

# **ITS ACADEMIES**

## **Introduction to the Italian Higher VET system and to ITS Academy Angelo Rizzoli**

# Expanding VET programmes to EQF levels 5-6: why? The Italian scenario

In Italy we are experiencing a real educational emergency that is putting the country system in crisis:

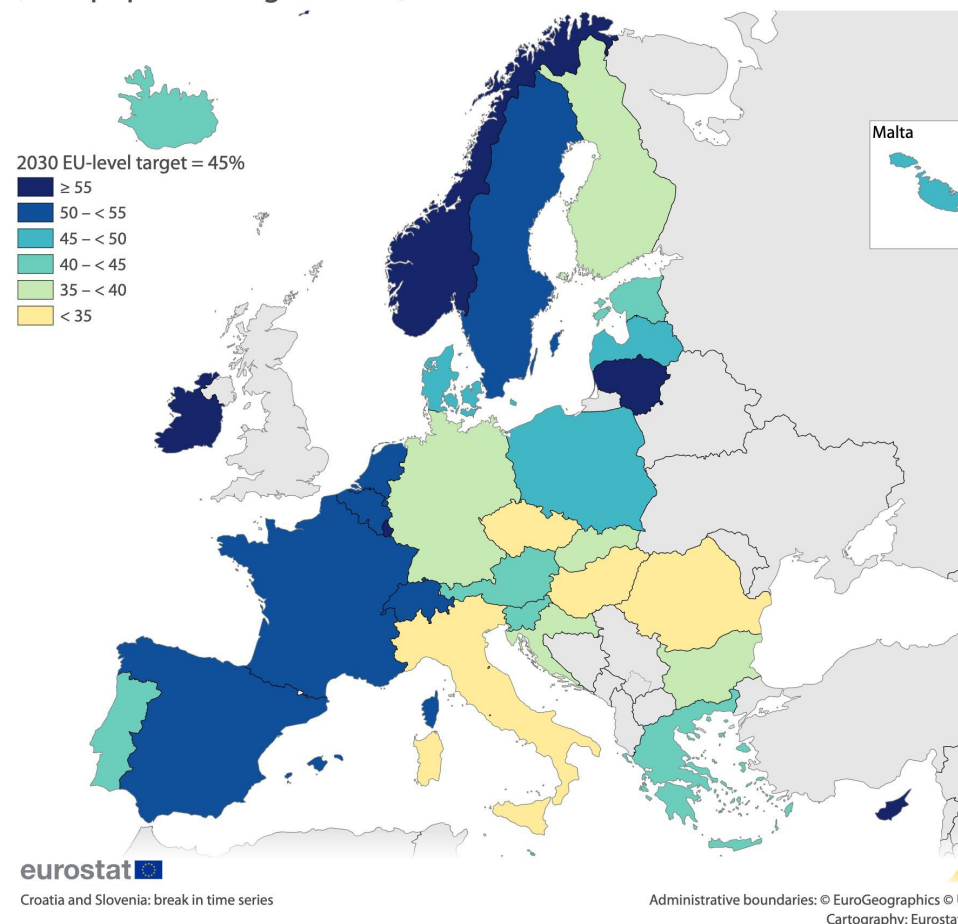
- skill gap and skill mismatch between the skills formed by the education system and those needed by the economic system of our country
- a shortage of HE qualifications (Italy ranks third lowest in the EU in terms of the number of young people with tertiary qualifications)
- high youth unemployment against a chronic shortage of specialised technicians (47.9% difficult to find- according to data in 2024) and a high percentage of NEETs (17.8% among 18-29 year-olds)
- complex school-to-work transitions (28 months on average, up to 58 for low levels of education);
- growing technological disruption (AI and twin transitions).

## Share of young people with a tertiary qualification (Bachelor or ITS diploma) in EU

Italy (30.6 percent) ranks third last after Romania (22.5 per cent) and Hungary (29.4 per cent),

EUROSTAT DATA

## Tertiary education attainment, 2023 (% of population aged 25-34)



# The ingredients of ITS Academies

The vocational non-academic tertiary education system of the ITS Institutes was created in **2010** to respond to this emergency, aiming at creating an effective tool to facilitate the school-to-work transition, through:

- courses financed and approved by the **Regional governments** according to the local specific needs
- **curriculum design flexibility** and continuous updating of programming;
- **co-designing with companies the curriculum** and professional profiles to support the Twin Transition;
- providing a **mix of soft skills and technical skills** to speed up the transition to work and to ensure resilience over time;

# The ingredients of ITS Academies

- **active participation of companies in the training:** 50% of the teachers must come from the world of work and provide at least 60% of the course hours
- **experiential teaching** and **team working** aimed at a “hands on” application of technical skills and the development of operational skills and problem solving abilities;
- **class tutors** in charge of students guidance and counselling;
- all courses have a **curricular internship** (at least 35% of hours) or an **apprenticeship** with the aim of guaranteeing qualified, stable employment consistent with what they have studied; the apprenticeship is an **employment contract**
- **mentoring of students at work** (both in internships and apprenticeships)

# Higher Education Training and Research Apprenticeship

**A concrete opportunity for Companies and Young People thanks to the ITS Academies.**

It is a full-time employment national contract - 40 hours per week - that a company can offer to a young person ONLY if they are enrolled and attending a training/academic course at an ITS Academy (or at a university).

The ITS student hired by a company with an Apprenticeship contract has the opportunity to work during the two-year Tertiary Specialisation course.

The contract is aimed at young people aged between 18 and 29 and is designed to integrate the training offered by the ITS Academy with training provided directly by the Company.

ITS and COMPANY participate to enable the young person to achieve excellence in skills and to access the final exam and obtain the ITS Diploma - EQF Level V.

In Italy, without the presence of an ITS Academy, the company cannot offer this type of employment contract.

# Apprenticeship: advantages for companies

Companies that hire in Italy with a Higher Education Training and Research Apprenticeship contract have the opportunity to:

- co-design the apprentice's training pathway with the ITS Foundations, building and strengthening the competences at the end of it;
- strengthen the relationship with ITS Academies to provide a constant contribution to innovation and competitiveness on the market;
- invest in young resources to be trained directly on the job, responding to the development needs of their business areas;
- benefit from: contribution and tax relief, salary relief, economic incentives.

# Apprenticeship: advantages for the students

## **Orientation**

The young person is introduced to the world of work and is confronted, in parallel with ITS training, with company specific features, needs and complexities.

## **Obtaining the Diploma**

They have the possibility of obtaining the ITS Degree without giving up a job opportunity aimed at developing professional skills consistent with the qualification.

## **Strategic competences**

Acquire strategic skills useful for the company by enhancing the training received.

## **Employment contract**

The apprentices sign a real employment contract, taking on the dual role of ITS student and company employee. They increase their integration within the company and develop greater loyalty.

# The Mission of ITS Academy system

The objective of the ITS Academies is not only to **train professionals** with the skills required by the labour market and in line with the needs of companies, but also to train specialised technicians who are able to **bring innovation and technology transfer to companies**, in particular SME.

With particular reference to the new European competence frameworks, the training is aimed at the development of: LifeComp, EntreComp, FinComp, DigiComp and GreenComp.

# The Mission of ITS Academy system

The training model is based on **experiential didactics** that alternates the acquisition of knowledge and technical-scientific principles with their immediate application in solving complex real problems through lab activities and “project work”.

The learning process is facilitated by teachers who come from the world of work, bringing their experience and real business cases to work on.

# Monitoring and evaluation of the system

The ITS system is the only Italian educational system **monitored and evaluated by a third party**: the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research - INDIRE ([www.indire.it](http://www.indire.it)).

On behalf of the Ministry of Education, INDIRE manages the national ITS Academy **database**, carries on national monitoring, conducts research to investigate the structural, organisational and didactic elements developed in the ITS Academies, sharing them within the system to initiate a process of innovation.

From the results of INDIRE 2024 MONITORING activities are:  
Average employment rate (12 months after graduation): 87%  
Consistent employment: 93.8%

# Some data about ITS Academies



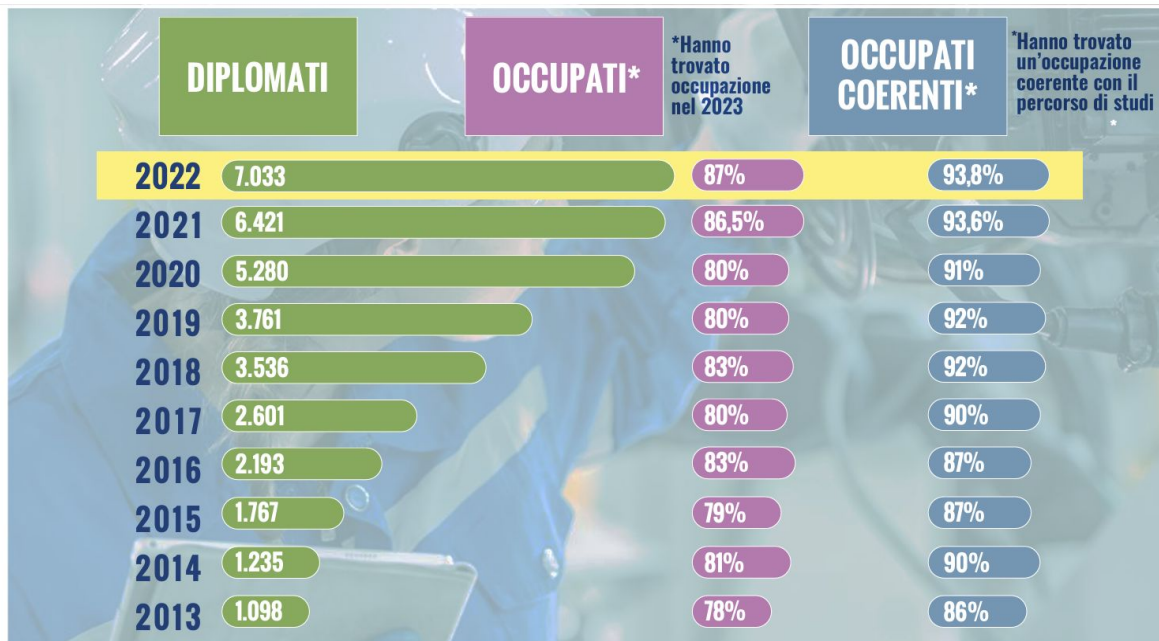
Sistema terziario di istruzione tecnologica superiore

L'istruzione terziaria professionalizzante degli ITS Academy

Graduates

Employed

Consistent employment



TODAY:

147 ITS Foundations

35,000-40,000 students enrolled in 2024-25

The Italian higher VET system is still **very small** compared to other European countries: e.g Germany (900K), France (600K), Spain (500K)



# The organization of ITS Academies: Participation Foundations

ITS Academies are set up according to the **Participation Foundation** organisational model in cooperation with companies (including chambers of commerce/business associations), universities/scientific and technological research centres, VET institutes and schools.

The Participation Foundation is a particular form of private entity used by public bodies to carry out public benefit activities with the help of private stakeholders.

The ITS fundings come partly by Regional governments and partly by the private sector

# ITS Academy Angelo Rizzoli at a glance

ITS Angelo Rizzoli was founded in 2010, as a result of the experience of the former Graphic Training Center, in order to promote post-graduate specialization courses in the **graphic and communication sector**.

ITSAR started with one course, called “Multichannel Communication Specialist”, training 25 students in the first year and 25 in the second in the field of graphic design and multimedia communication.

In 14 years, thanks to **ITSAR network of companies, business associations, research institutes, universities and agencies**, it has further strengthened and enlarged its training offer, covering today all the aspects of the ICT field. At the moment ITSAR offers **14 two-year courses (2000 hours - EQF 5)** held in 3 main locations in the Milan area (Gigroup training hub, via Crespi, Seregno + KMRosso-Bergamo)

The courses starting in September 2025 are:

**Omnichannel Communication, Digital marketing, Packaging, Network and Cloud, Cyber Defence, Industrial Digital transformation, Energy and Digital process, 3D Simulation and metaverse, Coding and AI, Big Data, Machine Learning and AI, Software Architect.**

# ITS Academy Angelo Rizzoli at a glance: CAREER GUIDANCE AND ORIENTATION

One of the key aspects to promote the ITS system and opportunities is career guidance and orientation.

ITSAR Orientation and guidance team projects, organizes and deliver training paths and guidance activities with secondary and VET schools. The activities are delivered both in school and on our premises/laboratories.

Some examples of **orientation activities offered by ITSAR** are:

- Free orientation activities to support activities organised by high school teachers
- Free, customisable experiential workshops in-presence or online.
- Projects organized with the secondary schools, in collaboration with our partner and associate companies
- Participation in events and fairs aimed at students organised both by schools, public or private organisations

# CAREER GUIDANCE AND ORIENTATION

- Open Days at our premises managed by our ITSAR PEOPLE students
- Free thematic labs and workshops to get hands-on experience of ITSAR didactics
- Events aimed at parents and secondary school teachers to raise their awareness of ITS system
- Free WINTER & SUMMER Camps for students
- Free online orientation interviews, to orient and support both families and students in their choice of education
- Direct mailing on graduate lists provided by secondary schools

# CAREER GUIDANCE AND ORIENTATION: how students learn about ITSAR

- Most students found out about ITSAR through our **website** or on **recommendation of their secondary school teachers**.
- The advertising channels intercepting our students are **Instagram** and **search engines**
- Most students have participated in **orientation events** promoted by ITS AR or organised in their secondary schools.
- Most students discovered ITSAR **in the previous 12 months**.
- The most important factors in choosing ITSAR are the **type of courses and educational activities**

# CAREER GUIDANCE AND ORIENTATION: FUTURE CHALLENGES

**Family orientation** to the ITS system

**New ways of engaging students:** competitions/hackatons

Tracking candidates journey & experience: **data analysis**

Engagement of secondary and VET schools and increasing **involvement of all stakeholders**

Coordinate the orientation activities at a **regional level** working with public bodies / municipalities on the organisation of effective models of orientation in the area

# International strategy



**Erasmus+**  
Enriching lives, opening minds.

Since its birth, ITSAR has invested in the internationalization of its courses which has proved to have a very positive impact on many aspects.

ITSAR is an Erasmus+ ECHE holder since 2016 and we have been funding students and staff mobilities to European and extra European countries through the Erasmus+ KA131, regional and private fundings. Our selected students are provided with scholarship to do their curricular internship abroad, or to do training and educational activities with partner Institutes.



Regione  
Lombardia

# International strategy



**Erasmus+**  
Enriching lives, opening minds.

Our staff is given the possibility to do teaching and job shadowing activities in partner Higher Education Institutes.

At the moment we have partner Institutes and companies in Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden, Malta, USA and we are developing collaborations with Egypt and El Salvador.



**Thank you for your attention**

**If you have any questions, feel free to ask**