

NATIONAL POLICY COHERENCE REPORT

Italy/Umbria,

August 2023

Main authors

Sylvia Liuti, FORMA.Azione

Chiara Palazzetti, FORMA.Azione

Michela Bastianelli, ANPAL

Stefano Pagnotta, ARPAL Umbria

Laura Profiri, Pluriversum

This project has been funded with the support of the Erasmus+ programme under grant agreement No 626147-EPP-1-2020-2-AT-EPPKA3-PI-POLICY.

This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Agency and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Introduction

The TRANSVAL-EU project

Transversal skills are often only an implicit part of the existing validation and guidance process. The aim of the TRANSVAL-EU project is to experiment on how to make those skills more explicit and to embed the lessons learned in validation and guidance provisions. TRANSVAL-EU proposes innovative approaches for the validation of transversal skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL), which were tested in five pilot countries – Austria, Belgium, Italy, Lithuania and Poland.

TRANSVAL-EU aims to increase the knowledge and awareness of validation assessors, counsellors and career guidance practitioners on transversal competences through capacity building. The project strengthens cross-sector cooperation between practitioners, policy-makers and other stakeholders in order to build coherent VNFIL systems. The project life span encompasses 30 months, starting on March 1st, 2021 and ending in August 2023. It is co-funded by Erasmus+ (Call KA3 Policy Reform – Policy Experimentations).

TRANSVAL-EU National Reports

In the last phase of the project, partners were looking into the potential for translating the successful experimentation that took place within the project frame into sustainable policy change.

Successful policies often rely on policy coherence and coordination. Policy coherence refers to how policies are connected between them and across silos, avoiding overlap and inefficiencies. It does not just happen by default. It implies a set of collaborative and knowledge-sharing practices between the responsible authorities in charge of the policy, their institutions and the staff in the institutions (the policy-makers). It is dependent on this cooperation to materialise in the policy texts.

A partner in the TRANSVAL-EU project, the Lifelong Learning Platform investigated coherence at the European level with the support of the other partners (see TRANSVAL-EU, European Policy Coherence Report, August 2023 and its short version). At national level (or in the case of Italy and Belgium, taking the regional dimension into consideration), partners from the five EU countries or regions where the experimentation took place (Austria, Belgium, Italy, Lithuania and Poland) plus a partner representing Nordic countries (for the case of Sweden and Iceland) also looked into the issue of policy coherence at national and regional levels. The National Policy Coherence Reports are the results of these reflections. They mostly relied on desk research and dialogue with the respective public authorities involved in the project. The National Policy Coherence Reports address the issues of main policies relevant for validation, guidance, skills and competences, coherence between these policies (e.g. terminological

coherence), coordination between the institutions in charge of these policies, among others. All Reports include recommendations for policy-makers at national and regional levels.

The results of this work complete the early research made in the first phase of the project which led to the publication of the TRANSVAL-EU, European State-of-Play Report on the Validation of Transversal skills and Country sheets for the five countries ([download links here](#)).

Italy Policy Coherence Report

Policy coherence challenges in Italy

In Italy, there are skill policies covering different education domains, from VET to higher education, including non-formal and formal education paths.

Within the Italian LLL strategy and the **National Plan for New Skills** (2021), it was decided that the Identification Validation and Certification (IVC) services for the enhancement of the competences acquired in the different learning contexts should be transversally integrated in the different policies areas. In particular way, the national guidelines for the interoperability of the Public Competent Authority (2021) allowed to link the IVC services to both lifelong learning policies and labour market policies by considering them as strategic levers for: encouraging the participation to upskilling and reskilling pathways and supporting their personalisation through the credits recognition; favouring the supply-demand matching of competences and job opportunities and the social inclusion. The 2022 **National Implementation Plan** focuses on 10 measures, 5 of which concern the improvement and reinforcement of educational, training, up-skilling and reskilling paths on a national, Regional and local level. The Plan has been developed by the Inter-Institutional Board for Lifelong Learning (TIAP).

The actual challenge in relation to skills policies is the complexity of the inter-institutional dialogue among the different authorities involved in the process. Indeed, being the authorities positioned on different policy level (i.e. VET is a competence of Regional Governments while Education is centralised at National level and in charge of the Ministry of Education) and with a different range of impact, it makes the overall process of elaboration, discussion and confrontation very complex and cumbersome. It could that the overall policy making process could be slowed down because of this.

The Inter-Institutional Board for Lifelong Learning adopted the **National Strategic Plan for the development of competences of adult population** (2021) starting from the enhancement of the competences acquired in different contexts, on the basis of the national and European lifelong learning indications. The plan describes provisions for coordinated actions for the development of competences of specific target groups, such as low skilled and disadvantaged adult population. The development of the Plan

is being coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies in concert the representatives of the Ministry of Education and Merit, Coordination of Regions.

Thus, one more challenge is related to the differences and variability in the implementation of the validation systems across the Italian Regions, which depends on the level of autonomy that each Regional Government has in VET and Active Labour Policies. Such autonomy is exercised within a common national legal framework set by the Law 13/2013.

The Italian strategy for lifelong learning, launched as part of the **Labour Market Reform Law** of 2012, recognizes the individual right to lifelong learning that takes place in formal, non-formal and informal contexts and in the different phases of life, as a strategic lever in order to improve the knowledge, skills and competences of individuals, in a personal, civic, social and occupational perspective. The goal of the strategy is to make lifelong learning a concrete reality through a broad and stable multilevel governance, capable of coordinating the different providers of education, training and work services, in the form of territorially integrated networks. Three are essentially the main services provided by these territorially integrated networks:

- support to the personalisation of the training and work pathways by the assessment and analysis of the skills needs with relation to the requirements of the territorial production systems and labour market;
- recognition of credits and identification, validation and certification of competences to promote the enhancement of the competences acquired by the individual in formal, non-formal and informal contexts;
- the lifelong guidance to support the participation in training and to favour the integration into the labour market.

Different approaches in regions

From a regional point of view, Umbria Region Government elaborated the following regulations, in 2016:

- Unitary regulatory framework regarding the integrated system for competences certification and training credits recognition as per the Ministry Decree.
- Executive dispositions for the Integrated system for competences certification and training credits recognition.

The Tuscany Region has defined these services with the following regulatory acts:

- Regional Law on education, guidance, vocational training and work.
- Regulation of the Regional Law for the implementation of the Regional System of Competences.

Inter-institutional coordination

For what concerns the policies and matters where Regions have autonomous legislative power (VET, employment policies, etc.), the **Permanent Conference for the relations between State, Regions and Autonomous Provinces** of Trento and

Bolzano (State-Regions Conference), is in charge of ensuring inter-institutional coordination. The Conference approves by agreement the updated referencing report to be adopted by the Interministerial Decree of the Minister of Labour and Social Policies.

In addition, several entities exist for inter-institutional coordination on skills development:

- The **National Board for Lifelong Learning** is responsible for the implementation of Italian LLL strategy and composed of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of University and Research, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Regions and Autonomous Provinces and Local Bodies, with the involvement of the competent public technical and research agencies;
- The **Inter-Institutional Board for Lifelong Learning** (TIAP) is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the actions related to lifelong learning, and specifically for education, VET and employment. Among its tasks are: to develop proposals for the definition of minimum standards and strategic interventions for lifelong learning services and local learning networks.

Is there coordination between national and regional levels?

In order to ensure convergent and integrated methods and phases, the inter-institutional coordination sites for the implementation of the National System for Certification of Competences and are:

- the **Technical Group**, at a technical and methodological preliminary level of governance;
- the **National Technical Committee** was established by the National law about the National System of Certification of Competences (D.lgs. 16 gennaio 2013, n. 13) and is chaired by representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and Ministry of Education and made of representatives from the Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Economic development, Ministry of Economy and finance and from public administrations at regional and local level, as entitled public entities. It therefore represents all the Public Competent Authorities (central, regional administration and of autonomous provinces) issuing qualifications within the NSCC, with functions of guiding, ratifying, monitoring, evaluating and verifying the essential levels of performance, and according to the principles of independence and tertiary.

The Department of European Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers is also present within the Technical Group and the National Technical Committee as authorities coordinating the implementation process in Italy of Directive 2005/36/EC that, in the context of the NSCC, concerns the qualifications of regulated professions.

At national, regional or sectoral level, the Public Competent Authorities involve the economic and social partners in the definition and updating of their respective qualification systems.

As an example of a system for informing policy making processes by consultation of local entities, the implementation of the GOL Programme for employability, it was established by the National Technical Committee. The Committee has the aim to discuss the practices adopted by the Regions to implement the Programme, to achieve progress and systematise good practices that have proven to be effective.

Has progress been made in the policy on transversal skills and competences since the first year of the project (individual country sheets)?

Since the beginning of TRANSVAL-EU, in Italy progress has been made on two fronts:

- The increasing attention to the development of digital skills for employability – intended as a transversal competence to all professional profiles;
- better implementation of the IVC process at local level (also in light of the Council Recommendation on VET adoption) – to promote its adoption and for improving its efficacy in the long term.

This process is particularly evident in the abovementioned National Implementation Plan, that foresees 10 core measures, where measure 8 focuses on the reinforcement of digital skills, and measures 1 and measures 6 and 7 are meant to improve the regulation and application of the IVC process and the adoption of digital credentials.

Additional official Recommendations developed at national level, that aim to better improve the strengthening, put to value and recognition of digital competences are:

- *2025 National Strategy for Technological Innovation and Digitalization*, developed by the Ministry for Technological Innovation and Digitalisation – and progress made by the Repubblica Digitale work groups, instituted by the Strategy;
- *Operational Plan for the National Strategy for Digital Competences*, developed and implemented by the Department for Digital Transformation;
- translation of *DigComp 2.2* into Italian;
- Inclusion of the digital competences of the DigComp in the assessment process of the *GOL (Workers Employability Guarantee) Programme*, foreseen by the National Plan for New Skills. This process also assesses linguistic competences as foreseen by the QCER;
- The *Job and Qualification Atlas*, which has been extended so as to include digital competences (DigComp) and progressively improved to include also green competences (ESCO and GreenComp).

Coherence with EU policies

The National Plan for New Skills and related programmes are referenced to the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation, EQF and VNFIL Recommendations, Key Competences Recommendation, Skill Agenda. The GOL Programme that it includes is developed in line with the NEXT Generation EU.

The National Strategic Plan for the development of competences of adult population above mentioned is strongly inspired by the European Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways of 2016.

The creation of the National System for Certification of Competences and related reform of the education and training systems in the direction of the portability of competences is based on the new paradigm for lifelong learning suggested by the EQF and VNFIL Recommendation

The National Implementation Plan has been created in agreement with the Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET).

Terminological coherence challenges

Terminology used in national documents is mostly based on EU policies, with some adaptations to national context in definitions of particular terms. The terms “competences” and “skills” – for instance – are translated into Italian using the word “*competenza*” with no distinctions. Another case that it is worth to mention is the Italian word for “microcredentials” which in the national context are referred to as “*micro-qualificazioni*”, *qualifications composed of one or more competences, constituting broader qualifications, awarded as a result of short-term pathways, also of a flexible, customised and modular nature.*

Recently, the new Italian Report referencing qualifications to the European EQF Framework¹ provides a Glossary of Legal Definitions (Annex 4) with a comprehensive overview of the key terms that facilitate the comprehension of the Italian system.

Policy recommendations for Italy

1. Systematization of transversal competences separately from the technical ones, and independently from the profiles listed in the national Job Atlas;
2. Foresee free training opportunities on the relevance of validation outcomes and of validated transversal skills for employers, and especially small realities that may not have an HR office;
3. Better dialogue and coordination of the regional implementation of the Validation process, and activation of feedback loops between ARPAL and the entities putting into practice Validation, to better assess the outcomes of the process in place and identify improvement areas, and especially concerning the validation of transversal competences;
4. Awareness raising and informative campaign directly targeting the citizens, highlighting the potential of being recognised/validated in the competences

¹ INAPP, Rapporto italiano di referenziazione delle qualificazioni al Quadro europeo EQF (2023)
<https://skillon.anpal.gov.it/it/news/skillon/EQF-rapporto>

acquired through non formal and informal learning, especially in relation to the transversal ones, which are largely evaluated as enablers for better access to labour market opportunities as well as greatly required by employers.

5. More investments on guidance services, thus increased coordination among PES “usual” services and guidance, also in view of empowered citizens asking for and accessing validation services.