

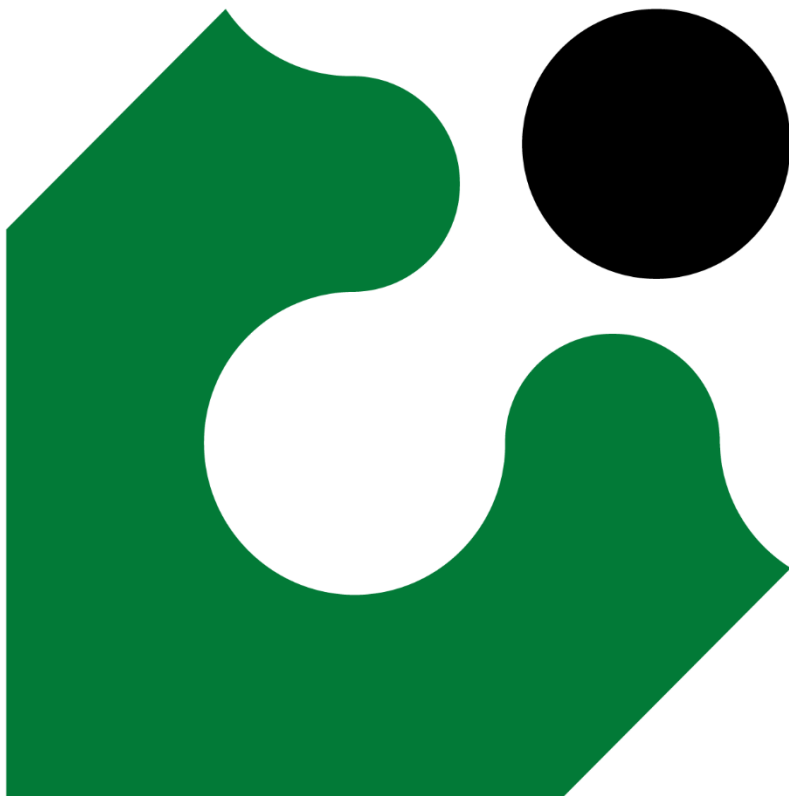


Labour market and education and training policies in the Lombardy Region

Executive Summary

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The Report illustrates the recent evolution of labour and education and training policies in the Lombardy region, with focus on the measures adopted to contrast the negative effects of the Covid - 19 pandemic on the labour market.

The assessment is based on a desk analysis of available regional and national administrative and monitoring data, complemented with interviews to representatives of the regional social partners¹. Monitoring data show a good performance of regional policies supporting employment and investment in human capital, and able to outreach the target population and support employment placement. The representatives of the social partners interviewed confirm an overall positive opinion on regional policies, although they underline the need to guarantee greater support to some specific targets and to intercept the emerging needs of the regional socio-economic system in the face of the medium-long term challenges related to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. In fact, there are still gaps with respect to the European average and the EU objectives that are likely to worsen with the Covid crisis, especially as regards the labour market participation and employment of young people, women, and those with a low level of education, as well as the still low level of tertiary education, especially in STEM, and of participation in lifelong learning.

Recent evolution of labour market policies

The Dowry system (*Dote Unica Lavoro - DUL*) is the main regional active labour measure, largely co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). The main strength of DUL, according to the representatives of the social partners interviewed, is its flexibility and constant monitoring that allows to periodically adapt it to changing labour market conditions. The third phase of DUL implementation was launched in January 2019, with the aim to strengthen synergies with national measures, the Re-Employment voucher (*Assegno di Ricollocazione – AdR*), and the Youth Guarantee Programme (YG). In addition, in the third phase was strengthened the profiling and support system for the unemployed more distant from the labour market, with particular attention to women, previously less involved than men in DUL measures. A higher “reward” was also confirmed for labour market operators ensuring stable employment to their DUL recipients, and administrative procedures were simplified. The initial financial allocation of €102 million, largely from the ROP FSE 2014-2020, was increased by € 17.219.206,39 in November 2019.

From January 2019 until May 18, 2020, almost all (98.5%) of the applications submitted have been financed, for an average amount per dowry of € 2,635.75. Almost two thirds (60.6%) of the dowries financed are concentrated on targets needing High (37.4%) and Very High (23.4%) intensity of support. A total of 189 accredited labour market operators managed the financed dowries, each operator managing just over 76 dowries for an average amount of just over 200 thousand euros, with ten operators concentrating 42.8% of the dowries and 46.5% of the financial endowment. Of these, 4 are private operators (concentrating 20.3% of the total dowries financed in the considered period), 4 are third sector operators (14.7%), and 2 are public operators (7.8%).

Among the unemployed involved in the DUL measures, there was an increase in unemployed or inactive women, who become the majority of DUL recipients (59.8% in May 2020 compared to 47.5%

¹ Special thanks to Dr. Rusciano (UIL) and Dr. Manfredda, Dr. Innocenti and Dr. Ballabio (Assolombarda) for their availability and contribution to the analysis of the current situation and future prospects.

and 45.1% in the two DUL previous phases), and in the long term unemployed (61% of total recipients compared to 38.8% in Phase II, and 48.5% in Phase I).

From January 22, 2019 to May 18, 2020, more than a thousand (1,089) dowry recipients have been placed at work with contracts lasting 6 months or more, mainly women (59.3%), between 35 and 54 years (70.7%). Most employment contracts (74%) are new ones, especially temporary (41%) and permanent (24.7%). The rate of insertion, calculated on the dowry recipients, is however very low (10.1%) and remains on average higher among men (11.4% against 9.4% of women) and those aged 30-44. The insertion rate is even lower (3.7%) for recipients of dowries for "Internships and start-up services".

These low achievement rates are largely attributable to the lockdown measures adopted in the first half of 2020, and it is expected that the severity of the crisis produced by the pandemic in Lombardy will make it difficult for DUL in this phase to achieve the good employment results of the previous phases, when job placements reached 80% (at the end of Phase I) and 90% (in Phase II).

The Regional Commission for Labour and Training Policies is envisaging a revision of the DUL mechanism to take into account the effects of the pandemic and the new ESF programming period. The focus of discussion is on: how to make the reward system more effective; how to strengthen the (re)training measures for job seekers according to the skills required by regional strategic sectors; how to introduce support measures for hiring companies.

The network actions for employment (*Azioni di rete per il lavoro*) are implemented in territories affected by corporate crisis situations. The measure supports the creation of networks of local stakeholders to provide employment and training services for workers involved in corporate crises, with the aim of reducing the impact of the crises on the territories and to maintain employment levels. In the period from June 2017 to June 2020, € 8,900,000 were allocated to these measures.

Monitoring data show that, overall, on the two calls issued respectively in 2017 and 2018, were admitted 39 projects out of the 44 submitted. The 24 projects admitted in the 2017 call involved workers from 37 companies. The 15 projects admitted in the 2018 call (still ongoing) involve workers from 23 companies. Most of the companies involved activated collective dismissal procedures. The local partnerships activated involve on average 8 partner per project, e.g. companies, local territorial bodies, social partners, accredited labour market and training operators, third sector organizations, universities, Chambers of Commerce, management consultants, outplacement operators. The total expected number of workers involved was 986 in the 2017 call and 811 in the 2018 call. The data available on the characteristics of the recipients and the services activated relate only the 2017 projects now concluded. The workers actually involved in these projects were 716 (72.6% of those expected). More than half (52.6%) were women, and nearly half (49.4%) were aged between 45 and 54 and had low to medium educational qualifications.

The services provided mainly concerned basic services (33.4%) and reception and counselling services (33.2%), while most (74%) of the service hours provided concerned reskilling and upskilling.

The representatives of the social partners interviewed underline the need for adequate monitoring and evaluation of the network actions implemented, in order to better understand in which contexts, how, and why the networks were (or were not) effective. The employers' representatives also underline the need to simplify some procedural constraints, and, above all, the need to intervene upstream in a preventive manner, when the workers are still in the company on temporary layoffs.

The **Youth Guarantee Programme (YG)** is another important employment measure in Lombardy, where the dramatic crisis triggered by the pandemic risks to further increase the already high share of young NEETs (the NEET rate reached 14.8% in 2019 compared to 12.5% in the EU28). The effects of emergency and lockdown measures to contrast the pandemic are indeed having particularly negative effects on young people, both in the labour market (as young people are largely employed with temporary contracts and are not protected by the ban on layoffs covering permanent workers), and in education and training (as the closure of schools and distance learning are penalising those most at risk of dropping out of school). The YG can contrast these risks depending on its ability to intercept and involve young NEETs with low levels of education and at greater risk of early school leaving and poverty in the long term.

In its first phase of implementation, YG in Lombardy showed a good intervention capacity, taking in charge a significant share of young NEETs (over 40%), and good results in terms of recruitments and internships activated. Among the main critical issues, however, was the relatively low degree of involvement of young women and the difficulty of outreaching the less educated NEETs, despite their high share among NEETs. These weaknesses are also present in the current YG Phase. The 31,593 young people involved in the programme as of 1 June 2020 represent about 15% of the young NEETs between 15 and 29 present in Lombardy, young women are about 44%, and only 16.7% are low educated (with at most a lower secondary education). In addition, only 14,660 have been placed in employment so far, equal to 46.4% of those taken in charge, although with a higher share of those hired with apprenticeship contracts compared to the previous phase (40% vs 13.0%) and a similar share of placements in permanent jobs (13.0%).

Again, the worse average employment outcomes compared to the previous phase are mainly attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis that has particularly hit the service sectors where many young people tend to be employed. The interviewed social partners representatives underlined, on the one hand (union representative), the need for an in-depth assessment of the actual results of the program and its capacity to outreach those NEETs most distant from the labor market; and, on the other (employers' representatives), the very long times for reimbursement of the internship allowance (over 1 – 1.5 year from the conclusion of the internship), which does not favor the employers' interest in the measure.

Concerning the national measures **Re-Employment Voucher and Citizenship Income**, the need to integrate regional and national policies at the territorial level has encouraged accredited operators to network with PES, which play a central role in the management of the Relocation Voucher and of the Citizenship Income. This process should not present particular problems in Lombardy. Furthermore, the ROP FSE of the Lombardy Region has launched a training measure to strengthen the skills of the operators of Employment Centers in Lombardy, in collaboration with FORMEZ, and of the POC SPAO. This measure has involved 241 PES operators so far (December 2019). As for the Relocation Grant, the employers' organisation Assolombarda proposes to extend it also to workers at risk of losing their jobs or who have lost their jobs.

With regard to income support measures, available data show that the Covid-19 emergency has dramatically increased the use of the **Redundancy Fund (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni- CIG)**, which compensates workers for reduced working hours due to crises. From January to June 2020,

compensation was authorised for over 386 million hours (compared to approximately 19 million between January and June 2019), of which 376 million concentrated in the second quarter of 2020. The estimate number of workers equivalent to zero hours, calculated on the basis of the authorized hours, reached over 189 thousand in the first half of 2020 compared to about 9 thousand in 2018 and 2019. The incidence on employment in Lombardy reaches 4.2%, two hundred times that recorded in 2018 and 2019 (0.2%). The provinces with the highest incidence on total employment are Bergamo (5.1%), Lecco 4.7%), Varese (4.6%), Brescia and Milan with Monza and Brianza (4.5%).

In addition to anticipating the Redundancy Funds, the Lombardy Region supported with regional resources solidarity contracts, which, however, have so far been little used. As underlined by the employers' representatives interviewed, the succession of many fragmented interventions put a strain on the system.

Despite the ban on layoffs, applications for Unemployment Benefits (NASpl) in Lombardy, already up by 4.3% in 2019 compared to the previous year, increased by 16.2 % in the first five months of 2020 compared to the same period of 2019, a growth higher than that recorded at national level (+ 15.5%).

Applications for the **Citizenship Income** (RdC) also increased significantly in the first half of 2020. INPS data relating to 7 July 2020, record 91,873 households in Lombardy that benefited from the Citizenship Income compared to 78,605 in 2019, and equivalent to 2.2% of Lombard households.

Almost four out of ten (37.5%) Lombard families benefiting from RdC includes at least one minor (lower than the national average of 40.1%), while 18.8% include a disabled person (compared to 17.8% nationally), although between 2019 and the first half of 2020 there was a reduction in the incidence of both families with minor children and those with people with disabilities among recipients.

The average monthly amount disbursed per recipient as of July 7, 2020 is €498, up from the €463 average in 2019, but still slightly lower than the national average (€502).

In Lombardy, according to data for the period March-August 2019, a lower share of RdC recipients tend to be addressed to PES compared to other regions data (40%, compared to 44.5% in Veneto, 50.8% in Emilia-Romagna 51.3% in Piedmont), while more than half (51.6%) are addressed to Social Services.

Recent evolution of education and training policies

The Education and Professional Training system (IEFP) is a very important training channel for the Lombardy Region, which annually finances IeFP courses within a dowry system ("*sistema dotale*"), a similar approach to that used for labour policies with DUL.

For the academic year 2019/2020, there have been almost 48,000 enrolments in Lombardy to the IeFP courses carried out by the 109 accredited operators receiving a budget for training.

The IeFP system in Lombardy is characterised by a concentration of economic resources, both in terms of territories - the provinces of Milan, Bergamo and Brescia manage 56% of the overall regional resources - and in terms of training operators. Indeed, 30% of the overall resources is intended for only 6 operators (out of 109), with a possible impact on the diversification and quality of the offer. A wider territorial distribution of the IeFP channel could make this opportunity accessible to an increasing audience of students.

As for occupational outcomes, the percentage of IeFP qualified in 2019 who are employed within 12 months stands at 30.4% (33.3% in 2018), while that of IeFP graduates is around 50% (57.6% in 2018).

From a comparison with the previous annuality, the decrease in the employment rate is probably connected to the Covid-19 medical emergency, which affected some of the key sectors for the IeFP occupational outlets, such as catering, retail and services.

Also for the 2019/2020 annuality, the Lombardy Region confirms its commitment in the **realisation of ITS (Istruzione Tecnica Superiore) - Higher Technical Education - and IFTS (Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore) - Higher Technical Education and Training - courses** based on the need for technical skills expressed by the economic system.

In the academic year 2019/2020, the ITS system presents an overall training offer of 114 courses and about 3.000 students. From the 2019/2020 call, it emerges the will to consolidate the existing courses and to promote the delivery of new ones within foundations already rooted in Lombardy.

Lombardy holds the regional record for number of courses (43 completed in 2019) and enrolments (1,159 in the courses completed in 2019), with more than 20% of the national total, both for active courses and for enrolments. The number of ITS foundations with registered office in the region has almost tripled from 2010 to 2020, going from 7 to 20. In the same way, the number of courses and enrolments has increased considerably in recent years - in Lombardy faster than at national level.

The analysis of occupational outcomes for the students of the 43 courses completed in 2019 highlighted a reduction in *placement* compared to previous years. A year after the conclusion of the course, about 66% of those admitted to the final exam are employed, compared to an average of 79% of those who graduated from the courses completed in 2017 and 2018. Although 2019 data are not yet definitive and completely comparable to those of the previous years, the medical emergency seems to have even affected a training channel that always stood out for its effective response to the real needs of companies and for its ability to grasp the trends of the labour market.

However, the ITS training offer remains strategic. On the one hand, it addresses the need for tertiary professional training - which is absent in Italy. On the other one, it increases the interest of companies, which increasingly enter into partnerships with foundations and find in these courses - to which they can directly contribute with the offer of internships and lectures - a valid response to their need for technical expertise.

The planning of ITS courses is accompanied by that of IFTS annual courses, mainly aimed at facilitating the job placement of young people in relation to the needs of the production system in Lombardy. The occupational outcomes analysis of those who graduated from the courses completed in 2019 and 2018 highlights a one-year employment rate of 68%, consistent with the data emerging from national surveys for the previous years.

Lombardy also stands out for being one of the regions with the largest number of **apprenticeship contracts for qualification and professional diploma, upper secondary education diploma, certificate of higher technical education (level 1 apprenticeship) and apprenticeship of higher education and research (or level 3 apprenticeship)**, regulated by Legislative Decree 81/2015 (former Articles 43 and 45). For the academic year 2019/2020, 16 million euros were made available for level 1 apprenticeship, in addition to 2 million euros allocated by Decree no. 10693 of 23/07/2018 to the apprenticeship of higher education and research.

The desired spreading has not been reached yet because of the marginal role played by these contracts with respect to the professional apprenticeship scheme. However, from 2015 to 2019, it has been recorded a high growth of both level 1 (from 1,214 workers in 2015 to 4,397 in 2019) and level 3 apprenticeship (from 183 contracts in 2015 to 401 in 2019).

The young people involved in level 1 and level 3 apprenticeship in Lombardy are mainly men (67.5% of level 1 and 71% of level 3 apprentices), while the age varies according to the type of apprenticeship. On the one hand, the age group 15-19 is the most represented among level 1 apprentices, consistently with its greater use for the acquisition of a diploma or qualification. On the other one, among level 3 apprentices, young graduates between 25 and 29 are prevalent, as a consequence of the difficulty in using this apprenticeship for more structured and less flexible paths - and therefore the choice to select it mainly for courses leading to the acquisition of master's and doctorates.

The analysis of the transitions of apprentices - i.e. contacts signed by young people following the end of their apprenticeship contracts - highlighted positive results. In particular, for boys and girls who completed a level 3 apprenticeship course in recent years, the most frequent contractual transition is to a permanent contract. Similar data - although altogether less positive - is registered for those who concluded a level 1 apprenticeship contract. However, for this younger target, the number of those who moved to a professional apprenticeship scheme is high - and grows over time. This type of contract is the one that saw the greatest increase over time in its share of the total.

Besides training policies addressed to young people, the Lombardy Region also stands out for its important role of guidance for developing **continuous training in the workplace, lifelong learning and vocational retraining**. These are essential policies because, although higher than the national average, the number of adults involved in lifelong learning courses in Lombardy is still lower than the European average and far from the EU goals.

In the Lombardy Region, **continuous training** is now a consolidated intervention tool on the labour market, to which important funding has been allocated over time, also thanks to the integration of resources from different sources. In particular, 5 notices on continuous training have been approved in the X Legislature until 2019 (phases 1-5), with an overall investment of more than 86 million euros, in addition to 26.6 million euros allocated to continuous training with the notice of phase 5 in July 2020 - which also intervenes in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The calls in phases 4 and 5 financed training courses focused on the regional strategic priorities, e.g. process and product innovations and Industry 4.0 and Enterprise 4.0. In 2018, 1,811 continuous training courses and 14,673 enrolments were recorded, while 636 courses and 4,356 enrolments in 2019. Also the number of operators involved decreased, going from 148 in 2018 to 64 the following year.

The Covid-19 pandemic and its heavy consequences on Lombardy brought to the introduction of some changes to the previous system of continuous training. This was carried out with a 2020 call that introduced for the first time remote training as the regular approach to continuous training during the health emergency, and devoted specific attention to the need to adapt the recipients' skills to foster the relaunch and reconversion of working activities, as well as the revision of management processes and organisational models in order to allow working activities to be performed safely, also through the acquisition of skills for introducing and/or consolidating smart working in working organisations.

The regional training offer for adults is completed by:

- **Permanent training courses:** in 2019, 1,085 courses were activated, with a total of 8,070 enrolments - in decrease compared to the previous year, in which 4,000 courses were activated, with the participation of 31,385 students;
- **Specialisation courses:** in 2019, 321 courses were activated, seeing the participation of 3,148 students - compared to the 1,241 courses and 11,430 enrolments in 2018;

- **Regulated offer and enabling offer:** even for this type of offers, a decrease is detected between 2018 and 2019, both in terms of started courses (860 instead of 1,711) and - consequently - in terms of enrolments (from more than 23,000 to little more than 12,000).

It is finally pivotal, in a perspective of lifelong learning, the course initiated by Regione Lombardia for the **certification of skills** in non-formal and informal contexts at regional level (D.D.U.O. no. 9380 of 22/10/2012 and subsequent update of the models to be used with the recent D.D.U.O. no. 17885 of 06/12/2019) and in addition the activation of a confront at national level through the active participation to the interinstitutional work for the implementation of Law 92/2012 on labour market and Legislative Decree 13/2013 on the certification system of skills acquired in any field, with the purpose of defining the guidelines on the certification system provided for by Legislative Decree no. 13/2013.

The Covid -19 crisis and policy implications

The concentration of the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in Lombardy and the lock-down measures adopted between March and May 2020 had a dramatic impact on the regional labour market and socio-economic system. The available indicators on the first two quarters of 2020 show a sharp decline in consumption, production and employment and an increase in the use of all the available social safety nets.

The crisis triggered by Covid-19 risks aggravating some pre-existing criticalities of the regional labor market that can hinder the possibilities for recovery and socio-economic growth, especially in the face of the current and future demographic, technological, environmental, and health challenges.

The share of people at risk of poverty has been growing since 2019. There are also significant gaps with Europe in the employment rates and working conditions of women and young people. Investment in human capital (especially in tertiary education and STEM) is still below the European average. The share of the working age population with insufficient basic and digital skills is still high. The low participation in IFTS and ITS courses in the face of the growing demand for technical skills by the regional production system, underlines the need to strengthen guidance and support measures for young people and their families and for a greater involvement young girls in STEM education and training.

Labor policies and education and training policies will have to act on two fronts to support the exit from the crisis.

In the immediate future, regional **labor policies** should continue to promote emergency support measures for workers and businesses in the sectors most hit by the crisis in synergy with national ones. The Lombardy Region is supporting SMEs and the self-employed in adapting to health security measures; it has anticipated and extended to workers and families national income support measures; it has issued company vouchers for the training of workers suspended from work and to support smart working; it has promoted distance training for those with access difficulties. Among the most recent measures, support to self-employment includes training and consultancy services for the unemployed with a business idea in the cultural / creative sector, among the most affected by the pandemic; while support for the adoption of Smart Working business plans offers employers with at least 3 employees, consulting and training services as well as contributions to the acquisition of the necessary technology.

The effects of these measures will be assessed in the next Annual Report. In the medium to long term, measures are needed to support socio-economic and employment growth, especially in strategic regional sectors and in those sectors most affected by the Covid-19 crisis, with support to digital, managerial and organizational innovation also in micro and small businesses, the strengthening of new professional skills, the valorisation of the human capital and skills of young people, women and immigrants (the most penalized by the crisis), and with support to high skilled employment and entrepreneurship. It is also necessary to strengthen hiring incentives and extend access to social protection to non-standard workers (e.g. temporary, irregular or self-employed low-income workers), among the most affected by the health emergency and the most at risk in the future. To encourage the growth of female employment, it is also necessary to improve the offer of care services.

Regional active labour market policies, in synergy with national ones, can support the socio-economic recovery. *Dote Unica Lavoro (DUL)* shows a good capacity to support the job placement and the reskilling and upskilling of the unemployed or workers in temporary lay-offs. The revisions introduced in Phase III are expected to improve support for people with greater employment difficulties and for stable employment, while the flexibility of the profiling system should improve the capacity to outreach other population targets at risk of unemployment and poverty due to Covid-19. The enhanced complementarity between DUL, the Youth Guarantee programme, and the Re-employment voucher avoids overlaps among regional and national measures and favours the extension of policy coverage to more vulnerable categories.

The *Youth Guarantee programme* in Lombardy shows a good capacity to activate young NEETs, although young women are still under-represented and it is necessary to strengthen the programme's ability to intercept NEET girls and young people with low levels of education at greater risk of exclusion and poverty in the long term.

Network actions for employment, make it possible to take into account territorial and company specificities and to reduce the impact of corporate crises on the concerned territories, thanks to the involvement of the main local socio-economic stakeholders and the activation of employment and training services. These networks can also represent an important tool for promptly intercepting the corporate crises generated by the pandemic.

As underlined by the representatives of the social partners interviewed, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in a labor market that was recovering from the negative effects of the previous crisis, it also accelerated socio-economic and technological processes already underway and generated new ones. According to the interviewed union representative, the Covid crisis has highlighted the need for long-term industrial policies and investments in new productive and employment areas, such as the green and white economy sectors, and in digitalisation and broadband connection (in Lombardy still affected by strong territorial differentiations). It also highlighted the need to support cultural activities, also for their social role, social voluntary activities, and women's work penalized first by the lockdown and then by uncertainty about the continuity of care and school services. Although smart-working (or more simply work from home) is going to become a common way of organizing work (in rotation, with alternating presence in the office or in co-working spaces, etc.), facilitating the balance of work and family, it is not a solution for low skilled and disadvantaged workers.

Furthermore, the growth of remote work will also affect commuting patterns and the socio-economic and territorial balance between urban and neighbouring or rural areas.

These developments will require the adoption of a strong holistic approach, valorising the integration of labour and training policies with industrial, housing and mobility policies, also through a stronger integration of ERDF and ESF funds.

The interviewed employers' representatives underlined the proposal promoted by the national employers' confederation (Confindustria) to simplify the unemployment benefits system, through the creation of a single measure with a contribution system based on an experience-based mechanism (so that each company's contribution to the benefit system is determined by its layoff experience), and a stronger integration between the unemployment benefit system (NASpl) and active labour policies. The NASpl could include an insurance part, parameterized to the Citizenship Income, and another part conditional on labour market activation.

To increase the number of young people who join the Youth Guarantee Program or who are employed in professional apprenticeships, it could be appropriate to promote (or strengthen) a communication campaign to inform young people and their families on the measures available and the employment opportunities resulting from participation to the Programme. The training dimension of the vocational apprenticeships and internships activated in the Youth Guarantee programme could also be strengthened through a greater involvement of companies in the definition of training projects, and a stronger role of company tutors who closely follow young people in their learning and professional growth.

With regard to **educational and training policies**, beyond the emergency measures adopted so far to support distance learning and e-learning, the health emergency has highlighted the need to sustain the traditional teaching system with new medium-long term solutions.

It is necessary to experiment and then implement innovative methods of delivery and use of distance learning (virtual classrooms, use of open platforms with freely accessible content, use of virtual reality, etc.) and of students' learning assessment. This requires new teaching and learning tools and a reorganization of the learning spaces within an inclusion approach (making public spaces available for distance learning for students with access difficulties), as well as a revision of the accreditation system, currently still based on the criteria of face-to-face training.

Particular attention must be paid to avoiding the negative consequences of the crisis on the Lombardy dual model which has proved effective, ensuring the continuity of the links built over time between the training institutions and the business system.

It is also necessary to invest in strengthening the IFTS and ITS paths and to steer students, and especially girls, towards STEM education and training fields, as well as in the digital upskilling of senior workers, who represent a growing share of the workforce. In the STEM field, in addition to supporting the investment in education and training of young people, orienting their choices for example in the acquisition of the skills necessary to adapt to technological changes, measures are needed to promote a technical-scientific culture through awareness-raising measures, the implementation of new curricula focused on science, the improvement of teaching methods and teachers' training, especially in primary and secondary schools.

The employment effects of the ongoing digitization and innovation processes must be taken into account, as they are reinforcing the trend already underway towards the polarization of employment, with the penalization of professions that require little or medium routine skills more easily replaceable by machines, and the growth of highly specialized and non-routine professions that require high soft

and problem solving skills. Some workers are in fact more exposed than others to the employment risks associated with new technologies, due to their lower technical skills or difficulties in acquiring new skills. It is therefore important to support the upskilling and reskilling of low-skilled workers in declining companies / sectors, through life-long learning measures, active labour policies to support (re) placement, and access to social protection for all workers (both self-employed and employees) involved in technological change or displaced by innovation.

It is also necessary to strengthen measures to contrast early school leaving, improving the attractiveness of education and training, and to support the integration between the education system and the business system with measures targeted to different groups of population. Cooperation between universities, research centers and businesses needs also to be strengthened, as well as that among European universities supporting joint study programs within the European Union.

The representatives of the social partners interviewed underline in this regard the importance of the Monitoring Committee activated by the Lombardy Region to monitor the learning and organizational solutions adopted for the activities to be carried out in the 2020/2021 training year and to develop operational proposals for new ways of providing training.

Finally, it is necessary to strengthen the **monitoring and evaluation** of regional policies and broaden the areas of attention, for example with respect to:

- employment and training outcomes (also with regard to the return to education-training);
- the outcomes of the emergency measures activated during the Covid crisis;
- the measures adopted to involve the most disadvantaged groups in regional policies;
- the outcomes of network actions for employment to understand which experiences have worked the most and why;
- the outcomes of active policies in the medium to long term;
- the interoperability between:
 - the different regional information systems (in the transition phases from one system to another or in updating the same system), to ensure continuity in the collection of data, completeness of information on regional education, training and employment policies, comparability over time and across the recipients of these policies;
 - the regional and national information systems on education, training and employment policies in order to trace the employment situation and access of Lombard citizens to active and passive policy measures on both the national and regional territory and avoid the overlapping of measures on the same target groups or the exclusion from support measures of other target groups;
- the reconstruction of the education and training pathways and of the employment and professional career of each Lombard citizen, including access to active and passive labour policies, in order to support individual transitions between labour market and employment statuses.