

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND



Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

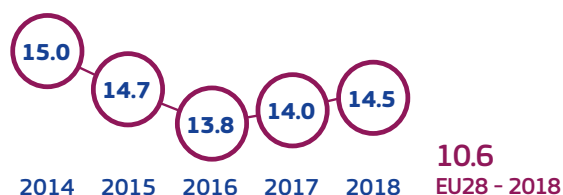
ITALY

SUMMARY

ESF Thematic Objective 10 funding is used to support education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning. Over 5 billion euro has been allocated to such operations in Italy, with 1 670 812 participations having taken place by the end of 2018. This factsheet summarises the main actions, outputs, results and lessons learned so far in the use of this funding in Italy.

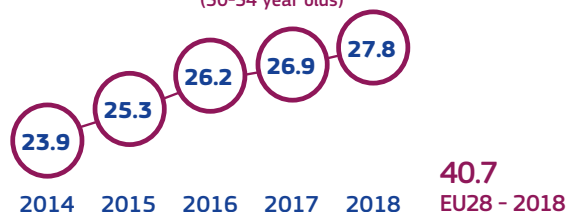
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Early school leaving (ESL) rate (%)



► In Italy, the **early school leaving (ESL) rate** decreased only slightly from 15% in 2014 to 14.5% in 2018 and is still above the EU28 average. Regional disparities are considerable. While the majority of more developed regions from northern and central Italy are above or in line with the EU average, less developed regions from southern Italy lag behind.

Tertiary educational attainment rate (%)
(30-34 year olds)



► OECD PISA results in 2015 show that **achievements in reading, mathematics and science** are below the EU28 average, with considerable regional disparities, and have not shown signs of improvement in recent years.

► The **tertiary educational attainment** rate has grown from 23.9% in 2014 to 27.8% in 2018 but is still below the EU28 average (40.7%). The challenge of improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary education is still very important in the southern regions of Italy.

► The **participation of adults** in education and training remains stable (8.1% in both 2014 and 2018) but below the EU28 average (11.1% in 2018).

► The **employment rate** of recent graduates increased during the 2014-2020 programming period but there are significant gender disparities as women find it more difficult to enter the labour market.

► Total **general government expenditure on education decreased** in Italy from 4% of GDP in 2013 to 3.8% in 2017. The expenditure on pre-primary and primary education remained constant at 1.5% of GDP in 2014-2017 while the expenditure on secondary education decreased from 1.8% of GDP in 2014 to 1.7% in 2017. Total general government expenditure on tertiary education also decreased from 0.4% of GDP in 2014 to 0.3% in 2017.

Participation rate in education and training by adults
aged 25-64 (%) (last 4 weeks)



EXPLANATORY NOTES

ESF European Social Fund

TO10 Thematic Objective 10

OP Operational Programme

IP Investment Priority

* Figures present the situation for ESF operations under Thematic Objective 10 and its four Investment Priorities (IPs) for the programming period 2014-2020 implemented up to the end of 2018, as reported on 1 October 2019. In many instances, operations are not yet complete at this stage, or have only recently started.

* As one person could participate more than once in ESF operations over time, the number of participations is reported. These figures exclude Technical Assistance.

* Where the breakdown of participants according to employment status, age, and level of education does not add up to 100%, it means that it was not possible to include characteristics of a number of participants in some OPs.

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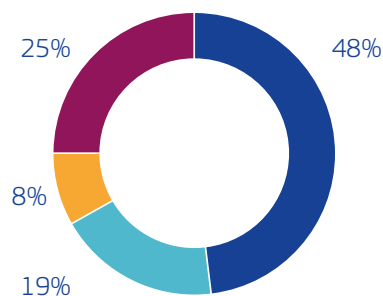
ESF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS IN ITALY

- ▶ In Italy there are **24** ESF operational programmes that invest in TO10: **3** national programmes and **21** regional OPs
- ▶ All four TO10 Investment Priorities are covered in Italy:
 - ▶ **The National Operational Programme for Education finances operations mostly aimed at reducing and preventing early school leaving and to improve key competences** through classes, courses and workshops. These can be organised outside ordinary school hours and facilities, with particular attention being given to disadvantaged students. The OP also supports equal access to lifelong learning and funds initiatives to improve the labour market relevance of education and training systems.
 - ▶ The **National Operational Programme for Research and Innovation focuses on tertiary education**, with initiatives for PhDs, mobility of researchers and access.
 - ▶ The **priorities of regional OPs in more developed regions** include reducing early school leaving and enhancing the labour market relevance of education and training. Some OPs prioritise the development of vocational education and training at secondary and tertiary level.
 - ▶ The **priorities of regional OPs in less developed and transition regions** include reducing and preventing early school leaving, investing in basic skills improvement for both adults and students, and increasing the link between the education system and the job market.

31% of total ESF funding¹...

€5 472 762 373² ...is allocated to the following TO10 investment priorities:

Allocation of ESF TO10 funds



- Reducing and preventing early school leaving - IP10.i
- Improving quality and access to tertiary education - IP10.ii
- Enhancing access to lifelong learning - IP10.iii
- Improving the labour market relevance of education and training - IP10.iv

STATE OF PLAY

76% of planned resources under TO10 had been allocated in 2018, with 26% spent.

Number of overall participations in TO10 operations by the end of 2018:

1 670 812

- ▶ **1 282 936** participations in operations to reduce and prevent early school leaving³
- ▶ **69 023** participations in operations to improve the access to, and quality of, tertiary and equivalent education
- ▶ **30 743** participations in operations to enhance access to lifelong learning
- ▶ **288 110** participations in operations to improve the labour market relevance of education and training

¹ This includes EU-only funding and co-financing from the Member State.

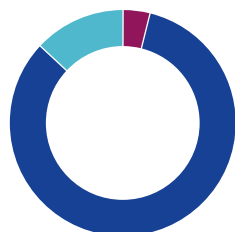
² Of which about €1.65 billion from the national OP Per la Scuola

³ Of which about 800 000 for the OP Per la Scuola

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PARTICIPANT PROFILES WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT

Employment status



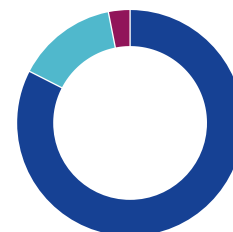
4% (72 889) Unemployed
 83% (1 378 937) Inactive⁴
 13% (218 851) Employed

Sex

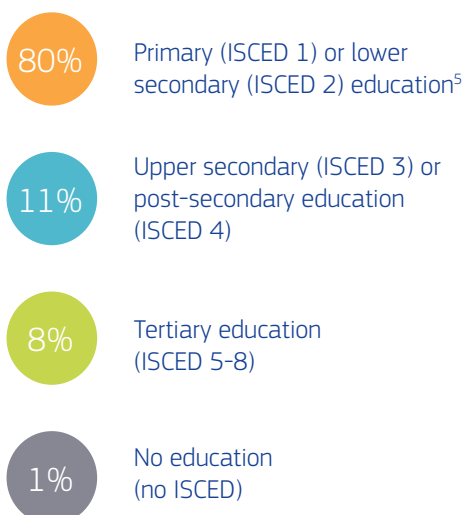
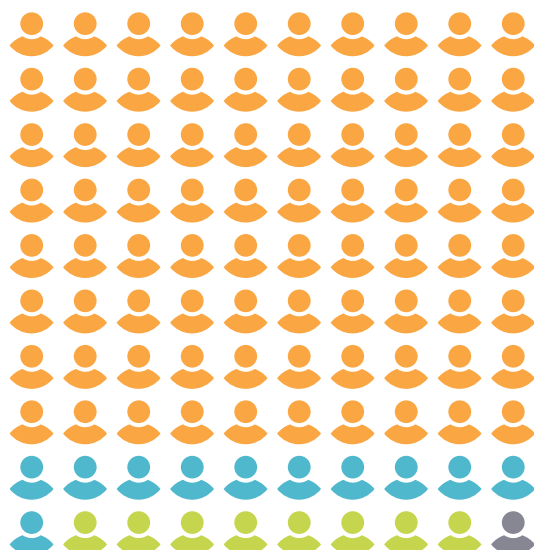


48% Men
 52% Women

Age



3% (42 507) >54 years
 83% (1 386 841) <25 years
 14% (241 329) 25-54 years



28 052
Migrants

69 571
Other disadvantaged

13 921
Participants with disabilities

599
Homeless

Key achievements to date of ESF T010 activities in Italy include⁶:

- ▶ **160 996** successful results have been achieved to date following participation in an activity funded by ESF T010, of which:
 - ▶ **6 443** inactive participants went on to engage in job searching
 - ▶ **22 628** participants went into education or training
 - ▶ **119 027** participants gained a qualification
 - ▶ **12 898** participants moved into employment upon leaving
- ▶ Nearly 90% of state schools participated in the call financed by the National Operational Programme on education. School participation was particularly high in less developed regions and in territories in greater need for support.
- ▶ According to the monitoring and analytical work carried out by INDIRE, the Ministry of Education institute for educational research, ESF financed operations have been found to be quite successful due to the improved performance of students in most participating schools. Furthermore, it was found that the participation in ESF T010 projects outside ordinary school times fosters students' motivation, facilitates participations of families, and strengthens the role of schools in local communities and their inclusiveness.

⁴ The inactive population can include pre-school children, school children, students, pensioners and housewives or -men, for example, provided that they are not working and not available or looking for work.

⁵ ISCED is the UN reference classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields.

⁶ Participants' data are collected when starting an operation. Data on results are collected at the end of an operation or even later. Because of this time lag the two sets of data (participations and results) should not be directly compared.

LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR

► Participation of schools and students

ESF calls for proposals show a very good response rate and engage most of Italy's state schools. The calls are well suited to the needs of territories: they offer a wide and adaptable education and training offer and provide flexible support, all year around, which is complementary to ordinary school times and deadlines.

► TO10 crucial for education outside ordinary school hours and adult learning

ESF TO10 operations provide funding and EU added value by supporting education outside of school hours, as well as supporting adult education institutions (CPIA).

► Administrative capacity challenges

A lack of administrative capacity (in terms of the number of staff and their competences) limits the ability of schools to manage funding in both national and regional level operations, and the overlap between them. Coordination efforts promoted by the central government and regional authorities have not yet resolved these difficulties.

► Improved digital administration for school staff

In the context of the National OP, operations are managed through an online platform which facilitates the development of digital and project management competences. School staff have improved their digital competences through using the platform and have also learned how to use standard costs in accounting for the operations.

► Wide range of initiatives and target groups

TO10 operations include classes, courses and workshops for strengthening languages, creativity, personal identity, music, reading, science, sports and digital skills. Support is also provided to pupils with learning and socio-economic difficulties (and their families), as well as counselling and support for educational orientation and internships.

► Addressing groups that would have otherwise not been addressed

The operations targeting education made it possible to address the needs of students from a difficult socio-economic context and at risk of early school leaving, and their families. The interventions have also made it possible to broaden the type of activities that the pupils from disadvantaged contexts could undertake, such as for example study trips abroad and work internships.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

► Social Inclusion and Fight Against Social Unease

Through this TO10 operation, the Ministry of Education wants to enhance the role of schools as active institutions, open to the public and capable of interacting with families and local communities. By keeping the schools open outside ordinary school hours and by engaging students in personalised education activities, the OP intends to strengthen education performance and prevent early school leaving.

► Developing basic competences

This operation aims to enhance students' basic competences, which according to PISA and other assessments (e.g. INVALSI tests), are lagging behind, especially in territories with socio-economic disadvantages. Basic competences include the ability to read, understand texts, write, calculate, as well as language, scientific and digital competences. These skills are the basis for further education and are essential for employment and social integration, and need to be strengthened across the entire national territory.

► "Torno Subito" (Will be back soon)

The Lazio ESF OP supports students with a secondary school or university degree who wish to undertake further specialised studies (e.g. Masters) or work experience abroad or in other regions. The support is organised in two phases: students carry out their courses or work experience; then they return to their home region and undertake an internship or receive support for starting their own business. This allows the territory to benefit from the return on investment in the students.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

European Commission, Study supporting the evaluation of ESF support to education and training (Thematic Objective 10)

The ESF in Italy: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=386&langId=en>

Website of the ESF in Italy: <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/europa-e-fondi-europei/focus-on/Fondo-sociale-europeo-2014-2020/Pagine/default.aspx>

