



COUNTRY STUDY

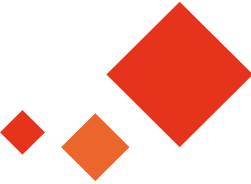


ITALY

Country Monitoring Report

Italy's education system is characterized by below-EU average school outcomes, and relatively high early school leaving rates. Consequently, the proportion of young people aged between 15 and 24 not in employment, education or training is the highest in the EU and youth unemployment reached almost 43 % in the third quarter of 2014. Nonetheless, Italy has taken some action in the past, such as having made the VET system more attractive.

Recommendations

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- Adopt and implement the planned school reform and expand vocationally-oriented tertiary education.
 - Strengthen and broaden practical training through work-based learning and VET in order to promote the employability of the students and to facilitate the transition from the school to the labour market.
 - Further develop and promote lifelong learning.
 - Set up a structured and organized national system of control and monitoring of VET.
 - Put in place the national register of regional qualifications
 - Develop further measures to fight youth unemployment and to reach out to NEETs.





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1. Promoting access and participation in LLL

Adult participation in education and lifelong learning (LLL) in Italy is below the EU average (6.2% compared to 10.5%, in 2013). Moreover, Italy's adult population (aged 16-65) has one of the lowest levels of numeracy and literacy skills among EU countries with a rate of close to 30 %, compared to 19% for literacy and 24% for numeracy in the EU. ¹However it appears that,

¹ European Commission (2015). *Commission Staff Working Document, Country Report Italy 2015 Including an In-Depth Review on*

paradoxically, also the highly trained are endangered of being inactive. As a matter of fact, this concerns every fourth Italian.

Lifelong learning in Italy is not sufficiently developed. Our Italian Members point out several structural problems of the Italian education and lifelong learning system. For once, the Italian school system and higher education fail to transmit interest and attractiveness of lifelong learning to the wider public. Secondly, there is a gap between the educational offer of higher education and the labour market.

In order to increase employability in the Italian labour market, Italy needs to develop its lifelong learning system, eventually even by multiplying its channels of non-formal and informal learning. Training agencies, media and civil society need to be involved in this process in a coordinated manner.

2. Vocational Education and Training

Vocational and Educational Training is governed at the regional level in Italy. Consequently, Italy has different VET and work-based learning systems in place. Participation of upper secondary students in vocational education and training remains above the EU average (59.2% compared to 50.4% in 2012). However, Italy has a very low share of young people in work-based learning.

Italy has tried to make the VET system more attractive. On the one hand, enterprises that hire apprentices can benefit from reductions in social security contribution, accordingly to the enterprise's size. On the other hand, the contribution to be paid by the apprentice is also reduced and is equal to 5.84% of taxable social security contribution.

However, it lacks a structured and organized national system of control and monitoring of the training.

the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances.



There is neither a unique data collection source on the participation levels of apprentices in training activities nor an assessing system aiming at verifying the training's effectiveness. In this context, our Italian members specifically highlight the lack of data on high school choral-music, introduced by the reform Gelmini, as well as on higher art (academies) and music (conservative) provided by the AFAM institutes. In addition, employers often underestimate the importance and the effectiveness of the training of the apprenticeship contract and complain about a lacking of support in completion administrative procedures, as they have the whole responsibility to provide and monitor the apprentice's training².

3. Validation of NFIL

As it is the case for vocational and educational training, non-formal and informal learning has been governed by regions for a long time. Despite the lack of a national framework, a considerable number of practices and experiences have been developed at the local, regional and sectoral level. As a matter of fact, every attempt to create a national legal framework on validation failed until 2012 due to the rigidity of the existing rules (legal value of national qualifications) and the complexity of the institutional governance of the education system (national level for school and university, regional level for VET with overlapping tasks). However, Italy has done a lot of efforts to establish a legal set of standards to share and harmonise validation practices and seems to have been finally successful.

In line with the 2012 labour market reforms, the legislative decree 13/2013 set up a national system to certify skills, including identifying and recognising non-formal and informal learning. Implementing this new system will require nationwide recognition of current regional qualifications. Although the provided

² Cedefop, ReferNet (2014). *Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes - Italy*.

a legal framework for a national register of regional qualifications, the register still needs to be put in place, as recommended in the 2014 country specific recommendations. Finally, since January 2014, all certifications of qualifications obtained in Italy have to make reference to the corresponding European qualifications framework level³⁴.

4. Early-school Leaving

The early school leaving (ESL) rate remains well above the EU average (17% compared to 12% in 2013), especially among foreign-born people (34.4% compared to 22.6% in 2013) and in southern regions. ESL is predominantly common among male students and the phenome is particularly rooted in Sardinia, Sicily and Campania.

Italy does not have a comprehensive strategy against early school dropout, however, the decree-law on education introduced an integrated programme to tackle ESL in problematic areas in September 2013. Consequently, school hours have been extended and initiatives to better integrate pupils with a migrant background have been provided. Furthermore, the 2014-2020 programming cycle of the European Structural and Investment Funds will continue to support Italy's southern regions in their fight against ESL⁵.

Moreover, the Italian government tries to combat this phenomena by increasing incentives for institutions that are capable of recording good results in combatting school dropout and by intensifying (or establishing) financial sanctions (cuts of welfare aids) for families who are not able to guarantee the constant school attendance of their children.

³ European Commission; Cedefop; ICF International (2014). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014: country report Italy*.

⁴ European Commission (2014). *Education and Training Monitoring Report – Finland*.

⁵ European Commission (2014). *Education and Training Monitoring Report – Finland*.



5. NEETs

Persistently high rates of youth unemployment and of young people not in employment, education or training point again to the risk of discouragement from entering the labour market. NEET's in Italy are mostly hopeless and are often the ones that remain, while their peers emigrate. The proportion of young people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training is 22.2 % in 2013 (32.9 % for those aged 25-29), being the highest in the EU. There is a gap between young graduates' competences and labour market needs that increasingly hamper the transition from education to work⁶.

As it is the case in many other Member states, NEET's are often not visible in the statistics. Since a lot of them are not enrolled at Public Employment Services and are socially marginalised, only partial data is collected.

For the period 2015-2016 the Commission and the Council are suggesting that Italy should adopt and implement the planned school reform and expand vocationally-oriented tertiary education.

6. Citizenship education

Italy does not have a clear definition of citizenship education and the course is not a separate subject at any education level in Italy. However, under the on-going cross-curricular area of 'Citizenship and constitution', launched in 2008, several concepts and notions must be taught at primary and secondary level with the ambitious objective to strengthen the pupil's identity and its openness to pluralism.

Hence, children at kindergarten are being taught the specific concepts of family, school and group, and correct behaviour; pupils in primary school learn the basics of the Constitution and coexistence, human rights, protection of the landscape, respecting the rules; and last but not least, secondary level students deepen their knowledge in Constitution and human rights along with promoting voluntary work, fair play,

⁶ European Commission (2014). *Education and Training Monitoring Report – Finland*.

road safety and environmental protection.

7. Council recommendations

During the last years, the country specific recommendations have called on Italy to adopt and implement the planned school reform and expand vocationally-oriented tertiary education. In general, Italy's education system needs to improve its school outcomes and upgrade educational performance at all educational levels, and increase the relatively high early school leaving rates. This could be obtained, amongst others, by diversifying teacher's careers and better linking their career trajectories to merit and performance, coupled with the generalisation of school evaluation. Furthermore, the Council recommended to finally put in place the national register of qualifications to ensure wide recognition of skills⁷.

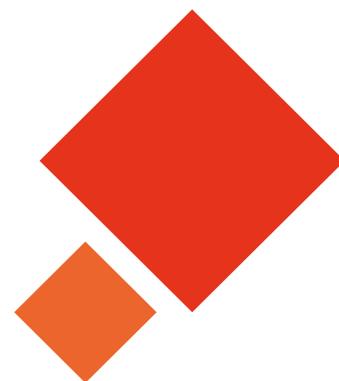
⁷ European Council (2014). *Council Recommendation of 8 July 2014 on the 2014 National Reform Programme of Italy and delivering a Council opinion on the 2014 Convergence Programme of Italy*. European Council (2015). *Council Recommendation of 14 July 2015 on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Italy and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Convergence Programme of Italy*.





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SOLIDAR, together with our national members and partners, has developed 15 case studies in 2014, presenting innovative, effective, sustainable and tailor made models to promote social inclusion, the social economy and quality job creation by adapting a social investment approach. In their daily work, SOLIDAR members and partners anticipate new or unmet needs of socio-economically vulnerable people and empower them to actively participate in society and to access the labour market.

These case studies gather strong evidence of the social impact of the activities undertaken by our members and partners to help Member States making progress towards the achievement of the social and employment objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the implementation of the Social Investment Package.

SOLIDAR Foundation in cooperation with national members and partners has gathered an examples of national programmes and initiatives that present the innovative and successful approaches that contribute to the process of building inclusive learning societies. The case studies are centred on themes of lifelong learning, civic and citizenship education, the validation of learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning, and NEETs (young people Not in Employment, Education or Training).



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