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MINISTERO DEL LAVORO
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FIRST ITALIAN REFERENCING
REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN
QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
EQF

ISFOL
ISTITUTO PER LO SVILUPPO DELLA
FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE
DEI LAVORATORI



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The series is edited by Isabella Pitoni, responsible for the ISFOL Communication and valorisation department.



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This Report describes the Italian Referencing process to the EQF, as required by the Recommendation of April 23rd 2008 of the European Commission. The Report, elaborated by a technical team of experts, is the result of close cooperation with the Regions, namely with their Technical Coordination Group, and social partners.

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Introduction

The European process for transparency and the EQF

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF), established by the Recommendation of April 23rd 2008, represents an important step within the process started by the Lisbon Council in March 2000.

Following the need to tackle new problems - rapid economic, social and technological changes, the increasing need of updating workers' competencies - European countries decided to develop their education and training systems in order to enhance the competitiveness of Europe. The Lisbon Council promoted close cooperation between Member States in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET). The cooperation between Member States highlights a complex and multifaceted scenario, characterized by significant differences: from the point of view of education, training and work opportunities, the European Space is not yet a reality accessible to all citizens. One reason is the lack of transparency of certifications and regulations that allows citizens to transfer their competencies across systems. In order to tackle this issue and create a European lifelong learning area, the principles established in Lisbon were transposed into concrete objectives:

- a. encouraging mobility and lifelong learning through the transparency of qualifications and Learning Outcomes (LOs);
- b. improving the quality of Education and training systems;
- c. facilitating a personalized access to education and training pathways through the recognition and the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- d. facilitating the transfer of LOs from one system to the other;
- e. defining a shared framework for education and training systems, based on LOs.

In order to achieve the "transparency" objective (a), European countries decided to create a single framework for the transparency of qualifications, and competencies. Decision No. 2241/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council established a single European framework for the transparency of qualifications and competencies called Europass. Since 2005, the countries adopting the Decision have been working, through their National Europass Centres, for the promotion of transparency docu-

ments included in the Europass portfolio, in order to support both institutions and end users.

In order to achieve the "quality" objective (b), the Conclusions of the Council of the European Union dated May 2004 invited Member States and the Commission to promote a shared framework to guarantee the quality of education and training pathways. Since 2000, a complex work has been carried out, thus leading to the Recommendation of June 2009, establishing a European reference framework for the assurance of quality in Vocational Education and Training system (VET). The Recommendation urges Member States to establish a National Plan for Quality Assurance in VET, based on the European reference framework.

In May 2004, in order to achieve the "recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning" (c), common European principles were established with regard to the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. In order to facilitate the growing convergence of approaches and methodologies, in the following years, the European Commission and Cedefop have worked on the elaboration and the update of the *European Inventory on Validation of non-formal and informal learning*. This instrument collects, describes and connects various systems, processes, devices and approaches to the validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe. The exchange of information has led, in 2009, to the *European guidelines for validating non formal and informal learning*, edited by Cedefop. Finally, the European Commission elaborated a Proposal for a Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

For the definition of a "shared approach for the transfer of LOs" (d), in 2002 the European Commission drafted a first proposal for a Credit transfer system in the field of VET (ECVET). ECVET draws on the structure of the ECTS system (European Credit Transfer System) used by universities; it is conceived to transfer and capitalize LOs in case of transition from a learning context to the another or in case of passage between different VET systems. The creation of the ECVET system was strengthened by the Recommendation of June 18th 2009. Since 2009, even though different modalities, European countries are implementing the ECVET system.

With a view to establishing "a shared reference code for education and training systems" (e), which includes all previous objectives, European countries established the European Qualifications Framework – EQF (Recommendation 2008).

Consistently with the EHEA Framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (adopted in Bergen in May 2005 and limited to tertiary education), EQF is the European answer to:

- simplify communication between the parties involved in the process of education and training in different countries and within each country;
- allow the translation, positioning and comparison among different LOs, while enabling the transfer and use of qualifications and competencies also outside the country where they have been acquired;
- facilitate matching the needs of the labour market and education and training opportunities in various countries;

- support non-formal and informal learning validation processes;
- create a common framework for the quality and development of education and training pathways;
- contribute to the development of sectoral qualifications;
- stimulate reforms and steer the development of new National Qualifications Frameworks.

Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

		Knowledge	Skills	Competence
		In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual	In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)	In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy
Level 1	The Learning Outcomes relevant to Level 1 are:	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context
Level 2	The Learning Outcomes relevant to Level 2 are:	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Work or study under supervision with some autonomy
Level 3	The Learning Outcomes relevant to Level 3 are:	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study. Adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
Level 4	The Learning Outcomes relevant to Level 4 are:	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change. Supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities

		Knowledge	Skills	Competence
Level 5 [*]	The Learning Outcomes relevant to Level 5 are:	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change. Review and develop performance of self and others
Level 6 [**]	The Learning Outcomes relevant to Level 6 are:	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision making in unpredictable work or study contexts. Take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
Level 7 [***]	The Learning Outcomes relevant to Level 7 are:	Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research. Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches. Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams

		Knowledge	Skills	Competence
Level 8 [****]	The Learning Outcomes relevant to Level 8 are:	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

[*] The descriptor for the higher education short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle), developed by the Joint Quality Initiative as part of the Bologna process, corresponds to the Learning Outcomes for EQF level 5.

[**] The descriptor for the first cycle in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process corresponds to the Learning Outcomes for EQF level 6.

[***] The descriptor for the second cycle in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process corresponds to the Learning Outcomes for EQF level 7.

[****] The descriptor for the third cycle in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process corresponds to the Learning Outcomes for EQF level 8

The EQF meta-framework aims at supporting and facilitating different categories of beneficiaries:

- institutions of European countries, in order to increase communication opportunities and create linkages between education and training systems;
- students and citizens, in order to guarantee a higher level of "portability" of their qualifications and LOs, and offer a wider range of education, training and job opportunities in Europe;
- enterprises, in order to make the labour market more dynamic and facilitate the creation of a flexible and mobile European workforce.

From a technical point of view, the EQF is a referencing grid aimed at linking and comparing qualifications achieved in each of the Member States; the comparison is based on shared reference levels, corresponding to LOs and positioned on a eight-level structure, as described in the previous figure. This multi-level structure allows positioning LOs in an increasing order of complexity. LOs are based on formal, non-formal and informal education and training pathways.

More specifically, each country is asked to:

- use the EQF to compare the levels of qualifications issued in different countries, to promote lifelong learning and equal opportunities in a knowledge-based society and to improve the level of integration of the European labour market, while preserving the diversity of systems;
- compare National Qualifications Systems to the EQF, while developing, when needed, National Qualifications Frameworks, in compliance with the national legislation and national practices;
- adopt adequate measures to make sure that all new qualifications and Europass documents will include, starting from 2012, clear reference to the appropriate EQF level on the basis of their National Qualifications Systems.

The EQF Advisory Group elaborated a document entitled *Criteria and procedures for referencing National Qualifications levels to the EQF*, that provides a list of ten criteria/procedures that all countries involved in the EQF shall consider for the referencing process.

Moreover, all countries are asked to create National Coordination Points, subject to the specific conditions and organization of Member States, in order to support, along with other relevant national Authorities, the referencing process between National Qualifications Systems and the EQF, while promoting the quality and transparency of the processes. In particular, National Coordination Points are expected to complete the following tasks:

- referencing national qualifications levels to EQF levels;
- ensuring that the method used for referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF is transparent, in order to simplify the referencing process, while making sure that all relevant decisions are made public;
- providing all actors involved with adequate access to information concerning the referencing process between National Qualifications Systems and the EQF;

- promoting the participation of all stakeholders involved, including - in compliance with national legislation and practice - Higher education institutes, VET institutes, social partners, experts in the field of referencing and use of qualifications at the European level.

A guide to the report

This Report describes the Italian Referencing process to the EQF, as required by the Recommendation of April 23rd 2008 of the European Commission. The Report, elaborated by a technical team of experts, is the result of close cooperation with the Regions, namely with their Technical Coordination Group, and social partners.

The Italian version of this Report uses the word *qualificazione* to translate the English word *qualification*. A *qualificazione* is intended as the "formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved LOs to given standards"¹.

The selection criteria of the qualifications included in the Referencing Report have been agreed with Regions, as well as the future steps for the inclusion of non-referenced qualifications. Considering the recent labour market reform², this Italian Referencing Report shall be seen as a work in progress that will be integrated in the near future.

The referencing process of Italian qualifications to the EQF followed three main phases:

- Phase 1. Analysing existing qualifications, including all education, training and vocational systems and sub-systems³;
- Phase 2. Mapping the qualifications issued in each of the above mentioned sub-systems;
- Phase 3. Selecting and referencing relevant qualifications to EQF levels, after analysing the European Criteria and defining related methodological and procedural choices.

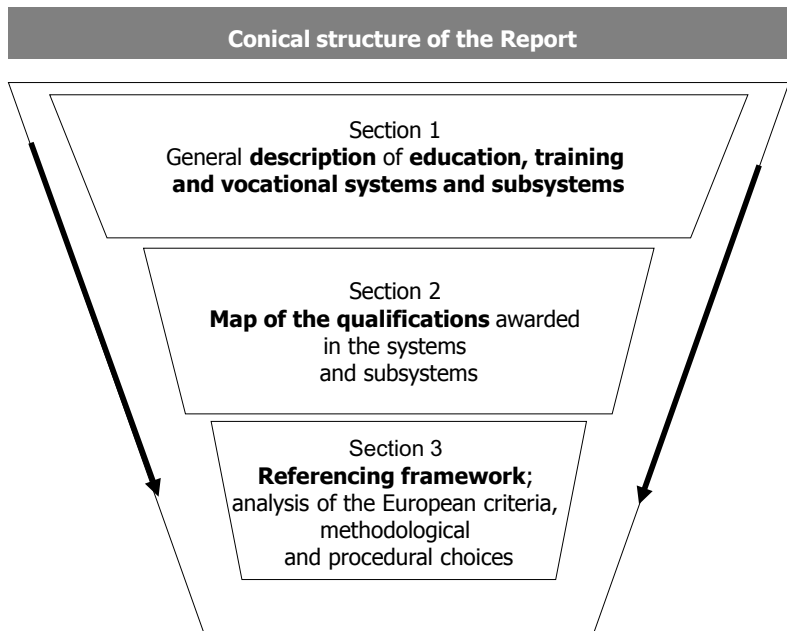
For this reason, the Report has a "conical" structure. Starting from a full description of all education and training national system and sub-systems (Section 1), the Re-

1. The term *qualificazione*, as used in the EQF context, has nothing to do with the same term used in the labour agreement context; moreover, the term has a broader meaning than the word *qualifica* that indicates a group of certifications awarded in VET.

2. Law of June 28th 2012, no. 92 "Disposizioni in materia di riforma del mercato del lavoro in una prospettiva di crescita" [Regulations concerning the labour market reform in a growth perspective], establishing a public national system for the certification of competencies and the definition of general norms for the identification and validation of competencies obtained in non-formal and informal learning contexts.

3. Job codification and job classification systems were not considered, unless they are relevant for the award of a qualification by a competent authority.

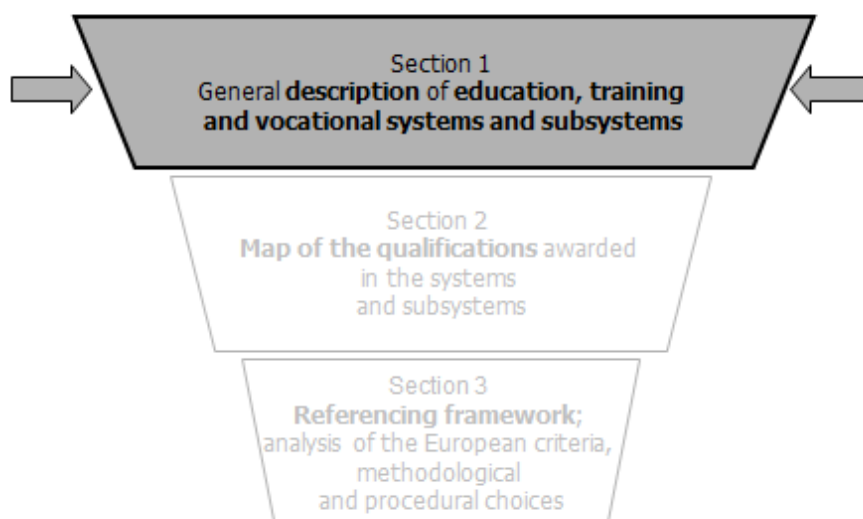
port draws on all qualifications awarded (Section 2) with a specific focus on the qualifications referenced to the EQF (Section 3).



With regard to the three sections of this Report, it shall be pointed out that:

- the English name used to mention the Italian qualifications is agreed by the authorities but not formally adopted;
- Section 3, for those who are familiar with the Italian education and training system, is self-consistent from the point of view of the EQF referencing. Sections 1 and 2 provide a full description of Italian qualifications, aimed at assisting the reader through the process conducted by the Technical Group;
- The Report includes the analysis and description of the System of Professions in Italy (see Section 1) and a more detailed description of its relevant qualifications (see Section 2). This choice is aimed at supporting the European harmonization process between Directive 2005/36/CE, regulating the recognition of qualifications associated with the system of professions across countries and the guiding principles of the EQF;
- Section 1 includes a focus on good practices in the field of validation of non-formal and informal learning, describing both instruments and practices that are widening the systemic approach to validation and recognition of non-formal and informal.

Section 1 – The lifelong learning system



1. The Education and Training system

1.1 The structure and governance of the Education and Training system

The Italian education and training system is divided into:

- Pre-primary school (ages 3 to 5), non-compulsory, lasting 3 years;
- First cycle of education, divided into Primary School (5 years) and Lower Secondary school (3 years);
- Second cycle of education, including Upper Secondary school (5 years) and Vocational Education and Training (IeFP - 3 or 4 years);
- Higher education, made up of University education, Higher Level Arts and Music Education (AFAM) and Higher Technical Education (ITS).

Full-time education is compulsory and free for 10 years for all children between usually 6 and 16. It includes the first cycle and two years in the second cycle. The current educational law provides that young people must accomplish their right/duty to education for at least 12 years or until they obtain a vocational qualification by the age of 18. Once completed compulsory schooling young people must go on with the second cycle of the education and training system.

The Italian training provision also offers the following opportunities:

- Higher Technical Education and Training (ITS);
- Post-VET (IeFP), post-upper secondary and post-higher education initial vocational training;
- Apprenticeship¹;
- Adult education;
- Continuous training;

1. With the exception of "Work-oriented apprenticeship".

- Private training.

As to the governance of the system:

- The State has exclusive competence for the definition of general provisions in the field of education². The responsibility of the education system falls under the scope of action of the Ministry of Education and Research (MIUR) that operates at central level, while Regional and Provincial Education Offices (USR and UST) operate at the local level. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies defines and guarantees the essential levels of performance of vocational training (leFP);
- Regions have exclusive competence in the field of vocational training, often operated through the decentralization of functions and tasks to the Provinces³. In the field of vocational training, Regions define the training provision in cooperation with social partners.

The Permanent Conference for the relations among the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano is the "privileged forum" for the political negotiation between central Administrations and regional autonomies. The unanimous Agreement represents the instrument through which Government, Regions and Autonomous Provinces coordinate their competencies and shared activities in the name of fair cooperation.

1.2 First cycle of education

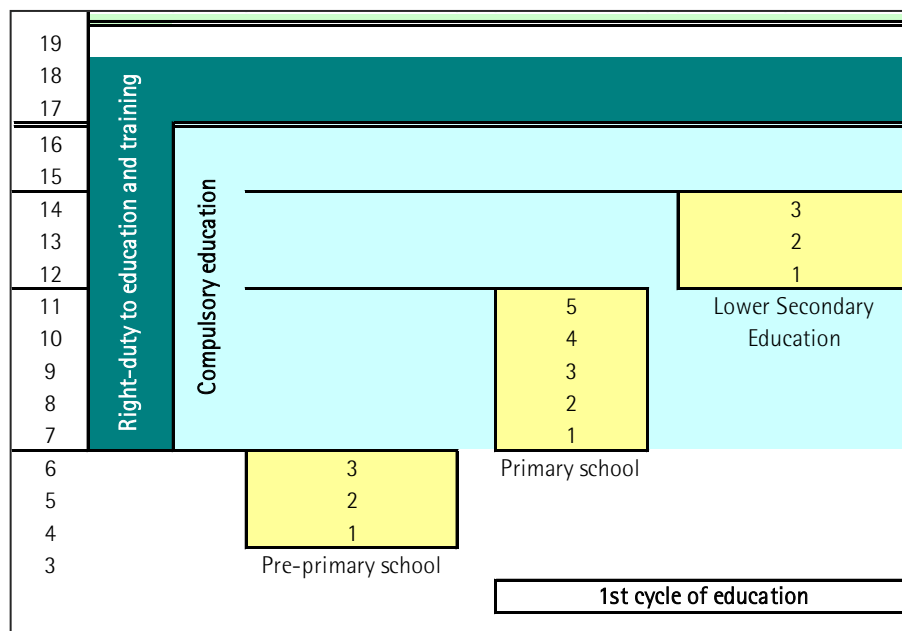
Compulsory education starts with the first cycle of education which is divided into two parts:

- Primary school, for children usually aged 6 and lasting 5 years. Primary school is divided into three didactic periods: one "one-year" period (the first class), and two "two-year" periods;
- Lower secondary school, for children usually aged 11 and lasting 3 years. It is divided into a two-year period and a third year, which serves as a vocational guidance and transition to the second cycle of education.

2. Constitutional Law no. 3 of 2001.

3. The State is responsible for the determination of the essential levels of performance, which ensure the same civil and social rights to all citizens on the whole National territory.

Figure 1 – First cycle of education



The first cycle of education can be delivered in public and private schools, the latter being either fully and non-fully recognized (respectively *paritarie* and *non paritarie*)⁴.

At the end of the first cycle, around the age of 14, students are required to pass a school-leaving examination for the completion of the first cycle of education, leading to *Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione* (Lower secondary school leaving diploma).

1.3 Second cycle of education

The second cycle of education includes education pathways of various duration, divided into two main branches:

- Upper secondary education under the competence of the Ministry of Education;
- Vocational Education and Training under the competence of Regions.

In the second cycle of education, students fulfil the right/duty to education and training.

4. The "full recognition" (*parità*) depends on a series of conditions and guarantees the equivalence of the qualifications awarded. Non-fully recognized schools, however, allow young people to fulfil the right/duty to education and training; a certificate is awarded after successfully passing a leaving examination in public school or an officially-recognized school.

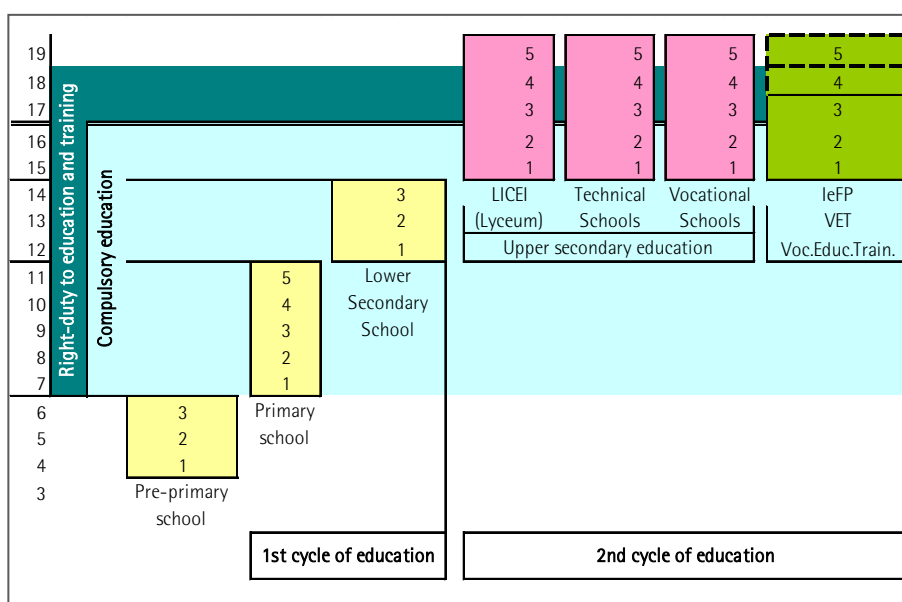
After the first cycle of education, students attend two years of the second cycle of education and complete their 10-years compulsory education period. Moreover, from the age of 15 they can fulfil this obligation with an apprenticeship contract⁵ leading to the *Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale* (Professional operator certificate) or *Diploma professionale di tecnico* (Professional technician diploma). The "right/duty to education and training" applies for 12 years, from 6 to 18 years of age. The right/duty to education and training is fulfilled in the education system (Upper secondary education), in the regional VET system or in apprenticeship programmes aimed at obtaining a VET qualification.

The flexibility of pathways is guaranteed, including the possibility to move within different systems and from education system to VET pathways/apprenticeship programmes, by special agreements between the State and Regions.

1.3.1 Upper Secondary Education

Students can attend Upper secondary education after successfully passing the school-leaving examination of the first cycle of education.

Figure 2 – First and second cycle of education



5. To be thorough, compulsory education could also be fulfilled through homeschooling (art. 1, 4, legislative decree No.76/2005).

Upper secondary education is made up of three education pathways. Each education pathway lasts 5 years:

- *Licei* (Lyceum);
- Technical schools;
- Vocational schools.

There are six types of *licei*: artistic, classical, linguistic, music and dance, scientific, human sciences; some of them are organised into specializations or options (Tab.1). The technical and vocational schools (Tables 2 and 3), as well, are organized in specializations⁶.

At the end of upper secondary education, students have to pass a State leaving examination. If they succeed, they are allowed to enrol in tertiary education or Higher Technical Education and Training pathways.

Table 1 – Structure and organization of *Licei*

<i>Licei</i> (1 two-year period + 1 two-year period + 5 th year)	Specializations/Options
Artistic	Starting from the second two-year period, the following specializations are available: 1. Figurative arts 2. Architecture and environment 3. Design 4. Audiovisual and multimedia 5. Graphics 6. Stage design
Classical	
Linguistic	
Music and dance	Music specialization Dance specialization
Scientific	Option: Applied sciences
Human sciences	Option: Economic-social

6. Specializations of the technical and vocational institutes are further articulated as DD.PP.RR.15 March 2010, and DD.II. 24 April 2012.

Table 2 – Structure and organization of Technical Schools

Technical Schools/Areas (1 two-year period + 1 two-year period + 5th year)	Specializations
Economics	1. Administration, finance and marketing 2. Tourism
Technologies	1. Mechanics, mechatronics and energy 2. Transportation and logistics 3. Electronics and electrical engineering 4. Informatics and telecommunications 5. Graphic and communication 6. Chemistry, materials and biotechnologies 7. Fashion system 8. Agriculture, Agrifood and agro-industry 9. Construction environment and territory

Source: Regulation of Technical Schools as per Decree of the President of the Republic of March 15th 2010 (DPR no. 88/2010)

Table 3 – Structure and organization of Vocational Schools

Vocational Schools/Areas 1 two-year period + 1 two-year period (1 year+1 year) + 5th year	Specializations
Services	1. Services for agriculture and rural development 2. Socio-sanitary services 3. Tourist hospitality and Food and Beverage services 4. Commercial services
Industry and Crafts	1. Craft and manufacturing productions 2. Maintenance and technical assistance

Source: Regulation of Professional Schools as per Decree of the President of the Republic of March 15th 2010 (DPR no. 87/2010)

1.3.2 The Vocational Education and Training system

The VET system, which falls under the competence of Regions, is organized in the following pathways:

- three-year courses, for the award of a *Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale* (Professional operator certificate);
- four-year courses, for the award of a *Diploma professionale di tecnico* (Professional technician diploma)

At the end of these courses, students obtain a qualification released under the regional system and acknowledged at national level. A National Register of qualifications awarded in the VET system was created in 2011. It is made up of two-level professional figures (Professional operator and Professional technician), that can be further subdivided into specializations and regional profiles⁷. The qualifications included in the register are described in terms of LOs.

The training provision is designed by Regions and implemented by accredited training providers. Moreover, vocational schools can provide subsidiary, integrative and complementary training. After obtaining a *Diploma professionale di tecnico* (Professional technician diploma), students can continue in the Higher Education and in the Higher Technical Education and Training system, after completing an additional year and after passing a State exam.

1.4 Higher Technical Education and Training

The Higher Technical Education and Training system⁸ is made up of:

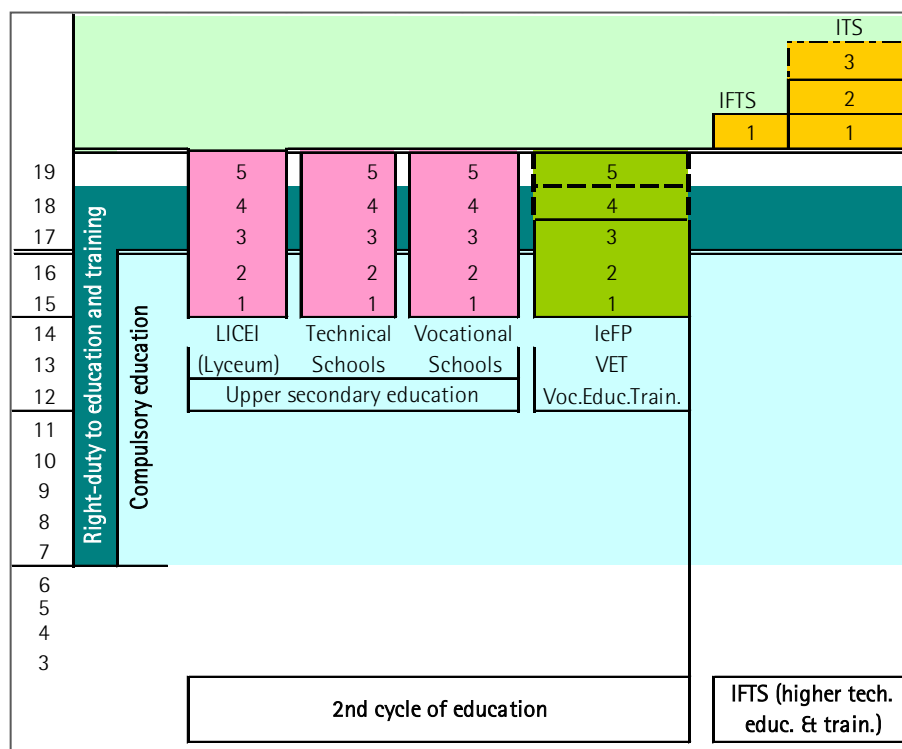
- Courses organized by Higher Technical Institutes (ITS);
- Higher Technical Education and Training pathways (IFTs).

Higher Technical Institutes (ITS), established on the basis of Regional Territorial Plans, are specific types of participative foundations. The organizational standard states that founders of these institutes are: an upper secondary school, both technical or vocational, state or fully recognized; a training centre accredited by the Region for the purpose of higher training; an enterprise operating in the same production area as the higher technical school; a university department or another organization operating in the field of scientific and technological research; a local institution (municipality, province, mountain community, etc.).

7. See State-Regions Conference Agreement of July 27th 2011, integrated by agreement of 19/01/2012. The identification of professional figures and specializations take into account the referencing of qualifications (of vocational education and training pathways) to the European Qualifications Framework and uses descriptors and definitions set out in the European Recommendation of April 23rd 2008.

8. Established with Law 144/99 amended by various legislative initiatives; in particular, L. 296/2006, art.1, par.631, and art.13 L. 40/2007 that merged into DPCM of January 25th 2008 that has reorganized IFTS and established ITS.

Figure 3 – Representation of the 2nd cycle of education and the IFTS system



Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) can be attended by young people and adults holding a *Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore* (Upper secondary education diploma). ITS courses last 4 semesters for a total of 1800/2000 hours⁹. At the end of ITS courses, a *Diploma di tecnico superiore* (Higher technical education diploma) is issued. These qualifications, awarded by the Ministry of Education, concern different technological areas (see relevant table) identified to meet the needs of the public and private labour market, in particular of small and medium-sized enterprises, and areas of high technological innovation and internationalization of market.

9. For special subjects, courses may take up to 6 semesters.

Technological areas	Specializations
Energy efficiency	1.1 Energy production and supply 1.2 Highly-efficient and energy-saving processes and plants
Sustainable mobility	2.1 Mobility of persons and goods 2.2 Production and maintenance of transportations and infrastructures 2.3 Management of info-mobility and logistic infrastructures
New technologies for life	3.1 Industrial and environmental biotechnologies 3.2 Production of biomedical and diagnostic devices
New technologies for "Made in Italy"	4.1 Food System 4.2 House system 4.3 Mechanic system 4.4 Fashion system 4.5 Services to enterprises
Innovative technologies for cultural heritage and activities - Tourism	5.1 Fruition and optimization of the cultural heritage 5.2 Preservation, enhancement and security of cultural buildings and sites
Information and Communication Technologies	6.1 Methods and technologies for software system development 6.2 Organization and fruition on information and knowledge 6.3 Communication architectures and infrastructures

IFTS courses, programmed by Regions, have a specialising nature and are designed and managed by at least four training partners (a school, a vocational training centre, a university, an enterprise or another public or private centre) which formally cooperate.

IFTS courses can be attended by young people and adults with a *Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore* (Upper secondary education diploma)¹⁰. IFTS courses last 2 semesters, for a maximum of 800/1000 hours. At the end of an IFTS course, a *Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore* (Higher technical specialization certificate) is awarded by Regions. The specialization fields include: Agriculture, Industry and Manufacturing (manufacturing products, ICT, construction), Tourism, Transportation, Public Services and private services of public interest, insurance and financial Services.

Both types of curricula - IFTS and ITS - are made up of units (*Unità capitalizzabili*, UC); this structure is consistent with the LOs approach.

10. IFTS courses are also open to: holders of a professional technician certificate; young people admitted to the 5th year of a *Liceo*; persons who do not have an upper secondary education qualification, but had their educational, training and vocational experiences validated.

The differences between IFTS and ITS courses are summarized as follows:

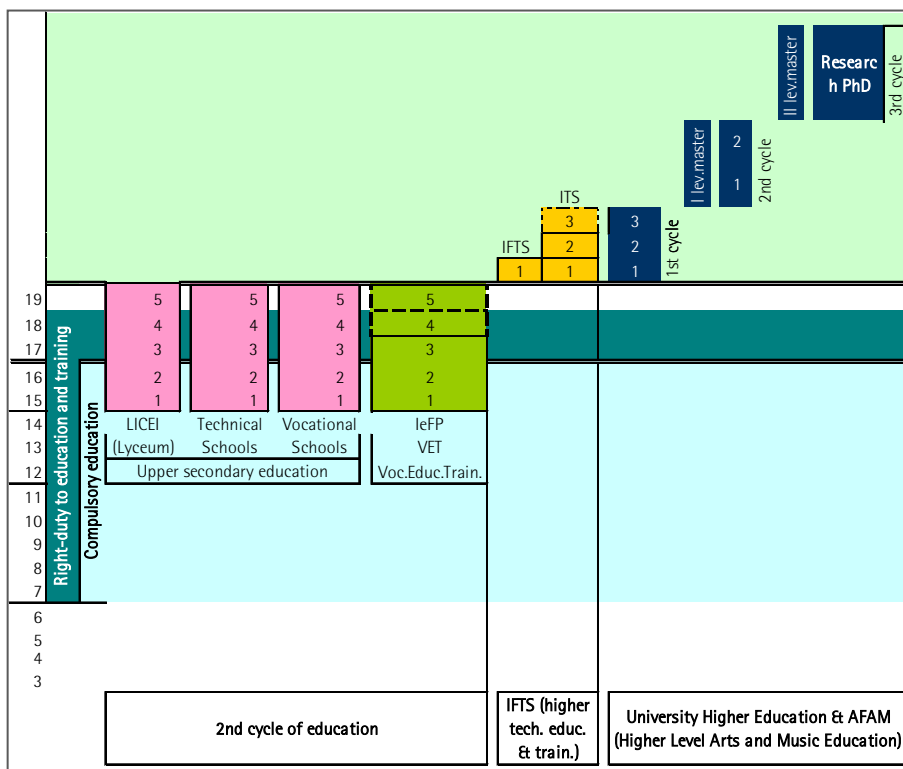
	IFTS courses	ITS courses
Training partners involved	Secondary education school Training Centre University Enterprise	Secondary education school of the Province where the foundation is based Training centre accredited by the Region Enterprise Scientific Department Local institution
Admission requirements	<i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma) or admission test for the assessment of competencies	<i>Diploma di Istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma)
Economic Fields / Technological Areas	Agriculture, Industry and Manufacturing/ Tourism/ Transportation/Public services and private services of public social interest /Insurance and financial services	Energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies for life, new technologies for "Made in Italy", innovative technologies for cultural heritage and activities, information and communication technologies.
Length of courses/ specializations	2 semesters (800/1000 hours)	4 semesters (1800/2000 hours); possibility of 6-semester courses
Certificate awarded	<i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i> (Higher technical specialization certificate)	Diploma di tecnico superiore (Higher technical education diploma)

1.5 Tertiary Education

Tertiary Education is divided into University Higher Education pathways and non-University Higher Education pathways, which include the *Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale* - AFAM (Higher Level Arts and Music Education).

The whole Higher Education in Italy is currently under reforms. These reforms are aimed at moving the Italian Higher Education system closer to the European model designed by the Bologna process (1999).

Figure 4 – Representation of the 2nd cycle of education and the higher education



1.5.1 University Higher Education

The University system is based on the following main features:

- Cycles: Universities offer 3-cycle courses¹¹. The first cycle offers the *Laurea* (3-year Bachelor's degrees); the second cycle offers the *Laurea magistrale* (2-year Master's degrees); the third cycle offers specialization courses and *Dottorato di ricerca* (PhD) courses.
- University qualifications: *Laurea - L* (Bachelor's degree), at the end of a 3-year first cycle course, during which students obtain 180 ECTS. A *Laurea* corresponds to the degree of "*dottore*"; *Laurea magistrale* LM (Master's degree) at the end of a 2-year second cycle course, during which students obtain 120 ECTS credits. A *Laurea magistrale* corresponds to the degree of *dottore magistrale*; a *Dottorato di ricerca* (PhD), which lasts at least 3 years, corresponds to the degree of *Dottore di ricerca*.

11. Decree of October 22nd 2004, no. 270.

- Categories: courses with shared objectives and training activities are grouped in categories¹². The training contents of each course are defined by each university; however, all universities are required to include training activities defined at a national level. These conditions are established for each category. Qualifications of the same category have the same legal status.
- University Credits: university courses are based on credits. Each university credit corresponds to 25 study hours, including individual study. The average number of study hours for each student in one year corresponds conventionally to 60 credits.

Article 33 of the Italian Constitution acknowledges the right of universities and academies to have autonomous regulations, within the limits allowed by Law. Universities can be both public and private. Universities can provide higher specialization courses and activate specialization schools for given professions, in order to implement specific normative provisions.

University Education is organized as follows¹³:

First cycle	Second cycle	Third cycle
<p><i>Laurea</i> (three-year bachelor's degree courses). A <i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma) is required. This qualification must be obtained after 13 years of schooling and after successful leaving examinations. An equivalent foreign certification is also allowed.</p> <p>In order to obtain a <i>Laurea</i>, students must obtain 180 credits; a traineeship period and the discussion of a dissertation might be also required. A <i>Laurea</i> entitles to access competitions for public em-</p>	<p>A) <i>Laurea specialistica/ magistrale</i> (Master's degree). A <i>Laurea</i> or an equivalent foreign certification is required. The admission to <i>Laurea specialistica/magistrale</i> is subject to the specific requirements of Universities; courses last 2 years and students obtain 120 credits. A <i>Laurea Magistrale</i> can be obtained after the presentation of a research dissertation.</p> <p>The change of denomination from <i>Laurea specialistica</i> to <i>Laurea magistrale</i> was defined in 2004. Some courses (Medicine and Surgery, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry and Dental Prosthesis, Pharmacy, Architecture, Law) are defined <i>Corsi di Laurea specialistica/magistrale a ciclo unico</i>: Combined bachelor's and master's</p>	<p>A) <i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> (Research doctorate PhD). A <i>Laurea specialistica/ magistrale</i> (Master's degree) or an equivalent foreign certification and a successful admission test are required. PhD students are required to elaborate an original research thesis to discuss for the final examination.</p> <p>B) Postgraduate specialization courses, especially in the field of medical, clinical and surgery sciences. A <i>Laurea specialistica/magistrale</i> (or an equivalent foreign certification) is required; the length of a specialization course depends on the specialization field. The speciali-</p>

12. A full and updated list of the categories of bachelor's and master's degrees is available in the National data bank at <http://offf.miur.it>.

13. Drawn from Point 8 of the Diploma Supplement elaborated by MIUR [Ministry of Education, Research and University] for Universities: <http://www.istruzione.it/web/universita/diploma-supplement>

<p>ployment, the labour market, regulated professions and second-cycle university courses.</p>	<p>degree): a <i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma) or a comparable foreign certification is required; the admission is subject to the results of a selection test. Study courses last 5 years and students obtain 300 credits (6 years and 360 credits for Medicine and Surgery only). All <i>Lauree magistrali/ specialistiche</i> (Master's degrees) entitle to access competitions for public employment, the labour market, regulated professions, <i>Dottorato di Ricerca</i> (PhD) courses and all other 3rd cycle courses.</p> <p>B) <i>Master universitario di primo livello</i>; (First-level university master courses); these masters are aimed at scientific specialization training and higher continuous training. A <i>Laurea</i> (bachelor's degree) or an equivalent foreign certification is required. The length of study is at least one year (60 credits).</p> <p>A <i>Master Universitario di primo livello</i> (First-level university master) is a second-cycle qualification that does not entitle to access <i>Dottorato di Ricerca</i> (PhD) courses or other third-cycle courses.</p>	<p>zation diploma corresponds to the qualification of <i>Specialista</i> (Specialist)</p> <p>C) <i>Master universitario di secondo livello</i> (Second-level university master courses); these masters are aimed at scientific specialization training and higher continuous training. A <i>Laurea specialistica/ magistrale</i> (Master's degree) or an equivalent foreign certification is required. The length of study is at least one year (60 credits).</p>
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1.5.2 Non-University Higher Education

Non-University Higher Education is set up by:

- *Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale* - AFAM (Higher Level Arts and Music Education);
- Institutes for Special Purposes.

AFAM¹⁴ offers 3-cycle education courses, based on the same model as Universities. The first cycle lasts 3 years; the second cycle lasts 2 years; the third cycle is focused on research training.

AFAM is organized as follows¹⁵:

First cycle	Second cycle	Third cycle
<p><i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i>. (First-level academic diploma). Access requirements: a <i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma) or an equivalent foreign certification; the admission is subject to an entry test aimed at verifying initial skills and knowledge, in compliance with didactic regulations, even at the end of preparatory training activities carried out in cooperation with secondary education schools. The maximum number of students allowed is defined by each institute. Courses last three years. In order to obtain a <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i>, students must obtain 180 credits. The <i>Diploma</i> entitles to access competitions for public employment, the labour market and second-cycle courses.</p>	<p>A) <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma). Access requirements: a <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (First-level academic diploma) or a <i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree) or an equivalent foreign certification; the admission is subject to specific requirements set out in didactic regulations. The maximum number of students allowed is defined by each institute. Courses last two years. In order to obtain a <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i>, students must obtain 120 credits.</p> <p>B) Specialization courses (I): they provide highly-specialized competencies in specific fields; a <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (first-level academic diploma) is required.</p> <p>C) Postgraduate higher specialization courses or masters: they respond to the needs of specializations courses, refresher courses, vocational requalification courses and lifelong learning activities. A postgraduate higher specialization course gives at least 60 credits. A <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (First-level academic diploma) is required.</p>	<p>A) <i>Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca</i> (Research training academic diploma) courses. They are aimed at providing competencies for planning and implementing highly specialized research activities.</p> <p>B) Specialization courses (II): they provide highly-specialized competencies in specific fields; a <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma) is required.</p> <p>C) Postgraduate higher specialization courses or masters: they respond to the needs of specializations courses, refresher courses, vocational requalification courses and lifelong learning activities. A postgraduate higher specialization course gives at least 60 credits. A <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma) is required.</p>

14. The AFAM is regulated by Law of December 21st 1999, no. 58, implemented by DPR of July 8th 2005, no. 212.

15. Drawn from point 8 of the Diploma Supplement elaborated by MIUR [Ministry of Education, University and Research] for AFAM institutions: <http://attiministeriali.miur.it/anno-2008/dicembre/nota-05122008.aspx>

As for the University system, the AFAM system is based on Academic Credits (CFA). The AFAM training provision is delivered by the following institutes:

- *Accademie di belle arti* (Academies of Fine Arts) providing courses in the field of visual arts, didactics of arts, design and applied arts;
- *Accademia Nazionale di Arte Drammatica* (National Academy of Drama), providing training courses for actors and directors, and the *Accademia Nazionale di Danza* (National Academy of Dance), providing training in choral arts and specialization courses as soloists, choreographers or teachers;
- Four *Istituti Superiori per le Industrie Artistiche* (Higher Institutes for Artistic Industries), providing courses in industrial and graphic design; *Conservatori di Musica* (Music Conservatories), now *Istituti superiori di studi musicali e coreutici* (Higher Institutes of Music and Choir Studies), providing courses to play music instruments.

Istituti a fini speciali (Institutes for Special Purposes) provide vocational specializations in a wide range of fields, from restoration to cinematography and archives¹⁶; admission is allowed after the end of a second-cycle course of 5 years and after passing an entry test.

1.6 Initial vocational training: post-VET (IeFP) /post-Upper Secondary and post-Higher education

In addition to Vocational Education and Training courses, the competence of Regions and Autonomous Provinces in the field of vocational training extends to other training activities for young people and adults. With regard to initial training activities, people who have completed the training and education pathways are entitled to enrol in specific training courses after obtaining an Upper Secondary or a VET qualification. Post-Higher Education courses offer an opportunity for those who have completed a University course.

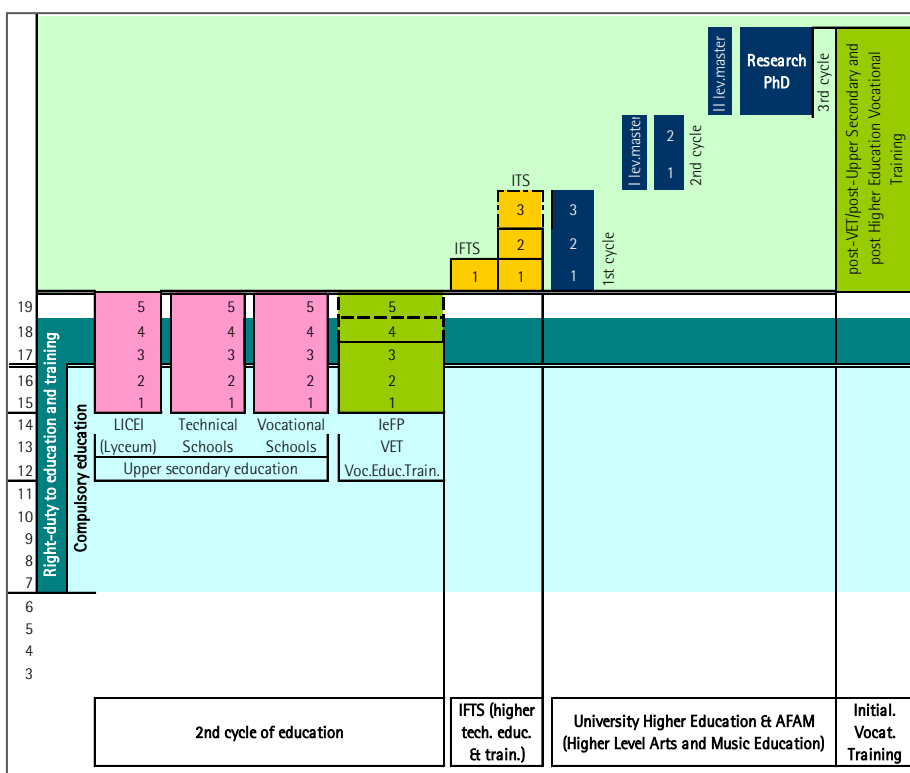
Courses are generally attended by unemployed young people or unemployed adults who have concluded a previous work experience. Sometimes, initial training courses are exclusively addressed to weak groups in order to increase the level of work integration: migrants, gypsies, disabled, young people, etc.

16. National Academy of Santa Cecilia (*Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia*), Higher Schools for Linguistic Mediators (*Scuole Superiori per Mediatori Linguistici*), Central Institutes and Restoration Schools under the Ministry of Cultural Heritage (*Istituti centrali e Scuole di restauro del Ministero dei beni culturali*), School of Restoration of the Mosaic (*Scuola di restauro del Mosaico*), National School of Cinema (*Scuola nazionale di Cinema*), Schools for the Archive System, palaeography and diplomatic studies (*Scuole di archivistica, paleografia e diplomatica*), Military Academies Police Institutes (*Accademie militari e Istituti di polizia*), School of the Gemstone Factory (*Scuola dell'Opificio delle pietre dure*), Higher Institutes for Religious Sciences (*Istituti Superiori di Scienze Religiose*), Central Institute for the Pathology of Books (*Istituto centrale per la patologia del libro*) "Alfonso Gallo", Foundation for the Conservation and Restoration of Books (*Fondazione per la conservazione e il restauro dei beni librari*).

Initial training initiatives are planned by Regions through open competitions, in order to meet the professional needs of the territory. Initial training courses aimed at providing a specialization in a given field, are made up of short cycles courses (400-600 hours); rarely, they last 2 years. In general, the completion of a traineeship is also required.

Full-time attendance at training courses is mandatory and free of charge.

Figure 5 – Second-cycle of education, Higher Technical education and training, Tertiary education and Initial vocational training



At the end of an initial training course, a vocational certificate or a certificate of attendance are awarded after passing a final examination.

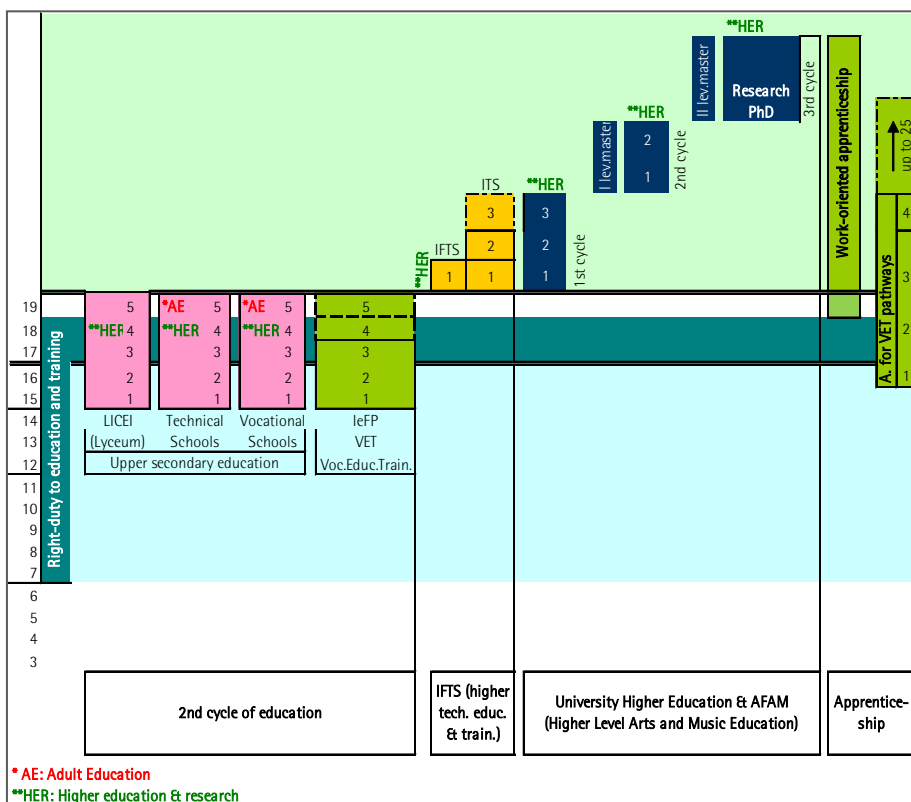
Beside training courses aimed at obtaining a qualification, the regional training provision also offers specific activities aimed at developing competencies. These are shorter courses (20-40 hours), generally addressed to adults and closer to the regional continuous training provision. At the end of these courses, a certification of competence is awarded¹⁷.

17. "A competence is the smallest certifiable unit"- says the State-Regions agreement of April 19th 2012.

1.7 Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a job contract aimed at training and employing young people.

Figure 6 - Representation of the education system, from the second cycle up to the apprenticeship



According to the innovations introduced by the recent Unified Text on Apprenticeship¹⁸, there are three different types of apprenticeship aimed at different training objectives with different linkages with the education and training system:

- Apprenticeship addressed to young people between 15 and 25 years of age; this type of apprenticeship lasts 3 years if aimed at acquiring an *Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale* (Professional operator certificate) and 4 years if aimed at a *Diploma professionale di tecnico* (Professional technician diploma)¹⁹;

18. Adopted by legislative decree no. 167 of 2011.

19. The State-Regions agreement of March 18th 2012 defines the minimum criteria for the length and structure of training pathways to be further regulated by Regions.

- b. Work-oriented apprenticeship addressed to young people between the age of 18 and 29. Collective agreements define the duration of the contract, which cannot exceed 3 years (five years for crafts activities), professional standards and the provision of technical-vocational training. Regions rely on a range of activities aimed at the development of basic and transversal competencies, for a maximum of 120 hours over 3 years. At the end of a work-oriented apprenticeship, it is possible to obtain a regional qualification, a certification of competencies or the validation of a qualification for contractual purposes;
- c. Higher Education and research apprenticeship addressed to people aged between 18 and 29, hired in all public or private sectors. It can be aimed at: obtaining a qualification (Upper secondary education diploma, IFTS/ITS certificates and University degrees, including PhD) and acquiring research experience, as well as accessing regulated professions.

BOX 1 – Agreement on the Apprenticeship Certification System

On April 19th 2012 a State-Regions Agreement defined the National Apprenticeship Certification System.

This Agreement includes important reference to the EQF. In particular:

- a set of general definitions concerning LOs, formal, informal and non-formal learning pathways, the validation of learning, the certification of competencies;
- the definition of competencies as the smallest units for certification, defining a professional figure/profile, collected into codified lists based on the relevant EQF level and on a clear explanation of LOs;
- a framework for the certification of the competencies, through the identification, assessment and certification in accordance with CEDEFOP guidelines for the validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning;
- the inclusion of the relevant EQF level in final qualifications.

The agreement is particularly important for the evolution of the Italian system towards a National framework for certification; it is also important for the apprenticeship system, for which the certification of LOs has been among the weakest points of the system so far.

1.8 Adult education and training

Adult education is the set of pathways or education and training activities for the professional upgrading or functional literacy of people in adulthood and is aimed at the acquisition and/or development of competencies, also of cultural and social nature, related to their personal and professional profile.

Adult education is provided through the new Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA) and evening classes in secondary education schools. They supply a different kind of service:

- CPIA usually offer general education courses for achieving a compulsory education certificate;
- Evening classes are mainly aimed to the attainment of a second cycle qualification.

CPIA are also committed to teaching Italian to foreigners, in compliance with recent regulations for residence permits. They are established by the Regional School Offices in first and second-cycle schools, which also provide for teachers; these centres can be linked to secondary centres based in libraries, hospitals, detention institutes, communities, etc.

With the above Regulation, the pathways of adult education are reorganized as follows:

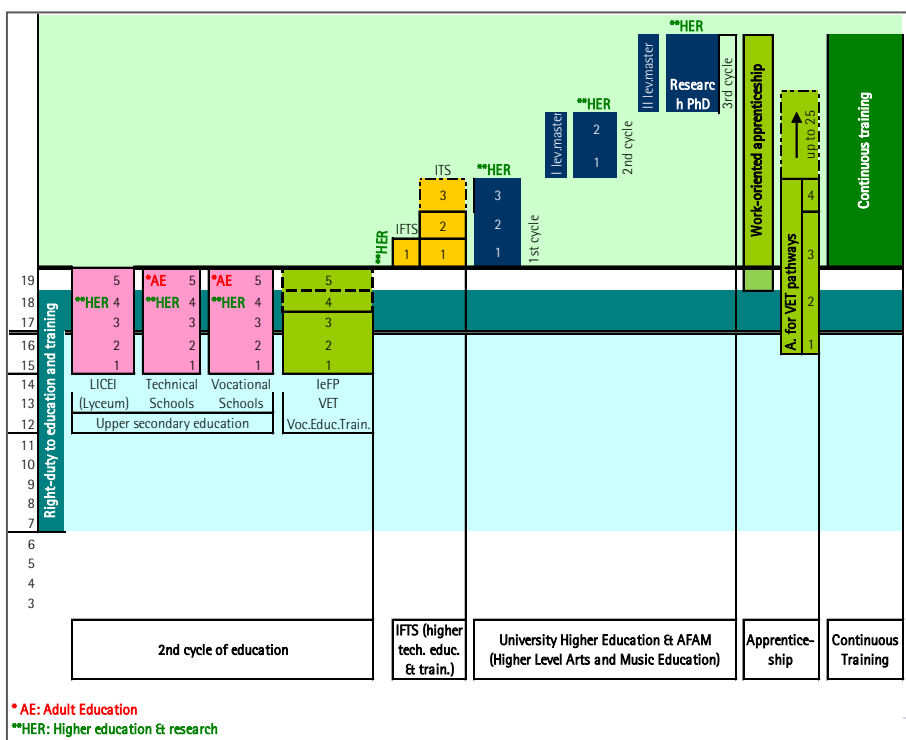
- a. first level paths (two teaching periods) leading to the final qualification of the first cycle of education and to the *Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione* (Compulsory education certificate), acknowledging the acquisition of the related basic skills;
- b. second level pathways (three teaching periods) leading to the *diploma di istruzione tecnica, professionale e di Licei artistici* (Upper secondary education diploma – technical schools, professional schools and artistic Licei);
- c. literacy and Italian language learning pathways for adult foreigners, aimed at obtaining an Italian language proficiency certificate no lower than level A2 of the CEFR – *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

In the framework of specific network agreements between the Provincial Centers for adult education (supplying first level pathways) and the schools that provide technical, professional and artistic education pathways (supplying second level pathways), dedicated Committees will be set up in order to ensure that the adults attending the courses receive adequate guidance services.

1.9 Continuous training

Continuous training provision, aimed at employed or unemployed people looking for a new job refers to a wide range of courses and includes both public and private-funded training initiatives.

Figure 7 – Representation of the education system, from the second cycle up to continuous training provision



With regard to the public system, continuous training is set up by:

- Regions and Autonomous Provinces, elaborating strategies with their own resources, including ESF resources and funds allocated by the Ministry of Labour;
- Social partners, mainly operating through Inter-professional Funds for Continuous Training, under the control of the Ministry of Labour. These Funds are based on a inter-confederal agreement between social partners. To date, there are twenty authorized Funds.

State-funded continuous training activities are provided by a range of actors and institutions that can be grouped into three main categories:

Public and private enterprises and organizations	Training organizations and institutes	Institutional organizations
They plan training activities for their employees, consortia of enterprises, etc.	Accredited and non-accredited training agencies, bilateral organizations, other organizations linked to social partners, category or professional associations, professional directories, other associations	They include job centres, schools, Universities and university networks

In addition, training activities aimed at employees shall also be considered. These initiatives are organized autonomously by the enterprise and funded with private funds exclusively, as shown in the following paragraph.

In general, there is no specific provision with regard to the organization of training activities, in terms of duration, organization and training locations. According to statistical data (Istat-CVTS3, Isfol INDACO-Imprese), each worker participates in about 26 training hours per year; most of the training is provided in workplaces, during working hours, especially through blended and informal learning. Part of the training is also carried out outside workplaces and outside working hours.

The topics addressed by in-house training (funded or non-funded by public resources) are aimed at the acquisition of new personal skills, with regard to better knowledge of the production context, enterprise management, informatics, production techniques and technologies, environment, work security and health protection. With regard to continuous training outcomes, evaluation and certification practices carried out both by enterprises and institutions are very rare. Statistical analyses highlight that two out of three enterprises do not use any evaluation system. External training activities, provided outside production contexts and supported by State aids, generally lead to a certificate of participation. In a limited number of cases, a qualification is obtained; more often, the certification of one or two competencies following short training activities may be awarded.

1.10 Private training

Beside the Vocational Education and Training provision of the education system, the regional system and social partners, through inter-professional funds, a private training provision is available, provided without public resources and funded through the contributions of users.

Sometimes, Regions release special authorizations to private training centres. In this case, the certificates awarded by private centres have the same status as regional certificates.

[illegible]

The same category also includes in-house training activities that are not funded through public funds. According to CVTS3 data, confirmed by the Isfol INDACO/CVTS survey, the percentage of enterprises that receive public resources for the organization of in-house training activities is about 8% in a year.

Isfol INDACO-Lavoratori survey stresses that the percentage of workers that contribute to covering the costs of training is about 7% of the total number of workers involved in training activities.

Focus – The validation of non-formal and informal learning: the state of the art

At regional level a number of relevant best practices on validation of non-formal and informal learning, have been implemented in the last few years in Italy. Therefore, here below it is presented a short panorama of the state of art and description of the relevant practices which are orienting systemic choices to broaden the opportunities to obtain a qualification – or a part of it – beyond the “formal channel”.

The establishment of the *Libretto formativo del Cittadino* (Citizen Learning Booklet) as a common basis to increase the transparency of competencies

The national level (Ministry of Education, University and Research, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Regional Coordination, social partners) plays a strategic role for the promotion of initiatives aimed at non-formal and informal learning recognition. The *Libretto formativo del cittadino* (Citizen Learning Booklet) introduced by Decree No. 276 of 2003 and established by decree in October 2005, represents a fundamental initiative at a national level to improve the employability of citizens. The Booklet is a tool conceived to collect, summarize and describe the learning experiences of workers, as well as their competencies obtained in school pathways, training courses, work or daily life. Since 2006, the Booklet has been adopted (on an experimental or continuous basis) in many Regions with different modalities and in favour of different categories of people: workers experiencing job loss, apprentices, migrant workers, officers discharged from the Armed Forces, volunteers.

Some experiences of validation in Higher Education

Some significant experiences in the validation of non-formal and informal LOs have been institutionalized and consolidated at a national level, within the field of specific branches of the Higher Education and Training system.

A relevant experience is the one of Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTS). Many training centres offering IFTS pathways (see section 1 par. 1.7) provide for the validation of credits at the beginning of the training pathways, after evaluating previous formal LOs as well as competencies acquired in different settings, from workplace to social and private life. Training credits can be validated to those who had enrolled in a training pathway before or had specific professional experiences; this

validation allows the attendance of courses also to those people who lack a *Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore* (Upper secondary education diploma).

Another significant experience of validation of non-formal and informal learning was carried out in the University system. Ministerial Decree No. 270/2004 established that Universities can validate University credits for "individually certified abilities and professional skills, in compliance with the regulation into force, as well as other knowledge and skills developed through other post-secondary training activities, designed and implemented in collaboration with the University itself". So far many Universities have activated projects, rules and procedures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning aimed at the validation of university credits in specializations and learning pathways.

The guidelines "*L'Università per l'apprendimento permanente*" [Universities for life-long learning] elaborated by the working group set up by the Ministry of University and Research in 2007 establishes the *Centri per l'Apprendimento Permanente* – CAP (Centres for Lifelong Learning). Their purpose is validating non-formal learning and credits, in order to customize learning pathways on the basis of previous non-formal experiences, and facilitate the participation of adults and/or working students. Some Universities – Università di Roma III (University of Rome III) Università Orientale (University of Naples), Università di Siena (University of Siena) and Università di Catania (University of Catania) – activated centres for Lifelong Learning, while implementing specific actions for the validation of non-formal and informal learning of adults or working students, agreements with Public Administrations (for example the Ministry of the Defence and the Ministry of Finance), private enterprises and companies.

Relaunching National policies on validation between 2009 and 2012

In the last three years, politics and national institutions relaunched the idea of implementing a certification system and validating non-formal and informal learning. Certainly, this is linked to the economic crisis of our country and of all the other countries on a global scale, while bringing about the need to improve and update the competencies of those who face the uncertainty of the labour market.

The economic crisis has deepened the gap between demand and supply of competencies. Therefore, the maintenance and optimization of competencies has become a priority for political-institutional agendas. In particular, the validation of non-formal and informal learning is promoted at a European and international level and considered as a strategic element for the innovation and optimization of learning systems, for the enhancement of individual skills and the development of employability. International surveys²⁰ show that the assessment of previous competencies brings a number of advantages. First, it has a positive impact on lifelong learning figures; in addition, it makes mobility and access to the labour market more dynamic; it offers new opportunities to workers and enterprises experiencing job crisis; it supports

20. 2010 OECD Report Recognising non formal and informal learning: outcomes, policies and practices http://www.oecd.org/document/63/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_37141759_1_1_1_1,00.html

European and international mobility for study or work; it provides a more reliable basis for a qualitative access of European and non-European workers; it supports young people in enhancing useful experiences, such as internships, apprenticeships, voluntary work.

In some national documents the importance of validation has been recalled explicitly:

1. The document *Libro Bianco* [White Paper] of the Ministry of Labour, published in 2009, states that it is necessary to enhance what is learnt in workplaces and stresses the importance and the need to build and implement a national system of validation of competencies.
2. The document *Italia 2020 Piano d'azione per l'occupabilità dei giovani attraverso l'integrazione tra apprendimento e lavoro* [Italy 2020. Action Plan for the employability of young people through the integration between learning and work] signed on September 23rd 2009 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Ministry of Education, University and Research, identifies strategic policies for the next years in the field of vocational training, and stresses the need to develop adequate approaches and instruments to guarantee the matching between the competencies of workers and the needs of the labour market, with a specific focus on the "evaluation and validation" of learning.
3. The document *Linee Guida per la Formazione* [Training Guidelines] of February 17th 2010 signed by the Ministry of Labour, Regions and social partners aims at relaunching the National Qualifications System as a fundamental basis for the effectiveness and the interoperability of non-formal and informal LOs, in compliance with European indications. In particular, the validation of competencies is seen as an important aspect for the economic development, competitiveness and lifelong learning; the importance of the *Libretto formativo del Cittadino* (Citizen Learning Booklet) is also stressed, as a tool to collect information about own competencies to enhance.

The possibility to certify LOs has been discussed more extensively from a normative perspective at a national level. The *Testo Unico per l'Apprendistato* (Unified Text for Apprenticeship) set out by Legislative Decree No, 167/2011 states that the competencies acquired by the apprentices can be certified in accordance with the modalities agreed upon by Regions, on the basis of the would-be Register of professions, and can be recorded on the *Libretto* (Booklet). Starting from this text, relevant Ministries and Regions have reached the State-Regions Agreement of April 19th 2012 for the "definition of a National Certification System of the competencies acquired during the apprenticeship period". This agreement also includes a number of key elements for the evolution of the general system (see box 1 par.1.7).

As pointed out, this agreement plays a key role, since it represents the evolution of the Italian system towards a National Framework of Standards for a European Certi-

fication, and in a more specific sense, because the validation of the apprenticeship outcomes has represented a weak point so far.

On June 28th 2012 the Law n.92/2012 on the reform of the labour market was approved: which identifies the validation of non-formal and informal learning and the National system of certification of competencies as two key factors in ensuring and implementing lifelong learning in view of employability of citizens. The Law provides for the creation of a National Register of education and training certifications and vocational qualifications, which anticipates the creation of a National Qualifications Framework. In addition, the law sets out the definition of general provisions for the validation of acquired competencies, as a precondition of the certification and validation of credits.

The text of the draft law addresses these topics in a holistic way, in the direction showed by the European Union, while starting the process of definition of national rules and standards in order to define the characteristics and the partners involved in the certification process and guarantee the transparency and the employability of acquired competencies and a wider access to validation and certification services.

Regional experiences

Beside the national level, in the last years all Italian Regions introduced some rules for validating non-formal and informal learning, with different tools and approaches. Based on a qualitative survey concluded in October 2011²¹ and recently updated, there are three main phases with regard to relevant policies and practices at a regional level.

The first group of Regions (see Table 1) worked on a preliminary definition and experimentation of validation and certification systems, mainly following urgent needs with regard to the implementation of apprenticeship programmes or active labour policies. Even though the introduction of the Unified Text for the Apprenticeship asks to modify regional Lawson apprenticeship approved in 2005, certification and validation principles still represent territorial decisions, and it is difficult to go back again. Another group of Regions (see Table 2) adopted a more formalized strategy aimed to the implementation of certification systems, which are still not active. Another group of six Regions (see Table 3) has already regulated and implemented a regional system for the certification and validation of the competencies acquired; they used regional registers of qualifications to structure their training provision and regulate the assessment and validation of previous competencies. The following tables summarize the state of the art of Regions in terms of certification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

21. See Isfol 2012 Validazione delle competenze da esperienza: approcci e pratiche in Italia e in Europa [Validation of competencies acquired by experience: approaches and practices from Italy and Europe], Rubbettino.

Table 1 – Systems (in a planning stage)

Region	Application field	Normative framework
Abruzzo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-oriented apprenticeship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Law No. 4 of December 4th 2009 "<i>Disciplina dell'apprendistato</i>" [Regulation of Apprenticeship]
Calabria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active labour policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Operational Plan (POR Calabria 2007-2013 "<i>Catalogo Regionale dell'offerta formativa per l'attuazione delle politiche attive del lavoro</i>" [Regional Register for the implementation of active labour policies]
Campania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-oriented apprenticeship • Adult education • Active labour policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework Agreement on Apprenticeship of December 14th 2010 • Action plan for "<i>Campania al lavoro!</i>" [Campania at Work!] of October 8th 2010
Friuli Venezia Giulia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-oriented apprenticeship • Adult education • School-work alternation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Law No.18 of August 9th 2005, entitled "<i>Regolamento dell'apprendistato professionalizzante</i>" [Regulation of work-oriented apprenticeship] • DGR No. 2023 DD. Of August 31st 2006
Molise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-oriented apprenticeship • Adult education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Regulation of January 8th 2010, No. 1. – Regulation implementing Regional Law of February 19th 2008, No. 3, entitled: "<i>Disciplina in materia di apprendistato</i>" [Regulation of apprenticeship]
Autonomous province of Bolzano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong learning • Lifelong adult education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Operational Plan for the years 2007-2013
Autonomous province of Trento	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-oriented apprenticeship • European programmes • Lifelong adult education • Voluntary work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Operational Plan for the years 2007-2013

Region	Application field	Normative framework
Puglia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong adult education • School-work alternation • Regional system of competences and experimentations for some professional areas and apprenticeship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law No. 59 of March 28th 2003 • DGR No. 2619 of December 28th 2009 • Regional Law No.31 of October 22nd 2012, entitled "<i>Norme in materia di formazione per il lavoro</i>" [Norms concerning work-oriented training] • D.G.R. No. 1604 of July 12nd 2011, entitled "<i>Protocollo d'intesa tra Regione Puglia e Regione Toscana per la collaborazione in materia di standard per il riconoscimento e la certificazione delle competenze</i>" [MoU between the Region of Puglia and the Region of Toscana for a cooperation on standards for recognition and certification of competencies] • DGR No. 2273 of November 13th 2012, entitled "<i>Indirizzi generali per la creazione del Sistema Regionale di competenze e Istituzione del comitato Tecnico regionale</i>" [General guidelines for the creation of a Regional system of competencies and of a Regional technical committee]
Sardegna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-oriented apprenticeship • Training courses for assistance to the elderly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Law No. 20/2005 • DGR No. 8/15 of 28/2/2006 • Work-oriented apprenticeship, 2010 Regional Directive • Deliberation No. 45/11 of December 21st 2010 – Leonardo da Vinci programme
Sicilia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent adult education • Active labour policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree of the Councillor for Family, Social Policies and Labour, No. 699 of August 12th 2010

Table 2 – Systems (in the implementation phase)

Region	Application field	Normative framework
Basilicata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional system of professional, educational and certification standards. A testing phase has started for some economic-professional areas and apprenticeship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Law No. 33 of December 11th 2003, entitled "<i>Riordino del sistema formativo integrato</i>" [Reform of the integrated system] (article No. 28) Deliberation of the Regional Committee of February 23rd 2011, No. 243, "<i>Documento metodologico per la costruzione del Repertorio regionale ...</i>" [Methodological document for the creation of the Regional Register] Deliberation of the Regional Committee of November 8th 2011, No. 1625 establishing the "<i>Repertorio regionale dei profili professionali della Basilicata</i>" [Regional Register of professional profiles of Basilicata] Deliberation of the Regional Committee of May 17th 2012, No. 625, establishing the Regional Register of certifications
Lazio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional system in a preliminary phase; tests of work-oriented apprenticeship, job centres and for the Ministry of Defence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lazio 2020 in the field of the Regional Operational Plan 2007-2013 MoU between the Region and the Regional Military Centre for the "management of certifications of specific training pathways and competencies of Military Staff" Deliberation of the Regional Committee of 11th September No. 452, entitled "<i>Istituzione di un Repertorio Regionale delle competenze e dei profili formativi e all'approvazione delle Linee di indirizzo e Procedura di aggiornamento</i>" [Creation of a Regional Register of competencies and training profiles and approval of guidelines and updating procedure]

Region	Application field	Normative framework
Liguria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System defined in 2009; tests of work-oriented apprenticeship, adult education and foreign migrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Law No. 18 of May 11th 2009, concerning a "<i>Sistema educativo regionale di Istruzione, Formazione e Orientamento</i>". [Regional system of Education, Training and Guidance] Guidelines for the experimentation of work-oriented apprenticeship – Technical Group, MoU between the Region of Liguria and social partners (2008) Regional Law No. 7 of 2007 – Norms for the integration of foreign citizens. Three-year plan for Education, Training and Work (2010-2012)
Marche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tests in the field of school-work alternation, continuous training and lifelong adult education. System regulated in 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Law No. 2 of 2005. Regional norms for occupation, protection and quality of work DGR 1656 of November 22nd 2010 "<i>Approvazione dell'architettura del sistema regionale per il riconoscimento e la certificazione delle competenze della Regione Marche</i>" [Approval of the regional system for the recognition and certification of competencies in the Region of Marche]
Veneto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experimental actions started in 2009 in education and training institutes, job services and job agencies. The final recipients of experimental initiatives are employed, non-employed and unemployed people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DGR 1758 of June 16th 2009

Table 3 – Systems (in a consolidation phase)

Region	Application field	Normative framework
Emilia Romagna	• Regional Certification System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Law No. 12 of 2003 • Deliberation of Regional Committee No. 530 of April 19th 2006, entitled "<i>Il sistema regionale di formalizzazione e certificazione delle competenze</i>" [Regional system of formalization and certification of competencies]
Lombardia	• Regional Certification System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DGR No. 8/6563 of February 13th 2008, entitled "<i>Indicazioni regionali per l'offerta formativa in materia di istruzione e formazione professionale</i>" [Regional indications for the training offer in the field of Vocational Education and Training], namely part III, entitled "<i>Certificazione delle competenze e riconoscimento dei crediti formativi</i>" [Certification of competencies and validation of credits] • Decree No. 7105 of July 29th 2011, entitled "<i>Aggiornamento del Quadro Regionale degli Standard Professionali</i>" [Updating the Regional Framework of Professional Standards] • Decree No.13503 of December 22 2010 entitles "approvazione del modello di certificazione competenze non formali e informali – 1 applicazione" (approval of the format for certification of non-formal and informal competences – 1st application) • Decree No. 9380 of October 22nd 2012, entitled "<i>Approvazione del modello e delle procedure per il sistema di certificazione delle competenze acquisite in ambito non formale e informale in Regione Lombardia</i>" [Approving the model and procedures for the system of certification of competencies acquired in non-formal and informal contexts in the Region of Lombardia]

Region	Application field	Normative framework
Piemonte	• Regional Certification System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DGR No. 152-3672 of August 2nd 2006 • Guidelines for certification
Toscana	• Regional Certification System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Law No.32/2002 • Regulation for the implementation of the Regional system of competencies – Regulation implementing Regional Law No. 32/2002 – Text including amendments approved by DGR No. 731/2010
Umbria	• Regional Certification System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberation of the Regional Committee No. 51 of January 18th 2010, entitled "<i>Approvazione della Direttiva sul sistema regionale degli standard professionali, formativi, di certificazione e di attestazione</i>" [Endorsement of the Directive concerning the regional system of professional, training, certification and validation standards]
Valle d'Aosta	• Regional Certification System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberation of the Regional Committee No. 2712 of October 2nd 2009, entitled "<i>Approvazione delle Disposizioni per l'istituzione e la gestione del sistema regionale di certificazione delle competenze e per la costituzione del repertorio degli standard professionali</i>" [Endorsement of the Regulations concerning the creation and the management of a regional system of certification and a regional register of professional standards] • Endorsement of the creation of the Regional register of profiles, professional standards and competencies; approval of criteria and modalities for the application of art. No. 19 of Regional Law of March 31st 2003 No. 7, entitled "<i>Disposizioni in materia di politiche regionali del lavoro, di formazione professionale e di riorganizzazione dei servizi per l'impiego</i>" [Regulations in the field of regional labour policies, vocational training and reorganization of job centres]

In general, it can be said that, as other European countries, Italy started formal actions or initiatives, in order to enhance and reaffirm the principles of certifiability of all LOs. In the Regions where systems and strategies are more consolidated, there is also a normative framework, that includes professional and qualification standards and credit validation systems.

Regions are gradually agreeing on criteria and instruments to match the specificity of territories and regional normative backgrounds with criteria and instruments designed at national level (for example, the *Libretto formativo del Cittadino* - Citizen Learning Booklet) and, consequently, with European strategies and orientations.

Particularly relevant is that Regions and Autonomous Provinces, approved on the document *Sistema nazionale di certificazione delle competenze - Elementi minimi condivisi* (National certification system of competencies - Minimum shared elements), where is defined the structure of the national system and the actors involved.

The above mentioned document includes not only the contents of the Agreement of April 19th 2012, but also additional elements such as prevision of a monitoring plan for upgrading the existing regional systems of certification and implementing the new ones, according to the minimum standards identified in the document. All that to ensure conditions of consistency among the various regional systems, so that the certified competencies can be used at national level.

As regards the inter-regional cooperation, a good practice has already been implemented in different territories: it consists of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by several regions in order to exchange experiences, tools and technical devices, regarding competencies' recognition. (I.e. MoU between Emilia-Romagna and Toscana as well as between Puglia and Basilicata).

This system takes advantage of the benefits related to the inter-regional cooperation:

- reducing time for implementing new systems;
- enhancing the regional standards over the minimum national level;
- producing a large saving of public resources to be allocated to other services.

The case of Emilia Romagna Region

The certification system of the Region of Emilia Romagna is based on the principle that "each person has the right to obtain the formal recognition of the competencies acquired". This is a well-articulated system aimed at certifying the individual professional background, while allowing individuals, young people and workers to evaluate and plan future professional and training experiences. The competencies certified under this system are considered to be certain, reliable, credible and usable in training and vocational pathways, since they refer or can be referred to the basic professional standards indicated in the Regional Qualifications System.

Within the regional certification system of Emilia Romagna, the competencies however acquired are certified: formal competences (acquired within the education and training system) as well as non formal and informal ones (acquired within work, social and private contexts).

The process of assessment, preceding the certification of formal competencies, is based on an individual orientation phase, and on the preparation and verification of evidences, like as: formal documents (declarations, collaborations contracts, self-declarations, certificates); output evidence (product samples - report letters, reports, softwares, etc.); action-based evidence (testimonies, audio-video recordings, log-books, direct observation). At the end of the assessment and validation process, the candidate can obtain a Certificate of Vocational Qualification (including all units the qualification is made of) or a Certificate of Competencies (concerning some units) or even a Knowledge and Skills Sheet (concerning only a part of a unit). The first two certificates can be acquired only at the end of a formal examination, while the Knowledge and Skills Sheet can be obtained after the verification of evidence. The certification system of Emilia Romagna Region is currently in its implementation phase. A first engineering phase of the validation and certification system of non-formal and informal learning, for the award of a professional qualification was addressed to Socio-Assistance Operators (OSA) and it produced excellent results.

The case of Lombardia Region

Deliberation No. 6274 of 21/12/2007 formalized the process of validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning for the accreditation in Vocational Education and Training pathways. In particular, Vocational Education and Training centres are called to validate credits on the basis of evidence and documents presented by the applicants, such as: qualifications, diplomas, final marks and any other informal documentation of school results, intermediate certifications of competencies awarded by schools and training agencies, concerning practical applications, training experiences or internships in Italy and abroad, positive evaluation of extra-curricular activities, foreign languages certificates, cultural or work activities, experience gained in various fields of civil society with regard to personal development, civil work and cultural development (work, environment, voluntary work, solidarity, cooperation, sport), certificates of knowledge, competencies and skills acquired in the apprenticeship system, as a consequence of work activities or self-training.

In case the documents are considered to be insufficient or incomplete, the applicant may be asked to take specific evaluation tests. Vocational Education and Training centres are responsible for the assessment and validation process. They assign a value to the credits (validated credits can account for a maximum of 50% of the training pathway).

The validation process entails a personalized process in which the applicant plays an active role for the identification and reconstruction of his/her professional identity, through the use of specific instruments such as the creation of a curriculum vitae, orientation activities, personalized advisory services and customized access to other services.

At the end of the assessment and validation process, which lasts a maximum of 6 months, the applicant will receive a Certification of Competencies on the basis of the relevant EQF level, which will be registered in his/her learning Booklet.

2. The system of professions

The system of professions falls under the jurisdiction of the State and the Regions, with shared responsibilities¹. The identification of professional figures, professional profiles and relevant training plans, the regulation of certificates needed to exercise a profession, as well as the setting up of new professional register fall under the competence of the State; Regions have the legislative competence with regard to the aspects that are not directly linked with fundamental principles.

The authorities allowed to release licenses to exercise regulated professions are the State, through Ministries and Provincial Labour Directorates, and the Regions. These certificates are licensed on the basis of constitutional provisions and specific Laws regulating each profession.

The organization of the Italian system of professions can be divided into:

- Intellectual and non-intellectual professions, with regard to training pathways, access to the profession, deontology and fees;
- Regulated professions² and non-regulated professions.

Intellectual professions include:

- liberal professions, regulated and protected to defend public interests, requiring the registration into professional lists and the creation of professional Registers with control functions;

1. The system of professions is regulated by Title V of the Constitution, article 117. The framework Law to understand and design the tasks of the State and the Regions hasn't been enacted yet, but there is a consolidated orientation of the Constitutional Court on that.

2. Definition drawn from the European Directive 2005/36/CE: "a professional activity or group of professional activities, access to which, the pursuit of which, or one of the modes of pursuit of which is subject, directly or indirectly, by virtue of legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to the possession of specific professional qualifications; in particular, the use of a professional title limited by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to holders of a given professional qualification shall constitute a mode of pursuit". The Regulation does not concern the profession as a whole but the professional activity only. The same Directive 2005/36/CE, while defining a regulated profession, introduces the notion of activity or set of activity for which a given qualification is required.

- professions regulated by Law, requiring to pass a State examination (teachers, etc.) and the registration into dedicated lists without the creation of a specific Register (for example: insurance assessors, insurance agents, etc.);
- professions that entail specific function or activities limited to the Public Administration, for which a specific qualification is required;
- non-regulated intellectual professions, represented by free associations, generated by the consistent restructuring and outsourcing processes of enterprises, the pervasiveness of technological development, the globalization of production and exchanges, the development of services aimed at satisfying cultural, leisure, assistance and care needs.

Non-intellectual regulated professions can be exercised on the basis of a specific qualification established by Law.

2.1 Regulated professions

Liberal professions

Professional registers are set up to ensure the performance of certain activities to persons who are eligible to perform them (art. 2229 of the Civil Code), and to entrust the State with the control on eligibility, in order to make sure that professionals have the technical and professional skills required to ensure good quality performance to the customer.

A practitioner, to carry out his/her activities, must be qualified to do his/her job. To achieve this qualification he/she shall pass a State exam and register to the relevant professional Register. This registration not only has the function of public information, but it also gives legal certainty to exercise a profession.

The rules regarding the discipline of registered professions are of public interest. There are some special Laws establishing the reserved matters and providing for professional Registers and their tasks. In the absence of registration to a professional Register, the intellectual work relationship does not arise legally, like the right to payment. In addition, the operator who has violated the rule, incurs in the crime of unauthorized practice.

The professions regulated by law, registered in a list

Some professions are practiced by professionals who, based on the fact that they meet certain requirements – such as, detection of a qualification or passing a special exam – are listed into a Register that enables them to exercise their profession. Among these professions are those:

- for which there is a list, called "register" or "role" by the legislator, which is held by a public authority for information only, i.e. to disclose to third parties the names of members;

- the practice of which by a non-member does not give rise to the crime of unauthorized practice, or to a contract of work which is null and void, but only to potential administrative fines. Included in this latter case is the register of agents and brokers; or
- other activities require the passing of a State examination (e.g. a statistician who wants to work at a government department, or a psychomotor therapist who wishes to work in public hospitals, or a teacher etc.). In this case the State exam ascertains the level of education of the examinee and does not regulate the practice of the profession.

Non-intellectual regulated professions

Non-intellectual regulated professions are regulated at central level by Ministries playing the role of competent authorities and, at a regional level, by the Regions and Municipalities. Ministries are responsible for identifying the learning objectives, i.e. the main technical and practical subjects. Regions, in turn, are responsible for: a) providing training, b) carrying out the theoretical and practical examination for access to the qualification, and c) promoting training and retraining. Finally, Municipalities are charged with the task of issuing municipal regulations on how to carry out professional activities and open shops - these qualifications are necessary for any professional performance.

2.2 Non-regulated professions

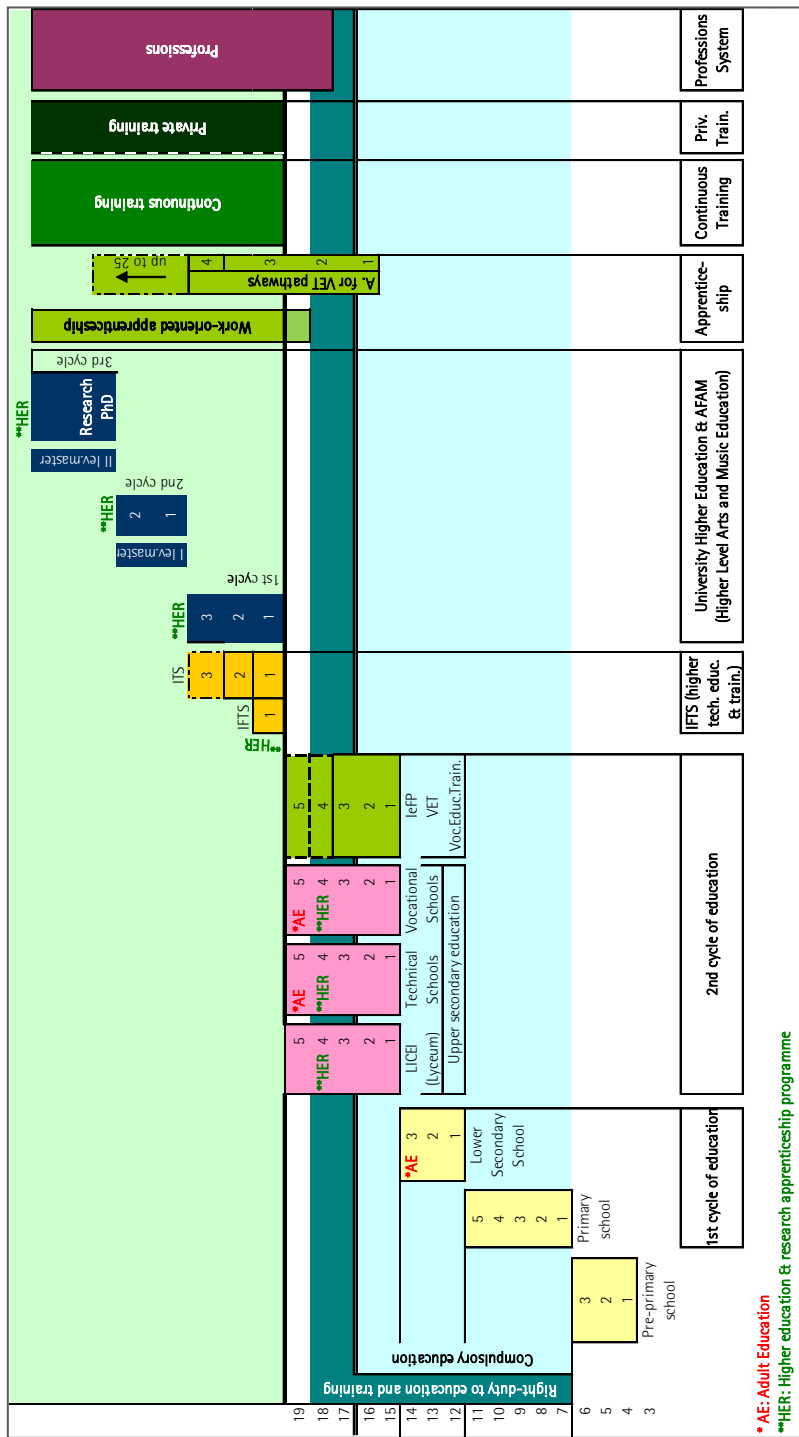
Non-regulated intellectual professions are those for which a specific qualification is not required by Law and access is free. This applies to all those professional activities: practised by professionals, not included enrolled into voluntary registers: the regulated professions. Non-regulated professionals are grouped in professional associations whose main goals are:

- to protect professions and clients from any improper and/or incorrect practice;
- to promote them in the market. Membership in such associations is not compulsory.

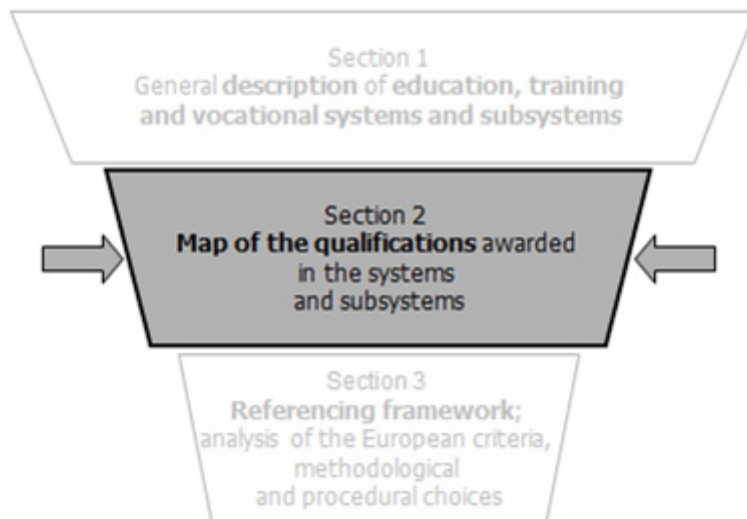
Although there is no provision on the recognition of professional associations or of the new professions, Legislative Decree 206/2007 - which transposed Directive 2005/36/EC in Italy - recognizes that professional associations would play an advisory role, should European³ training platforms be defined. In order to be considered representative, such associations must meet a number of requirements and undergo a preliminary investigation led by the Ministry of Justice in accordance with the Department for European Policies.

3. Article 26 of the aforementioned Decree states that should national service conferences be held for the definition of European training platforms for non-regulated professions, the competent authorities shall consult with the most representative professional associations at the National level.

Graphical representation of section 1



Section 2 – Qualifications awarded In the Italian system



Qualifications awarded by competent public authorities

Qualifications awarded by competent public authorities can be divided into the following categories:

QUALIFICATIONS AWARDED IN THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM	
Qualifications	Competent authorities
Qualifications awarded at the end of the first and second cycle of education	MIUR
Qualifications awarded at the end of a Vocational Education and Training pathway	Regions
Qualifications awarded in the Higher Technical Education and Training system	MIUR/Regions
Qualifications awarded in the University Higher Education system	MIUR
Qualifications awarded in non-University Higher Education system: AFAM and other Institutes	MIUR
Qualifications of the initial and continuous vocational training	Regions
Qualifications of the apprenticeship system	Regions/MIUR
QUALIFICATIONS AWARDED IN THE SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONS	
Qualifications	Competent authorities
Licenses for regulated professions	Competent Ministries

3. Qualifications awarded in the education and training system*

3.1 Qualifications awarded in the first and second cycle of education

The first qualification of the Italian education and training system is awarded at the end of the first cycle of education (Lower secondary education).

The competent authority is the Ministry of Education.

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione</i>	Awarded at the end of a Lower secondary education pathway.
Lower secondary school leaving diploma	Competent authority: MIUR

After the fulfilment of compulsory education, generally at the end of the first two years of Upper secondary education, a formal certificate is awarded to certify the acquisition of basic knowledge and competencies¹. Introduced in school year 2010-11, this certificate is awarded after a formal request by the student or automatically for those aged at least 18.

* The Italian Law recognizes the "legal status" of these qualifications. The legal status of a qualification determines a legal certainty about the possession, by the holders, of given cultural and professional knowledge, as a result of the conformity of the education pathway to the standards of the National didactic regulation. The legal certainty does not only operates in the didactic system, while allowing the continuations of studies, but in the whole National legal system, allowing the participation into public competitions or the exercise of given professions, after passing a State examination (art 33. of the Constitution). The translation of qualifications titles is agreed by the institutional actors but formally recognized.

1. The form is attached to MIUR Decree no. 9 of January 27th 2010, in application of the Regulation of the compulsory education. The certificate is valid for both Upper Secondary Education and Vocational Education and Training pathways.

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione</i> Compulsory education certificate	Awarded as a result of the fulfilment of compulsory education. It certifies the acquisition of basic competencies and knowledge. Competent authority: MIUR/Regions

At the end of three-year and four-year VET pathways, after passing a final examination in accordance with regional regulations, an *Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale* (Professional operator certificate) and a *Diploma professionale di tecnico* (Professional technician diploma) are awarded. These qualifications can be also gained through an apprenticeship contract.

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale</i> Professional operator certificate	Awarded at the end of a three-year education and training pathway. It includes reference to the relevant national professional figure and the regional profile, in addition to the denomination of the qualification acquired. Competent authority: Regions
<i>Diploma professionale di tecnico</i> Professional technician diploma	Awarded at the end of a four-year education and training pathway. It includes reference to the relevant national professional figure and the regional profile, in addition to the denomination of the qualification acquired. Competent authority: Regions

At the end of five-year Upper secondary education pathways and after passing a final State examination, three types of qualifications can be awarded:

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Diploma liceale</i> Upper secondary education diploma - <i>Licei</i>	After passing a State examination at the end of a five-year <i>Liceo</i> , the Upper secondary education diploma is awarded. It includes the type of <i>Liceo</i> , as well as the specialization chosen by the student. Competent authority: MIUR
<i>Diploma di istruzione tecnica</i> Upper secondary education diploma - Technical schools	After passing a State examination at the end of a five-year technical school, the Upper secondary education diploma is awarded. It includes the specialization chosen by the student and the competencies acquired. Competent authority: MIUR

<i>Diploma di istruzione professionale</i> Upper secondary education diploma – Vocational schools	After passing a State examination at the end of a five-year professional school, the Upper secondary education diploma is awarded. It includes the specialization chosen by the student and the competencies acquired. Competent authority: MIUR
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The qualifications of the Upper secondary education can be achieved even through the participation to an Higher Education apprenticeship programmes.

3.2 Qualifications awarded in the Higher Technical Education and Training system

The Higher Technical Education and Training system provides for the following qualifications:

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Diploma di tecnico superiore</i> Higher technical education diploma	Awarded at the end of Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) courses as per art.5 Decree of the MIUR-MLPS of September 7 th 2011 and art.7 DPCM of January 25 th 2008 Competent authority: MIUR
<i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i> Higher technical specialization certificate	Awarded at the end of Higher Technical Education and Training pathways (IFTS) (art.9 DPCM January 25 th 2008) Competent authority: Regions

The above-mentioned qualifications can be also achieved through Higher Education apprenticeship programmes.

3.3 Qualifications awarded in the Tertiary Education system

University Higher Education

The University Higher Education system awards the following qualifications:

FIRST CYCLE

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Laurea</i> Bachelor's degree	Awarded at the end of three-year Bachelors' degree courses (180 ECTS) aimed at "ensuring adequate mastery of scientific methods and general contents, even in case the course is oriented towards the acquisition of specific professional competencies". Competent authority: MIUR

Qualifications of the previous university system included in the first cycle:

- *Diploma di scuole dirette a fini speciali* (Diploma of schools for special purposes;)
- *Diploma universitario* (University diploma).

SECOND CYCLE

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Laurea Magistrale</i> Master's degree	Awarded at the end of a master's degree course, generally of two years (120 ECTS), aiming at "providing the student with advanced education for the exercise of highly specialized activities in specific fields". Awarded at the end of <i>Corsi di laurea magistrale a ciclo unico</i> (Combined bachelor's and master's degree courses) from 5 to 6 years, for a total of 300 to 360 credits*. Competent authority: MIUR
<i>Master universitario di primo livello</i> First-level university master	Awarded at the end of a higher scientific specialization course or a higher continuous training pathway after the <i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree). The length of a <i>Master universitario di primo livello</i> (First level university master) is of one year. Competent authority: MIUR

* The *Laurea a ciclo unico* (Combined bachelor's and master's degree) categories are: LMG/01 Law; LM - 4 Architecture and Construction Engineering - Architecture (five years); LM - 13 Pharmacy and industrial pharmacy; LM - 41 Medicine and Surgery; LM - 42 Veterinary medicine; LM - 46 Dentistry and dental prosthesis.

Qualifications of the old university system included in the second cycle: *Laurea Specialistica* (Specialized degree).

THIRD CYCLE

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> Research doctorate (PhD)	Awarded at the end of a three-year research doctorate. They are regulated by universities and aim at providing the "necessary competencies to carry out, in universities, public or private institutions, highly specialized research activities". Competent authority: MIUR
<i>Diploma di specializzazione</i> Specialization diploma	Awarded at the end of a specialization course (2-6 years), with the aim of "providing the student with knowledge and skills to carry out given professional activities; it can be established only as a result of the application of specific norms or European Directives". Competent authority: MIUR
<i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II)</i> Higher specialization diploma	Awarded at the end of one-year higher specialization courses, created to respond to cultural and research needs in specific fields, or to the need of refreshing courses, professional re-qualification courses or lifelong education pathways. Competent authority: MIUR
<i>Master universitario di secondo livello</i> Second level university master	Awarded at the end of scientific higher specialization courses and permanent higher education courses, after a <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's degree); the minimum length is one year. Competent authority: MIUR

All the qualifications awarded through the first, second and third cycle of education can be also achieved at the end of higher education apprenticeship programmes.

Higher Level Arts and Music Education (AFAM)

FIRST LEVEL

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> First-level academic diploma	Awarded at the end of a first-level academic diploma course with the aim of ensuring adequate mastery of artistic methods and the acquisition of specific professional competencies. Competent authority: MIUR

SECOND LEVEL

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> Second-level academic diploma	Awarded at the end of a second-level academic diploma with the aim of providing the student with advanced training for a full mastery of artistic methods and the acquisition of high professional skills. Competent authority: MIUR
<i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (I)</i> Higher specialization diploma or master (I)	Awarded at the end of a higher specialization diploma course or a master course to respond to specific cultural needs in specific contexts or as a refreshing course, a professional requalification course or a continuous education pathway. Competent authority: MIUR
<i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione</i> Academic specialization diploma (I)	Awarded at the end of a specialization course with the aim of providing the student with high professional skills in specific application fields. Competent authority: MIUR

THIRD LEVEL

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca</i> Research training academic diploma	Awarded at the end of a research training course with the aim of providing the student with adequate competencies to design and implement high qualification research activities. Competent authority: MIUR
<i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II)</i> Higher specialization diploma or master (II)	Awarded at the end of a higher specialization diploma or an academic master course to respond to specific cultural needs in specific contexts and as a refreshing course, a professional requalification course or a continuous education pathway. Competent authority: MIUR
<i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione (II)</i> Academic specialization diploma (II)	Awarded at the end of a specialization course with the aim of providing the student with high professional skills in specific application fields. Competent authority: MIUR

Other Institutes

Different types of qualifications are also awarded by Higher Education institutes, which do neither belong to the University system nor to AFAM. These courses generally have a different length and provide different opportunities to access further education pathways. Here are a few examples:

Denomination	Procedure
Scuole Superiori per Mediatori Linguistici (Higher school for linguistic mediators) <i>Diploma di mediatore linguistico</i> Linguistic mediator diploma	Awarded at the end of a three-year course. The qualification has the same legal status as a <i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree) in the category of Sciences of linguistic mediation. Competent authority: MIUR
Istituti/Scuole di Psicoterapia (Psycho-therapy schools/institutes) <i>Diploma di psicoterapeuta</i> Diploma in psychotherapy	Awarded at the end of a four-year course. The qualification has the same legal status as 3 rd cycle qualifications in psychology and similar disciplines, awarded by Italian universities. Competent authority: MIUR

3.4 Qualifications awarded in the initial and continuous training system

The initial and continuous training system awards the following qualifications:

Denomination	Procedure
<i>Attestato di qualifica professionale</i> Professional qualification	Awarded at the end of post-qualification, post-diploma and post-degree courses, generally after passing a final examination aimed at verifying the fulfilment of the training objectives of the project, defined against vocational and training standards at a regional level (if any). Competent authority: Regions
<i>Certificato di competenze</i> Certificate of competencies	Awarded at the end of short training courses for the development of single competencies codified by a regional register, or as an intermediate certification of competencies. Competent authority: Regions

3.5 Qualifications awarded in apprenticeship programmes

Apprenticeship programmes allow for the acquisition of the following qualifications:

Denomination	Procedures
<i>Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale</i> Professional operator certificate <i>Diploma professionale di tecnico</i> Professional technician diploma	Apprenticeship programmes award: Professional operator certificate (three-year) and a Professional technician diploma. Competent authority: Regions
<i>Certificato di competenze</i> Certificate of competencies	Work-oriented apprenticeship programmes generally awards a qualification as intended by collective agreements. The norm states that in completion of this type of apprenticeship, a certification of basic, transversal and technical-professional competencies may be awarded by Regions. Competent authority: Regions
<i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> <i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i> , <i>Diploma di tecnico superiore</i> , <i>titoli dell'istruzione superiore universitaria</i> Upper secondary education diploma: <i>Licei</i> , Technical schools, Vocational schools Higher technical specialization certificate and Higher technical education diploma, University qualifications	Higher education apprenticeship programmes allow to achieve all qualifications awarded by the 2 nd and 3 rd level education system. Competent authorities: MIUR and Regions

4. Qualifications awarded in the system of professions

4.1 The qualifications for regulated professions and the competent authorities

Access to regulated professions is subject to the award of an authorization certificate, which may fall under the competence of the State - through Ministries and Provincial Directorates - and/or the Regions.

Denomination	Procedures
License for professions requiring registration with a professional register	For the awarding of the licence, it is required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pass a State examination;• register with a professional register. Holding a specific academic degree is a prerequisite to obtain these authorizations. The Unified Text on Apprenticeship provides for the possibility that the preparatory period for registered professions is carried out through an apprenticeship contract of advanced training and research.
License for professions requiring registration with a list	For the issuing of the license, it is required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pass a State examination;• register with a list. Holding a specific academic degree is a prerequisite to obtain these authorizations.
License for professions in the scope of the civil service	This license refers to the practice of specific professions within the civil service.
License for specifically regulated professions	This license refers to the practice of some regulated professions for which he/she is expected to hold a specific qualification.

Below listed are the Italian Authorities responsible for carrying out the professional recognition and the professions they are responsible for.

Competent Authority	Professions for which a qualification is awarded
Ministry of Health	Allergology and Clinical Immunology, Pathological Anatomy, Anesthetist and Intensive Care, Caregiver, Medical Assistant, Audiology and Speech therapy, Clinical Biochemistry, Digestive Surgery, General Surgery, Maxillofacial Surgery, Oral Surgery, Pediatric Surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Thoracic Surgery Cardiac Surgery, Vascular Surgery, Dermatology and Venereology, Dietician, Hematology, Endocrinology and Metabolic diseases, Pharmacist, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Gastroenterology, Geriatrics, Gynecology and Obstetrics, Dental Hygienist, Hygiene and Preventive Medicine, Nurse, Pediatric Nurse, Professional Nurses, Speech Therapist, Cardiovascular diseases, Respiratory diseases, Infectious diseases, Massager, Head lifeguard at hydrotherapy facilities, Occupational Medicine, Sports Medicine, Community Medicine, Emergency Medicine, General Medicine, Internal Medicine, Forensic Medicine, Nuclear Medicine, Tropical Medicine, Microbiology and Virology, Nephrology, Neurosurgery, Neurophysiology, Neurology, Neuropsychiatry, Child Neuropsychiatry, Dentistry, Ophthalmology, Medical Oncology, Orthodontics, Orthopedics and Traumatology, Obstetrics, ENT Oto(rhino)laryngology, Optician, Pediatrics, Podiatrist, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Radiology, Radiology, Radiotherapy, Rheumatology, Food Science, Audiometrist, Audiologist, Medical Laboratory Technician, Biomedical Laboratory Technician, Medical Radiation Technologist, Occupational Therapist, Blind Rehabilitation Therapist, Neuro and Psychomotor Therapist D.A., Medical Toxicology Medical Genetics, Urology, Veterinary
Ministry of Justice	Junior Forest Agronomist, Agrotechnician, Junior Social Worker, Social Worker Specialist, Actuary, Junior Actuary, Lawyer, Junior Biologist, Agricultural Biotechnologist, Chemical, Junior Chemist, Agronomist Doctor and Forestry Doctor, Chartered Accountant and Certified Public Accountant, Geologist, Junior Geologist, Surveyor, Journalist, Civil and Environmental Engineer, Junior Civil and Environmental Engineer, Information Engineer, Junior Information Engineer, Industrial Engineer, Junior Industrial Engineer, Agricultural Surveyor, Industrial Expert and Graduate Industrial Expert, Auditor, Zoonomist

Ministry of Education, University and Research	Architect, Junior Architect, Curator of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage, Professor at First Grade Secondary Schools, Professor at Second Grade Secondary Schools, Kindergarten Teacher, Primary School Teacher, Technical Professor (secondary education), Professional Educator, Landscape, Territorial Planner
Ministry of Labour and Social Policies	Labour Consultant, Beautician
Ministry of Economic Development	Agent, Business Agent, Pest Control, Deratisation and Sanitation Activities, Installation, Transformation, Extension and Maintenance of Systems, Repairer, Industrial Property Consultant, Brokers in the Wholesale, General Stores, Trade Intermediary, Sea Intermediaries, Hairdresser, Delivery of Food and Beverage, Freight Forwarder, Appraiser and Public Weigher
Ministry of Cultural Heritage	Curator of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage, Manufacture and Repair of Musical Instruments, Jewellery, Precious Stones Cut, Restorer
Ministry of Transport	Air Traffic Controller, Brokers in the Sale, Purchase or Hiring of Ships
Presidency of the Council of Ministers	Tourist Guide, Technical Director of Travel Agency. Activities related to sport, Mountain Guide, Ski Instructor, Snowboard Teacher

BOX 2 - The National Contact Point for professional recognition

Within the Department for European Affairs - Office of Internal Market and Competitiveness - the **National Contact Point for professional recognition (NCP)**¹ provides all citizens with the information they require to understand the complex system of EU and National regulations, standards and principles governing the free movement of professionals in the European Union.

The NCP provides both citizens and contact points of the Member States with any information that may be relevant to the recognition of professional qualifications provided for in Directive 2005/36/EC. In addition, the NCP provides information on the National legislation regulating professions and their practice, including social legislation, and, if necessary, the rules of ethics. The NCP also cooperates with the contact points and the related competent authorities of the other Member States.

1. Email of the Italian Contact Point: puntonazionalecontattoqualificheprofessionali@politicheeuropee.it.
Web: www.politicheeuropee.it

5. Qualifications awarded by private Institutes

Mapping the qualifications awarded by private institutes and "private competent authorities" is a complex issue, since these qualifications are subject to ever-changing evolutions.

An example of these qualifications is the certification of *Valutatore di Sistemi Qualità* [Evaluator of Quality Systems] awarded by the *Associazione Italiana Cultura Qualità* [Italian Association for the Culture of Quality], partner of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). Candidates who have successfully completed the course are awarded the relevant certification and are included in the Register of Evaluators of Quality Systems created by the AICQ to certify evaluators.

Another example are the certificates released by CEPAS (a no-profit association that operates as an authority for the certification of professional competencies and training) in order to respond to the need of the market to enhance professional activities with the highest guarantee of competence and experience. Professional competencies are certified in accordance to the norm ISO/IEC 17024 (non compulsory technical norm, adopted on a voluntary basis) "*Requisiti generali per gli Organismi che operano nella certificazione del personale*" [General requirements for Organizations operating in the field of certification of professional competencies]. CEPAS certifies professional competencies in different fields: Quality, Environment, Safety, Security, HACCP, Health, Construction and Plants, Biological Agriculture, Marketing, Sales, Credit Recovery, Real Estate Administration and Apart-Block Administration, Metrology: Mechanic measurement and CMM, Forests, Prevention and Protection Services, Enterprise Training and Organization, Management Consultancy, Life Science, Food Security, etc.

Until 2009, the accreditation system concerning the conformity to "voluntary norms" (ex. ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO/IEC 17025) fell under the competence of three main organizations: Sincert, Sinal e SIT. Following the European Regulation 765/2008, Italy has appointed ACCREDIA as the organization provided for by the Regulation, while determining relevant requirements. Accredia is a no-profit association made up by Ministries, national administrations, corporate and professional organizations, and other relevant partners. Accredia evaluates the technical competencies and the professional adequacy of evaluators (Laboratories and Organizations),

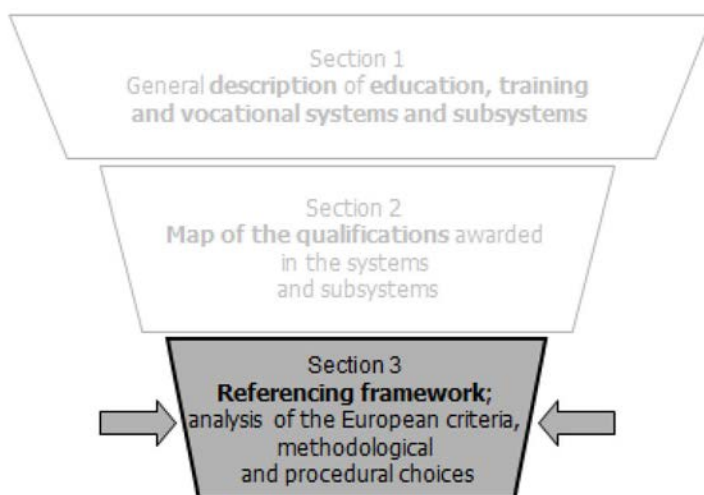
while verifying the conformity to compulsory rules and voluntary norms, in order to ensure the value and the credibility of certifications.

With regard to linguistic competencies, in 2001 the Resolution of the Council of Europe established the CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - with the aim of providing a method to assess linguistic skills for all European languages. The framework is based on six reference levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2) widely accepted as parameters to evaluate individual language skills. Most certifying bodies are adopting descriptors of language skills for the certifications they release or, alternatively, they provide a form to convert their own certification levels into European standards.

With regard to information technology, Microsoft certifications concern a wide range of professional roles and responsibilities. They aimed at certifying the competence to carry out critical IT activities. A few examples of these certifications are: Microsoft SQL Server 2005, Microsoft Visual Studio 2005 e Microsoft BizTalk Server 2006.

As to the certification of IT competencies, the ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) certifies the ability to use a personal computer on different levels of specialization, and is considered a reference standard at international level. The ECDL certification is acknowledged at international level and proves that the holder knows the fundamentals of IT and that he/she has the necessary skills to use a personal computer and the most important software. It is addressed to students, workers, citizens and those who are interested in having their IT skills certified. The certifying organization in Italy is AICA *Associazione Italiana per l'Informatica ed il Calcolo Automatico* [Italian Association for Informatics and Automatic Calculation].

Section 3 – Referencing the qualifications awarded by the Italian system to the EQF



6. Referencing Italian qualifications to the EQF

The Italian Referencing Process of qualifications to the EQF was started at the end of 2008 by a dedicated Technical Group. This Group worked with all relevant stakeholders of the education and training system, namely: the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of Education, University and Research, the Department for European Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Regions and Autonomous Provinces, social partners. Isfol, that hosts the EQF National Coordination Point, and CIMEA, a technical body of the Ministry of Education, also contributed to the Referencing Process.

The Referencing Process was carried out in a period of intense evolution of the Italian education and training system, especially for the Upper secondary education, the Higher technical education and the Vocational Education and Training system. The simultaneous work contributed to re-orienting the national reform processes in accordance with the principles defined at European level.

The Technical Group agreed to limit the scope of application of the Referencing Process, namely:

- Only the qualifications awarded by public authorities are considered for the purposes of the Referencing Process;
- only qualifications recognized on a national level are considered, because they are awarded by national authorities (Ministry of Education and University) or in the framework of State-Regions agreements;
- the Referencing Process considers only qualifications still awarded.

In particular, the Referencing Process does not consider:

- licenses for regulated professions, as per Directive 2005/36/EC. In agreement with the representatives of the Department for European Policies, the Referencing Process of regulated professions will be reported at a later stage;
- other qualifications awarded by Regions and Autonomous Provinces, not regulated by State-Regions Agreements. In agreement with the Regions, the Referencing Process of these qualifications will be reported at a later stage;
- the qualifications awarded in the private system (See Sect. 2, par. 3).

The results of the Italian Referencing Process to the EQF is reported in the following table.

Referencing framework of Italian National qualifications

EQF Level	Type of qualification	Competent authority	Relevant education/training pathway
1	<i>Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione</i> Lower secondary school leaving diploma	MIUR	Lower secondary school
2	<i>Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione</i> Compulsory education certificate	MIUR or Regions, according to the type of education pathway	End of the first two-years: <i>Licei</i> , Technical schools, Vocational schools, three-year and four-year VET pathways
3	<i>Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale</i> Professional operator certificate	Regions	Three-year VET pathways ¹ .
4	<i>Diploma professionale di tecnico</i> Professional technician diploma	Regions	Four-year VET pathways ²
	<i>Diploma liceale</i> Upper secondary education diploma - <i>Licei</i>	MIUR	Five-year Upper secondary schools (<i>licei</i>) (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
	<i>Diploma di istruzione tecnica</i> Upper secondary education diploma - Technical schools	MIUR	Five-year technical schools (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
	<i>Diploma di istruzione professionale</i> Upper secondary education diploma - Vocational schools	MIUR	Five-year vocational schools (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
	<i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i> Higher technical specialization certificate	Regions	Higher Technical Education and Training pathways (IFTS) (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
5	<i>Diploma di tecnico superiore</i> Higher technical education diploma	MIUR	Higher Technical Education pathways (ITS) (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
6	<i>Laurea</i> Bachelor's degree	MIUR	Three-year bachelor's degree courses (180 credits -ECTS) (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
	<i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> First - level academic diploma	MIUR	Three-year courses (180 credits - ECTS)

1. The qualification can also be achieved in vocational schools, as per agreement with Regions or in apprenticeship programmes (for young people over 15 y.o.).

2. See previous footnote.

EQF Level	Type of qualification	Competent authority	Relevant education/ training pathway
7	<i>Laurea Magistrale</i> Master's degree	MIUR	Two-year master's degree courses (120 credits – ECTS) (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
	<i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> Second – level academic diploma	MIUR	Two-year courses (120 credits – ECTS)
	<i>Master universitario di primo livello</i> First – level university master	MIUR	Minimum one year courses (min. 60 credits – ECTS) (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
	<i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione</i> Academic specialization Diploma (I)	MIUR	Minimum two years courses (120 credits – ECTS)
	<i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (I)</i> Higher specialization diploma or Master (I)	MIUR	Minimum one year courses (min. 60 credits – ECTS)
8	<i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> Research Doctorate (PhD)	MIUR	Three-year courses (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
	<i>Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca</i> Academic Diploma for research training	MIUR	Three-year courses
	<i>Diploma di specializzazione</i> Specialization diploma	MIUR	Minimum two years courses (120 credits – ECTS) (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
	<i>Master universitario di secondo livello</i> Second – level university master	MIUR	Minimum one year courses (min. 60 credits – ECTS) (Higher education and research apprenticeship programme)
	<i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione(II)</i> Academic specialization diploma (II)	MIUR	Minimum two years courses (120 credits – ECTS)
	<i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II)</i> Higher specialization diploma or Master (II)	MIUR	Minimum one year courses (min. 60 credits – ECTS)

The Referencing Report was submitted to the open public consultation³ involving the scientific community, relevant stakeholders and citizens. The consultation was carried out between July 12th and August 17th 2012 and was promoted online. A total of 150 organizations operating in the field of education, vocational training, trade unions and employers' associations took part in the public consultation, as well

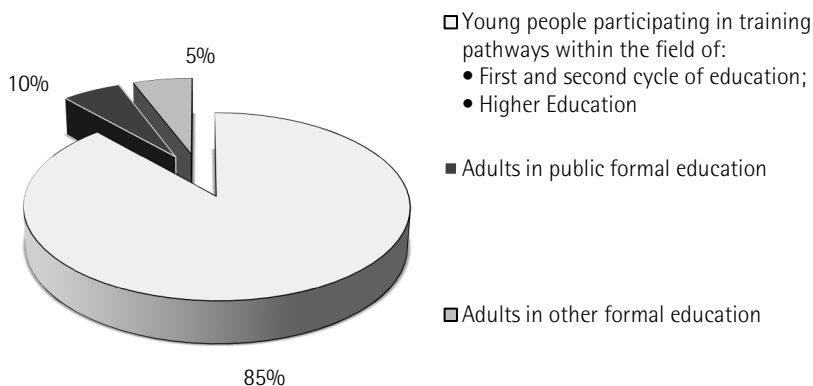
3. A more detailed analysis of the results of the public national consultation is available among the supporting documentation.

as universities, Regions, consultants, free-lance professionals, enterprises.

The data processing exercise shows an extremely positive feedback about the Report and the whole Referencing Process. According to 90% of the participants, the Report describes fairly well (63%) or very clearly (27%) the education and training system; only 10% of the participants considers the Report unclear and difficult to interpret. Most participants (92%) consider that the referencing framework is clear and explicit; in terms of methodological choices, 93% of participants provided positive feedback. In addition, 96% of participants acknowledged the importance of the EQF with regard to their own professional field.

The referenced qualifications represent a very relevant part of the National Qualifications System. Indeed, almost 85% of the people involved in education and training activities (in 2010) participate in the pathways covered by the Referencing Report. The majority of persons involved in training pathways are young people who participate in initial training and education initiatives. A more limited number of adults participate in adult education pathways.

The most significant part of adults participating in the education and training system are involved in initiatives that are not included in the Referencing Process. Indeed, relevant surveys stress that about 1.5 million of people aged between 25 and 64 participated in training activities in 2010, that is, 15% of the total participants in the education and training system. Only one third of them (5%) is involved in State-funded education and training pathways, which lead or potentially lead to the award of a public qualification. They are mainly involved in qualification pathways set up by Regions, which will be referenced to the EQF at a later stage.



The next stage of the EQF Referencing Process will take advantage on the recent labour market reform⁴. Based on this reform a national public system for the certification of competencies will be set up as well as a National Register of qualifications as

4. Law of June 28th 2012, no. 92.

a step towards a National Qualifications Framework. In addition, the reform defines general norms and essential levels of services for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning

BOX 3 - Law of June 28th 2012, No. 92 : "general provisions concerning the labour market in a growth perspective"

Art. 4 par. 55 : "... priority actions concern: --- b) the validation of credits and the certification of previously acquired competencies;"

Art. 4 par. 58: "The Government is delegated to adopt ... one or more legislative decrees for the definition of general norms and essential levels of services for the identification and validation of non formal and informal learning, with regard to the national system for the certification of competencies"

Art. 4 par. 64: "The national public system for the certification of competencies is based on minimum standards of service on the whole national territory, in compliance with the principles of accessibility, privacy, transparency, objectivity and traceability"

Art. 4 par. 66: "Pursuant to par. 64, a certifiable competence is a structured group of knowledge and skills, acquired in the contexts described in par. 51-54 and measurable in terms of credits as well"

Art. 4 par. 67: "All standards of qualifications and competencies certifiable on the basis of the public system of certification are included in directories, codified at a regional or national level, recognized publicly and accessible in a national register of education and training qualifications and professional qualifications..."

6.1 The coordination between the EQF Referencing Process and the Bologna Process

The present **Referencing Report** includes the decisions made during the **Bologna Process** with regard to the Higher Education qualifications represented in the Italian Qualifications Framework⁵, adopted in October 2010.

The inter-institutional cooperation allowed the Referencing Process and promoted the involvement of CIMEA (Information Centre on Mobility and Academic Equivalences)⁶. In 2005 already, CIMEA was asked to create a first prototype of the National Qualifications Framework.

5. The official website of the Italian Qualifications Framework for Higher Education- QTI in Italian and English is: <http://www.quadrodeititoli.it>. The QTI can be also accessed through the website of the Ministry of Education, University and Research: <http://www.istruzione.it/web/universita/il-quadro-dei-titoli-italiani>.

6. ENIC-NARIC Centre in Italy; centre for the MERIC network.

Based on the procedure identified at the European level, Italy fulfilled the requests of the Bologna Process in November 2012, with the publication of the "Self Certification Report", as set out in the Report⁷ entitled "National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation 2009-2012 – Italy".

The Referencing Process of the Italian system to the EQF includes the decisions made for Higher Education qualifications. Indeed, with regard to these qualifications, the European Framework defined within the EHEA Framework coexists with the lifelong learning framework (EQF); there are not relevant differences between them, even though the language of the EQF is not exactly the same as the EHEA Framework. The "Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area"⁸ is based on three cycles of qualifications, described on the basis of the Dublin Descriptors adopted by the EHEA Framework, that is: knowledge and understanding; applying knowledge and understanding; making judgements; communication skills; learning skills.

The equivalence of frameworks was recognized in 2007 by the Ministries responsible for Higher Education, gathered in London, and was described explicitly in the EQF Recommendation.

In the Italian Qualifications Framework, EQF Level 6 corresponds to the qualifications awarded within the first cycle of Higher university and non-university Education, Level 7 corresponds the qualifications awarded in the second cycle, Level 8 corresponds to research doctorates and other qualifications of the third cycle.

Following is the description of the Cycles based on the Dublin Descriptors adopted by the EHEA Framework and the corresponding qualifications awarded.

7. The Report is published on <http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/National%20reports/Italy.pdf>

8. "A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area", Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, published by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Copenhagen, can be downloaded from www.vtu.dk.

Description of Cycles on the basis of the Dublin Descriptors and corresponding qualifications	
Cycles of the EHEA Framework/ EQF Levels	Corresponding qualifications in the Higher Education system
<p>First cycle/level 6</p> <p>Final first-cycle qualifications can be awarded to the students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have demonstrated understanding and abilities in a post-secondary application field and use advanced course books and knowledge of innovative topics in their area of study; are able to apply their knowledge and understanding in order to demonstrate a professional approach to a professional activity, have acquired adequate competencies to design and support arguments as well as to solve problems in their area of study; are able to collect and interpret data (usually in their area of study) considered as useful to make a judgment on various topics, including social, scientific or ethical issues; are able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to specialized and non-specialized interlocutors; have developed the learning abilities to proceed to further studies with a high degree of autonomy. 	<p>University</p> <p><u><i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree)</u></p> <p>This qualification is awarded as a result of a bachelor's degree course, aimed at providing the student with adequate mastery of general methods and scientific contents, even in case the degree is oriented towards the acquisition of specific professional competencies.</p> <p>Terms of admission: upper secondary school qualification or equivalent foreign certificate.</p> <p>Credits: 180</p> <p>Duration: 3 years</p> <p>A <i>Laurea</i> allows access to: <i>Laurea Magistrale</i> (Master's degree); <i>Master universitario di primo livello</i> (First-level university master); <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma); <i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione</i> (Academic specialization diploma) (I); <i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master</i> (Higher specialization diploma or master) (I).</p> <p>Old university qualifications considered equivalent to the first cycle are: Diploma of schools for special purposes (Sdafs), university diploma.</p> <p>High Level Arts and Music Education System – AFAM</p> <p><u><i>Diploma accademico di I livello</i> (1st level academic diploma)</u></p> <p>Awarded at the end of a first-level academic course, aimed at providing the student with adequate mastery of artistic methods and the acquisition of specific professional competencies.</p> <p>Terms of admission: upper secondary education qualification or equivalent foreign certificate.</p> <p>Credits: 180</p> <p>Duration: 3 years</p> <p>A <i>Diploma accademico di I livello</i> (First-level academic diploma) allows access to: <i>Laurea Magistrale</i> (Master's degree), <i>Master universitario di primo livello</i> (First-level</p>

	<p>university master), <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma); <i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione</i> (Academic specialization diploma) (I); <i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master</i> (Higher specialization diploma or master) (II)</p> <p>Old university qualifications considered equivalent to the first cycle are: <i>Diploma di conservatorio</i> (Conservatory diploma), <i>Diploma di Istituto Musicale Pareggiato</i> (Diploma of State-authorized musical Institute), <i>Diploma dell'accademia di Belle Arti</i> (Diploma of the Academy of Fine Arts), <i>Diploma dell'Istituto Superiore delle Industrie Artistiche (ISIA)</i> (Diploma of the Higher School for Art Industries); <i>Diploma dell'Accademia Nazionale di Danza</i> (Diploma of the National Academy of Dance,) <i>Diploma dell'Accademia Nazionale di Arte Drammatica</i>, (Diploma of the National Academy of Drama.)</p> <p>Qualifications by institutes allowed to award equivalent qualifications: <i>Diploma di mediatore linguistico</i> (Diploma of linguistic mediator)</p>
<p>Second cycle/ level 7 Final second-cycle qualifications can be awarded to the students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that extend and/or reinforce the abilities traditionally associated to the first cycle and allow elaborating or applying original ideas, often in a research context; ▪ are able to apply their knowledge, understanding abilities and problem-solving abilities to new or familiar issues, included in wider contexts (or interdisciplinary contexts) linked to their area of study; ▪ are able to integrate knowledge and manage the complexity of their application field, as well as make judgments with limited or incom- 	<p>University</p> <p><u><i>Laurea Magistrale</i> (Master's degree)</u></p> <p>Awarded at the end of a master's degree course, aimed at providing the student with advanced training for the exercise of highly specialized activities in specific fields. Terms of admission: <i>Laurea</i> (bachelor's degree), three-year university diploma, <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (First-level academic diploma) or equivalent foreign certificate.</p> <p>Credits: 120 Duration: 2 years</p> <p>A <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's degree) allows access to: <i>Dottorato di Ricerca</i> (PhD); <i>Diploma di Specializzazione</i> (Specialization diploma); <i>Master universitario di secondo livello</i> (Second-level university master); <i>Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca</i> (Research training academic diploma); <i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione (II)</i> (Academic specialization diploma II); <i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II)</i> (Higher specialization diploma or master (II)).</p>

<p>plete information on various topics, including social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and opinions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ are able to communicate clearly and unambiguously their conclusions, as well as their knowledge and the underlying ratio, to specialized and non-specialized interlocutors; ▪ have developed adequate learning abilities to proceed to further studies in a direct or autonomous way. 	<p>This qualification can be also awarded at the end of a combined bachelor's degree and master's degree course.</p> <p>Combined bachelor's and master's degree categories are: LMG/01 Law; LM - 4 Architecture and Construction Engineering – Architecture (five years); LM13 – Pharmacy and Industrial Pharmacy; LM – 41 Medicine and Surgery; LM - 42 Veterinary Medicine; LM - 46 Dentistry and Dental Prosthesis.</p> <p><u><i>Master di primo livello (First-level master)</i></u></p> <p>Higher specialization courses and higher continuous training courses to attend after a bachelor's degree</p> <p>Terms of admission: <i>Laurea</i> (bachelor's degree) or any other equivalent foreign certificate</p> <p>Credits: a minimum of 60</p> <p>Duration: a minimum of one year</p> <p>A <i>Master di primo livello</i> (first-level master) allows access to: it does not allow to enrol in PhD courses and third-cycle courses, because the course is not part of the national didactic regulation; the qualification is awarded under the autonomous responsibility of universities.</p> <p>Old university qualifications equivalent to second-cycle courses are: specialization degree and bachelor's diploma.</p> <p>High Level Arts and Music Education System – AFAM</p> <p><u><i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello (Second-level academic diploma)</i></u></p> <p>Awarded at the end of a second-level academic course aimed at providing the student with advanced mastery of artistic methods and techniques and the acquisition of highly professional skills.</p> <p>Terms of admission: <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (First-level academic diploma or equivalent foreign certificate).</p> <p>Credits: 120.</p> <p>Duration: 2 years.</p> <p>A <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma) allows access to: <i>Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca</i> (Research training aca-</p>
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	<p>demic diploma); <i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> (PhD (courses); <i>diploma accademico di specializzazione</i> (II) Academic specialization diploma (II); <i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master</i> (II) (Higher specialization diploma or master (II); <i>Master universitario di secondo livello</i> (Second-level university master).</p> <p><u><i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione</i> (I) Academic specialization diploma (I)</u> The specialization course aims at providing the student with highly professional skills in specific fields. Terms of admission: <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (first-level academic diploma) or any other equivalent foreign certificate. Credits: a minimum of 120. Duration: a minimum of 2 years. The <i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione</i> (Academic specialization diploma) allows access to: it does not allow to enrol in courses for academic diploma for research training or other third-cycle courses</p> <p><u><i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master</i> (I) (Higher specialization diploma or master (I))</u> Higher specialization diplomas or masters respond to specific cultural needs in specific areas of study and allow for refreshing opportunities, professional requalification and continuous training. Terms of admission: <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (First-level academic diploma) or any other equivalent foreign certificate. Credits: a minimum of 60. Duration: a minimum of 1 year. A <i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master</i> (Higher specialization diploma or master) allows access to: it does not allow to enrol in a course for academic diploma for research training or other third-cycle courses, because this course is not included in the national didactic regulation and the qualification is awarded under direct responsibility of each institute.</p>
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Third cycle/ level 8

Final third-cycle qualification can be awarded to the students who:

- have demonstrated systematic understanding of an area of study and adequate mastery of the relevant research methods;
- have demonstrated adequate ability to conceive, plan, create and adapt a research process with adequate research approach;
- have carried out an original research that has extended the frontiers of knowledge, while providing a contribution that deserves the publication, partially or as a whole, at National or international level;
- are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;
- are able to communicate with their colleagues, with the wider community of researchers and with the society as a whole, within their competence field;
- are able to promote, in academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advance in a knowledge-based society.

University

Dottorato di ricerca (Research Doctorate (PhD))

This qualification is awarded at the end of a research doctorate aiming at providing the competencies to exercise in universities, public or private organizations, highly specialized research activities.

Terms of admission: *Laurea magistrale* (Master's degree) or any other equivalent foreign certificate

Procedure of admission: public competition.

Credits: none.

Duration: a minimum of 3 years.

Diploma di specializzazione (Specialization diploma)

A specialization course is aimed at providing the student with knowledge and abilities in the field of specific professional activities and can be set up only in application of specific norms or directives of the European Union.

Terms of admission: *Laurea magistrale* (master's degree) or any other equivalent foreign certificate

Procedure of admission: public competition

Credits: from 120 to 360.

Duration: from 2 to 6 years.

Academic qualification: Specialist.

Master universitario di secondo livello (second level master)

Higher Education courses and higher continuous training courses to attend after a master's degree.

Terms of admission: *Laurea magistrale* (master's degree) or any other equivalent foreign certificate

Credits: a minimum of 60.

Duration: a minimum of one year.

A *Master universitario di secondo livello* (Second-level master) allows access to: it does not allow to enrol in PhD courses and third-cycle courses, because the course is not included in the national didactic regulation; the qualification is awarded under the autonomous responsibility of universities

Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II) (Higher specialization diploma or Master II)

The *Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II)* (Higher specialization diplomas or masters II) respond to spe-

cific cultural needs in specific areas of study and allow for refreshing opportunities, professional requalification and continuous training.

Terms of admission: university qualifications, generally a Laurea (Bachelor's degree).

Admission requirements are established by the organizing institutes.

Credits: none.

Duration: generally one year.

The *Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II)* (Higher Education diploma or master) allows access to: it does not allow to enrol in any type of course.

High Level Arts and Music Education System – AFAM

Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca Research training academic diploma.

The research training course aims at providing the student with the competencies to design and implement highly specialized research activities.

Terms of admission: *Diploma accademico di secondo livello* (Second-level academic diploma) or any other equivalent foreign certificate.

Credits: none.

Duration: a minimum of 3 years.

Diploma accademico di specializzazione (II) (Academic specialization diploma (II))

The specialization course aims at providing the student with highly specialized competencies in specific fields

Terms of admission: *Diploma accademico di secondo livello* (Second-level academic diploma) or any other equivalent foreign certificate.

Credits: a minimum of 120.

Duration: a minimum of 2 years.

A *Diploma accademico di specializzazione (II)* (Academic specialization diploma (II)) allows access to: it does not allow to enrol in courses for academic research training or any other third-cycle courses.

Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II) (Higher specialization diploma or master (II))

Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II) (Higher specialization diplomas or masters (II)) respond to specific

	<p>cultural needs in specific areas of study and allow for refreshing opportunities, professional requalification and continuous training.</p> <p>Terms of admission: <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma) or any other equivalent foreign certificate</p> <p>Credits: a minimum of 60.</p> <p>Duration: a minimum of 1 year.</p> <p>A <u><i>Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II)</i></u> (Higher specialization diploma (or master) (II)) allows access to: it does not allow to enrol (or change into) in a course for Research training academic diploma or other third-cycle course, because this course is not included in the national didactic regulation and the qualification is awarded under direct responsibility of each institute.</p> <p>Qualifications by institutes allowed to award equivalent qualifications:</p> <p><i>Diploma di psicoterapeuta</i> (Diploma in psychotherapy)</p>
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6.2 The compliance of the Referencing Process with the 10 European criteria

The document *Criteria and procedures for referencing National qualifications levels to the EQF*, elaborated by the EQF Advisory Group⁹, lists ten criteria and procedures that all European countries are called to consider for their Referencing Process.

These criteria were elaborated to make sure that each Referencing Report allows the inter-readability between systems and the comparison between qualifications, in order to support and stimulate the mutual trust among countries and facilitate the mobility of citizens and workers.

The criteria provide precise orientations to guarantee that Referencing Reports are transparent and authoritative "products".

9. Coordination Group created by the European Commission, made up of National bodies and other key stakeholders, supporting the implementation of the EQF.

Criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications to the EQF	
1	The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Coordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public bodies.
2	There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.
3	The national framework or qualification system and its qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and linked to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where these exist, to credit systems.
4	The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualifications system are transparent.
5	The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications framework or system and are consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines (as indicated in annex 3 of the Recommendation).
6	The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies.
7	The referencing process shall involve international experts.
8	The competent national body or bodies shall certify the referencing of the national framework or system with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it shall be published by the competent national bodies, including the National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria.
9	The official EQF platform shall maintain a public listing of member states that have confirmed that they have completed the referencing process, including links to completed referencing reports.
10	Following the referencing process, and in line with the timelines set out in the Recommendation, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents issued by competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications system, to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level.

Following are the arguments explaining the compliance of the Italian Referencing Report to the 10 criteria elaborated by the EQF Advisory Group, including the outcomes illustrated in the previous table.

6.3 Compliance of the Referencing Process to Criterion 1

- 1 The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Coordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public bodies.**

The Referencing Process and the elaboration of the Report have been carried out by a Technical Group, made up of representatives of two promoting Ministries and Isfol. The Technical Group was asked to elaborate a methodological proposal for referencing national qualifications to the European Qualification Framework, and a more operational proposal for the management of the Referencing Process. After validating proposals, the Technical Group was asked to manage the dialogue with public authorities that award the qualifications included in the Report.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies is part of the Technical Group as the leading administration for the qualifications awarded by the Regions. A representative, identified by both Ministries, Labour and Education, also seats on the EQF Advisory Group. The Ministry of Education, University and Research is the competent authority for the qualifications awarded in the education system, both first and second-cycle education, and in the Higher Education system; the same Ministry is in charge of the Italian participation in the Bologna Process and the European Area for Higher Education. In particular, in order to reinforce the synergy between the EQF Referencing Process and the Bologna Process, the Technical Group also invited CIMEA to be an active member. CIMEA is the technical structure that has supported the Ministry of Education for the elaboration of the framework of Higher Education qualifications.

Isfol was assigned the task to draft work proposals, based on the analysis of ongoing processes in other European countries, as well as to promote and support technical cooperation. Isfol is a public research institute, operating as a technical agency of the Ministry of Labour to support the implementation and the evaluation of policies in the field of training and job policies; Isfol hosts the EQF National Coordination Point, as well as NEC Italia and the Reference Point on Quality; furthermore a representative of Isfol is a member of the EQF Advisory Group.

In particular, the EQF National Coordination Point is in charge of implementing some operational activities to support the Referencing Process: organization of meetings with public authorities; publication of information concerning the EQF and the Italian Referencing Process; organization of the debate among relevant operators; creation of the EQF web site with links to existing databases for the establishment of a database of referenced qualifications; production of the English version of the Italian Referencing Report; exchange of experiences with other European countries.

The Department for European Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministries is the authority that coordinates the process of implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC and is responsible for the definition of an Italian position with regard to

the reform of the same Directive. The Department was involved in the Referencing Process of professional licences with regard to regulated professions.

Regions and Autonomous Provinces are the public competent authorities in charge of initial and continuous vocational training. They participated in the Referencing Process through the Technical Coordination, that is, the technical group supporting the proceedings of the IX Commission established by the Conference of the Presidents of Regions and Autonomous Provinces. The Conference of Presidents is the official seat for interregional dialogue, preparing the documents submitted to the Government for stipulating State - Regions agreements.

Since, the Constitution, identifies as awarding authorities the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces, the State-Regions Conference is the best fitting house to adopt the Italian Referencing Report.

The representatives of employers and trade unions were invited to participate in some meetings aimed at describing the Referencing Process and sharing the adoption of relevant approaches. Other players of the Italian education and training system were involved in the Referencing Process through the 2012 national public consultation.

6.4 Compliance of the Referencing Process to Criterion 2

2 There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework

In order to demonstrate a clear link between the existing Italian qualifications and EQF descriptors, the Technical Group made the following steps:

- A. analysis of the "qualifications structure", while considering: the "nature" of each qualification (more or less general/academic and more or less work-oriented); usability; relations (in terms of links and progressions) with the other qualifications; descriptors of the LOs;
- B. identification of methods for referencing to the EQF levels: comparative analysis of LOs with regard to level descriptors and adoption of the general principle "full fit/best fit", intended as a different correspondence degrees to the EQF level;
- C. adoption of relevant choices for referencing Italian qualifications to the right EQF level, on the basis of the analysis of their position within the system and of the LOs descriptors.

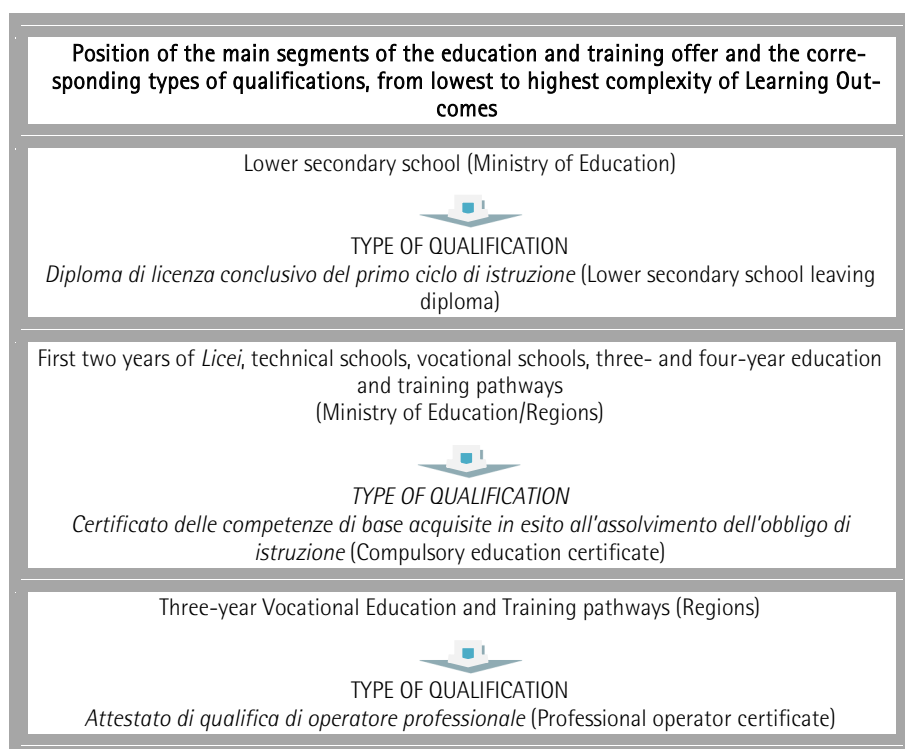
Following the three phases (A-B-C) are described.








A. The 'qualifications structure'

The Italian education and training system does not include any framework of qualifications divided into levels. However, it clearly identifies a 'structure' of qualifications that are:

- Awarded at the end of specific education and training pathways;
- characterized by mutual links and progressions, as specified in the legislation that establishes and regulates them, which also defines a clear and recognizable position in the system;
- described in such a way that they can be compared to the language of LOs, although with different levels of adherence to this approach, according to the different types of qualifications;
- characterised by increasing complexity (in terms of LOs) which is directly linked to their position (progression) in the system.

Below is a representation of the qualifications structure:



<p>Four-years Vocational Education and Training pathways (Regions)</p>  <p>TYPE OF QUALIFICATION</p> <p><i>Diploma professionale di tecnico</i> (Professional technician diploma)</p>
<p>Upper secondary school: <i>Licei</i>, technical schools, vocational schools (Ministry of Education)</p>  <p>TYPE OF QUALIFICATION</p> <p><i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma (<i>Licei</i>, technical school, vocational school))</p>
<p>IFTS (Higher Technical Education & Training) pathways (Regions)</p>  <p>TYPE OF QUALIFICATION</p> <p><i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i> (Higher technical specialization certificate)</p>
<p>ITS (Higher Technical Institutes) pathways (Ministry of Education)</p>  <p>TYPE OF QUALIFICATION</p> <p><i>Diploma di tecnico superiore</i> (Higher technical education diploma)</p>
<p>First-cycle Universities and AFAM (High Level Arts and Music Education) (Ministry of Education)</p> <p>Three-year courses</p>  <p>TYPE OF QUALIFICATION</p> <p><i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree) and <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (First level academic diploma)</p>
<p>Second-cycle Universities and AFAM (High Level Arts and Music Education System) (Ministry of Education, Uni.)</p> <p>Two-year course</p>  <p><i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's degree) and <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma)</p>
<p>Third-cycle Universities and AFAM (High Level Arts and Music Education System) (Ministry of Education, Uni.)</p> <p>Three-year course</p>  <p><i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> (Research Doctorate PhD) and <i>Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca</i> (Research Training Academic Diploma)</p>

This structure, which includes different types of qualifications, provided the starting point for assigning qualifications to the EQF levels. As part of this "structure", qualifications refer to LOs that describe different sets of knowledge, skills and competencies.

B. Referencing methods: a comparative analysis of LOs and adoption of the 'best fit' principle

The starting point for assigning qualifications to the EQF levels was **analysing both the learning process and the LOs in relation to the EQF level descriptors**. Therefore, a specific phase of the Referencing Process was dedicated to a critical analysis of the EQF descriptors: knowledge, skills and competence.

This analysis showed that the 'Knowledge' and 'Skills' descriptors as defined in the EQF were clear enough to allow the correlation with the Italian qualifications.

With regard to the descriptor 'Competence', the need for further clarification emerged; this descriptor was therefore divided into minimum elements consisting in three dimensions pertaining to:

- Work/study context;
- Type of tasks, problems and problem-solving approaches;
- Autonomy and responsibility.

Explanation of the descriptor 'Competence':

Competence descriptors of the eight levels as contained in EQF		The descriptor 'Competence' in the Italian national context		
		Work/study context	Type of tasks, problems and problem-solving approaches	Autonomy/responsibility
1	Working or studying, under direct supervision, in a structured context	Determined and structured	Simple	Operating under direct supervision
2	Working or studying under supervision with some degree of autonomy	Determined and structured	Frequent, requiring the implementation of simple rules and tools	Operating under direct supervision with autonomy over one's tasks
3	Taking the responsibility to carry out tasks in work or study. Adapting one's behaviour to circumstances in solving problems	Determined and structured	Frequent, requiring the selection and use of basic resources, and adapting one's behaviour to circumstances	Functional operation and autonomy in carrying out a task
4	Self-management when guidelines are provided in a work/study context, which are usually predictable, but which are subject to change. Supervising the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities.	Predictable, but subject to change	Specialist	Independent management of activities under instructions. Supervising the routine work of others. Evaluation and improvement of work activities
5	Managing and supervising activities in work/study contexts which are subject to unpredictable change. Reviewing and developing one's as well as others' performance.	Exposed to unpredictable change	Not usual and not determined, involving creative solutions	Management and supervision of non-routine activities exposed to unpredictable changes. Reviewing and developing one's and others' performance

Competence descriptors of the eight levels as contained in EQF		The descriptor 'Competence' in the Italian national context		
		Work/study context	Type of tasks, problems and problem-solving approaches	Autonomy/responsibility
6	Managing technical/professional complex activities or projects taking responsibility for making decisions in unpredictable work or study contexts. Taking responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups.	Unpredictable, complex	Complex and unpredictable related to a specialized context	Managing the professional development of individuals and groups
7	Managing and transforming complex work/study contexts, which are unpredictable and require new strategic approaches. Taking responsibility for contributing to knowledge and professional practice and / or reviewing the strategic performance of teams.	Unpredictable, complex, relating to different fields and requiring new strategic approaches	Complex and unpredictable, whose solution requires the ability to integrate knowledge gained in different fields	Management and transformation of context. Contributing to knowledge and professional practice. Checking the strategic performance of teams
8	Showing authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly abilities and professional integrity and the commitment to the development of new ideas or advanced processes in work/study contexts and in research.	Exposed to systematic/continuous innovation and related to different areas, contexts and fields	Complex, of research and innovation	Development of new ideas or advanced processes

This analysis was aimed at facilitating the correlation and the alignment of the national descriptors with the EQF ones, and in the perspective of the inclusion of the other regional qualifications at a later stage.

For the comparison among the different types of qualifications and the EQF level descriptors, two correlation methods were adopted:

- a 'natural' correlation, with no need for adaptation, when the comparative analysis of the qualifications descriptors and the EQF descriptors allowed for an unambiguous matching to an EQF level;
- a correlation based on the 'best fit' principle, when the adaptation resulted as a less "natural" process.

'Best fit' means the best possible positioning, that is the result of discussions and sustainable approximation, when it is not possible to immediately get to an unambiguous, and therefore 'natural', correlation (full fit).

To support the referencing of the qualifications to the EQF levels, the Italian system provides additional information: information on the positioning of the qualification in the system (in terms of access requirements, length, etc.), as specified in the norms; outcomes of the referencing process in other countries for the qualifications common to most countries; the results of the Referencing Process of Higher Education qualifications, etc. Therefore, the 'best fit' principle was intended as an integrated approach between the analysis of the positioning in the system and the analysis of the LOs descriptors.



C. Referencing the qualifications to the EQF levels

Considering all the elements and methods described in the previous steps, and given the limited number of qualification types existing in the Italian system, the correlation was 'natural' and unambiguous (full fit) for the following qualifications:




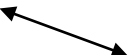




- *Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione* (Lower secondary school leaving diploma) related to level 1;
- *Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione* (Compulsory education certificate) related to level 2;
- *Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale* (Professional operator certificate) related to level 3;
- *Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore* (Upper secondary education diploma) for *Licei*, Technical schools, Vocational schools related to level 4;
- *Diploma di tecnico superiore* (Higher technical education diploma), related to 5.
- Qualifications awarded in the three university cycles related to EQF levels 6,7,8 considering the outcomes of the Bologna Process.

The application of the 'best-fit' principle was required for border-line qualifications and the stakeholders had to make a choice for one level.

In particular, the 'best fit' approach had to be adopted for the following qualifications:

- *Diploma professionale di tecnico* (Professional technician diploma) between EQF levels 3 and 4;
- *Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore* (Higher technical specialization certificate), between EQF levels 4 and 5.

Synthetic representation of the referencing options:

Type of qualifications from minimum to maximum complexity of Learning Outcomes		EQF
Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione (Lower secondary school leaving diploma)		1
Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione (Compulsory education certificate)		2
Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale (Professional operator certificate)		3
<i>Diploma professionale di tecnico</i> (Professional technician diploma) <i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma for <i>Licei</i> , technical schools, vocational schools) <i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i> (Higher technical specialization certificate)		4
<i>Diploma di tecnico superiore</i> (Higher technical education diploma)		5
<i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree) and <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (First-level academic diploma)		6
<i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's Degree) and <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma)		7
<i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> (Research doctorate PhD) and <i>Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca</i> (Research Training Academic Diploma)		8

The three qualifications which were referenced to level 4 differ in terms of length and relevance of the LOs descriptors (KSC). For example, the descriptor 'skills' plays a major role in the following qualifications: *Diploma professionale di tecnico* (Professional technician diploma) and *Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore* (Higher technical specialization certificate) compared to the *Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore* (Upper secondary education diploma) where 'knowledge' plays a major role.

Firstly the qualifications 'naturally' correlated to level 4 were identified, considered as 'central' qualifications: *Diploma liceale* (Upper secondary education diploma for *Licei*), *Diploma di istruzione tecnica* (Technical schools) and *Diploma di istruzione*

professionale (Vocational schools). This choice was based both on considering the full correspondence to the level in terms of LOs and adhering to the results of the European debate that agreed on referencing these qualifications to level 4. Secondly, the 'central' qualifications were compared with the two border-line qualifications: *Diploma professionale di tecnico* (Professional technician diploma) and *Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore* (Higher technical specialization certificate). As the approximation was considered the most acceptable, the three types of qualifications were referenced to the level 4.

Example 1. Application of the 'best fit' principle to the qualification of *Diploma professionale di tecnico edile* (Professional technician diploma for construction), based on the analysis of LOs descriptors

EQF LEVEL	Type of qualification	Awarded by
4	<i>Diploma professionale di tecnico edile</i> (Professional technician diploma for construction)	Regions

This qualification, following four-year education and training courses provided by Regions, is described by law according to the following elements provided:

- description of the job profile;
- referencing of the profile to the Professional Units Nomenclature (*Nomenclatura delle Unità Professionali - NUP*) and ATECO 2007 Classification and further updates;
- working process;
- competencies;
- building-blocks of each competence: skills and knowledge.

Below is the descriptive format:

<p>Professional technician diploma for construction</p> <p>A construction technician operates with a relative degree of autonomy within for actions and specifications assigned, contributing to the surveillance of the process of construction through the participation in the identification of material resources and instruments, the preparation, organization and implementation of procedures of continuous processing improvement, monitoring and evaluating results, with responsibility for the supervision of activities carried out by others. Technical training in the use of methodologies, tools and specialized information allows him/her to carry out the activities of civil engineering, with competencies related to supply logistics, documentation of activities and organization of the yard.</p> <p>Competencies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managing the work based on orders and specifications, coordinating the activities of a team.
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2. Identifying situations of potential threat to the safety, health and the environment in the workplace, encouraging correct behaviour and prevention awareness. 3. Assisting in the handling of the logistics supply process, defining the needs for purchasing equipment and materials. 4. Preparing documents concerning activities and materials. 5. Collaborating in the implementation and decommissioning of the site, in compliance with design and industry regulations.	
Competence 1 (of 5)* Managing the work based on orders and design specifications, coordinating the activities of a team.	
Skills	Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applying criteria for the allocation of tasks, operating procedures, sequences and time for carrying out the activities - Implementing coordination procedures for the work of operational roles - Identifying problems - Applying methods to detect and report on the training needs of staff - Formulate proposals to improve corporate standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equipment, human and technological resources of the site - Elements of corporate and work organization - Organizational model and organization of the site - Regulation on worksite safety and accident prevention - Quality systems and main models - Strategies and techniques to optimize the results and to address any critical problems - Strategies and instruments to check quality of the work
Competence 2 (of 5) ...	

* Competencies are associated with specific work-activities processes. For example competence 1 (along with competence 2) is associated to the process A- Organizational management of the work, whose details of the characteristic activities of the work process are known.

Starting from these descriptive elements, the comparison with the descriptors of EQF levels 3 and 4 (and also marginally with EQF level 5) was carried out in order to get to the appropriate level, according to a logic of 'prevalence' of LOs descriptors. The result is best fit 4.

As an example, the diagrams below show the correlation between the elements of competence 1 (of 5) of a Construction Technician "Managing the work, based on the orders and design specifications, coordinating the activities of a team" to the EQF descriptors. For the descriptor 'competence', reference is made to the descriptors' explanation elaborated by the Technical Group.

Example of correlation matrix of the descriptive elements of the qualification: Professional technician diploma for construction			
Competence 1 (of 5)* Managing the work based on orders and design specifications, coordinating the activities of a team			
COMPETENCE			
LEV	EQF	NATIONAL EXPLANATION OF EQF DESCRIPTORS	NATIONAL DESCRIPTION OF LOs
3	Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study Adapting own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems	a. Work / study context Determined and structured Type of tasks, problems and coping strategies Frequent, requiring the selection and use of basic sources, as well as adapting one's behaviour to circumstances c. Autonomy / responsibility Functional operation and autonomy in carrying out a task	
4	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study context, that are usually predictable but are subject to change; Supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities	Working / studying context Predictable, but subject to change b. Type of tasks, problems and coping strategies Specialist c. Autonomy/ responsibility Independent management of activities under instructions	Managing the work based on orders and design specifications, coordinating the activities of a team The working context is changeable due to orders, specifications, etc. Special tasks Independent management with checks and coordination by others
KNOWLEDGE			
LEV	EQF	NATIONAL DESCRIPTION of LOs	
3	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulation on worksite safety and accident prevention - Equipment, human and technological resources of the site 	
4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizational model and organization of the site - Elements of corporate and work organization 	

	contexts within a field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality systems and main models - Strategies and techniques to optimize the results and to address any critical problems - Strategies and instruments to check quality of the work
SKILLS		
LEV	EQF	NATIONAL DESCRIPTION of LOs
3	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	
4	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applying criteria for the allocation of tasks, operating procedures, sequences and time for carrying out the activities - Implementing procedures for coordination of the work of operational roles - Identifying execution problems - Applying methods to detect and report on the training needs of staff
5	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulating proposals to improve corporate standards

* Competencies are associated with specific work-activities processes. For example competence 1 (together with competence 2) is associated to the process A- Organizational management of the work, whose details of the characteristic activities of the work process are given.

Example 2. Application of the 'best fit' principle to the *Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore per l'Assistenza alla Direzione di Agenzie di Viaggio e Tour Operator* (Higher technical specialization certificate as Assistant Manager for Travel Agency and Tour Operator), based on the analysis of LOs descriptors

EQF LEVEL	Type of qualification	Awarded by
4	<i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore per l'Assistenza alla Direzione di Agenzie di Viaggio e Tour Operator</i> (Higher technical specialization certificate as Assistant Manager for Travel Agency and Tour Operator)	Regions

The qualification *Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore per l'Assistenza alla Direzione di Agenzie di Viaggio e ai Tour Operator* (Higher technical specialization certificate as Assistant Manager for Travel Agency and Tour Operator), is awarded at the end of Higher Technical Education and Training pathways (IFTTS) provided by the Regions. By the law the national description include the following elements:

- description of the job profile;
- a set of Units of Competences;
- Each competence is divided into minimal elements related to both 'skills' and performance level.

Below there is an example of a unit of competences related to the qualification of Assistant Manager for Travel Agency and Tour Operator.

Higher technical specialization certificate as Assistant Manager for Travel Agency and Tour Operator
An Assistant Manager for Travel Agency and Tour Operator supports company management in organization, management and development tasks, contributing to the development and implementation of corporate objectives.
<p>Units:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysing economic data and market trends, searching information sources, applying the study methods and information processing techniques; 2. Identifying the main geographical, historical, cultural, artistic, socio-economic and logistical features of the territory for the development of products; 3. Developing new and existing products/services, also with ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies); 4. Supporting planning, promotion and marketing of the tourist services in the local, National and international markets; 5. Applying specific marketing techniques, with particular reference to customer relationship; 6. Supporting the activities of budget-reporting, using the main accounting instruments as well as those for the control of economic and financial management; 7. Supporting PR initiatives, with particular reference to those that can be undertaken with public and private organizations; 8. Dealing with booking services and pricing;

9. Applying the rules governing the sector.	
Unit 1 (of 9) Analysing economic data and market trends, searching information sources, applying study methods and information processing techniques.	
A – MINIMUM STANDARD OF COMPETENCE	
This person is able to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. collect and process socio-economic data of his/her reference market; 2. examine the data collected and extract information from tables, graphs, diagrams and other statistical documentation in order to detect current and potential trends of the tourist and leisure market. 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To collect and process socio-economic data of his/her reference market, he/she needs to know how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • search, select and organize sources of information related to socio-economic data • process and represent the data collected; 2. To examine the data collected and extract information from tables, graphs, diagrams and other statistical documentation in order to detect current and potential trends of the tourist and leisure market, he/she needs to know how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine and compare the information and data collected; • identify the market trends of reference. 	
B – PERFORMANCE LEVEL	
To be able to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. collect and process socio-economic data of his/her market; 2. examine the data collected and extract information from tables, graphs, diagrams and other statistical documentation in order to detect current and potential trends of the tourist and leisure market. 	
This person must show that he/she:	The indicators are:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows how to organize data on a real situation in tables and graphs; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall consistency of the information sources selected with the situation to be analysed;
...	...

Starting from these descriptive elements, the comparison with the descriptors of EQF level 4 and 5 was carried out in order to get to the appropriate level, according to a logic of "prevalence" of LOs descriptors. The result is best fit 4.

The example shows the correlation among the elements (competence and skills) of the above mentioned Unit 1 and the corresponding EQF level.

Example of correlation matrix of the descriptive elements of the qualification: Higher technical specialization certificate as Assistant Manager for Travel Agency and Tour Operator			
Unit 1: Analysing economic data and market trends, searching information sources, applying study methods and information processing techniques.			
COMPETENCE			
LEV	EQF	NATIONAL EXPLANATION OF EQF DESCRIPTORS	NATIONAL DESCRIPTION OF LOs
4	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of Work or study context that are usually predictable but are subject to change. Supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities	Work/study context Predictable, but subject to change Type of tasks, problems and coping approaches Specialist Autonomy/responsibility Independent management of activities under instructions	Analysing economic data and market trends, searching information sources, applying study methods and information processing techniques. Collecting and processing socio-economic data of his/her market; Examining the data collected and extract information from tables, graphs, diagrams and other statistical documentation in order to detect current and potential trends of the tourist and leisure market. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Special context subject to changes</i> • <i>Special tasks</i> • <i>Independent management</i>
SKILLS			
LEV	EQF	NATIONAL DESCRIPTION OF LOs	
4	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to formulate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • searching, selecting and organizing sources of information related to socio-economic data; • processing and representing the data collected; • examining and comparing the information and data collected; 	
5	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying market trends. 	

6.5 Compliance of the Referencing Process to Criterion 3

- 3** The national framework or qualification system and its qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and linked to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where these exist, to credit systems.

Italy is now gradually integrating the European proposals on lifelong learning in the education and training system and, as part of this process, the LOs approach has also been gradually adopted.

The Italian education and training system has always been oriented to the application of study programmes, intended as a prescriptive list of disciplinary contents to be acquired in a specified time. However, the system has progressively shifted from programmes to curricula based on learning objectives. Over the last decade all the education and training system has been gradually reformed and this process is still on-going. The guidelines supporting the reforming process place the students (and not disciplines) at the heart of the education and training process and promote a major involvement of schools and VET providers in the process of designing pathways aimed at achieving the Los (expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competence).

These reform measures follow the needs of the civil society, and adapt the principles expressed by the recommendations of the European Parliament and the European Council. The renewal of the different pathways was oriented to support the process of European integration, taking as methodological assumptions the key concepts proposed at European level in the field of transparency, quality assurance and LOs approach.

BOX 4 - The steps of the reform of the Italian education and training system

- Law No. 53/2003 - Reform of the first and second cycle of the education and training system
- Reform of the first cycle: definition of general rules with Legislative Decree No. 59/2004; guidelines for the definition of curricula, with Ministerial Decree of July 2007, currently under revision
- Reform of the second cycle of education and training: definition of the general rules with Legislative Decree No. 226/2005; regulations of secondary schools, technical institutes and vocational schools with Decrees of the President of the Republic of March 2010; Guidelines for the first two-year period (July 2010) and Guidelines for the three-year period (January 2012)
- Reform of Vocational Education and Training: definition of the general rules and essential levels of performance with Legislative Decree No. 226/2005; creation of the Register of professional qualifications, diplomas, and certifi-

cates for three-year and four-year courses of Vocational Education and Training with agreements between the State and the Regions, dated July 2011 and January 2012

- Reform of the Higher Technical Education and Training: Guidelines set out in the Decree of the President of the Republic of January 25th 2008
- Reform of Higher Education: Ministerial Decree No. 270/2004 for the University and Presidential Decree 212/2005 for AFAM

The example provided at the end of this paragraph shows that the LOs approach was adopted for reforming the education and training system.

The validation of non-formal and informal learning

In Italy there is a long and consolidated social and institutional debate on this issue. The implementation of the new Law reforming the labour market (Law 92/2012) will provide for specific rules for "the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, with reference to the National system of certification of competencies" (Article 4, paragraph 58).

The implementation of methods and tools for the validation of non-formal and informal learning has been primarily developed at regional level (see Section 1 of the Report FOCUS: validation of non-formal and informal learning – State of the art). More practices, which are methodologically consistent with the 2009 Cedefop Guidelines, have been piloted at local level. The target groups of these practices are migrant workers, workers experiencing jobs crisis and recipients of active labour market policies, workers involved in training activities, young people involved in work experiences, in training course, in apprenticeship or voluntary work. The economic sectors that are mainly represented in this scenario include: construction, maintenance and services, welfare, tourism.

With regard to Higher Education, Ministerial Decree 270/2004 of the Ministry of Education and University states that "universities can recognize as ECTS-credits, according to predetermined criteria, the professional knowledge and skills certified in accordance with the regulations in force, and other knowledge and skills gained in post-secondary education and training designed and developed by the university". Based on this provision, some universities introduced and regulated the recognition of non-formal learning.

The credit system

The credit system provided for by the University reform (Ministerial Decree 509/99) is based on the use of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The regulations of the University reform makes explicit reference to the European system, and the design of new courses is based on University credits [CFU is the Italian equivalent], exactly corresponding to ECTS-credits.

According to ministerial decrees, 60 university credits represent one year of a student's work load (just like the ECTS-credits). The credits can only be achieved by

passing exams: universities or departments can validate credits obtained through work activities, other training and workshops.

Implementation of ECVET at national level is being mainly carried out by participating in pilot activities in the framework of transnational projects funded by the European Commission since 2008.

Example 3. The description of LOs in *Diploma di istruzione professionale* (Upper secondary education diploma - Vocational schools)

EQF LEVEL	Type of qualification	Awarded by
4	<i>Diploma di istruzione professionale</i> (Upper secondary education diploma - Vocational school)	MIUR/Education

The LOs description for the above mentioned qualification – included in the PECUP, the Student's educational, cultural and professional profile (Annex A of the Regulation No. 87 of 2010) lists the following:

- (a) the LOs common to all pathways;
- (b) the LOs related to each professional sector.

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with teachers from different disciplines and social partners, professional associations, Regions and Autonomous Provinces, defined Guidelines¹⁰ to support the schools in designing curricula according to the new approach. Guidelines were introduced in the framework of an open consultation with all schools, and supported by a national action programme. Guidelines express the LOs in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies as in the EQF framework. Below is an example of LOs for the last two years and the fifth year of vocational education, common to all upper secondary education pathways for vocational schools. It is presented as reflected in the PECUP and then as expressed in the Guidelines:

EQF Level 4 Descriptors of the LOs	Knowledge: Practical and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a work or study field	Skills: A range of cognitive and practical skills required to solve specific problems in a work or study field	Competence: Self-management with instructions given in a work or study context, which are generally predictable yet subject to changes; supervising the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities
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10. Directive of the Minister No. 70 of August 1st 2012 on the Guidelines for the pathways of vocational schools.

<p>LOs which are common to the pathways of vocational schools with reference to PECUP</p>	<p>At the end of their pathways in vocational schools, students - through study and work activities carried out in school labs and real-world settings, comparison and cooperative work, enhancement of their creativity and autonomy - are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use the cultural tools and methodologies acquired to have a rational, critical, creative and responsible attitude towards reality, its phenomena and its problems, even for lifelong learning; - use the Italian vocabulary and expressions according to the communication needs in different contexts: social, cultural, scientific, economic, technological and professional; - recognize the essential in terms of history, ideas, culture, literature, arts and easily recognize texts and key authors, from technical-professional components related to the fields of reference; - establish links between local, national and international cultural traditions, in a cross-cultural perspective and in terms of study and work mobility; - recognize the value and potential of artistic and environmental heritage; develop and express their quality in terms of relationship, communication, listening, cooperation and sense of responsibility in the exercise of their roles; - understand the ethical, social, scientific, productive, economic, and environmental implications of technological innovation and its industrial, craft and art applications; <p>.....</p>	
<p>LOs expressed in the guidelines with reference to the Italian language and literature</p>	<p>In terms of scheduling activities, the discipline contributes, in particular, to the achievement of the following course-related LOs in terms of competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify and use communication and team-working tools which are more appropriate to use in organizational and professional contexts of reference - write technical reports and describe individual and group activities related to professional situations - use and develop visual communication and multimedia tools also with reference to the strategies and technical tools of online communication 	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Knowledge</p> <p><u>Language</u> Writing techniques for different types of written works, also for professional purposes. Tools for the analysis and interpretation of literary texts and topics consistent with their curriculum. Repertoires of technical and scientific terms in different languages. Documentation tools and methods for technical information. Structure of a curriculum vitae and how to write the European CV.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Skills</p> <p><u>Language</u> Use specialized languages in communication in professional contexts. Professional text editing using technical or specialized language. Compare and use technical and scientific terms in different languages. Speak and argue with the recipients/target of the service in professional settings. Select and use appropriate forms of multimedia communication that are most suitable in the professional con-</p>

	<p>Research and cataloguing techniques for multimedia productions and websites, even 'dedicated' ones. 'Dedicated' software for professional communication.</p> <p><u>Literature</u></p> <p>.....</p> <p><u>Other artistic expressions</u></p> <p>.....</p>	<p>text of reference. Develop a curriculum vitae in the European format.</p> <p><u>Literature</u></p> <p>.....</p> <p><u>Other artistic expressions</u></p> <p>.....</p>
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6.6 Compliance of the Referencing Process to Criterion 4

The introduction of new qualifications within the National Qualifications System in Italy is a process that is under direct control of the same awarding bodies - the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) and the Regions - in compliance with the normative provisions that regulate the various parts of the system.

Qualifications of the education system

<i>Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione</i> (Lower secondary school leaving diploma)
<i>Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione</i> (Compulsory education certificate)
<i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma) for <i>Licei</i> , technical schools, vocational schools
<i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's Degree) and <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (First level academic diploma)
<i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's degree) and <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second level academic diploma)
<i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> (Research Doctorate PhD) and <i>Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca</i> (Research Training Academic Diploma)

As for the qualifications awarded in the education system (under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, University and Research), the competent public authority introduces a new qualification or recognizes a given one by formally adopting it ('legal value'). Public authorities therefore protect 'the process of inclusion of qualifications' and identify the institutions (schools, universities) able to award them.

In particular:

- the qualification *Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione* (Lower secondary school leaving diploma) is achievable upon completing a compulsory pathway and after passing a State exam; as already stated, it is required to access to the second cycle;

- *Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore* (Upper secondary education diploma) for *Licei*, technical schools and vocational schools, awarded at the end of five years of a upper secondary education pathway and after passing a State exam, is defined according to the Law; the current provision is related to the reform of the second cycle of education which came into force in 2010-2011. The *Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione* (compulsory education certificate), defining knowledge and competencies to be acquired in the first two years of second cycle education and training pathways, is awarded in the second year of the five-year period;
- for academic qualifications, each university is free to design curricula that are tailored to the needs of the local economic and social context, complying with national criteria (in terms of objectives and other general training-related aspects) and degree types. MIUR established some requirements to start new courses: transparency and effectiveness-efficiency of teaching, quality assurance, number of students, facilities, organization. Until the completion of the university reform, MIUR has suspended the introduction of new degrees. The new qualifications will be subject to the evaluation of the NVA (University Evaluation Units) and ANVUR (National Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).

Qualifications of Vocational Education and Training

Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione
(Compulsory education certificate)

Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale (Professional operator certificate)

Diploma professionale di tecnico (Professional technician diploma)

With regard to Education and Vocational Training, which falls within the competence of the Regions, the qualifications *Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale* (Professional operator certificate) and *Diploma professionale di tecnico* (Professional technician diploma) are included in the National Register of qualifications. These qualifications are the outcome of a technical and institutional process, which took place at the Permanent Conference for relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces (a privileged forum for political negotiations between the central Government and the Regions), with the signing of a State-Regions Agreement. Any modification to the Register requires a debate in the above-mentioned forum.

The *Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione* (compulsory education certificate), i.e. the same awarded by the Ministry of Education, is also awarded in the second year of education and training pathways.

Qualifications of Higher Technical Education and Training

Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore (Higher technical specialization certificate)

Diploma di tecnico superiore (Higher technical education diploma)

Also in the scope of Higher Technical Education and Training, which falls under the responsibility of the Regions (awarding *Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore* - Higher Technical Specialization certificates) and the Ministry of Education (awarding *Diploma di tecnico superiore* - Higher technical education diploma), the qualifications are a close number and new qualifications can only be introduced following a broad consultation process. Since 2008, with the new rules that have reorganized the Higher Technical Education and Training system - aimed at facilitating collaboration at regional and national level, and with the social partners - the already existing National Committee IFTS (Higher Technical Education & Training) was supported by a National Annual Conference ('of services'). Promoted by the MIUR, with representatives of the Conference of the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces, the social partners, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Conference aims at adjusting the system to the new demands of the labour market.

6.7 Compliance of the Referencing Process to Criterion 5

5 The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications framework or system and are consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines (as indicated in annex 3 of the Recommendation).

Public authorities in charge for awarding qualifications in the Italian national system are also in charge for assuring the quality in developing qualifications and standards, defining Education and Training pathways, elaborating systems for the evaluation and validation of learning, assessing training facilities.

The following paragraphs describe the quality assurance systems with respect to the following macro-domains:

- primary and secondary education and training;
- higher education;
- vocational training.

The overall framework shows how a number of measures have been put in place in recent years to ensure the consistency of the national quality assurance system with the relevant European principles and guidelines.

In April 2012 the process of formal adoption of the National Plan for Quality Assurance of Vocational Education and Training system by the competent authorities

(Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Regions) was finalized, following the 2009 EQAVET Recommendation.

The main pillars of the Plan include:

- promotion of a culture of continuous quality improvement;
- promotion of a culture of evaluation and assessment, including both self-assessment and external assessment;
- involvement of stakeholders;
- measuring the satisfaction of users and all stakeholders involved (trainers, families, businesses, etc.);
- publication of results.

The Plan identifies the on-going actions that ensure the quality of the education and training system (referring to the phases of planning, implementing, evaluating and reviewing), and highlights how "different elements proposed by the European reference framework are already part of the national context". At the same time, the Plan identifies improvement goals and the actions to be taken to increase the degree of alignment to the European model.

Quality assurance in first and second cycle of education and training

The quality assurance of the education and training system is entrusted to the National Evaluation System, established by Law No. 10 of 2011, which is based on the collaboration of the following stakeholders:

- the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System (INVALSI), which is responsible for the preparation of evaluation tests for all the schools at all levels, and participates into international surveys, carries out national surveys based on national standards; INDIRE (National Institute of Documentation for Innovation and Educational Research), which is responsible for supporting improvement processes and educational innovation, in-service training of school staff, documentation and research;
- the Inspectorate, which is autonomous and independent and charged with the task of evaluating schools and school directors.

These bodies had already played an active role in promoting the quality of education; the new regulatory provision reorganizes the functions of each of them, harmonizing and promoting coordination.

The National Evaluation System aims at the following objectives:

- a) supporting schools and training institutions in analysing the effectiveness of their organizational structure, the efficiency of their actions and the overall quality of the services provided, in order to promote self-assessment initiatives as well as the improvement, assessment and evaluation of the results achieved;
- b) helping schools and training institutions in critical situations, supporting improvement actions and promoting actions aimed at overcoming difficulties.
- c) promoting transparency, social accountability, reporting and comparability of schools and training institutions – aimed at comparing results at a European and international level – in order to improving the organization of teaching and training actions;

d) enabling the evaluation of school leaders and directors, to improve the quality of education and training service of their institutions, while complying with the general regulatory framework and the national collective agreement.

The Regulation¹¹ defines external evaluation by means of surveys conducted on a regular basis. Learning assessment tests are based on a census-taking mechanism regarding pupils attending the second and fifth year of primary school, the first and third year of lower secondary school and the second and final year of upper secondary school. The National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System (INVALSI) defines the effectiveness and efficiency indicators for the evaluation of school and training institutions, as well as the indicators for the evaluation of school directors. INVALSI is also responsible for the National Evaluation System.

The second pillar of the reform consists in the self-assessment of schools. The analysis will produce a self-assessment report which INVALSI will use to identify schools which have to undergo external evaluation, coordinated by inspectors.

BOX 5 - The evaluation process in the education and training system

a) self-assessment:

1) analysis and assessment of its service based on the data made available by the information system of the Ministry, surveys on learning and processing of the added value returned to INVALSI, as well as other significant elements integrated by the same school;

2) development of a self-assessment report in electronic form, according to a framework designed by INVALSI, and formulation of a plan for improvement;

b) external evaluation:

1) identification of the situations to test, according to the efficiency and effectiveness indicators defined by INVALSI;

visits by evaluation units, according to the assessment programmes and protocols adopted by the Conference for the Functional Coordination of the National Evaluation System;

3) redefinition of improvement plans based on the results of the analysis carried out by the units;

c) measures for improvement: definition and implementation of improvement actions with the support of INDIRE or through collaboration with universities, research institutes, professional and cultural associations;

d) social accountability and reporting: publication, dissemination of the results achieved through indicators and comparable data, both in a dimension of transparency and with a view to sharing and promoting the improvement of the service with the community.

11. The Regulation was approved in first reading by the Council of Ministers of August 24th 2012.

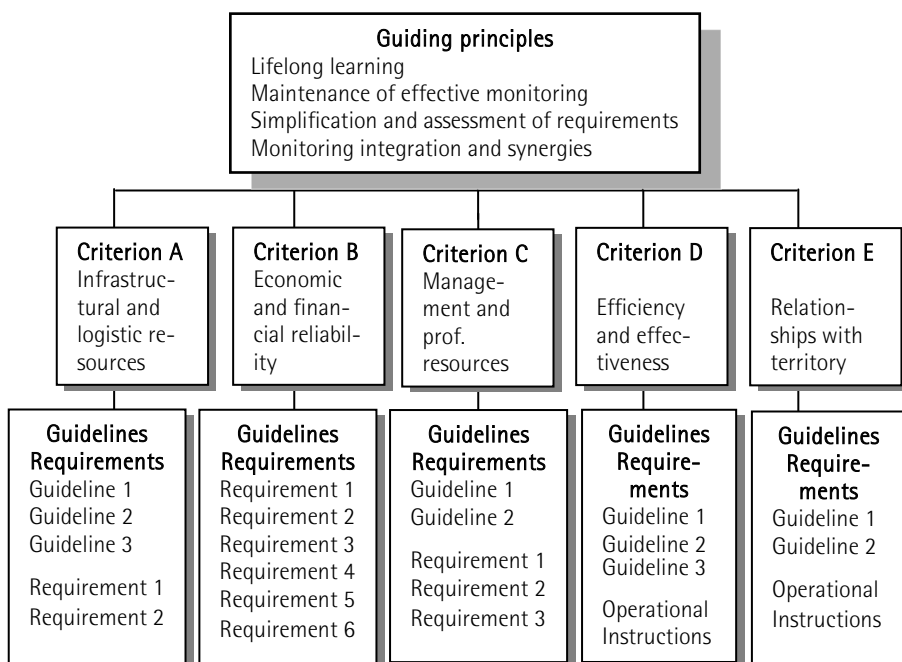
Based on the results of the Report, and with the support of INDIRE, universities, research institutes, professional or cultural associations, schools will define an improvement plan. The outcomes of the assessment procedure are not intended to punish or reward but to improve the educational effectiveness of the schools. The aim is to enable a systematic and comprehensive process for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of services, which should be primarily aimed at raising the learning levels of students and at providing them with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed choices about their future.

Strategic priorities of the education system evaluation are stated by the Ministry of Education, University and Research with a three-year Directive (art. 2 par. 3 Law Decree No.286 of November 19th 2004).

Quality assurance in Vocational Education and Training pathways

'Accreditation' is the main tool for quality assurance of training provision at regional level. In order to receive public funds, training institutions must be accredited by the Region, demonstrating that they meet a given set of requirements.

Based on the agreement reached at the State-Regions Conference, some national benchmarks and minimum standards were defined. Regions have progressively refined their accreditation systems, in terms of both selectivity of institutions and sustainability of devices. The agreement reached in 2008 identified the criteria and guidelines for a new model of accreditation of training institutions, designed to focus on the quality of the performance, more in terms of product than of process.



The logical structure of accreditation can be considered from distinct viewpoints:

- Guiding principles, which are the pillars of the accreditation strategy, and quality improvement of the training system, which should be pursued across all criteria;
- Criteria for allowing access or denial to the system are defined;
- Guidelines/requirements/operational guidelines, that is, the explicit operational criteria with different specification levels. Guidelines and requirements are further detailed, with reference to: the 'evidence' demonstrating that a requirement is met, the documents available for verification, key points for audits and maintenance guidelines, as shown in the example below.

CRITERION A: INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOGISTIC RESOURCES				
Requirement	Type of Evidence	Documentary Verification	Direct Verification	Maintenance Guidelines
A1) Availability of facilities and premises	A1.1) Scanning of the document of exclusive availability of the premises of the headquarters for at least three years from the date of the application for accreditation: - lease, ownership, usufruct, loan contract; - for public training centres, declaration by the executive or director regarding the availability of the property to be used as headquarters; - For public schools, declaration by the owner of the premises specifying that the facility is leased for vocational training and/or guidance.	Assessment of the document certifying exclusive availability, for at least three years of the premises of the headquarters from the date of the application for accreditation, with attached the model F23 for payment of the registration fee. In the case of public schools, document review of the declaration of availability.	Direct verification of the availability of the premises based on their state/condition. The exclusive use must be inferred from the document, the utilities and the means of communication (telephone, fax, data). It follows that two or more accredited institutions cannot coexist in the same place.	Updating the documentation submitted before each expiry date.

A2) Compliance of facilities and premises	A2.1) Scanning of the cadastral survey of the place or of the documentation regarding cadastral registration.	Document check of the cadastral survey of the headquarters. Failing this, document check of cadastral registration request by the property owner.	Direct check of the data contained in the cadastral survey and comparison with the state/ condition of the premises.	Updating the documentation sent in case the state/ condition of the premises has changed.
.....			

The regional accreditation systems meet the criteria for quality assurance indicated in the EQAVET Recommendation, as also shown in the National Plan for Quality Assurance adopted in the first half of 2012 by the competent authorities (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Regions).

In addition, the Inter-ministerial Decree of November 29th 2007 defines quality criteria for training centres providing three-year VET courses under the State-Regions agreement, which allow completing compulsory education:

- a) belonging to a no-profit organization, which provides educational services for the education and training of young people aged less than 18 years and that has facilities, classrooms and equipment suitable for the management of these services;
- b) managing an educational project aimed at transferring the knowledge and competencies required for the achievement of compulsory education; guaranteeing joint design and management of education and training activities, ensuring the periodic and final certification of LOs; providing teachers with qualified teacher status for secondary or higher schools and, on a temporary basis, personnel with a bachelor's degree in competent specific area and adequate professional experience or, at least, an upper secondary school diploma and a five-year experience;
- c) applying the National Collective Agreement for Vocational Training;
- d) ensuring adequate links with families, as well as local economic and social stakeholders, through suitable measures that encourage educational success.

Quality assurance in Higher Education

The Italian Higher Education system pays the highest attention to quality assurance. The pursuit of an European Higher Education Area through the progressive convergence of national systems required to adhere to specific guidelines on the quality of courses and the general organization and structure of the three cycles, as agreed by the relevant Ministers at the Bergen meeting (2005). The overall picture of quality systems shows how a number of measures have been put in place to ensure the consistency of the national system of quality assurance with the relevant European principles and guidelines.

The reform of Higher Education (Law of December 20th 2010, No. 240¹²) established a system of accreditation of university courses, based on the use of *ex-ante* indicators for verifying whether universities meet and have adequate didactic, structural, organizational, teaching and research standards as well as financial sustainability requirements. In addition, this Law introduced a Periodic Assessment System, which is also based on *ex ante* criteria and indicators, aimed at verifying the efficiency and achievements in teaching and research by universities.

ANVUR (National Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education¹³) was charged with the task of monitoring and evaluating results in a transparent manner and according to quality and merit promotion criteria. Therefore, ANVUR helps defining and organizing activities with regard to the accreditation system, periodic evaluation and the enhancement of self-assessment mechanisms, also based on the best practices at international level. The standards and guidelines for quality assurance in Higher Education (in accordance with the ENQA¹⁴ Bergen Report of 2005 – “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area”) adopted in 2006 with the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2006/143/EC) are also taken into account.

The Agency oversees the national public system of quality assessment of universities and research institutions, and is responsible for external evaluation; therefore, it performs “the functions of a national agency for quality assurance, as provided for by the relevant European agreements”.

In addition, this agency disseminates the results of analysis and assessments and draws up an annual report on the state of the Higher Education and research system. This report is submitted to the Minister and the Prime Minister, the Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Planning and the Parliament.

The recent Decree regulating the Higher Education reform¹⁵ stated also the introduction of:

- an initial and periodic accreditation system of university facilities and curricula;
- a system of quality assessment and assurance, efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and university research;
- a mechanism aimed at reinforcing self-assessment of quality and effectiveness of teaching and research;
- mechanisms designed to ensure incentives, *pro rata*, to the universities that have achieved excellent results or that have significantly improved teaching and research.

12. www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/10240l.htm

13. Presidential Decree providing for “Regulation of the structure and functioning of ANVUR” (Presidential Decree No. 76, February 1st 2010) states that the Agency shall have a legal personality and organizational, administrative and accounting autonomy. The autonomy of the Agency over the Ministry and the Government is guaranteed by the fact that the President and the Selection Committee that will identify the members of the Council shall be appointed by the President of the Republic.

14. ENQA – European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies.

15. Legislative Decree No. 19 of January 27th 2012.

On July 24th 2012 the ANVUR Council approved the document entitled "Self-evaluation, assessment and accreditation of the Italian university system"¹⁶, with the aim of implementing the Decree regulating the Higher Education reform Law of January 27th 2012.

The procedure designed by ANVUR aims to provide:

- universities with a model of quality assurance as well as the training of teaching, technical and administrative staff for their adequate development;
- universities with useful information for a better development of their strategies in the field of education and research, along with other activities;
- courses and research units with comparative elements in order to improve the quality of their activities;
- MIUR with the necessary information required for national planning and decisions concerning the allocation of resources;
- students with useful information for their career choices;
- the business community with information on the quality of programmes and graduates;
- the civil society with reliable and transparent information on the activities of the Italian university system.

To achieve these objectives, they have set up:

1. An accreditation system of universities and university courses based on the use of specific indicators, defined *ex ante* by ANVUR, for checking whether universities meet suitable didactic, structural, organizational, teaching and research standards, as well as economic and financial sustainability requirements¹⁷
2. A periodic evaluation system based on criteria and indicators established *ex ante*, by ANVUR, of efficiency and achievements in teaching and research by single universities and their internal structure (primarily departments)¹⁸.
3. A mechanism that aims at strengthening the self-assessment of quality and efficiency of universities, which will use evaluation units and the contributions of the staff-student joint committees.

Evaluation units are responsible to check the quality and effectiveness of the didactic provision and the research activities carried out by departments. They complete evaluation procedures for facilities and staff, in order to promote merit and the improvement of organizational and individual performance in universities, in full autonomy and with their own organizational methods.

Staff-student joint committees monitor training activities, the quality of teaching, as well as the services provided by teachers to students. They also identify indicators for

16. www.anvur.org/sites/anvur-miur/files/ava_documentofinale_0.pdf

17. Accreditation is a ministerial act, with the assent of ANVUR authorizing or not - in the case of initial accreditation, confirmation or revocation, in the case of periodic accreditation - courses or universities.

18. The periodic evaluation of universities measures the efficiency, financial sustainability and results achieved by single universities and their departments in the field of research, teaching and self-assessment of quality. The periodic evaluation is summarized by ANVUR in a report to be sent to the Ministry and based on which an FFO share of the reward is assigned.

the evaluation of the results referred to in the previous paragraph and provide feedback on the activation and cancellation of courses.

The enhancement of self-assessment activities and the application of the quality assurance system to universities started in the academic year 2012-13.

Also AFAM (High Level Arts and Music Education System) made commitments similar to those established for universities.

6.8 Compliance of the Referencing Process to Criterion 6

6 The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies.

Based on what it has been illustrated with reference to the previous criterion, i.e. No.5, the bodies in charge of quality assurance in the Italian education and training system are:

- for the first and second cycle of the education and training system:
 - INVALSI – the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System performs periodic and systematic assessment of the knowledge and skills of students and of the overall quality of the training provision by Vocational Education and Training institutions, also in the field of lifelong learning; it also provides support and technical assistance to school administration, Regions, local authorities and single schools and training institutions for carrying out autonomous monitoring, evaluation and self-evaluation initiatives;
 - INDIRE – the National Institute of Documentation for Innovation and Educational Research¹⁹ supports the autonomy of school in the European Union and innovation and educational research processes to encourage interaction with the in-service training of school staff and documentation and educational research;
- for the Higher Education system, quality assurance is entrusted to ANVUR²⁰ – the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research, whose task is to promote “a culture of quality, excellence and merit of the Italian universities and research system, working in a way that is consistent with the best practices for evaluating results at international level and based on the principles of independence, impartiality, professionalism, transparency and publicity of acts”.

19. Its origins date back to 1925, but later on it has undergone several changes. With Law No.296/2006 it had been transformed into ANSAS – National Agency for the Development of School Autonomy – and then, in compliance with Art.19 of Law No.98/2011, it was called back INDIRE, but with renewed tasks.

20. Established by Law No. 286/2006 and regulated by Presidential Decree No. 76 of February 1st 2010.

The aforementioned bodies are public research institutions, with organizational, administrative and accounting autonomy; nevertheless, they are subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Education, University and Research. In particular, the Minister gives the green light to annual and multi-year activity plans, issued in accordance with the guidelines and directives provided for by the Ministry of Education. The Minister is shown the results of the activities that have been carried out.

As far as Regions and Autonomous Provinces are concerned, through the accreditation system, these acknowledge the possibility to propose and implement training measures which are funded with public resources, based on specific quality standards (about 6,800 were accredited in 2011). The accreditation process is entirely under the responsibility of the Regions.

Given the role of the Ministry of Education with respect to the agencies for the evaluation of the education and training system (INDIRE, INVALSI and ANVUR) and the role of the Regions in the accreditation of those bodies providing vocational training, it is believed that the formal approval of the results of the Referencing Process of the Italian system of qualifications to the EQF through the agreement signed at the State-Regions Conference fully meets criterion 6.

6.9 Compliance of the Referencing Process to Criterion 7

7 The referencing process shall involve international experts.

The Referencing Process is the result of both a national and an international activity. In order to meet Criterion 7, five international experts were invited to play different roles in the process of referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF:

- Father Friedrich Bechina - Responsible for the international relations of the Holy See for Higher Education;
- Richard Curmi - Senior Manager at the Department for the evaluation and accreditation of the Malta Qualification Authority;
- Claudia Gelleni - Official at the International Centre for educational cooperation - CIEP (*Centre international d'études pédagogiques*) France;
- Adi Edlira Kahani - Official at the Department for the recognition of the qualifications, Division of International Relations and Unesco of the Ministry of Education of Israel;
- Jean Philippe Restoueix - Official at the Council of Europe and member of the EQF Advisory Group.

The consultation process was carried out in two different phases: first, through a web seminar, then, through an face-to-face seminar which also involved representatives from the Regions along with the Technical Group. In this process the experts shared their views and comments on the Italian Referencing Report, namely on some key points regarding the "quality" of the Report (i.e. the capability of the

document to fully represent and promote the Italian system in the European context), as well as the "quality" of the Referencing Process (i.e. the clearness and transparency of the methods used during the Referencing Process). The results were reviewed on the basis of the feedbacks given within the national consultation process. The experts agreed on the representation of the Italian system as clear and sufficiently exhaustive at all levels, however they suggested that the political view and governance of the educational and training system may be more explicit, thus better clarifying both responsibilities and scope for inter-institutional cooperation between the State and the Regions. In particular, several points were raised regarding how to improve the "readability" of the Report and of the Italian Referencing Process to the benefit of foreign readers. Moreover, in order to increase the clearness and transparency of the Referencing Report, the experts suggested that the connection with the Italian Qualifications Framework for Higher Education defined within the Bologna Process could be made more explicit and that the main points about quality assurance of the overall process may be clarified.

A detailed analysis of the contribution provided by the international experts, including comments, is available in the documents enclosed in the Referencing Report.

6.10 Compliance of the Referencing Process to Criterion 8

8 The competent national body or bodies shall certify the referencing of the national framework or system with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it shall be published by the competent national bodies, including the National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria.

The present Report, developed by the Technical Group, was shared and agreed upon by Regions and social partners; it was also the basis for national and international consultancy activities and represents the final outcome of the Referencing Process. The Report certifies the referencing of the Italian Qualifications Framework to the EQF in paragraph 1, section 3. It describes and provides evidence supporting the Referencing Process, with explicit reference to each of the ten European criteria outlined by the Advisory Group in paragraphs 4 to 13, Section 3.

The Report was formally adopted by the competent bodies responsible for awarding referenced qualifications through an agreement signed at the permanent Conference for the relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano and it shall be published on institutional websites by competent national bodies.

The National Coordination Point (NCP) will ensure the publication of the Referencing Report both in paper and electronic format and make it available on the official website. Furthermore, the NCP will continue managing the implementation of the

Referencing Process to the EQF, in order to enable subsequent inclusion of regional qualifications.

Once the Report is submitted to the Commission, a qualifications database capable of interacting with the European EQF portal will be created.

The NCP will also be in charge of all the activities concerning exploitation and dissemination of the results, including the regular updating of the contents of the national website, the organization of events, seminars and working groups with the aim of promoting and increasing awareness about the EQF and the Italian Referencing Process.

6.11 Compliance of the Referencing Process to Criterion 9

- 9** The official EQF platform shall maintain a public listing of member states that have confirmed that they have completed the referencing process, including links to completed referencing reports.

Once the Referencing Process is complete and its results are approved by the State-Regions Conference, the EQF National Coordination Point will inform the European Commission and provide a link to the Report.

The Report will be available nationwide on the official websites of the national bodies responsible for the Referencing Process.

The national website (<http://www.isfol.it/isfol-europa/dispositivi-europei>) of the EQF and the Referencing Process will be implemented together with a set of documents to be downloaded in electronic format, such as: the Report, the EQF Recommendation, the Directives, the Notes by the Advisory Group, etc.

The qualifications database will also be available on the website; information will be divided into two areas (education and vocational training); the database will be linked to Ploteus, the portal of learning opportunities in the European area (the Italian section of Ploteus is managed by ISFOL).

6.12 Compliance of the Referencing Process to Criterion 10

- 10** Following the referencing process, and in line with the timelines set out in the Recommendation, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents issued by competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications system, to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level.

The formal agreements set by the competent bodies as a result of the Referencing Process specify the timelines and modes for the inclusion of references to EQF levels

in all new qualifications awarded after the publication of the Referencing Report. The constant and joint cooperation between the EQF National Coordination Point and the National Europass Centre, both operating within Isfol, will contribute to meet this criterion. The agreements resulting from the State-Region Conferences held in the past two years explicitly refer to the EQF:

- the first one - July 27th 2011 - sets out LOs standards as referred to EQF levels;
- the second one - April 2012 - introduces the main pillars of a national system for the certification of the competencies which might have been acquired during an apprenticeship pathway.

It requires that an explicit reference to the appropriate EQF level is expressed in all certificates and diploma.

Section 4 – Descriptive tables of the qualifications

EQF LEVEL	Certificate/Qualification	Awarded by
1	<i>Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione</i> (Lower secondary school leaving diploma)	MIUR

Acquisition pathway	<p>Attending the first cycle is compulsory for all Italian and foreign kids.</p> <p>The first cycle of education consists of the five-year primary school and of the three-year lower secondary school; after passing the first cycle leaving State exam, <i>Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione</i> (Lower secondary school leaving diploma) will be issued granting admission to the second cycle.</p>
Learning Outcomes (LOs) Description	<p>The main purpose of the first cycle of education is enhancing the kid's full development, walking him through the pathway leading to the full understanding of the meaning of what he/she is experiencing, whilst promoting and increasing his/her awareness of active citizenship and of the basics of culture.</p> <p>The Guidelines for the curriculum of pre-primary education and the first cycle of education (September 2007) allowed the Ministry of Education to provide a reference framework enabling schools to plan educational activities, while fully complying with and enhancing their autonomy. As for pre-primary education and the first cycle of education, the Guidelines indicate the subjects and groups of disciplines that schools must take into consideration:</p> <p>Language and art-related Disciplines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Italian language - European Languages - Music - Art and design - Body, movement and sport <p>History and geography-related disciplines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - History - Geography <p>Mathematics, science and technology-related disciplines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mathematics - Natural Science - Technology <p>The "Goals for the development of competencies" to be achieved at the end of the primary school and then of lower secondary school, are shown for every subject. As you can see from the example hereinafter, the Goals were determined and elaborated by following an approach which is consistent with the one followed for the LOs, the main focus being on the outcomes the pupil must be enabled to achieve in every single subject:</p> <p>A new discipline so called "Citizenship and Constitution" was introduced within the schools at each level of the education according to the law n.169/2008, not foreseen in the Guidelines of 2007.</p>

	<div data-bbox="377 189 1057 287" style="text-align: center;"> EX. Outcomes for the development of competencies at the end of lower secondary school Subject: Italian language </div> <div data-bbox="377 287 1057 1261" style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 10px;"> <p>The pupil is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Effectively interact in different communication settings, supporting his/her arguments both orally and in written form, while fully respecting other pupils' ideas. He/she has realized that besides being a relevant communication tool, dialogue is an extremely valuable civic instrument and he/she is able to use it to increase his/her knowledge and to elaborate his/her personal views on different cultural and social issues. – Effectively use his/her oral and written communication skills to cooperate with other pupils, while playing, developing a project and assessing the effectiveness of different solutions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use school textbooks or other books as well as information technology tools, to search, collect and revise data, information, ideas and the experience he/she needs during his/her study activities, both autonomously and with others. – Show interest in different genres of literature, start developing his/her personal taste for specific works, authors and genres and exchange opinions about them with his/her classmates and teachers. – Create simple hypertexts with his/her classmates and teachers' help, by effectively combining verbal, iconic and sound languages. – Appreciate language as a tool through which he/she can express his/she feelings, recollect his/her experience and elaborate his/her personal opinions. – Use meta-linguistic knowledge to improve oral and written communication skills. – Consistently modulate formal and informal registers depending on the communication situation and on the persons he/she is talking to; recognize and use specialized words according to the subject of the conversation. </div> <p>The introduction of the guidelines for the curriculum was supported by a monitoring activity on the implementation process carried out in the years 2009/2010 – 2011/2012. The vast majority of schools took part in the monitoring activity.</p> <p>The results of the monitoring stressed the need to revise the National guidelines. Therefore was taken the decision to undergo electronic consultancy with all schools during summer 2012.</p> <p>The final text of the new guidelines was approved by the Minister of Education and issued under the form of Regulations on November 16th 2012, waiting for registration at the Court of Auditors. Such guidelines will replace, as deter-</p>
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	<p>mined by the Presidential Decree 889/2009, the National Guidelines for customized study plans (Decree 59/2004) as well as the National Guidelines for the Curriculum (Ministerial Decree of July 31st 2007).</p>
Legislation	<p>Ministerial Regulations containing the National guidelines for the curriculum of pre-primary schools and first cycle of education (November 16th 2012)</p> <p>Regulations for reorganizing pre-primary schools and the first cycle of education – DPR No. 89 of March 20th 2009</p> <p>Guidelines for the curriculum of pre-primary education and the first cycle of education – MIUR (Ministry of Education University and Research) – September 2007</p> <p>Ministerial Circular No. 85 dated December 3rd 2004 Instruction on the evaluation of pupils and on the certification of competencies in primary school and lower secondary school.</p> <p>Legislative Decree of February 19th 2004, No. 59 - Definition of the general provisions concerning pre-primary school and first-cycle education, ex art. No. 1, Law dated March 28th 2003, No. 53.</p> <p>Law dated March 28th 2003, No. 53 "Delegation to the Government for the definition of general provisions on education and for the definition of expected minimum levels of performances in education and professional training."</p>

EQF LEVEL	Certificate/Qualification	Awarded by
2	<i>Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione</i> (Compulsory education certificate)	MIUR or Regions

Acquisition pathway	A certificate shall be awarded at the end of compulsory education, generally at the end of the first two years of the upper secondary education and Vocational Education and Training courses, while confirming the acquisition of basic knowledge and competencies required by compulsory education. The certificate was introduced since school year 2010-2011 and is awarded either upon the student's request or as a matter of course to students over 18 years.								
Learning Outcomes (LOs) Description	<p>The Regulations on the extension of compulsory education and the related technical document, fully complying with the European Recommendation on key competencies for lifelong learning (Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, December 18th 2006), defined the basic competencies to be acquired at the end of compulsory education and divided them into four cultural areas (Languages, Mathematics, Science-Technology, History-Social).</p> <p>Cultural areas play a fundamental role in the creation of learning pathways aimed at the acquisition of key competencies, divided into skills and knowledge, with explicit reference to the EQF Recommendation and to the LOs descriptors. The certificate is structured in a way that the description of the basic competencies acquired at the end of the first two years of the upper secondary education and the first two years of professional training courses, in subjects such as Italian language, history, foreign languages, mathematics, information technology and science, is concise and transparent.</p> <p>Cultural areas represent the 'pillars' of the setting up of learning pathways aimed at the acquisition of key competencies. Competencies are divided into skills and knowledge.</p> <p>Below is the synthetic description of the four competencies gained at the end of a two-year course in the area of languages. The transposition of competence descriptor 1 into 'skills' and 'knowledge' is also reported.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Area of languages</th></tr> <tr> <th>Competence</th><th>Competence descriptor</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>N.1 Mastery of the Italian language</td><td> 1. (Using) communication tools in different contexts 2. Reading, understanding and interpreting written genres 3. Elaborating different types of text according to different communication purposes </td></tr> <tr> <td>N.2 Speaking a foreign language</td><td>Using a foreign language to achieve main communication and action-related purposes</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Area of languages		Competence	Competence descriptor	N.1 Mastery of the Italian language	1. (Using) communication tools in different contexts 2. Reading, understanding and interpreting written genres 3. Elaborating different types of text according to different communication purposes	N.2 Speaking a foreign language	Using a foreign language to achieve main communication and action-related purposes
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	<table><tr><td>N.3 Using basic tools for the enjoyment of the artistic and literary heritage</td><td>Using basic tools for the enjoyment of the artistic heritage</td></tr><tr><td>N.4 Using and creating multimedia texts</td><td>Using and creating multimedia texts</td></tr></table>	N.3 Using basic tools for the enjoyment of the artistic and literary heritage	Using basic tools for the enjoyment of the artistic heritage	N.4 Using and creating multimedia texts	Using and creating multimedia texts								
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<p>In order to fully meet the recommendation on key competencies, key competencies for citizenship (Annex 2 of the technical document) to be achieved through the mutual integration and interdependence of the competencies included in the cultural areas, shall be added to the competencies concerning the four cultural areas.</p>													
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	<p>study/work methods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Planning: planning and carrying out projects concerning the development of one's study and work activities, by applying the acquired knowledge in order to set relevant and realistic goals as well as one's own priorities, by assessing the existing boundaries and opportunities, by defining strategies and checking own achievements. – Communicating and understanding messages of different nature (everyday, literary, technical, scientific) and complexity, delivered through different linguistic codes (verbal, mathematic, scientific, symbolic...) and means (paper, information technology, multimedia); representing events, phenomena, principles, concepts, regulations, procedures, attitudes, moods, emotions and so on, by using different linguistic codes (verbal, mathematic, scientific, symbolic...) and different disciplines, through different means (paper, information technology, multimedia). – Collaborating and participating: interacting within a group of people, understanding other people's points of view, promoting one's own skills as well as others', managing conflict situations, giving one's contribution to everybody's learning and carrying out group activities, while always respecting other people's fundamental rights. – Acting autonomously and responsibly: actively and consciously taking part in the social activities while asserting one's rights and needs and simultaneously acknowledging other people's, as well as shared opportunities, boundaries, rules and responsibilities. – Problem solving: tackling challenging situations by creating and verifying hypothesis, identifying the appropriate sources and resources, collecting and assessing data, putting forward potential solutions which shall include contents and methods acquired from different disciplines according to the specific problem. – Creating connections and relations: identifying and describing through consistent reasonings, the existing connections and relations among phenomena, events and different ideas, even belonging to different groups of disciplines, even far away in both time and space, by understanding their systemic nature, identifying differences and similarities, consistency and inconsistency, causes and results as well as their probability-related nature. – Acquiring and interpreting information: wittily and acutely acquiring and interpreting information on different topics delivered through different communication means, as assessing its reliability and applicability, and as recognizing facts and opinions.
Legislation	<p>Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 9 dated January 27th 2010: definition of the model for the certification of the competencies acquired by students at the end of compulsory education.</p> <p>Inter-Ministerial Decree dated November 29th 2007. First implementation of</p>

	<p>compulsory education.</p> <p>Decree of MIUR dated August 22nd 2007, No. 139. Regulations on the extension of compulsory education.</p> <p>Law No. 296 dated 2006, art. 1, paragraph 622.</p> <p>Legislative Decree dated April 15th 2005, No. 76. Definition of general provisions on the right/duty to education and training.</p> <p>Law dated March 28th 2003, No. 53 "Delegation to the Government for the definition of general provisions on education and the definition of expected minimum levels of performances in education and professional training."</p>
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EQF LEVEL	Certificate/Qualification	Awarded by
3	<i>Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale</i> (Professional operator certificate)	Regions

Acquisition pathway	The <i>Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale</i> (Professional operator certificate) is awarded at the end of a three-year Vocational Education and Training (<i>Istruzione e Formazione Professionale – leFP</i>) pathway. Anyone holding a <i>Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione</i> (Lower secondary leaving diploma) can access VET courses.
Learning Outcomes (LOs) Description	<p>VET courses refer to minimum levels of basic competencies as well as to general and specific technical-professional competencies in terms of LOs.</p> <p>There is explicit and specific reference to: "minimum training levels based on competence as proven capacity to apply knowledge, skills and personal and/or methodological abilities both in study and work situations as well as in one's personal and professional development".</p> <p>The National Register for the provision of Vocational Education and Training (State-Regions agreement dated July 27th 2011), includes qualifications such as Professional Operator (three-year vocational course) and Professional Technician (four-year vocational course), relying on a National system of general and technical-professional competence standards complying with LOs.</p> <p>The agreement (Annex A – Descriptive-constructive information about competencies, skills and knowledge) points out the following:</p> <p>"In compliance with the EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy and is the expression of the synthesis of its fundamental elements, such as: the situation/context for which it provides a certain level of mastery; the resources it puts in place (...) the expected outcome. From a descriptive point of view, this shall result in the use of verbs in their infinite form to clearly identify the taxonomy of the different levels of responsibility/autonomy for Professional operators and Professional technicians (...).";</p> <p>"Skills" are a fundamental component of competencies and "indicate the ability to apply one's knowledge to fulfil tasks and solve problems (...).";</p> <p>"Knowledge", another fundamental component of competence, "is a set of facts, principles, theories and practical applications which concern a specific work field. Unlike competencies, knowledge shall be identified on the basis of its substantiality and the student's possibilities to be trained according to his/her learning pathway (...)."</p> <p>Hereinafter is an example of technical-professional standards of the descriptive format defined for qualification of Professional operator (LOs after the third year). The qualification in the example is the 'Construction operator' and is included in the Register:</p>

	<p>The Professional operator certificate for Construction</p> <p>The Construction operator takes part in the construction process. His/her autonomy and responsibility are limited to what is endorsed in the prescriptions in terms of procedures and methods concerning his/her job. His/her qualification in the application and use of basic methods, tools and information allow him/her to work at the construction and finishing of buildings, with competencies in the preparation of the building site, planning and monitoring activities, conformity checks and work adequacy.</p> <p>Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Defining and planning different operative actions to be carried out in compliance with the legislation on safety, on the basis of the instructions provided, of the available reference documents (diagrams, drawings, procedures, bills of materials, ...) and of the system of relations. – Preparing the instruments, tools and machinery. necessary in the various operational phases, with reference to the kinds of material to be used, endorsed indications/procedures, the expected outcome, always complying with safety measures. – Monitoring the correct functioning of instruments, tools and machinery by taking care of standard maintenance activities. – Preparing and monitoring the workplace in order to ensure that all health-related regulations are abided, thus preventing tiredness and work-related pathologies. – Preparing and decommissioning the construction site and its operative elements with reference to the instructions provided and in compliance with specific safety measures. – Creating permanent stone structures with reference to project specifications and in compliance with specific safety standards. – Performing carpentry-related works for the creation and assembly of construction elements, with reference to project specifications and in compliance with specific safety standards. – Performing finishing activities with reference to the project specifications and in compliance with specific safety standards. – Checking, through measuring and monitoring activities, the conformity and adequacy of the performed construction activities with the expected quality and safety-related standards. <p>Competence 1 (of 9)¹</p> <p>Defining and planning different operational phases to be carried out in compliance with safety measures, on the basis of the instructions pro-</p>
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1. Competencies are associated with specific work-activity processes. Competence 1, for instance (together with competence 2, 3 and 4) is related to process A- Organizing and planning one's activity; a detailed list of the features characterizing the working process is also provided.

	vided, of the available reference documents (diagrams, drawings, procedures, bills of materials, ...) and of the system of relations.	
	Skills	Knowledge
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Using reference documents (diagrams, drawings, procedures, bills of materials, ...) and instructions to plan the various working phases and activities – Applying organizing and planning methods in compliance with specific regulations on safety, health and environmental protection. – Applying time-saving and time-managing techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Specific regulations on safety, health and environmental protection. – Main technical vocabulary of the field – Processes, working procedures and posts in the construction sector – Organization-oriented communication skills – Planning techniques
	Competence 2 (of 9) ...	
Legislation	<p>State-Regions agreement dated July 27th 2011 and January 19th 2012 Legislative Decree dated October 17th 2005, No. 226. General provisions and expected minimum levels of performance of the second cycle of the education and training system.</p> <p>Law dated March 28th 2003, No. 53. "Delegation to the Government for the definition of general provisions on education and for the definition of expected minimum levels of performances in education and professional training."</p> <p>Regional Laws regulating the regional system of Vocational Education and Training</p>	

EQF LEVEL	Certificate/Qualification	Awarded by
4	<i>Diploma professionale di tecnico</i> (Professional technician diploma)	Regions

Acquisition pathway	<p>The <i>Diploma professionale di tecnico</i> (Professional technician diploma) is awarded at the end of a four-year Vocational Education and Training course. Anyone holding a <i>Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione</i> (Lower secondary school leaving diploma) can access Vocational Education and Training courses.</p>
Learning Outcomes (LOs) Description	<p>Vocational Education and Training courses refer to minimum levels of basic competencies as well as to general and specific technical-professional competencies in terms of LOs.</p> <p>There is explicit and specific reference to: "minimum training levels based on competence as proven capacity to apply knowledge, skills and personal and/or methodological abilities both in study and work situations as well as in personal and professional development".</p> <p>Moreover, the courses and qualifications defined in the National Register for the provision of Vocational Education and Training are described "in compliance with the descriptors and definitions reported on the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (April 23rd 2008)".</p> <p>The <i>Diploma professionale di tecnico</i> (Professional technician diploma - four-year course) is awarded to professional workers whose qualifications are included in the National Register for the provision of Vocational Education and Training and share the minimum training levels of technical-professional competencies, (updated on a three-year basis after monitoring and evaluating activities carried out on the system in compliance with State-Regions agreements).</p> <p>The National Register for the provision of Vocational Education and Training (State-Regions agreement July 27th 2011), includes qualifications such as Professional Operator (three-year professional course) and Professional Technician (four-year professional course), relying on a national system of general and technical-professional competence standards which complies with LOs.</p> <p>The agreement (Annex A – Descriptive-constructive information about competence, skills and knowledge) points out the following:</p> <p>"In compliance with the EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy and is the synthesis of its fundamental elements, such as: the situation/context for which it provides a certain level of mastery; the resources it puts in place (...) the expected outcome. From a descriptive point of view, this shall result in the use of verbs in their infinite form to clearly identify the taxonomy of the different levels of responsibility/autonomy for Professional Operators and Professional Technicians (...).";</p> <p>"Skills" are a fundamental component of competencies and "indicate the ability to apply one's knowledge to fulfil tasks and solve problems (...).";</p>

"Knowledge", another fundamental component of competence, "is a set of facts, principles, theories and practical applications which concern a specific work field. Unlike competencies, knowledge shall be identified on the basis of its substantiality and the student's possibilities to be trained according to his/her learning pathway (...)".

Hereinafter is an example of technical-professional standards of the descriptive format for the *Diploma professionale di tecnico* (Professional technician diploma) LOs after the fourth year. The qualification here at stake is of Construction technician and is included in the Register:

The Professional technician diploma for Construction

The Construction technician operates autonomously, on the basis of an established work plan and specifications, and gives his/her own contribution to the construction process by taking part in the identification of material and instrumental resources, the preparation, the organization of operations and the implementation of new procedures aimed at constantly improving the work process, the monitoring activity as well as the evaluation of the results, whilst being in charge of monitoring the activities carried out by other workers. His/her technical training in the use of methods, instruments and specialized information allows him/her to work in the construction industry, with competencies on the construction site.

Competencies:

- Managing the different operational phases on the basis of the scheduled programme and of project specifications, by coordinating team activities.
- Identifying potentially risky situations for safety, health and work-environment, thus promoting correct, aware and pre-emptive behaviours.
- Collaborating at managing the logistics supply by identifying purchasing needs of tools and materials.
- Drawing activity and material-related documents.
- Collaborating at the preparation and decommissioning of the construction site, in compliance with project specifications and legislation.

Competence 1 (of 5)

Managing operational phases on the basis of the scheduled programme and project specifications, by coordinating team activities.

Skills	Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Using specific criteria to assign tasks, set operative methods, define a schedule for each activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Machinery, human resources and technologies of the construction site

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Coordinating the work of operational staff – Identifying operational issues – Using specific methods to identify and report any training need for his/her staff – Putting forward proposals aimed at improving company standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Company and work organization – Organization and components of the construction site – Safety legislation of the construction site and industrial accident prevention – Quality systems and its main models of application – Strategies aimed at optimizing the results and tackling potential difficulties – Techniques and instruments for job quality control
	Competence 2 (of 5)	
	...	
Legislation	<p>State-Regions agreement dated July 27th 2011 and January 19th 2012</p> <p>Legislative Decree dated October 17th 2005, No. 226. General provisions and expected minimum levels of performance on the second cycle of the education and training system.</p> <p>Law dated March 28th 2003, No. 53. "Delegation to the Government for the definition of general provisions on education and for the definition of expected minimum levels of performances in education and professional training."</p> <p>Regional Laws regulating the regional system for Vocation Education and Training.</p>	

EQF LEVEL	Certificate/Qualification	Awarded by
4	<i>Diploma liceale</i> (Upper secondary education diploma for <i>Licei</i>)	MIUR/Education
	<i>Diploma di istruzione tecnica</i> (Upper secondary education diploma for Technical Schools)	
	<i>Diploma di istruzione professionale</i> (Upper secondary education diploma for Vocational Schools)	

Acquisition pathway	<p>The Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore (Upper secondary education diploma) is awarded at the completion of five-year secondary education courses in <i>Licei</i>, Technical schools and Vocational schools. The diploma can also be awarded at the completion of Higher education apprenticeships courses.</p> <p><i>Licei</i>, Technical schools and Vocational school courses are divided into two two-years cycles and one fifth year.</p> <p>After passing the secondary school State examination, a <i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma) is awarded; this diploma is necessary to enrol in Higher Education and in Higher Technical Education and Training pathways.</p>
Learning Outcomes (LOs) Description	<p>Technical and vocational secondary education, along with <i>Licei</i>, have undergone deep and radical reforms since Law No. 53 was promulgated in 2003. The specific regulations for each training provision include LOs expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies. As a matter of fact, the student's educational, cultural and professional profile explained in annex A to the regulations, indicates:</p> <p>(a) The general LOs which shall be shared by all pathways;</p> <p>(b) The LOs which shall be peculiar to the specific pathways of <i>Licei</i>, technical and vocational schools, while pointing out that, in compliance with the EQF provisions, LOs shall be described in terms of competencies, skills and knowledge in this case as well.</p> <p>Following a debate with social partners, professional associations, Regions and Autonomous Provinces, the Ministry of Education, fully supported by thousands of teachers from different disciplines, decided to promote the establishment of guidelines² to support the definition of the plan for the training provision for each school.</p> <p>The processing of the guidelines took place in the framework of a constant and open consultancy activity with all the schools, also through the web, and their introduction was supported by a set of national measures.</p> <p>The Guidelines for technical and vocational schools explain which are the LOs in the framework of the student's educational, cultural and professional Profile with reference to the first two-year cycle, then with reference to the second two-year cycle and finally with reference to the fifth year and are expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies in line with the EQF.</p>

2. Ministerial Directive No. 69 dated August 1st 2012 on the guidelines for technical school courses; Ministerial Directive No. 70 dated August 1st 2012 on the guidelines for vocational school courses.

<p>The following scheme is an example to show the LOs common to Vocational courses listed in the educational, cultural and professional profile, expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competence as established in the National guidelines for the second two-year cycle and the fifth year, with reference to the discipline of Italian language and literature:</p>				
EQF Level 4 LOs Descriptors		Knowl- edge: Fac- tual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study	Skills: A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific prob- lems in a field of work or study	Competence: Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, take some re- sponsibility for the evaluation and im- provement of work or study activities
LOs for Voca- tional School courses estab- lished in the Educational Cultural and Professional Profile		<p>Vocational education pathways aim at providing students with competencies based on the integration of technical, professional, linguistic, historical and social knowledge to be used in different contexts. At the end of these courses, students are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use the acquired cultural and methodological knowledge to rationally, acutely, creatively and responsibly face the world with its peculiar phenomena and issues, to the benefit of their lifelong learning as well; – Use the Italian language and vocabulary in different contexts according to the expected communication situations: social, cultural, scientific, economic, technological and work-related contexts; – Identify the basic guidelines underlying the history of ideas, culture, literature and arts and comfortably handle fundamental literature and authors, starting from the technical-professional components regarding their area of expertise; – Establish relations between local, National and international cultures and traditions both in an intercultural perspective and aiming at increas- 		

		<p>ing their mobility chances both in study and work activities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Acknowledge the worth and potential of the artistic and environmental heritage; develop and show their capability to relate, communicate, listen, cooperate and their sense of responsibility, in the exercise of the role– Understand the ethical, social, scientific, productive, economical and environmental implications of technological innovation and its industrial, artistic and handcrafting employment;– ...					
	Definition of LOs in the Guidelines concerning the subject "Italian language and literature" of the fifth year	<p>In the framework of Class Council agreed programme, the discipline is mainly aimed at achieving the following LOs expressed in terms of competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- identifying and using adequate communication and team-working tools to take part in organizations and professional contexts- editing technical reports and documenting personal and group activities with regard to specific work situations- creating and using visual and multimedia tools with reference to expressive strategies and web-communication technical tools					
		<table><tr><th>Knowledge</th><th>Skills</th></tr><tr><td><p>Language</p><p>Writing techniques for different written genres, even for professional purposes.</p><p>Tools for the analysis and interpretation of literary texts and for the research on topics regarding the educational pathway.</p><p>Glossary of technical and scientific terms in different languages</p><p>Research tools and methods for technical information.</p><p>Layout of a Curriculum Vitae and correct filling</p></td><td><p>Language</p><p>Using field-related language to communicate in work situations.</p><p>Editing professional texts by using specific technical language.</p><p>Comparing and using technical and scientific terms in different languages.</p><p>Interact with and provide arguments to the service recipient in work situations concerning the areas of expertise.</p><p>Choosing and using adequate multimedia tools for the professional area</p></td></tr></table>	Knowledge	Skills	<p>Language</p> <p>Writing techniques for different written genres, even for professional purposes.</p> <p>Tools for the analysis and interpretation of literary texts and for the research on topics regarding the educational pathway.</p> <p>Glossary of technical and scientific terms in different languages</p> <p>Research tools and methods for technical information.</p> <p>Layout of a Curriculum Vitae and correct filling</p>	<p>Language</p> <p>Using field-related language to communicate in work situations.</p> <p>Editing professional texts by using specific technical language.</p> <p>Comparing and using technical and scientific terms in different languages.</p> <p>Interact with and provide arguments to the service recipient in work situations concerning the areas of expertise.</p> <p>Choosing and using adequate multimedia tools for the professional area</p>	
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		<p>of the European CV. Research and classification techniques of multimedia tools and websites, even of specific nature. Specific software for communication.</p> <p>Literature Other artistic expressions</p>	<p>of expertise. Editing the European Curriculum Vitae.</p> <p>Literature Other artistic expressions</p>
Legislation	<p>Guidelines for the second two-year cycle and the fifth year of technical schools (Ministerial Directive No. 4 dated January 16th 2012)</p> <p>Guidelines for the second two-year cycle and the fifth year of vocational schools (Ministerial Directive No. 5 dated January 16th 2012)</p> <p>Guidelines for the first two-year cycle of technical schools (Ministerial Directive No. 57 dated July 15th 2010)</p> <p>Guidelines for the first two-year cycle of technical schools (Ministerial Directive No. 65 dated July 28th 2010)</p> <p>Presidential Decree dated March 15th 2010, No. 89. Regulations on the reform of the organization and the didactics of the school system of <i>Licei</i>; annex A – The student's educational, cultural and professional Profile</p> <p>Presidential Decree dated March 15th 2010, No. 88. Regulations on the reorganization of technical schools; annex A – The student's educational, cultural and professional Profile</p> <p>Presidential Decree dated March 15th 2010, No. 87. Regulations on the reorganization of vocational schools; annex A – the student's educational, cultural and professional profile</p> <p>Legislative Decree dated October 17th 2005, No. 226. General provisions and expected minimum levels of performance on the second cycle of the education and training system.</p> <p>Law dated March 28th 2003, No. 53 "Delegation to the Government for the definition of general provisions on education and definition of expected minimum levels of performances in education and professional training."</p>		

EQF LEVEL	Certificate/Qualification	Awarded by
4	<i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i> (Higher technical specialization certificate)	Regions

Acquisition pathway	<p>The <i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i> (Higher technical specialization certificate) shall be issued on completion of a training course (maximum duration: 800hours) or an apprenticeship programme, after passing the leaving examination.</p> <p>Higher Technical Education and Training courses are programmed by the Regions in the framework of their exclusive competence concerning the planning of the training provision. Anyone holding a <i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma) or a <i>Diploma professionale di tecnico</i> (Professional technician diploma) can access Higher Technical Education and Training courses. Access is also allowed to those who have been admitted to the fifth year of the <i>Licei</i> as well as to those who do not hold any <i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma), provided they hold a certification of the competencies acquired during previous training and work experiences undertaken on completion of compulsory education.</p>
Learning Outcomes (LOs) Description	<p>The <i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i> (Higher technical specialization certificate) as well the <i>Diploma di tecnico superiore</i> (Higher technical education diploma) were established in the Decree "<i>Linee guida per la riorganizzazione del Sistema di istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore e la costituzione degli Istituti tecnici superiori - ITS</i>" (Guidelines for the reorganization of the Higher Technical Education and Training system and for the establishment of higher technical schools- ITS). The Decree states that both Higher Technical Education and Training and higher technical education courses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> achieve homogeneous quality standards and homogeneous levels of applicability of the competencies acquired on completion of the training course, both at a national level and European level. refer their curricula to common linguistic, scientific and technological, legal and economic, organizational, communication and relational multi-level competencies, as well as to specific technical-professional competencies concerning the specific role of Higher Technician defined with reference to the indicators provided by the European Union. <p>The <i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i> (Higher technical specialization certificate) shall be issued after a leaving examination, on completion of Higher Technical Education and Training courses planned by the Regions, on the basis of the features characterizing regional job markets and referring to Nationally defined and established in State-Regions Agreements professional roles.</p> <p>Higher Technical Specialization qualifications are based on a system of minimum levels of general (basic and transversal standards) and technical-</p>

	<p>professional competencies³, Nationally recognized and structured into Course Credits (<i>Unità Capitalizzabili - UC</i>). Although not perfectly identical, the 'language' used to describe the system of levels is mostly consistent with the Learning Outcomes approach. Level description includes Learning Outcomes descriptors in terms of competence and knowledge; moreover, they are also provided with assessment criteria.</p> <p>Hereinafter is an example of the descriptive format of technical-professional Course Credits (<i>Unità Capitalizzabili - UC</i>); the example is referred to the Higher technical specialization certificate for Management Assistance of Travel Agencies and Tour Operators</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Qualification in Assistant Manager for Travel Agency and Tour Operator</p> <p>The Assistant Manager for Travel Agency and Tour Operator supports company management in organizational, executive and development activities; he/she also contributes in defining and implementing company objectives.</p> <p>Units (<i>Unità Capitalizzabili - UC</i>)</p> <p>Analysing economic data and market trends by researching information, implementing study methods and information processing techniques; Identifying the main geographical, historical, cultural, artistic, social, economic and logistics-related features of the territory to create and promote products; Presenting old and new products/services, also by means of Information and Communication Technologies; Supporting planning, promotional and marketing activities on local, national and international markets; Applying specific marketing techniques with particular reference to customer relationship; Supporting the company's budget-reporting activities by using the main accounting and economic-financial management tools; Supporting public relations initiatives, with particular reference to those which can be carried out with both public and private organizations; Managing the methods to provide booking services as well as rates-related services; Implement the rules regulating the specific area of expertise</p> <p>Units 1 (of 9)</p> <p>Analysing economic figures and market trends by researching information, implementing study methods and information processing techniques.</p> </div>
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3. Annex A – Unified Conference Agreement dated April 29th 2004; Unified Conference Agreement dated March 16th 2006; Inter-Ministerial Decree dated July 7th 2011.

	A – MINIMUM LEVEL OF COMPETENCIES	
	Students are able to:	
	Collect and process social and economic data regarding their market;	
	Analyse the collected data and draw information from graphics, diagrams and other statistical evidence in order to assess current and potential trends of the touristic market.	
	In order to (1) collect and process the social and economical data regarding their own market, students need to know how:	
	To search, collect and organize information on statistical social and economical data;	
	To process and represent the collected data;	
	In order to (2) analyse the collected data and draw information from graphics, diagrams and other statistical evidence in order to assess current and potential trends of the touristic market, students need to know how:	
	To examine and compare the collected information and data;	
	To identify market trends in the reference market.	
	B – TRANSLATION INTO LEVEL	
	In order to be able to:	
	1. Collect and process social and economical data regarding their own market;	
	2. Analyse the collected data and draw information from graphics, diagrams and other statistical evidence in order to assess current and potential trends of the touristic market	
	Students must show:	The indicators being:
	They can organize data referring to a real situation into graphics and diagrams;	The overall consistency of the source of information with regard to the situation which is being examined;

Legislation	Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers dated January 25 th 2008. Guidelines for the reorganisation of the Higher Technical Education and Training system and the establishment of Higher Technical Institutes. Law dated April 2 nd 2007, No. 40, art. 13: Urgent provisions for technical-vocational education and the promotion of school autonomy Law dated December 27 th 2006, No. 296, art. 1, c. 631 Unified Conference Agreement of March 2 nd 2000 (IFTS – Higher Technical Education and Training evaluation and certification pathways) Unified Conference Agreement of September 14 th 2000 (Planning of IFTS Higher Technical Education and Training pathways and system measures) Unified Conference Agreement of August 1 st 2002 (IFTS Higher Technical Education and Training planning pathways 2002-2003)	

	<p>Unified Conference Agreement of November 19th 2002 (Minimum basic and cross-skills training levels)</p> <p>Unified Conference Agreement of April 29th 2004 (Minimum technical and professional training levels of national profiles)</p> <p>Unified Conference Agreement November 25th 2004 (IFTS planning pathways 2004-2006)</p> <p>Unified Conference Agreement March 16th 2006 (Minimum technical and professional training levels of national profiles – transport sector)</p> <p>Unified Conference Agreement February 28th 2008 (Minimum technical and professional training levels of national profiles – insurance and financial sectors)</p> <p>Law dated May 17th 1999, no. 144, art. 69: Higher Technical and Professional Education</p>
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EQF LEVEL	Certificate/Qualification	Awarded by
5	<i>Diploma di tecnico superiore</i> (Higher technical education diploma)	MIUR

Acquisition pathway	The <i>Diploma di tecnico superiore</i> (Higher technical education diploma) is awarded at the end of a 1800/ 2000-hours training course and after a final assessment of the acquired competencies. The areas of expertise are: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies in life, new technologies for the 'made in Italy', innovative technologies for arts and cultural activities, Information and Communication Technologies. Anyone holding a <i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superior</i> (Upper secondary education diploma) can access Higher Technical education courses.									
Learning Outcomes (LOs) Description	<p>The Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers dated January 25th 2008 "<i>Linee guida per la riorganizzazione del Sistema di istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore e la costituzione degli Istituti tecnici superiori – ITS</i>" (Guidelines for the reorganisation of the Higher Technical Education and Training system and the establishment of Higher Technical Institutes) states that both Higher Technical Education and Training and Higher Technical education courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) achieve homogeneous quality standards and homogeneous levels of applicability of the competencies acquired at the end of the training course, both at a national level and in the European area.b) refer their curricula to common linguistic, scientific and technological, legal and economic, organizational, communication and relational multi-level competencies, as well as to specific technical-professional competencies concerning the specific role of Higher Technician defined with reference to the indicators provided by the European Union on qualifications. <p>Higher Technical education courses are linked to the six technological areas foreseen in DCPM 2008 above mentioned and structured in sectoral fields; the Inter-Ministerial Decree MIUR-MLPS dated 7th September 2011 states that: <i>competencies resulting from Higher Technical Education courses comply with the European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning and include: Linguistic, communicative and relational, scientific, legal and economic, organizational and managerial competencies which constitute common ground for all the national professional roles resulting from Higher Technical education. Technical-professional competencies which are specific for every professional role resulting from higher technical education</i></p> <p>Hereinafter is an example of the descriptive format concerning the qualification of Higher technical education diploma for Mobility of people and goods:</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">AREA OF SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY</th></tr><tr><th>Field</th><th>Role description</th><th>Resulting macro-competencies</th></tr><tr><td>2.1</td><td>Higher Technician for the</td><td>– Planning, organizing and</td></tr></table>	AREA OF SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY			Field	Role description	Resulting macro-competencies	2.1	Higher Technician for the	– Planning, organizing and
AREA OF SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY										
Field	Role description	Resulting macro-competencies								
2.1	Higher Technician for the	– Planning, organizing and								

	<table> <tr> <td>Mobility of people and goods</td> <td> <p>mobility of people and goods</p> <p>Higher Technicians work within the system organizing, handling and assisting the transfer of people and goods. They take care of the running of vehicles and of the organization of transfers in compliance with environmental protection, safety regulations, the ergonomics, transportation costs and local, national and international regulations on the subject.</p> </td> <td> <p>monitoring the necessary resources for transfers in compliance with safety rules and regulations, ergonomics, costs and environmental protection;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Taking care of the correct functioning and running of vehicles and of their operating systems; – Organizing and supervising the activities aimed at supporting the transfer of people and/or goods. </td> </tr> </table>	Mobility of people and goods	<p>mobility of people and goods</p> <p>Higher Technicians work within the system organizing, handling and assisting the transfer of people and goods. They take care of the running of vehicles and of the organization of transfers in compliance with environmental protection, safety regulations, the ergonomics, transportation costs and local, national and international regulations on the subject.</p>	<p>monitoring the necessary resources for transfers in compliance with safety rules and regulations, ergonomics, costs and environmental protection;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Taking care of the correct functioning and running of vehicles and of their operating systems; – Organizing and supervising the activities aimed at supporting the transfer of people and/or goods.
Mobility of people and goods	<p>mobility of people and goods</p> <p>Higher Technicians work within the system organizing, handling and assisting the transfer of people and goods. They take care of the running of vehicles and of the organization of transfers in compliance with environmental protection, safety regulations, the ergonomics, transportation costs and local, national and international regulations on the subject.</p>	<p>monitoring the necessary resources for transfers in compliance with safety rules and regulations, ergonomics, costs and environmental protection;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Taking care of the correct functioning and running of vehicles and of their operating systems; – Organizing and supervising the activities aimed at supporting the transfer of people and/or goods. 		
	<p>Indications on the referencing with the EQF level 5 can be found in the Decree dated September 7th 2011; article 3 states that "the competencies required to access Higher Technical Institutes training courses referring to each area of expertise are represented by the expected LOs at the end of the five-year cycle included in the regulations (...) concerning the reorganisation of Vocational and Technical Institutes (...) being understood that both young people and employed adults may access Higher Technical Institutes courses with any kind of <i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma).</p>			
Legislation	<p>Law-Decree No. 5/2012 converted into Law No. 35/2012, art. 52: Measures for the simplification and promotion of technical-vocational education and of Higher Technical Institutes – (<i>Istituti Tecnici Superiori – ITS</i>)</p> <p>Inter-Ministerial Decree dated September 7th 2011. General regulations concerning Higher Technical Institutes Diplomas – (<i>Istituti Tecnici Superiori – ITS</i>) and National professional roles, the examination and certification of competencies</p> <p>Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers dated January 25th 2008. Guidelines for the reorganisation of the Higher Technical Education and Training system and the establishment of the higher technical institutes.</p> <p>Law dated April 2nd 2007, No. 40, art. 13: Urgent provisions for technical-vocational education and the promotion of school autonomy</p> <p>Law dated December 27th 2006, No. 296, art. 1, c. 631</p> <p>Law dated May 17th 1999, No. 144, art. 69: Higher Technical Education and Training</p>			

EQF LEVEL	Certificate/Qualification	Awarded by
6	<i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's Degree)	MIUR

Acquisition pathway	<p>This qualification is awarded at the end of a three-year bachelor's degree course aimed at providing the student with adequate mastery of general scientific methods and knowledge, even when oriented towards the acquisition of specific professional knowledge. It can also be awarded at the end of Higher Education apprenticeship pathways. Access to bachelor's degree courses is allowed to those who have a <i>Diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore</i> (Upper secondary education diploma) or any other equivalent certificate awarded abroad. The <i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree) enables admission to: <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's degree), <i>Master di primo livello</i> (First-level master), <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma), postgraduate specialization diploma, postgraduate course or master</p>
Learning Outcomes (LOs) Description	<p>The latest reform (Decree dated October 22nd 2004, No. 270) established the creation of two training pathways: the <i>Laurea</i> (bachelor's degree) and the <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (master's degree); however, the <i>laurea a ciclo unico</i> combined bachelor can still be accessed. Cycles are represented on the basis of the Dublin's Descriptors endorsed in the EHEA Framework⁴ (knowledge and understanding; applying knowledge and understanding; making judgements; communication skills; learning skills).</p> <p>The latest regulations concerning bachelor's degree courses are oriented towards an approach that includes descriptors in terms of LOs, whilst the training offer concerning masters, specialization diplomas and research doctorates is more heterogeneous.</p> <p>The "Guidelines for the definition of new didactic plans for designing first and second-level training courses" by MIUR highlight the need to improve the quality of Higher Education pathways and make them consistent with the European framework in the light of the Bologna Process.</p> <p>At present, all Italian universities are redefining their bachelor's degree courses by applying a common format (RaD DM 270, Ministerial Decree No. 270 on university courses design) which requires the expected LOs to be explicitly identified and expressed in terms of European descriptors for qualifications (Ministerial Decree dated March 16th 2007, art. 3, paragraph 7). The Ministry of Education, University and Research, in cooperation with Cineca (Consortium of Universities), has already prepared a online search service of universities and university degrees, whose courses are presented in terms of LOs and expressed in terms of European descriptors for qualifications (http://cercauniversita.cineca.it/).</p> <p>Hereinafter is a description of the first-cycle education based on Dublin De-</p>

4. "A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area", Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, published by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Copenhagen, download at <http://www.vtu.dk>.

	<p>scriptors endorsed in the EHEA Framework with its related qualification; following, is the formal correspondence between descriptors 6 of the EQF and the "Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area agreed by the Ministers responsible for Higher Education their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process":</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Cycle Description based on Dublin Descriptors and related qualification</th></tr> <tr> <th>Cycle</th><th>Qualification</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>First Cycle</p> <p>Final first-cycle qualification can be awarded to the students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – have demonstrated understanding and abilities in a post-secondary application field and use advanced course books and knowledge of innovative topics in their area of study; – are able to apply their knowledge and understanding in order to demonstrate a professional approach to a professional activity, have acquired adequate competencies to design and support arguments as well as to solve problems in their area of study; – are able to collect and interpret data (usually in their area of study) considered as useful to make a judgment on various topics, including social, scientific or ethical issues; – are able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to specialized and non-specialized interlocutors; – have developed the learning abilities to proceed to further studies with a high degree of autonomy </td><td> <p><i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree)</p> <p>This qualification is awarded as a result of a bachelor's degree course, whose aim is to provide the student with adequate mastery of general methods and scientific contents, even in case the degree is oriented towards the acquisition of specific professional competencies.</p> <p>Terms of admission: upper secondary school qualification or equivalent foreign certification.</p> <p>Credits: 180</p> <p>Duration: 3 years</p> <p>A <i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree) allows access to: <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (master's degree); <i>Master universitario di primo livello</i> (First-level university master); <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma); <i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione</i> (Academic specialization diploma); <i>Corso di perfezionamento o Master</i> (Higher specialization course or Master)</p> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Cycle Description based on Dublin Descriptors and related qualification		Cycle	Qualification	<p>First Cycle</p> <p>Final first-cycle qualification can be awarded to the students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – have demonstrated understanding and abilities in a post-secondary application field and use advanced course books and knowledge of innovative topics in their area of study; – are able to apply their knowledge and understanding in order to demonstrate a professional approach to a professional activity, have acquired adequate competencies to design and support arguments as well as to solve problems in their area of study; – are able to collect and interpret data (usually in their area of study) considered as useful to make a judgment on various topics, including social, scientific or ethical issues; – are able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to specialized and non-specialized interlocutors; – have developed the learning abilities to proceed to further studies with a high degree of autonomy 	<p><i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree)</p> <p>This qualification is awarded as a result of a bachelor's degree course, whose aim is to provide the student with adequate mastery of general methods and scientific contents, even in case the degree is oriented towards the acquisition of specific professional competencies.</p> <p>Terms of admission: upper secondary school qualification or equivalent foreign certification.</p> <p>Credits: 180</p> <p>Duration: 3 years</p> <p>A <i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree) allows access to: <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (master's degree); <i>Master universitario di primo livello</i> (First-level university master); <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma); <i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione</i> (Academic specialization diploma); <i>Corso di perfezionamento o Master</i> (Higher specialization course or Master)</p>
Cycle Description based on Dublin Descriptors and related qualification							
Cycle	Qualification						
<p>First Cycle</p> <p>Final first-cycle qualification can be awarded to the students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – have demonstrated understanding and abilities in a post-secondary application field and use advanced course books and knowledge of innovative topics in their area of study; – are able to apply their knowledge and understanding in order to demonstrate a professional approach to a professional activity, have acquired adequate competencies to design and support arguments as well as to solve problems in their area of study; – are able to collect and interpret data (usually in their area of study) considered as useful to make a judgment on various topics, including social, scientific or ethical issues; – are able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to specialized and non-specialized interlocutors; – have developed the learning abilities to proceed to further studies with a high degree of autonomy 	<p><i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree)</p> <p>This qualification is awarded as a result of a bachelor's degree course, whose aim is to provide the student with adequate mastery of general methods and scientific contents, even in case the degree is oriented towards the acquisition of specific professional competencies.</p> <p>Terms of admission: upper secondary school qualification or equivalent foreign certification.</p> <p>Credits: 180</p> <p>Duration: 3 years</p> <p>A <i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree) allows access to: <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (master's degree); <i>Master universitario di primo livello</i> (First-level university master); <i>Diploma accademico di secondo livello</i> (Second-level academic diploma); <i>Diploma accademico di specializzazione</i> (Academic specialization diploma); <i>Corso di perfezionamento o Master</i> (Higher specialization course or Master)</p>						
Legislation	<p>Ministerial Decree No. 270 dated 2004.</p> <p>Ministerial Decree dated March 26th 2007 art. 3 paragraph 7.</p>						

EQF LEVEL	Certificate/Qualification	Awarded by
7	<i>Laurea Magistrale</i> (Master's Degree)	MIUR

Acquisition pathway	<p>This qualification is awarded at the end of a two-year master's degree course aimed at providing students with advanced training competencies for highly qualified activities in specific sectors. It can also be awarded at the end of Higher Education apprenticeship pathways. The access to master's degree courses requires one of the following qualifications: <i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree), <i>Diploma Universitario</i> (University diploma), <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (First-level academic diploma) or other equivalent qualification awarded abroad.</p> <p><i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's degree) enables admission to: <i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> (Research doctorate (PhD)), <i>Diploma di specializzazione</i> (Specialization diploma), <i>Master universitario di secondo livello</i> (Second-level master) <i>Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca</i> (Research training academic diploma). The qualification can also be awarded at the completion of a <i>Laurea magistrale a ciclo unico</i> (Combined bachelor and master's degree) - 5 to 6 years - 300 to 360 credits.</p>
Learning Outcomes (LOs) Description	<p>The latest reform (Decree dated October 22nd 2004, No. 270) established two training pathways: the <i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree) and the <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's degree); however, <i>Laurea magistrale a ciclo unico</i> (combined bachelor and master's degree) can still be accessed. Cycles are represented on the basis of the Dublin's Descriptors endorsed in the EHEA Framework⁵ (knowledge and understanding; applying knowledge and understanding; making judgements; communication skills; learning skills).</p> <p>The latest regulations on bachelor's degree courses are oriented towards an approach that considers descriptors in terms of LOs, whilst the training offer concerning masters, specialization diplomas and research doctorates is more heterogeneous.</p> <p>The "Guidelines for the definition of new didactic plans for designing first and second-level training courses" by MIUR highlight the need to improve the quality of Higher Education pathways and make them consistent with the European framework in the light of the Bologna Process.</p> <p>At present, all Italian universities are redefining their bachelor's degree courses by applying a common format (RaD DM 270, Ministerial Decree No. 270 on university courses design) which requires the expected LOs to be explicitly identified and expressed in terms of European descriptors for qualifications (Ministerial Decree dated March 16th 2007, art. 3, paragraph 7). The Ministry of Education, University and Research, in cooperation with Cineca (Consortium of Universities), has already prepared a online search service of universities and</p>

5. "A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area", Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, published by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Copenhagen, download at <http://www.vtu.dk>.

university degrees, whose courses are presented in terms of LOs and expressed in terms of European descriptors for qualifications (<http://cercauniversita.cineca.it/>).

Hereinafter is a description of the first-cycle education based on Dublin Descriptors endorsed in the EHEA Framework with its related qualification; following, is the formal correspondence between descriptors 7 of the EQF and the "Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area agreed by the Ministers responsible for Higher Education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process".

Cycle Description based on Dublin Descriptors and related qualification	
Cycle	Qualification
<p>Second Cycle</p> <p>Final second-cycle qualification can be awarded to the students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that extend and/or reinforce the abilities traditionally associated to the first cycle and allow elaborating or applying original ideas, often in a research context; – are able to apply their knowledge, understanding abilities and problem-solving abilities to new or familiar issues, included in wider contexts (or interdisciplinary contexts) linked to their area of study; – are able to integrate knowledge and manage the complexity of their application field, as well as make judgments with limited or incomplete information on various topics, including social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and opinions; – are able to communicate clearly and unambiguously their conclusions, as well as their knowledge and the underlying ratio, 	<p><i>Laurea Magistrale</i> (Master's degree)</p> <p>Awarded at the end of a master's degree course with the aim of providing the student with advanced training for the exercise of highly specialized activities in specific fields.</p> <p>Terms of admission: <i>Laurea</i> (Bachelor's degree), <i>Diploma universitario</i> (university diploma), <i>Diploma accademico di primo livello</i> (First-level academic diploma) or other equivalent qualification awarded abroad</p> <p>Credits: 120</p> <p>Duration: 2 years</p> <p>A <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's degree) allows access to: <i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> (Research doctorate (PhD)), <i>Diploma di specializzazione</i> (Specialization diploma), <i>Master universitario di secondo livello</i> (Secondlevel master); <i>Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca</i> (Research training academic diploma).</p> <p>This certification can be awarded also at the end of a <i>Laurea magistrale a ciclo unico</i> (Combined bachelor's and master's degree)</p>

	<p>to specialized and non specialized interlocutors;</p> <p>– have developed adequate learning abilities to proceed to further studies in a direct or autonomous way.</p>	<p>course.</p> <p><i>Laurea a ciclo unico</i> (Combined bachelor's degree) categories are: LMG/01 Law; LM - 4 Architecture and Construction Engineering – architecture (five years); LM13 – Pharmacy and Industrial Pharmacy; LM – 41 Medicine and Surgery; LM - 42 Veterinary Medicine; LM - 46 Dentistry and Dental Prosthesis</p>
Legislation	<p>Ministerial Decree No. 270 dated 2004.</p> <p>Ministerial Decree dated March 16th 2007 art.3 paragraph 7.</p>	

EQF LEVEL	Certificate/Qualification	Awarded by
8	<i>Dottorato di Ricerca</i> (Research Doctorate -PhD)	MIUR

Acquisition pathway	<p>This qualification is awarded at the end of a research doctorate course (PhD) which shall last at least three years. The access to PhD courses requires one of the following qualifications: <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's degree) or <i>Laurea magistrale a ciclo unico</i> (Combined bachelor and master's degree) or a foreign qualification validated by the responsible academic authorities. Moreover, applicants are admitted upon specific examinations concerning the area of study. Research doctorate courses are basically advanced research projects individually and independently carried out by students under the supervision of a specifically appointed tutor. Attendance to seminars and specific disciplines may be required. Admission to the next years of research doctorate courses is subject to the tutor's positive evaluation of the study and research activities carried out by the student during the academic year.</p>				
Learning Outcomes (LO) Description	<p>The latest regulations on bachelor's degree courses are oriented towards an approach that considers descriptors in terms of LOs, whilst the training offer concerning masters, specialization diplomas and research doctorates is more heterogeneous</p> <p>The "Guidelines for the definition of new didactic plans for designing first and second-level training courses" by MIUR highlight the need to improve the quality of Higher Education pathways and make them consistent with the European framework in the light of the Bologna Process.</p> <p>At present, all Italian universities are redefining their bachelor's degree courses by applying a common format (RaD DM 270, Ministerial Decree No. 270 on university courses design) which requires the expected LOs to be explicitly identified and expressed in terms of European descriptors for qualifications (Ministerial Decree dated March 16th 2007, art. 3, paragraph 7). The Ministry of Education, University and Research, in cooperation with Cineca (Consortium of Universities), has already prepared a online search service of universities and university degrees, whose courses are presented in terms of LOs and expressed in terms of European descriptors for qualifications. (http://cercauniversita.cineca.it/).</p> <p>Hereinafter is a description of the first-cycle education based on Dublin Descriptors endorsed in the EHEA Framework with its related qualification; following, is the formal correspondence between descriptors 8 of the EQF and the "Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area agreed by the Ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process".</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Cycle</th><th>Qualification</th></tr> <tr> <td>Third Cycle Final third-cycle qualification can be awarded to the students who:</td><td><i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> - Research doctorate (PhD)</td></tr> </table>	Cycle	Qualification	Third Cycle Final third-cycle qualification can be awarded to the students who:	<i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> - Research doctorate (PhD)
Cycle	Qualification				
Third Cycle Final third-cycle qualification can be awarded to the students who:	<i>Dottorato di ricerca</i> - Research doctorate (PhD)				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – have demonstrated systematic understanding of an area of study and adequate mastery of the relevant research methods; – have demonstrated adequate ability to conceive, plan, create and adapt a research process with adequate research approach; – have carried out an original research that has extended the frontiers of knowledge, while providing a contribution that deserves the publication, partially or as a whole, at National or international level; – are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas; – are able to communicate with their colleagues, with the wider community of researchers and with the society as a whole, within their competence field; – are able to promote, in academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advance in a knowledge-based society. 	<p>This qualification is awarded at the end of a research doctorate aiming at providing the competencies to exercise, in universities, public or private organizations, highly specialized research activities</p> <p>Terms of admission: <i>Laurea magistrale</i> (Master's degree) or any other equivalent foreign certification</p> <p>Procedure of admission: public competition</p> <p>Credits: none</p> <p>Duration: a minimum of 3 years</p>
Legislation	<p>Law dated December 30th 2010, No. 240 "Regulations concerning the organization of Universities, teaching personnel and recruitment procedures,..."</p> <p>Ministerial Decree April 30th 1999 No. 224 "Regulation containing rules concerning research doctorates" (Official Journal No. 162 dated 13/07/99)</p>	

Glossary¹

Formal learning

Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designed as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.

"Formal learning is meant the one that takes place within the Education and Training system, Universities, as well as Higher Level Arts and Music Education (AFAM) system and leads to a degree or a qualification or a professional diploma, achieved also through the apprenticeship defined by the Legislative Decree n. 167 (14 September 2011), or a recognized certification" (See Law 92/2912, Art. 4, par. 52).

Non formal learning

Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designed as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

"Non-formal learning requires a willful choice and it takes place outside the above mentioned systems, within each institution with educational and training purposes, even voluntary work, national civil service and enterprises" (See Law 92/2912, Art. 4, par. 53).

Informal learning

Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.

1. Definitions not concerning the specific Italian system shall be searched for in: CEDEFOP, Terminology of European education and training policy - A selection of 100 key terms.

"Informal learning is achieved during activities in day by day situations and interactions within work, family, leisure time context" (See Law 92/2912, Art. 4, par. 54).

Qualification

The formal outcome of an assessment and validation process, obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved Learning Outcomes to given standards.

Qualification is therefore conceptually independent from training pathways and specific learning situations and can be achieved through several formal, non-formal and informal pathways.

National qualifications system

National Qualifications System means all aspects of a Member State's activity related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. This includes:

- definition of qualification-related policy, training design and implementation, institutional arrangements, funding, quality assurance;
- assessment, validation and certification of LOs.

National Qualification Framework

An instrument for the development and classification of qualifications (e.g. at national or sectoral level) according to a set of criteria (e.g. using descriptors) applicable to specified levels of LOs

Learning Outcomes (LOs)

The Learning Outcomes are "statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence".

- Knowledge is "the outcome of the collection and assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is made up of facts, principles, theories and practical applications concerning a specific field of work or study". In the EQF, "knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual".
- Skill is "the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems".
- Competence is "the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and other abilities to perform a function against a given standard in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development. In the EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy" (EQF Recommendation).

Standard

A series of elements whose contents are defined by concerned actors. Standards can be divided into several types: competence standard refers to the knowledge, skills and/or competencies linked to the practice of a job; educational standard refers to

the statements of learning objectives, content of curricula, entry requirements as well as resources required to meet the learning objectives; occupational standard refers to the statements of the activities and tasks related to a specific job and to its practice; (...).

In the framework of the Italian Referencing Process and of the current Report, "standard" is to be understood as the whole set of distinct and descriptive elements which have been identified by the competent authority as referring to the different qualifications taken into consideration.

Competent Institution (Authority)

"An institution which is responsible for designing and awarding qualifications (...)" (ECVET Recommendation).

Education and Training system

The new Italian Education and Training System, endorsed in Law 53/2003 is divided into:

- Pre-primary education (three years);
- The first cycle of education, which includes primary education (five years) and lower secondary education (three years);
- The second cycle of education which includes: upper secondary education (five years) - *Licei*, technical and vocational schools - and the Vocational Education and Training system.

Vocational Education and Training system


The Vocational Education and Training falls under the competence of Regions and provides the following training offer:

- Three-year courses leading to a Professional operator certificate;
- Four-year courses leading to a Professional technician diploma.

Vocational training

Vocational training is aimed at increasing knowledge and competencies expendable on the job market in order to promote the growth of employment in terms of quantity and quality. It can be addressed to young people who have already obtained a qualification but would like to acquire more specific professional competencies in order to increase their opportunities in the labour market, as well as to employed people or people looking for a new job, who would like to upgrade or improve their professional abilities (continuous training).

Vocational training falls under the competence of Regions, in charge of defining annual and multi-year training programmes, of delegating competencies to Provinces and Municipalities, of distributing competencies for the implementation of initiatives to public and private entities, of providing funds, also in cooperation with the central State or the European Union.



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The European Qualifications Framework (EQF), established by the Recommendation of April 23rd 2008, represents an important step within the process started by the Lisbon Council in March 2000.

A major reason to create EQF is the need of compare skills and qualifications of European citizens, to support lifelong learning and encourage mobility of students and workers, with the aim of increasing job opportunities and education and training chances.

In order to achieve these aims the European Commission and the Parliament set up a global strategy and a set of tools, among which EQF.

The purpose of this Report is to disseminate the results of the Italian referencing process, in compliance with EQF Recommendation's requirements .

The referencing process and the Report have been elaborated by a working group of experts and have been agreed with Regions and Social parties.