Italian Youth Guarantee implementation plan
EU’s “Youth Guarantee” scheme

With the Recommendation of the EU Council of 22 April 2013, the EU defined its strategy to increase youth employment. The Recommendation focuses on the establishment of a Youth Guarantee that urges Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship or other forms of training, within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The Youth Guarantee targets in particular young people who have left their studies and do not work, the so-called NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training), whose activation should be promoted through measures aimed at increasing their motivation and retraining. At the same time, the scheme is open to all young people, who are in the final stage of their education or training, in order to actively support a swift and efficient transition to the labour market.

The European Youth Guarantee is made operational with an Implementation plan devised by Member States. In Italy, the Recommendation was transposed through the development of a single strategy shared between State and Regions. As a matter of fact, according to the Italian Constitution, regions have exclusive powers in the fields of vocational training and active labour policies, including the management of employment services. For this reason, in addition to the National Plan that identifies common actions for the overall national territory, every region established its own Implementation plan.

As a result of the discussion between institutional players carried out mostly in a special “mission structure”, State and Regions agreed on the possibility of managing the Youth Guarantee through the definition of a National Operational Programme placed under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and in which Regions act as intermediate bodies (i.e. “delegated managers”). The total amount of resources allocated for the Plan is 1.513 million euros, 1.135 million coming from European funds and 378 million co-financed by the State. These resources should be used by the end of 2015, though the process that was launched to promote the activation of NEETs may continue also after this date, thanks to the support of the Operational Programmes financed by the ESF in the 2014-2020 programming period.

Economic and labour market context

The economic and employment crisis that started in 2008 struck more or less all European countries, hitting in particular the younger population. Job seekers in this demographic group are especially vulnerable because of their lack of professional experience, which turns into a strong risk factor when combined with low qualifications and, often, limited social assistance coverage. As a result, the share of unemployed people in the 15-24 age group has sharply increased: by the time of the approval of the recommendation of the Youth Guarantee in 2013, the number of unemployed youngsters in Europe had grown to a total of 7.5 million, which accounted for 12.9% of European youth.

In this context of widespread crisis - even though its impact was felt differently across EU countries - Italy saw a gradual increase in the youth unemployment rate. In 2013, the average unemployment rate of people between 15-24 years of age was 40%, compared to an EU average of 23.4%. This figure placed Italy fifth in the ranking list of European countries with the highest youth unemployment levels.
According to data provided by the Italian Statistical Office (Istat), between 2008 and 2013 more than 1 million jobs were lost in Italy, while the share of unemployed labour force increased by 1.5 million people, reaching a total of 3 million during the third quarter of 2013. The decrease in employment levels involved almost all age groups and the only exception was the group of people aged between 55 and 64, whose employment rate increased by more than 6 percentage points, mainly due to the reform of the pension system introduced in 2012.

The crisis affected in particular the younger generation. Generally speaking, the Italian labour market has been characterised for many years by a high structural component of youth unemployment, a result of the highly complicated pathways to the labour market that young people must face. In 2008, compared to a general unemployment rate of 6.7% (average figure in 2008), the 15-24 age group recorded an unemployment rate of 21.3%. The EU average (calculated in the current 28 EU Member States) was characterised by a much lower gap between the general and youth unemployment rate, with figures of 7.0% and 15.8% respectively. In the five years following the crisis, the youth unemployment rate almost doubled in Italy, reaching 40%, while the EU average grew in a much more limited manner, going from 15.8% to 23.6%.

Worrying signs were observed also for the employment levels of young people: in 2013 the average employment rate for the 15-24 age group was 16.3%, more than eight percentage points lower than the 2008 figure. The situation worsened dramatically, going from one in four young people who were working five years ago, to less than one in six.

Furthermore, another phenomenon that is currently characterising the crisis in the entire European Union is on the rise: the increase in the number of young people who are not working nor attending an education or training pathway (NEET). For this group of young people, a long period of exclusion from the labour market and the education system could lead to more difficulties in their reintegration. In 2013, the share of NEETs in the 15-24 year age group was 22.2%, 5.5% higher than in 2008.
Strategic choices for the definition of the Italian Plan

The Italian Youth Guarantee implementation plan was devised by involving a large number of institutional partners. In order to develop this institutional partnership, a special Mission Structure was established. In addition to the Ministry of Labour and its supervised bodies - ISFOL and Italia Lavoro - this special structure saw the participation of INPS (the Agency that ensures the implementation of passive labour market policies at a national level), the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Department of Youth of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Economy, the Regions, the Autonomous Provinces, the Provinces, and Unioncamere (the national coordination and research body of the Chambers of Commerce network). The debate that took place in the mission structure led to the general strategic choices that represent the main pillars of the Italian Plan. Firstly, the choice of having one single national plan supported by an operational programme managed by the Ministry of Labour, in order to provide a point of reference for the establishment of the ensuing regional plans. Secondly, the necessity of widening the target to include citizens up to 29 years of age, in order to address a context characterised by a particularly high level of youth unemployment accompanied by a much higher average labour market entry age compared to the rest of the European Union, with longer and more fragmented pathways leading to a stable employment. Finally, the choice of implementing the Youth Guarantee scheme through the establishment of an articulated intervention model that could ensure the involvement and activation of young people within four months after becoming unemployed and/or leaving an education or training programme, providing a potential offer of education and training interventions and support measures for labour market integration that could operate in synergy with the measures already implemented in Italy to tackle youth unemployment. From an operational point of view, it was decided that Regions should take over the responsibility of implementing the active labour market policies directed at the beneficiaries of the Scheme, with the only exception of the guidance activities carried out in the framework of the formal education and training system, which fall under the scope of the measures promoted by the Ministry of Education, Universities, and Research. Following this procedure, the Regions became intermediate bodies that operate in the framework of an agreement signed with the Ministry of Labour and which must meet specific targets in terms of expense and results. For Regions requiring aid in the implementation of the actions proposed, the Ministry of Labour - also through its supervised bodies (ISFOL and Italia Lavoro) - promoted a series of support activities and subsidiarity-based interventions. Out of an expected number of more than 5 million young people - inactive, never employed, unemployed - particular attention was paid to the 1.274,000 NEETs in the 15-24 age group, young people who do not work or attend any education or training course. Considering the extremely severe youth unemployment situation in Italy, the Government decided to increase the eligible age limit to 29 years of age, raising the number of possible beneficiaries by almost one million people. Nevertheless, priority was given to the interventions addressed to young people under 24 years of age.
Population in the 15-24 and 15-29 age groups (data in thousands). Year 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>15-24</th>
<th></th>
<th>15-29</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>NEETs</td>
<td>Total population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piemonte</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle d’Aosta</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lombardy</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1,426</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trentino - Alto Adige</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>169</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veneto</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friuli - Venezia Giulia</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia - Romagna</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbria</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>132</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marche</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>231</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lazio</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>882</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abruzzo</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>214</td>
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<tr>
<td>Molise</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campania</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1,122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puglia</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>725</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basilicata</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>373</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sicily</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>933</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sardinia</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Italy</td>
<td>6,041</td>
<td>4,920</td>
<td>1,274</td>
<td>9,439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ministry of Labour took charge of the establishment and management of the technological platform (www.garanziaigiovani.gov.it) that allows young people to register for the initiative, in addition to providing a monitoring tool for the implementation of the interventions. Furthermore, the platform represents also a tool to connect the various regional programmes, establish a monitoring and evaluation system for the scheme, and carry out communication and information activities at a national level.

Overall information about preventive measures and activation policies

Some years ago, a normative provision came into force in Italy in order to guarantee young unemployed people with a targeted education or training intervention and/or work integration measure within four months. This kind of “Youth Guarantee” has been part of national Law since 2002, when this disposition was approved, and it refers to those people registered with relevant authorities. Despite the fact that essential levels of performance were to a large extent established by Law, these norms are currently not fully effective and a homogeneous and organic system that could monitor the services provided and evaluate their efficiency is still lacking. In this context, the establishment of the “Youth Guarantee” was seen as an opportunity to test a wider model of intervention that could promote the involvement of young people who leave their education and training pathways, support the “take in charge” carried out by competent employment services, and ensure the launch of training and/or work integration measures within the maximum period of four months. These interventions are carried out in the framework of a programme that defines specific action and cost standards at a national level, combined with monitoring and functional evaluation measures that aim at ensuring the achievement of the objectives, the identification of possible critical issues, and the promotion of contingent measures.
The first step to launch the programme was the dissemination of the information regarding the existence and the measures of the Youth Guarantee. Keeping this goal in mind, appropriate communication actions were established. A key role was played by the portal www.garanziegiovani.gov.it, which has several functions:

- provide information about the labour market, employment perspectives and opportunities;
- provide guidance and support for the active search of education, training, and employment pathways;
- connect the different realities existing in the fields of education and training;
- allow for the direct registration in the system and the provision by the user of basic information;
- book customised consultancy services.

In order to implement the Youth Guarantee, it was necessary to ensure the access of all young people to a system of information and guidance established through the use of remote and automated systems and, in particular, a network of customised services, available in two contact centres:

- a system of “competent services”, identified by the Regions in relation to the opportunities existing in the territory and the governance strategies linked to the management of employment services;
- specific bodies established in the formal education and training system in order to “intercept” early leavers of education and training pathways.

Guidance and consultancy services offer young people, within four months, a series of measures of integration or reintegration in education or training pathways, or the possibility to take part in a work placement experience. Reforms play a crucial preventive and complementary function, in order to activate school-work alternance education programmes, as well as the guidance, counselling, and tutoring services carried out in the framework of the formal education system and directed at people aged between 16 and 20 who show strong difficulties in following formal education pathways.

A system of competent bodies and the formal education and training system are the main providers of information, guidance, and support services of a general nature, thanks to the involvement of other institutions and stakeholders of civil society, such as the Chambers of Commerce, the Associations representing employers and workers, the so-called “third sector”, and youth associations.

In order to ensure at the first contact point an efficient dissemination of information about the possibilities offered to young people, a so-called “Youth Corner” has been created. This corner is clearly identified inside the single structures and is run by appropriately trained professionals who are thoroughly aware of the aims and
How to register for the Scheme

The participation in the Youth Guarantee scheme starts with the enrolment of the participant in the programme and ends when the participant takes part in all active labour market policies offered or receives a job offer. The registration procedure allows participants to gain access to the Youth Guarantee National Portal or a Regional Portal, where they can provide their personal data and email address, starting by filling out the “worker’s file”: a file containing the personal data, education and training background, past work experience, and list of active and passive labour market policies in which the participant was involved in the framework of the scheme. This file is marked by a unique code assigned at national level, the so-called “registration plate”. After successfully completing the registration procedure, participants receive via email the login credentials needed to complete the enrolment on the Youth Guarantee Scheme. Participants are effectively enrolled on the Scheme when they choose at least one Region where they want to be activated; participants may choose one or more Regions, not necessarily the one where they live. Beneficiaries of the “Youth Guarantee” scheme are young unemployed people who do not attend any education and training pathway and are aged between 15 and 29 (29 years of age and 364 days at the time of enrolment). In order to be eligible for the participation in the scheme, participants must declare that from the moment of registration to the participation stage in the programme:
- they do not attend any education pathway, including university and training courses and traineeships;
- they are unemployed, pursuant to Legislative Decree no. 181/2000;
- they are available to start working immediately.

To ensure the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, a national portal for the matching of labour offer and demand called “Cliclavoro” (www.cliclavoro.gov.it) was established. It was developed by the Ministry of Labour and it represents a single system for the entire national territory. The portal is a genuine network for labour, where users access a loop of information and employment services provided across the entire national territory. This portal aims at boosting employment opportunities and staff recruitment, focusing in particular on easing the matching of offer and demand and therefore playing the role of a collector of the employment opportunities published on the Internet.

Employment offers and CVs can be uploaded directly by users on the portal (authorised public and private operators), as well as through regional portals, which represent nodes of the Cliclavoro network that cooperate at an operational level. The link to the Youth Guarantee web-site (www.garanziaugiovani.gov.it) allows users to find information on the Scheme and register for it, in addition to providing access to interventions of first-level guidance. Finally, the Cliclavoro portal allows for the integration of existing information systems in order to track users, services, and scheme outcomes.

Preparatory actions for the delivery of specialist services in contact centres

Participants in the Youth Guarantee scheme are summoned by the competent services of the Region or Regions where they enrolled on the programme. The term ‘competent services’ refers to public centres for employment and other bodies that are authorised or certified to carry out these functions, according to regional law. In the framework of the Youth Guarantee, every Region established in its own Regional Implementation Plan the authority responsible for the delivery of services aimed at taking charge of participants and performing active labour market policies. The competent services welcome participants during the taking charge stage. The meeting with the operators of the competent services takes place according to the organisational modalities established by the Region or Autonomous Province and its overall aim is to promote the aware activation of participants in the framework of the Guarantee. The output of this service is the signature of the service pact and profiling of participants. For the profiling of participants, operators estimate the disadvantage and difficulty index of job seekers by processing the data provided by participants and registered using a software appositely created by the Ministry of Labour. According to the result of these calculations, participants are divided into four groups with increasing level of work placement difficulty (low, medium, high, and very high). These categories are important in order to
establish the amount of employment bonus that should be provided and the recognition of the results of the tutoring activity. After the welcome stage - which is common to everyone - the procedure continues with the signature of the “Service Pact” and the establishment of a tailor-made pathway aimed at work placement and/or the reintegration in the education and training system. This activity - which falls into the category of active labour market policies that must be concretely offered in the territory of beneficiaries - is strictly linked to the services for education, training, and work. The stages described above represent a first-level guidance intervention and they can be followed by a specialised and qualified second-level guidance and/or skills assessment procedure, with the aim of exploring exhaustively the beneficiaries’ life experiences and promote their development, proactivity, and independence, in order to build their “career plan”. During this process different tools are available: individual interviews, group workshops, evaluation grids and structured forms, questionnaires, psychological and aptitude tests, and others.

After the welcome and “take in charge” stage, which is common to everyone, the signature of the “Service Pact” offers a customised and shared pathway of work placement or reintegration in education and training programmes that can be performed through the participation to specific standard interventions in terms of implementation times, costs, and modalities.

Measures for work placement and education and training reintegration

These measures follow the terms of the Regional Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans, in accordance with the territorial systems of regulation and organisation of education, training, and employment services. The measures are designed taking into account the following possible lines of action:

a) job proposal, possibly followed by an employment bonus for the hiring company;

b) apprenticeship contract proposal, involving also companies established abroad thanks to the support of the EURES network;
c) traineeship proposal;
d) civil service;
e) tutoring and support for starting a new business;
f) transnational mobility;
g) integration or re-integration in training or education pathways.

Estimated number of young people involved in every measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Subjects to be involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training and education</td>
<td>139,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job-coaching</td>
<td>151,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>26,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-curricular traineeship, also in transnational mobility</td>
<td>135,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National civil service</td>
<td>8,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional civil service</td>
<td>2,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to self-employment and self-entrepreneurship</td>
<td>21,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational and territorial professional mobility</td>
<td>19,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment bonus</td>
<td>64,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>569,083</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In detail:

**Job proposal, possibly followed by an employment bonus for employers**

In the framework of the Youth Guarantee Programme, job coaching interventions are provided by qualified operators of accredited/authorised bodies for the delivery of employment services that work at regional level. Operators:
- identify the most suitable employment opportunities (scouting) according to the profile of the participant of the work placement programme;
- match the labour offer and demand (matching) and identify the company for the work placement programme;
- provide assistance to participants during the pre-selection stage (telephone interview, face to face interview, etc.) and during the first period of the work placement programme (tutoring), with the aim of providing useful information to settle in the company and offering guidance to participants in order to understand the activities that they must perform (role guidance).

Furthermore, operators take part in the establishment of possible education and training projects and in the identification of the most functional contract type (open-ended contract, fixed-term contract, temporary work, apprenticeship). The reimbursement of the intervention will be granted at the accomplishment of results, according to standard cost parameters that take into account the outcomes of profiling, with a higher cost for the initiatives of placement involving young people with stronger difficulties.

The job coaching initiative is accompanied by measures aimed at raising the companies’ awareness about the scheme. These measures are carried out generally at a national level by the Ministries of Labour and Education, through collaboration protocols signed with big companies and organisations representing employers. All organisations commit themselves to the promotion of traineeships and apprenticeships and to publishing on the Youth Guarantee national portal and advertising of job offers, apprenticeship offers, and traineeship opportunities offered by their members. On the garanzia giovani.gov.it web-site, a specific area has been devised to allow the companies involved in the Scheme to publish their offers and announcements for specific candidate profiles. Furthermore, companies will be involved also through public communications and regional calls, which will establish participation modalities and funding requirements, in addition to the common activity that normally sees employment services sign special agreements with the main stakeholders of a specific territory.

Companies will gain access to the resources provided by Regions through the tools put at their disposal - such as traineeships, apprenticeships or employment bonuses - and their main benefit will essentially consist of lower employment cost. The total amount of resources available will be established by the agreements reached between Regions and the Ministry of Labour. The Youth Guarantee scheme foresees an employment bonus of variable amount between 1,500 and 6,000 euros for recruitment initiatives carried out with the following types of contract:
- fixed-term contract or temporary work between 6 and 12 months;
- fixed-term contract or temporary work over 12 months;
- open-ended contract.

Furthermore, in order to support the involvement of companies and entrepreneurs, assistance services for recruitment and selection will be provided, as well as support measures to devise the training project linked to the apprenticeship contract or to identify the most functional type of contract in order to meet existing needs.

**Apprenticeship**

In Italy, apprenticeships are regulated with specific contracts that might be compared to open-ended contracts with training and work placement aims. According to the terms of apprenticeship contracts, companies shall provide technical and professional skills through training activities that should integrate the skills learned in schools, universities, or research institutions. Apprentices are workers in all respects: they receive a salary and enjoy the rights and safeguards set by collective agreements. Three types of apprenticeships are recognised by Italian law:
- **Apprenticeship for the achievement of a qualification and professional diploma (or first-level apprenticeship):** directed at young people aged between 15 and 25. This type of apprenticeship is aimed at acquiring a three-year qualification as a professional operator or a four-year technical diploma in an alternate education programme.
- **Professional apprenticeship (or second-level apprenticeship):** open to young people aged between 18 and 29. This type of apprenticeship is aimed at providing skills during a three-year programme that combines technical and vocational training in a company, with courses organised by Regions, for a total amount of 120 hours aimed at developing basic and transversal skills.
- **Apprenticeship for higher education and research (or third-level apprenticeship):** open to young people between 18 and 29. This type of apprenticeship is aimed at the achievement of formal qualifications, from secondary education diplomas to university degrees, and the qualifications issued by higher technical education and training or higher technical institutes. Furthermore, the contract may be used to recruit young people and promote their work placement in a company in the framework of a research activity programme.
The duration of the contracts is established according to their aims, following an agreement between the education and training body that will issue the formal qualification, the company involved and its representation association. The Youth Guarantee scheme offers interventions for first-level and third-level apprenticeships. At a national level, grants are provided only to employers who contract young people with first-level apprenticeship, with grants of 3,000 euros for the recruitment of young people under 18 years of age and 2,000 for those over 18, in order to compensate for the difficulties linked to the practical implementation of this measure. Furthermore, the programme supports education and training programmes carried out outside the company in order to achieve formal qualifications, with grants up to 7,000 euros for first-level apprenticeships and 6,000 euros for third-level ones. The support provided by competent services will consist in the identification of the hosting company, the development of a customised education and training plan, and a customised tutoring service.

**Traineeship and transnational traineeship**

Extracurricular traineeships are work placement experiences supported by education and training projects aimed at developing professional skills. Italian law distinguishes between training or guidance traineeships and work placement or reintegration traineeships. The former ones aim at providing support for the transition between school and labour market to youngsters who have recently obtained a formal qualification and/or a certificate, while the latter ones aim at providing support to unemployed people. Age limits for traineeships are not established by law and these programmes can last up to 12 months (for training and guidance traineeships) and 6 months (for work placement traineeships). Companies shall pay a monthly compensation of at least 300 euros to trainees, according to regional norms. Traineeships are organised in a triangular relationship that requires the involvement of a sponsoring body that can ensure the educational value of the experience and support the hosting company and the trainee. The education and training project at the basis of the traineeship is regulated by an agreement signed by the three parties involved. Its implementation is placed under the responsibility of the hosting company and, in particular, the tutor appointed by the company, who works in collaboration with the tutor of the sponsoring body, who instead is the main figure responsible for the monitoring of the traineeship. At the end of the experience, the trainee receives a certification that describes the skills and competences acquired.

Among the measures of the Operational programme of the Youth Guarantee, participants are offered also six-month extra-curricular traineeships. In order to boost the involvement of companies in the Scheme, a monthly grant of up to 500 euros is provided, without overshooting the threshold of 3,000 euros for the entire traineeship period (6,000 euros when disabled or disadvantaged users are involved). Economic incentives are granted to the companies that hire with a regular contract a participant of a traineeship programme within 60 days from the end of the traineeship.

Traineeships may take place also in national or transnational mobility, in order to promote education and training experiences abroad. This kind of intervention is carried out in synergy with the EURES network. In this case, participants will receive also an economic aid in order to pay for the expenses incurred, which will be established according to the current EC tables used for mobility programmes.

**Civil service**

The National Civil Service was established as an alternative to the compulsory military service and, since 2005, it has been open only on a voluntary basis. Today, the civil service is considered an experience that contributes to the “civic, social, cultural, and professional” education of young people. It is an opportunity provided to young people between 18 and 28 years of age to devote one year of their lives to a solidarity commitment to society and the common good, strengthening social cohesion. The voluntary civil service boasts a strong educational and training value and it represents an important - and often unique - opportunity for personal growth and education to active citizenship, playing a crucial role in the social, cultural, and economic development of the country. Among the proposals that the competent services can offer young people at the end of the individual interview required by the Youth Guarantee scheme, the civil service represents an option for those who show an interest in the areas linked to the projects of the national and regional civil service.
The programme provides the general and specific training required and it can have a maximum duration of 12 months. Such a measure boasts a strong educational civil and social value; it allows participants to gain knowledge of the sectors in which the national civil service is operating - care giving, civil protection, environment, cultural heritage, education, and culture promotion - in addition to providing transversal skills. The experience can last up to 12 months and the total work hours can vary between 30 and 36 weekly hours, with a minimum of 1,400 yearly hours. Volunteers receive a total net monthly economic compensation of €433.80 euros. For volunteers operating abroad, in addition to the monthly compensation, travel expenses are reimbursed and a daily reimbursement for room and board is provided for the entire period spent abroad. The Youth Guarantee scheme provides funds for the coverage of the economic compensation and reimbursement of volunteers. According to Italian law, young volunteers can be rewarded with education credits that may be used in their studies or vocational training programmes. The Civil Service National Office signed specific agreements with accredited Universities and Bodies in order to recognise this right. All participants shall attend general and specialist training programmes. The general training (more or less 30 hours) focuses on general culture and the principles on which the Civil Service was created, while the specialist training (more or less 50 hours) focuses on the activities linked to the project for which participants were selected. At the end of the programme, participants can ask for a certificate attesting the end of their commitment and the experience made. The Civil Service can be managed at a regional level by the institutions that regulate the intervention by means of specific laws.

Training and education

Young people who require additional skills and competences to enter into the labour market and, in particular, the youngest with the lowest levels of qualification are directed towards education and training measures developed in different territories in the framework of the vocational training offer provided by Regions and Autonomous Provinces. In addition, the Youth Guarantee scheme offers two other kinds of education and training measures:
- **reintegration of young people between 15 and 18 years of age in the formal education and training system**: in the case of young people aged over 15 and under 19 without a qualification or diploma, competent services shall promote their reintegration in the formal education and training system with the aim of acquiring at least a three-year qualification, strengthening their basic knowledge and promoting their involvement in the labour market and society. These pathways will enable participants to obtain qualifications with national legitimacy, both through pathways held completely in vocational training centres, and subsidiarity and complementary courses organised in national vocational institutes. These are all full-time education and training pathways, for a total amount of 990 yearly hours, including the hours of the curricular traineeship organised in a company. At the end of the programme, a qualification will be awarded after the successful completion of an exam.
- **targeted education and training measures for work placement**: complementary to the vocational training provided by Regions, the Youth Guarantee offers education and training pathways of a duration between 50 and 200 hours that aim at providing useful competences and skills for a swift and efficient entry into the labour market. Education and training measures, carried out both at an individual and group level, are offered by bodies accredited or authorised by the Regions, and their goal is to provide additional technical and professional competences and skills. In the case of economic difficulty, beneficiaries belonging to the first target group who were directed towards a three-year vocational education and training programme (IeFP) may receive economic support (a training grant) or a voucher for the purchase of specialist support services that could be provided by an education and training body (in the case of private structure). Generally speaking, the funds provided through the Youth Guarantee scheme will be used to finance the education and training measures by reimbursing accredited bodies for the expenses incurred.

Entrepreneurship training and benefits for self-employment and business-creation

Beneficiaries who during preliminary first-level and second-level guidance activities show sound entrepreneurial skills and demonstrate a good possibility of success will benefit (directly or through accredited bodies) from
support services for self-employment and self-entrepreneurial support. The support provided in the start-up and post-start-up stage will provide access to existing economic incentives for business creation (such as micro-loan) and/or the activation of national and regional funds. Among the services available for business start-ups, it is possible to find: training courses for the establishment of a business plan, customised assistance for the creation of a business plan, tutoring and counselling for credit access and financing of the entrepreneurial idea also through self-employment initiatives, and support services for start-up and business creation. Beneficiaries who show sound entrepreneurial and self-entrepreneurship skills but who are not considered bankable and therefore would have difficulties in getting access to bank credit if evaluated only through ordinary parameters of credit score, could receive an easier access to credit through the creation of a guarantee fund.

**NEETs involvement in the Youth Guarantee**

From the launch of the initiative, the number of young people who have registered in the scheme has been substantial. Up to December 4, 2014, 331,094 people registered in the Youth Guarantee scheme. Among them, 52% (173,330 people) did so by using regional portals, while 48% (157,764 people) used the national portal. NEETs participation mirrors the characteristics of the Italian labour market in terms of age, qualification level, and territorial origin. At a national level, the number of young people involved in the Youth Guarantee scheme reached a 19.1% share of the potential target composed of 1,723,000 NEETs in the 15-29 age group who are employable according to Istat data. Also in this case, the situation is characterised by a high level of regional differences, with regions that overshoot the 50% threshold of the potential target, and regions where only an 11% share of potential beneficiaries decided to take part in the initiative.

**Registered participants by region of residence compared to total number of NEETs * (available to work)**

Analysing the gender of participants, one notices that 51% of them are men, while 49% are women. In terms of age, 52% of participants are aged between 19 and 24, 39% between 25 and 29, and 9% between 15 and 18. If divided according to qualification level, 19% of participants have a university degree, 57% have a higher secondary education diploma, while 24% have a lower secondary education diploma or lower qualification.

The number of young people “taken in charge” and profiled has been 112,234 people, 34% of those registered. The gender analysis shows that 52% of those profiled are men, while 48% are women, while the categorisation according to age groups mirrors the distribution of registered participants: 11% for the 15-18 year age group, 52% for the 19-24 year olds, and 37% for the 25-29 year olds.
Considering the profiling index of the participants taken in charge, 35% of them had a low index, 36% medium-low, 22% medium-high, and 7% high. The high level of education and the strong presence of young people living in Northern Italy translated into a “quite low” average profiling class of the participants taken in charge (i.e. their placement difficulty level): 71% of participants entered the "low" or 'medium-low' risk category, while only 7.5% of young people had characteristics that placed them in the 'high risk' category. Implementation planning changes according to the type of intervention and regional situation. The details regarding the amount of resources allocated in implementation planning according to the type of measure show that established goals were met for two measures: national civil service and mobility promotion.

The Youth Guarantee scheme is open also to foreign citizens “living” in Italy, even if they do not have Italian citizenship. The number of young foreigners who registered in the Scheme is 17,650 people (5% of the total number of registered participants). Among them, 23% come from EU countries, with Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria as the three main countries of origin, while 77% come from non-EU countries, with Albania, Morocco, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as the three main countries of origin. Age groups mirror the percentages recorded for the entire number of participants, with the largest group of participants aged between 19 and 24 (50% of the total number of foreign young people registered in the Scheme). The Regions chosen by participants were those with a higher share of foreign workforce: Piemonte, Emilia Romagna and Veneto were the main three regions chosen by young people with EU parents, while Emilia Romagna, Veneto and Marche were those chosen by young people with non-EU parents.

While waiting for the involvement of companies in single measures as a result of the regional calls and the employment bonus that have been launched, companies have already started publishing their vacancies on a voluntary basis. Up to now, companies have been publishing vacancies and employment opportunities directly on the national portal or through employment agencies. The total number of employment opportunities published from the beginning of the project up to December was 25,281, for a total number of 36,121 open positions. Of this total number, 4,896 vacancies are still to be filled, representing 7,196 jobs available. These figures refer to the labour offer and demand matching performed on the portal, without considering the procedures carried out by employment services. A 72.6% share of job opportunities gathers in Northern Italy, 13.5% in Middle Italy, and 13.8% in Southern Italy, while employment opportunities coming from abroad represent 0.1% of the total.