



European alliance for apprenticeships

Member States – Planned reforms/initiatives

Italy

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS
MEMBER STATES – PLANNED REFORMS/INITIATIVES

COUNTRY	Italy
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Ministry/Ministries	Ministry of Labour and Social Policies Ministry of Education, University and Research
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Implementation of the national commitment

Progress and main achievements

In Italian legislation, apprenticeships are deemed 'a primary instrument for promoting the work of young people'. Many initiatives are currently underway aimed at increasing the attractiveness of apprenticeships within the strategy for reinforcement of the school-work programme, in the second cycle of Education and Training.

The national legal framework on apprenticeships describes apprenticeships as a job contract, structured in three main schemes and targeted at different groups of young people:

1. Apprenticeships that lead to a professional operator certificate, a professional technician diploma, an upper-secondary school diploma or a higher technical specialisation certification. (1st scheme apprenticeship)
2. Professional training apprenticeships. (2nd scheme apprenticeship)
3. Higher education and research apprenticeships. (3rd scheme apprenticeship)

Within the **Jobs Act Framework** (a major new reform carried out by the government), **Legislative Decree 81/2015** fundamentally revised regulations related to apprenticeships, widening the diplomas that can be acquired through 1st scheme apprenticeships, and introducing measures to make apprenticeships more attractive to companies. Simultaneously, the implementation of a **National Qualification Framework (NQF)** will increase the quality of training standards, especially for professional apprenticeships, and represents a strategic leverage to renew and boost their use. Although 2nd scheme apprenticeships remain widespread (96 %), a positive impact has also been measured with regards to 1st scheme apprenticeships. The 3rd scheme is still limited to a few experiences.

In terms of the quality of apprenticeships, the new features included in the apprenticeship reforms aim to improve 'on the job training', while assuring the right to education for apprentices. The reforms also provide training standards at the national level for work-based learning in the existing vocational training learning pathways (**Interministerial Decree 12 October 2015**). More specifically, curricula will be shaped to provide at least 40 % work-based learning for the first year of attendance, and will proportionally increase each year. These standards are intended to raise the quality of work-based learning and, at the same time, foster the employability of young people, by giving them alternative means for accessing the labour market on completion of their studies.

With reference to the 2nd scheme, the implementation of a **National Repository of Professional Profiles of Apprentices**, along with the setting of a NQF (foreseen in legislative decree No. 13/13), will contribute to the transparency of qualifications and titles. The launch of a structured 'dual system' as part of the 2015 reforms created a positive impact, widening the apprenticeships and traineeships opportunities, both for learners and for companies.

The launch of a national initiative, aimed at implementing apprenticeship contracts in line with the new policies and legal provisions outlined in the 2015 legislative acts, indicates successful reform of the apprenticeship system. Even though the numbers are low in

comparison with other countries of consolidated experience in the dual system, there is growing interest in arranging new learning pathways that benefit from apprenticeship schemes. Programmes are shaped to take into account the involvement and cooperation of schools, companies, social partners and regional authorities.

The latest data from the monitoring of the dual system shows that the 23 731 learners are enrolled in dual paths - an increase of 11.4 %. The majority of this total (79 %) are involved in VET paths, while 7.1 % are in higher technical specialisation courses, and the remaining 13.9 % are apprentices.

In addition to apprenticeship reforms, another reform (**'La buona scuola'**) carried out by the Ministry of Education aimed to emphasise the benefits of alternating between classwork and periods of workplace training. Its main objective was to improve the school-work transition by increasing employment opportunities and guidance for students. The reform made it compulsory for all students attending the last three years of upper secondary school to take part in a school-work alternance scheme. This calls for the involvement and cooperation of schools, companies, social partners and regional authorities.

Study-work initiatives have also been implemented as part of some university courses, under the 3rd apprenticeship scheme (higher education and research). Additionally, the new reform has provided a more attractive set of financial supports for hiring young apprentices, compared to the previous legislative framework.

The school reform also envisages the creation of a **National Directory of Companies** involved in school-work programmes or apprenticeship schemes, as well as a scheme to increase access to higher technical education for young people in VET pathways.

A series of initiatives have been shaped to strengthen the channels of communication and exchange among key policy actors, and a national system action was carried out by ANPAL and ANPAL SERVIZI to foster cooperation among different learning venues.

A reinforced cooperation with Germany led to the design and delivery of blended learning courses for in-company tutors and training institution tutors. This action, still underway and allowed for by a **Memorandum of Understanding between Italy and Germany**, provides 25 blended training courses, organised for the whole territory and carried out by the Italian-German Chamber of Commerce. This will be finalised and supported through a multiplier mechanism for putting in place a continuous training programme for in-company tutors, along with the definition of standards for national training and professional apprenticeships.

The attractiveness of apprenticeships for learners has been strengthened in the last three years, as a result of communication campaigns. Several actions specifically concerned the promotion of apprenticeships within companies, and among young people and their families, in order to highlight the advantages of undertaking an apprenticeship to acquire a vocational or professional qualification (1st and 3rd scheme).

Update of the national commitment

Planned reforms and initiatives

To accomplish the apprenticeship reforms, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies has defined the procedure to re-activate the Technical Committee for Apprenticeships (Organismo Tecnico per l'Apprendistato) as a permanent high-level body. This will be composed of representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (with chairing functions), the Ministry of Education, University and Research, the State-Regions Conference, the social partners and the National Agency for active labour policies (Anpal).

The mandate of the Committee should, overall, be the steering and coordination of apprenticeships, with their main function being to foster the implementation of the 1st scheme as a priority, working to analyse and overcome obstacles for its fulfilment.

Involvement of the social partners in this Committee is crucial for its effectiveness, as trade unions and employers can ensure a link with the world of work, reporting relevant trends and changes such as skill needs, occupational profiles, and work organisation.

In addition, from an economic point of view, the Ministry of Labour is promoting a significant increase in financial resources within the next budget law.

Targets and/or indicators

n/a

Budget of the reform/initiative

Based on the budget law, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies can allocate and distribute EUR 140 million per year to regions and autonomous provinces for apprenticeships, under specific conditions.

Key stakeholders involved

Apprenticeships are run according to a multi-level governance system. Several partners and key actors are involved in the achievement of goals outlined in the reforms.

National competent institutions are involved in setting the national guidelines and framework for apprenticeships. This includes the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of Education, University and Research and the National Institute for Social Security.

Regions and autonomous provinces are involved in the implementation of apprenticeship schemes at the regional level.

Social partners and trade unions act as advisory bodies at the national level, setting policies and performing a crucial role in professional apprenticeships, as leading partners of the collective labour agreements.

Further measures planned as a follow up to the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships

n/a

