

The opportunity for an Italian Skills Agenda is now

We learnt it also from this crisis: responding to the emergency and building sustainable solutions for the future requires human skills and resources and, first of all, all kind of competencies - basic, transversal, social, scientific and entrepreneurial. These are all necessary to face uncertainty and create opportunities starting from new technologies, the development of international trade, as well as the vast heritage of cultural and natural assets that Italy offers.

Even today, a large part of the Italian working-age population does not have a secondary school qualification, nor does it participate in lifelong learning activities. Nearly 13 million adults hold a qualification below secondary school level. Furthermore, when taking into account linguistic, numerical and digital literacy, the share of the population in need to update their skills is estimated at between 50-60% of the total.

Nevertheless, in a dynamic society that is capable of changing in sustainable directions, the challenge goes far beyond the so-called low-skilled, which rightfully are of particular attention for European policies. Everyone must have the opportunity to benefit from training courses that allow both to improve their skills throughout their life, and to tangibly contribute to the innovation and competitiveness of our country system.

The 'Next Generation Italia' National Recovery and Resilience Plan recognizes the importance of lifelong learning and the need to invest in training to ensure the modernization of the public administration, the digitization of the economy, the school education system and employment support. However, in the absence of an integrated national system for lifelong learning and for the recognition of skills of the adult population, such measures could be limited in their effectiveness.

Next Generation Italia represents an opportunity to create a real lifelong learning system in our country, providing systematic access, as well as training and skill development opportunities, to all Italians. This would happen regardless of them being employed permanently or in atypical forms, job seekers, freelancers, entrepreneurs, or even outside of the labour market - so as to achieve the European target of 50% of adults participating in training activities at least once every 12 months by 2025.

An ambitious goal that not only addresses the needs of social inclusion and cultural development, but also represents one of the structural requirements to move towards a sustainable and digital economy. An objective that fits in the new National Strategic Plan for the development of skills of the adult population under discussion at the State-Regions Joint Conference.

We are convinced that our country is adequately equipped with the skills and resources necessary to make this structural, qualitative leap. We believe that a discussion table on adult education and training is necessary for restarting processes and involving existing networks to define a new skills agenda at national level, supporting today's development priorities with a focus on the benefits for future generations.

European Skills Agenda – 2020-2025 Goals

Indicators	Goals for 2025	Current level in the EU-27 average (last available year)	Expected increase in the EU-27 average
Participation of adults aged 25-64 in learning activities in the past 12 months (in%)	50%	38% (2016)	+32%
Participation of low-skilled adults aged 25-64 in learning activities in the past 12 months (in%)	30%	18% (2016)	+67%
Portion of unemployed aged 25-64 with recent learning experience (in%)	20%	11% (2019)	+82%
Portion of adults aged 16-74 with at least basic digital skills (in%)	70%	56% (2019)	+25%

Signatories

Antonio Bernasconi, ENAIP NET

Giovanni Biondi, President of the National Institute of Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research – INDIRE

Sebastiano Fadda, President of the National Institute for Public Policy Analysis – INAPP

Laura Formenti, Italian University Network for Lifelong Learning – RUIAP

Antonio Ranieri, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training – CEDEFOP

Giorgio Sbrissa, President of the European Vocational Training Association – EVTA

Siria Taurelli, European Training Foundation – ETF

Monica Verzola, Lifelong Learning Platform – European Civil Society for Education