

EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010

NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION WORK PROGRAMME

Published by the Ministry for Education
the Ministry for Labour and Social Security and
the Ministry for Universities and Research

ITALY

Rome, May 2007

Chapter I – Presentation of the national lifelong learning strategy

1.1. Current state of play

1.1.1 Specify whether a lifelong learning strategy was established in your country by the end of 2006, and if not, specify the timetable for its establishment

To achieve the Community's education and training targets, to date Italy has pursued *an overarching strategy* that includes the definition and implementation of specific components. Italy's system-wide approach should be seen, primarily, as the active involvement of the various actors who, by working to an agreed strategy, aim to achieve the same result. It cannot be said at present that a coherent and uniform lifelong learning strategy is fully up and running, but all the actions that come under the education and training heading are being implemented from a lifelong learning perspective. It should however be pointed out that one of the Italian programme objectives is the adoption of a law of principles on lifelong learning to act as a legal framework of reference at the national level. In this legal framework, the active, integrated involvement of the different stakeholders, acting on an equal footing, is strongly emphasized. The Council of Ministers approved recently (3/8/07) a bill submitted by the Ministers for Education and labour, which will undergo parliamentary approval. This proposal sets up for the first time a system of lifelong learning with particular reference to:

- the learning within formal, non-formal and informal settings;
- the recognition of training credits and the certification of learning whenever acquired;
- the national system of guidance throughout life;
- the measures to support learning of workers.

1.1.2 What are the plans for future adjustment, completion or modification of the strategy?

See answer to previous question

1.1.3 Have you encountered any obstacles in the establishment of your strategy?

The difficulties encountered in establishing a lifelong learning system in a rapid timescale depend partly on the country's institutional architecture, which assigns competence on this matter to a number of actors (Ministries of Labour and Social Security, Education, and Universities and Research; Regions and Autonomous Provinces). This creates a need to act in a coordinated and integrated way and to take the views of all stakeholders into consideration by drawing together and reconciling their different viewpoints. The social partners too play a very important role, not least because they manage sizeable financial resources for use in lifelong learning. They are, therefore, actors who – together with the institutions – play an active and full part in the process of agreeing on the strategies and actions to be put in place. Taking an integrated approach, this means that the different cultural perspectives and different speeds of implementing policies at the national and sectoral levels need to be taken into account.

1.2. A comprehensive, coherent and relevant strategy

1.2.1 Which systems and levels of education and training are covered?

The strategy covers all education and training systems, at all levels.

1.2.2 What are the challenges addressed by the strategy, including improving the efficiency and equity of the education and training systems, and how were they identified (evidence base)?

Competitive success and the achievement of adequate standards of prosperity and social cohesion depend to a large extent on the diffusion of high levels of competence and lifelong learning ability and skills in the general population. Italy needs to make a significant effort to achieve this since, in spite of a number of improvements, the country is still lagging behind with respect to the objectives agreed in Europe for 2010 (see annex).

The promotion and improvement of individuals' competences in their different life stages and in different contexts (school, work etc) are a necessary condition to increase labour market participation, social inclusion and competitiveness in economic systems. As a consequence, we need to set ourselves significant goals in terms of reinforcing the system's capacity to: improve learning levels and diffusion in young people, achieve a greater capacity to offer lifelong learning opportunities to the population as a whole; and reinforce economic actors' success in attaining the competences needed to engender the ability to compete and innovate.

The strategy is dedicated to enhancing human capital and focuses on improving and adapting people's competences and related systems and instruments, through an approach based on a lifelong learning. The aim, therefore, is to make the system increasingly lifelong-learning oriented, by focusing on learning content in terms of efficacy and equity in acquiring competences, the spendability of those competences, and the achievement of high levels of qualification in relation to innovation and competitiveness.

1.2.3 What are the priorities for action and policy development within the strategy, in the light of these challenges?

As mentioned above, the first and main priority is to build an adequate system of education and lifelong learning that enables individuals to acquire new knowledge and improve, refine and refresh their competences; hence the plan to adopt a law of principles governing LLL, to provide a legal framework of reference at the national level.

Working in this direction, Italy's education and employment policies are focused on improving the quality of education and training and on ensuring a high degree of social cohesion. These national policy priorities and the consequent strategic objectives were set out in the employment, education and training policy guidance documents in the Finance Law for 2007, as well as in the national documents for the implementation of the European strategies (Lisbon Strategy National Reform Plan and Structural Fund programming documents for programming period 2007-2013).

Of the main provisions, one action deemed to be a priority is the fullest possible enhancement of human capital, through a more effective organisation of the basic and higher education and vocational training systems. This also applies to public sector employees and extends to providing lifelong learning for all citizens, thus creating a favourable environment for the diffusion of the digital culture and for stimulating and supporting scientific research, and, through it, technological innovation in production processes.

The priorities for action and the development of the consequent policies and initiatives will concentrate specifically on: a) education-training-employment systems; b) young people; c) adults in general; and d) employed adults.

The most significant objectives include:

a) the strengthening, integration and improvement of the quality of the **education, training and employment systems** and, more specifically:

- the quality of education-training provision, thanks to: ⇒ the creation and sharing of tools to enhance system quality through quality monitoring, surveys and assessments based on agreed standards; ⇒ the accreditation of training structures, with a closer focus on qualitative indicators of the service provided and the use of a model that responds to common minimum standards agreed at the national level;

- the recognisability of the competences acquired, to enable closer integration of the different systems involved and support mobility policies, as a result of the construction of a national qualifications and competences certification system that is coherent, readable, based on LLL principles and in line with the latest developments at the European level;

- support for the system for permanent monitoring of training and occupational needs, as a knowledge resource for all the institutional, economic and social stakeholders with an interest in understanding the present nature of employment trends and how they are likely to develop, and in defining employment, organisational development and human resource management policies from a lifelong learning perspective.

b) as regards young people, raising the key learning and competence levels, achieving true equality of access to the best learning pathways, increasing the coverage provided by initial education and training pathways, and more specifically:

- initiatives to increase early training, thanks to: measures to strengthen the relationship between school and the local environment; the integration of innovative experiments with traditional teaching methods; the implementation of integrated, flexible pathways based on innovative methodologies to combat early school leaving and increase the system's inclusiveness;
- improved guidance: ⇒ for individuals in their choice of pathway; ⇒ on how best to integrate study and employment, so that decisions on training pathways are based on knowledge of actual employment prospects; ⇒ on the promotion of access to scientific and technological educational and training pathways, with a focus on female participation;
- greater use of the new technologies, as a result of teaching methods (including e-learning) and the provision of technological and IT equipment.

c) with respect to adults, increased basic and advanced lifelong learning opportunities, with due consideration for the needs of different user targets (identifiable by gender, educational level, age, citizenship, and condition in the labour market). The main aim here is to reinforce basic competences and support the inclusion of adults in educational and training pathways leading to a diploma or vocational qualification. In this, a double aim is pursued: to raise the educational level of the adult population, in line with the objectives set in Europe; and to increase the flexibility of training, education and vocational training provision in order to enhance any competences that the adult in question has already acquired in employment and other contexts. Achieving this aim will be possible thanks to:

- the accessibility of training opportunities for key competences and active citizenship through: ⇒ the optimisation and improvement of the existing structures, opening them to all actors in the area, and taking action to establish new structures where there is a clear need for them; ⇒ the reinforcement of a widely distributed information and guidance system that is able to reach those less able to identify training opportunities and make informed choices;
- the construction of a national advanced training system, thanks to the reinforcement of specific higher and advanced education and vocational training pathways. This would also involve the rationalisation of existing pathways and identifying new needs; linking these to forms of work-training alternation and apprenticeships; supporting the creation of networks of centre of excellences; and creating networks with business systems;
- the increased use of integrated pathways for employment insertion and re-insertion, through: ⇒ actions, with a special focus on disadvantaged persons, in which training is accompanied by social and employment policy initiatives; ⇒ the strengthening of employment services using instruments that link learning to work experience with a view to avoiding "precarious" employment situations; ⇒ improved conditions for engaging in and using apprenticeships and enhancing their training value.

d) with respect to employed adults, the improvement of the overall strategy and thrust of lifelong training strategies as a means of up-dating competences and reskilling workers, and more specifically:

- the development and enhancement of lifelong learning thanks to dialogue and agreement between the social partners to establish organisational arrangements that are able to expand the public of beneficiaries, provide innovative content, quality and continuity in initiatives, and ensure the full implementation of innovative features;
- the promotion of "active ageing" of the population to encourage older people to remain in the labour market;
- the promotion of, and access by, low-skilled workers;
- measures to enhance immigrants' potential and combat discrimination against them, especially in the workplace;
- improved life-work balance (policies on working hours and times, access to services for the care of children and the elderly, etc) to encourage access to lifelong learning, especially by women, as well as initiatives to combat employment segregation and/or the exclusion of women from employment, and to promote their access to high quality training opportunities.

1.3. Main policy measures

1.3.1 Describe the main policy measures in the strategy and the way they fit together, and in particular:

In addition to the above-mentioned law on LLL principles, we should, first and foremost, note those measures that can best pave the way to establishing a lifelong learning strategy, since lifelong learning can only be guaranteed through communication and cooperation between the education, training and employment systems and between the different actors responsible. The aim here is to remove, for each citizen, all possible barriers to access to education and training and to the possibility of combining qualifications obtained from different institutions, and to ensure that they are able to move freely within the European labour market, enjoy lifelong learning opportunities that cut across all levels of education and training and use formal, non-formal and informal learning methods. One of the principal measures to achieve this aim has been the recent establishment of a Technical Table for the construction of a national system of minimum vocational and training standards and competence certification, in line with the European policies on this subject (lifelong learning, EQF, ECVET).

This Table acts as a national control centre. Thanks to features such as the participation and active involvement of all the key actors (competent ministries, Regions, Social Partners) and the systematic approach to the integration of the education, training and employment systems, it has set itself the task of identifying and selecting, within a common methodological framework, a national system for the definition and recognition of qualifications, the certification of competences and training credits, the transparency of competences, and the establishment of training and occupational standards. It will follow an approach based on the mutual and transparent recognition by the systems of competences acquired in the different contexts of “formal, non-formal and informal” learning and in the different supply chains, thus harmonising initiatives at the regional level with the general, shared national objectives. In the context of this National Table the considerations made and work carried out in the different segments/sectors of the system (Higher Technical Education and Training (Italian acronym IFTS), training Libretto, integrated three-year training pathways, training needs analysis, apprenticeships, employment grants, etc) will be brought together within a common framework (see Section 2.1 also).

These “system-level” measures are integrated with measures addressing the different segments/sectors of the education-training-employment systems (see below) within an overarching strategy pursued by Italy thanks to the active involvement of all stakeholders (competent ministries, Regions, social partners).

1.3.2 Measures designed to address progress towards the EU benchmarks, including any national targets in these areas

Using the data on the attainment of education and training benchmarks (see annex to section 1.2.2.) the difficulties of achieving, and/or the territorial divide (between Centre-North and South) with respect to, some of these benchmarks have been highlighted. The Italian situation still has considerable ground to make up with respect to the indicators measuring learning quality in young people and the system’s propensity to offer learning opportunities throughout each individual’s life. Signs of marked imbalance and of inadequacy with respect to the quantity of education and training (participation and achievement of qualifications), learning quality (the competences acquired) and equity in access to the system and its services, still persist.

As regards the targets for early school-leaving, key competences, and secondary school attendance, i.e. the benchmarks concerning young people, Italy has invested in building a guidance system, reinforcing the apprenticeship system and developing alternating school-work pathways with the aim of using the business system for training purposes and giving young people a taste of the world of work.

The territorial divide is more evident in the “young people” segment, especially with respect to the key competence target. With a view to raising the competence levels of students, measurable indicators have been identified for the areas of southern Italy. Binding target levels will be established for these, to which a considerable part of the additional structural fund resources will be allocated under the Convergence objective (see in this respect the initiatives for young people in section 1.2.3.).

With respect to the lifelong learning target, with a view to offering more LLL opportunities to the adult population as a whole, Italy has focused its policies on:

- Continuing learning and training. Public action in this matter is designed, on the one hand, to eliminate the risk of the vicious circle of “low human capital resources in workers – low-innovation production structures – low investment in human capital”, and on the other to reduce inequalities in earnings and employment prospects (actions to promote equality). The lifelong learning supply chain is particularly relevant and has encouraged the diffusion of lifelong learning following the creation and operation of funds (Inter-Occupational Funds for Lifelong Learning) managed collectively by the social partners, which assume a

direct, central role in governing and delivering training. To these Inter-Occupational Funds should be added funds made available through national financing laws, as well as the ESF contribution. Since, generally speaking, it is the “strongest” workers, i.e. those with the richest cultural baggage and a better position within the company, who take part in these training activities, public action to promote greater equity has been necessary in this area. This has taken the form of funding allocations through national laws or the ESF contribution to promote in-house training plans for weaker categories of workers in private enterprises (workers on wage supplementation schemes or at risk of redundancy, the over-45s, low-skilled workers, etc).

- Training on individual demand. The diffusion of training on individual demand through the use of training vouchers and training leave has also played a part in increasing adult participation in training activities.

- Training provision for adults in the education system. Permanent Local Centres and upper secondary schools.

- Training provision in the higher education system. As regards higher education, Italy is lagging well behind on the Lisbon objectives. But Italian universities have great potential to increase training provision in lifelong learning for adults. This potential has not yet been fully expressed as a result of the absence of clear political guidelines and support actions. The Government, Regions and various institutional, economic and social actors will need to make a stronger effort to work together. At the higher education and advanced training level, the key to change lies in the hands of the universities, which in turn need to gradually take on board and legitimise their new mission. Italy is becoming aware of the problems connected with the amount of resources needed to develop “universities for all” and to train the qualified researchers the country needs if it is to compete in the innovation society. We need to be equally aware of the fact that in higher education for all, space will increasingly need to be allocated to the adult population and its lifelong learning requirements. At the same time, we also need to realise that in no European country has lifelong learning at the university level developed of its own accord. Any change of mission that may have occurred has only taken place in the presence of a clear political lead and sufficient resources. The Italian Government has given new, more precise recommendations to this end, including through a proposal to establish Lifelong Learning Centres (Italian acronym CAPs) in universities.

1.3.3 Allocation of resources to main policy measures, including any national targets for more / more efficient use of funds, and the use of EU funds (for example, the Structural Funds and the European Investment Bank) to support lifelong learning

One factor that also reinforces the prospects for integrating European policy objectives and responds to the need for a rational use of resources is the significant use of ESF resources in support of education and training initiatives.

In the 2000-2006 programming round, a specific Priority Axis was devoted in all programming documents to the promotion and improvement of vocational training, education and guidance, in the context of an integrated LLL Policy.

In the 2007-2013 round, Italy’s National Strategic Framework will list human capital as one of its key priorities. This involves, more specifically: the integration of education/training/employment systems and lifelong learning. The development of human capital has also been a priority axis in all of Italy’s ESF Operational Programmes, with the focus on: drawing up and introducing reforms in the education, training and employment systems to improve their integration and develop employability, with a particular focus on guidance; increased participation in lifelong opportunities; and higher learning and knowledge levels.

The national resources earmarked by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security provide funding on an annual basis for compulsory training, apprenticeships and lifelong learning.

1.3.4 Measures to change attitudes to learning

A number of measures have been put in place to increase the attractiveness of the educational and training system, with action also focusing on infrastructure (improving structures, equipping them with multi-purpose spaces, workshops, sports facilities and places that are also suitable for self-learning and teacher training), teaching tools and additional services.

Principles to evaluate and ascertain their merits are needed if we are to create an appropriate system of incentives that once again motivates teachers and students.

1.3.5 Measures designed to strengthen evidence-based policy making, using a culture of evaluation, leading to innovation in education and training

One of the most significant examples of evidence-based education and training policies is provided by the Structural Fund programming for 2007-2013. As a result of context analysis and the evaluation of existing policies, the improvement and enhancement of human resources has in fact been placed at the centre of programming strategy in national regional policy (i.e. funded by national and ordinary resources) and in European regional policy (i.e. financed by the structural funds).

The Finance Law for 2007 also lays a particular emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of policies in general. It establishes that in view of the need to adopt highly incisive actions with concrete results on the social fabric – with due consideration for the financial resources available – accurate monitoring of the projects and initiatives under way is vital to constantly verify their repercussions and if necessary make the necessary adjustments.

1.3.6 Measures to target the needs of disadvantaged people (e.g. immigrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled)

The measures implemented in the education and training systems to achieve greater equity and cohesion are intended to support disadvantaged people by supporting the rehabilitation and re-inclusion of individuals who have abandoned (or are at risk of abandoning) the educational and vocational training system. These actions are accompanied by awareness-raising initiatives addressed to families, partly to foster the integration of foreign nationals in the educational system. On the subject of employable adults, see also the lifelong learning initiatives to promote equality (see also sections 1.3.2, 3.1.3 and 3.4.6).

1.4. Development, implementation and dissemination of the strategy

1.4.1 Coordination and consultation mechanisms involving all relevant stakeholders

The governance of this strategy is ensured through a common awareness of the importance of acting in an integrated manner on education-training-employment systems with a view to harmonising specific regional goals and initiatives (each Region has its own unique features, differences and priorities pertinent to its territory) with general, shared goals at the national level. The actions adopted take the form of establishing formal and informal working situations (Working Groups, committees, national consultations on *ad hoc* issues, etc), whose composition reflects the structure of the national system and sees the systematic involvement and active participation of all the actors involved. To this end, institutional sites have areas dedicated to thematic forums and the dissemination of documents of common interest (www.lavoro.gov.it/Europalavoro).

From the perspective of coordinating and consulting with all stakeholders in the education and training system, some of the situations where this coordination – both institutional and broader in scope (with, for example, the economic and social partners) – takes place are worthy of mention:

- Technical Table to establish a national system of minimum vocational and training standards and minimum certification standards (participation extended to all stakeholders: competent ministries, regions, social partners);
- Interministerial Table (Ministry of Labour; Ministry of Education; Ministry for Universities and Research) for institutional coordination for the integrated governance of the Lifelong Learning Action Programme;
- Board of the national network for quality assurance in education and vocational training (national equivalent of the European ENQA-VET) with the participation of an extensive range of partners (competent ministries, representatives of the regions and social and economic partners, representatives of VET providers);
- Lifelong Learning Observatory and Guidance Committee for the funding of Law 236 (Lifelong Learning): participants include the Ministry of Labour, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces and the social partners;
- Occupational Needs Analysis “Control Centre”, with participants including the Ministry of Labour, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces and the social partners;

- National Table to identify accreditation criteria for vocational training bodies, with participants including the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces and the social partners.

Italy's priorities for action and policy development include the specific aim of improving governance of policies and systems. Given the new competence structure (see annex section 1.1.3), Italy intends to reinforce its capacity for institutional interaction and re-design the coordination role at the central level to provide citizens with equal opportunities for access to, and uniform quality standards in, training and employment systems. The presence of an *efficient and effective policy monitoring and evaluation system* in the training and employment field is one of the key elements of this process, as are *the construction of a national system of qualifications and competences certification* and *a review of the standards for the accreditation of training structures*. The complexity and fragmentation of the systems makes it increasingly clear that there is a need for a *national vocational training statistics system* that draws where appropriate on the interoperability of local and sectoral databases.

1.4.2 Implementation arrangements, including publicity and dissemination

Implementation activities for a fully operational lifelong learning system are not yet in place for the reasons set out in section 1.1.1. The relevant sections of Chapters 2 and 3 contain information on the implementation of specific initiatives making up the LLL strategy currently in place.

CHAPTER 2 –IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSVERSAL POLICY OBJECTIVES

2.1. The establishment of national qualifications systems and frameworks (in line with the European Qualifications Framework – EQF), and the elimination of obstacles between levels and systems

The aim of establishing a common national qualifications and certification framework in Italy has for some years now been the focus of a wide-ranging reform initiative designed to achieve a substantive reorganisation of training provision and the visibility and *enhancement* of learning outcomes, regardless of the contexts and modalities in which they were attained. In this perspective the certifiability of competences, on the one hand, and the establishment of certifiable competence-based training provision, on the other, have for some years now been a constant feature of the strategy for the implementation of these objectives in our country. They are present, therefore, in many national and regional provisions, as well as in agreements between regions and with the social partners, and in many interesting experiments conducted in recent years by the Regions. In this respect the rules and experiments have developed along two complementary directions in recent years (2004-06):

- increasing the transparency of training pathways and the spendability of the competences certified as outcomes, with a view also to encouraging their mutual *recognition* by the institutions and social actors who in one way or another are potentially interested in using them;
- extending and increasing the transparency of the different learning experiences, regardless of the formal, non-formal and informal pathways in which they took place.

The progress followed by of this process over the last year is illustrated below:

1) In implementation of Law 53/2003 (the Moratti Law), the completion in 2006 of the legislative procedure for agreements between the competent ministries and the Regions is worthy of note. These agreements provide a new impetus to the role of vocational training in enabling the population segment subject to compulsory training (young people aged 14-17) to obtain a three-year qualification that is recognisable at the national level. More specifically, the Agreements signed by state and regions between 2003 and 2006 to define the common and national characteristics of these pathways, including the basic competences and technical-vocational competence standards, are of great importance.

2) In 2006, a number of Italian Regions also took forward the task of implementing Regional Competence Systems. In this process it is interesting to note that many of these systems are based on common technical features and on European principles in line with the EQF strategy (repertories of occupational profiles broken down by progressive levels of learning outcomes; capitalisable units described in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, complete with evaluation indicators; procedures and arrangements for the certification of competences, regardless of how they have been acquired). Also worthy of note is the role played by the Regions with the “Inter-Regional Competences Project”, as a result of which the Regions have agreed on common instruments and pathways to define a national framework, understood as a set of *minimum vocational, competence recognition and certification standards and training standards*, starting with agreement on and the standardisation and simplification of the many languages used, and a clear exposition of their shared conceptual references.

3) A particularly important factor and condition on the road to a national qualifications system is the recent (April 2006) establishment of the Technical Table promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, which also involves the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Universities and Research, the Regions Coordination body and the social partners. The aim of the Table is to begin the process of defining a national system of minimum vocational, competence recognition and certification standards and training standards. The vocational standards currently being established envisage a correlation with: specific working situations and contexts; occupational areas/sectors; employment/economic processes; the breakdown/disaggregation of services/activities and connotative occupational content; and reference to inventory schemes provided by the principal sources currently in place at the European, national and regional levels.

The standards currently being established for the recognition and certification of competences envisage: setting out principles and criteria for the recognition of competences, regardless of how they were acquired; and correlation with professional standards to make it possible to evaluate and valorise the competences held and acquired in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

4) The recent bill laying down general provisions on LLL (see par. 1.1.1.) aims at regulating competence certification and, therefore, the definition of a National Qualification Framework through the setting up of a Professions Repertory for non-regulated professions with their vocational, training and certification standards.

2.2 The identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning

The Italian situation in this area does not yet feature a formalised or institutionalised national validation system. It is, however, characterised by a rich socio-institutional debate and by many experiences acquired in regional or local contexts or in specific sectors or enterprise-level situations or situations linked to specific user targets. The institutional actors involved in these issues are:

- at the national level (Ministry of Education, Ministry for Universities and Research and Ministry of Labour and Social Security; social partners and employers' representatives; and representatives of the Regions), operating in terms of a general framework and approach;
- and the regional or local level, which has dealt with the issue, and continues to do so, both from the strategic point of view, by drawing up systems and models, and from the technical and operational point of view, by promoting experiments and concrete services for the validation of learning, wherever and however acquired.

A particularly important event on the road to a national system for the validation of learning was the establishment, in April 2006, of the Technical Table promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for the national standards system (see section 2.1), with particular reference to the evaluation and value-allocation of competences held and acquired in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

In addition reference should be made to the recent bill laying down general provisions on LLL (see par. 1.1.1.) which aims to define and validate non-formal and informal learning.

This work, which is still on-going, will make it possible to address as yet unresolved questions such as:

- The definition of validation criteria and procedures, i.e. to establish when validation needs to be applied to assign a value and spendability to "mixed" learning experiences or those developed in different places and contexts, and especially in the sphere of school/work alternation, apprenticeships, or lifelong learning
- The clear and unambiguous definition of the institutional procedure to be followed to bring the citizen's *Libretto Formativo (Training Booklet)* fully into operation and ensure that the registration of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, as envisaged in the log book, acquires an institutional value through specific validation arrangements. The introduction of the *Libretto*, as a tool conceived to record and document citizens' competences, no matter how they are formed, and at the same time encourage the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning credits, was originally envisaged by Law 30/2003¹ and implemented through an Interministerial Decree in 2005. The *Libretto* is currently being piloted in a number of Regions through an agreed process and methodology (www.nrpitalia.it).
- The provision of a common framework of reference for the many experiences and policies on the issue activated in recent years at the local level and more specifically by Regional Governments. The Italian regions and provincial and municipal administrations have adopted various initiatives and specific actions to encourage and develop lifelong learning by citizens and assign a value to competences, no matter how and where acquired (see annex 2.2).

The Italian universities, again in the context of national and European projects, are moving in the direction of validating non-formal and informal learning. To regulate this subject, the Ministry for Universities and Research has set up a working group to draw up Guidelines for the accreditation of previous learning. It will enable the universities to use quality-based methodologies to introduce mechanisms for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in university courses.

¹ Law 30 of 14 February 2003 concerning *Delegated powers in matters concerning employment and the labour market*

2.3 Widely accessible lifelong guidance policies and systems

Over the last five years (2001-2006), guidance policies and systems have been driven by the aim of modelling the processes and practices activated, the type of services on offer, the organisational arrangements put in place and the products developed to respond to the occupational needs of wider user groups with differentiated needs. Starting from lifelong learning and lifelong guidance concepts, the path that has been followed places these two key elements at the base of systemic guidance activity. At the operational level, “all life long” guidance pathways have been created with the aim of supporting social actors in the process of choosing and drawing up their own personal and occupational plans, thus fostering both the development of self-awareness and an awareness of the surrounding world and the development and fine-tuning of training-vocational pathways that can support individuals in the transitions they make during their working lives.

This commitment and effort has taken concrete form in the experimentation and implementation of original and innovative pathways of relevance to the different types of user (young people, adults, women) and different contexts (schools, vocational training, universities, work) to help achieve an effective matching of demand and supply of guidance and quality improvements throughout the system. The activities conducted over the six years in question (2001-2006) are still under development. They involve – from the planning stage to implementation in the field – the different organisational contexts (Regions, Provinces, municipalities, public and private structures) that deal with guidance, operating directly to set up an active, synergistic network linking the public and private structures involved. At present these practices are being disseminated in various parts of the country and are being implemented, on the basis of specific protocols of understanding, in different guidance services (see annex).

The recent bill laying down general provisions on LLL aims defining a national system for LLL guidance through the promotion and the support of LLL guidance services. This system will take advantage of the definition of minimum standards of vocational and employment guidance services to be granted for the whole of Italy

See also the question of guidance as a measure to reduce early school leaving (section 3.2.4).

References, contacts, web sites:

http://portale.isfol.it/Politiche_e_sistemi_formativi/Politiche_per_lorientamento/index.scm

2.4 Measures to reinforce trans-national mobility in all sectors, including through the removal of administrative and legal obstacles, the implementation of Europass or by provision of financial or other support

Mobility in access to the professions

Partly on the basis of the Community law on occupational mobility, a substantial body of work has been carried out in Italy over the last year on the liberalisation of, and removal of obstacles to, access to a large number of occupations (Period 2006/07 – legislative data – Liberalisation Decrees 2006 and 2007).

Italy’s participation in the important projects to harmonise the systems for the recognition of qualifications (“European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning”; Europass) is testified to by the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, currently at an advanced stage of development. Our signing of the “Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region”, which was ratified by Law 148/2002, is still awaiting the adoption of secondary legislation to deposit the ratification instruments and complete the process.

The recognition of foreign academic qualifications to enable students to continue their studies in Italian higher educational establishments and the authorisation to engage in occupations, in Italy, for which the necessary qualifications were obtained abroad does not cover the full scope of the recognition of foreign qualifications. One proposal is to establish a new certificate, a sort of “level of achievement” certification that would replace declarations of equivalence and/or recognition for the purpose of access to professional rolls and registers administered by the chambers of commerce; enrolment in training courses to obtain professional qualifications, for registration with employment centres; entitlement to social security benefits

and/or to “discount” years spent studying for university degrees; and access to selective procedures for scholarships. The certification could be issued by the ministries concerned.

Mobility for learning

Policies and financial support for mobility in Higher Education

National policies now routinely incorporate incentives for international collaboration, both in the training and research spheres, with economic support being channelled to the international mobility of university students, lecturers and researchers. This mobility is intended to prepare the key actors to live in a global, knowledge-based society.

New funding instruments have been created for **universities**. Flanking the resources envisaged for Italian universities’ internationalisation initiatives in the most recent three-year programmes (€35 million since 2001) with the measures envisaged in the “Youth Plan” (€1.2 million per year), merit-based criteria have been used to share out the “Ordinary Fund for the Universities” and specific incentives linked to the rate of internationalisation of the universities have also been created. Initiatives to increase the attractiveness of our university system have also been put in place. Examples include:

- the announcement, for 2005 and 2007, of 100 scholarships for young Indian researchers in specific research sectors;
- the Marco Polo Programme, coordinated by the Conference of Italian Rectors, with the participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and Confindustria (the employers’ association). The programme was created to provide information and guarantees to Chinese students wishing to attend courses at any level in our system’s academic institutions;
- The Project to create a Euro-Mediterranean Advanced Training and Research space, which was launched in 2003. This project was consolidated with the signing of the Declaration during the last meeting, in Catania in 2006, of 13 Higher Education Ministers, representatives of 40 Universities and 200 delegates from 16 Mediterranean countries. The project focuses on the creation of a **Network of Advanced Learning Centres** in non-EU Mediterranean countries of general interest for the countries of the area. It is characterised by a bilateral approach, including in the provision of resources. With regard to the development of a distance learning system in the Mediterranean, the initiative was developed by the Nettuno Consortium in coordination with the Med Net’U Project. A proposal has also been put forward to extend initiatives in the educational field to *Vocational Education and Training (European VET Project)*;
- agreements with the USA, China, India, Israel, Japan, Australia, the Gulf countries. The agreement model defines a plan for university exchanges, a sort of Erasmus between our country and the partner-country, in sectors of mutual interest;
- the “Italian-Chinese Campus”: established in early 2006 with the signing of the initial agreements. This university is located in Shanghai and will be attended by students from both countries, the aim being to enable Chinese students to obtain degrees that are also recognised in their country of origin. The three Italian “Politecnico” universities and Shanghai’s Tongji University are taking part for the Engineering hub; while the Bocconi, LUISS and Bologna Universities, along with Shanghai’s Fudan University, are contributing to the Economics hub. The initiative is also being supported by the Italian economic-financial community.

The Ministry for Universities and Research’s new, revised policy has therefore tended to add, over and above the processes established by the universities themselves and free exchanges by students, more targeted actions coordinated with other countries to:

- ⇨ obtain reciprocal funding;
- ⇨ set up joint research laboratories to double investment and obtain valuable knock-on effects in Italy;
- ⇨ identify excellence throughout the world and disseminate and publicise our own areas of excellence through the complementarity of international projects and in keeping with the guidelines set out in our national research plan.

A further measure was also envisaged, with Law 230 of 4 November 2005 containing “New provisions concerning university teaching staff and researchers and delegated powers to the government to review the recruitment of university teaching staff”. Under this law, the universities, within the scope of their budgetary

resources, can cover up to 10% of certain lectureships and professorships by directly recruiting foreign academics or Italian academics working abroad. They can also cover professorships by directly recruiting academics with a particularly distinguished reputation.

Initiatives taken in our country in support of the internationalisation of our higher education system have facilitated the participation of many of our universities in the European Union's Erasmus Mundus programme for 2004-2008. This programme was established by the EU to increase the attractiveness of the European higher education system. The participation, with recognised merit, of Italian universities testifies to the way in which policies implemented at the national level have produced results that are more than encouraging and, therefore, to the fact that we need to continue in this direction.

Measures to reinforce trans-national mobility in all sectors, including by eliminating **administrative obstacles**, are described in the "Programming document for policies concerning immigration and foreign nationals on Italian territory for the three-year period 2007-09". This is a particularly relevant document, which sets out Italy's domestic and international policy on the subject of immigration for the period in question. The document is therefore of primary importance from the political point of view, and produces repercussions in the way that immigration is handled in both practical and administrative terms by the government departments that have competence, in one respect or another, for immigration issues.

In exercising its institutional powers, the Ministry for Universities and Research has long been pursuing a policy to encourage the acceptance and integration of foreign students in the academic world. The provisions regulating their matriculation, adopted in conjunction with the MFA and the Ministry of the Interior, have been amended and simplified over the years, to the advantage of the various stakeholders, both in terms of understanding and in the practical implementation of the rules in question.

The document, which covers a three-year period, is currently being up-dated for 2008-10. It will retain its open approach designed to improve the rules and bring them increasingly into line with the real needs expressed by the various stakeholders (universities – embassies – students).

In accordance with Legislative Decree 286 of 25 July 1998 as amended, foreign citizens with valid residence permits are entitled to equal access to university courses with respect to students from EU countries, a provision which also brings clearly positive results with respect to their subsequent entry to the world of work. In the case of numerically restricted courses, the above category of students is not included in the quota reserved for students from abroad, but in the list based on the numbers dictated by national requirements. This leads not just to a direct outcome where any qualification obtained is directly spendable in Italy in the employment sectors appropriate to the subjects chosen, but also, it follows, to full social integration.

Also being studied is the possibility of speeding up the resident permit renewal procedure at the end of the university period for those wishing to continue with post-graduate studies; all the institutions involved have been made aware of this need.

To help foreign nationals obtain access to universities and complete their degrees, the following are envisaged: renewability of residence permits; access to scholarships, allowances and awards subject to assessment of the applicant's economic condition; Italian language courses for foreign students; and the recognition of educational qualifications obtained abroad.

It should also be noted that, in accordance with Art. 13 of the Prime Minister's Decree of 9 April 2001, adopted in implementation of Art. 4 of Law 390 of 2 December 1991 on uniform treatment in the right to university studies, foreign students from non-EU countries may access, under equal conditions to Italian students, "right-to-study" services and initiatives. For short-term visits to attend language courses or other short-term courses lasting less than three months, an important step in the simplification process was Art 5 of Decree Law 10 of 15 February 2007. This eliminated, for non-EU citizens, the need to apply not just for an entry visa from the diplomatic mission, once they had obtained the documentation attesting to their enrolment on the course and appropriate guarantees as to their means of economic support for the duration of their stay and return home, but also for a permit of stay from the competent authorities, within eight working days of their entry to Italy.

Europass

The National Europass Centre (NEC), established in ISFOL on 1 May 2005, handles the coordination and promotion of the European transparency tools contained in the Europass portfolio. The NEC also collaborates actively with the social partners and educational and training institutions. It carries out

information and promotional activities addressed to the wider public and the key actors in the education, training and employment systems and is responsible for issuing the Europass-Mobility document. In particular, the Italian NEC is responsible for the procedures for verifying the required standards and the final checking of the completed documents. During its first year, the NEC conducted an analysis of certain qualitative-quantitative data relating to the degree of dissemination, the specific targets and the document-issuing policies adopted by the various actors, to ascertain the state of the art in the application of the provisions and identify any points that need to be monitored in the light of future developments. The data collected enabled the NEC to pinpoint a number of critical factors on which it has focused since it began operating (May 2005). (Period 2005-06 – source NEC – www.europass-italia.it)

Other programmes

Programmes supporting mobility for learning (Socrates, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci) have been widely used in Italy (Sources: Leonardo, Socrates, Erasmus agencies).

Chapter 3 –Implementation of policy objectives in schools, higher education, vocational education and training, and adult education

3.1 Elements to be reported on for all levels (schools, higher education, vocational education and training, adult learning)

3.1.1 Governance and leadership of education and training institutions (e.g. organisational and administrative reforms, autonomy and accountability measures, public/private initiatives)

The reform of Title V of the Italian Constitution, approved in 2001, redefined the role of the state and regions in matters concerning education and vocational training. In general terms, the distinction can be illustrated as follows:

- in matters of education, the state defines the essential levels of services and general rules governing the system; the Regions are responsible for coordination of provision at the local level, and the organisation and governance of the system;
- in matters of vocational training, the distinction is more marked: the state defines the essential levels of services while the regions have sole competence in defining policies and their implementation strategies.

Central government still has different, wider roles in a number of specific strands of the system, especially as regards on-the-job training in apprenticeship schemes, and lifelong learning. On these issues, recent rulings by the Constitutional Court (2005) determined that the principle of concurrent competence applies, which entails the need for state and regions to operate under principles of fair collaboration.

Linkages exist between the central and regional institutions. More specifically, in the case of vocational training, the strategic framework of actions developed in recent years is based on Law 30/2003 (the Biagi Law) reforming the labour market, and Law 53/2003 (the Moratti Law) reforming the education and initial training system. The process of translating general rules into operating strategies and implementing the provisions in the different parts of the country has been “governed” through dialogue and on-going discussion between the two institutional areas. On specific aspects of the provisions, this has led to the definition of formal agreements in the State-Regions Conference and the Unified Conference. Over the last two years the State-Regions dialogue has focused on a number of key issues. First of these is the reform of the education and vocational training system and, in this context, the effort to standardise and increase the recognisability of the three-year courses to obtain an initial vocational qualification for young people who have completed compulsory schooling (2005 Agreement for the mutual recognition of qualifications obtained on completion of 3-year courses; 2006 Agreement on minimum training standards for technical-vocational competences in initial training pathways). Attention has also been devoted to the need to regulate the provisions introduced by the labour market reform (2005 Agreement to approve the format of the *Training Booklet*).

With respect to lifelong learning, in the Italian system the Region’s initiatives co-exist with those carried out by the Inter-Occupational Funds, set up (with authorisation from the Ministry of Labour) and managed by the social partners since 2001. The need to draw the various initiatives together into a unified strategic framework underlies the 2006 trilateral agreement (Ministry of Labour, Regions, social partners), in which the various actors undertake to act in a coherent manner and to encourage the exchange of information in order to build up an integrated system.

The opening of the new Parliament is still too recent to evaluate its scope for innovation in the vocational training system. Law 296/2006 introduced the first initiatives focusing on the education system – but with repercussions also on training. These include the raising of the compulsory school age to 16 and confirmation of the obligation to remain in the education-training system until the age of 18; and a redefinition of the adult education system hinging on provincial centres with administrative, organisational and didactic autonomy. More recently, Law 40/2007 envisaged the possibility of setting up “technical-vocational hubs”, consortium-based structures whose aim is to promote, in a stable and systematic manner, the dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge and to support measures to foster the country’s

social, economic and productive growth.

3.1.2 Stimulating private investment from enterprises, households and individuals

We need to be aware of two key elements to evaluate the weight of public funding on training in terms of impact and stimulation of Italian businesses' private investment capacity in training:

1. first, we have seen a tendency to overall growth, in nominal terms, of enterprises' spending on training². However, this growth concerns a small portion of businesses (large companies) and so does not involve most of the Italian economy, which is mainly made up of small and very small enterprises. Indeed, while large firms have more than doubled their investment, the level of investment by smaller companies has remained more or less unchanged.
2. and second, the growth in the portion of businesses' overall training expenditure covered by public funding has slowed down; since 2003 this has been falling off in both percentage terms (6.1% in 2005) and absolute terms.

It should however be noted that policies promoting lifelong learning generally envisage **co-funding** (amounting to at least 20%) by the beneficiary (firm or worker). Vouchers for workers are, in general, free, but some Regional and Provincial authorities ask worker-citizens to contribute a part of the cost, which varies from just a few euros to 20% of the total cost of the course fee.

It should also be noted that in recent years no significant changes have been introduced in this area, such as, for example, rewards for those investing in training.

3.1.3 Widening access, and improving equity of participation, treatment and outcomes, especially for disadvantaged learners (e.g. migrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled)

A number of projects carried out under the Community's Equal Initiative can be cited. The Equal initiative, co-funded by the ESF for the period 2000-2008, fosters the development of innovative approaches, methods and policies to combat discrimination and inequality in access to the labour market. These actions aim, in particular, to create conditions favourable to the social and employment inclusion of disadvantaged persons. Their sphere of action includes innovation and greater flexibility in guidance and training for people with poor employability potential (migrants, the disabled, convicts, ex-convicts, drug addicts, former drug addicts, drop-outs, the unemployed, young people in search of their first job, etc).

This sphere of action focuses on the need to make training, guidance and certification provision accessible to all by identifying new training methodologies and instruments from a lifelong learning perspective. In this respect, particular attention has been devoted to enhancing, evaluating and validating any competences previously acquired by people from the most disadvantaged categories (see annexed project description).

3.1.4 Measures to address gender aspects in education and training

Although considerable progress has been made by women in terms of participation in training systems, a number of problems remain with respect to segregation in training and, above all, in access to jobs (see annexed analyses of this aspect). The aim of the initiatives adopted in this sector has been cultural change, i.e. the capacity of training and education systems to intervene in these areas. The role of teachers has therefore been central: they need to receive training on gender issues and respect for human rights while a policy to increase the presence of men in schools should also be pursued, with a view to fostering a more balanced vision from the outset in educational establishments. Other actions should address subject content, which should be enriched by gender awareness and at the same time bring men into closer contact with subject areas that have a stronger impact on the formation of social identity (pedagogy, philosophy, sociology, etc) to encourage the development of new professional aspirations.

In more operational terms, we can cite a number of initiatives with the potential to foster equality between men and women in matters of education and training:

² Total expenditure, including public funding, amounted to over €1,500 million in 2005, compared with €895 million in 2000.

- In the context of the 2000-2006 programming round for the structural funds, the development of an *ad hoc* evaluation tool: the **Equal Opportunities Strategic Impact Assessment** (Italian acronym VISPO) guidelines. In addition to providing working guidelines, this instrument provides a framework of reference for use in drawing up an equal opportunities evaluation model. The VISPO guidelines provide recommendations on the types of impact produced by co-financed initiatives, focusing on the four strategic spheres/objectives: improvement of women's living conditions; improved accessibility to the labour market and training for women; improvement in women's working situation in the workplace and redistribution of care responsibilities; and the promotion of women's participation in the creation of socio-economic activities.
- **Legislative instruments and bodies** designed not just to resolve cases of evident discrimination, but also and above all to prevent or take action on the sources and indirect causes of discrimination, in order to fully implement the principle of equality and equal opportunities between men and women with respect to vocational training, access to and continuing presence in the labour market, and career progress in the workplace. The most recent legislative provision on this matter is the Code on equal opportunities between men and women. The institutions and bodies cited in the Code include the network of equality counsellors who, at the national, regional and provincial levels, make it possible to work at the grass-roots level to promote and monitor the implementation of the principles of equality and non-discrimination.
- Since 2000, all the Notices, Decrees and Public Circulars regulating the use of public resources to foster citizens' and workers' access to training have envisaged a **clause reiterating respect for the principle of equal opportunities** (previously envisaged only for ESF co-financed initiatives).

3.1.5 The use of learning-outcome-based approaches for the definition and design of education and training objectives, standards and curricula, and their relevance to the needs of society and the economy

A reading of learning outcomes in the education system has led to quantitative and qualitative analyses of the marks obtained by students and the learning levels attained with respect to linguistic, literacy, technical-scientific and numeracy competences. The degree of learning achieved is noted each year in the framework of a more general national-level survey of the education system and is specifically intended to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the system by monitoring the competences developed by students. These assessments are used as tools by policy makers in the field of school education.

As regards vocational training, a learning evaluation project involving pupils following experimental education and training pathways is worthy of note. Three types of test were devised³ to evaluate competences on the basis of minimum educational and training standards established in 2004 to measure basic competences in three-year pathways: numeracy competence test; literacy competence test; and self-evaluation test (pupils' own perception of their strategic competences). This project is part of a series of activities designed to improve the quality of the training system and increase the use of evaluation practices to improve the performance of the system itself.

Finally, at the regional level, a number of Regions and Provinces have begun to apply reward models for education and training bodies producing a certain percentage of "graduates" who find work within six months of completing their vocational training course.

³ The tests have been piloted in a number of Regions (Puglia, Lazio, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Sicily) on 250 pupils enrolled in the third year of the three-year courses.

3.1.6 Quality assurance systems

The quality assurance systems applied by Italy in the education and training system all revolve around the accreditation of structures and therefore act primarily on the quality of provision.

With respect to education and vocational training (VET):

1) The accreditation of training structures is the method adopted by the Ministry of Labour and the Regions to assure the quality of training provision financed by public resources. The accreditation system was introduced in 2001, by identifying common criteria at the national level with which the regional accreditation systems must comply. The system has subsequently been regulated by individual regions, which have applied specific rules to their own territory. The accreditation criteria include structural, organisational and economic aspects, the quality of human resources, and the results achieved. At present the accreditation process is at an advanced stage of implementation, with two-thirds of the structures (64.3%) accredited, a figure that is in line with the regional laws.

On the basis of the early years of implementation, a process to redefine the accreditation arrangements has also been opened, with a view to ensuring constantly improving quality standards and therefore a more attractive VET system (see annex for more detailed information).

2) Quality certification based on international UNI EN ISO 9000:2000 standards plays a significant role in Italy's vocational training system. The dissemination of the ISO family of standards has been encouraged not just by a general need to ensure the reliability of the training service, but also by the 2001 accreditation provisions, which envisage fast-track accreditation procedures for training structures holding ISO certification. Although a considerable effort is required to interpret the standards and adapt them to the peculiarities of the training system, a substantial proportion of structures (81.9%) are involved, while other quality assurance models and provisions, such as the EFQM, only involve 1.7% of structures.

3) The ever-growing dissemination of self-assessment methodologies by educational and training structures (5.3%) as a complementary and/or preliminary tool in the accreditation and certification process is an important indicator in terms of awareness of the quality achieved by organisations in the integrated training system (see also section 3.4.1).

4) A growing focus not just on the overall quality of training projects and organisations, but also on the results achieved by pupils, should also be noted⁴.

5) The creation of national and European networks (Italy's Quality Reference Point, part of the *European Network for Quality Assurance* (ENQAVET) system, and the network for the dissemination of the Peer Review methodology, under the Leonardo da Vinci "*Peer Review as an Instrument for Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement in Europe*" project) are examples of progress in the dissemination of good practice and on-going benchmarking activities, as well as of systems integration (for this point two, see section 3.4.1).

6) In the sphere of continuous and lifelong learning, the catalogues promoted by the Regions and autonomous Provinces are worthy of note. In recent years, these have fostered the visibility of parameters and indicators that make it possible to identify the quality features of training provision and enhance comparability. The catalogues have also made it possible to use the potential inherent in an approach based on competition amongst the different actors operating on behalf of specific targets.

See also in the annex an important trial project on structure accreditation.

The entire theoretical accreditation model now needs to undergo a repositioning process with respect to the development of the national regulatory context (in relation to employment and to education and training systems). The task of redefining new minimum national standards for regional accreditation systems should be inserted in this scenario, as a basic structure of provisions ensuring the completion of a comprehensive lifelong learning system through:

- the completion of the accreditation system by establishing 2nd generation systems with a set of quality indicators more focused on developing the quality of training/guidance initiatives and their effectiveness in terms of employability; the focus would also be on meeting the Community

⁴ Surveys of pupils' occupational outcomes are now found in most of the Regions and their training activities. The learning evaluation activities conducted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and by ISFOL in agreement with the Regions and Province are also moving in this direction. Objective learning evaluation tools have been piloted in Puglia, Lazio, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Sicily.

requirements on freedom of movement and establishment, the provision of services, equal treatment, transparency and proportionality. These indicators would be periodically reviewed and verified to reinforce the accreditation maintenance concept. A necessary condition for accreditation to fully achieve this goal is to restore a central role to the human factor through systems to up-date, requalify and certify the credentials of the operators organising and delivering the initiatives;

- a system of common minimum standards for the 21 accreditation provisions issued by the Regions and Autonomous Provinces, thus promoting a technical and procedural mutual recognition pathway.

As far as the universities are concerned, the Italian Government has approved the establishment of a National University and Research Evaluation Agency (ANVUR). The task of the new structure is to promote quality in our universities and research bodies by means that include evaluation, the collection and analysis of data, consultancy, training and cultural promotion. ANVUR will accredit and evaluate courses and lifelong learning activities.

3.1.7 Developing learning partnerships with stakeholders (policy-makers at national, regional and local levels, social partners, learners and representatives of civil society)

Networks for participation in the different training supply chains have been developed on a number of levels:

1. in defining policies, with reference to both national and regional legislative provisions;
2. in governing the different supply chains;
3. in implementation at the local level.

1) As regards national and regional policies, it should be noted that in Italy, in defining policies and drafting legislation on education and training issues, the practice of concerted action by the different institutional stakeholders working on the issues concerned is widespread, especially with respect to initial training and lifelong learning. In this respect, the most recent provisions on education met with agreement during the drafting process and were jointly signed by the various ministries responsible, in one respect or another, for education and training issues (see attached outline).

2) On the question of *governance of training supply chains*, those for which a number of different institutions are responsible are guided by pilot or support Committees composed of representatives of the institutions in question (Ministry of Education, Ministry for the Universities, Ministry of Labour, Regions and Autonomous Provinces, social partners and technical bodies). These include the National IFTS Committee and the Institutional Partnership Table responsible for the three-year training pathways referred to in the 2003 Agreement. Similar formalised coordination structures exist at the local level, such as the Regional IFTS Committees, charged with drawing up policy lines for the supply chain at the local level, in which context the concerted action by the social partners is implemented.

3) In terms of implementation, education and vocational training provision is sometimes delivered in an integrated fashion by the different training institutions (schools, vocational training centres, universities, research bodies) and the world of work (enterprises). This is the case of the IFTS pathways and training hubs currently being established. These deliver integrated initial training provision (for which the regions are responsible) through schools and vocational training centres, in some cases with the involvement of local actors (businesses, Employment Centres). Finally, specific networks for cooperation by the different institutions concerned also exist at the local level, such as the networks to support successful training by the under-18s. These networks promote informational, guidance and tutoring initiatives and include Employment Centres, schools, training agencies and municipal authorities.

3.2 Schools

In addition to the points set out in section 3.1, we can also report on the following elements:

3.2.1 Increasing investment in and strengthening pre-primary education

With the Finance Law for 2007 the Government drew up a structured plan of initiatives to give a comprehensive new impetus to public schooling, which impacts on various different aspects of the national education system. These measures are intended to make a start on implementing the Government's goals in the area of education and are therefore inspired by the intention to make a lasting impact on the quality of the educational service, by improving results and making the system more modern, efficient and tailored to our young people's expectations and the country's development.

The main initiatives envisaged by the Finance Law and affecting the education system concern:

- **the enhancement of schools' autonomy** by, *inter alia*, simplifying accreditation procedures for funding with direct allocation of resources to schools without further constraints on end-use, and increased training provision by extending the hours available for the use of the school service, including outside lesson hours
- **the development and up-grading of the education system** through measures that include:
 - raising of compulsory schooling, with effect from school year 2007-08, until the second year of secondary school, the aim being for pupils to obtain a secondary school or vocational qualification of at least three years duration by the age of 18; consequent raising of minimum working age from 15 to 16;
 - activation of pathways and projects agreed by the Ministry of Education and individual Regions to prevent and combat early school leaving and foster success in completion of compulsory education;
 - continuation of experimental education and vocational training pathways;
 - intensification of measures such as individualised teaching to combat low educational achievement and consequent need to repeat years, often a cause of early school leaving;
 - extension of partially free provision or loans of school text books;
 - activation of new services to ensure that education provision for children aged two-three is extended and tailored more closely to families' educational needs and expectations;
 - insertion of adult education in the national system with full rights and entitlement;
 - enhancement of technical and vocational education and training with the activation of a set of measures to enrich provision, with a view also to facilitating young people's employability;
 - reorganisation, starting in 2007, of the upper technical education and vocational training system;
 - support for technological innovation in schools;
 - increased resources for the three-year period 2007-2009, amounting to €250 million, for use in school building projects with joint participation by state, regions and local authorities in the effort to restore the education sector's built heritage;
 - improved prevention/promotion funding measures for lower and upper secondary schools to remove architectural barriers or adapt structures to the current provisions concerning health and safety in the workplace;
 - support for the public service role played by private schools in the national education system, with increased funding of €100 million;
 - creation of a fund amounting to €50,000 for each year in the period 2007-09 for regions deeply affected by organised crime; funding to be used to develop and disseminate actions and policies to affirm a culture of legality.

3.2.2 Modernising school curricula and assessment arrangements (*inter alia* to address learning outcomes and the attainment of key competences)

The Ministry for Education has opened a review of the existing “national indicators” for pre-school education and the first cycle of education through documents submitted for consultation and validation through classroom trials.

The first (“Culture, school, individual”) sets out the cultural framework within which schools’ educational and teaching work is carried out: in a society characterised by a high degree of change and discontinuity, the aim of schools is to develop each individual at the cognitive and cultural level to enable them to tackle the uncertainty and change inherent in social and employment scenarios in a positive manner.

Students are placed at the centre of all aspects of education: cognitive, affective, relational, corporal, ethical and spiritual.

School education, especially basic schooling, follows a double educational direction: vertical, expressing the need to establish learning patterns that will continue throughout the individual’s life; and horizontal, which indicates the need for close collaboration between schools and other actors with a role in education, first and foremost the family.

Schools perform their function by undertaking to achieve educational success for all their students, with a special focus on support for the various forms of diversity or disadvantage.

The second document (“The curriculum in autonomous schools”) is pedagogic-didactic in nature and, with due respect for, and the enhancement of, schools’ autonomy, sets out the framework of reference for the choices and decisions entrusted to schools in their planning activities: general objectives of the formative process; specific learning objectives with respect to pupils’ competences; the subjects and activities making up the national portion of curricula and annual hours allocated to them.

With respect to general objectives, the central reference is the full enhancement of the human being; the competences to which basic schooling aspires are first and foremost general. They are intended to foster the individual’s awareness of him- or herself as a responsible person and citizen with respect to themselves and to others, and to the city and environment in which they live.

The goals of the learning outcomes pursued by schools are the development of competences that are relevant to the activities and subjects pupils engage in.

In kindergarten, teaching places the children’s lives and experiences in a development perspective, mediating these in cultural terms within a social and educational context that is intentionally oriented towards the progressive construction of knowledge and the development of competences.

In the early years of primary school, the initial organisation of learning is structured more explicitly towards subject knowledge, which can be grouped into three main areas: a) linguistic-expressive; b) anthropological; and c) mathematical-scientific.

Progressively, through research activities and reflection drawing the experiments carried out and experience lived, children will become increasingly aware of the notion of “subjects”; subjects should be seen not simply as sets of notions, but as instruments for investigation with their own specific and characterising methods, languages and concepts.

In later education, teaching aims to encourage a unified spirit of learning, i.e. one that can lend meaning to the wide range of information and experience to which the individual is exposed.

The ways in which competences can be developed are subject to the autonomy of schools and teachers, especially as regards the choice of didactic and organisational system, all the while safeguarding the principle of joint action and shared responsibility of the teaching body.

With due respect for the national recommendations, each school draws up its own Plan of formative provisions, the didactic heart of which is the curriculum; it is in drawing up the curriculum that the planning capacity of each school is measured. The curriculum organises and describes the student’s entire formative pathway, in which cognitive and relational process intertwine; it is also the result of the integration of national recommendations and local needs. Goals and content need to take the social and cultural reality in which the school is located into account, and teachers must act not as mere executors but as protagonists with responsibility for the choices made, a process which enhances their professionalism.

Assessment in basic education performs a prime formative function that accompanies learning processes and stimulates constant improvement. All forms of documenting pupils’ formative and learning processes are left to the full autonomy of the schools

3.2.3 Addressing the specific learning / training needs of teachers (including pre-primary) to enable them to cope with their changing roles in the knowledge-based society

The Ministry for Education has promoted, in support of the improvement of independent educational institutions and the professional development of teachers, long-term training plans for basic learning.

These include:

- *the POSEIDON long-term training plan for linguistic and literacy education (mother tongue, modern languages and classical languages)*

The POSEIDON Plan is intended to promote integrated e-learning for teachers in lower (level I) and upper (first two-years of level II) secondary schools. Its aim is to develop teaching competences that meet the needs of young people, taking into account the Lisbon targets and the results of national and international surveys (OECD-Pisa) on students' learning.

POSEIDON has set up an electronic archive of innovative multi-lingual material addressed to L1 and L2 teachers of Italian, classical languages and modern languages who wish to work together on multi-lingual curricula. This material has been put together specifically for an integrated use that can be modulated in network environments. The training material, consisting of hyper-text forms, material for didactic pathways, activities, bibliographies and sitographies, focuses the key nodes of language teachers' knowledge/competences and identifies the "filters" between the various forms of subject knowledge, methodological options and didactic decisions which teachers in the two teaching cycles can adopt to build up teaching/learning pathways.

- *the m@t.abel Long-Term Plan for maths education*

The m@t.abel long-Term Plan is intended for the in-service training of first level secondary school teachers and teachers in the first two years of the second level. It is intended in part to remedy the deficit in maths skills noted in our students in the 11-16 age group (OECD-PISA and INVALSI surveys). Its aim is to improve the teaching of maths in Italian schools using a concept, agreed at the international level, that sees mathematics competences as a set of processes based on the mathematical modelling of reality within an increasingly systematic theoretical approach.

3.2.3 Measures to reduce early school leaving, to increase rates of completion of upper secondary education, to reduce the proportion of low-achieving 15 year olds in literacy, and to increase the take-up of mathematics, science and technology subjects (EU benchmarks)

From the legislative point of view, the Finance Law for 2007 decrees that "education for at least ten years is compulsory and is intended to enable pupils to obtain an upper secondary school qualification or a vocational qualification requiring at least three years, by the pupil's eighteenth year", with effect from training/educational year 2007-08.

With respect to the measures implemented by schools at the local level, in recent years the lower and upper middle schools have conducted guidance activities intended to reduce early school leaving. These include:

- a) Modular guidance pathways. In a number of regions⁵, to facilitate young people in their decisions schools have promoted initiatives in collaboration with Employment Centres to guide pupils in their training choices and provide information on local training provision and the world of work, with guidance modules included in the curriculum. Work experience and workshop initiatives have also been carried out, while specific modules for pupils with intellectual and/or physical disabilities have also been included in the programmes.
- b) Informational seminars for pupils and parents. Many regions⁶ have promoted information campaigns on local training opportunities. Guidance seminars for families have been organised, to present the full range of training provision to them and help young people choose from the different training pathways available.
- c) Advisory services for families. Individual meetings have been organised with parents to help them support their children in making their choices and interpret the different stages of adolescent development. More specifically, "listening" workshops, advisory help-desks, individual

⁵ Veneto, Valle d'Aosta, Bolzano, Liguria, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche, Molise, Basilicata

⁶ Valle d'Aosta, Bolzano, Veneto, Liguria, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche, Abruzzo, Puglia, Basilicata

counselling, and self- and mutual-help groups for parents have been organised. These initiatives ⁷ have been addressed primarily to families in difficulty or experiencing problems in their relationships with their children.

- d) Guidance. Guidance and advice for young people at risk of leaving school early. This service is intended to support young people in their training choices and includes a number of actions to help them draw up an education, training and employment plan. Advisory interviews have been conducted, both in schools and in Employment Centres, in most Italian Regions⁸.
- e) Refresher and training courses for teachers in the various Regions.

⁷ Valle d'Aosta, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche, Basilicata

⁸ Bolzano, Trento, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche, Molise, Campania, Puglia

3.3 Higher education

This part of the national report will also act as a report on the progress achieved in the modernisation of the universities. It should not however be confused with the progress report on the Bologna reform process, for which Eurydice is responsible.

In addition to the points set out in section 3.1., the following elements are also deserving of mention.

3.3.1 Measures to reinforce the knowledge triangle between education, research and innovation

Universities for lifelong learning

In the course of 2006 the Ministry for Universities and Research (MiUR) drew up and launched a new policy for lifelong learning in the higher education system, and more specifically in the universities. “Universities for Lifelong Learning” guidelines (www.miur.it) were drawn up; these introduce new strategies in the national panorama for lifelong learning in higher education.

In keeping with the European Union’s strategies, the MiUR has pointed out the need to strongly enhance the role of the universities in lifelong learning. More specifically, the ministry proposes that Lifelong Learning Centres (Italian acronym CAP) should be set up in all universities. In these Centres, guidance, advisory and support activities could be provided for adults, offering them concrete opportunities for lifelong learning and the recognition of their existing learning, regardless of how it has been acquired in their work or social activities (non-formal and informal learning).

Not all Italian universities have undertaken strategies in line with the European Union’s guidelines on lifelong learning. Awareness-raising activity by the MiUR, in coordination with the Conference of Rectors of Italian Universities, will therefore be needed if the innovative methodological and management approaches needed to reinforce lifelong learning activities in universities are to be introduced.

- The new guidelines have not yet had enough time to make a real impact, although some universities are already active in this respect. The greatest obstacle in the current situation of profound change in Italian universities with respect to the reorganisation of study courses, is the excessive number of new developments that might distract people from the objective of undertaking further innovation in the field of lifelong learning. The other significant obstacle is the need for additional investment in the CAPs to equip them with adequate organisational, logistical and personnel resources. Support initiatives to remove these obstacles, at least in part, are being prepared. These include the use of ESF funding, especially in Objective 1 Regions.

The education, research and innovation triangle has for years now been the focus of Italian universities’ efforts to play a part in the development of the country. There is no shortage of positive examples, although much remains to be done. Many of the most significant lifelong learning activities (masters and specialisation courses) are directly linked to the transfer of the most recent knowledge (see www.cruil.it).

The linkage between research, innovation and lifelong learning is particularly important in the sphere of continuing professional development (CPD), demand for which has increased strongly and will continue to do so in coming years.

In the sphere of policies to reinforce the connection between education, research and innovation, three initiatives that illustrate the choices made by the Italian system can be identified:

- The promotion, in the context of the Ministry of Education’s Plan of Intervention (2005), of Advanced Technical Education and Training Hubs in Obj. 1 Regions⁹. The plan is being implemented in the framework of institutional collaboration with the regions of southern Italy and takes the form of a national system measure. It is intended to be linked progressively with the

⁹ Campania, Calabria, Puglia, Basilicata, Sicily, Sardinia, Molise (definition Obj. 1 Structural Funds programming 2000-2006).

regional plans for Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTS) approved by the Regions for programming period 2004-2006 and aims to promote the development of ever-wider networks of schools, training bodies, universities, research and the world of work. The plan is divided into areas of intervention that develop action programmes for the implementation of IFTS courses; system actions in support of the pathways themselves (needs analysis, accompanying measures, guidance measures, agreement on and sharing of teaching tools, etc); and the development of teachers' and education and training managers' skills and competences¹⁰.

- The establishment of Technical-Vocational Hubs in accordance with the provisions of Law 40/2007. These are forms of consortium set up by technical and vocational institutes, accredited training structures and advanced technical institutes already delivering training provision through programmes being conducted in the higher technical education and training context. They include: the world of education, training, the universities and business. The Hubs are intended to systematically promote both the extension of technical vocational training options at the post-secondary level, and the dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge and measures for economic and industrial development.
- The identification of technological hubs by the Ministry for Economic Development, in conjunction with the Ministry for Innovation and Technologies. Since 2005, funding has been provided for high-technology hubs, i.e. groups of enterprises (large enterprises and SMEs), research centres, universities and public research bodies working on projects to develop new products through the application of digital technologies.

3.3.2 Participation targets and measures to achieve them

The next few years will see a strong growth in demand for lifelong learning in Italy. This is a result of trends in the labour market, which is becoming increasingly flexible and globalised and incentivises individuals to invest time and personal resources in training. The reform of the professional and occupational associations will increase demand in particular, since compulsory annual CPD will be required for entry to these organisations.

To satisfy and meet this demand, adequate training provision, developed using new methodologies and resources (e-learning, recognition of acquired learning, teaching organisations suitable for adult learners, etc) will therefore be needed.

Appropriate support policies will need to be put in place, especially in southern regions, to implement effective system-level integration policies. The appropriate use of ESF funds, both regional and national, should make it possible to create the infrastructure for regional lifelong learning systems that from the outset will be made available for the growth of the private lifelong learning market, supported by private resources (individual investments, Inter-Occupational Funds, etc).

The establishment of Lifelong Learning Centres and their integration with regional lifelong learning systems and with the other actors in the system should ensure that adequate provision is available to satisfy demand.

3.3.3 Measures to increase excellence

The establishment of the Lifelong Learning Centres (CAP) will make it possible to rationalise and evaluate current lifelong learning provision and plan a system of controlled and certified quality for this and other new training provision. The development of measures to increase excellence will therefore be set in a wider framework of quality controlled and certified training provision, which will provide guarantees for individuals investing in their training and prevent provision from becoming self-referential.

¹⁰ 131 partner schools grouped into 29 local networks have been identified, for six economic sectors in which the IFTS courses will be held.

To this end, the forthcoming establishment of the National University and Research Evaluation Agency (ANVUR), which will also evaluate lifelong learning provision, is worthy of note.

3.3.4 Measures to increase the number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology (EU benchmark)

In its Three-Year Plan 2004-06, the MIUR has drawn up a broad-ranging Scientific Degree Project (Italian acronym PLS).

The PLS is intended to increase the numbers of students taking basic science subjects: chemistry, physics, mathematics and materials science.

The project's aims are:

- **to increase the number of students** enrolling in degree courses in classes 21 (chemistry), 25 (physics) and 32 (mathematics), while maintaining high student quality standards
- **to increase the number of graduates** from classes 21, 25 and 32 and increase their rate of labour market penetration.

The period running from 1989 to 2000 saw an average reduction of 50% in the numbers enrolling in chemistry, physics and maths degree courses (of 43.1%, 55.6% and 63.3% respectively), although degrees in these subjects are amongst the most sought-after in the labour market. The drop-out rate is about 25%: in practice, one student in 4 abandons their studies before the end of their first year. About 20% of students complete their first year without managing to take their exams. Low numbers of students and graduates in these subjects translate into an overall loss of international competitiveness in the field of high technology as a result of the difficulties encountered by businesses in meeting demand for highly qualified scientific research and technical staff.

To achieve the objectives in this area actions are envisaged to:

- provide enhanced **pre-university guidance** for students in upper middle schools;
- modulate **three-year degree courses** in relation to actual labour market requirements;
- reinforce and incentivise **internships** in companies for students from classes 21, 25 and 32;
- reinforce the provision of **post-graduate training** for class 21, 25 and 32 graduates;
- draw up a detailed **communication plan**.

To succeed in this undertaking, hundreds of schools, universities and businesses throughout the country have been involved.

The PLS project will involve thousands of lecturers, teachers and students over two years. The state has earmarked €5.5 million to implement the project, to which should be added nearly €2 million provided by individual universities.

The site dedicated to the project is: <http://www.progettolaureescientifiche.it/cgi-bin/WebObjects/pls>

See annex to section 3.3.4.

3.4 Vocational education and training and adult learning

In addition to the points in section 3.1, the following elements can also be reported.

3.4.1 Measures to improve the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training and of adult education

Improving the attractiveness of training requires measures to improve its perceived value and facilitate the spendability in the labour market of competences acquired on-the-job and through courses. In this respect, the introduction of the Training Libretto at the national level is worthy of note. This instrument, promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, is intended to record and document the competences of citizen-workers, regardless of how they have been acquired, and to favour the recognition of credits deriving from formal, non-formal and informal learning (cf, in this respect, section 2.2).

With respect to measures to increase the quality of vocational education and training, the following initiatives are worthy of mention (cf in this regard section 3.1.6):

- The establishment in 2005 of the Italian Reference Point for the Quality of Education and Vocational Training in the context of the European Network on Quality in Vocational Education and Training (ENQAVET). The Reference Point has been charged with tasks such as: providing information to the main Italian stakeholders on the European Network's VET quality initiatives; providing active support for the development of the Network programme; promoting practical initiatives to reinforce the use of methodologies to guarantee and develop VET quality; developing stakeholders' awareness of the benefits deriving from the use of quality assurance and development tools; and coordinating national activities in relation to participation in the European Quality Network.
- The drafting of the Italian Guide for Self-Assessment by educational and training structures, in line with the Community mandate to encourage the dissemination and application of self-assessment methodologies at the national level. The Guide has been applied on an experimental basis in some of the main training bodies and in numerous schools, from an integrated training system perspective. It has also had to be tied in with the instruments and models already applied by training structures. The self-assessment methodology was proposed as being preliminary and/or complementary to the practices currently most widely used at the national level (ISO 9000) and to the relevant legislative provisions (2001 Decree on the accreditation of training structures).
- Dissemination and application of the Peer Review methodology at the national level, as an external tool to assess the quality of training systems and structures.
- The need to use learning assessment in vocational training as an instrument to evaluate the impact of the system. Any evaluation of the quality of training provision must necessarily include an evaluation of learning outcomes achieved; these are in fact the main system indicator. The higher the quality of the training, the better the results achieved by students and the lower the drop-out rate.
- the launch in 2005-06 of experiments to evaluate learning through vocational training, using three types of competence assessment test (mathematical competence, linguistic competence, and self-assessment (students' perception of their own strategic competences)) based on the minimum training standards for the basic competences in the three-year pathways (cf section 3.1.5).

The key principle of lifelong learning activities organised by universities, alone or in partnership with public and private bodies, should be to verify learning attained on an individual basis using a quality model that enables people to "spend" training credits acquired in their university courses. Equally, the credits acquired should be recognised for career progression purposes by the enterprises and organisations where the people concerned work. From the perspective of integration between training systems and collaboration with the public administration and private enterprises, agreements and measures that refer jointly to quality, the recognition and evaluation of the individual's learning commitment and efforts, and a series of learning assessments, are therefore necessary.

3.4.2 Measures to reinforce the link between VET and labour market needs including early identification of skills/competences needs, improving the relevance of curricula and qualifications

Changes in the set of competences demanded of workers (adaptability) may require targeted training actions. Of crucial importance in developing and fine-tuning these actions are a knowledge of and ability to interpret trends in economic systems (adaptation of technologies and work organisation methods). It is no coincidence that in recent years the use of training needs analyses has increased, as a preparatory step to the actions

envisaged in the Training Plans financed by the Joint Inter-Occupational Fund for Lifelong Learning. To address the complex ramifications of the problem, Italy has established a “permanent national occupational and training needs observation system”¹¹. Permanent, because needs develop rapidly over time and an instrument that can monitor them in real time and, if possible, anticipate them, is needed. And national, because vocational and training needs need to be grouped under a common naming system with a view to labour mobility that is able to cut across territorial borders, and in many cases sectoral borders also.

The system takes the form of an interface that enables communication between the economic-industrial system and labour market on the one hand, and the education/vocational training system on the other. Through this action, the aim is to create a channel linking the two sides from a synergistic perspective to foster the activation of integrated employment and education policies. This is, therefore, a “support tool for policy decisions” for the programming and planning of initiatives to increase the employment opportunities of people entering the labour market and helping those already in work to stay there.

The system is primarily intended to support selection processes with respect to: *the programming of training and education provisions* (information concerning the development prospects of the different economic sectors and qualitative and quantitative information on needs for use in defining qualitative and quantitative policies for education and training provision); *the planning of training and education provision* (developments in job content and in knowledge and competences); and *guidance in the choice of education/training pathways and in vocational/occupational decisions*. Over and above the three categories indicated above, the permanent vocational needs observation system also has a more general function as a knowledge resource for all the institutional, economic and social actors with an interest in understanding the nature of existing or potential developments in the world of work with a view to defining employment, organisational development and human resource management policies. As an interface for communication between the national permanent vocational needs observation system, an system that provides information on needs (grouped by occupation and economic sector) that can be matched to employment prospects in either a short- or medium-term perspective has been set up.

In Italian universities, good examples of collaboration with businesses and with labour market actors have been in place for years now. The results, however, still fall far short of requirements and timely measures should be adopted to foster early detection and recording of the competences required.

Closer relations with businesses and with employers’ and workers’ organisations should be encouraged through appropriate measures.

At the institutional level, closer coordination at the ministerial level is needed, especially between the MiUR and the Ministry of Labour, on the planning of university-level education and training.

3.4.3 Opening up pathways to further and higher education

In the three years from 2004 to 2006, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, in collaboration where applicable with the Regions, took action to facilitate pupils’ transitions between the education and vocational training systems. This approach was both *horizontal* (transition from one strand to another) and *vertical* (from one level to another, in all the strands).

The documentary and legislative material produced through the initiatives on *horizontal* transitions has focused on transitions from vocational training and apprenticeships to school and vice-versa. In these transitions, arrangements are in place at the intermediate and final stages for certification of the competences acquired during training, for the recognition of credits and transitions to other pathways (2004 Agreement). This task was made possible by the work carried out on defining exit standards, and more specifically: minimum education/training standards for basic competences acquired in three-year education and training pathways (2004); and minimum education/training standards for technical-vocational competences (2006) (see the regional experience described in the annex).

¹¹ The system was developed over the seven years from 2000 to 2006.

In the case of the *vertical* transition from education, vocational training and apprenticeships to higher education, the following measures are worthy of mention:

- the 2002 Agreement on guidelines for the programming of Higher Technical Education and Training and for Measures for the integration of the education/training systems is still in force. This Agreement regulates access to and the selection and accreditation of competences for entry to the relevant pathways. It also provides an opportunity for people who do not hold an upper secondary school qualification, but have reached a certain level of competence, to enter these pathways and courses¹²¹³.
- The different types of apprenticeships established in 2003¹⁴. Of these, the apprenticeship to obtain a diploma or access to advanced training pathways is significant. This form of apprenticeship is designed to provide access to secondary school, university, advanced training and IFTS qualifications. Young people aged 18-29 can take part in this form of education/training, in all sectors of activity (see more detailed information in annex).

The new pathways proposed by the MiUR in the Guidelines on “Universities for lifelong learning” can help adults enter or return to formal university learning pathways. In some universities these new approaches have already been adopted.

An innovative experiment with respect to the accreditation of previous learning and work-based learning has been conducted by the Universities of Basilicata, Calabria and Molise as part of the Formez Project on “Quality in the Public Administration”. (see section 3.4.3. of annex).

3.4.4 Addressing the specific learning / training needs of vocational and adult teachers and trainers to enable them to cope with their changing roles in the knowledge-based society

Strategies relating to the development and re-training needs of adult teachers and trainers are mainly to be found in the regional and national ESF Operational Programmes. Of the training initiatives examined for adult teachers and trainers, the following thematic areas are worthy of note: mastery of the most widespread languages and technologies; openness to innovation; and the ability to handle group dynamics, interact with other cultures, up-date skills, “learn to learn”, self-assess, and work in networks with the other local actors operating in the adult education/training field (training centres, guidance agencies, employment centres, businesses, trade unions, cultural associations, etc). The trend is to reinforce the ability to work not just on content but also on the empowerment of the individual, on assigning value to the individual’s life experience and on providing motivation and support, especially with reference to users classified as “weak” in social, vocational or employment terms.

Also worthy of note is the project developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, the Regions, the universities, ISFOL and the social partners, and based on a “blended” methodology designed to foster the updating/requalification of operators in the vocational training system by setting up and testing a vocational training course as part of the three-year degree in training sciences.

For the universities too, specific training activities for lecturers, tutors and support staff should be set up in the Lifelong Learning Centres (CAPs). Adult learning requires a more complex approach to process organisation, especially if blended learning methods are to be used.

3.4.5 Measures which reinforce social partner involvement in training, in particular sectoral approaches to skills and qualifications

¹² Level 3 of the IALS SIALS scale for functional literacy and numeracy skills

¹³ L’INVALSI has conducted an experiment involving “entrance” tests.

¹⁴ Established by Decree 276/2003 implementing Law 30/2003.

In Italy also, as already happens in other European countries, the social partners, acting bilaterally, are directly responsible for organising and funding the demand for lifelong learning expressed by enterprises, through Joint Inter-Occupational Funds for Lifelong Learning. These funds are set up and promoted by the social partners themselves. Over the last year, however, the process of reinforcing the lifelong learning system, based on the creation of joint funds and on the quest for flexible specialisation drawing on the public instruments available to central and regional government (regional programmes financed by the ESF, Law 236/1993 initiatives, actions to promote training leave as envisaged by Law 52/2000) seems, in part, to have slowed down. Fewer businesses are investing in training (the percentage of businesses providing training fell to 18.8% in 2005, the lowest level since 2001); they are however signing up to the Inter-Occupational Funds, which were set up as a result of agreements signed by the main employers' and workers' organisations¹⁵.

It should however be pointed out that in 2005 an important **agreement** was reached between the Ministry of Labour, the Regions and the social partners on the establishment of a “**progressive, non-competitive, integrated national system of lifelong learning**”. The agreement commits the signatories to:

- coherently plan lifelong learning initiatives with a view to providing a countrywide response to the training needs of workers and enterprises;
- reinforce the technical and operational dimension of the National Lifelong Learning Observatory;
- share information to build a national lifelong learning system.

The **National Observatory on Continuous Training** acts as a single centre for strategic and programming discussion and has the task of:

- a) establishing guidance proposals by drawing up guidelines. These draw on the input and contributions of members of the new body and the institutional actors who, in recent years, have built up significant expertise in the field of lifelong learning;
- b) express opinions and assessments with respect to the activities carried out by the Funds, including in relation to the application of the above-mentioned guidelines.

3.4.6 Enhancing access and opportunities for learning among the disadvantaged, and alternative pathways, including for early school leavers

In the course of 2006, a number of measures were adopted to improve access to the education and vocational training system.

1) In the case of early training, following the 2003 Agreement a three-year training pathway leading to a qualification was established. This short-term training provision, which is therefore accessible to those wishing to enter work as early as possible, has been implemented in different ways in different parts of the country. Some of these envisage the possibility of transferring from school to training at different stages of the education/training pathway. These opportunities to switch facilitate access to the pathways by enabling young people to choose the one most suited to their personal learning styles and expectations, without ruling out a later transition to traditional schooling or other training pathways.

2) Provincial and regional “register offices” for the under-18s have been established – systems of databases that can be used to monitor young people’s participation in education, vocational training and apprenticeships.

3) Taking the use of these instruments as their starting point, operators in Employment Centres, which are run by the Provinces, contact those young people who are not taking part in any education or training and provide information, guidance and mentoring to encourage them to return to training; the process starts by drawing up a specific “training plan”.

4) With reference to the three-year pathway mentioned at point 1) above, accompanying measures have been established at the local level to increase the flexibility and degree of customisation of courses and pathways. These measures, which are particularly useful for people living in conditions of disadvantage, include:

- **guidance** (reception, re-direction, a guiding hand into employment, counselling) to support young people in their choice of training or employment, foster socialisation in training settings, and reinforce their motivation to learn;
- **tutoring**, to accompany young people through their training and then facilitate their entry into work;

¹⁵ Overall, more than 420,00 enterprises, employing more than 6 million workers, have joined the Funds to date.

- **customisation of learning pathways**, i.e. the division of learning pathways into certifiable modules so that pupils only need to attend the modules that are necessary for them to complete their training. This makes it possible to respond to individuals' learning and cognitive differences;
- **support for disadvantaged categories**, i.e. individual actions specifically addressed to disadvantaged young people (drop-outs, non-EU citizens, the disabled);
- **Learning Recovery and Development Workshops (LARSA)**, modules that enable young people to acquire or make up individual skills, competences or aspects of knowledge that they have not mastered sufficiently.

5) Finally, with a view to encouraging integrated guidance policies countrywide, **Training and refresher pathways for Employment Centre trainers and operators** have been set up in a number of Regions¹⁶. These are intended to improve participants' skills in contacts with users, especially with respect to individuals at risk of leaving training, and to foster the growth of the system by promoting stable cooperation between the worlds of education and vocational training.

Under the EU's Equal Initiative¹⁷, measures designed to create the conditions for the social and employment inclusion of disadvantaged individuals are worthy of mention. These include:

- innovation and greater flexibility in guidance and training provision for people with poor employability prospects (migrants, the disabled, convicts, ex-convicts, drug addicts, former drug addicts, drop-outs, the unemployed, young people in search of their first job, etc). This sphere of action focuses on the need to make training and guidance accessible to all by identifying new training, guidance and certification methodologies and instruments from a lifelong learning perspective. In this respect, particular attention has been devoted to enhancing, evaluating and validating any competences previously acquired by people from the most disadvantaged categories.
- the promotion of stable linkages between the training, employment and welfare systems through the active involvement of the competent services. This sphere of action is reserved for the construction of social and institutional networks to provide an integrated response to the many and varied problems and needs experienced by disadvantaged people and promotes experimental alternative pathways for access to training, education and employment by reinforcing the systems of reference.

See also the attached examples of good practice.

3.4.7 Measures to increase the rate of adult participation in lifelong learning, and to reinforce key competences among adult learners and older people whether employed or not (EU benchmark)

With respect to measures to increase the rate of adult participation in lifelong learning:

- In 2006, the Ministry of Labour distributed to the Regions and Provinces the resources referred to in Law 236/1996. This provision reiterates the principle of equality already set forth in previous laws. Against this background, **workers aged more than 45 in any private enterprise** are included in the priority target groups for training initiatives. These measures are intended to consolidate basic and transversal knowledge and skills through initiatives delivered on a project, training structure or voucher basis. Again in 2006, all of the Regions which issued notices publicising the Ministry's provision fully espoused the priority, which they adapted to their own social and economic circumstances.
- With respect to the Joint Inter-Occupational Funds for Lifelong Learning, initiatives specifically addressing older workers have thus far been sporadic¹⁸.

In addition, the recent bill laying down general provisions on LLL (see par. 1.1.1.) should be mentioned, which aims to define measures supporting learning of workers.

And finally, as far as measures to increase adult participation in lifelong learning are concerned, the following actions are worthy of note:

- the continuation, in 2005, of the work of the Permanent Local Centres which, according to the latest data published by the Ministry of Education, have 404,212 users and provide 19,375 courses in 540 centres

¹⁶ Valle D'Aosta, Bolzano, Trento, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche, Basilicata

¹⁷ Initiative co-financed by the ESF for 2000-2008.

¹⁸ In 2006 just one Fund indicated workers aged 45+ as priority targets, in the notice on funding for lifelong learning activities for member firms.

throughout the country. On the basis of the Finance Law for 2007, these Centres, which operate in schools of all levels and types, are to be reorganised on a provincial basis and will become “Provincial Centres for Adult Learning”. They will enjoy administrative, organisational and didactic autonomy and will have their own staffing structure distinct from that of ordinary educational pathways.

- The introduction, in three regions of central-northern Italy, of the inter-regional project on “Individual Learning Accounts – Prepaid cards for individual training credits”. These are intended for use in local experiments on an initiative designed to meet the training needs of a pre-determined number of citizens.

ANNEX TO CHAPTER 1

Section 1.2.2

Italy's position (showing the geographical gap) with respect to the European benchmarks in the area of education and training is illustrated below.

Table 1. – Italy's position with respect to the five "Education and Training" Benchmarks – Lisbon 2010

Indicator	2010 Target	2000		2004			
		EU (25)	Italy	EU (25)	Italy	Centre-North	South
1. Early school leavers: Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most one lower secondary school qualification and not engaged in further education or training	No more than 10%	17.3	25.3	15.7	22.4	18.8	27.2
2. Key competences: Percentage of 15-year old students with at least the basic level of literacy skills	reduction of 20% on figure for 2000	19.4	18.9	19.8	23.9	14.7	34.7
3. Percentage completing upper-secondary education: Percentage of the population aged 20-24 with at least the upper-secondary certificate	at least 85%	76.4	68.8	76.7	72.3	75.9	67.7
4. Graduates in mathematics, science and technology: number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology –per 1000 inhabitants aged 20-29	increase of at least 15% on the figure for 2000	10.2	5.6	12.3	9.0	11.3	5.8
5. Lifelong learning: Percentage of adults aged 25-64 participating in lifelong learning	at least 12.5%	7.9	4.5	9.9	6.2	6.5	5.8

Source: Istat, Eurostat, OECD PISA 2003.

ANNEXES TO CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 2 –IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSVERSAL POLICY OBJECTIVES

Annex 2.1

www.nrpitalia.it for an overview of new developments at the national and regional levels in the area of qualifications and certification.

[Il punto su...il Lifelong learning nel quadro delle politiche comunitarie 2007-2013 Europa.doc n. 5/2006](#) (Bibliographic Bulletin)

EQF Network testing (project funded under Leonardo da Vinci Programme 2000-2006)

The project, aimed at elaborating technical and strategic support for the definition of national systems of the participating countries (Italy, France, United Kingdom, Spain, Belgium, Poland and Romania), foresees the testing of some aspects linked to the EQF application by challenges identification and review proposals. The project work aims at identifying, sharing and describing standard content of professions group by economic sector to compare them with the EQF structure.

Annex 2.2

Regional experience:

Some regional administrations¹⁹ have taken direct action to define operational policies and strategies to encourage the validation of informal and non-formal learning for the recognition of training credits in specific formal learning activities or to acquire official qualifications and certificates²⁰. In some cases, the validation process has taken place within training supply chains (Ifets, Adult Learning pathways). In others, the regional administrations have designed and implemented systems for the validation and recognition of training credits or official qualifications referring to specific learning contexts (national community service, specific economic sectors). And in other cases again, the validation mechanisms have been activated on an *ad hoc* basis and brought into play for all the vocational training pathways and supply chains involved.

Two examples of good practice are illustrated below:

Training and Employment for the Social Economy (Italian acronym FLES)

This project is being implemented from July 2005 to December 2007 in four Italian regions²¹. Its aim is to support social enterprises in the process of redefining their organisational model and up-dating operators' skills, a necessary step to address the many changes that have affected the personal services sector in recent decades. The strategy consists of encouraging an agreed approach to the forward planning of training initiatives as opposed to sporadic "patching up" initiatives. A lifelong learning perspective has been adopted, making it possible to address changes in demand for services and their delivery method. 200 operators working in social enterprises to identify training needs and consequently to plan and design training programmes to fill the skills gap were involved in training activities at the local level. The approach followed was to help define a systematic framework which, at the national level, picks out regional differences in profiles – and therefore in training pathways – and specific local features of the practices followed. In this context, the project aim of testing Prior Learning Validation (PLV) is particularly interesting. PLV is a validation/standardisation model for previously acquired competences and skills, especially those acquired in non-formal and informal conditions. The PLV model will then be tested in different sectors and on different target groups with a view to validating it from the methodological point of view.

Investing in people

¹⁹ Basilicata, Emilia Romagna, Piedmont, Autonomous Province of Trento, Veneto and Valle d'Aosta

²⁰ See Isfol, *Sistema di Monitoraggio sui dispositivi di certificazione delle competenze formalizzati nei diversi contesti regionali*, September 2004

²¹ Liguria, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Umbria and Calabria

This project helps enterprises and workers from the most vulnerable categories become more adaptable to labour market changes by promoting lifelong learning and the enhancement of human resources. The initiative is intended specifically to encourage the employment of the over-45s and disabled people by recognising and validating competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, and to help companies increase their competitiveness by enhancing their human resources. It also contributes to the creation of innovative services for the local labour market by involving trade associations, employers' organisations, public and private employment services and political and economic decision-makers interested in sharing an integrated training model focusing on the enterprise as training structure.

The experiment²² is based on a workers' competence validation model developed and tested in the Netherlands. The model, called Prior Learning Validation (PLV, see above) uses a variety of instruments including: guidance, skills audit and validation, individualised learning, as well as support in entering work. It is currently being tested in small-to-medium sized enterprises.

The steps envisaged in applying the model include analysing the local economy and the people working in it; drawing up functional profiles and defining competence/skills indicators for them; formulating competence evaluation processes based on these indicators; and validating the competences thus evaluated, even if they are not backed up by educational qualifications or other forms of certification.

- www.nrpitalia.it
- [Sperimentazione del libretto formativo del cittadino](#) (Format and Guidelines (October 2005), Experimentation Plan (March 2006), initial outcomes of experiment activities (January 2007))
- *ISFOL 2007 "Esperienze di validazione dell'apprendimento non formale e informale in Italia e in Europa"* (publication pending)
- *OECD Activity on Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning – Italy Country Background Report*

Annex 2.3

Some examples of good practice are illustrated below:

Passoallapratice (Step-by-Step into Practice). This is a guidance pathway designed to develop and enhance the individual's general self-guidance ability, so as to lead him or her progressively to a better awareness of themselves and of their personal resources to enable them to cope effectively with various employment and personal situations. *Passoallapratice* is characterised by the absence of diagnostic goals, the use of validated instruments, the anchoring of the project to pertinent theoretical models, and the attempt to achieve integration between the different learning systems, most notably the school and employment systems.

The pathway tested involved the observation of a series of dimensions and variables in order to evaluate their effectiveness and pertinence, the aim being to identify which stage participants have reached in their decision-making process and help them clarify their position by analysing a set of internal and external resources.

The experience was intended to:

- develop and apply a voluntary, needs-focused guidance pathway to be implemented through local services and in collaboration with schools;
- define a type of *ad hoc* service for the youth target, which can be integrated with the guidance initiatives already in place in schools. The aim here is to provide an advisory approach that draws directly on the boy or girl's own motivation and for this reason presupposes a personalised relationship;
- provide a service that is also available to young people applying individually or coming on their own initiative (or accompanied by family members) to ask for guidance "advice".

With this objective in mind, the pathway was based on the idea of an advisory service to support young people in their decision-making process. It was therefore divided into three stages: group activity; individual interviews; and the completion of questionnaires.

²² Implemented in the Province of Macerata

A scuola mi oriento (Guiding myself at school). This is a guidance pathway for pupils in upper secondary schools. It is implemented by teachers to foster increased self-awareness and support the development of competences that enable pupils to build up their own decision-making pathway, the aim being to increase their ability to apply self-guidance in their own life-space and reduce early school-leaving.

A special emphasis was therefore laid on identifying certain qualities deemed to be particularly relevant for operational purposes (coping, self-efficacy, learning styles, motivation, attitudes and values) in order to foster the development of the necessary competences to draw up a personal and vocational project that reflects the reference context.

The pathway is divided into four modules and can be implemented over a variable timescale depending on the frequency of meetings; in any case the total time involved must be no more than two and a half months.

Before starting on the pathway, pupils take part in the awareness-raising stage, where the pathway is presented to them and to the teaching staff in order to create the right conditions for all the actors concerned to play their part in full. After this, the pupils embark on the pathway itself, which is divided into four modules. 1) The first (*La Mia Storia/Le Mie Domande (My Story/My Questions)*) is designed to encourage pupils to reconstruct their learning history, identify its most salient features and reflect on their expectations, goals and fears with respect to the pathway they are about to follow. 2) The second (*A Caccia di Risorse (Hunting for Resources)*) is designed to create and nurture students' ability to analyse critical situations in everyday life in order to develop their awareness of the strategies they employ, expand the range of possible coping strategies and enhance their sense of self-efficacy. 3) The third (*Stili a confronto (Styles Compared)*) is designed to increase young people's self-knowledge through awareness of their learning and working styles, and to encourage them to test themselves in a flexible approach that is appropriate to the tasks required of them. 4) Finally, the fourth (*Un ponte verso il futuro (A bridge to the future)*) is designed to develop pupils' ability to take decisions regarding their educational, vocational and employment future.

Bi.dicomp. This activity was conceived to fine-tune a skills auditing pathway that meets employment centre operators' need for an instrument that can be used in real local contexts, with all their constraints and resources. The target group consists of adults aged 26-55 with previous vocational and employment experience, who have not immediately managed to enter the world of work or are about to leave it.

Bi.dicomp was tested countrywide by employment centres and other employment structures, with the involvement of the various local organisations (regional, provincial and municipal authorities, public and private bodies) dealing in one way or another with guidance activities. The pathway envisages an initial reception service, individual interviews, an information and documentation service, and group workshops. An "autobiographical" approach was encouraged. This was expressed in the process whereby participants reconstructed their employment history and competences.

In.la.v. - (insieme lavoro vita (work life together)). European guidance on equal opportunities and, more specifically, the reconciliation of work and family/personal life, was the cue that prompted the implementation of a guidance and advisory pathway addressed to individuals with a pressing need to hold together life and work: men and women from different social and employment backgrounds.

The aim is to foster a shared mindset and support the work of the local guidance centres, and to pave the way for change in the times, modes and strategies adopted to reconcile paid work and private life, including space and time for the individual.

With respect to this more general objective a specific goal was also identified for the pathway. This was for people to re-define their own resources from their working and personal lives, and provide them with instruments to seek solutions and take decisions in the light of a wider development project that touches on both spheres of reference (work and personal).

3. Isfol, *Le dimensioni del coping e dell'attribuzione causale nell'orientamento: due strumenti ISFOL*, Rome, Isfol, 2006 (Temi&Strumenti. Studi e ricerche; 17)
4. Isfol, *Bi.dicomp. Un percorso ISFOL di Bilancio di Competenze*, Rome, Isfol, 2006 (Temi&Strumenti. Studi e ricerche; 16)
5. Isfol, *A scuola mi oriento*, Rome, Isfol, 2006 (Temi&Strumenti. Percorsi; 2)
6. Isfol, *Funzioni, competenze e profili formativi*, Rome, Isfol, 2006 (Temi&Strumenti. Percorsi; 3)

Annex 2.4

1. Isfol, *Mobilità e trasparenza delle competenze acquisite: l'esperienza Europass Formazione in Italia*, Rome, Isfol, 2005 (Temi&Strumenti. Studi e ricerche; 2)

ANNEXES TO CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 – Implementation of policy objectives in schools, higher education, vocational education and training, and adult education

Annex 3.1.1

Isfol, *Istruzione e formazione professionale: verso la costruzione di nuovi scenari e nuove competenze per gli operatori del sistema*, Rome, Isfol, 2006 (Temi&Strumenti. Studi e ricerche; 12)

Annex 3.1.2

Lifelong Learning Report 2006.

<http://www.eformazionecontinua.it>, <http://www.ricercheformazione.it>;
<http://www.welfare.gov.it/EuropaLavoro/Novita/News/RapportoFC2006.htm>)

Annex 3.1.3

The following is an example of good practice:

Club Itaca: Employment inclusion pathway for the mentally disabled.

The Lombardy Equal project addresses the factors obstructing the employment inclusion of disabled people: misinformation; difficulty in coping with the pace and responsibilities of work; inadequate technical skills; difficulties with relationships; or the fear of losing rights such as benefits, attendance allowances, etc. Another factor is that employers' behaviour does not always encourage the employment inclusion of the mentally disabled and training and insertion pathways often fail to meet the needs of this target group.

The Club Itaca project included a stage during which the local social, economic, legislative and social assistance scenario²³ was studied – in this case, one with a sound and well-established social, health and welfare system. The project tests an employment inclusion model for a group of 25 mentally disabled people, who are given the opportunity of attending a day-centre operating along the lines of a club. Here, beneficiaries engage in activities designed to restore their ability to relate to other people, take on responsibilities, try out different roles, respect commitments, and recover and enhance any skills they have acquired. In the “clubhouse”, beneficiaries are mentored as they design their own social and employment re-inclusion pathway through *ad hoc* learning activities, apprenticeships, temporary jobs, “supported” jobs, study support and tutoring. The various initiatives are also addressed to employers.

[Dipendenze e Mentoring. Prevenzione del disagio giovanile e sostegno alla famiglia](#), I libri del Fse, May 2006

Isfol, *Investire nella progettualità delle associazioni di promozione sociale. Compendium progetti legge 383/2000 triennio 2002-2004*, Rome, Isfol, 2006 (Temi&Strumenti. Studi e ricerche; 8)

Isfol, *Accogliere e integrare. Esperienze Equal in tema di immigrazione*, Rome, Isfol, 2006 (Temi&Strumenti. Studi e ricerche; 10)

Isfol, *Esperienze di validazione dell'apprendimento non formale e informale in Italia e in Europa*, Rome, Isfol, 2006 (Temi&Strumenti. Studi e ricerche; 20)

²³ City of Milan

Annex 3.1.4

Context analysis:

An analysis of gender-related statistics in the area of education, training and the transition to work shows that some areas of segregation still exist. Although not many in number, when labour market trends are taken into consideration they are found to be connected to the sectors of greatest employment growth (technical/scientific/engineering) or areas linked to innovation. Women's learning and training choices therefore run the risk of translating into educational qualifications that are unattractive in employment market terms, to which should be added other gender-related disadvantages. Moreover, in Italy, the skills and competences currently found in the female component of the population (women generally perform better at all levels and grades of education and have higher transition rates to second- and third-level higher education, and better success rates than men) are not fully valued and/or valorised. This situation is so marked as to present a very real problem of lost potential in terms of human resources. Even women who have made non-traditional education or training choices (graduates in technical or scientific disciplines) encounter difficulties when they try to enter the labour market under the same conditions as men.

[Esiti dell'applicazione della politica delle pari opportunità e del mainstreaming di genere negli interventi di Fse, I libri del Fse, June 2006](#)

[Modelli e metodologie per la formazione continua nelle Azioni di sistema. I progetti degli avvisi 6 e 9 del 2001 del Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, I libri del Fse, June 2006](#)

[Il punto su...scienza e pari opportunità nelle politiche dell'Unione europea, I libri del Fse, 2006](#)

"Indirizzi Operativi per l'attuazione delle Linee Guida V.I.S.P.O."
http://www.retepariopportunita.it/Rete_Pari_Opportunita/UserFiles/Isfol/Vispo/Indirizzi_operativi.pdf

“Esiti dell'applicazione della politica di pari opportunità e del mainstreaming di genere negli interventi di Fse. Le “azioni rivolte alle persone” and “le azioni rivolte all'accompagnamento” lette secondo il genere
<http://www.welfare.gov.it/EuropaLavoro/Ucofpl/ProdottiEditoriali/CollaneEditoriali/ILibriDelFondoSocialeEuropeo/Esitipariopportunita.htm>

<http://www.consiglieranazionaleparita.it>

Annex 3.1.6

Detailed analysis of structure accreditation:

The “*Structure Accreditation*” scheme co-funded by the ESF as part of the “System Actions” National Operational Programme in programming period 2000-2006 is a key stage in the quality development of the Italian learning and training system. The starting point of any accreditation pathway has been and continues to be quality and guarantees for users, a concept around which the procedures and checks on the structures and services provided by the actors organising and delivering publicly funded learning and training initiatives, or by those implementing actions recognised by regional government, unfold. Under the 2000-2006 programming, all the Regions and Autonomous Provinces defined their own accreditation systems to monitor the actors implementing them. Centres applying for accreditation and undergoing monitoring processes (paper-based or on *in situ*) amounted to over 14,000. About 9,500 of these were admitted, after various checking processes, to take part in regional competitive bidding procedures for the organisation and management of publicly funded training and guidance initiatives. Another extremely significant result was the creation of the first national database of accredited training bodies and centres; this contains information on provisionally or definitively accredited bodies and operational centres

Annex 3.1.7

With respect to the “network” project that led to the definition of regulations governing education and training (point 1), legislative or regulatory provisions on the following subjects are worthy of mention:

- minimum basic standards for learning pathways (2004)
- final and intermediate certification and recognition of training and learning credits (2004)
- definition of minimum training standards for technical-vocational competences (2006)
- general rules and essential performance levels for the second cycle of the education and training learning system (2005)
- definition of general rules on the right-duty to education and training (2005)
- definition of general rules on school-work alternation (2005)
- urgent provisions concerning technical-vocational education and enhanced school autonomy (2007)

3.2 Schools

Annex 3.2.4

Regional experience:

The Regions and Provinces of Emilia Romagna support schools and training agencies in developing guidance functions through training initiatives for teachers, the use of experts and the provision of adequate operational guidance tools. In the Province of Ravenna, for example, for the training of 1st level secondary school teachers, the initiatives are designed to develop in teaching staff the methodological and pedagogical skills needed to support young people and their families in their educational and training choices, as well as a clearer knowledge of the learning, economic and employment situation of the province. The initiatives involve teachers (with a particular focus on those holding guidance positions) and use interactive methods such as workshops.

[Plus Participation Labour Unemployment Survey. Indagine nazionale sulle caratteristiche e le aspettative degli individui sul lavoro](#), I libri del Fse, July 2006

3.3 Higher education

Annex 3.3.1

The Ministry for Universities and Research has drawn up guidelines on “Universities for Continuing Learning”. The guidelines can be found on the Ministry’s site www.miur.it

Annex 3.3.4

SCIENTIFIC DEGREE PROJECT

The Scientific Degree Project (Italian acronym PLS) arose from a collaborative programme between the Ministry for Universities and Research (MIUR), the Education Ministry (MPI), Confindustria (the Italian employers’ association) and the National Conference for Heads of Science and Technology Faculties. Its aim is to:

- increase the number of students enrolling in degree courses in categories 21, 25 and 32 (chemistry, physics and mathematics) while maintaining high academic standards;
- increase the number of science graduates entering the world of work, by incentivising pre- and post-graduate work experience and internships and identifying the skills demanded by the labour market;

- create a clearly defined pathway, for the first time in Italy, for young people interested in taking up basic science; this would lead from school to university to the world of work;
- increase the dissemination of scientific learning at the upper middle-school stage by involving pupils in guidance and workshop activities (some of them extra-curricular) during their last three years in middle school;
- introduce a refresher process for upper secondary school teachers based on innovative workshop-based research/training activities.

This determination to launch a truly synergistic project between schools and universities is confirmed by the funding allocated to the PLS for a 2-year period, with €6.5M from the MIUR Three-Year Plan for the Universities, €1.5M from the MPI's Directorate General for Students and €0.5M from the MPI's Directorate General for training.

The PLS is divided into 9 national projects:

- 1) Student guidance and teacher training – Chemistry
- 2) Student guidance and teacher training – Physics
- 3) Student guidance and teacher training – Mathematics
- 4) Student guidance and internships – Materials Science
- 5) Three-year learning, internships and post-graduate training – Chemistry
- 6) Three-year learning, internships and post-graduate training – Physics
- 7) Three-year learning, internships and post-graduate training – Mathematics
- 8) Scholarships for Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics
- 9) General initiatives.

STUDENT GUIDANCE AND TEACHER TRAINING: CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS, MATHEMATICS AND MATERIALS SCIENCE

The project covers, essentially, the whole country. Those taking part include about 30 universities for each of the three degree categories (21, 25 and 32) and all of the 11 institutes offering degree courses in Materials Science.

At the national level, the four guidance projects have involved over 50,000 students in over 1,500 schools of all types: science-stream secondary schools; industry-stream technical colleges; classics-stream secondary schools; vocational training institutes, and others. Over 1,150 university lecturers, 1,850 upper-secondary school-teachers and over 320 representatives of industry associations and/or companies have taken part. School-teachers, university lecturers and other experts have worked together to design and implement specific workshop activities for students in their last three years of upper secondary school. By taking an active part in these workshops the students have acquired more direct experience of the issues and problems involved in science subjects and have also learned more about their own interests and inclinations. Participation in these activities has also enabled teachers to increase their knowledge in their own subject areas as well as their more general skills and expertise. Further teacher-training opportunities have been provided through refresher courses and Masters degrees set up specifically for the project.

These activities were monitored at the national level through a site set up specifically by the Educational Quality Network in Milan and questionnaires issued to students and teachers to evaluate their satisfaction with, and the effectiveness of, the various initiatives. The questionnaires were designed to be equal for all the institutions taking part and all the subjects involved.

All the responses to the questionnaires showed a high degree of student satisfaction. More specifically, over 90% replied in the affirmative to the last question, on whether it was worthwhile taking part in the project activities. This confirms that the workshops were effective in imparting a better understanding of the subjects concerned. Teachers had very positive opinions on the knock-on effects of these activities in their ordinary teaching work. Both teachers and students were unanimous in their overall appreciation of the initiative. Finally, specific guidance initiatives were set up by employment experts to provide information on and raise awareness of job opportunities for science graduates in the private sector.

THREE-YEAR LEARNING, INTERNSHIPS AND POST-GRADUATE TRAINING

An analysis of vocational needs, which is intended to assess how well the learning objectives of the different degree courses match the vocational skills required by business, is nearing completion. A paper setting out the conclusions of the analysis will be available by the end of the summer and will be particularly useful in the light of the amendments that Law 270/2004 will bring to the current regulations.

To incentivise pre- and post-graduate internships and apprenticeships, a national database is being compiled on the internships offered by enterprises. The database will be ready by the end of the year. Financial incentives are envisaged for students taking up internships in different provinces from those where their universities or homes are located.

Finally, another database is being compiled on the Masters degrees and specialisation courses available for level-I graduates in class 21, 25 and 32 subjects. The aim here is to rationalise the offering of such courses by identifying best practices and applying them at the national level. To achieve this, a number of actors have been involved: the universities, local and sector-based organisations run by Confindustria and its member companies, individual enterprises and professional associations. The results of this analysis will be available by the end of the year, and will considerably simplify the options available to students interested in this type of learning.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Italian Chemistry Society (SCI), the Italian Physics Society (SIF) and the Institute of Advanced Mathematics (INDAM) issued over 120 scholarships for students enrolling in academic year 2006-07 in the first year of one of the category 21, 25 or 35 degree courses. These scholarships, amounting to €4,000 per year for a potential three years, were awarded through a national competition sub-divided by subject. They will be extended beyond the first year only if the recipient complies with his/her course requirements and achieves high academic standards. The rules also envisage that scholarship winners will be able to choose which university to attend.

The high degree of interest that students expressed in this initiative should be underscored, with over 1,500 applications for the 120 scholarships.

GENERAL ACTIONS

The following communication initiatives are worthy of note:

- the www.progettolaureescientifiche.it portal, to showcase and publicise the results of the Science Degree Project, direct visitors to related, more detailed thematic sites (already on-line or under construction) and, more generally, to provide “validated” information on the PLS and the issues it addresses;
- the information booklet on category 21, 25 and 32 degree courses. The booklet, entitled “Quattro idee per il futuro: riflessioni e orientamento per gli studenti in Chimica, Fisica, Matematica e Scienza dei Materiali” (*Ideas for the future: reflections and guidance for chemistry, physics, mathematics and materials science students*), was conceived specifically for students in the last three years of upper middle school. It is available in electronic format on the project portal, and through the MIUR and MPI web sites;
- a stand promoting the PLS which was set up by the MPI’s Directorate General for Communication at the CampusOrienta events in Rome and Palermo.

Specific actions are currently being developed to:

- capitalise on the good practices brought into play by the PLS;
- set up on-line courses for teachers on the competence-based design of learning pathways and workshops;
- conduct an in-depth survey on the way upper-middle school pupils perceive science subjects and on the outcome of the PLS initiatives.

The site dedicated to the Project is: <http://www.progettolaureescientifiche.it> .

3.4 Vocational education and training and adult learning

Annex 3.4.2

Detailed analysis of the permanent national occupational and training needs observation system

The national vocational needs monitoring system is able to provide material, which can be interlinked, on:

- economic trends in the relevant sectors of activity
- sectoral registers of needs as produced by the social partners
- description of needs organised into single-subject fact-sheets
- short-term recruitment projections
- medium-term employment projections.

The system architecture is based on a new classification tool – the Vocational Units Nomenclature and Classification System (Italian acronym NUP)²⁴ – conceived as a tool linking vocational and employment needs, in the context of building a national needs monitoring system.

The NUP is a set of vocational units that starts from the current vocational classification and uses the jobs inventories resulting from the national needs surveys conducted by bilateral bodies (joint trade union and employers' bodies) in recent years. With respect to these, it provides a greater degree of detail²⁵. This transforms the classification into a sort of “jobs dictionary”, a key tool in opening a process of representing job content using a common language. The classification therefore performs a double function. On the one hand, thanks to the more detailed break-down, it enables the needs expressed by the labour market to be better codified, and on the other it enables this qualitative information to be linked with quantitative data forecasting short- and medium-term employment requirements.

On the “employment needs and forecasting”²⁶ front, the system provides information on short-term employment needs and medium-term employment forecasts:

- 1-year recruitment forecasts at the national and regional level;
- 5-year employment forecasts at the national level.

The standardisation of the occupational groupings into approximately 800 units (UPs) and the adoption of a uniform criterion to describe them provides an unambiguous reference point to measure and classify the needs of over 6000 occupations operating in the Italian economy. It also makes it possible, as mentioned earlier, to link the information on occupational and vocational needs to employment forecasts.

Similarly, on the occupational needs front a diversification over time is envisaged between contingent needs and forecasts of medium-term needs. Of the various foresight²⁷ methodologies, the one best suited to evaluating the medium-term impacts of socio-economic, technological and organisational change on occupational and employment systems is the scenario.

If we envisage an information flow linked to the contingent needs expressed by the economic system and to studies forecasting what the requirement will be in the medium term, the national system of employment needs takes into account a usership interested and involved in lifelong learning.

The information gathered in the database of the national occupational needs monitoring system has many spheres of use. In particular, the data on the short- and medium-term national and regional employment forecasts, as well as the studies deriving from them, could provide a useful support in drawing up labour market intervention policies, planning training/education activities and employment guidance.

²⁴ Drawn up by ISFOL together with the National Statistics Institute.

²⁵ For each category in which the Occupational Classification is drawn up, one or more units are identified. These are defined as sets of homogeneous occupations in terms of knowledge, competences, skills and type of work involved. With respect to the Occupational Classification, the Vocational Units Nomenclature and Classification System not only increases the amount of detail in the break-down, but also introduces a descriptive component and defines for each level in a given occupation the classification criteria and corresponding job content.

²⁶ Forecast: projections based on mathematical-statistical models to estimate trends in phenomena in the near future (e.g. employment)

²⁷ Foresight: Prefiguring, through the use of empirical and scientific techniques and instruments, of events that could take place in the future and the possible effects of these events.

(techniques used to plan medium- and long-term strategies and policies)

Information on the qualitative aspects of contingent needs and studies forecasting medium-term needs could provide a useful reference for targeted planning of training and education provision and for a better understanding of the labour market's development mechanisms and learning and vocational choices.

<http://fabbisogni.isfol.it>

Annex 3.4.3

Detailed analysis of third level apprenticeships:

In the last two years a national experiment involving apprenticeships leading to a diploma or advanced training certificate has been initiated. This experiment implements the third type of apprenticeship introduced by Legislative Decree 276/2003. It involves nearly all the Regions of central and northern Italy in setting up pathways that use a training model alternating between the enterprise and external training structures (mainly university-based) to channel the apprenticeship experience to the attainment of university qualifications such as degrees and 1st or 2nd level Masters, or else advanced technical training certificates. Once it is fully up and running the experiment will involve about 1000 apprentices. About half this number have already been taken on by companies and have embarked on their training pathway.

Regional experiences:

The Autonomous Province of Trento: the fourth year in regional vocational training

The Autonomous Province of Trento has conducted an experiment involving a fourth year of vocational training. This provides young people interested in taking their vocational qualification a step further with an opportunity to develop the competences they have acquired over the first three years.

At the end of the fourth year the trainees sit their final exam and, if successful, are awarded the provincial vocational training diploma.

The exam involves an interview to evaluate their degree of preparation in terms of reflection on the training experience, attainment of an occupational identity and employment aspirations.

The final certificate consists of a Diploma and an Annex specifying the sector and key features of the training pathway followed (duration, component elements, type of environment in which the training took place, subjects and aspects addressed and certification of the competences acquired).

Annex 3.4.4

Detailed analysis of ESF Operational Programme initiatives:

Of the measures envisaged by the ESF programmes for 2006, which support the development of a professional role to manage the change associated with the knowledge-based society, the following are particularly noteworthy:

- implementation of the on-line Permanent Training System (Italian acronym SPF) leading to qualifications and refresher courses for training system operators. The system is delivered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security with the technical support of ISFOL. It is intended for a potential pool of about 400,000 operators from the following sectors: lifelong learning; employment services; continuing training; apprenticeships; compulsory training; post-secondary training and advanced training. The initiative involves all the Regions and Autonomous Provinces and adopts e-learning methodologies disseminated through an open web-based system that can be accessed from any workplace;
- implementation of an information system (database), at the national and regional levels, on the social, personal and occupational characteristics and training needs of teachers and trainers in the integrated education-vocational training-employment system. It suggests that:
 - training needs data from a sample of trainers show needs relating primarily to classroom teaching (26.9%), needs analysis (21.5%) and training design (10%), assuming lifelong

learning as having a privileged position, especially with reference to strategic competences linked to the knowledge-based society. Other needs concern ICT (10.3%) and research and development (10%) issues. The last two relate to the fact that, in the context of the trainer-training activities experienced by the interviewees, multi-media self-learning (off-line) and on-line distance learning are still viewed as being entirely experimental in nature (1.5% and 2.1% respectively).

- in the training of teachers working in adult education, the explicit demand for refresher courses, as observed from a sample of teachers working in this sector in Permanent Local Centres, seems to be oriented primarily towards issues connected with teaching methodologies (39%), pupil communication (27.7%), teaching planning and design (25.3%) and the development of skills and expertise in the subject taught (22.2%).

[Insegnare agli adulti: una professione in formazione](#), March 2006

Annex 3.4.6

The following are two example of good practice:

ET – Esperienze di Transizione (Transition Experiences)

This project promotes initiatives to reduce youth disadvantage and the related risk of the social and employment exclusion of young people and adolescents in the province of Bologna, caused by their social context (membership of ethnic minorities or of disadvantaged or dysfunctional families, former drug addiction), by relationship problems (bullying), by learning difficulties and early school-leaving, and by difficulties in entering employment or adult social life. The initiative tested innovative services accompanying a group of young people in the transition and inclusion process, from an educational welfare perspective.

The initiatives are supported by a local partnership and by a strong degree of inter-institutional cooperation which promotes a linkage between the monitoring of disadvantage and the planning of employment service activities. The model tested from April 2006 to February 2007 is based on the activation of individual pathways for 95 young people, half of whom minors. The young people, 65% of whom were male and 24% immigrants, were referred by Employment Offices and community centres. The community centres design the pathways around an analysis of the provision available locally and its match with the beneficiaries' characteristics.

On the basis of the needs observed, specific training activities were implemented, either for short periods of two/three weeks or in relation to the need to acquire competences for subsequent entry to the workplace. The project provided informational, motivational and occupational guidance services, to which were added traineeships and tutoring in enterprises in the Bologna area.

PALMS - Guiding unaccompanied young people into work

This project deals with the taking in hand of young foreign nationals who find themselves alone in Italy without adult family members. As such, they may become victims of exploitation and are exposed to the risk of involvement in illegal activities, social exclusion and discrimination. The project partners are a number of town councils²⁸ and bodies working in the social sector. The project successfully pursues the aim of achieving the social and employment integration of young foreign nationals through a series of activities that can be classified as system actions or as actions addressed more specifically to individuals. In both cases, they call into play local services and resources which are activated from a perspective of integration and on-going improvement of the systems in which they operate.

²⁸ Roma, Ancona, Bologna and Turin (areas in which the experimental project is being implemented)

The partners implement the training activities in a number of wider-ranging educational, social and employment inclusion pathways that start by selecting the young people and continue with a series of activities ranging from reception to on-the-job training and entry to employment. Participants' medium- to long-term personalised educational plans are drawn up through information and guidance interviews. The guidance can be school-based or designed to create the motivational conditions for the transition to vocational training. The guidance practices, designed in part to teach the rules of community life and active citizenship through employment workshops and socially useful jobs, enable operators to plan initiatives more rationally, and users to perceive themselves as the real protagonists of the process, with the consequent advantage for the young participants of becoming more aware of the choices and decisions they make.

Various initiatives are then open to the young people: assistance in obtaining the necessary permits to remain in Italy; cultural, socialising, recreational and sports activities (sport is highly effective as an educational tool to encourage socialisation in young people and help them out of welfare circuits); Italian language lessons; school support and inclusion activities; and training activities. For the last-named, collaborative projects with schools and training bodies have been established, and "work environments" that can accommodate the young people for on-the-job training and are appropriate to their profiles have been identified, so as to ensure continuity after the grant has been delivered. The training pathways are designed around on-the-job training plans implemented using employment grants: the young person's interest in specific types of work is noted and, through motivational activities, training proposals based on the needs of the host enterprises are developed. The strong points noted by operators and by the internal monitoring procedures are: co-design; partnership with specialist private actors; vocational and educational tutoring; guidance and mentoring for the young people in their traineeships; monitoring of the experiment; checks carried out with a multi-professional team; and the reflection and remodulation of the methodological lines followed by the traineeship project.

Annex 3.4.7

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of continuing learning:

One worker in three (32.7%) in Italy takes part in **continuing learning** activities each year (Isfol INDACO-Lavoratori survey).

Training and learning opportunities are distributed unevenly amongst the different types of worker. The participation rate that emerges is:

- 53.1% of public sector employees
- 26.7% of private sector employees
- 27.6% of the self-employed.

The greatest number of learning opportunities are offered to graduates (60.6% compared with just 12.5% of workers with only elementary schooling), while the gender gap is most marked in private sector employees and the self-employed.

More specifically, in private enterprises fewer learning opportunities are envisaged for manual workers (16.4%) and clerical workers (38.1%) compared with junior and senior management (54.7%).

The over-45s appear to be disadvantaged, especially those in low level jobs: barely 12% of manual workers aged over 45 and 10% aged over 55 have taken part in training activities, while for senior and junior management the levels are 53% and 84% respectively.

The trend for public sector employees is in some ways similar.

The data show, therefore, that enterprises prefer to invest in "higher" employment categories, even when the workers concerned are older, while the experience of less qualified workers, who run a higher risk of

occupational obsolescence, does not seem to be sufficiently valued. This also happens, albeit to a lesser extent, in the public sector.

(Period: 2005. Source: Isfol INDACO-Lavoratori survey. Data collection method used: CATI. MLPS-Isfol, Lifelong Learning Report 2006.

<http://www.eformazionecontinua.it>, <http://www.welfare.gov.it/EuropaLavoro/Novita/News/RapportoFC2006.htm>)

Examples of good practice and experimental projects:

Prepaid training credit card beneficiaries are people aged 18-plus resident in the locality involved in the trial, as well as unemployed people or those in atypical jobs²⁹. The trial envisages a very strong role for the Employment Centres (which are responsible for the selection, guidance and tutoring of participants, as well as the financial management of the card). Beneficiaries are provided with an individual prepaid training-credit card worth 500 euros which the Province, through the Employment Centres, recharges as they take part in training activities, up to a maximum of 2500 euros over two years. Under the National Operational Programme system action co-funded by the ESF, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security supports the experimental projects set up in the Regions and/or Provinces to develop and implement an ILA model and identify the conditions for the experiment to be transferred.

(Period: 2006. Source: www.welfare.gov.it/.../ProgettoToscanaPiemonteUmbria.pdf)

The creation of five local committees in seven municipalities in the Rome City Council area to give priority to unexpressed demand, establish a system to respond to the needs of adult citizens and apply the concept of lifelong learning to educational practices for adults is also worthy of mention.

(Period: 2006. Source: Lifelong Learning: Learning demand and supply in Rome and municipal areas I-IX-V-VI-VII-XIII; www.educazionepermanenteroma.it).

At the regional level, in 2006 the Autonomous Province of Trento and Campania Region adopted specific legislative provisions concerning adult learning. These are intended to increase adult participation in lifelong learning through measures such as flexible opportunities throughout the area in question and strategies to plan and programme integrated learning provision for adults.

(Period: 2006. Source: Provincial Law 5 of 7 August 2006 concerning the Educational system for learning and training in Trentino, articles 68 and 69; Campania Region's Guidelines for the construction of an integrated adult learning system, Resolution 794/2006).

²⁹ In Tuscany, the experimental projects involved the provinces of Pistoia, Arezzo, Livorno and Grosseto. In Pistoia, 800 cards were issued. In Piedmont, only the province of Turin is taking part in the trial, while the whole of Umbria is involved in the project.