

The training offer framework also has the following opportunities:

- the educational specializations and higher technical training (IFTS);
- initial vocational training post-qualification, post diploma and post-graduate;
- apprenticeship;
- education and adult education;

- continuing education;
- the private provision of training. In addition to education and training pathways, the competence of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces in the field of vocational training is accomplished through the programming of additional activities for young people and adults.

The basic vocational training

Those who finish the middle school, does not wish to continue their studies within the school system can achieve a professional qualification in the field of basic vocational training, also known as Level I, regional management, aimed at learning specific skills professional theoretical and technical (including practical work and experience in enterprise). Under the old system students could attend courses after the age of fifteen, they had to last at least two years, be structured as certifiable cycles, to be characterized by the reception modules, guidance and support, work experience in enterprise and the possibility of a third year of specialization at the end of which was issued with a certificate in the specialty. Under the new system, these courses within the vocational education and training channel may begin after completion of secondary school and will last at least three years. Courses cover almost all sectors of the economy.

VET at upper secondary level

The post-secondary education (6-12 months) also called level II, regional management, is aimed at acquiring vocational skills with a high theoretical, technical, technological and management, including practical work and experience in enterprise . It generally enters upper secondary school diploma. At the end it is awarded a certificate of competency.

Technical education is provided by State technical colleges (5 years) and leads to the award, after passing the State exam, a technical baccalaureate for holding mid-level tasks in a plurality of sectors (agriculture, commerce, tourism, surveying, industry, water); the certificate also allows university entrance or entry into post-secondary studies. The courses are organized in two years and three years. The curriculum includes the teaching of both subjects (Italian language, foreign language, mathematics, history, science, etc.) To the different specializations and subjects specific to each specialization.

Vocational education is delivered by professional state institutions (sectors: agriculture, industry and crafts, services sectors) and leads to the award of the diploma of professional qualification (three years) that allows: entering the world of work; the continuation of studies in the post-qualification courses (two years) organized by professional institutions; The attendance of vocational training courses Level II managed by the regions. The post-qualification courses are aimed to obtain a vocational baccalaureate for university entrance or to attend regional and other post-secondary courses of specialization courses

Three- and four-year leFP programmes

The leFP programmes (*percorsi triennali e quadriennali di istruzione e formazione professionale*) offer young people the opportunity to fulfil their right/duty to education and training. The training is designed and organised by the regions.

Over the past few years, increased cooperation between the State, the regions and the provinces has made these programmes more flexible. In 2011, regulations issued by the State-Regions conference, have introduced several important systemic elements:

- (a) a set of training standards for basic skills to be developed in the three- and four-year programmes;
- (b) a set of minimum standards (valid at national level) for technical and vocational skills in relation to the occupation profiles included in the national qualifications register (*Repertorio nazionale delle qualifiche*);
- (c) intermediate and final certifications that are valid at national level. The national qualifications register created in 2011 (10) contains the national occupation profiles and the corresponding qualifications and programmes or learning pathways, as well as minimum education and training standards (valid at national level). Qualifications leading to a certain national occupation profile need to be described in terms of learning outcomes and to be allocated the corresponding EQF level.

The leFP programmes are organised in modules and aim to develop basic, transversal and technical-occupational skills. This modularisation allows learners to change areas of study through recognition of credits. On-the-job training activities (especially internships) play a key role and are carried out under the supervision of two tutors, one from the training centre and one from an enterprise. Methods include traditional classroom teaching, simulations, role play, and cooperative learning. Active teaching methods are highly recommended to meet learner needs. Statistics (ISFOL, 2013a) show that over 300 000 people enrolled in threeyear leFP programmes in 2012/13. Of these, almost 163 000 were enrolled in programmes at upper secondary vocational schools and almost 128 000 in training centres. This represents an increase of 18% in enrolments compared to the previous year, a positive trend due to increase in enrolments in three-year leFP programmes at upper secondary vocational schools. Learners in these leFP programmes train for occupations in catering (58 424), while those enrolled in training centres prefer training for occupations in the wellness sector (32 240 students). During 2012/13, an increase in enrolments was also registered in the fouryear leFP: 9 471 more students enrolled in 2012/13 compared to previous year.

Data from ISFOL show that in 2013, 50% of those who have acquired a leFP qualification in the past three years are employed (ISFOL, 2014a).

Post-leFP programmes and others

People who have completed the three- or four-year vocational training leFP and those who have obtained an upper secondary diploma can access specific training organised by regions or the autonomous provinces. These training courses (13) are generally targeted at young unemployed people, adults, migrants and the disabled. They generally last 400 to 600 hours and are jointly financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). Upon completion, a regional vocational certificate commonly referred to as a 'second level qualification' is awarded. These courses aim at the acquisition of theoretical, technical and managerial skills, though practical work is included and completion of a traineeship is generally required. Admission is often subject to selective procedures that may include entrance tests or interviews; there may be additional specific requisites such as previous specific working experience.

A minimum number of learners are usually required to start a course. Classes are organised according to conditions specified by the course announcement (such as being unemployed, holding a specific qualification or diploma) and not according to learner age.

Courses are job-oriented and should meet the requests coming from the labour market at local level. They lead to a regional qualification corresponding to specific occupation areas, though these are not listed in the national register of qualifications.

Courses are organised in modules or units corresponding to specific themes or to the acquisition of specified competences. Timetables are organised at regional and local level and subsequently defined by the training centre providing the course: lessons may be grouped in a few weeks or distributed throughout the year. The organisation of courses is decentralised and general information on the content of the curriculum is not available at the national level. Methods may include traditional classroom teaching, simulations, role play, and collaborative learning. Active teaching methods are recommended, meeting learners' needs to acquire cultural and technical/occupational competences through practice. Job placements are mandatory, due to the job-oriented nature of these courses, and are organised in collaboration with enterprises. Distance learning is widespread. Learners generally undergo intermediate assessments through tests or submission of individual works. They sit a final exam that can be either written or oral/practical, as the examining commission decides. To be admitted to the final exam a minimum attendance for two thirds of the total timetable is required. These courses are organised by training centres (14) accredited by the regions and are not homogeneously offered in the country. They lead to a qualification certificate awarded by the regions according to their own specific register, not recognised nationally. There is no national register of qualifications for regional courses.

In Italy the training partnership between school and the working world has experienced in recent years important developments in two directions:

- Strengthening the training offer in alternating training, provided by the Law of 13 July 2015, n. 107;
- The enhancement of apprenticeship for the acquisition of a secondary school diploma, according to the changes introduced by Legislative Decree 15 June 2015, n. 81 implementation of the JOBS ACT 1.

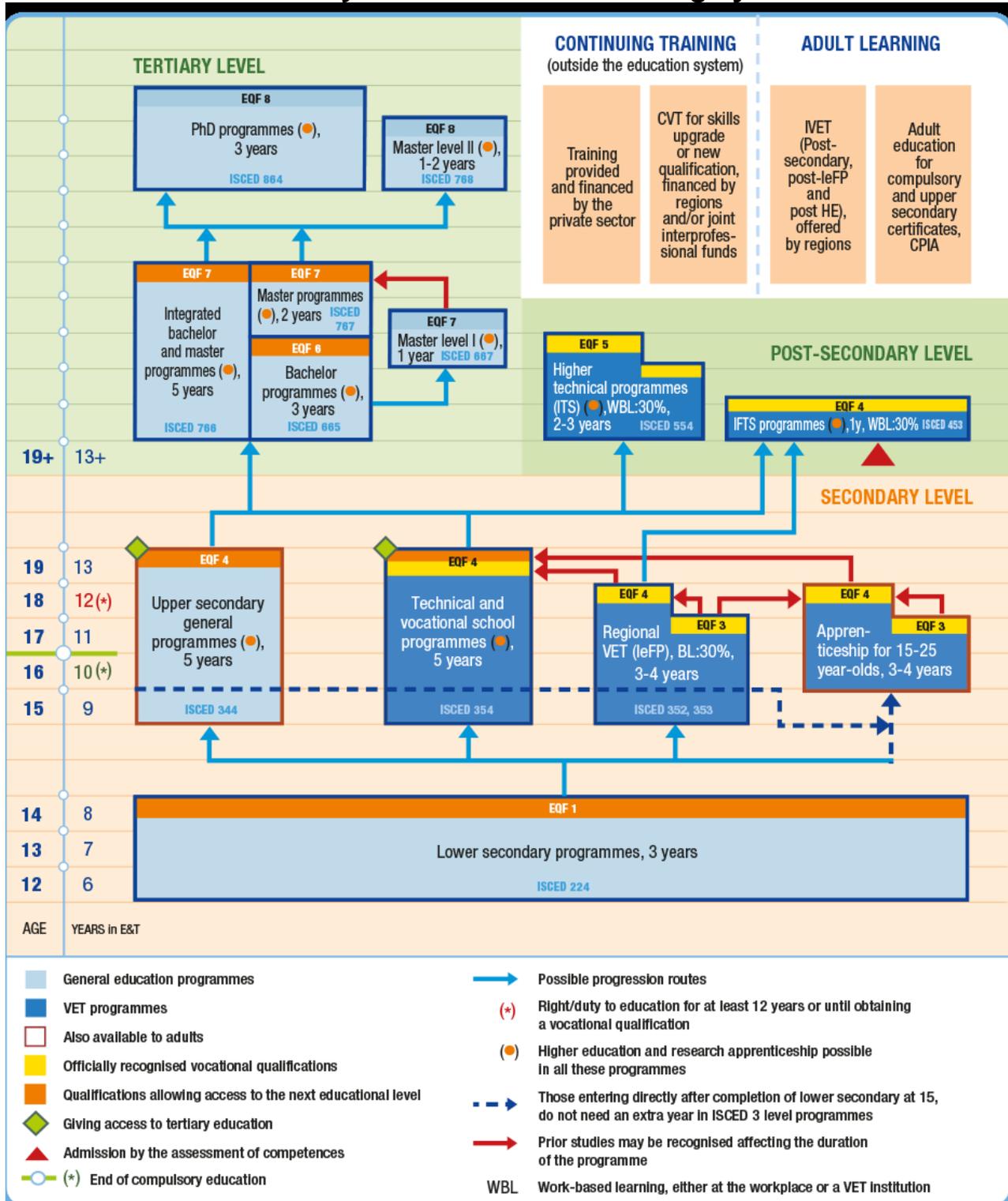
The training offer enhancement in alternating training is readily observed in the Law of 13 July 2015, 107, entitled "Reform of the national education and training system and powers in the reorganization of the existing legislative provisions", which entered organically this strategy teaching in the courses of all branches of study of secondary school degree as an integral part of education paths. The role of alternating school and work in the education system comes out decisively strengthened. Compared to the chosen course of study, the 107/2015 law establishes a number of hours required to activate the experiences of alternation that the current school year 2015/16 will involve, from the third class, all students in the second cycle of education. With these new modes of activation, the intrinsic characteristics of alternation school work outlined by earlier laws enacted change radically: the teaching methodology that schools were designed to activate in response to individual applications for training by the student, now it engages in school curricula and become a structural component of training "in order to increase job opportunities and abilities of student orientation".



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

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

VET in Italy's education and training system



Post-higher education VET

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

National regulatory framework

In Italy a state school system or Education System has existed since 1859, when the Legge Casati (Casati Act) mandated educational responsibilities for the forthcoming Italian state (Italian unification took place in 1861). The Casati Act made primary education compulsory, and had the goal of increasing literacy. This law gave control of primary education to the single towns, of secondary education to the provinces, and the universities were managed by the State. Even with the Casati Act and compulsory education, in rural (and southern) areas children often were not sent to school (the rate of children enrolled in primary education would reach 90% only after 70 years) and the illiteracy rate (which was nearly 80% in 1861) took more than 50 years to halve.

The next important law concerning the Italian education system was the *Legge Gentile*. This act was issued in 1923, thus when Benito Mussolini and his National Fascist Party were in power. In fact, Giovanni Gentile was appointed the task of creating an education system deemed fit for the fascist system. The compulsory age of education was raised to 14 years, and was somewhat based on a ladder system: after the first five years of primary education, one could choose the 'Scuola media', which would give further access to the "liceo" and other secondary education, or the 'avviamento al lavoro' (work training), which was intended to give a quick entry into the low strates of the workforce. The reform enhanced the role of the *Liceo Classico*, created by the Casati Act in 1859 (and intended during the Fascist era as the peak of secondary education, with the goal of forming the future upper classes), and created the Technical, Commercial and Industrial institutes and the *Liceo Scientifico*. The *Liceo Classico* was the only secondary school that gave access to all types of higher education until 1968. The influence of Gentile's Idealism was great,^[4] and he considered the Catholic religion to be the "fundament and crowning" of education. In 1962 the 'avviamento al lavoro' was abolished, and all children until 14 years had to follow a single program, encompassing primary education (*scuola elementare*) and middle school (*scuola media*).

From 1962 to the present day, the main structure of Italian primary (and secondary) education remained largely unchanged, even if some modifications were made: a narrowing of the gap between males and females (through the merging of the two distinct programmes for *technical*

education, and the optional introduction of mixed-gender gym classes), a change in the structure of secondary school (*legge Berlinguer*) and the creation of new *licei*, 'istituti tecnici' and 'istituti professionali', giving the student more choices in their paths.

In 1999, in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Bologna Process, the Italian university system switched from the old system (*vecchio ordinamento*, which led to the traditional 5-year *Laurea* degree), to the new system (*nuovo ordinamento*). The *nuovo ordinamento* split the former *Laurea* into two tracks: the *Laurea triennale* (a three-year degree akin to the Bachelor's Degree), followed by the 2-year *Laurea specialistica* (Master's Degree), the latter renamed *Laurea Magistrale* in 2007. A credit system was established to quantify the amount of work needed by each course and exam (25 work hours = 1 credit), as well as enhance the possibility to change course of studies and facilitate the transfer of credits for further studies or go on exchange (e.g. Erasmus Programme) in another country. However, it is now established that there is just a five-year degree "Laurea Magistrale a Ciclo Unico" for programmes such as Law and a six-year degree for Medicine.

Law 236/1993 finances in-company training, teacher training, system actions, sectoral and territorial plans promoted by the social partners, and individual training (through vouchers). It also allocates a yearly budget of around EUR 100 million which is managed by the regions.

Law 53/2000 finances training leave in accordance with the regulation on working hours, using training vouchers. It recognises workers' right to lifelong learning by granting leave for training activities and establishes that

EUR 15 million are allocated annually by the MLPS to support employee training.

Almost EUR 400 million come from the ESF to support continuing training financed by the EUR 500 million from the joint interprofessional funds.

The competent authorities for the ESF and Laws 236/1993 and 53/2000 are the MLPS, the regions, the autonomous provinces and the provinces that may delegate other bodies.

The government, regions and social partners agreed to allocate financial resources to promote training programmes for low-qualified workers and for those most affected by the economic downturn. The following measures have been adopted:

- ✓ establishment of a specific government unit responsible for collecting data on skills needs and occupation profiles required in specific sectors at local level;
- ✓ the labour market reform law (Law 92/2012) provided for the creation of an integrated information system on training and welfare policies for employment at local level;
- ✓ broader adoption of outcome-oriented learning methods;
- ✓ incentives to adults, also through:
- ✓ agreements aimed at providing new employment opportunities for laidoff workers;
- ✓ use of joint interprofessional funds to provide training opportunities for the unemployed;
- ✓ launch of a quality assurance system at regional level

Lex 107/2015

The strengthening of alternation school work, in legislative measure Law of 13 July 2015, 107, follows three main lines:

- The development orientation, aimed at students enrolled in the last year to facilitate conscious choice of the study program and encourage awareness of the opportunities and employment opportunities, including for the purpose of implementing the measures provided by the European program "Youth Guarantee". The guidance paths also provide training days in the company to raise awareness of the educational value and training of labor.
- The definition of the rights and duties of secondary school students of the second degree engaged in alternating training courses or periods of internships, apprenticeship and teaching in the laboratory, without prejudice to the protection of health and safety in places of work.
- The introduction of measures for teacher training, aimed at increasing the skills to favor the alternating training courses through training periods at public or business entities.

The above-mentioned legislative measure, Article 8-bis, has also introduced an experimental program relating to the conduct of periods of in-company training for students of the last two years of secondary school degree, through the signing of contracts apprendistato. La Law 107/2015, finally, in paragraphs 33 to 43 of Article 1 systematizes the combined school dall'a.s.2015-2016 work in the second cycle of education, through:

- the use of obligatory paths of alternation in the second two years and the last year of the secondary school degree, with a different total duration compared to the laws: at least 400 hours in technical and vocational institutes and at least 200 hours in high schools, to be included in educational offer three-year plan;
- the ability to enter into agreements for conducting pathways in work also with professional associations and entities carrying out activities related to artistic, cultural and environmental or sports promotion bodies recognized by CONI;
- the possibility to realize the alternation of activities during the suspension of teaching activities and abroad, as well as with the educational enterprise simulated mode;
- d. the enactment of a regulation which is called the "Charter of rights and duties of students in alternating training ", with the possibility for the student to express an evaluation effectiveness and coherence of the routes with their field of study;
- is. the reliance on secondary high schools with the task of organizing training courses relating to the protection of health and safety in the workplace, for students inserted in the alternating routes and carried out according to the provisions of Legislative Decree no. 81/2008;
- the allocation of 100 million euro per year to develop the school work in alternation secondary school degree from the year 2016. These resources fund the organization of alternating activities, technical assistance and monitoring of the routes;
- g. the award to the school manager of the task of identifying companies and public bodies and private available for the activation of alternate pathways school work and to enter into agreements Also designed to promote the orientation of the student. Such agreements may be signed with museums and other cultural venues, as well as with the central and local offices

the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture;

- drafting a final evaluation form on approved facilities, drawn up by the executive school at the end of each school year, in which the specific nature of their potential are highlighted training and any difficulties encountered in the collaboration;
- the constitution at the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture, as from 'a. s. 2015/16, the national registry for alternating training, where one can see the companies and public and private agencies available to accept students for alternate routes (How many young people, and for what periods).

The main points of the reform are:

Introduction of meritocratic components in teachers' salaries each year, teachers with the best results of each school will receive a one-time bonus. The head teacher will identify teachers with the best results by applying the criteria established by the evaluation committee of the school teachers. The committee will consist of: i) the head teacher; ii) three teachers; iii) an external evaluator (a teacher or director of another school or even an inspector); iv) two representatives of the parents (in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools) or a representative of the parents and a student representative (in the second-level secondary schools). In 2018, based on an evaluation of the first three years of implementation, the Ministry of Education, University and Research will establish national guidelines for the evaluation of teachers. For this measure has been allocated EUR 200 million a year. This is a positive initiative since it is expected that the work of teachers is evaluated and that the good results are rewarded. However, it may only have a limited impact in terms of improving the motivation of teachers and the attractiveness of the profession from an economic point of view, since the reform makes no changes to the teachers' career structure.

- **assumption of teachers** between 2015 and 2016 more than 100,000 teachers, who have so far exercised its work on temporary contracts, will be hired on permanent contracts. While about half of these teachers is needed to cover existing chairs, the other half will occupy new places. Their role will enhance the educational program offered by each school, both in terms of both teaching materials regarding other aspects, including the reduction of early school leaving and improving the knowledge of the Italian language by foreign students. The recruitment plan aims to solve the old problem of lists of qualified teachers. As a whole is a positive measure, provided that the government meets its commitment to allow access to the profession only through public competitions from 2016 onwards. One potential problem is that it is unclear to what extent the skills of additional teachers really correspond to the needs of individual schools.

-**autonomy school**: school leaders will have greater autonomy in the management of human resources, technological and financial resources and will be subject to external evaluation every three years. Also from 2016/2017 onwards will be free to select the new insegnanti⁵ within specific classes of competition, depending on the needs of their school. It is potentially far-reaching measures, as attenuate a number of constraints that have so far limited the real school autonomy.

-**Curriculum**: Will be established or strengthened some subjects: music, art,

economics, law and sports. In particular, the introduction / strengthening teaching of the economy can help raise literacy levels Financial Italian students, which are very low by the standards International (OECD 2014b). The second-level secondary schools enjoy flexibility in setting their own curriculum through the introduction of materials optional.

Article 1, paragraph 60, of the 107/2015 law, introduces the Territorial laboratories for employability, whose state schools and educational institutions of the second degree can also equip themselves through technical professional poles. It is a new generation of workshops are also open to non-class time, thought for gyms innovation and spaces where to field of work and alternating guidance, but also projects to combat early school leaving and to recover Neet, young people not enrolled in courses of study or in the workplace. Are places open to the territory to stimulate professional growth, skills and self-employment, joining together innovation, education, inclusion, including through the participation of public and local authorities, chambers of commerce, universities, associations, foundations, the training institutions , Higher Technical Institutes and private companies. With them it strategic use of digital technologies, is applying the teaching and design innovations related to them. Through this type of workshops, school and educational institutions have the following objectives:

- opening of the school to the territory and the possibility of use of space, even outside school hours;
- orientation of teaching and training in strategic sectors of Made in Italy, in based on the productive vocation, cultural and social characteristics of each territory

**Ongoing reforms/policy developments/ ministerial/national guidelines/
Country-specific Recommendations
(CSRs)**

The youth guarantee

In the past year, guidance and counselling has received new impetus with the launch of the youth guarantee programme. Following the 2013 European Council recommendation, Italy launched its youth guarantee programme which became operational in May 2014. According to the national youth guarantee plan, every young person aged 15 to 29 years old has the right to receive a good quality offer of employment, a place in training or apprenticeship or an offer to return to education, within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.

The programme sees a strengthened role for guidance and counseling services as key to success, with stress on profiling. Each young person's individual needs are assessed to provide a personally tailored offer. Young people interested in receiving information or participating in the programme can register through the web portal *Cliclavoro* , regional web portals or the website of the youth guarantee .Each young person registering will also choose the employment services that will support her/him (first information, guidance, training agreement, job coaching and job provision).

Various institutions and associations, including chambers of commerce, trade unions and employer associations, youth and third sector organisations are involved in communication and providing information. Regional authorities will be entrusted with implementing the plan through memoranda of understanding and the government will launch a reform of the employment services through partnerships between businesses, public institutions and non-profit organisations.

These will make matching labour demand and supply easier and promote entrepreneurial initiatives. After registration and a preliminary interview, young people will be supported through individual guidance to help them define tailor-made training and/or suitable career choices. Those who meet the formal requirements will be offered direct financing (such as bonus or vouchers) to access a range of potential programmes, including job placements via an employment contract, apprenticeships or traineeships, specific training and coaching to start a business or become self-employed. By July 2014, 119 092 young people had registered in the youth guarantee web portals. The majority of those enrolled live in Sicily (17%), followed by Campania (16.5%) and Lazio (8%). The public employment services (PES) had contacted 13 770 young people; 5 860 had had their first guidance/profiling interview. Under an agreement with employer associations the youth guarantee website also serves as a matching tool between labour demand and supply as employers can advertise their vacancies there. By July 2014, 3 658 employment opportunities, accounting for 5 312 vacancies, had been published.

Other recent initiatives

‘Education starts again’ was launched in 2013 and has a budget of EUR 6.6 million. It involves all types and levels of schools that will appoint a guidance counsellor who liaises with other teachers and with the local guidance network. Specific training courses for teachers will be available.

Activities to increase awareness and parent involvement are also included in this initiative. The web portal ‘I choose, I study’ was launched in early 2014 by the MIUR and targets parents and young people. The portal gathers all basic information on the different education programmes and options. Through this website experts can be asked for advice; it also includes short videos with personalities from business, science and industry explaining how they achieved their goals.

VET governance

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

- ❖ the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) sets the framework for VET in national school programmes (technical and vocational schools) for ITS and IFTS;
- ❖ the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLPS) sets the framework for leFP, while the regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of planning, organisation and provision;
- ❖ regions and autonomous provinces are also in charge of planning, organisation and provision of ITS, IFTS, post leFP, post-higher education, and most of the apprenticeship-type schemes;

- ❖ goals of CVT under the public system are set by the Ministry of Labour, while CVT activities are managed by either regions and autonomous provinces or social partners;
 - ❖ social partners play an important role in promoting company-level training plans (single or group of companies) to be financed by the regions or by the joint interprofessional funds;
 - ❖ the social partners have a general advisory role in VET policy, from which VET provision is then defined;
- the social partners contribute to designing and organising active labour market policies

Comparative analysis with European guidelines (identifying strengths and weaknesses, similarities and differences)

In recent years Italy has made progress in improving its education system. It is in During the introduction of a school evaluation system, the basic skills - according International studies - have improved, the drop-out rate is decreasing and participation in early childhood education is almost universal among children between four and six years. Furthermore, the recent reform of the national education system and training could further improve educational outcomes. However, the system of education and training Italian still suffers from major problems. The rate school dropout still well above the EU average. There are considerable regional differences in basic skills. The tertiary level of education of young people is the most lowest in the EU and many students still leave tertiary education. learning based on the work it is not sufficiently developed and the entry into the labor market is difficult for young people, including those highly qualified. Public spending on education in relation GDP, is among the lowest in the EU, in particular for education at tertiary level. While the participation of students in upper secondary schools of vocational or technical education or vocational training remains above the EU average (59.4% compared to 48.9% in 2013), the employment rate of young people who have recently achieved upper secondary school diploma is the lowest in the EU (38.3% in 2014). This is due in part to the fact that work-based learning is not sufficiently developed: only 10.7% of students in upper secondary school participated in the alternating routes school-work in 2013/2014, although this percentage registers an upward trend in recent years (INDIRE 2014). As for young people who do not work or are inserted in education or training, Italy has the second highest percentage in the EU (26.2% of people aged between 15 and 29 years in 2014), after Greece (26.7%). The participation of adults in lifelong learning it has increased by 1.8 percentage points in 2014, but It remains below the EU average (8.0% compared to 10.7% in 2014). This is due to extremely low participation of people with a low level of education (2.2% than the EU average of 4.4%). Participation rates of adults with educational levels

medium or high are in line with the corresponding EU averages. In the field of work-based learning, in addition to measures included in the reform of school the recent labor market reform aims to a major overhaul of the apprenticeship system. In particular, it allows students to use apprenticeship to acquire upper secondary education qualifications and simplifies the requirements training for apprenticeships.

Practices adopted by the school system, best practices implemented, territorial experimentations

Emilia Romagna case study

The certification system of Emilia Romagna region is founded on the principle that ‘each person has the right to obtain the formal recognition of competences acquired’. This is a well-articulated system to certify individual professional background, while allowing individuals, young people and workers, to evaluate and plan their professional and training future. Certified competences (independent of the way they were acquired) are considered to be certain, reliable, credible and usable in education and training, since they refer or can be referred to the essential vocational standards indicated in the regional qualifications system.

The process of evaluation is based on an individual orientation phase, and on the preparation and verification of evidence: formal documents (declarations, collaborations contracts, self-declarations, certificates); output evidence (product sample-report letters, report, software, etc.); and action-based evidence (testimonies, audio-video recordings, log book, direct observation). Where there is insufficient or incomplete evidence, the candidate may choose to sit an examination to demonstrate he/she has the competences that were not proven. At the end of the verification and validation process, the candidate can obtain a certificate of vocational qualification (including all competence units comprising the qualification) or a certificate of competences (concerning one or more competence units of the qualification but not all of them) or even a knowledge and skills sheet (concerning only part of a competence unit). The first two certificates can be acquired only after passing a formal examination, while the knowledge and skills sheet can be obtained after the evidence has been verified.

This certification system is currently in its implementation phase. A first pilot of the validation and certification system of non-formal and informal learning for the award of the healthcare operator qualification yielded excellent results.

Lombardy case study

Regional legislation of 2007 requires VET centres to validate credits based on evidence and documents submitted by the applicants: qualifications, diplomas, final marks and any other informal documentation of school results, intermediate certifications of competences awarded by schools and training agencies, concerning practical applications, training experiences or traineeships in Italy and abroad, positive evaluation of extracurricular activities, foreign languages

certificates, cultural or work activities, experience gained in various civil society fields concerning personal development, community work and cultural development (work, environment, voluntary work, solidarity, cooperation, sport), certificates acquired in apprenticeship, as a result of work activities or self-training.

Where documents are considered insufficient or incomplete, the applicant may take evaluation tests. VET centres assign a value to the credits: validated credits can account for a maximum of 50% of the training programme.

The validation is a personalised process in which the applicant plays an active role in identifying and reconstructing his/her professional identity, through the use of specific instruments such as drafting a curriculum vitae, orientation activities, personalized advisory services and customised access to other services. At the end of the verification and validation, which lasts a maximum six months, the applicant will receive a certification of competence at the relevant EQF level, which will be registered in his/her training log book.

Article 1, paragraph 60, of the 107/2015 law, introduces the Territorial laboratories for employability, whose state schools and educational institutions of the second degree can also equip themselves through technical professional poles. It is a new generation of workshops are also open to non-class time, thought for gyms innovation and spaces where to field of work and alternating guidance, but also projects to combat early school leaving and to recover Neet, young people not enrolled in courses of study or in the workplace. Are places open to the territory to stimulate professional growth, skills and self-employment, joining together innovation, education, inclusion, including through the participation of public and local authorities, chambers of commerce, universities, associations, foundations, the training institutions , Higher Technical Institutes and private companies. With them it strategic use of digital technologies, is applying the teaching and design innovations related to them.

Through this type of workshops, school and educational institutions have the following objectives:

- a) opening of the school to the territory and the possibility of use of space, even outside school hours;
- b) orientation of teaching and training in strategic sectors of Made in Italy, in based on the productive vocation, cultural and social characteristics of each territory

Spread of ECVET in the upper secondary technical and vocational education system

Italy is one of the most active states from the point of view of the dissemination of information on ECVET.

The new ECVET expert team organized a conference in order to provide stakeholders, social partners, employers and other actors of the labor market, managers of training institutions professional, specific information on ECVET and specific training. The aim was to increase knowledge on the ECVET system, its technical support and its application in country. (The development of ECVET in Europe - Cedefop, 2013.)

The European Commission has proposed to create and support a community of practice for the ECVET (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). This idea was presented at the Annual Forum ECVET organized by Cedefop and the European Commission in May 2012. In Italy you have created a communities of practice, but this will have to be further developed (The development of ECVET in Europe - Cedefop, 2013).

At the moment, in Italy there is a shared system for the recognition of skills obtained in non-formal and informal settings. The most recent reforms, both at the national and regional levels, as mentioned, have suggested planning curricula based on learning outcomes. Law 92/2012 "Reform of the labor market" and the introduction of the EQF (European Qualification Framework) have created important links between the strategy of the Lifelong Learning program in Italy and the ECVET system for the recognition of credits in the training and education professional. Law 92/2012 "Reform of the labor market" adopted in July 2012 refers explicitly the principles of lifelong learning, considered as an important prerequisite for the implementation of ECVET. Formally does not exist in Italy, a coordination center for the ECVET, but related activities ECVET is currently managed by ISFOL (Institute for Professional Training of Workers). The same organization acts as the contact point for ECVET for EQF (The development of ECVET in Europe - Cedefop, 2013). The approach based on learning outcomes has been implemented in different areas of the system Italian qualifications, but still different subsystems exhibit differences that are mostly more in terminology. The approach based on learning outcomes will be extended in the near the future on the basis of the second phase of the application process and the EQF system implementation of the latest standards in the education system and vocational education. (The development of ECVET in Europe - Cedefop, 2013). A system based on modular qualifications (ECVET model) has been partially adopted. They can provide citizens with the opportunity to obtain partial qualifications adopting systems which provide for the evaluation of learning occurred previously or accumulation of credits relating to the learning unit. With the implementation of the last national training standards and vocational education, the approach based on learning outcomes will be further developed (The development of ECVET in Europe - Cedefop, 2013). conclusions To date (2014), the "Institute for the Development of Vocational Training of Workers" (ISFOL), is the entity responsible for the development of ECVET in Italy. The national team of experts is ECVET It composed of 13 experts from various fields: National Agency Leonardo da Vinci

- Researchers in the field of vocational training and labor market
 - ❖ Group members "ECVET Users"
 - ❖ Experts involved in ECVET projects;
 - ❖ Members of the national coordination point for the EQF, the National Reference
- The team is working on the systematization of ECVET processes at national level. The team and the institute

They are trying to raise awareness on the ECVET among stakeholders and citizens highlighting the potential of this tool for mobility between different training systems and European countries in the context of vocational training.

In Italy, the bodies responsible for ECVET policies are the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, University and Research and some local authorities. These organisms are involved in the management of policies related to education and vocational training, as well as those relating to higher education. The Ministry of Education, University and Research is responsible, at national level, for determination of rules, the curricula and policies relating to education and higher education. The Regions are responsible for the vocational training system and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is responsible for policy coordination and for funding vocational training at European level. The social partners and representatives of the category are involved in the processes relevant to the field of vocational training and, usually, are partners in the Leonardo da Vinci projects ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training), (The development of ECVET in Europe - Cedefop, 2013). Although there is not, at the time, in Italy, a specific and explicit adoption of systems for the ECVET, However, there are some experiences that are contributing to the achievement of this objective (The development of ECVET in Europe - Cedefop, 2013). In Italy there is substantial agreement between all institutions and social actors on the importance, in line in principle, to be able to validate learning acquired in non-formal and informal contexts. however. It has not yet led to the adoption of the necessary provisions for the development and the institutionalization of a national system of validation and certification of skills, however acquired.

The delay in making a formal decision is related to the difficulties of consolidation of the reforms of vocational education and training system as well as delays related to the development of procedures necessary for its implementation (The development of ECVET in Europe - Cedefop, 2011).

The Italian system of certification of skills is art. 4 (sec. 58) of Law 92 of 2012, which empowers the government to define general standards and essential levels of services for the identification and validation of prior learning in non-formal and informal contexts, with reference to the national system of certification of powers and lays down the criteria and guiding principles. The subsequent co. 64-68 of the same 35

Article draw the national skills certification public system, while the Legislative Decree n. 13 of 16/01/2013 governing its implementation.

The Legislative Decree no. 13/2013 thus constitutes the fundamental building block to enhance the right of people in lifelong learning, in a personal perspective, social and employment. The decree is divided into two priority lines of action:
a) the formation of the national repertoire of educational qualifications and training and

qualifications;

b) the definition of minimum standards of the national skills certification system service (the process of accreditation by the system). As part of the construction of the national certification system, Isfol carries out research and technical assistance for the identification of procedures and tools for the validation of competences and within the National Qualifications Repertoire. There are also investigations conducted on the educational and employment outcomes of VET courses, IFTS, but also of traineeships and apprenticeships, as well as more generally offer guidance. This line of research also includes numerous insights on subjects that benefit from the training: young people NEET above, adult workers, young people coming out of the secondary school of first and second grade and their families (including investigations orientation), immigrants, those receiving forms of income support. To these are added the sample surveys on quality of work, those on training activities promoted by businesses also through joint interprofessional funds and the participation of adults in various continuing education activities including training in entrepreneurship and managerial skills.

Eight strategies have been identified for the implementation of ECVET (based on ReferNet reports and information provided by national stakeholders). Most countries, like Italy, are developing ECVET through a combination of strategies. Italy has followed three of these eight strategies:

Strategy 1: the creation of testing initiatives

The test is performed in national initiatives for a specific qualification process. In most cases these initiatives followed by the most important political decisions actors (ministries or authorities for qualifications). The initiatives have a specific budget line and are co-financed by national and European budgets.

Strategy 3: implementation of legislation and regulations on training

Legislation and regulations are updated by integrating the technical characteristics of the ECVET system.

Strategy 7: learning by working with European projects ECVET
This strategy involves regional or national sectoral European ECVET projects.

Accreditation and qualifications

In Italy, formal qualifications (ie. Diploma, degree, professional qualification) have a strong legal and social value. In recent years there has been a debate on the development of certification systems to recognize learning outside the formal system. The agreement between the State, Regions and Local Authorities of February 2000 and the Ministerial Decree n. 174 / pinpoint some key components of the new certification system: (A) stress on competences in order to impart transparency to training, enhancing individual and the educational credits experiences; (B) definition of minimum standards of competence; (C) devising instruments such as certificates, procedures to validate work and recognize prior knowledge, citizen's training booklet;

As part of HTE "the higher technical specialization certificate 'is a first national attempt to certify competences in a way which links the competences certified to training units or modules of the course, as well as those identified in the working world by referring to a professional. The entry accreditation system, based on similar experiences in other European countries [eg. VAE in France or APL in the UK], carries out functions of: support / guidance so conscious identification of individual training needs; rating with the production of a personal dossier; certification / recognition through a formal entry into or the recognition of credits within a training path.

Relation among upper secondary schools system and relevant stakeholders (business system, labor market, research organizations). Dual system, apprenticeships, 'alternance' schemes and work-based learning in VET

Apprenticeship-type schemes

Apprenticeship in Italy designates a work contract with a specific training purpose; it includes both on-the-job and classroom training. The apprenticeship contract, which is distinct from other work-based learning, must be drafted in a written form. It defines the roles and responsibilities of all parties as well as terms and conditions of the apprenticeship, the probationary period, the occupation tasks, wage increases, both the entry and final grade levels and the qualification to be obtained. The training programme is an integral part of the contract. Both the contract and the training programme must be signed by the employer and the apprentice. Since apprentices are considered employees, they are entitled to insurance benefits for job injuries and accidents, occupational diseases, health reasons, ageing and disability, maternity, household allowance, and, since 1 January 2013, labour social security insurance. Apprenticeship-type schemes were reformed in 2011 (15) aiming to promote the integration of young people into the labour market. Workers registered in so-called 'mobility lists' (16) can participate in this scheme to qualify or requalify (usually they are offered a place in the 'professional' apprenticeship scheme, see paragraph (b) below). Employers willing to offer apprenticeships can benefit from several incentives. They can hire an apprentice at an entry grade level up to two levels lower than the final qualification to be obtained and/or pay a salary equal to a percentage of the salary of a qualified worker, according to the provisions of the collective agreement applied. They can take advantage of a reduction in social security contributions, according to the enterprise size. Companies with up to nine employees (micro enterprises) are exempt from paying social security contributions (100%) for the first three years of the contract (17); in the fourth year they will pay 10% of taxable social security contributions. Companies with more than nine employees pay a contribution, for the entire duration of the apprenticeship, equal to 10% of the taxable social security contribution. Companies recruiting apprentices registered in the mobility lists, can benefit from a subsidised contributory scheme, corresponding to 10% of the salary for 18 months of the contract and, in addition, receive an incentive equal to 50% of the mobility allowance, if received by the employee, for a period of 12 months (24 months if the employee is older than 50 years).

The Jobs Act (Law 78/2014) introduced a new feature only for those employed under the apprenticeship leading to a professional operator certificate and a professional technician diploma contract (point (a) below). These apprentices receive a salary on the basis of the number of hours spent in training, calculated at 35% of the total number of training hours, unless differently decided via collective bargaining. The social security contribution paid by the apprentice is also reduced at 5.84%. The Jobs Act established that only enterprises with up to 50 employees, can hire apprentices if, in the previous 36 months, they have retained 20% of the previous apprentices. Social partners, beyond their advisory task at national and local levels, perform a crucial role in professional apprenticeship regulation. They define, through collective bargaining, contents, provisions related to specific occupations, and tools to carry out training. They also establish the professional qualification to be acquired and the certification procedures, as well as setting out the necessary requirements for tutors/trainers at the enterprise.

The apprenticeship system includes three types of contract:

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

These schemes allow young people aged 15 to 25 to fulfil their right/duty to education and training. There are no specific entry requirements but learners need to bridge the year between the end of lower secondary and the start of apprenticeship in an upper secondary school programme or in IeFP, unless they are already 15 years old. These schemes are regulated by the regions and autonomous provinces through specific State-Regions conference agreements. Content, shared between theoretical and practical learning, the specific qualifications offered and the number of training hours are established by the regions and autonomous provinces according to minimum standards agreed at national level. The duration of the contract is determined according to the certificate or diploma to be achieved: it may not exceed the three- or four-year training period nor be less than the national minimum standard set at 400 hours per year, though further training at enterprises can be agreed through collective bargaining. These apprenticeship schemes last three or four years and offer the possibility to acquire qualifications at operator or technician level (in 22 and 21 occupation fields respectively: *attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale* (EQF level 3) or *diploma professionale di tecnico* (EQF level 4). These qualifications are part of the national qualifications register. After obtaining the operator certificate the apprentice may proceed to the fourth year to obtain a technician diploma, in the same occupation. Access to university is possible after successful completion of secondary education and an additional one-year course at an education institute;

(b) professional apprenticeships (*apprendistato professionalizzante o contratto di mestiere*): This scheme targets 18 to 29 year-olds who want to acquire a qualification provided for in the collective bargaining agreements and required on the labour market. Training comprises two parts:

(i) acquisition of key skills (120 hours over a three-year period) regulated by the regions and autonomous provinces and provided by training centres;

(ii) acquisition of vocational skills for specific occupation areas provided directly by companies. The occupation areas and the training content are defined by collective bargaining agreements.

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

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

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

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

Training cost allocation is defined by the local authorities, according to the national, regional and European Social Fund regulations. Over the past few years the number of apprenticeship contracts has dropped. The latest available data also include apprentices hired under the previous regulations. In 2012, 469 855 apprentices were employed (stock data), 4.9% less than the previous year. However, the reduction is lower than that registered in the previous year (-6.8%) and flow data show that, in the first half of 2013, 128 802 apprentices were hired.

To grasp the similarities and differences between alternating and other details (eg. Work experience, job training and guidance), aimed at strengthening the links between school and the world of work, necessary to refer to the law 24 June 1997 n.196 (cd. Treu package) and the subsequent regulation issued by the Inter-ministerial Decree 25 March 1998, n.142. Each of these training tools has its own characteristics. In common, the internships, apprenticeship and school-work alternation have the conception of the workplace as a place of learning. The organization / company / institution that houses the student takes on the role of complementary learning context to the classroom and laboratory. Through direct participation in the operating environment, then, they realize the socialization and the permeability between different environments, as well as mutual exchange of experiences that contribute to the formation of the person. The period of learning that the student spends in a work context can be considered in all respects as a curricular internship (ref. Art. 4 of Law 53/03, the Note of the Ministry of Labour no. 4746 of 14 February 2007 and circular of the Ministry of Labour no. 24 of 12 September 2011). Therefore, although it is correct to say that the training can not be identified with the outright alternation, it is equally correct that the curricular internship is a time of alternation, or the "practice" being an alternate route, the period of training done by the student at the host hotel. However, it must remember that, no schools, when entering into the Agreements with the host organization, being yet defined a training curriculum subject, still refer to Article. 18 of Law 196/97 ("Traineeships and guidance") and its implementing decree (Decree 142/98). The school work alternating enters the education system in Italy with the law 28 March 2003, 53 of which in Article 4 provides as the possibility to realize the courses of the second cycle, enabling young people who have reached the age of fifteen to carry out the whole training from 15 to 18 years "by alternating periods of study and work, under the responsibility of the educational institution, on the basis of agreements with enterprises or their representative associations or

chambers of commerce, industry, trade and agriculture, or institutions, public and private, including the third sector, willing to accept students for internships that do not constitute individual employment relationship. " The Legislative Decree of 15 April 2005 n.77, that is achieved, the alternation which defines procedures for the realization of the second cycle courses to ensure young people, in addition to basic knowledge, acquire skills in the labor market . They are students who can make the request to carry out, under the responsibility of the school or training, the educational path chosen by alternating periods in the classroom and in the workplace, in accordance with the same educational profile of the ordinary course of studies. In other words, the young man keeps the student status, the path of the responsibility lies with the school and the alternation is presented as a teaching method and does not constitute an employment relationship. The activities in the host structure may also be made of the teaching withdrawal periods.

The role of alternation school work has subsequently been confirmed and consolidated with the Regulations issued with dd.PP.RR. Nos. 87, 88 and 89 of 2010, regarding the new systems of vocational schools, technical colleges and licei⁴, in the subsequent "Guidelines for the transition to the new arrangement, the second two years and the fifth year" of technical and vocational schools and institutes " national Guidelines "of high school courses.

With regard to vocational schools, the Presidential Decree March 15, 2010, n. 87 provides that "The paths (...) are developed primarily through methodologies based on the teaching laboratory, also to enhance inductive learning styles; the progressive orientation, analysis and solution of problems related to the reference productive sector; cooperative work on projects; customization of products and services through the use of technology and creative thinking; the management of processes in an organized setting and the school-work alternation ". With regard to technical institutions, the Presidential Decree March 15, 2010, n. 88 provides that "Stage, internships and alternating training are teaching tools for the realization of courses of study."

For high schools, the Presidential Decree March 15, 2010, n. 89 reads as follows: "As part of the educational institutions high school courses provide, in the second two years, (...), specific arrangements for the advancement of knowledge, skills and competences required for access to the relevant courses of study and for insertion into the working world. The study can also be created as part of the school-work pathways (...) and through the implementation of modules and work-study initiatives for projects, practices and training experiences. " In particular, the Guidelines No. 4/2012 and # 5/2012, relating, respectively, to the guidelines for the second two years and the fifth year of the technical and vocational institutes, point out that with the alternating training is recognized equivalent training value to the journeys made in the company and those curricular held in the school context. Through the alternation methodology allow the acquisition, development and application of specific skills relevant educational profiles, cultural and professional of the different courses of study.

The reorganization of vocational schools has entrusted alternation also another function: in the period of transition between the old and the new system of vocational schools has been used to replace the entire area of professionalization (ie. Third area). The Presidential Decree 87/2010, article 8, paragraph 3, insert, instead of this curricular segment of post-qualification courses, 132

hours of alternation to be organized in the fourth and fifth classes dall'a.s.2010 / 11 until the full implementation of the new vocational education system (completed nell'a.s.2014 / 15). That provision that, if only for a limited period, has made compulsory the alternating training experiences, marking the first change of course than envisaged by Article 4 of Law 53/2003, which placed at the base of the alternation of the request students. Within the education system of our country the alternating training has been proposed as a teaching methodology:

- a) implementing flexible and equivalent learning mode from the cultural and educational profile, compared to the results of the second cycle paths, which systematically linking classroom training with practical experience;
- b) enriching the training acquired in school and training courses with the acquisition of skills that even in the labor market;
- c) facilitate the orientation of young people to improve personal vocations, interests and individual learning styles;
- d) create an organic connection of educational and training institutions and the world of work and civil society, for the active participation of persons referred to in Article 1, paragraph 2, in the educational process;

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<http://www.indire.it>

INPS, Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale [National Social Security Agency].

<http://www.inps.it>

ISFOL, Institute for the development of vocational training for workers <http://www.isfol.it>

ISFOL: ReferNet Italia.

<http://www.isfol.it/refernet-italia>

ISFOL: Professioni, occupazione, fabbisogni [Occupations, employment, needs].

<http://professionioccupazione.isfol.it/>

ISTAT, National Institute of Statistics.

<http://www.istat.it/en/>

Italia Lavoro SpA, Technical agency promoting labour market policies

www.italialavoro.it

Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

<http://italia2014.eu/en/>

MIUR, Ministry of Education, University and Research (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca).

<http://www.istruzione.it>

MIUR, I choose, I study (Io scelgo, io studio), the portal for information and guidance for learners entering and leaving upper secondary level (Il portale dell'orientamento al secondo grado e al post diploma).

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