



spotlight on VET ITALY

VET in Italy

In recent years, several reforms have been carried out to make vocational education and training (VET) more flexible and respond better to labour market needs. VET in Italy is characterised by multilevel governance with broad involvement of national, regional and local stakeholders. Ministries of Labour and Education define the general framework and policies. Regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of providing several vocational programmes and most apprenticeship-type schemes.

Compulsory education lasts 10 years, up to age 16. To ensure young people do not leave education and training without a qualification, they have the 'right/duty' (*diritto/dovere*) to accomplish at least 12 years before they are 18. The choice between general education and VET is usually made at age 14.

At upper secondary level, the following VET programmes are available:

- (a) five-year programmes at technical schools (*istituti tecnici*), to prepare for technical and administrative jobs, and at vocational schools (*istituti professionali*) to prepare for carrying out qualified tasks in the production industry (fields of national interest). They combine general education and VET. Graduates have access to higher education and acquire qualifications at EQF level 4;
- (b) three- to four-year VET programmes organised by the regions (*istruzione e formazione professionale, leFP*). These modular programmes aim at developing basic, transversal and technical-occupational skills and include on-the-job training (especially internships). Learners can change areas of study through recognition of credits. Qualifications at EQF levels 3 and 4 are recognised nationally;
- (c) a three- to four-year apprenticeship-type scheme offers qualifications at EQF levels 3 and 4. Apprenticeship includes both on-the-job and classroom training. The minimum entry age is 15.

At post-secondary level, there are several options which all include internships or traineeships:

- (a) IFTS programmes (*istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore*) leading to EQF level 4 offer higher technical education and training for young people and adults;
- (b) ITS programmes (*istituti tecnici superiori*) leading to EQF level 5 offer non-academic training at tertiary level in professional areas considered strategic for the country's development;
- (c) post-leFP and other programmes/courses, which provide theoretical, technical and managerial skills, also through practical work and offer regional qualifications. They usually cater for young unemployed people, migrants and disabled people.

VET courses also exist at post-higher education level.

Higher education and research apprenticeships (*apprendistato di alta formazione e ricerca*) enable 18 to 29 year-olds to acquire qualifications usually offered through school-based programmes at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels, including a doctoral degree (EQF levels 4 to 8).

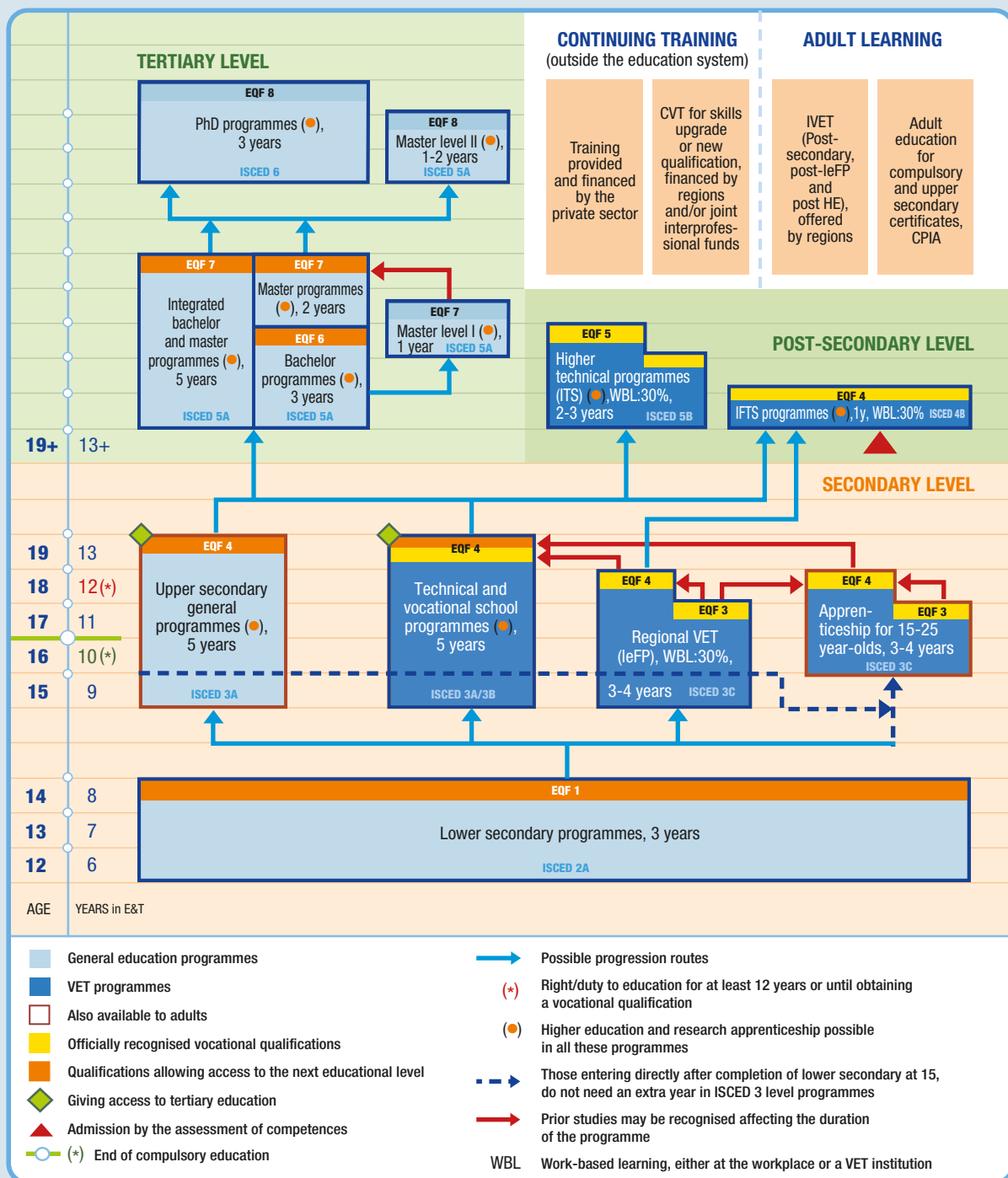
Professional apprenticeships (*apprendistato professionalizzante o contratto di mestiere*) offer qualifications provided for in collective-bargaining agreements to 18 to 29 year-olds. They last up to three years (five for the crafts sector). Workers affected by restructuring can participate in this scheme to (re)qualify.

VET for adults is offered by a range of different public and private providers. This includes programmes leading to upper secondary VET qualifications to ensure that the low-skilled have progression opportunities.

Continuing vocational training (CVT) to meet enterprise, sectoral and regional needs is supported by joint interprofessional funds managed by the social partners.

For lifelong learning, training is also provided by free universities or universities for the third age, voluntary associations, NGOs, etc.

VET in Italy's education and training system



Distinctive features of VET

In Italy, the term VET tends to be 'reserved' for programmes primarily under the Ministry of Labour's and the regions' and autonomous provinces' remit, while technical and vocational school programmes are considered to be part of the 'education system' under the Ministry of Education's remit.

VET offered by the regions used to be very heterogeneous. To address this issue, the State-regions conference agreed on minimum education and training standards (valid at national level). These are linked to national occupational profiles and the corresponding qualifications and programmes included in the qualifications register created in 2011.

This helped to make the wide variety of VET managed by the regions more transparent and more flexible, allowing learners to switch between different types of VET and from general education to VET (and vice versa) and preventing early leaving.

Social partners have a general advisory role on VET at all levels, in particular shaping and regulating professional apprenticeships. They also promote company-level training plans, provide CVT and manage joint interprofessional funds, which finance learning in line with company needs and apprenticeships.

Challenges/ policy developments

Since the outbreak of the economic crisis, employment has decreased from 58.7 to 55.6% and is generally lower than the EU average across all age groups.

Unemployment grew by almost six percentage points. Young people have been hit hardest, as their unemployment rate doubled since 2008, reaching a staggering 40% in 2013. The share of young people leaving education and training early is steadily decreasing but still high.

The country is characterised by regional disparities in terms of economic structure and labour market situation. Unemployment due to lack of jobs, in particular in the south, and skills shortages due to educational choices coexist. Low returns on education and training do not encourage many people to update and upgrade their skills, although a right to training leave exists.

Therefore, Italy's objective is to strengthen VET to support its enterprises and citizens. The recent policy package with its focus on the youth guarantee scheme and measures to reduce red tape for enterprises and promote interfirm cooperation reflect the need to link education and training better with the labour market. Apprenticeship schemes are considered an important pillar of the youth guarantee.

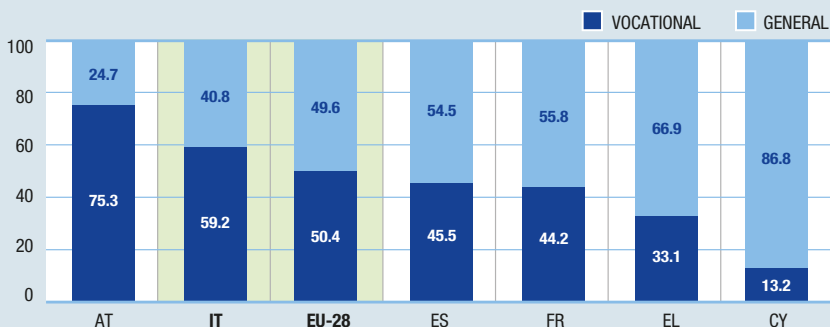
Support measures for young people and adults include a reform of the employment services, improved teacher and trainer development, stronger vocational guidance, a citizen's training logbook which resembles the European skills portfolio, and a legal framework for validating learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.



Education and training in figures

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes

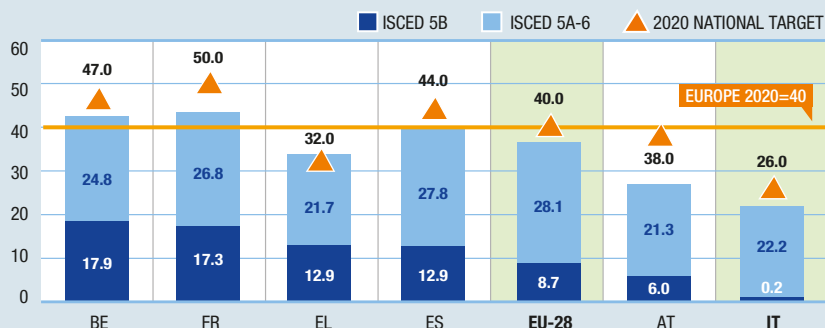
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2012



Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 30.5.2014.

Tertiary education by type

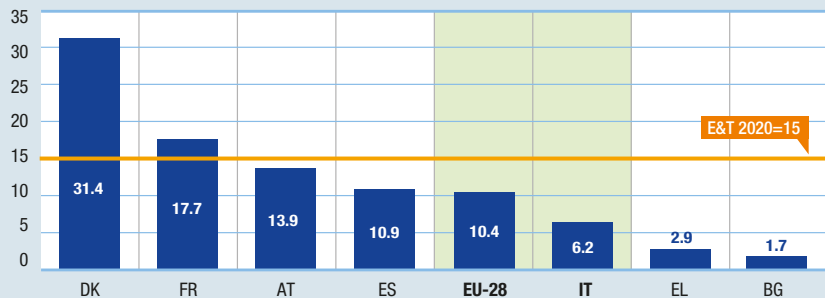
% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2013



Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.

Lifelong learning

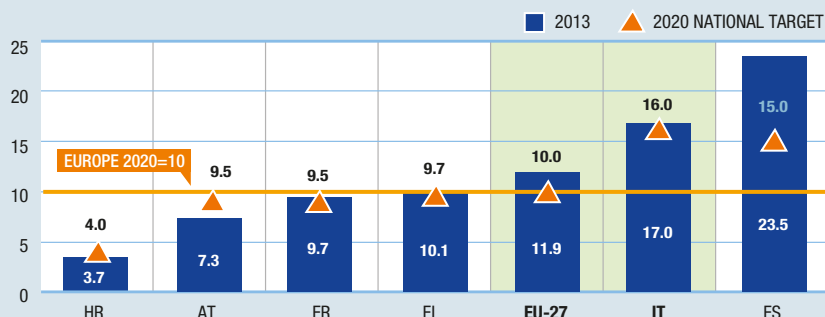
% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2013



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.

Early leavers from education and training

% of early leavers from education and training, 2013



Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.



Further information

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http://italia2014.eu/en/	2014 Italian EU Presidency
www.lavoro.gov.it	Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies
www.garanziaigiovani.gov.it	The youth guarantee
www.istruzione.it	Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research
www.isfol.it	Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers
www.isfol.it/refernet-italia	ReferNet Italy
www.istat.it	Italian National Institute of Statistics
www.indire.it	National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research
www.inps.it	National Agency for Social Security
www.statoregioni.it	Italian State-regions conference
www.tecnostruttura.it	Regional structure for management of the European Social Fund
www.italialavoro.it	Technical agency promoting labour market policies
www.censis.it	Centre for studies on social investment

This Spotlight is based on input from ReferNet Italy.



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