

## Italy – EQAVET and the quality of VET

### Summary

The quality of the training system and its ability to transmit adequate skills to the students for the world of work represents a key factor for the growth of employability and for the improvement of production processes. With this in mind, the European Union has been making a great effort for several years to help countries develop the effectiveness and quality of their training systems. In support of the quality development process, INAPP, as the EQAVET National Reference Point in Italy, carries out constant monitoring of the quality of training systems and management models. The research was defined in continuity with previous monitoring activities and had two objectives:

- 1) to collect documents and information useful for describing the quality cycle in the education and vocational training systems of the 21 Italian Regions, with particular attention to the implementation of the EQAVET Recommendation and to regional training and updating projects for trainers;
- 2) to carry out an exploratory survey with trainers, aimed at reconstructing their professional profile as well as updating and self-led training paths, as the professionalisation of human resources is a crucial factor for improving the quality of training as a whole.

### Date of implementation

2018 - 2019

### Scope and partners involved

The national research involved the 21 Italian Regions, including approximately 500 trainers from the Regions.

### Funding sources

The research project was funded through the Italian National Reference Point Activity Plan 2017/2019, co-funded by the Italian Ministry of Labour and the European Commission (EQAVET NRP 586525-EPP-1-2017-1-IT-EPPKA3-EQAVET-NRP).

### Aim of the implementation

The research aimed to investigate how the 2009 EQAVET Recommendation was implemented in the regional VET systems. In particular, it analysed the way regional administrations managed the EQAVET indicators and promoted the EQAVET quality cycle. Besides, it analysed in-depth the initiatives for the trainers' training as well as the updating of their professional skills, carried out by the Italian Regions. Finally, it was fundamental to investigate the trainers' professional profile as a key factor for the quality assurance of the Italian VET system.

## Targeted EQAVET indicative descriptors at system/provider level

With regards to the EQAVET indicators, in addition to the analysis of what was implemented for each indicator at regional level, an in-depth study concerning indicator number two (investment in training of teachers and trainers) was carried out, as a fundamental topic in relation to the EQAVET Recommendation. This indicator was investigated from several points of view, through the analysis of regulations, technical documents, and funding sources available.

Regarding the VET trainers, a structured questionnaire was sent to about 500 trainers in order to examine their socio-professional profile, their real awareness about the EQAVET Recommendation and / or indicators as well as their investment and participation in training and self-led training activities.

### Activities

The research activities were based on the following two working lines:

- 1) analysis of the regional documentation, linked to the EQAVET quality cycle, and carrying out 21 interviews with representatives of the regional VET systems
- 2) implementation of a survey for 500 trainers working within accredited training institutions across Italy.

The survey was carried out using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) methodology and a questionnaire consisting of 44 questions about the following topics related to VET trainers:

- ❖ socio-professional profile
- ❖ working conditions
- ❖ teaching methods and outcomes assessment
- ❖ professional experience and satisfaction
- ❖ training and self-led training activities
- ❖ perception and awareness about the European EQAVET Recommendation.

### Main outputs and outcomes

The main outcomes of the first research line were:

- ❖ the quality cycle described by EQAVET was substantially followed by the Italian Regions; however, the fourth stage in the process, related to review and re-design of the supply in light of the achieved results, was certainly weaker than the others. Therefore, it was definitely important to work towards its further implementation;
- ❖ The Italian Regions looked for VET quality mainly through increasingly advanced accreditation procedures focused on specific territorial needs; in fact, the accreditation system, as *ex-ante* and *in itinere* evaluation, was considered as a key tool for the quality implementation and promotion;
- ❖ a specific focus on quality by the institutions and agencies working in the VET area was constantly increasing, albeit with speed and methods that are different from Region to Region;

- ❖ awareness of the EQAVET Recommendation was quite widespread among regional participants.

In relation to the second research line, the study highlighted that:

- ❖ In general, VET trainers were very motivated and do their job with passion and satisfaction. They were 48% women and 52% men, with high or medium-high qualifications: 61% of trainers were graduates and the average age of the trainers was 44 years old;
- ❖ training and updating activities for trainers were mainly supplied by training agencies, whereas the Regions were most committed to activities aimed at strengthening specific aspects of the trainers' skills;
- ❖ the awareness about the EQAVET indicators was low among the trainers, while it was slightly higher among the coordinators and those trainers who also carried out planning tasks.

Many other interesting elements emerged in the two working lines and they may be further investigated through future studies.

### **Indicators of the EQAVET framework to measure and evaluate the quality improvements**

Indicator number two (investment in training of teachers and trainers) can be used to measure/evaluate quality improvements. The indicator is about the investment in training of teachers and trainers, more in detail about:

- 1) teachers and trainers' participation rate in further training, whose purpose is to promote ownership of teachers and trainers in the process of quality development in VET
- 2) the amount of funds invested, including for digital skills, whose purpose is to improve the responsiveness of VET to the changing demands of labour market, increase individual learning capacity building and improve learners' achievements.

### **Added value of EQAVET**

The EQAVET Recommendation represented a fundamental reference framework for the implementation of a quality assurance approach and culture in Italy. The Recommendation provided an operational perspective adapted by both national and regional authorities. The EQAVET Framework, descriptors and indicators, has promoted a reflection on the Italian VET system, demonstrated in the Italian national plan for the quality assurance of the education and training system. The European guidelines and indicators, shared among the national and regional authorities, helped to reinforce quality tools, such as the regional accreditation systems, the national repertory of qualifications and the skills certification system.

### **Website**

<https://oa.inapp.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.12916/713> (Available only in Italian)