



# Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe

Italy

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European Commission





# STRUCTURES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

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## ITALY

2009/10

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## INTRODUCTION: GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT

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Italy is a Parliamentary Republic headed by a President and a Parliament consisting of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, which exercise legislative power. In general, supreme legislative power is exercised by the Parliament. However, in exceptional cases, the Government may also exercise legislative power, issuing legislative decrees and decree-laws, following delegation from the Parliament or in cases of necessity or emergency. Executive power is in the hands of the Government.

For administrative purposes, Italy is divided into 20 autonomous territorial areas, known as Regions. Each of these has its own legislative, administrative and financial powers (legislative powers are conferred on the Regional Council, while the Regional Commission is the executive body). The regions are divided into provinces, each of which consists of a number of municipalities, each with their own main town or provincial capital. At both provincial and municipal levels, administration is in the hands of elected councils. The Regions may also legislate on certain matters specified by the Constitution. They may define the regulations which relate to national laws, and may delegate administrative authority to lesser local bodies. Local administrations are responsible for all questions concerning the organisation of services within their competence area.

Italian is the official language, although in some areas (Valle d'Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli Venezia Giulia) the use of local languages is officially authorised for official documents and for education. These areas have a special form of autonomy and are known as 'Special-Status Regions'.

The most widespread religion in Italy is Roman Catholicism although it is not a State religion.

As of the latest census carried out on 31 December 2008, the population of Italy was 60 045 068. The country covers an area of 301 336 square kilometres.

The basic principles relating to education are laid down in the Italian Constitution of 1948 and include: freedom of education; the State's duty to provide a network of educational establishments of every type and level, open to all without distinction; the right of private individuals to set up schools at no cost to the State; the right to education and basic vocational training for those unable to work and the disabled (Articles 34 and 33 of the Constitution). The application of the basic principles of the Constitution has inspired all subsequent legislation, which has particularly insisted on compulsory schooling, teacher training, allowing pupils to develop their full potential, integration of the disabled, vocational training and autonomy for educational establishments.

The main legislation which presently governs the Italian educational system is listed below:

- Consolidation Act of 16 April 1994 includes all main rules in force concerning public education; however, laws and decrees later approved have introduced several relevant changes, and therefore a revision of the document is expected;
- Law no. 59 of 15 March 1997 and following Decree no. 275 of 8 March 1999 which, starting from school year 2000/01, have provided schools with didactic, organizational and research autonomy;
- Law no. 53 of 28 March 2003 for the reform of the education and training system; it redefined and broadened the concept of compulsory schooling and compulsory training, introducing the 'right-duty' to education and training for at least 12 years from the age of 6 years. This 'right-duty' is fulfilled within the education system or until the pupil obtains a qualification within the vocational education and training system by the age of 18 years;
- Law no. 296 of 27 December 2006 (Financial law 2007) which establishes, amongst others and starting from the 2007/08 school year, the extension of compulsory education to ten years

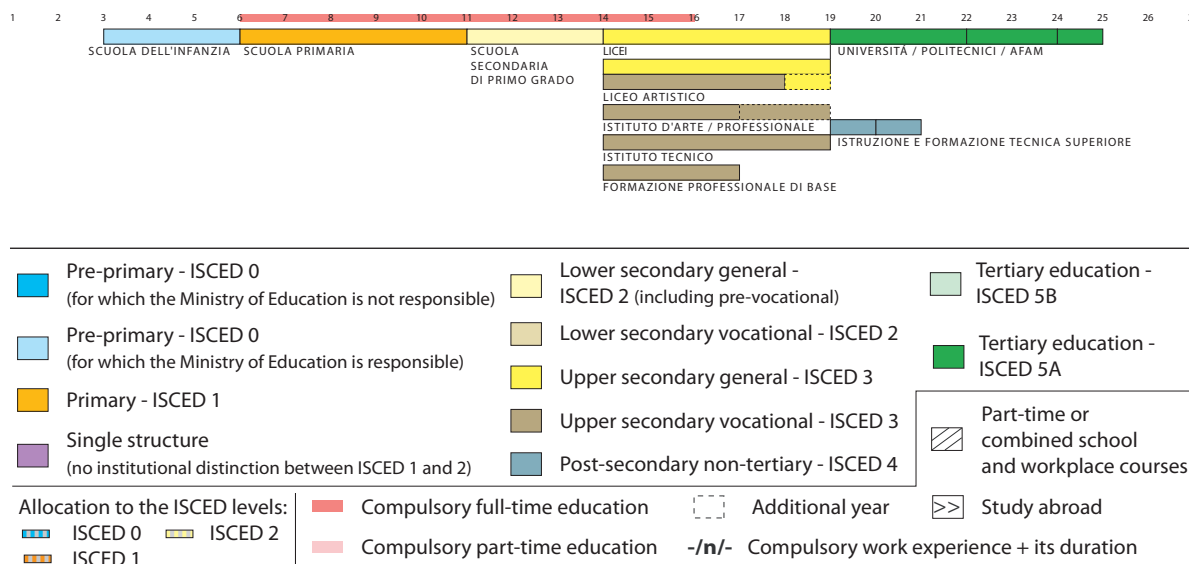
to be fulfilled by pupils either at school or through three-year vocational courses falling under the responsibility of the Regions, and extension to 16 years of age for access to the labour market;

- Law no. 1 of 1st January 2007 introducing a new procedure for the state exams organised at the end of upper secondary school level;
- Law no. 40 of 2 April 2007 which provides for the postponement of the reform of the second cycle in school year 2009/10;
- Law no. 133 of 6 August 2008 providing for a range of interventions which will be implemented from school year 2009/10, aimed at revising the organisation and the didactic of the school system; and the full implementation of the three-year vocational education and training pathways for the fulfilment of compulsory education;
- Law no. 169 of 30 October 2008 containing urgent measures on education and university;
- DPR no. 17 of 20 January 2009: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of University and Research has again been reorganized to come under one Ministry called Ministry of Education, University and Research (*Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca – MIUR*).



# 1. INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: ORGANISATION, FUNDING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

## 1.1 Organisation of the initial education and training system



The education system includes the following at present:

- *Scuola dell'infanzia* (non-compulsory) for children between 3 and 6 years of age, lasting 3 years;
- first cycle of education (length: 8 years), organised in primary education for children between 6 and 11 years of age, which lasts 5 years, and lower secondary school for children between 11 and 14 years of age, lasting 3 years;
- second cycle of education consisting of two different pathways: the first is upper secondary school, which falls under the responsibility of the State, lasts 5 years and is addressed to students from 15 to 19 years of age. This level of education is provided by *licei*, technical institutes, art institutes and vocational institutes. Vocational and art institutes also offer three-year courses. The second pathway is initial vocational training (three-year courses) for students who have completed the first cycle of education and is organised by the Regions;
- post-secondary non-tertiary education, within the higher technical education and training system (*Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore* – IFTS), offers higher technical education and training pathways and courses provided by Higher Technical Institutes (*Istituti Tecnici Superiori* – ITS);
- higher education sector consisting of university and non-university higher education. The higher education system is divided into State and non-State establishments.

Education is compulsory for 10 years (up to 16 years of age). It includes the first cycle of education and the first two years of the second cycle of education (upper secondary education). The last two years of compulsory education can be accomplished either at upper secondary schools or within the three-year vocational training courses run by the Regions. Compulsory education can be fulfilled both in state and *paritarie* schools. In addition, everyone has the 'right/duty' (*diritto/dovere*) to education and training for at least 12 years (in the school system) or up to the obtainment of a three-year

vocational qualification (either at school or in the initial vocational training system) before reaching 18 years of age (law 53/2003).

### **Non-State education**

Article 33 of the Italian Constitution states that legal bodies and private individuals may set up schools and educational establishments without contribution from the State. The Law no. 27 of 3 February 2006 stipulates that non-state schools can be classified as two types of school, *scuole paritarie* (i.e. schools that requested and obtained equality and became part of the national education system) and *scuole non paritarie* (i.e. schools that cannot issue either intermediate or final qualifications with legal value).

As regards non-State higher education, there are three types of establishments:

1. Institutions within the arts sector managed by local bodies or purely private subjects;
2. Colleges that train linguistic mediators (i.e. for interpreters and translators);
3. Universities and other higher education establishments.

## **1.2 Distribution of responsibilities**

After the session of the new government in May 2008, in particular with DPR no. 17 of 20 January 2009, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of University and Research have been restructured to form one Ministry called the Ministry of Education, University and Research (see Introduction).

The Italian public administration has been a highly centralised organisation for a long time; Law no. 59 of 15 March 1997 granted Regions, Provinces, Communes and Mountain Communities all the roles and administrative tasks currently performed by the state bodies, apart from those linked to matters expressly reserved to the State.

The consequent delegated provisions have granted schools from the school year 2000/01 a wide autonomy for teaching methods, organisation, research, experimentation and development. Autonomy of schools is exercised within a general framework set by the MIUR to guarantee the coherence of the education system.

At the higher education level, based on the regulation on university autonomy no. 509 of 3 November 1999 (for the implementation of Law 127/1997), all universities and university-level establishments are autonomous bodies, as regards both their administrative and financial management, as well as teaching methods and scientific research.

In implementation of the Labour Agreement of 1996, Law no. 196 of 1997 was issued, which launched an in depth process of renewal and re-qualification of the vocational training system. This process then came together in the Reform of clause V of the Constitution of 2001, which conferred exclusive legislative power over vocational training on the Regions.

Finally, as part of the drive to redesign training provision, art. 69 of the Law no. 144 of 17 May 1999 created the system of higher technical education and training (IFTTS) within the system of integrated advanced training (FIS). The aim of this system is to widen the scope of the training courses intended for young people and adults (employed or unemployed). Based on the above-mentioned provisions, Regions plan the institution of IFTTS courses in order to assure integration among educational systems, on the basis of guidelines defined by a National Committee and approved by the Unified Conference.

### **General administration at national level**

The general administration at national level, as far as education is concerned, is entrusted to the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR):

- a) As regards school education, the Ministry carries out its own functions in the following areas: the general organisation of school education; school organisation and timetabling; the legal status of the staff; the definition of the criteria and parameters for the organisation of the school network; the determination of the financial resources to be borne by the State budget and school staffing; the assessment of the school system; the identification of the training objectives and standards in the field of higher education, etc.
- b) As regards higher education and research, the Ministry is vested with functions in the following areas: the scheduling of interventions on the university system and of the research bodies; orientation and coordination; general rules and financing; in both the university and non university sector (the system of high artistic and musical training – AFAM) monitoring and assessment; European harmonisation and the international integration of the university system and the AFAM system; rationalisation of the conditions for admission to university education and the AFAM sector; assessment of and support for research, etc.

### **General administration at local level**

The local administration is currently subdivided into two levels: provincial and municipal, with various responsibilities for school subjects and levels.

The Provincial School Office (former *Centro Servizi Amministrativi* – CSA: Administrative Services Centre) is designed simply as an internal wing of the *Uffici Scolastici Regionali* – USR (Regional School Offices). It therefore has no operational autonomy of its own, since, as a provincial administrative body, it is merely the body responsible for public education at Provincial level. There are no Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) peripheral offices at commune level.

The organisation of the MIUR provides for a ‘peripheral’ organisation made up of the regional school offices (general management level). They are autonomous centres of administrative responsibility exercising residual state functions, not transferred to the Regions and schools, as well as the functions involved in relationships with the Regions and local bodies, University and training agencies.

The Regional Administration Departments (*Assessorati*) deal with education and training issues at regional level.

Furthermore, the Education Office of the Regional authorities is responsible for planning the integrated educational offer which includes general education and vocational training; school network planning, based on provincial plans; school calendar determination; funds destined to non-state schools. It is also responsible for vocational training.

The regional competences therefore include the initiatives geared towards ensuring initial integration, including higher education technical-vocational training, advanced training, vocational retraining, continuing training, etc.

The main responsibilities of the Regions concerning education and vocational training can be delegated to Provinces and Communes on the basis of a trend which reserves functions of guidance, planning and monitoring to the Regions. As a result, this gives them fewer and fewer managing functions.

There is no administration for higher education at the regional level.

### **Administration and management at local level**

In each school, the management and administration functions are vested in the *Consiglio di circolo* (for pre-school establishments and primary schools) or in the *Consiglio di istituto* (for secondary schools) and in the *Dirigente scolastico*.

The *Consiglio di circolo* and the *Consiglio di istituto* are responsible for questions relating to the budget and the organisation and planning of school activities. As part of this autonomy, each educational establishment draws up the *Piano dell'Offerta Formativa* (POF), which is the basic document that defines the school's cultural identity and plans for the future. This document is drawn up by the *Collegio dei docenti* (Teachers' Committee), and is approved by the *Consiglio di circolo* or by the *Consiglio di istituto*.

The *Dirigente scolastico* handles the management of the school. He is its legal representative, and he is responsible for the management of the school's financial and material resources and for the results of the service. The *Dirigente* has independent powers of management, coordination and use of the resources, and to this end he has the power to promote actions aimed at guaranteeing the quality of the training processes.

Starting from school year 2000/01 the person in charge of administrative matters was given the title *Direttore dei servizi generali e amministrativi* (Director of general and administrative services). This Director has operational autonomy to oversee, within the framework of the guidelines issued by the *Dirigente* of the school and the set objectives, the administrative services and the general education services, to which end he coordinates the personnel concerned.

The *Collegio dei docenti* (Teachers' Committee) formulates teaching and educational plans for each school year, and in particular the *Piano dell'Offerta Formativa*. This Committee periodically reviews the overall teaching activity to ensure that it conforms to the planned objectives, proposing improvements where necessary.

The *Consiglio di intersezione* (for pre-primary schools), the *Consiglio di interclasse* (for primary schools) and the *Consiglio di classe* (for secondary schools) formulate educational and teaching plans for the class, assess class teaching and discipline, organise innovation remedial and support initiatives, and carry out the periodic and final assessment of pupils.

Universities are legally represented by the Rector who is chosen by the professors from among their own ranks. The Rector carries out the decisions taken by the *Senato Accademico* (Academic Senate), a collegiate body with decision-making responsibilities as regards educational and scientific matters and questions of general interest, and by the *Consiglio di Amministrazione* (Administration Council), the board responsible for the administrative, economic and financial management of the university.

Each university is divided into a number of faculties which carry out administrative and scientific and educational activities. The *Consiglio di Facoltà* (Faculty Council) plans and coordinates teaching activities.

The Departments promote research activities. They have their own structures and enjoy financial and managerial autonomy. The *Consiglio di Dipartimento* (Department Council) takes decisions regarding research and teaching activities.

### **Advisory and consultative bodies**

The National Education Council (*Consiglio Nazionale della Pubblica Istruzione*) is an advisory body of the Ministry at central level (DPR 416/1974), that assists the Minister in the planning and reviewing of school policy.

Furthermore, always at central level, work the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education System (*Istituto nazionale per la valutazione del sistema di istruzione – INVALSI*) and the National Agency for the Development of School Autonomy (*Agenzia nazionale per lo sviluppo dell'autonomia scolastica*). The Agency was established by the financial law 2007, to replace the INDIRE (National Institute of Documentation for the Innovation and Research in Education) and IRREs (Regional Institutes for Educational Research) which have been suppressed by the same law.

As for three-year vocational education and training courses, falling under the responsibilities of the Regions, the Institute for the development of professional training of workers (*Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori – Isfol*) is the reference body for research and monitoring activities, policies and guidance to Regions.

The main advisory body for university education is the National University Council (*Consiglio Universitario Nazionale – CUN*), in which the representatives of the various categories of university staff and students participate. It issues opinions and proposals on the university programme, on the approval of university teaching rulings and on the recruitment of professors and researchers.

The Standing Conference of the Rectors of Italian Universities (*Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane – CRUI*) is the consultative body that promotes better organisation of teaching and scientific research.

Students also have a participatory body: the National Council of University Students (*Consiglio Nazionale degli Studenti Universitari – CNSU*), which has powers of consultation and proposal in matters of general interest for the university.

### 1.3 Financing

Although Law no. 59 of 15 March 1997 grants schools autonomy in regards to teaching methodology, organisation, research, experimentation and development, it does not give schools financial autonomy. Therefore, as stipulated in art. 21 of the aforementioned law, the essential financial appropriation is made up of the allocation by the State of funds for administrative and didactic functioning, which is subdivided into an ordinary allocation and an equalising allocation. This appropriation is granted without any other commitment as to use, other than the requirement to give priority to the education, training and guidance characteristic of each type and level of school.

The State directly provides the administrative and didactic financing of the school, while the Regions provide services and assistance for pupils (school meals, transport, textbooks in primary school, grants for less well-off pupils and social care). The Provinces and the Municipalities, for their part, can provide assistance and services by way of delegation from the Regions.

Enrolment and attendance in compulsory education are free of charge. For the pre-school level, even though it is not compulsory, tuition fees are not charged, while at upper secondary level pupils are expected to pay the enrolment fees, examination fees and contributions towards the functioning of laboratories/workshops.

The State finances universities through three funds which are part of the budget of the State and which are divided among the universities: the fund for the ordinary financing of universities (*Fondo di finanziamento ordinario – FFO*), the fund for university buildings and major scientific equipment (*Fondo per l'edilizia universitaria e per le grandi attrezzature scientifiche – FEU*) and the fund for the planning of the development of the university system (*Fondo per la programmazione dello sviluppo del sistema universitario – FPS*).

## 1.4 Quality assurance

There are essentially two procedures for evaluating education establishments: internal and external.

Internal evaluation of educational establishments is regulated by the Charter of Academic Services (DPCM/1995) and the Regulation on autonomy (DPR 275/1999) which encourages self-evaluation. The Charter of Academic Services identifies three quality areas (didactic, administrative, environmental), defines quality and standard factors for each area, stipulates self-evaluation procedures (revelation of elements through questionnaires for parents, staff and students).

As for external evaluation of schools, law 176/2007 entrusts the National evaluation service (*Servizio nazionale di valutazione*) of the education and training system (established by reform law 53/2003 in the INVALSI) with the task of carrying out the necessary surveys for evaluating the positive outcomes of schools. The Board of Auditors is entrusted with the control on administrative and accounting regularity.

On the national level, the education system is evaluated by INVALSI (National institute for the evaluation of the system of education) reformed with DL no. 286/2004 through the national evaluation system of the educational system of instruction and training. The learning levels reached by pupils are analysed through the INVALSI's annual findings.

The Ministry of Education, University and Research has established the three-year and annual action plans for the evaluation activities that should be carried out by the INVALSI starting from school year 2008/09. The ValSIS (evaluation of the education system and schools) research project has been started up in the view of defining a unitary framework for the evaluation of the education system and schools.

The Ministerial Directive on the action plan of INVALSI for the next three years, establishes that, as for the evaluation of the education system, INVALSI draws up an annual report on the school system, which must include both quantitative indicators (demand/supply ratio, resources, etc.) and qualitative indicators (analysis of exam outcomes, analysis of national and international surveys, etc.).

According to the three-year directive, the areas subject to intervention are the following: education system evaluation; schools evaluation; evaluation of the learning outcomes of pupils and students.

At higher educational level, the major changes that occurred in the university system and, in particular, the wider teaching autonomy and the new curricular model required a redefinition of the institutional bodies for the evaluation of university education. In fact, Law no. 370 of 19 October 1999 outlined the new evaluation system; it defined the role and functions of two organisations: the board of auditors, which already existed inside each university, and the National Committee for the evaluation of the university system (*Comitato Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario – CNVSU*), which has recently been instituted outside the university system.

As for higher non-university education (AFAM system), recognised by Law no. 508 of 21st December 1999 as the same level as the university higher education, the external evaluation activities are carried out by the same body that is responsible for the quality assurance at university higher level.

## 2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Pre-primary education is organised at *scuola dell'infanzia*, it lasts 3 years and is addressed at children from 3 to 6 years of age. The *scuola dell'infanzia* is part of the education and training system, yet it is not compulsory. These nursery schools are co-educational establishments and may be located on the same premises as primary schools or on separate premises. They are the only type of pre-school in both the State and non-State sectors.

Responsibility for State pre-primary education establishments lies within the Ministry of Education, University and Research with the administration of the majority of nursery schools being delegated to local education authorities. As the State nursery schools are unable to meet the demand, non-State schools (private and municipal) receive subsidies from the State, provided certain essential conditions are met. In addition to subsidies, there are sources of funding provided under the terms of regional laws. This funding is provided directly to schools or indirectly through pupils' families.

The State only took over complete responsibility in the sector of pre-school education in 1968 with Law no. 444. However, with the passing of time, pre-primary education has lost its assistance features and gained not only educational value, but also a full didactical autonomy even though it keeps a certain level of continuity with the primary level of education.

The system was further radically reformed by Legislative Decree no. 59 of 2004, which was passed in implementation of delegated Law no. 53 of 2003 aimed at reforming the entire system of education and training. Under the terms of the reform, the three-year *scuola dell'infanzia* (the new name for nursery schools) is designed to foster 'the education and the emotional, psychomotor, cognitive, moral, religious and social development of children (...)' and to guarantee educational continuity with both childcare services and with schools. The *scuola dell'infanzia* is fully included in the educational system.

### 2.1 Admission

In general, children who have turned three by the 31st of December of the relevant school year can enrol in pre-primary school; starting from school year 2009/10, it will be possible to enrol children who turn three by the 30th of April of the relevant school year. Families are free to choose the kind of school they want to send their children to. The only limitations may be due to the lack of available places or to the lack of school staff assigned to each school by the School administration.

### 2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

Nursery schools are under the administrative responsibility of a *Direzione didattica* (Education Directorate). Within the confines of their organisational and didactic autonomy, schools are responsible for defining, on the basis of educational plans, a weekly and daily timetable that is compatible with staffing resources and family demand. The District/School Council sets the timetable for the beginning and the end of the daily activities as well as the days of lessons in a week; the latter cannot be less than 5.

Within the total amount of hours (875-1 700 hours), three timetable models can be offered, from a minimum of 25 hours a week only in the morning up to 40 hours or a maximum of 50 hours a week.

From 1 September 2000, with the entry into force of autonomy, individual schools have considerable discretion as regards teaching methods and organisation, and nursery schools are therefore free to organise their school activities in a flexible manner.

The teaching activities begin on 1 September and end on 30 June. Art. 3, subparagraph 2, of Legislative Decree no. 59 of 2004 provides for a timetable calculated on an annual basis of between 875 and 1 700 hours, with holidays at Christmas, Easter and in summer.

Schools are divided into 3 sections, depending on the age of the children. Typically, a school has three sections catering for children of the same age (3, 4 and 5 years), but sections may also be composed of mixed age groups. The grant of autonomy to schools confirmed their freedom in forming the groups of pupils. In smaller locations, a school may have only one mixed-age section.

The sections are arranged according to the number of pupils enrolled, which is not determined in a rigid manner, but rather varies according to many different factors, such as the presence of disabled pupils, the geo-morphological characteristics of the territory, the economic conditions and the level of social disadvantage and the availability of regional staffing. Generally speaking, in the case of nursery schools, the sections are arranged according to a maximum of 25 children and a minimum of 15, with two teachers per section. If there are any disabled pupils, the number of children cannot exceed 20.

The DPR no. 81/2009 has set different levels for class size at all levels. From school year 2009/10 at pre-primary level, classes will group from a minimum of 18 children (instead of 15) to a maximum of 26 children (instead of 25). Only for 2009/10 the maximum level of 25 children will be maintained.

### 2.3 Curriculum

Legislative Decree no. 59 of 2004 provides National Guidelines for the personalised plans of educational activities in nursery schools (*Indicazioni nazionali per i piani di studio personalizzati delle attività educative nelle scuole dell'infanzia*).

Revision of these national indications led to the issue, in September 2007 of the new Indications for nursery school and the first education cycle (*Indicazioni per il curricolo per la scuola dell'infanzia e per il primo ciclo dell'istruzione*), used on an experimental basis for two school years (until school year 2008/09).

The DPR 89/2009 has established that, starting from school year 2009/10 and up to school year 2011/12, the National Guidelines of 2004, updated through the Guidelines for the Curriculum of 2007, will be implemented. In the period 2009/10-2011/12, the activities carried out by the schools will be monitored by the National Agency for the Development of School Autonomy and the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System. The outcomes are likely to be used to amend the National Guidelines of 2004.

The National Guidelines of 2004 established the following: general objectives of the formative process (strengthening of personal identity, independence attainment, competencies development); specific learning objectives listed under the following titles: 'the self and the other', 'body, movement, health', 'use and output of messages', 'exploring, knowing and planning'; the criteria for the selection of the formative objectives and the formulation of the personalized plans of the educational activities.

The new aspects of the Guidelines of 2007 are: the curriculum is made up of the so called 'fields of experience'; specific indications on planning and evaluation models and on organisation restraints are replaced with the proposal of a few general methodological criteria which are useful to schools, in the respect of their autonomy, for creating the learning environment.

### 2.4 Assessment

At nursery school, the occasional and systematic observation of children and the documentation of their activities provide a means of gathering and assessing their needs, adjusting the range of educational services to the quality and quantity of their requirements and sharing them with their



families. In fact, nursery schools are responsible for identifying educational processes that will allow all pupils to fulfil their potential.

Evaluation of development levels requires: an initial moment that defines starting capacity, moments within the didactic sequences which 'calibrate' the educational proposals and learning courses based on necessities, verification of the training requirements, the educational-didactic quality and the meaning of the academic experience.

## 2.5 Teachers

Reform law 53/2003 and the following Decree 227/2005 provided new procedures for initial training of teachers and their recruitment. However, law 244/2007 (Financial law 2008) repealed dispositions of law 53/2003 and of the Decree and established that new procedures for the initial training of teachers and for their recruitment should be adopted through a specific Decree of the Ministry. Therefore, up to school year 2007/08 the legislation prior to law 53/2003 has been applied. In school year 2008/09, access to schools qualifying for teaching at secondary level (*Scuole di specializzazione per l'insegnamento secondario* – SSIS) has been suspended (law 133/2008).

At present, the Decree of the Ministry of education including the new dispositions for initial teacher training and recruitment procedures is being discussed and, therefore, it is not possible to provide detailed information on the contents of the new legislation. In general, the draft Decree establishes that to teach at all levels of education a five-year university certification (*laurea magistrale*) will be required: teachers at pre-primary and primary levels are required a *laurea magistrale* obtained at completion of a five-year course of study; teachers at secondary levels are required a *laurea magistrale* obtained at completion of a two-year course of study (following a three-year university certification) and one year of practical training.

## 2.6 Statistics

### State schools – School year 2008/09

|                              |      |
|------------------------------|------|
| Number of pupils per teacher | 11.6 |
| Number of pupils per section | 22.9 |

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| Pupils   | 978 302 |
| Teachers | 88 342  |
| Schools  | 13 624  |
| Sections | 42 419  |

Source: Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca – Direzione Generale per gli Studi, la Statistica e i Sistemi Informativi 'La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati a.s. 2008/2009', Table A (p.VIII) e Table B3 (p.X) e 'Sedi, alunni, classi, dotazioni organiche del personale della scuola statale. Situazione di organico di diritto, a.s. 2008-2009' (p. XVI).

### 3. PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Primary education was completely reformed with Legislative Decree no. 59 of 19 February 2004, which was passed following the implementation of delegated Law no. 53 of 28 March 2003 aimed at reforming the entire system of education and training.

Based on the new organisation, the first cycle of education, which lasts a total of 8 years, consists of primary school and the first cycle of secondary school. Primary school and lower secondary school are two different education levels, each with its own specificities, even though they are part of only one school cycle.

Primary school is compulsory and lasts 5 years (from 6 to 11). It consists of a first year that serves as a transition from nursery school and two successive periods of two years. Primary education is provided at legally recognised State and non-State schools.

Enrolment and (compulsory) attendance are free of charge at State, equal status or *parificata* (authorised) schools. The municipality provides all pupils with textbooks free of charge. Transport and school meal services are always managed by the municipality, but the families are requested to make contributions, except for some exemptions.

The possibility to offer financial aids directly to the families falls within the responsibility of single regions; therefore, it changes according to the different legislations. It can be stated, generally, that provisions are contributions in money like cheques and scholarships, reductions of the payment for transport and meals up to the total exemption, for the weaker categories, as well as reductions for text books purchase.

#### 3.1 Admission

Starting from school year 2009/10 compulsory enrolment will involve children turning six by the 31 December of the current school year. Children turning six by the 30 April of the current school year can also be enrolled, upon parents' request. Early enrolment is an allowance made to families designed to meet the need to give them a decisive role to play in their children's academic career. There are no restrictions where parental choice of school is concerned.

#### 3.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

In general, pupils are divided into classes according to age. In smaller schools, in isolated locations, there are still pluri-classes, i.e. classes with children of different ages grouped into one class from an administrative point of view. This situation only affects a limited number of pupils.

Classes normally have a maximum of 25-27 pupils (20 if there are pupils with special educational needs) and a minimum of 10, while pluri-classes (mixed-level classes) have a maximum of 12 children and no fewer than 6.

The school year (lessons and assessments personnel updating activities) starts on 1 September and ends on 30 June.

Legislative Decree 59/2004 stipulates the following possibilities for organising teaching time

- compulsory timetable 891 hours per year, corresponding to an average of 27 hours a week;
- compulsory timetable + timetable for facultative and optional activities (99 hours a year, corresponding to an average of three hours a week), for a total of 30 hours a week, not including the time devoted to the canteen;

- a timetable of 40 hours per week (called 'full time timetable'), included the time dedicated to the canteen.

Starting from school year 2009/10, a new school time model will be introduced, together with the already existing models, in the first grades of primary school: it foresees 24 weekly hours with only one teacher per class. This new system will be gradually phased in throughout the subsequent grades of primary school which will initially keep the old school time models until the implementation is fully confirmed (Law 169/2008 and DPR 89/2009).

The task of organising the school timetable is left to the autonomous discretion of individual schools.

### 3.3 Curriculum

Legislative Decree no. 59 of 2004, which was passed in implementation of the law aimed at reforming the national education system, superseded the programs that had been in force since 1985 with the National Guidelines for Personalised Study Plans appended to the decree itself.

At the beginning of 2007 a revision procedure of the above indications was launched. This led in September 2007 to the issue of the new *Indicazioni per il curricolo per la scuola dell'infanzia e per il primo ciclo dell'istruzione* (see paragraph 2.3).

The disciplines for primary school are: Italian, English, history, geography, mathematics, science, technology and information technology, music, art, physical education and the Catholic religion. One innovative element is the introduction across the board of English courses and basic courses in technology and information technology.

The decree does not specify the number of hours to be devoted to the teaching of the disciplines or of the education courses.

Schools have autonomy in regards to the choice of teaching materials and textbooks.

### 3.4 Assessment, progression and certification

In primary schools, the level of learning and the behaviour of pupils are assessed periodically and every year by the teachers who are responsible for the educational and didactic activities, and they are also responsible for assessing the two-year periods for the purpose of transition to the next period and the certification of the skills they have acquired.

A final exam at the end of primary school is not foreseen because primary school, together with lower secondary school, is part of one only school cycle called 'first cycle'. In fact, the Italian Constitution only foresees final exams at the end of each cycle of education.

Therefore, the transition from primary school to lower secondary school is the result of a straightforward final assessment at the end of the second two-year period of primary education. During the two-year periods, any decision not to admit a pupil to the next class must be taken by teachers unanimously and for exceptional reasons that must be explained.

Starting from school year 2008/09, the recurrent and final evaluation in each subject is expressed through numerical marks in tenths (from 0 to 10), while behaviour is assessed through an analytical or synthetic assessment deliberated by the teachers' assembly of the school.

### 3.5 Guidance and counselling

Guidance has an educational function in primary education; it aims at promoting the pupils' identity construction and autonomy development. According to Ministerial directive no. 487 of 6 August 1997, guidance 'finds expression in a series of activities aimed at forming and developing the students' self-knowledge, the environment where they live, the cultural and social-economic changes, the educational offers, so that they can manage the project of their own life'; it is, therefore, 'an integral part of the study curricula from the very beginning of the *scuola dell'infanzia* as well as 'an institutional activity of every school type and level'.

### 3.6 Teachers

See section 2.6.

### 3.7 Statistics

#### State schools – School year 2008/09

|                              |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Number of pupils per teacher | 10.5      |
| Number of pupils per class   | 18.8      |
| Pupils                       | 2 571 627 |
| Teachers                     | 261 079   |
| Schools                      | 15 950    |
| Classes                      | 137 095   |

Source: *Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca – Direzione Generale per gli Studi, la Statistica e i Sistemi Informativi 'La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati a.s. 2008/2009'*, Table A (p.VIII) e Table B3 (p.X). Number of pupils per teacher (p.170), Number of pupils per class (p.102).

## 4. SECONDARY EDUCATION AND FIRST- LEVEL INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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### 4.1 Secondary education

The education and training system, according to Law no. 53 of 28 March 2003, consists of a pre-primary level (*scuola dell'infanzia*), a first cycle of education comprising the primary and the lower secondary levels, and a second cycle of education comprising the *licei* system (artistic, classical, economic, linguistic, music and dance, scientific, technological, human sciences) and the vocational education and training system. The lower and upper secondary levels of education have recently been reformed by law 53/2003 and subsequent Decrees; in particular these include the length of compulsory education, the reform of the upper secondary level of education and a few aspects of the organization and curriculum at lower secondary level.

The same law has introduced the 'right-duty' to education and training for at least 12 years. This 'right-duty' is fulfilled within the education system or up to the obtainment of a three-year vocational qualification (either at school or in the initial vocational training system) before reaching 18 years of age. However, education is compulsory for 10 years (from 6 to 16 years of age).

Here follows the main legislation governing the lower and upper secondary school level in the last few years:

- Law No. 296 of 27 December 2006 (Financial law 2007) has foreseen the extension of compulsory education to ten years, starting from school year 2007/08, and the extension to 16 years of age for access to the labour market; dispositions for its implementation have been issued through Ministerial Decree no. 139/2007;
- Law no. 1 of 1st January 2007 has introduced a new procedure for the state exams organised at the end of upper secondary school level;
- Law no. 133 of 6 August 2008 has foreseen the reform of the *licei* and the reform of the technical and vocational institutes, whose regulation drafts have been approved by the Council of Ministers on the 12th of June 2009 and on the 28th of May 2009 respectively. At present, the regulation has neither been released nor published in the Official Gazette;
- DPR no. 89 of 20 March 2009 provides for the revision of the organization and the didactic at pre-primary, primary and lower secondary levels, starting from school year 2009/10, according to law no. 133/2008.
- DPR no. 122 of the 22nd June 2009 provides for the coordination of all the dispositions concerning student assessment at primary and secondary levels. The Decree will be implemented starting from school year 2009/10.

Secondary education is divided into two different levels: the lower secondary level (*scuola secondaria di primo grado*), which foresees a length of 3 years (from 11 to 14 years of age); and the upper secondary level of education, called 'second cycle of education' (*secondo ciclo di istruzione*), which is made up of the upper secondary school (called *scuola secondaria di secondo grado*) falling under the responsibility of the State, and the vocational and training system falling under the responsibility of the Regions.

The State upper secondary education is offered by the *licei*, the technical institutes, the vocational institutes, and the arts institutes. The overall length of study is 5 years (from 14 to 19 years of age) both in the *licei* and in the technical institutes, except for the *liceo* specialising in arts subjects which

offers a course of study of 4 years plus an additional year. Vocational institutes and arts institutes offer courses lasting either 3 or 5 years.

Education is compulsory up to 16 years of age. The last two years of compulsory education (first two years of upper secondary education) can be fulfilled in all upper secondary school pathways.

The lower secondary level of education is compulsory, which means that enrolment and attendance are free of charge. Families are required to pay for the textbooks.

Payment of enrolment and attendance fees is required only for upper secondary schools; however, students who enrol in the first, second and third grades of upper secondary schools, are exempted from paying school fees. This is due to the fact that the 'right-duty' to education and training can be fulfilled by acquiring a 3-year qualification at upper secondary level, both in the state educational and training system and in the regional initial vocational training. Exemptions may also be granted according to the family income.

Financial aids are foreseen both by the state and regional legislation. The State foresees grants to be awarded with priority to low income families; financial aids provided by the Regions, are for example financial contributions to purchase textbooks, free-of-charge transport and canteen services, etc.

### LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION (*SCUOLA SECONDARIA DI PRIMO GRADO*)

Based on the reform of the school system introduced with Law no. 53/2003 and the subsequent Legislative Decree no. 59/2004, the lower level of secondary education, which was previously referred to as *scuola media* (lower secondary school), will henceforth be referred to as *scuola secondaria di I grado*. Pupils will move to this level of education at the end of primary school, the second segment in which the first cycle of education is provided. Together with primary school it also makes up the first segment in which the 'right-duty' to education and training is implemented.

The lower secondary school, 'is aimed at fostering the ability to study autonomously and at strengthening the pupils' attitudes towards social interaction [...]; it is characterised by the different teaching and methodology approaches according to the development of the pupils' personalities [...]; it progressively develops choice skills and abilities according to the pupils' aptitudes and inclinations [...]; it helps to orientate oneself in the future choice within education and training' (Legislative Decree no. 59/2004).

Lower secondary school lasts a total of three years. It is divided into a first two-year period and a third year for guidance and the transition to the second cycle of education. It is attended by pupils between 11 and 14 years of age. This level of education is provided at public schools and at legally recognised private schools.

### UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL (*SCUOLA SECONDARIA DI SECONDO GRADO*)

Since the abovementioned reform of education (Law no. 53/2003), upper secondary education has been the second cycle of education. This cycle encompasses the *liceo* (artistic, classic, economic, linguistic, musical, scientific, technological, human sciences) of State competence and the vocational education and training system of Regional competence. While waiting for the application of the reform of the *licei* and of the technical and vocational institutes, starting from school year 2009/10, the present organisation of lower and upper secondary education will be described below.

The schools belonging to the general type of upper secondary education are: classical *liceo*; scientific *liceo*; artistic *liceo*; social-psycho-pedagogical *liceo*; schools forming part of the vocational type secondary education are technical institutes; vocational institutes; art institutes.

The language *liceo* is to be added to these schools. This works formally in some state recognised schools, while it has been introduced experimentally into state schools (Brocca Project CM No. 27/1991).

These types of upper secondary schools cater for pupils aged between 14 and 19 years.

Education offered by the *licei* aims at preparing students for university studies and for other post-secondary pathways, whereas education offered by the *liceo* specialising in arts subjects aims at teaching art.

The classical and scientific *Liceo* have a unified structure (lasting five years) which are split into two and three year sections. In the classical *Liceo*, the teaching is predominantly classical and humanistic. The scientific *Liceo* places the emphasis on scientific training, particularly during the last three years.

The main purpose of technical education is to give pupils specific theoretical and practical preparation for skilled tasks (vocational education) and preparation for work and artistic production (artistic education) in various sectors, with particular attention to the requirements of the local labour market.

This type of training is given in technical, vocational colleges and in art institutes.

There are different types of *Istituti tecnici* (technical colleges): agricultural, commercial, touristic, surveying, industrial, company experts and correspondents in foreign languages, naval, aeronautic and social activities. Each offers several branches and specialisations. The courses are divided into two cycles (one of two years and one of three years). However, there are no examinations between these two cycles and the programmes are the same in the two-year period and differ in the three year period with regard to specialisations.

*Istituti professionali* (vocational colleges) cover three-year sectors and the following vocational studies: agriculture, industry and crafts, services, auxiliary sanitary and the special sector. Each sector offers a number of branches which correspond to the most important areas of professional life. These colleges may also organise evening courses.

The *istituti d'arte* (arts institutes) prepare pupils for work and artistic production, according to local industries and materials. There are about 40 regulated directions and these take into account many sectors: printing and engraving, textiles and decorations, jewellery, metals, furniture, ceramics, painting, glass, set design, etc.

## 4.1.1 Admission

### Lower secondary education

Enrolment in lower secondary school is compulsory for pupils who have obtained the final admission certificate at the end of primary school. Pupils attending state or *paritarie* schools are not required to sit any final exam to pass from primary to lower secondary school, because an examination is only required at the end of each education cycle.

### General and vocational upper secondary education

Students who have passed the state exam at the end of the first cycle of education must enrol in schools of the second cycle of the education and training system. In fact, compulsory education lasts 10 years and is accomplished at the end of the second grade of upper secondary education. There are no restrictions where parental choice of school is concerned.

## 4.1.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

### Lower secondary education

The lower secondary school lasts 3 years and is subdivided into a two-year period and a third year aimed at consolidating the disciplinary path and strengthening guidance and connection with the second cycle, in order to permit a reasoned choice by pupils in regards to their study prosecution. This level of education is generally attended by pupils aged from 11 to 14. The classes are generally composed on the basis of age. The DPR no. 81/2009 has established the following new minimum and maximum class sizes: at pre-primary level a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 26 children; for the first grades of lower secondary school a minimum of 18 (instead of 15) and a maximum of 27 (instead of 25, which still applies in 2009/10). Class teachers are specialists in one or more subjects.

The school year begins in September (at different dates depending on the Region) and ends in mid-June. There are holidays in summer and at Christmas and Easter.

The total number of hours in lower secondary school is established on an annual basis. According to DPR no. 89/2009, the annual compulsory school time amounts to 990 teaching hours, equal to 30 weekly hours (29 hours plus 1 additional hour for study in depth of literary subjects), including the Regions' share and the school share. In the extended-time classes, the weekly school time will be on average 36 hours or, exceptionally, 40 hours including the time dedicated to meals.

### General and vocational upper secondary education

As far as the organisation of the study plan is concerned, almost every upper secondary institute is divided into a first two-year course and a second three-year course. The two-year course is attended by students aged from 14 to 16 years, the three-year course by students aged from 16 to 19.

Generally, classes at upper secondary level should have not less than 25 and no more than 28 students in the first year, while in the following years the minimum is 20 students.

At this level of education, the total number of hours in lower secondary school is established on an annual basis. Timetables of upper secondary schools vary a lot depending on the number of subjects included in the study courses of the various institutes and the teaching hours devoted to each of these subjects. For details on the weekly timetable per subject, see 4.3.a.

## 4.1.3 Curriculum

### Lower secondary education

The reform law (no. 53/2003) and the subsequent implementing decree (no. 59/2004) provided for arrangements at lower secondary level and for the old study programs at primary level to be replaced by the Personalised Study Plans set out in the National Guidelines attached to the Decree itself.

At the beginning of 2007 the procedure for revising the above indications was launched, which led in September 2007 to issuing new Indications for the curriculum for nursery school and the first education cycle, introduced on an experimental basis in school year 2007/08 and school year 2008/09. Starting from school year 2009/10, the National Guidelines of 2004, updated through the Guidelines for the Curriculum of 2007, will be implemented. In the next three school years, the activities carried out by the schools will be monitored by the National Agency for the Development of School Autonomy and the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System. The outcomes are likely to be used to amend the National Guidelines of 2004 (DPR no. 89/2009).



The disciplines for which the specific learning targets are defined at lower secondary level are: religion (optional), Italian, English, second Community language, history, geography, mathematics, science and technology, information technology, music, art and physical education.

### General upper secondary education

The reform of the *licei* and of the technical and vocational institutes is one of the reform law (no. 53/2003) aspects, which is under discussion at present. The reform provides for the reorganisation of the *licei* pathway (the ordinary three *licei* specialising in classical studies, scientific studies and arts subjects plus experimental pathways like the linguistic and the social-psychopedagogical *licei*) in 6 *licei*: arts subjects, classical studies, scientific studies, foreign languages, music and dance, human sciences.

The reform of the education and training foresees the reorganisation of the technical and vocational institutes. Technical institutes will refer to 2 sectors: the economic sector, subdivided into 2 branches, and the technological sector, subdivided into 9 branches. Vocational institutes will refer to 2 sectors: the service sector, subdivided into 5 branches, and the industry and handicraft sector, which will foresee 1 branch. The reform should be gradually implemented starting from school year 2010/11.

In the classical *Liceo*, the standard timetable is as follows:

| SUBJECTS                                 | <i>Ginnasio</i> |    | Classical <i>Liceo</i> |    |     |
|--|-----------------|----|------------------------|----|-----|
|  | IV              | V  | I                      | II | III |
| Italian language and literature          | 5               | 5  | 4                      | 4  | 4   |
| Latin language and literature            | 5               | 5  | 4                      | 4  | 4   |
| Greek language and literature            | 4               | 4  | 3                      | 3  | 3   |
| Foreign language and literature          | 4               | 4  | --                     | -- | --  |
| History                                  | 2               | 2  | 3                      | 3  | 3   |
| Geography                                | 2               | 2  | --                     | -- | --  |
| Philosophy                               | --              | -- | 3                      | 3  | 3   |
| Natural science, chemistry and geography | --              | -- | 4                      | 3  | 2   |
| Mathematics                              | 2               | 2  | 3                      | 2  | 2   |
| Physics                                  | --              | -- | --                     | 2  | 3   |
| Art history                              | --              | -- | 1                      | 1  | 2   |
| Religion                                 | 1               | 1  | 1                      | 1  | 1   |
| Physical education                       | 2               | 2  | 2                      | 2  | 2   |
|  | 27              | 27 | 28                     | 28 | 29  |

Religious education is optional.

At the scientific *Liceo*, the weekly timetable is as follows:

| SUBJECTS                                 | Scientific <i>Liceo</i> |    |     |    |    |
|--|-------------------------|----|-----|----|----|
|  | I                       | II | III | IV | V  |
| Italian language and literature          | 4                       | 4  | 4   | 3  | 4  |
| Latin language and literature            | 4                       | 5  | 4   | 4  | 3  |
| Foreign language and literature          | 3                       | 4  | 3   | 3  | 4  |
| History                                  | 3                       | 2  | 2   | 2  | 3  |
| Geography                                | 2                       | -- | --  | -- | -- |
| Philosophy                               | --                      | -- | 2   | 3  | 3  |
| Natural science, chemistry and geography | --                      | 2  | 3   | 3  | 2  |
| Physics                                  | --                      | -- | 2   | 3  | 3  |
| Mathematics                              | 5                       | 4  | 3   | 3  | 3  |
| Design                                   | 1                       | 3  | 2   | 2  | 2  |
| Religion                                 | 1                       | 1  | 1   | 1  | 1  |
| Physical education                       | 2                       | 2  | 2   | 2  | 2  |
|  | 25                      | 27 | 28  | 29 | 30 |

Religious education is optional.

The artistic *liceo* offers pupils specialised art teaching, particularly in painting, sculpture, scenography and architecture.

The course lasts four years and is split into two sections: one for the study of figurative arts and scenography and the other for the study of architecture. The first two-year cycle is identical for both sections, in the second cycle the number of hours of art subjects is different. The first section permits access to the Fine Arts Academy, the second to the faculty of architecture. Whenever pupils follow the fifth integrated year they obtain the fine arts certificate for upper secondary artistic instruction, which permits access to all the university faculties.

Using the experimentation tool, nearly all the artistic *licei* have a five-year study course at the end of which it is possible to enrol in university without having to attend the integrated course.

In the artistic *liceo*, the compulsory disciplines are divided into general and artistic subjects according to the following timetable:

|                      | 1 <sup>st</sup> year | 2 <sup>nd</sup> year | 3 <sup>rd</sup> year |         | 4 <sup>th</sup> year |         |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
|                      |                      |                      | I Sec.               | II Sec. | III Sec.             | II Sec. |
| ARTISTIC SUBJECTS    |                      |                      |                      |         |                      |         |
| Figurative drawing   | 10                   | 6                    | 8                    | 4       | 8                    | 4       |
| Decorative drawing   | 10                   | 6                    | 8                    | 4       | 8                    | 4       |
| Figurative modelling | --                   | 4                    | 4                    |         | 4                    |         |
| Decorative modelling | --                   | 4                    | 4                    |         | 4                    |         |

|   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Geometrical drawing                       | 4  | 3  | -- | -- |    |    |
| Perspective                               | -- | -- | 4  | 4  |    |    |
| Elem. of architecture                     | -- | 2  | 4  | 4  |    |    |
| Anatomy                                   | -- | -- | 2  | 2  |    |    |
|   | 24 | 25 | 34 | 26 | 34 | 26 |
| CULTURAL SUBJECTS                         |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Literature and history                    | 3  | 3  | 4  | 4  |    |    |
| Art history                               | 2  | 2  | 2  | 3  |    |    |
| Mathematics and physics                   | 4  | 4  | -- | 4  | -- | 5  |
| Natural sciences, chemistry and geography | 3  | 3  | -- | 2  | -- | -- |
| Religion                                  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |    |    |
| Physical education                        | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |    |    |
|   | 15 | 15 | 9  | 15 | 10 | 15 |

The hour of religion is optional.

The socio-psycho-pedagogic *liceo* is an experiment of the former *istituti magistrali* (former institutes for teacher training), since there is no regulated course for this sort of *liceo*. The 'Brocca Project' involves 34 hours per week for all five classes and the following disciplines: religion or alternative activities (optional), Italian, history, Latin, foreign language, mathematics, geography, earth sciences, music, law and economics, art history, philosophy, pedagogy, sociology, social legislation, socio-pedagogic research methodology, physics, chemistry, biology, physical education.

Within the same class, the subjects are taught to all at the same level.

From 1998, under article 21 of Law no. 59 of 1997, which introduced school autonomy, schools may – within the limits of the national learning objectives to be attained by means of autonomous training programmes which replace the national programmes – set their own curriculum in such a way that they include the basic subjects that must be included in the curriculum or extra optional subjects.

Teachers are free to choose the content and methods that are best suited to the class and to individual pupils, provided they remain within the individually and jointly established curricula.

### Vocational upper secondary education

During the initial two-year cycle, the curriculum of the technical colleges includes the following subjects, which are common to all specialisations: Italian, history, chemistry, geography, foreign language, mathematics, physics, natural sciences, biology, law and economics, physical education and religious education or alternative subject (optional).

The only difference concerns specific subjects corresponding to the branch chosen and the practical exercises belonging to each branch.

During the second cycle, which lasts three years, the general subjects are common to all specialisations. The other subjects vary according to the branch chosen. A considerable part of the curriculum is devoted to practical exercises in specialised fields.

Within the same class, the subjects are taught to all at the same level.

In the curriculum of vocational colleges, during the first three-year cycle teaching includes subjects that are common to all courses and different subjects depending on the branch chosen.

The subjects that are common to all sections take up a total of 22 hours a week during the initial two years and 12 to 15 hours in the third year. These are: Italian, history, foreign language, law and economics, mathematics and IT, earth sciences and biology, physical education and religious education (optional). There are also specific subjects for each specialisation, with their respective technologies, covering 14 hours a week during the first two years and 21 to 24 in the third year. Four hours are also available for autonomous work (in-depth study) for guidance activities and for extra coaching and remedial work. Management of the in-depth area is entrusted to the autonomous programming of each institute, with a view to attaining the identified general objectives; and the teachers' board indicates the activities of the in-depth area, also taking into account any possible working connections with the territorial realities to accentuate the character of practical guidance in the professional sector.

After attaining the qualification and a positive outcome of attending the first three year period, the students can: access the working world, enrol in post-qualification two year courses to obtain the upper secondary education diploma with a vocational direction; attend successive modules also carried out in the school in agreement with the Region to obtain a second and higher level of qualification.

Within the same class, the subjects are taught to all at the same level.

The teaching methods are adapted to the objectives specific to each specialised branch and to local economic and social requirements. An endeavour is made to encourage polyvalent professionalism, which will form the basis for any subsequent specialisation.

Practical activities must be provided to give students experience which will enable them to work with the production processes that are typical of the sector concerned.

Moreover, in the art institute, subjects are divided into general compulsory subjects (general and artistic) and artistic disciplines, which are optional based on the selected direction.

The general subjects are: Italian, history, art history, mathematics, physics, natural sciences, chemistry and geography. These basic materials, common to all directions, are integrated by different laboratories and practical activities according to the chosen artistic direction.

The hour of religion or alternative activity is optional. The minimum weekly timetable generally goes from 36 hours up to a maximum of 44 hours. The lesson hours, divided into five or six days a week, vary according to the direction which has been chosen.

The methods are chosen by individual teachers with regard to individual and collegial programming and in these schools they are mainly based on laboratory activities.

#### **4.1.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

##### **Lower secondary education**

At the end of the school year, each pupil is required to have attended at least three quarters of the annual compulsory teaching time, including the optional teaching hours.

The end of term (at the end of a three-month or four-month term) and the annual assessment of the pupils' learning outcomes and behaviour, as well as their skills certification and the assessment of the first-cycle leaving state exam, are carried out by class teachers.

The end of term and annual assessment of pupils' learning outcomes and behaviour, as well as the skills certification, together foresee the assignment of a mark expressed in tenths. A mark equal to 6/10 corresponds to a sufficient assessment.

Admission to the next grade requires, besides a certain minimum school attendance, having obtained a mark equal to or higher than 6/10 in each subject and behaviour. The mark is assigned by teachers at the Class council.

At the end of lower secondary school (third year), pupils take the State examination, which foresees three written tests, an oral test and a national written test. The exam is successfully passed if the overall assessment is equal to or higher than 6/10.

Pupils passing the final state exam held at the end of the first cycle of education, obtain the lower secondary school leaving certificate.

### **General upper secondary education**

Student assessment takes place at the end of each term (either three-month or four-month periods) and at the end of each school year, based on the results attained by pupils in the various types of assessment carried out during the year. Assessment is carried out by class teachers in the Teachers' assembly, and is expressed by a mark out of 10, positive from 6 to 10 and negative from 0 to 5.

Admission to the following grade requires marks equal to or higher than 6/10 in each subject and behaviour. Admission is suspended if a student obtains a mark lower than 6/10 in one or more subjects. In this case, students should fill in their gaps within the beginning of the following school year. The students' learning outcomes are assessed before the beginning of the school year. Students who obtain at least 6/10 are admitted to the following grade.

At the end of general and vocational upper secondary education, pupils take the State examination for the upper secondary school leaving certificate. Admission to the state exam requires that pupils have obtained an average mark equal to or higher than 6/10 in all subjects and behaviour.

Law no. 1 of 1st January 2007 introduced a new procedure for the state exams organised at the end of upper secondary school level.

All pupils who have attended the final year can take this examination. The examination consists of two written tests set by the Ministry of Education, University and Research, a third test set by an examination board set up by the school and an oral examination. According to the abovementioned law, the composition of the adjudicating boards was amended: there are now three internal teachers of the class and three external ones as well as the external president. The final assessment is expressed in the form of a percentage. The minimum mark to pass the exam is 60/100.

Starting from school year 2009/10, the pupils' general results for each of their last three years of upper secondary education will give them a credit of up to 25 points (instead of 20). Successful candidates receive a diploma and a certificate. The certificate mentions the branch and duration of their studies, the subjects and courses included in the curriculum in addition to the total length of the course, the grade awarded in written tests and in the oral examination, along with their school credits and training credits. The training credits are awarded based on the pupil's experience outside of school in different aspects of social life. The Class Council sets the criteria for the assessment of these credits.

Diplomas and certificates are written in four Community languages so that they can be understood in the different countries of the EU.

Finally, for the appraisal of the education system the law has set up within the National Institute for the Assessment of the Education System a National Observatory with responsibility for monitoring,

verifying and assessing the new arrangements for State examinations and to provide permanent support for the examining boards for the arrangements for the third written test.

### **Vocational upper secondary education**

As regards the assessment criteria and the methods of assessment, the information given for general upper secondary education also applies to technical, vocational and art institutes.

Students of vocational and arts institutes obtain a qualification after a three-year course of study. Students can afterwards attend a further two years of study in order to obtain an upper secondary level qualification.

In the vocational institutes and arts institutes, the exam for the qualification certificate and the exam for the certificate of Master of Art take place at the end of the three year courses. The corresponding diploma gives them direct access to the world of work, the option to enrol in post qualification two year courses through which they can obtain the upper secondary education diploma with a vocational direction; the right to attend successive modules also carried out in the school in agreement with the Region to obtain a second and higher level of qualification.

## **4.1.5 Guidance and counselling**

### **Lower secondary education**

Guidance falls within the fundamental tasks of the lower secondary school. The third year of lower secondary school is devoted to courses that provide pupils with more in-depth teaching and guidance and assistance for the transition to the second cycle of education.

### **General and vocational upper secondary education**

There are various guidance activities, mostly of an informative nature, during the final two years of upper secondary school.

There are many initiatives in connection with the branch of study in which they are organised, the socio-economic and cultural situation of the territory in which the school operates, the funds and infrastructure that it can obtain not only from the Ministry but also from companies, associations of industrialists, small businesses, professionals, local banks, etc.

The guidance activities are carried out according to the most diverse arrangements that vary from school to school and from year to year. The reason for this is that this task has not been institutionally assigned to a specific body.

## **4.1.6 Teachers and trainers**

### **Lower secondary education and general and vocational upper secondary education**

Reform law no. 53/2003 and the following Decree no. 227/2005 had provided for new procedures for initial training of teachers and their recruitment. However, law no. 244/2007 (financial law 2008) repealed dispositions of law 53/2003 and of the Decree and established that new procedures for the initial training of teachers and for their recruitment should be adopted through a specific Decree of the Ministry of education.

At present, the Decree of the Ministry of education including the new dispositions for initial teacher training and recruitment procedures is being discussed and, therefore, it is not possible to provide detailed information on the contents of the new legislation. In general, the draft Decree establishes

that to teach at all levels of education a five-year university certification (*laurea magistrale*) will be required: teachers at pre-primary and primary levels are required a *laurea magistrale* obtained at completion of a five-year course of study; teachers at secondary levels are required a *laurea magistrale* obtained at completion of a two-year course of study (following a three-year university certification) and one year of practical training. In particular, to teach in secondary schools it was necessary to have a *laurea*, in addition to the training at the Schools qualifying for teaching at secondary level (*Scuole di specializzazione per l'insegnamento secondario* – SSIS). In school year 2008/09, access to SSIS has been suspended (law 133/2008). No alternative pathways have been defined in order to obtain the qualification to teach.

In regards to their allocation, teachers are specialised and teach a subject or a group of subjects, but also interact with other teachers through interdisciplinary arrangements. Each teacher is assigned to one or more classes. Generally speaking, teachers stay with the same classes throughout the course.

## 4.1.7 Statistics

### Lower secondary education

#### State schools – School year 2008/09

|                              |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Number of pupils per teacher | 10        |
| Number of pupils per class   | 21.3      |
| Pupils                       | 1 651 680 |
| Teachers                     | 175 525   |
| Schools                      | 7 099     |
| Classes                      | 77 645    |

Source: Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca – Direzione Generale per gli Studi, la Statistica e i Sistemi Informativi 'La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati a.s. 2008/2009', Table A (p.VIII) e Table B3 (p.X). For 'Number of pupils per teacher' see p.170, and for 'Number of pupils per class' see p.102.

### Upper secondary education

#### Enrolled in upper secondary state schools for type of school – School year 2008/09

|                                     | Pupils attending |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Liceo classico</i>               | 277 524          |
| <i>Liceo scientifico</i>            | 592 248          |
| <i>Liceo artistico</i>              | 41 528           |
| <i>Liceo socio-psico-pedagogico</i> | 201 258          |
| <i>Istituti professionali</i>       | 538 709          |
| <i>Istituti tecnici</i>             | 862 349          |
| <i>Istituti d'arte</i>              | 52 846           |
| Total                               | 2 566 462        |

Source: Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca – Direzione Generale per gli Studi, la Statistica e i Sistemi Informativi 'La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati a.s. 2008/2009', pp. 65-89.

**School units, classes and teachers in second grade secondary school – School year 2008/09**

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| Teachers | 241 173 |
| Schools  | 5 193   |
| Classes  | 117 787 |

Source: Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca – Direzione Generale per gli Studi, la Statistica e i Sistemi Informativi 'La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati a.s. 2008/2009', Table A (p.VIII) and Table B3 (p.X).

## 4.2 First-level initial vocational training

Vocational training falls under the Regions' responsibility and also through delegation and transfer of functions and tasks to the Provinces. The State remains nonetheless responsible for setting the essential minimum levels of provision in accordance with framework law 845/78 as well as to the wider reform context of public administration, implemented through the so called Bassanini laws (law no. 59/97, legislative decree 469/97, legislative decree no. 112/98) and the recent reform of the Title V of the Italian Constitution which confers on the Regions exclusive legislative powers in regards to matters of vocational training.

Initial vocational training concerns training for 14-17 year-old students carried out by accredited training agencies and schools providing three-year education and training pathways (*Istruzione e Formazione Professionale* – IeFP) in accordance with the State-Regions Agreement of 19 June 2003. Such pathways should have at least a three-year duration, provide subjects and activities related to both general cultural education and vocational areas and lead to the attainment of a vocational qualification acknowledged at the national level and corresponding at least to the II European level (Decision of the Council 85/368/CEE), released by the Regions through accredited training organisations.

Initial training includes external training for underage apprentices (foreseen by the 'right-duty' to education and training) organised by the Regions and by the Provinces through short formative modules (120 annual hours dedicated to vocational training and 120 annual hours of basic competences).

As far as young people aged 14-17 are concerned, the regulation framework has been modified since year 1999, passing from compulsory schooling (Law no. 9/1999) and formative schooling (Law no. 144/1999), to 'right/duty' (*diritto/dovere*) to education and training for at least 12 years (in the school system) or up to the obtainment of a three-year vocational qualification (either at school or in the initial vocational training system) before reaching 18 years of age. Law no. 296/2006 has then foreseen, starting from school year 2007/08, the extension of compulsory schooling for at least 10 years; after the fulfilment of compulsory schooling pupils continue in the right/duty to education and training pathway. Law no. 133/2008 regulated the education and training three-year pathways (former Agreement of 19 June 2003) making them become one of the possible pathways leading to the accomplishment of compulsory education after lower secondary school.

The three-year pathways have been established at the national level to integrate accredited training agencies with schools. According to the type of courses provided (more education-oriented or more training-oriented), the responsibility of the course will be of the school or of the training agency. A qualification or a school certificate will be released.

Through the regulations on compulsory schooling (decree no. 139/2007) and the Technical document on key competencies for citizens to be obtained at the end of compulsory education, Italy has carried on the adjustment of the education system to the European education policy, assuring the attainment of the same general learning aims to all compulsory education pupils i.e. either those enrolled in upper



secondary schools, or those attending the three-year pathways managed by schools or by credited formative agencies. Also the inter-ministerial decree of 29 November 2007 outlines the quality criteria for the formative agencies, and the Guidelines of the Ministry of education and of the Conference of the Regions for the implementation of compulsory education at schools and formative agencies, provide indications to support the learning of key competencies in the first two years of upper secondary school, regardless of the type of pathway taken.

The collaboration between State, Regions and Provinces has enhanced, in the last few years, the flexibility of our education system, through the possibility of passing from one pathway to the other and from the school and the vocational training systems with the aim of preventing school drop-out.

A series of documents produced by the Unified Conference have introduced important changes: for example the definition of formative standards for the basic skills of the three-year pathways (January 2004, and replaced with the Key Competencies of citizens included in the already mentioned decree no. 139/2007), and the definition at the national level of the minimum standard of technical and vocational skills of 14 professional profiles (October 2006) and, subsequently, of 5 additional profiles (February 2009). These 19 profiles correspond to the national framework for the educational and training pathways and the related qualifications. At last, national final and intermediate certifications have been introduced to foster passages between the education system and the IeFP (October 2004).

Initial vocation training, including the external apprenticeship training, is provided by vocational training premises identified by the Regions, through the so called 'credit': the Regions recognise to a public or private entity the power to provide training supported through public funds. The need to define national minimum standards for the training providers was already foreseen in Law no. 845/78 and Law no. 196/97.

However, the first structure of a national credit plan has been introduced in 2001. A decree established that all formative organisations which intend to carry out interventions using public funds should be accredited in the respect of specific requirements related to specific formative/guidance services.

The agreement acknowledged the D.I. of 29 November 2007 of the Ministry of public education and the Ministry of Labour establishing the general criteria for the crediting of the formative structures which carry out vocational education and training pathways (IeFP), the criteria for the subdivision of the state contributions and the measures for the implementation of compulsory education.

As far as apprenticeship is concerned, the legislative framework is the law no. 30/2003 which introduced 3 types of apprenticeships among which is the apprenticeship for the fulfilment of the 'right-duty' to education and training, lasting three years.

As for the formative aspect of this measure, the regulation of the formative profiles for apprenticeship destined to minors is under the Regions' and Autonomous Provinces' responsibility, in accordance with the Ministry of labour and the Ministry of education, upon opinion of the social partners.

If any regional/provincial regulation is lacking on this matter, the decree foresees that the previous national regulations are still in force also as far as the external training of underage apprentices is concerned. It foresees the compulsory participation of underage apprentices to the 120-hour modules of external training on vocational and technical competencies and to the additional modules (120 hours) on basic skills.

According to the recent Law no. 296/2006, it is possible to access work at 16 years of age instead of 15. Tax relieves are foreseen for enterprises which employ apprentices.

The three-year pathways are financed by the Regions through national funds allocated by the Ministry of Labour and by the Ministry of education, as well as through their own funds.

Regarding apprenticeship, to fulfil the 'right-duty' to education and training (*diritto-dovere all'istruzione e formazione*), the formative activities are financed by the Ministry of Labour, through the annually allocated national financial resources and the regional funds.

Enrolment to all formative pathways during the period of compulsory education (10 years)/'right-duty' to education (12 years) is free of charge.

#### **4.2.1 Admission**

The access requirements to the three-year vocational education and training pathways refer to the completion of lower secondary school. Enrolment in the first grade requires being less than 15 years of age. Access of young people coming from other pathways to the following grades (the so-called 'bridges') is extended to young people under 18 years of age.

The only requirement for the external training of apprentices is to be over 16 years old according to Law no. 296/06; the regional or provincial administration should offer the courses through a call through the local services for the employment.

#### **4.2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue**

The time organisation of the three-year pathways provided by the training agencies varies by Region. However, the trainees generally attend the three-year pathways for 5 or 6 hours a day, in the morning, with a break in the middle of the morning like at school. Classes should start in September, like at school, and finish in June-July; however, this organisation undergoes some changes according to the regional planning and the availability of the funds annually allocated by the Ministry of labour and the Ministry of education.

The training year can be organised into 2 four-month periods or in 3 three-month periods, with the respective trainees' results being recorded and the information related to parents.

The duration of the pathways, which foresee school attendance and stages in enterprises, is not the same everywhere in Italy, and is approximately 1 000 hours per year, with a total amount of 3 000 hours in the three years. For handicapped trainees, and more generally for trainees with specific needs, the regions also provide one-year and two-year vocational training pathways.

All the three-year pathways provide stages, which are considered fundamental in the vocational training system. The stage duration is decided at regional level, and is done so in accordance with the related qualifications. The first year, however, has a guidance approach: it foresees guided tours to the enterprises on the territorial area. In the following years the stage has become more focused on training, and the trainees work in an enterprise and their training is coordinated and managed by a stage tutor at the training provider, and by an enterprise tutor at the work placement. A stage (approx. 200 hours a year) is organised into one or two parts, taking place generally after the 1st four-month term or after the 2nd three-month term of the training year. The stage should always foresee some periods in a classroom to re-elaborate the work experience with the course teachers.

The classes are generally composed of 20 trainees, even if the maximum limit changes by Region. It is also generally the case that each class has no less than a minimum number of trainees (for example 12). Each class is made up according to the enrolment year (1st, 2nd and 3rd year) and also according to name of the qualification issued at the end of the pathway (for example, class of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of 'catering services operator').

Other professional profiles are the class tutor and the stage tutor. The first one coordinates the learning-teaching process within the training provider; the second one organises, manages and coordinates the part related to the school-work alternance.

As far as the external training is concerned, trainees within the period of their 'right-duty' to education and training (12 years) should participate in at least 240 hours of external training both on vocational technical skills and on basic skills.

The 120 or 240 hours of external training can be organised in different ways: a certain number of hours every day of the week, for half day or the whole day; or, more frequently, once or twice a week for half day or the whole day until the total number of hours has been covered.

### 4.2.3 Curriculum

National study programmes for the three-year pathways of leFP don't exist. Therefore, the training providers should prepare didactic projects on the basis of the tasks and skills typical of the relevant professional profiles. The modules provided are generally referable to basic, transversal, technical-vocational skills.

As for the three-year pathways provided by training agencies, integrated with schools but with a higher number of vocational training (*Formazione Professionale – FP*) teachers, the total number of vocation training hours can vary on the national territory. However, the average number is approximately 1 000 hours per year. The timetable is regulated at the national level; however, the results of the ISFOL national monitoring indicate that between 24 and 50 % of the total number of hours is dedicated to basic skills learning; between 33 and 50 % to technical-vocational skills; between 5 and 15 % to personalisation and catching-up; between 8 and 32 % to stages. As for integrated pathways, carried out at school, with a higher number of school teachers, the training activities are carried out within the regular school timetable, with a curricular flexibility (15 % of the total amount of hours), using possible study-in-depth hours in vocational institutes, for a total number of maximum 310 hours per year.

As far as key competences for citizenship or basic skills, the relevant curricula are developed according to the Document on Key Competencies for the citizens, annexed to the Regulations on compulsory education (already mentioned Ministerial decree no. 139/2007). The key competences are those which should be attained by 14-16 year olds during the first two years in the training agencies or at school. The document on key competencies while not substituting curricular programmes or detailed planning of single courses, still represents a guide for teaching-learning the basic competences. In accordance with the European recommendations, the document foresees the acquisition of the following competencies subdivided into the following 'cultural axes': Languages; Mathematics; Scientific-technological, and Historical and social.

Such areas are linked to the following key competencies: learning to learn; planning; communicating; collaborating and participating; responsible and autonomous behaviour; problem solving; identifying links and relations; and obtaining and interpreting information.

Vocational competences should be established making reference to the State-Regions agreement of 5 February 2009 (see section 4.2). It represents the national qualification framework for the three-year pathways. It presents the skills and abilities related to each professional profile and the activities that this professional profile should be able to carry out.

The training methodologies used in training interventions are the most varied: classroom lessons, simulations, role play, group discussions, visits to enterprises, etc. In particular, the use of active training methodologies is highly recommended to support learning and to meet the requirements of trainees to learn theoretical content and subjects through practice. Therefore, stages are very appreciated by trainees for the possibility to put into practice the knowledge and competences learned in the classroom (as for stage, refer to 4.2.2).

Specific textbooks for vocational training are available and are published by the same publishers who release school textbooks. The trainers are free to distribute lecture notes or to suggest specific textbooks.

Regarding apprenticeships for the fulfilment of the 'right-duty' to education and training, the hours of external technical-vocational training correspond to the minimum training objectives related to the professional profiles and to corresponding qualification; as for the additional modules, the DI no. 152/2001 foresees that after a 3-year training apprentices have gained certain levels of language competence (Italian and foreign language), mathematic and ICT competences. Such levels are referred to in the development of the curricula for the 120 training hours.

The most adequate teaching methodology for the apprenticeship training is based on 'learning by doing and active teaching', for example on the problem solving and on the method by projects. According to these methodologies, the trainees work in a group, using their basic skills to produce a service/product that is externally assessed. This helps to motivate young people with previous difficult school carriers to go on learning.

#### **4.2.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

The three-year pathways managed by training agencies release a final vocational qualification certificate and credits, if any, for passing to the education system; the pathways managed by schools, provide not only the diploma foreseen by the education system, but also a vocational qualification certificate or the acknowledgement of credits for passing to the FP.

This document is dealing with three-year pathways provided by training agencies; the pathways provided by schools relate to the education system.

As far as initial training is concerned, the subject teacher or the training tutor is responsible for the learning assessment.

The field of vocational training is also increasingly using portfolios as a means of systematic collection of data on the skills acquired by trainees through the work they submit, with documentation, analysis, interpretation and assessments. The portfolio provides a means of assessing not only the trainee's performance but also the learning processes, the strategies used by the trainees and the progress achieved.

Learning assessment is carried out at the beginning, during and at the end of pathways (qualification exams). The exams are held at the end of the three years before a board of examiners that include, internal and external teachers, representatives of the Ministry of Education, University and Research, experts from the labour market and representatives of the Region that have been authorised to award the qualification. The assessment is focused on each subject and in some pathways also includes a practical test or a discussion on a product of the trainee developed during the course (authentic assessment).

The assessment is expressed in thirtieths which are transformed into credits at the end of the year (from 60 to 100). The credits collected at the end of the three years (from 180 to 300) are calculated for access to the final examination. The assessment of the final exam, for qualifications obtained within the training agency, is expressed in thirtieths. Access to the final examination requires that the trainees have not accumulated absences in an amount lower than the 20 % of the total number of teaching hours. Absences can reach maximum 30 % for justified reasons and in agreement with the teachers' assembly (body which includes all the trainers of a pathway).

The trainees evaluate the teaching methods of their teachers, their course organisation and structure, through satisfaction questionnaires. In some cases, this is part of standardised quality monitoring procedures.

In regards to the forms of certification aimed at the pathways mobility in the system of vocational training, as in Decree no. 174/01 they are designed to guarantee the transparency of the training courses and the recognition of the skills acquired by individuals. Certification is aimed at ensuring the recognition of qualifications, in order to enable trainees to enter or re-enter the system of vocational education and training. The certified skills constitute training credit. The educational establishment attended by the student provides for the recognition of the credit, sometimes in cooperation with the establishment previously attended. A specific board decides in which grade to introduce the student.

The regions are responsible for the final and intermediate certification and they organise the implementation procedures taking into account the minimum standards and the types of certification defined at national level.

These opportunities can be used starting from the Agreement signed on 28 October 2004 in the Unified Conference which endorsed final and intermediate nationally valid certification, and recognition of credits collected in training courses, and were also established in order to favour passing between the education and training systems (see par. 4).

The Interministerial decree (Ministries of Education and Labour) no. 86/2004, also stipulated, with regard to the above mentioned Agreement, approval of two certification models to recognise credits to make the transition from vocational training and apprenticeship to the education system.

Another important feature favouring the transition between systems is the Order of the Ministry of Education no. 87 of 2004. This concerns that passage from the vocational training system and apprenticeship to the education system, by abolishing the stipulated exam and establishing that proper Commissions evaluate the certifications introduced by the above mentioned interministerial decree no. 86 and testify that the young person has proper competences for admission to a certain class of the institute to which she/he has applied.

Recently, the training booklet has been introduced through interministerial decree of 10 October 2005. This document can note all the study or work experiences of the student/trainee. The person owning the training booklet, is uniquely responsible for updating it, while the Regions and Provinces issue the booklet, although they can also delegate other subjects. In 2006 the training booklet was introduced on an experimental basis only in some Regions and with application procedures which differentiated on a territorial level, but in accordance with a common and shared work plan. At the end of 2006 the opportunity of a more detailed distribution and set up of the booklet for all citizens requiring it has been taken into consideration.

As regards the possibility to access further education and training pathways, the qualification released at the end of the III grade allows enrolment in the IV specialisation grade only offered by some training providers and only for some professional profiles; it enables enrolment in the III and IV grade of upper secondary schools (mainly technical and vocational institutes). Furthermore, a I level vocational qualification enables enrolment in post-qualification or post-diploma vocational training pathways (see chapter 5); otherwise, it makes it possible to be employed with an apprenticeship contract (for young people over 18 years of age). It is also possible to enrol in the IFTS (*Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore*) pathways upon assessment of the already acquired skills (see chapter 5).

As far as apprenticeship is concerned, qualifications are released by the enterprise at the expiry of the contract. External training for apprentices foresees the attainment of certain competence levels at the end of 120-hour annual modules on basic skills. Decree no. 152/2001 provides for assessment of the trainees' basic skills at the end of the apprenticeship through tests recognised at national level. Such

tests, in accordance with indicators related to international levels, verify the attainment of formative objectives in four competence areas: Italian language (reference to level 3 of the IALS-IALS – International Adult Literacy Survey- Second International Adult Literacy Survey scale); mathematics (reference to level 2 of the ALL-Adult Literacy Lifeskills Survey scale); foreign language (reference to level 2 of the ALTE-Association of Language Testers in Europe scale); ICT (reference to the ECDL – European Computer Driving Licence modules). The tests for Italian and mathematics have been developed by ISFOL in 2001; tests for foreign language and ICT are available directly at the certification providers on the Italian territory and expenses are paid by the Regions.

#### **4.2.5 Guidance and counselling**

The main agencies with responsibility for offering guidance to young people and adults in the labour market (which includes directing them to vocational training pathways) are the territorial employment services (job centres). These agencies are organised at provincial level, but have many local branches that operate within the framework of active employment policies defined at regional level. The employment services provide information and guidance on the opportunities for training and work in the territory. They also have a relevant role for young people subject to the 'right-duty' to education principle (12 years) who are not enrolled in any training pathways. In fact, they help manage the register of young people based on their training status and provide information, guidance and tutoring in order to control the phenomenon of dispersion. Such registers are being further implemented even if the process is quite slow and not really homogeneous in the territory.

In addition to the employment services, within many vocational training agencies there is also a guidance service that helps young people to make their choice of the course option and help them to join the job market at the end of the course.

Other guidance centres are organised by the Municipalities.

Guidance and introduction in the job market are also offered by the curricula of the three-year pathways; they are carried out by teachers/guidance tutors: a certain number of hours is specifically dedicated to guidance during the whole pathway, in order to identify difficulties of the trainee due to a wrong training choice and to prevent any drop-out of the training activities. In the third grade, a certain number of hours is dedicated to joining the job market to provide young people with the necessary knowledge and skills to start an active and strategic search for a job, how to behave in a job interview and how to draw up a curriculum vitae.

#### **4.2.6 Teachers and trainers**

The trainers in regional vocational courses are employees or other staff members hired by the local authorities (in the case of training agencies belonging to public administrations) or by private training centres. There is a regional register, but there are no formal channels for access to the register. The assignment is entrusted per call and selection or according to membership of a register.

The teachers of the three-year pathways provided by schools are school teachers regularly recruited through public recruitment procedures (see chapter 4.6.a).

Before the introduction of the decree on the accrediting of the training agencies providing three-year leFP courses where it is possible to accomplish the 'right-duty' to vocational education and training (see par. 4), the teachers were required to be experts of the professional sectors related to the qualification or to have an upper secondary education diploma or a degree. Today, the decree of 27 November 2007 on the accreditation of the training agencies for the accomplishment of compulsory education and training (art. 2, paragraph d) foresees the teachers have obtained a teaching qualification for upper secondary school or, in a transient phase, to have obtained a degree in the

relevant sector and to have a certain experience or, at least, to have obtained an upper secondary school leaving certificate and five-years experience.

The collective contract governing this category defines their professional functions taking into account the need for flexibility in the vocational training system. The term 'trainers' covers not only teachers, but also training tutors, who are normally given the role of overall control of the classroom.

The responsibility for the training of trainers is vested in the Regions; it is however also carried out by the training agencies themselves who organise seminars, courses (also distance learning courses and conferences on topics of particular interest of teachers.

In the case of apprenticeships, the company must define the profile of the company tutor as the person chiefly responsible for the work-related training. The company tutor is required to have certain requirements. He/she is selected by the employer among people with a contractual level equal or higher than the contractual level obtained by the apprentice at the end of his/her apprenticeship. The company tutor should carry out work activities consistent with those carried out by the apprentice and to have at least three years of work experience.

In the case of companies with less than fifteen employees or of craft companies, the company tutor can be the owner of the company, a partner or a relative who work for the company. Each company tutor can support no more than five apprentices.

The teachers of the training pathways external to the company (120/240 training hours), work for accredited vocational training providers (see 4.6.a).

## 4.2.7 Statistics

### Number of trainees enrolled in three-year pathways managed by training agencies and schools (school and training year 2004/05-2007/08)

| School and training year | Number of trainees |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 2004/05                  | 72 034             |
| 2005/06                  | 96 580             |
| 2006/07                  | 117 481            |
| 2007/08                  | 130 431            |

Source: ISFOL Area POFIP- Le misure per il successo formativo. VIII Rapporto di Monitoraggio del diritto-dovere, 2009.

### Training status of 14-17 year olds (school and training year 2007/08)

| Education/training pathway                            | Absolute Value | Percentage |
|---|----------------|------------|
| Young people enrolled in school                       | 2 080 148      | 88.7       |
| Young people enrolled in vocational training agencies | 102 297        | 4.4        |
| Young people hired with apprenticeship contract       | 41 028         | 1.7        |
| No pathway  | 121 070        | 5.2        |
| Total 14-17 year olds                                 | 2 344 543      | 100        |

Source: ISFOL elaboration of MIUR data, Regional data, Istat data – Le misure per il successo formativo. VIII Rapporto di monitoraggio ISFOL sul diritto-dovere, 2009.

## 5. POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION

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### 5.1 Higher technical education and training system

Art. 69 of Law no. 144 of 17 May 1999 and subsequent regulations adopted with the Interministerial Decree No. 436 of 31 October 2000 set up the system of higher-level technical education and training (IFTS) within the system of integrated higher education training. The system is designed to speed up the access of young people to the world of work and to retrain those who already have work experience. This is done through courses which are designed to provide young people and adults (employed or otherwise) with more specific cultural knowledge and in-depth and targeted technical and vocational training.

The financial law 2007 art. 1 section 631 stipulated the reorganisation of the IFTS system to strengthen vocational training and measures to improve the technical and scientific line. Further, with Law no. 40/2007 the IFTS system was redefined as 'Higher technical institutes, providing for their confluence in the technical-professional poles made up of technical institutes, accredited professional institutes, vocational training structures and higher technical institutes.

The guidelines for the reorganisation of the IFTS system and for the establishment of the Higher Technical Institutes have been issued through Decree on 25 January 2008. According to this reorganization, the offer at this level is the following: training offer and programmes provided by Higher Technical Institutes (*Istituti Tecnici Superiori* – ITS) and training offers provided through the IFTS pathways.

High Technical Institutes (ITS), according to the degree which instituted them, are specific types of foundations (half-way between being associations and private foundations). They can be set up by: an upper secondary school, either State-funded or *paritaria*, belonging to the technical/vocational branch situated in the same province of the foundation; a training institution which has been accredited by the Region for the purpose of higher level training and situated in the same province of the foundation; an enterprise belonging to the same productive branch of the ITS; university department or any other body belonging to the technological/scientific research system; a local authority (municipality, province, extended urban area, etc).

IFTS courses are free of charge. They are co-financed by the Ministry and by the Regions; however, private financing can also be foreseen.

#### 5.1.1 Admission

Anyone (adults included) holding an upper secondary education leaving certificate, has access to courses offered by the High Technical Institutes (ITS) and to IFTS pathways.

Access to IFTS pathways is also allowed to those in possession of a three-year vocational diploma, to those who have been admitted to the fifth year of the *liceo*, as well as to those who do not hold any upper secondary certification. These latter are required to hold a certification of competences acquired through previous training and working experiences undertaken after the fulfilment of compulsory education.

#### 5.1.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

Courses organised by the Higher Technical Institutes as well as the IFTS pathways, are addressed to young people and adults in general. Courses are not organised according to age levels.



Courses organised by the Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) last 4 semesters for a total of 1 800/2 000 hours and, for specific subjects, up to a maximum of 6 semesters; IFTS pathways last 2 semesters, for a total of 800/1 000 hours.

IFTS pathways are planned and carried by minimum four educational subjects: school, vocational training, university, enterprise or another public or private subject, formally associated in the form of a consortium.

### **5.1.3 Curriculum**

The higher technical education and training system (ITS courses and IFTS pathways) offer courses aiming mainly to develop professional specialisations at post-secondary level which meet the requirements of the labour market, both in the public and private sectors.

The curricula of both pathways refer to different-level common, linguistic, scientific and technological, juridical and economic, and relational competences as well as to competences related to organisation, and communication, and to technical/vocational competences related to specific higher technical profiles; curricula are developed according to the indicators of the European union certifications and qualifications.

Courses offered by the Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) are aimed at meeting the formative needs throughout the country, referred to the following 6 technological areas: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies in life, new technologies 'made in Italy', innovative technologies for arts and cultural activities, ICT.

IFTS courses, on the contrary, are planned by the Regions within their own exclusive competences.

Each pathway is divided into hours of theoretical, practical and laboratory/workshop work. Pathways destined for employed workers take into account their employment commitments when the timetable is made up and the arrangements for attendance are defined. Company-based training and training courses must cover 30 % of the total length of the courses.

### **5.1.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

For the issue of the relevant certification, courses offered by Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) end up with final assessments of the competences acquired by students. Assessments are carried out by specific boards of examiners made up of representatives of the school, university and vocational training sectors as well as experts belonging to the world of work.

For the issue of the relevant certification by Regions, IFTS pathways end up with final assessments of competences acquired by students. Assessments are carried out by specific boards of examiners made up of representatives of the school, university and vocational training sectors as well as of experts belonging to the world of work. The certification is released by the Regions which establish how the boards of examiners are set up and give general indications both for the final assessment of acquired competences and for the relevant certification, in order to make the certification obtained applicable both at national and European level.

Courses offered by Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) lead to the obtainment of a Diploma of high level technician, while IFTS pathways lead to the obtainment of a Certificate of high level technical specialisation. Both qualifications are accepted to apply for open competitions.

The 'formative credit' acquired in both pathways (ITS courses and IFTS pathways), is the whole of the competences that can be recognised in further training or work experience. Recognition of credits is carried out by the institution which the person applies, taking into account the characteristics of the

course she/he is going to start. The recognition of credits is done: when accessing the courses; throughout the courses to shorten them and facilitate possible shifts to other courses or paths within the whole system; outside the courses, in order to facilitate the partial or total recognition of competences acquired in the world of work, universities and other training systems.

### 5.1.5 Guidance and counselling

Both pathways offer initiatives supporting the attendance and the obtainment of the formative credits, the intermediate and final certification, and helping students enter the labour market.

### 5.1.6 Teachers and trainers

For courses offered by Higher Technical Institutes and IFTS pathways, 50 % of teachers come from the labour market and must have at least five years specific professional experience.

### 5.1.7 Statistics

**Courses financed since 2000 until 2009, subdivided by economic sectors, in the IFTS system**

| Economic sectors   | Number of courses |
|--|-------------------|
| Agriculture  | 275               |
| Industry and handicraft – manufacturing                      | 712               |
| Industry and handicraft – ICT                                | 678               |
| Industry and handicraft – building industry                  | 155               |
| Trade and tourism, transport – Transports                    | 235               |
| Trade and tourism, transports – Tourism                      | 526               |
| Cultural Heritage  | 261               |
| Public and private services of social interest – Environment | 361               |
| Insurance-financial *  | 25                |
| Other courses  | 372               |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>3 600</b>      |

\* The 9 professional figures of this sector have been approved by the Unified Conference on 25 November 2004. Therefore, they are used within regional planning.

Source: Servizio IFTS – *Agenzia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo dell'Autonomia Scolastica* (former INDIRE).

## 5.2 Second-level initial vocational training

Second-level vocational training activities are addressed at those who have obtained an upper secondary school leaving certificate or a first-level qualification in the three year vocational education and training courses (see chapter 4). These students have fulfilled their 'right-duty' to education and training according to former law 296/2006. Second-level courses, offering a qualification and a specialisation in a profession of a specific area, foresee full time attendance in an accredited formative institute, which manages the courses, and a compulsory 'stage'.

Second-level vocational training also includes a professionalizing apprenticeship, which foresees external training (120 hours) or training which takes place in an enterprise; and apprenticeship training aimed at the acquisition of a higher level qualification; due to this combination of job/training, the

apprenticeship is a 'mixed cause' labour contract. The information related to apprenticeship and to its training can be found on the annexed sheet. Regions are responsible for the external training.

Regions are also responsible for the establishment of the post-diploma courses/post-vocational qualification courses; they organise the courses by setting up a regional/provincial call and train professional profiles with a high specialization level to meet the needs of the local professional market. Regions release higher qualification diplomas or, in the case of short courses, an attendance certificate.

In most Regions, courses are financed through the European Social Fund, therefore they are offered free of charge.

### **5.2.1 Admission**

Generally, admission foresees a numerus clausus limitation, as often demand is much higher than the number of available places. Selective procedures based on test or interviews are foreseen; sometimes additional specific requisites are also requested to access the course (for example, a specific upper secondary school certificate).

All information on courses and admission requirements can be obtained by the Education Office of the regional and provincial authorities responsible for the professional training, by the Regional agencies for labour, by the Territorial employment services and through guidance centres.

Generally, the bodies responsible for the organisation of courses publish a participation announcement on the national and local press to specify all the information related to the courses: admission requirements, documents needed for the enrolment, length, course programme, 'stages' in enterprises, attendance allowance, and professional profile acquired at the end of the course.

Foreign students living in the area, where the course is held, and having completed compulsory education in Italy or in the country of origin, also have access to the courses.

### **5.2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue**

Second-level vocational training courses are for those who have obtained an upper secondary school leaving certificate or a first-level qualification, and foresee pathways lasting from 400 to 1200 hours. They are organised into short one-year cycles (400-600 hours); they only rarely last two years and have a high level of planning character related to the specific requirements of the local productive system. Generally, the total amount of hours is defined by the Regions, according to the professional profile to be acquired at the end of the course, according to the specific requirements of the local productive system.

The course programme is diversified at regional and local level, and it is defined by the institute/body managing the course. It can foresee blocks of weekly lessons or lessons distributed over several months to reach the total amount of hours required.

The 'stages' in enterprises constitute an important and compulsory part of the course; enterprises should principally adhere to the project and offer placements to course participants. Distance learning modules are also foreseen.

Generally, according to funds, a maximum number of participants (e.g. 20-23) is established, while a minimum of 12 participants is required to start a course. In case of 'desertion' of some participants from the course, the course itself must be cancelled, if the number of participants is less than 12.

### 5.2.3 Curriculum

Curriculum is defined at regional and local level, because these courses must meet the needs of the local professional area and the requirements of the enterprises.

The curriculum is drawn up by the bodies/institutes offering the courses according to the requested professional profile and competences. These competences are generally divided into basic competences, transversal competencies and professional competences. Basic competences cover the Italian/foreign language competence area, the mathematical and technological competence area and the ICT competence area. The transversal competences generally refer to working in groups, problem solving, entrepreneurship and communication's abilities, which are fundamental for each professional profile. The professional competences refer to the knowledge/competences necessary to develop the profession related to the relevant profile. These latter competences are strengthened during the 'stage', which is both applicative and formative. During the practical training, the 'stage' tutor coordinates the activities and supports the enterprise's 'stage' tutor in programming the educational pathway on the job.

Teachers/trainers are the same for the accredited agencies, responsible for this type of training. These teachers/trainers are employed in the abovementioned agencies and are often experts of vocational training and professional profiles.

Besides class teaching and active workshops, multidisciplinary didactic methodologies are very widespread with theoretic and theoretic/practical contents, and put the acquired relational attitudes in specific professional areas into practice.

The main teaching materials used are teachers' lecture notes.

### 5.2.4 Assessment, progression and certification

Assessment is generally formative, carried out through the traditional assessment modalities (questionnaires, written tests) at the end of one or more learning modules; at the end of the course another assessment takes place (summative assessment) following the final examination. This latter assessment is taken with the teachers of the educational establishment and with representatives of the professional market (experts and trade-union representatives) and the Regions.

Admission to the examination is only allowed to students who attended at least two-thirds of the course.

Students obtain a vocational qualification certificate, which enables entry to the job market or an attendance certificate specifying the competences acquired. The assignment of a final mark is not always compulsory.

These pathways give access to IFTS pathways or to apprenticeships aimed at the obtainment of a high level training qualification. There are no limits as the continuing of any type of higher education/training is concerned (admission to university is allowed only to students in possession of an upper secondary school leaving certificate).

### 5.2.5 Guidance and counselling

See section 4.2.5.

A specific module for guidance to work is often part of the course programme.

## 5.2.6 Teachers and trainers

See section 4.2.6.

## 5.2.7 Statistics

Data refer to post-diploma/post-qualification courses/students in school years 2005/06 and 2006/07. These data are collected through the Regions by ISFOL according to law no. 845/1978.

**Data on courses/students numbers related to the second-level training activities (school year 2005/06 and 2006/07)**

| School year | Number of courses | Number of students |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 2005/06     | 1 964             | 32 849             |
| 2006/07     | 2 304             | 38 856             |

Source: Isfol – Data collected according to law no. 875/1978 (article 20).

### **A focus on Apprenticeship**

The apprenticeship is a 'mixed cause' labour contract, aimed at the obtainment of a vocational qualification. It has been redefined through law no. 196/1997 and has been reformed by law no. 30/2003 and by Legislative decree no. 276/2003. Three different types of apprenticeship are foreseen:

- *Apprenticeship for the fulfilment of the 'right-duty' to education and training: young people who have reached 15 years of age can be employed in every professional area. The length of the labour contract covers at most three years and aims at the obtainment of a vocational qualification (see section 4.2 – First-level initial vocational training);*
- *Professionalizing Apprenticeship: people between 18 and 29 years of age can be employed. According to the qualification type to be obtained, collective agreements establish the length of the labour contract, which can't last less than two years and more than six years. Additionally, an external and internal training part is foreseen (the old legislation – Law no. 196/1997 – foresaw a professionalizing compulsory external training of 120 annual hours);*
- *Apprenticeship aimed at the acquisition of a certificate or apprenticeship linked to high level training: all professional areas can employ people between 18 and 29 years of age for the obtainment of an upper secondary school leaving certificate, university titles and high level training titles, and to have access to the higher-level technical education and training system (IFTS).*

*For all types of apprenticeship, Regions and institutions involved (Ministries, social parts, universities, according to apprenticeship type) are responsible for the definition of the formative profiles. The apprentice's Individual Formative Plan (Piano Formativo Individuale) must be attached to the labour contract. The Individual Formative Plan is a document containing the planning of the formative activities, which will be developed by the apprentice during the labour contract. A tutor with adequate training and competences must follow the apprentice's pathway in the enterprise.*

*In 2007, the highest number of occupied people in apprenticeships is registered in Italy: 638.807 units <sup>(1)</sup>; most of them (84 %) is employed with a professionalizing apprenticeship contract (Legislative Decree no. 276/2003) or with a contract destined for young people with more than 18 years of age (according to previous Law no. 196/1997) in the Regions where the new law hasn't been applied yet. The amount of young people in public training courses in 2007 is higher than that of 2006: 124.262 units, corresponding to 20,7 % employed young people.*

*As for the third type of apprenticeship concerned (high level apprenticeship), which represents a real innovation in Italy, experimentations promoted and financed by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies in accordance with the Regions have been developed. This experimentation has involved a thousand apprentices and has allowed to start up the following formative offer: 49 courses aimed at the acquisition of university Master titles, 7 courses for the obtainment of IFTS certificates, 2 post-qualification high training courses, 2 laurea courses financed for several academic years, 44 available places in pathways aimed at the acquisition of IFTS titles; university titles (60 credits), and university master titles.*

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<sup>(1)</sup> ISFOL, Apprendistato: un sistema plurale. X Rapporto di monitoraggio, 2009 is the source of the data presented by the sheet.

## 6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

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The legal provisions in force for higher education in Italy are set out in Article 33 of the Italian Constitution, which recognises the right of universities and academies to act autonomously within the limits set by the law. Both public and private organisations have the right to establish schools and educational establishments. The higher education system is divided into State and non-State establishments.

The whole higher education sector in Italy underwent a reform process to align itself with the European model outlined through the European agreements (from Sorbonne 1998 to Bergen 2005), which brought to a system subdivided into three separate sectors: university higher education; non-university higher education offered by the Higher level Arts and Music Education system (Afam), and other pathways offered by non-university higher education institutions (the higher technical education and training system – IFTS system, which is part of this third sector, has been described separately in chapter 5).

University management is based on the principles of autonomy and responsibility. Universities have adopted new autonomy statutes which establish their governing bodies as well as their teaching and research structures. Academies and Afam institutes are the principal seats of high level education, specialization and research in the art and music sector. They have statutory legal status and autonomy in regards to the following fields; teaching, scientific, administrative, financial and accounting.

### UNIVERSITY HIGHER EDUCATION

Regulation no. 509 of 3 November 1999 on university autonomy has established the new structure of the Italian university teaching system. Course reform began to be implemented in academic year 2001/02, therefore the old courses existed until being gradually or completely phased out; in some cases, they are however still active.

The reform foresees a new organisation of the courses to obtain the 1st and 2nd cycle qualifications: three-year *laurea* (L) course (1<sup>st</sup> cycle); two-year *laurea specialistica/magistrale* course (2<sup>nd</sup> cycle); first-level *Diploma di specializzazione* courses, whose duration can vary (2<sup>nd</sup> cycle), and first-level *Master universitario* course, lasting at least one year (2<sup>nd</sup> cycle). The 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle offers Research Doctorate courses, lasting three years.

Furthermore, the reform (Regulation no. 509 of 1999) has introduced the CFU (university credits) system, which represents the quantity of learning work required by students: a credit corresponds to 25 hours of study. The average quantity of learning work carried out by a full-time student at the university corresponds conventionally to 60 credits.

The new classes of the *lauree* (L) and of *laurea magistrale* have been laid down at national level for all universities: 43 classes of *laurea* (L) and 100 classes of *laurea magistrale*. At present, a complete list of *laurea* (L) and *laurea specialistica/magistrale* classes is accessible on the national database, and regularly updated on the website <http://offf.miur.it>. Each class includes several *laurea* courses which the universities are free to offer based on various factors. For each course there is a study plan, established by each faculty in its own Statute, setting out the compulsory subjects, the number of examinations students must take and the order in which they must be taken. It also proposes supplementary courses to be selected by the students to complete their individual study plans. Each course may last one year or half a year. It may cover a single subject or be 'integrated' (*corso integrato*), according to the decision of the Faculty Council (*Consiglio di facoltà*). Integrated courses are composed of coordinated modules, which may be given by more than one member of staff. Students finish their study course when they have passed all the examinations listed on the study

plan, have obtained the required number of credits and have presented and discussed their final thesis during an examination.

Overall, the teaching activities cover a certain number of hours, part of which may consist of theoretical lectures and the rest may be composed of seminars, laboratories/workshops, practical exercises, vocational courses and guided study activities.

### **NON-UNIVERSITY HIGHER EDUCATION**

Non-university higher education is governed by Law no. 508 of 21 December 1999, which was implemented by DPR no. 212 of 2005, a regulation governing the definition of the didactic orders of the Higher level arts and music education system (Afam system). This type of education is provided in institutions which have their own particular structures, regulations and organisation. These institutions can generally be subsumed into the following types:

- Afam institutes: 20 State art academies and 26 legally recognised academies, 4 higher institutes for artistic industries (*Istituti superiori per le industrie artistiche* – ISIA), the National Academy of Drama ‘Silvio D’Amico’, 54 Conservatoires, 21 officially recognised music institutes and the National Academy of Dance;
- other institutions which offer non-university higher education courses: National School of Cinema (*Scuola nazionale di cinema*), with its seat in Rome; Central Institute for Restoration (*Istituto centrale del restauro*) with its seat in Rome; School of Restoration of the Mosaic (*Scuola di restauro del mosaico*) managed by the Environment and Architectural Goods Service of Ravenna in collaboration with the Central Institute for Restoration of Rome; the School of the Gemstone Factory (*Scuola dell’Opificio delle pietre dure*) with its seat in Florence; the Schools for the archive systems, palaeography and diplomatic (*Scuola di archivistica, paleografia e diplomatica*), which covers 17 schools at national level; Military academies (*Accademie militari*); Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences (*Istituti superiori di scienze religiose*); Central Institute for the Pathology of Books "Alfonso Gallo" (*Istituto centrale per la patologia del libro*), which is a body of the Ministry of cultural goods and activities, with its seat in Rome; and Foundation for the Preservation and Restoration of Books, which has its seat in Spoleto and which is supported by the European Social Fund.

Only universities and Afam institutes issue officially recognised degrees; other non-university higher education institutions will not be dealt with in this document, as they do not issue certifications equivalent to *lauree*.

Based on Law no. 508/1999 and on DPR no. 212/2005 which has defined the new academic titles and orders of AFAM, institutes that belong to them can offer study courses organised in three cycles. The 1st cycle foresees 3 year courses leading to the first-level *Diploma accademico*, the 2nd cycle foresees two-year courses leading to the second-level *Diploma accademico*, annual courses leading to the *Diploma di perfezionamento* or Master, and courses leading to the Specialisation *Diploma accademico*, whose duration can vary; finally, a 3rd research training cycle is provided.

Ministerial Decrees no. 482 and no. 483 of 22 January 2008 define the new teaching regulations of Academies and Fine Arts Conservatoires respectively.

Academies of Fine Arts (*Accademia di belle arti*) are higher institutes of applied arts, which offer courses in painting, sculpture, decorating and scenery.

Higher institutes for Artistic Industries (*Istituti superiori per le industrie artistiche* – ISIA) are state institutes offering a specific training in the design field (graphic design).



The National Academy of Drama (*Accademia Nazionale d'Arte Drammatica*) offers training courses for theatre actors and directors.

The National Dance Academy (*Accademia nazionale di danza*) is a higher institute of applied arts, whose main purpose is to train dancers, soloists and choreographers.

The Conservatoires (*Conservatori di musica*) are higher institutes of applied arts aimed at the teaching of music.

Non-university higher education institutes offer specialised education in very diverse fields, including courses in restoration, the cinema, archiving, interpreting and translation and training for officers of the armed forces and the police. Courses consist of theoretical lessons that alternate, according to the arrangements and timetabling specific to each establishment, with practical and laboratory/workshop exercises.

As far as Afam is concerned, DPR no. 212 of 2005 has introduced the CA (academic credit) with the same peculiarities described above for CFUs.

## 6.1 Admission

### University higher education

Under the terms of the reform to be accepted for a *laurea* course, students must have an upper secondary school leaving certificate or another diploma which was obtained abroad and has been recognised as acceptable. The two ministerial decrees regarding didactic autonomy (no. 509/1999 and no. 270/2004) stipulate that the teaching regulations of individual universities must also require that students have or acquire adequate initial preparation, and to this end the same regulations must define the knowledge required for access and the arrangements for assessment.

To be accepted for a specialised *laurea*/master's course, students must have the *laurea* degree or a three-year university degree or other study qualification which was obtained abroad and has been recognised as acceptable.

### Non-university higher education

As for the Afam system admission to the courses leading to a first-level *Diploma accademico* requires an upper secondary school leaving certificate. Furthermore, teaching regulations require possession or acquisition of an adequate initial qualification. To this end, teaching regulations establish which knowledge is required for admission and its verification procedures at the conclusion of preparatory formative activities, and those also carried out in collaboration with upper secondary education institutes.

Admission to courses leading to a second-level, a specialization *Diploma accademico*, and to a *Diploma di perfezionamento* or Master requires a *laurea* (L) or a first-level *Diploma accademico*, or another equivalent qualification obtained abroad.

Access to the other non university higher education institutes is allowed upon attainment of an upper secondary school leaving certificate and through admission exams. This is due to the limited number of available posts established on an annual basis. In some cases, the possession of the requirements of a previous training is necessary and it allows the admission exams to be avoided.

## 6.2 Students' contributions and financial support

### University higher education

All students must pay matriculation fees based on family income and assets and the regional tax for the right to study, introduced by Law no. 549 of 1995 in order to provide grants and loans. Each university is free to set the number of students to be exempted from paying these fees based on their merit and income. Furthermore, students may receive financial assistance in the form of study grants and interest-free loans or in the form of services such as free board and lodging.

Generally speaking, books and teaching materials are paid for by the students themselves.

### Non-university higher education

Admission is not free of charge, and, generally speaking, the amount of the fee is set by each institute.

The State provides financial support in the form of student grants, which are very limited in number. Certain 'weak' categories are also exempted from the payment of fees.

In general, the students pay for their textbooks, but the cost of the materials used for the exercises and theses is paid by the establishment.

## 6.3 Organisation of the academic year

In general, the academic year starts on the 1st of November and ends on the 31st of October of the following year; each faculty actually establishes the organisation of its academic year.

The national legislation on the subject of university autonomy establishes that teaching regulations of each university and teaching regulations of the study courses should regulate the organisation of all teaching activities. In particular, according to Law, such regulations which should be approved beforehand by the Ministry lay down the procedures, for instance, to carry out exams, etc.

## 6.4 Assessment, progression and certification

### University higher education

Every course listed in the study plan entails passing a special examination, the *esame di profitto*. This examination may consist of written, practical and oral tests. The assessment of candidates is out of 30, and the minimum grade to pass an examination is 18/30.

Within certain limits, students may take examinations when they wish and may retake any number of further examinations if they fail. This means that the total length of studies is usually prolonged.

According to reform (Regulation no. 509 of 1999), universities release the following qualifications:

- *Laurea* (1<sup>st</sup> cycle qualification) obtained at the end of a three-year course (corresponding to 180 CFU);
- *Laurea specialistica/magistrale* (2nd cycle qualification) obtained at the end of a two-years course (120 CFU);
- First level Master *universitario* (2nd cycle qualification) obtained at the end of an annual course (60 CFU);
- First level *Diploma di specializzazione* (2nd cycle qualification), which has a variable length;

- Research Doctorate (3rd cycle qualification) obtained at the end of a three year course.

To obtain the *laurea* or specialised *laurea*/master, students must discuss a report which they have submitted to the examining board or present a written paper on the training course and/or work in the laboratory/workshop, based on the university regulations. The final grade takes account of the average of the marks awarded for previous examinations and the quality of the thesis. The minimum pass mark is 66 out of 110. The maximum mark is 110 (cum laude).

### **Non-university higher education**

Each institute through its own didactic regulations sets the assessment criteria (either continuous or final). The teachers play a pivotal role in the assessment process.

According to the reform legislation, the Afam institutes award the following qualifications: academic diploma level I reached at the end of the relative course and with the acquisition of at least 180 academic credits (3 years) and academic diploma level II or specialised (2 years); an academic specialisation diploma obtained at the end of the course; a minimum number of credits is not obtained; and finally, a Master's diploma which is obtained at the end of the course and the acquisition of at least 60 academic credits (at least one year).

For each course a duration in years is defined, in proportion to the total number of credits, with 60 academic credits usually corresponding to one year.

## **6.5 Guidance and counselling**

### **University higher education**

Guidance in higher education is actually based on 4 fundamental phases:

- In the first phase guidance activities are carried out at the level of upper secondary education leading to the so called pre-enrolment in the University (not compulsory);
- In the second phase, when students enrol and begin to attend University, the contribution of teachers, tutors and older colleagues of the different faculties is fundamental;
- In the third phase educational support is provided to progress in the selected branch of study, as well as in case of change of faculty and training stages;
- In the fourth phase vocational guidance is provided to know which possible future work opportunities exist.

Ministerial Decree no. 509/1999 provided for the inclusion of guidance within formative activities that should be foreseen by the teaching regulations of the universities.

### **Non-university higher education**

It is not possible to provide a single description of the procedures that each institute applies to facilitate the access of its students to the labour market, mostly because these are not institutionalised in most cases and depend on the type of profession taught in each institute.

## 6.6 Academic staff

### University higher education

After an intense debate within the universities, Law no. 230 of 4 November 2005 came into force. This reorganised university teaching. Some of the main characteristics are: the introduction of a new recruiting system of university professors which stipulates a suitable national set up as presupposed by the universities' requirement, the introduction of researchers on fixed contracts, the possibility of transfer to associate professor for researchers, research agreements with businesses or foreign organisations, etc.

The teaching staff in higher education is divided into the following categories: permanent teachers, subdivided into first-band lecturers (*professori di prima fascia*), also called *ordinari*, and second-band lecturers (*professori di seconda fascia*), also called *associati*, researchers, contract lecturers (*professori a contratto*) and linguistic experts teaching their mother tongue and exchange lecturers.

University lecturers, especially those of the first and second bands, have always enjoyed a special legal status guaranteeing their freedom of teaching. As a result, they cannot be removed from their post and have considerable didactic freedom and scope for research but they do have the duty to ensure their presence for no less than 250 hours a year for teaching activities, including participation in examination and degree boards.

After three years of teaching, foreign first band teachers, associate professors and researchers must undergo assessment in order to be confirmed in their post.

Each lecturer and researcher may choose between full-time and part-time status. The former cannot be combined with any freelance activity, but they can apply for internal university posts such as the Rectorate. The latter status permits the holder to engage in professional activities but cannot be combined with positions of responsibility within the university.

No in-service training is required for university lecturers.

### Non-university higher education

There is a special system of recruitment for tenured and non-tenured teaching staff. In particular, vocational education is given by well-known personalities. The staff enjoy a legal status which is different from that of their counterparts in non-university education.

## 6.7 Statistics

### Enrolled students at the University – Academic year 2007/08

|   | Total     | Women (out of the total) |
|---|-----------|--------------------------|
| Enrolled students                           | 1 809 192 | 57.0 %                   |
| Enrolled foreign students                   | 51 803    | 59.0 %                   |
| Students enrolled in the first year         | 307 426   | 55.9 %                   |
| Foreign students enrolled in the first year | 11 500    | 61.0 %                   |
| Graduates (year 2007)                       | 299 026   | 57.5 %                   |

Source: Miur – Statistical Service.

**University teachers – Academic year 2007/08**

|                             |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| <i>professori ordinari</i>  | 18 929 |
| <i>professori associati</i> | 18 256 |
| Researchers                 | 25 583 |
| Total                       | 62 768 |

Source: Miur – Statistical Service.

**Higher level arts and music education system (Afam system) – Academic year 2008/09**

|                                 | Total  | Women (out of the total) |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| Enrolled students               | 70 631 | 38 463                   |
| Students who obtained a diploma | 10 023 | 5 704                    |
| Teachers                        | 10 423 | 3 462                    |

Source: Miur – Statistical Service.

## 7. ADULT EDUCATION AND CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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There are two systems that provide adult education (*Istruzione degli adulti* – IdA). The first falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, University and Research. The second, which provides continuing vocational training (*Formazione Professionale Continua* – FPC) for adult workers, falls under the responsibility of regional and local authorities, of social partners and of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies.

### 7.1 Adult education

Adult education is offered by Permanent Territorial Centres (*Centri Territoriali Permanenti* – CTP) and by evening classes (*Corsi serali*) at upper secondary schools.

#### 7.1.1 Policy and legislative framework

Pursuant to art. 5 of Law no. 53 of 8 March 2000, employees who work for public or private employers and who have worked for at least five years in the same company can request a suspension of the employment contract for training leave. This period cannot exceed 11 months throughout the worker's entire working life. Training leave is defined as training which is undertaken to complete compulsory education, to obtain an upper secondary school leaving certificate, to obtain a *laurea* degree or to participate in training activities other than those offered by or financed by the employer. During the period of training leave, the employee keeps his post but is not entitled to receive a salary. The employer can refuse the training leave if he can demonstrate that there are administrative constraints.

Art. 6 of the same law stipulates that workers (employed or otherwise) are entitled to follow training courses throughout their life to upgrade their knowledge and vocational skills. The State, the Regions and the local authorities provide training tailored to the territory under the terms of art. 17 of Law no. 196 of 24 June 1997. The training offered must include personalised courses which are certified and recognised as giving training credits at national and European level. The type of training can be selected independently by the worker or provided by the company in the form of company-based or territorial training plans agreed with the social partners. The national and decentralised collective sectoral agreement defines the number of hours to be devoted to leave, the criteria for the selection of workers and the arrangements for working hours and salaries connected with participation in the training courses.

Under the terms of Ministerial Orders no. 455 (Adult education – instruction and training) and no. 456 (Adult education – instruction and training in primary and lower secondary school) of July 1997, the then Ministry of Education carried out a radical renewal of the structure of services offered by creating Permanent Territorial Centres for adult education which are normally set up in provincial capitals and, in any case, in places where the demand for ongoing adult training exceeds a certain threshold.

Two Ministerial circulars (no. 7809/1990 and no. 305/1997) establish the organisation of evening classes.

The Agreement of 2 March 2000 between the Government, the Regions, the Province, the Municipalities and the mountain communities to reorganise and upgrade ongoing education for adults and the subsequent directive 22 of February 2001 for the implementation of this agreement outlined the priority objectives and defined the forms of intervention. The abovementioned Agreement specifies that the evening classes, together with the CTP, are 'another barycentre of Adult education activities, able to meet the cultural and training requirements of those who have accomplished compulsory education'.

Reform law 53/2003 introduced 'lifelong learning' among the principles and directive criteria of the education and training system. For its implementation, the reform law provided a programmatic plan to fund interventions for adult education.

The State-Regions unified Conference of 28 October 2004 has ratified an agreement for the certification of competences and the recognition of formative credits.

The system of adult education (IdA) is currently under reform. The reform process started with the Ministerial Decree of 25th October 2007 that has established the Provincial centres for adult education (*Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti – CPIA*). These centres have teaching autonomy and their own staff. Courses are aimed at: obtaining the first cycle of education leaving certificate (primary and lower secondary education); obtaining the certifications required for the fulfilment of compulsory education; obtaining the upper secondary school leaving certificate; functional literacy and literacy for immigrants. The reform involves both courses run by Permanent Territorial Centres and evening courses. A recent note from the Ministry of 22 April 2009 confirms that the structure and the teaching as well as the management of the Provincial centres of adult education, is an integral part of the whole structure of the upper secondary education level. The same document establishes that the revision and reorganisation of the system will start from the school year 2010/11.

## **7.1.2 Distribution of responsibilities**

The general adult education system can be subsumed into the following institutional levels:

### **National level**

The functions connected with the integration of the systems are entrusted to a joint committee on which there are representatives of the Ministry of Education, University and Research, of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Regional Representation Body, the local authorities and the social partners. This committee must have established links with the National Committee for Higher Technical Education and Training (the IFTS) to ensure the necessary coherence of the system integration initiatives. These functions are primarily aimed at setting strategic priorities, defining general guidelines and the available resources, setting criteria for the allocation of resources, defining the guidelines for the setting of standards, for monitoring and for assessment and defining the arrangements for the certification and recognition of the credits awarded.

### **Regional level**

The planning and curricula of the integrated training courses offered to adults are the responsibility of the Regions under the terms of art. 138 of the Legislative Decree of 1998. The Regions set up a regional committee made up of regional council members, representatives of the local authorities, the representative of the regional education department and the social partners, according to arrangements similar to those required at national level. This committee decides on the actions to be taken to promote adult education, defines the criteria for the implementation of the actions on its own territory (based on knowledge of the local vocational and training needs), defines the overall framework of available resources for the integrated system of adult education and sets the criteria and arrangements for monitoring and assessment. In addition, the Regions promote the matching of adult education plans with development and employment policies. In consultation with the local authorities, the Regions also define the criteria for the identification of the territorial scope of the local committees and the deployment of the territorial centres.

## Local level

The Province assists the Region in defining the selection of adult education programmes, outlines the guidelines for territorial planning, arranges the supra-municipal information and advertising services and helps monitor the provincial-level system based on information received from the regional level.

The Municipalities and the mountain communities lend support to the Regions and the Province in selecting adult education programmes, arrange for the monitoring and analysis of the training and vocational needs that emerge within the territory, arrange (in consultation with the local committees) the shared use of the available resources, promote initiatives within the framework of adult education, assist in defining pilot projects (based on the territorial priorities), promote the implementation and coordination of all the opportunities present at territorial level (to ensure integrated functioning of the system), organise initiatives geared towards providing information and guidance to users on the different opportunities and, finally, set up the local committees.

The local committees, which are made up of representatives of the municipalities and of the mountain communities, organise the integrated training courses offered to adults. To do this, they take into account the criteria defined at regional level, the activities to be implemented on their own territory (based on an analysis of the local vocational and training needs) and frame proposals for the overall calendar of training courses and proposals concerning the setting-up of territorial centres and the deployment of the centres. The local committees are chaired by representatives of the Municipalities and of the mountain communities and are made up of representatives of the regional education offices, the Province, the Municipalities, the mountain communities and the social partners and representatives of the training agencies operating in the field of non-formal education.

### 7.1.3 Financing

The adult education system (Territorial Permanent Centres and evening classes) is financially supported by resources allocated by the State, the Regions, the local authorities and a number of public and private agencies, possibly with the addition of other resources allocated by the European Union.

No payment of fees is required for enrolment and attendance in Permanent Territorial Centres (generally, fees are not required for the attendance of formal courses, i.e. courses issuing a certification, while the attendance of short and modular courses foresees an enrolment fee. The possibility of self-financing is related to school autonomy).

As far as evening classes are concerned, fees are generally equal to those foreseen for diurnal courses.

### 7.1.4 Programmes and providers

Adult education within the school system provides for the creation of Permanent Territorial Centres for adult education and training. These centres are designed to serve as points where adult education and training can be organised on the basis of needs, planning, consultation and the implementation and management of initiatives and where documentation can be gathered and disseminated.

Evening classes aim at strengthening and extending basic skills. The Permanent Territorial Centres co-ordinate education and training offers on the territory, together with other formative agencies; the MIUR Regional School Offices set up the Centres and, in order to favour the users, the activities can also be distributed outside the schools, in different seats. From an administrative point of view, every CTP depends on a school. The school manager of the school appoints the CTP co-ordinator.



The evening classes set up at the upper secondary schools foresee the following: flexible pathways which exploit the students' experiences; modular subdivisions concerning teaching time, school time and grouping of pupils per level.

All adults, over the age of 16 (compulsory education lasts until 16 years of age) who do not hold a first cycle of education leaving certificate as well as adults who, although in possession of that certificate, intend to go back to education and training can participate in the activities of the Permanent Territorial Centres. Admission to evening classes is restricted to: holders of a lower secondary school leaving certificate; those who have obtained a study title obtained in state institutes or legally recognised institutes (formal credits); those who have work experience or have carried out personal studies consistent with their study branch (non formal credits). In the first case, the recognition of the study title is automatic; otherwise assessment is required on the basis of specific verifications.

The educational offer of the Permanent Territorial Centres refers to the following courses: courses of the first cycle of education (courses of cultural alphabetisation for primary school with final assessment and courses of lower secondary education with state exam; 150 teaching hours); courses for foreign citizens for their linguistic and social integration, and short and modular courses as well as courses of functional alphabetisation.

The educational offer of the evening courses is considerably diversified. The most attended study pathways are offered by technical institutes and vocational institutes.

At compulsory education level no subject assessment is foreseen, neither during the school year, nor during the examination; only the actual cultural level of students at the beginning and at the end of their study course is taken into account.

As far as certification is concerned, the Permanent Territorial Centres issue the following: first cycle of education leaving certificate (at the end of lower secondary school courses followed by the relevant State exam); certifications of participation in short and modular courses for functional literacy aimed at foreign citizens; certifications for the recognition of credits valid for attending evening courses for the obtainment of the upper secondary school leaving certificate and/or vocational qualification diploma. The evening courses (upper secondary schools organising evening classes) issue the following: upper secondary school leaving certificate and vocational qualification diploma.

### **7.1.5 Quality assurance**

A national technical committee has been set up within the Ministry of Education, University and Research with the responsibility for the orientation, monitoring, support and assessment of adult education and training actions. Based on the information supplied by the national technical committee, the Ministry monitors the innovations introduced and ensures the necessary assistance and the dissemination of documentation.

### **7.1.6 Guidance and counselling**

Directive no. 455 of 1997 stipulates that the interviewing of students, the analysis of their individual needs and individual tutoring and assessment are the responsibility of the teachers, in cooperation with the other staff of the centre.

### **7.1.7 Teachers and trainers**

The Permanent Territorial Centres' teachers are part of the teaching staff of the relevant state schools. The permanent staff of each Centre is composed of 5 teachers assigned to the following 4 areas:

literary subjects area (2 teachers); mathematics area (1 teacher); foreign languages area (1 teacher); technologies area (1 teacher).

The permanent staff of evening classes depends on the types of courses started up. The tutoring function is carried out by one of the teachers of the Class council. In particular, tutors help students with difficulties referred to, for example, their integration into the school system.

### 7.1.8 Statistics

#### Courses leading to the final qualification offered by Permanent Territorial Centres – 2007/08

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Cultural literacy courses – primary school with final evaluation |        |
| Number of courses  | 2 102  |
| Number of students enrolled                                      | 43 531 |
| Lower secondary school courses with state exam – 150 hours       |        |
| Number of courses  | 2 111  |
| Number of students enrolled                                      | 42 310 |

#### Evening courses' offer

| Evening courses   | Students enrolled |
|---|-------------------|
| Courses offered by Permanent Territorial Centres          | 6.642             |
| Courses offered by upper secondary schools, divided into: | 77.509            |
| Technical institutes                                      | 47.011            |
| Vocational institutes                                     | 27.033            |
| <i>Licei</i>  | 1.710             |
| Other   | 1.755             |

Source: National monitoring of the educational offer for adults provided by the CTP and upper secondary schools running evening courses for school year 2007/08, carried out by the National agency for the development of the school autonomy, on behalf of the Directorate General for Higher technical education and training and of the relations with Training Systems (statistical data can be consulted on the Adult education portal, at the following Internet address: [www.indire.it/ida](http://www.indire.it/ida)).

## 7.2 Continuing vocational education and training

### 7.2.1 Policy and legislative framework

The notion of continuing vocational training confirmed in Italy includes all the training activities making up (or permitting) training courses for knowledge and competences which follow initial training and which are distinct from it. In recent years efforts have been intensified to consider continuing training as a fundamental component of lifelong learning policies, connected with learning as a strategy for developing a knowledge-based competitive economy, focusing on people as citizens and workers. There is still not a complete and coherent legislative framework.

In Italy, continuing vocational training has been regulated through specific legislation starting from the early 90s. In the last decades legislation has further developed and this has led to new policies (Joint Professional Funds for continuing vocational training) managed by social partners. However, these policies apparently haven't been able to adequately answer the requests coming from the production and labour world. Different initiatives aimed at reforming the system and promoting the right to lifelong learning have been discussed in the Parliament for years, without being transformed into law. The

definition of an intervention strategy, involving different economic and institutional subjects interested in the development of the system (Ministry of Labour, Regions, Provinces, social partners) is also under debate.

Legislation is based on three Agreements, signed in the 90s between the government and social partners:

- the tripartite agreement of 23 July 1993 on the cost of work which has among other things defined the institutional aspect of the continuing vocational training system and which has laid the basis for the launch of the national law 236/93;
- the tripartite agreement 25 September 1996, culminating in the Law 196/97 (so called 'Treu package'), which indicated the general objectives of the reform of the continuing vocational training system;
- the agreement of 22 December 1998, specifying the characteristics of the system.

Thanks to the ESF (European Social Fund) it was possible to realise the first intervention for the development of continuing training, in particular through Objective 4 (1994-1999 programming period). Based on the first results of ESF, in 1996 the Ministry of labour, together with the Regions and social partners, built the experimentation of the national policy on continuing training by using financial resources according to art. 9 of law 236/1993. Afterwards, law 144/1999 and law 53/2000 (the latter recognises the right to paid leave for training purposes) were introduced together with the Joint Interprofessional Funds for continuing training (set by law 388/2000, as modified through art. 48 of law 289/2002).

At present, different policies coexist: policies at national level for supporting continuing training, policies developed by social partners and policies acknowledging European trends. Within these policies, several experimentations have started up, however only law 53/2003 supports the right to lifelong learning by also foreseeing the leave for training purposes for workers.

The need to recognise the competences acquired in the work place is a theme that has been debated for years, but companies have paid it little attention. This, for example, is valid for the introduction of the 'citizen's training booklet' (Legislative Decree no. 276 of 10 September 2003 implementing the Law no. 30 of 2003) which is the worker's personal booklet which records the competences acquired during apprenticeship training, placement contract specialist training and the continuing training performed during working life and carried out by Region accredited agents as well as the competences acquired formally and informally according to the directions of the European Union regarding permanent apprenticeship, as long as they are recognised and certified.

The DM 174 of 31 May 2001 regarding the certification of skills, in receiving the conclusions of the State-Region Agreement 18 February 2000 formalised the *Libretto Formativo* (Citizen's training booklet) defining it as a tool to report certifications of skills based on minimum homogeneity standards used throughout the national territory. Various elaborations and agreements have arisen from the provisions of the cited DM and pursuant to the approval of the Constitutional Law no. 3 of 18 October 2001. These include those signed by the Regions and Social Partners on 1 August 2002 on national standards of skills and certification. The objective at the base of this process is to realise a national skills certification system based on identifying homogenous standards to read the various training courses. While respecting the subsidiarity principle this will provide transparency and transferability of skills in a national and European context.

Still, statistical surveys (e.g. Continuing Vocational Training Survey – CVTS3 or Isfol INDACO-Businesses) reveal that two out of three businesses that offer their employees training do not use an evaluation system. The most frequently used evaluation system is to verify that acquired competences

are used at the work place, then to verify the improvement in operational services, tests to verify the acquired competences, the individual exam/interview and balance/analysis of the competences. Only in a few cases are the acquired competences certified.

## 7.2.2 Distribution of responsibilities

Most of the funds for continuing training come from private sources, either companies or workers themselves. Public or social partners participation is limited and does not affect private choices, which rarely refer to groups of the same sector.

The national policy for supporting continuing training (law 236/1996 and 53/2000) and the policy referring to the ESF fall under the responsibility of: Ministry of Labour and social policies (Directorate General for guidance and training policies), and for national coordination: Regional administrative authorities or delegated provincial administrative authorities. If applicable, implementation and coordination (financing included) is done at local level. However, an important role in the allocation of resources at sectoral and local level is also played by social partners (through participation in the Guidance Committee of law 236/1993 and in possible consultations at local level).

The Joint Interprofessional Funds for continuing training, which are a sort of Sectoral Training Fund, are managed directly (and solely) by the social partners, and are supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, which is also responsible for the monitoring of initiatives. The Funds are set up as associations according to the Interconfederal agreement signed between the social partners. At present, there are 18 registered Funds. The establishment of an Observatory for continuing training is foreseen by law no. 289/2002, which will have tasks related to programming and coordination of policies; this Observatory has not yet come into force however.

The extreme waste of competences does not help the system's efficiency, while overlapping cases between Joint Interprofessional Funds, FSE and law no. 236/1993 are most widespread. For this reason, it is necessary to define a coordinated and integrated intervention strategy between the economical and institutional actors that are interested in the system's development (Ministry of Labour, Regions, Provinces and social partners). For this purpose, a national agreement (2007) and some agreements at regional level (only 5 regional agreements have been stipulated until now) among the diverse economical and institutional actors at various level have been reached.

## 7.2.3 Financing

The continuing training system is financially substituted by resources made available to the State, the Regions, public and private parties, to be integrated if necessary with other resources made available by the European Union. This type of financing system is not widespread, because most of the continuing training initiatives are financed directly by the economical and social actors (mainly enterprises and workers) through private choices.

The main instruments supporting continuing training currently operating in Italy are the following:

1. the European Social Fund 2007-2013 (effective since 1994);
2. national Law 236/93, which set up a fund for vocational training (effective since 1996);
3. national Law 53/00 (effective since 2001);
4. Interprofessional Equal Funds for continuing training, a kind of Sectoral Training Funds, managed directly by social partners, set up in 2001 and which became operative as of 2004.

As for the two national instruments (Law 236/93 and Law 53/00), the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies allocates the resources among the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces and distributes the funds to them, and they in turn issue notices and invitations to tender.

Regarding resources made available by the Joint Interprofessional Funds, they themselves are responsible for directly issuing the notices and invitations to tender. The funds finance company, sectorial, territorial and individual training plans to benefit the member companies.

In Italy, the funds attributed to continuing training mainly derive from the obligatory contribution of enterprises to the INPS (national welfare institute). These financial resources are drawn from the annual yield of the contribution of 0.30 % of business's contributions to the INPS as contribution for obligatory insurance against involuntary unemployment. Exemptions are represented by funds ex lege no. 144/1999 and no. 53/2003.

#### **7.2.4 Programmes and providers**

Continuing training activities in Italy are implemented by a variety of agencies and institutions. These can generally be subsumed into three main categories:

- companies and organisations (public and private) which lay on training activities for their own staff, consortia of companies, etc;
- training agencies and bodies (accredited or otherwise as stipulated by Decree 166/2001), consultancy firms, bilateral bodies and other agencies, i.e. the social partners, industrial trade associations operating in categories or sectors, consultancy firms linked to the industrial districts or to the local productive systems or to the territorial agreements, professional associations, professional bodies, technology supply companies, etc;
- institutional-type bodies (universities, job centres, permanent territorial centres, schools, etc.). The role of public universities has recently been implemented; they have indeed instituted a national network (promoted by ISFOL) composed of centres set-up for continuing education.

Generally, the intended recipients of continuing training interventions financed through support policies are employed workers. Specific criteria relative to other categories identified from time to time (free lance workers, semi subordinates in integration semi-subordinates, in layoff fund, over 50 year olds, small business employees, low-skilled employees etc.) are stipulated in the single proclamations and regional notices of the ESF, of the Law 236/93 and 53/00 as well as Interprofessional Funds. (For an up to date reading see [www.eformazionecontinua.it](http://www.eformazionecontinua.it)).

In consequence of the present economic recession, some non structural interventions have been issued (for instance, law no. 2/2009), with the aim of strengthening the social protection of persons employed by enterprises in financial crisis, also through mixed interventions (training and integration to the income).

A reform of the whole system has not yet been issued; for this reason it is necessary at present to use different available instruments to obtain different objectives and target groups which can be summarised as follows:

- The European Social Fund in the course of programming 2000-2006 intended to sustain the adaptability of workers and processes for anticipating and managing change, mainly through providing training and organisational development interventions of companies, but with particular attention to creating equity type benefits directly for workers, prioritising SMEs. This objective was taken up and subsequently broadened with the 2007-2013 programming;

- In the first ten years of activity the national Law 236/93 financed company training interventions and could try individual training interventions and the training plans agreed by the social partners on a company, sectorial and territorial level. Since 2003, the Law 236/93 has undergone a revision of the standards for using financial resources. With the new implementing decrees the support for the bands of workers occupying 'weak' professional positions, generally not favoured by continuing training initiatives, tend to favour the targets of younger workers who are already sufficiently secularised;
- The national Law 53/00 recognises the general right to training throughout life and to this end finances training leave connected with remodelling working timetables;
- The Interprofessional Equal Funds for continuing training acts directly in favour of the member companies promoting the updating of employees' competences and the organisational development in order to increase the companies' competitiveness.

Still, these objectives have been adjusted as the interventions have been put into practice. For example, thanks to the experiments performed with the Law 236/98 starting from 1998 individual training has been introduced in Italy whereby the single individual worker is the direct beneficiary of the financing (supplied through vouchers). Further, starting from 2003, Law 236/93 has undergone a revision of the criteria for using the financial resources which has reinforced the support for the groups of workers in 'weak' professional positions. In this sense a new Law 236/93, with 'social' type objectives has been discussed.

As a rule there are no principles for time and place organisation. The available statistical data (Istat-CVTS, Isfol INDACO-businesses) show that on average a worker participates in about 26 hours of training courses and that a large part of training activity is carried out within working contexts. Therefore it is during working time, and is mainly comprised of blended and informal procedures. One part of the training activities, especially financed activities, is carried out outside the work environment or partly within and partly outside working time.

The main business training themes (whether financed by public resources or not) are the acquisition of new personal abilities, which are also aimed at better knowledge of the worker's own work context, business management, IT, production techniques and technologies, environmental themes, work health and safety.

Regarding training activities financed by the Law 236/93, the main theme in the last few years has been organisational innovation, followed by quality, technological innovation and safety in the work place and in the environment.

### **7.2.5 Quality assurance**

For the time being, there is no quality control of the programmes of continuing training courses.

In Italy, the standards used for the assessment of the quality of the training system and the related quality assurance mechanisms are implemented through a special institute for the accreditation of training centres (Decree 166/2001).

The accreditation of vocational training activities is granted according to the following three broad types:

- Compulsory training: this includes courses provided in the vocational training system and in the context of apprenticeships;
- Advanced training: this includes post-compulsory training, advanced technical instruction, high-level training for courses during and after university;

- Continuing training intended for persons who work in CIG schemes (*Cassa Integrazione Guadagni*) and mobility schemes, unemployed persons who require training in preparation for employment, and apprentices who have completed compulsory training.

To be accredited, the training centres of public or private bodies must provide certain guarantees based on the following criteria: managerial and logistics capacities; economic situation; vocational skills; levels of effectiveness and efficiency in previous activities; long-standing relations with the social and productive system in the area.

The accredited training centres must offer services to users of all kinds and must provide the following:

- information on training and job opportunities;
- guidance in the techniques and strategies involved in looking for work, the new forms of work available and the labour market;
- individualised guidance aimed at helping trainees discover their attitudes, interests and motivations with a view to defining their own career plan.

The Regions and the Autonomous Provinces are responsible for accreditation. They must carry out a preliminary investigation to assess the documentation produced. This investigation, which is carried out on site, involves assessing conformity and operationality according to the set requirements.

This procedure also involves an annual assessment to verify that the relevant requirements have been maintained. In the event of any unsatisfactory findings, the accreditation can be suspended or withdrawn.

## **7.2.6 Guidance and counselling**

There are no structured consultancy and guidance services for occupied adults, with the exception of any that may be provided by Job Centres (which offer guidance interviews and, sometimes, the updating of their competences) by structures provided in the industrial districts and in some cases, by companies. At present, ISFOL is carrying out a census at national level on the existing guidance offered and is conducting an analysis of counselling demand.

## **7.2.7 Teachers and trainers**

Generally speaking there are not any specific regulations aimed at identifying the professional resources to be used for continuing training or to ensure the quality of training for the trainers involved in continuing training, as minimum qualification requirements.

Law 236/93 has financed training courses for trainers (vocational retraining and re-skilling actions for workers in bodies operating under Law 40/87).

The bodies concerned by this financing facility are those which the Ministry of Labour, in the meaning of Law 40/87, provides contributions for the general administrative expenses relating to the needs for operational coordination at national level which are not covered by regional funds. This category includes private national bodies which operate in more than one region and which are set up by the national organisations for salaried workers, the self-employed, entrepreneurs, training and social associations or associations of companies and their consortia or bodies within the cooperative movement. These bodies must also apply the national contract for sectoral workers and publish the annual balance sheet for each centre, and they must not pursue profit-making aims.

## 7.2.8 Statistics

Training enterprises as a percentage of all enterprises (enterprises with 10 employees and more), by sector of economic activity and type of training provided. Italy, year 2005 (%)

| Economic activity sector (Ateco 2002)   | Training enterprises | Enterprises providing Continuing Vocational Training courses | Enterprises providing other forms of training |
|---|----------------------|--|---|
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>32.2</b>          | <b>26.8</b>  | <b>20.0</b>                                   |
| Mining and quarrying  | 26.7                 | 21.9   | 16.1  |
| Manufacture of food products, beverages and tobacco   | 30.7                 | 24.9   | 17.1  |
| Manufacture of textiles and textile products; Manufacture of leather and leather products   | 13.2                 | 8.8  | 7.7   |
| Manufacture of wood and wood products; manufacturing – n.e.c.   | 22.0                 | 17.3   | 13.0  |
| Manufacture of pulp, paper and paper products   | 29.1                 | 22.8   | 18.0  |
| Publishing and printing   | 27.9                 | 21.2   | 14.4  |
| Manufacture of coke, refined petroleum products and nuclear fuel; manufacture of chemicals, chemical products and man-made fibres                     | 59.4                 | 53.1   | 48.3  |
| Manufacture of rubber and plastic products; manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products  | 32.0                 | 26.1   | 19.2  |
| Manufacture of basic metals and fabricated metal products   | 28.3                 | 23.2   | 16.6  |
| Manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c.   | 36.8                 | 32.8   | 22.0  |
| Manufacture of electrical and optical equipment   | 36.1                 | 31.4   | 24.0  |
| Manufacture of transport equipment  | 38.7                 | 34.0   | 24.8  |
| Electricity, gas and water supply   | 69.3                 | 67.3   | 49.5  |
| Construction  | 36.7                 | 31.2   | 20.3  |
| Sale, maintenance and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; retail sale of automotive fuel  | 51.2                 | 47.4   | 32.6  |
| Wholesale trade and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles  | 33.0                 | 28.3   | 20.3  |
| Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles; repair of personal and household goods  | 21.8                 | 18.0   | 12.0  |
| Hotels and restaurants  | 14.0                 | 11.3   | 7.3   |
| Land transport; transport via pipelines; water transport; air transport; supporting and auxiliary transport activities; activities of travel agencies | 35.5                 | 28.4   | 22.8  |
| Post and telecommunications   | 42.4                 | 37.8   | 29.8  |



|  |      |      |      |
|--|------|------|------|
| Financial intermediation, except insurance and pension funding;  | 89.1 | 85.2 | 70.9 |
| insurance and pension funding, except compulsory social security | 95.6 | 89.9 | 76.6 |
| Activities auxiliary to financial intermediation                 | 50.8 | 37.2 | 39.6 |
| Estate, renting and research services                            | 37.8 | 33.5 | 25.3 |
| Informatics and related activities                               | 56.9 | 47.6 | 43.9 |
| Legal counselling, accountability and management                 | 50.3 | 38.0 | 35.0 |
| Technical services and advertising                               | 59.2 | 49.1 | 45.1 |
| Other business activities  | 38.0 | 28.9 | 25.3 |
| Other service activities   | 46.2 | 17.6 | 14.5 |

Source: Istat. Rilevazione sulla formazione professionale nelle imprese (CVTS IT). 2005. Data has been processed by Isfol.

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<http://www.pubblica.istruzione.it>

<http://www.miur.it>

#### **Ministero del Lavoro. Salute e Politiche Sociali**

<http://www.lavoro.gov.it/lavoro/>

#### **Agenzia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo dell'Autonomia Scolastica**

<http://www.indire.it>

#### **Invalsi**

<http://www.invalsi.it>

#### **Isfol**

<http://www.isfol.it>

<http://www.ricercheformazione.it>

#### **Education. Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA P9 Eurydice)**

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education>

#### **CEDEFOP**

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu>