



RESEARCH REPORT ON EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING WP3 Deliverable n. 3.1

Chapter 1 - HOW IS EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING DEFINED AND MEASURED

1.1. Definition of ESL

As known, the Lisbon targets have introduced, in terms of early school leaving, a goal the same for all European countries: 10% reduction in the rate of non-completion of secondary school. The failure to achieve the goals identified for 2010, has prompted the European Commission to review the objectives of the **Lisbon Strategy in 2020**, which have been translated into national targets, so as to allow each Member State to tailor interventions compared with their specificities and to enable those countries far from what is indicated by the EU, it was decided to program intermediate goals. In the case of Italy, the fourth overall objective (The school dropout rate is to be reduced to below 10% and the percentage of the 30 to 34 year olds who have completed a tertiary education is to be increased to at least 40%) is 15-16%, which should correspond to a rate equal to 26-27% of graduates.

The phenomenon of early school leaving, however, it appears difficult to define as “extremely complex and multifaceted”¹.

In Italy², both the ESL both the dropout are frequently designated by the term “school dropout” (or “early exit”), not making it easier a precise definition of the phenomenon. A recent survey carried out in our Country³ shows how is very critical situation about definition and consequently the measurement of the phenomenon of early school leaving. The different definitions lead to the adoption of different methodologies in detecting and measuring the consistency of this phenomenon (vd. par 1.2).

Since 2000, the Ministry of Education defines the (school) dispersion as “a set of phenomena that involve a slowdown in the formal course of study; failures of compulsory education; exits in progress or end of the year in the different degrees of compulsory education or post-compulsory, before reaching the qualification”⁴. The National Statistical System (SISTAN) has articulated this definition in five kind of measures:

1. pupils repeaters;
2. pupils lag behind their age;
3. dropouts, that breaks frequency;

¹ The actions of the PON "SKILLS DEVELOPMENT" to contrast early school leaving - Survey evaluation

² Lost – EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING: the cost to the community and the role of schools and Third sector, Edited by Daniele Checchi (Università degli Studi di Milano), With the collaboration of: Gianfranco De Simone, Katia Scannavini, Stefano Piziali, Anna Teselli, Giuliano Ferrucci, Alessandro Volpi, Created by WeWorldOnlus, via Serio 6 – 20139 Milano Italia; Associazione Bruno Trentin, via Santa Teresa 23 - 00193 Roma; Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, via Nizza 250 – 10126 Torino with the collaboration of CSVnet, Ottobre 2014

³ Survey XVII LEGISLATURA — VII COMMISSIONE — SEDUTA DEL 21 OTTOBRE 2014

⁴ MPI, The Early School Leaving. A lens on the school, Rome, 2000. The Ministry of Education has made national surveys on school drop since 2000 (the last survey in 2012), using the same indicators: number of pupils repeating and pupils not promoted; number of promoted with debt; children with delays in the various years of the course; steps to another address; interruptions/dropouts.

4. irregular frequencies, ie pupils not evaluated at the end of the year for excessive number of absences;
5. pupils promoted with formative debt (only for pupils of secondary school degree)⁵.

For this reason, periodic publications of the Ministry of Education about *early school living* highlight this phenomenon as the number of drop-outs recorded during a school year. This data is supplemented with additional indicators of possible causation of the phenomenon, such as:

- Number of repeaters;
- Promoted with debt;
- Delays in the various years of the course;
- Transfer to another school.

This is a definition of the concept of early school leaving including therefore also the phenomena of irregularities and school failure: the indicators that outline the area of exposure to the phenomenon are the repetition rate and the rate of delay, the rates of non-admission and admission with a formative debt.

In June 2013⁶, however, the Ministry of Education focuses exclusively on the detection of the phenomenon of “dropout”, which is understood and measured as “the difference between the initial data of pupils and that relating to pupils who are counted at the end of each school year”. This interpretation is due to the setting of the Registry National Student (ANS) of the Ministry of Education that aims, basically, to contrast early leaving, and renames the concept of dispersion in a “preventive” logic.

In fact, each school updates and changes at any time the status of the student, accessing the information system of the Ministry of Education (SIDI). The school shows the motivation (transfer abroad, transfer to another school, transition to vocational education and training, parental education) with reference to the notice of the interruption frequency. The system shows what is called “risk of dropping out”, when the interruption is not covered by a formal communication by the pupil or the family.

This is therefore a phenomenon that records only partially the concept of ESL, as defined at EU level, because it focuses on a different target (students enrolled in school) that, at some point in their school career, interrupt studies but do not give formal communication. This definition, at the moment, in the absence of integration with regional registers students’ excludes the possibility of mapping if the guy is completely out of the system of education and training, or whether out of the first, but is still included in regional vocational training.

This method of detection, which formalizes a definition of early school leaving which coincides with the phenomenon of school drop-out, leads to statistical results strongly different from those arising from the adoption of the international definition of ESL and strongly lower from those resulting from the adoption of EU definition.

⁵ The actions of the PON, *ibidem*

⁶ Focus “The Early School Leaving”, Ministry of Education - Office of Statistics, June 2013

1.2 Data collection systems on ESL

As shown, the difficulties of statistical measurement about school dropouts “are connected with its being at the intersection of different training worlds: that of school, that of vocational training and that of workplace”⁷.

The phenomenon of *school drop-out*, in contemplating a plurality of categories required for the completeness of the survey, therefore presents “a significant number of variables that make rather complex reading the data, from the inhomogeneity of contexts and of school realities”⁸.

The development of an information framework about early school leaving goes necessarily through an integration of various administrative sources and their systematic and integrated use that, at present, is still not fully implemented.

Recalling the definitions already seen in the previous section, it can be said that there are two dimensions of analysis of *early school leaving* phenomenon: one that made to coincide the phenomenon of *early school leaving* with the concept of “dropout” and which is detected periodically by MIUR; the second one instead, is anchored to the European definition ESL and is “measured” by ISTAT (National Statistics Institute) using the “Labour Force Survey”.

If we look exclusively to the school, for years, this measurement was made by subtracting the total population aged 14 to 17 years, enrolled in school, the assumptions in apprenticeship, the enrolled in the Vocational Education and Training (IeFP); what remained from this subtraction was probably attributable to the amount of the “school drop-out”.

More recently, it has been developed a further indicator given by the difference between the number of enrolled in the first year of secondary school degree and graduates from the fifth year.

Following the agreement in Lisbon in 2000, Italy adopted a series of legislative measures to respond to the dictates of Europe. In particular, the law of delegation n. 53/2003, which intended to create a system that can address the problem of school dropouts by monitoring the frequency of pupils, both nationally and regionally. Next, the legislative decree n. 76 of 2005, in accordance with the mentioned delegating law, has regulated the right and duty to education and training, and established the National System of Registries of Students. This decree has initiated a phase of systematization of the various statistics existing at different levels.

At present, after a period of stagnation, there are two different detection systems:

- A national system established by the Ministry of Education with the processing of data on school careers, training and apprenticeship of individual students, from the first year of primary school
- The regional registry systems that will accompany the students along their path, both at school and training.

Finally, the law n. 221/2012 (“Urgent measures for the growth of the Country”) has imposed an acceleration in the process of integration of the registers, opening the

⁷ Ministry of Education, Directorate General Studies and Planning, Office of Statistics, the Early School Leaving, Basic indicators for the analysis of the phenomenon, School Year 2004/05, December 2006

⁸ Consorzio Scholè, Fondazione Alma Mater – IRRE Lombardia, EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING IN UNITED KINGDOM. ANALYSIS AND EXTENT OF THE PHENOMENON, edited by Pierangelo Barone

National Register of Students (at the Ministry of Education) to access by Regions and Local Authorities. However, it is not yet complete integration of Ministry of Education Registry with municipal and regional registers, that contain the paths of education and vocational training and apprenticeship.

First of Law no. 221, the recognition of the consistency of the phenomenon of ESL took place with the help of “Integrative Surveys on Schools”, ie statistical focused in particular on the final results at school. Subsequently, from school year 2011/2012, this “synthetic” survey has been replaced by the data on the “risk of dropping” surveyed by the ANS, which has highlighted an underestimation of the value obtained from “Integrative Surveys”.

At the time, the National Register of Students is the only national system of registry existent, usable by the various subjects described in the decree n. 76/2005 (the municipality where young people, subject to compulsory education, are resident, managers of the school or the head of the educational institution at which students - obliged to fulfill the right/duty to education - are registered or have applied for enrollment; Province, through the Employment Services) but not yet integrated with the regional registers. At the moment, for example, those who take the apprenticeship contract are not yet included in this Survey. In summary, this detection system is not fully reliable because the lack of integration with the regional systems does not allow, for example, to detect the results of the training.

The measurement of the phenomenon of the dispersion takes place at the national level, even using the Labour Force Survey (ISTAT). This Survey plays an important role in the estimation of the main aggregates of the labor supply. In addition to information on the aspects related to the labor market, the survey also allows to describe the socio-cultural characteristics of the population and is the most complete source for the development of educational indicators that produces official estimates reported to Eurostat to monitor the status of each country in achieving the objectives related to education. In line with the new provisions of Eurostat, the Survey was innovated in 2004, when the Quarterly Labour Force survey (RTFL) has been replaced by the new Labour Force survey (RCFL), called “Continues” because the information is collected in all the weeks of the year and no longer in a single week for a quarter (as happened with the Quarterly Labour Force survey).

In the European comparison, the indicator calculated by ISTAT identifies the share of population aged 18-24 who left school without having obtained a title above the level 3C short of the International Classification on education levels (Isced97). In the Italian education system, this indicator represents the percentage of the population aged 18-24 that has no educational qualifications at higher than lower secondary education, is not in possession of professional qualifications obtained in courses lasting at least two years and do not attend either school courses or training activities. In 2011, the historical series has been revised to take account of the change that Eurostat has recently made to the calculation method in the treatment of non-response. In some cases, the data may therefore differ slightly from those published years prior to that date⁹.

Besides the two major dimensions based on the achievement or not of a certain degree, there is one further which is detected through the investigation OECD-Pisa.

⁹ <http://noi-italia.istat.it/>

This is focused on the assessment of the skills acquired through vocational education. It is implemented at the international level since 2000 and involved 65 countries in the last survey in 2012, including Italy. It is the only international survey which measures the knowledge and skills of young people aged 15 years, an age that, in many countries, matches or is close to that of end of compulsory education¹⁰. The survey focuses on the understanding of Reading, in Mathematics and Science.

1.3. The national data on ESL

The different systems and methods of detection of the phenomenon have consequently a different quantification of the phenomenon itself. Below we present the quantitative representations emerging using different detection methods seen in the previous paragraph.

According to the latest figures of the Ministry of Education¹¹, in school year 2011/2012, the number of students “at risk of drop-out” is equal to 3.409 units for the Lower Secondary School (0,2% of pupils in September) and 31.397 units for the Upper Secondary School (1,2% of pupils). In the Lower Secondary School, pupils’ at “risk of drop-out” are primarily enrolled in the second and third years; the phenomenon is more evident in the Upper Secondary School, where the drop-out affects mainly the third and fourth year.

Pupils at “risk of dropping out” for type of school and year of study (% of students) – Academic Year 2011/2012

	Alunni a rischio di abbandono		Iscritti a settembre
	v.a.	per 100 iscritti	
Sec. I grado	3.409	0,2	1.716.549
I anno	747	0,1	570.837
II anno	1.116	0,2	577.010
III anno	1.546	0,3	568.702
Sec. II grado	31.397	1,2	2.523.719
I anno	6.732	1,2	578.804
II anno	4.635	0,9	510.373
III anno	7.050	1,4	508.433
IV anno	8.246	1,8	466.752
V anno	4.734	1,0	459.357
di cui serali	4.520	7,5	60.583
I anno	523	9,0	5.800
II anno	309	7,1	4.347
III anno	1.543	8,8	17.441
IV anno	1.151	8,1	14.274
V anno	994	5,3	18.721

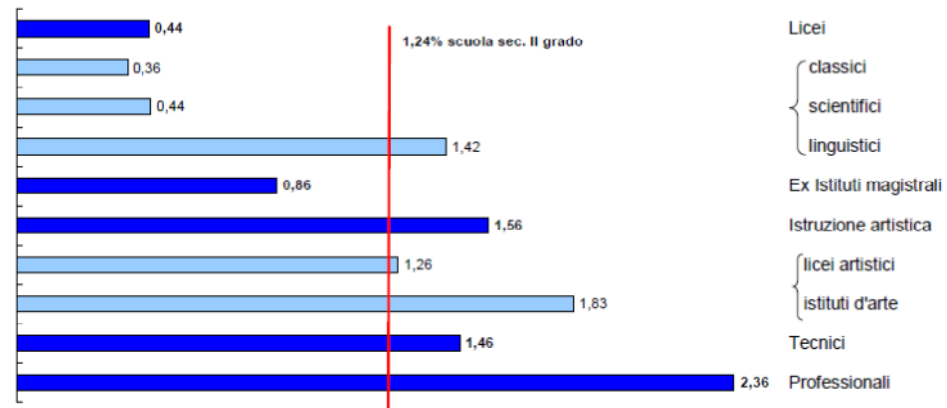
Fonte: MIUR - D.G. per gli Studi, la Statistica e i Sistemi Informativi - Servizio Statistico

¹⁰ <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/pisafaq.htm>

¹¹ Focus “The Early School Leaving”, Ministry of Education - Office of Statistics, June 2013

The highest concentration of drop-out in upper secondary school is recorded in Professional, in Technical and in Artistic Institutes¹².

Pupils at “risk of dropping out” (% of students) for type of upper secondary school – Academic Year 2011/2012



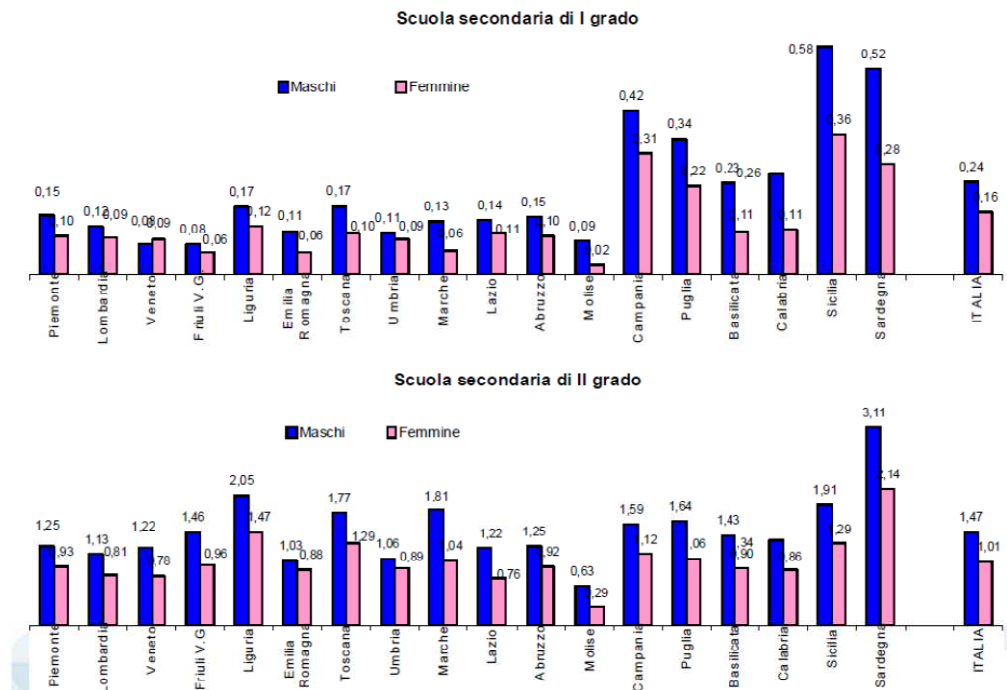
Fonte: MIUR - D.G. per gli Studi, la Statistica e i Sistemi Informativi - Servizio Statistico

From the geographical point of view, the “risk of dropping out” is localized mainly in Southern Italy. For the lower secondary school, the highest concentrations of dropping out are recorded in Sicily (with 0,47% of those enrolled), Sardinia (with 0,41%) and Campania (with 0,36%), followed by Puglia (0,29%) and Calabria (0,19%). Even in upper secondary school, high percentages of students “at risk of dropping out” are present in the southern regions, first of all Sardinia (2,64% of those enrolled), followed by Sicily (1,6%) and Campania (1,36%).

Also in the South, there is a greater tendency to early school leaving by pupils male.

Pupils at “risk of dropping out” (% of students) by region and gender – Academic Year 2011/2012

¹² The Ministry of Education notes that, for the risk abandonment registered in vocational schools, the lack of integration of the detection system with a national regional ones, can lead to an overestimation of the phenomenon: some of the escapees could be in fact passed into the regional system of vocational education and training without have been communicated to the school.



Regards the risk of dropping out by age, for the lower secondary school, 17,6% of pupils at risk of dropping out is below the age of 14 years, 43,7% are aged between 14 and 16 years old, 34,3% are between 16 and 18 years and 4,4% is above 18 years. As for the upper secondary school level, the percentage composition by age shows that only 0,1% of the students “at risk dropping out” has less than 14 years, 6,1% are aged between 14 and 16, 28,8% are between 16 and 18 years and as much as 65% has come legal age.

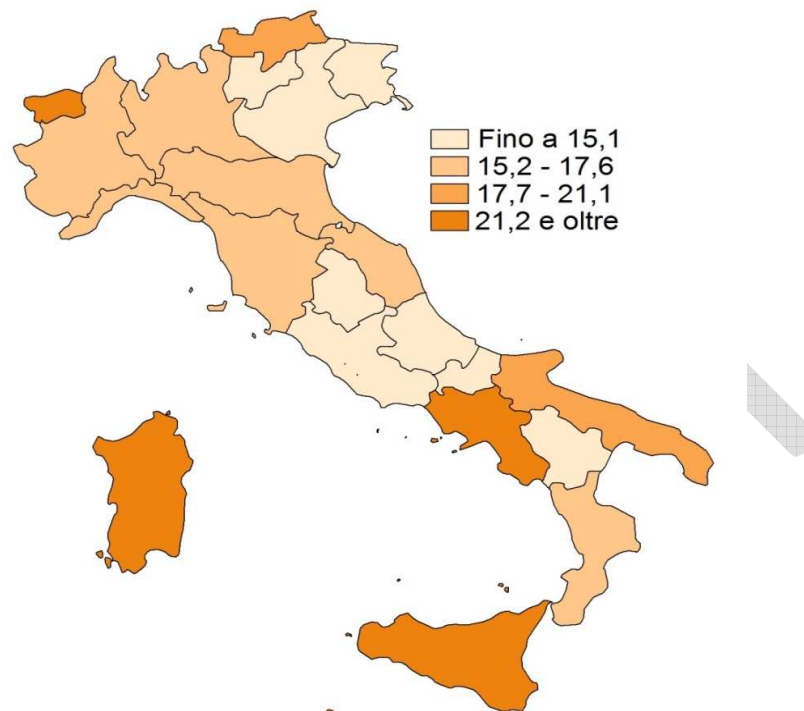
Finally, we look to the students without Italian citizenship which are currently 9,5% at lower secondary level and 6,6% in upper secondary school. The phenomenon of school drop affects more foreigners than Italians but particularly affects foreigners born abroad than foreigners from the second generation, i.e. those born in Italy.

The measurement system developed by ISTAT, shows how in Italy, although the phenomenon is gradually decreasing, it is still far from the European objectives. In 2012, the share of young people who stopped prematurely school is 17,6%, 20,5% among men and 14,5% among women. The Italian average value is therefore higher than the average of the EU-27, which stands at 12,8%. In the ranking of EU countries, Italy ranks in the fourth worst position, immediately after Portugal (20,8%). The gap of Italy compared to the European average is more pronounced for the male component (20,5% versus 14,5%), compared to that of women (14,5% and 11,0%, respectively).

In 2012, at the regional level, the phenomenon of early school leavers still involves 21,1% of young southern and 15,1% of young people in the Centre-North. Sardinia and Sicily are the regions where the phenomenon is more present, as about one in four young people do not complete an educational path/training after lower secondary school. Very high values are also observed in Campania (21,8%), and Puglia (19,7%) while in the North the highest shares of dropouts occur in Valle d'Aosta and

the Autonomous Province of Bolzano. However in the South, in the period 2004-2012, there was a decline of the phenomenon quite sustained (young people who leave school early decreased by 6,5 points), compared to a decrease in central and northern lower (4,1 points). Most progress in terms of reduction of early school leavers were those of the autonomous province of Bolzano and Puglia.

Young people who drop out of school by Region - Year 2012 (percentages)



Source: Istat, Labour Force Survey

(a) The upper bounds of the first three classes are given respectively by the average values of the center-north, Italy and South.

Young people who drop out of school by sex and Region - Years 2004 to 2012.

REGIONS/ GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		
									Total	Men	Women
Piemonte	22,2	20,6	20,0	17,3	18,4	19,8	17,6	16,0	16,3	19,3	13,0
Valle d'Aosta	22,3	22,1	21,9	24,2	25,9	21,4	21,2	22,4	21,5	25,9	17,1
Liguria	16,3	17,0	16,1	16,5	12,6	12,4	16,2	15,0	17,2	19,1	15,2
Lombardia	21,7	21,5	18,5	18,3	19,8	19,9	18,4	17,3	15,3	19,0	11,5
Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol	21,6	19,5	17,3	17,2	17,0	16,7	17,3	14,0	15,9	20,5	11,2
<i>Bolzano/Bozen</i>	30,6	26,4	23,5	23,3	21,5	21,0	22,5	18,2	19,5	23,8	15,4
<i>Trento</i>	11,9	12,2	10,5	10,6	12,3	12,2	11,8	9,6	12,0	17,1	6,3
Veneto	18,1	18,4	15,0	13,1	15,6	16,9	16,0	16,8	14,2	15,8	12,5
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	13,6	15,8	19,7	12,6	15,2	14,5	12,1	13,9	13,3	13,8	12,7
Emilia-Romagna	20,0	19,3	17,7	17,4	16,6	15,0	15,0	13,9	15,4	15,9	14,8
Toscana	20,9	17,2	16,3	17,9	16,5	16,9	17,6	18,6	17,6	20,1	14,8
Umbria	13,2	15,4	14,8	12,7	14,8	12,3	13,4	11,6	13,7	13,4	14,0
Marche	16,7	19,1	18,0	16,3	14,7	15,6	14,8	12,8	15,7	19,1	12,3
Lazio	15,6	14,8	12,3	10,9	13,2	11,2	13,4	15,7	13,0	15,7	10,1

REGIONS/ GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		
									Total	Men	Women
Abruzzo	16,6	16,1	14,7	15,0	15,6	14,8	13,5	12,8	12,4	15,1	9,6
Molise	15,2	15,5	16,2	16,4	16,5	16,6	13,5	13,1	10,0	10,7	9,3
Campania	28,6	27,8	27,1	29,0	26,3	23,5	23,0	22,0	21,8	25,2	18,4
Puglia	30,2	29,2	27,0	25,1	24,3	24,7	23,5	19,4	19,7	23,3	16,1
Basilicata	16,8	18,1	15,2	14,1	13,9	12,0	15,1	14,5	13,8	18,3	8,8
Calabria	21,8	18,2	19,6	21,2	18,7	17,4	16,1	18,2	17,3	19,5	15,0
Sicilia	30,6	30,0	28,1	26,1	26,2	26,5	26,0	25,0	24,8	29,1	20,4
Sardegna	30,1	33,1	28,3	21,8	22,9	22,9	23,9	25,1	25,5	30,7	20,3
Northwest	21,4	20,9	18,7	17,9	18,8	19,3	18,0	16,8	15,8	19,1	12,3
Northeast	18,7	18,5	16,6	15,0	16,1	16,0	15,4	15,2	14,7	16,1	13,2
Center	17,1	16,1	14,4	13,8	14,5	13,5	14,8	15,8	14,7	17,3	12,1
Centre-North	19,3	18,7	16,8	15,7	16,7	16,5	16,2	16,0	15,1	17,7	12,5
Southern Italy	27,6	26,9	25,5	24,9	23,8	22,9	22,3	21,2	21,1	24,7	17,4
Italy	22,9	22,3	20,6	19,7	19,7	19,2	18,8	18,2	17,6	20,5	14,5

Source: Istat, Labour Force Survey

Quantification official provided by Eurostat, based on data drawn from the European Labour Force Survey, shows a drop-out rate in Italy stands at 17% (2013), with a decidedly positive trend of improvement (6 percentage points reduction in 10 years, which would leave presage the achievement of goal self-assigned 15-16%). The breakdown of the data by genre would signal that the problem only concerns the male component of the population, the female having achieved the goal five years already.

GEO/TIME	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
European Union (28 countries)	16,0	15,7	15,3	14,9	14,7	14,2	13,9	13,4	12,7	12,0
European Union (27 countries)	16,1	15,8	15,4	15,0	14,8	14,3	14,0	13,5	12,8	12,0
European Union (15 countries)	17,7	17,5	17,2	16,8	16,5	15,8	15,3	14,7	13,7	12,8
Euro area (18 countries)	17,9	17,6	17,3	16,8	16,4	15,8	15,4	14,7	13,8	12,9
Euro area (17 countries)	17,9	17,7	17,3	16,8	16,4	15,8	15,5	14,7	13,8	12,9
Euro area (13 countries)	18,2	17,9	17,6	17,0	16,6	16,1	15,7	14,9	14,0	13,1
Belgium	13,1	12,9	12,6	12,1	12,0	11,1	11,9	12,3	12,0	11,0
Bulgaria	21,4	20,4	17,3	14,9	14,8	14,7	13,9	11,8	12,5	12,5
Czech Republic	6,3	6,2	5,1	5,2	5,6	5,4	4,9	4,9	5,5	5,4
Denmark	8,8	8,7	9,1	12,9	12,5	11,3	11,0	9,6	9,1	8,0
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	12,1	13,5	13,7	12,5	11,8	11,1	11,9	11,7	10,6	9,9
Estonia	13,9	14,0	13,4	14,4	14,0	13,5	11,0	10,6	10,3	9,7
Ireland	13,1	12,5	12,1	11,6	11,3	11,7	11,5	10,8	9,7	8,4
Greece	14,7	13,6	15,1	14,3	14,4	14,2	13,5	12,9	11,3	10,1
Spain	32,2	31,0	30,3	30,8	31,7	30,9	28,2	26,3	24,7	23,6
France	12,1	12,2	12,4	12,6	11,5	12,2	12,5	11,9	11,5	9,7
Croatia	5,4	5,1	4,7	3,9	3,7	3,9	3,7	4,1	4,2	4,5
Italy	22,9	22,3	20,6	19,7	19,7	19,2	18,8	18,2	17,6	17,0
Cyprus	20,6	18,2	14,9	12,5	13,7	11,7	12,7	11,3	11,4	9,1
Latvia	14,7	14,4	14,8	15,6	15,5	14,3	12,9	11,6	10,6	9,8

GEO/TIME	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Lithuania	10,3	8,4	8,8	7,8	7,5	8,7	7,9	7,4	6,5	6,3
Luxembourg	12,7	13,3	14,0	12,5	13,4	7,7	7,1	6,2	8,1	6,1
Hungary	12,6	12,5	12,6	11,4	11,7	11,2	10,5	11,2	11,5	11,8
Malta	42,1	33,0	32,2	30,2	27,2	27,1	23,8	22,7	21,1	20,8
Netherlands	14,1	13,5	12,6	11,7	11,4	10,9	10,0	9,1	8,8	9,2
Austria	9,5	9,1	9,8	10,7	10,1	8,7	8,3	8,3	7,6	7,3
Poland	5,6	5,3	5,4	5,0	5,0	5,3	5,4	5,6	5,7	5,6
Portugal	39,3	38,3	38,5	36,5	34,9	30,9	28,3	23,0	20,5	18,9
Romania	22,4	19,6	17,9	17,3	15,9	16,6	18,4	17,5	17,4	17,3
Slovenia	4,3	4,9	5,6	4,1	5,1	5,3	5,0	4,2	4,4	3,9
Slovakia	6,8	6,3	6,6	6,5	6,0	4,9	4,7	5,1	5,3	6,4
Finland	10,0	10,3	9,7	9,1	9,8	9,9	10,3	9,8	8,9	9,3
Sweden	9,2	10,8	8,6	8,0	7,9	7,0	6,5	6,6	7,5	7,1
United Kingdom	12,1	11,6	11,3	16,6	17,0	15,7	14,9	15,0	13,6	12,4
Iceland	24,9	24,9	25,6	23,2	24,4	21,3	22,6	19,7	20,1	20,5
Norway	4,7	4,6	17,8	18,4	17,0	17,6	17,4	16,6	14,8	13,7
Switzerland	9,5	9,7	9,6	7,6	7,7	9,1	6,6	6,3	5,5	5,4
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the	:	:	22,8	19,9	19,6	16,2	15,5	13,5	11,7	11,4
Turkey	:	:	48,8	46,9	45,5	44,3	43,1	41,9	39,6	37,5

Source: Eurostat – Labour Force surveys -

http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=edat_lfse_14&lang=en

As noted in the previous paragraph, is internationally active investigation OECD-PISA. According to this survey¹³, Italy follows a performance worse than the OECD average. Nevertheless there are signs of improvement: between 2006 and 2009, the results improve and 2012 confirms this trend reversal. There are wide regional disparities, with the regions of the North ahead, while the South, despite signs of improvement from 2006 and beyond, especially in certain regions, is below the national average. The Center of Italy has the values corresponding to the national average.

The skills of 15-year olds Italians, Mathematics, are slightly below the OECD average (about 2%, 485 points compared to 494 the OECD average). Slightly better the results in Reading and Science, with values of Italy respectively 490 and 494 (compared to the OECD average values of 496 and 499 respectively). The students' poor knowledge", that is, those who do not pass the first level of skills (on a scale to 6 levels) are concentrated in the South. The differences in skills highlighted according to learning tests lead to the consideration that "we should aim at a definition based not so much on the achievement, or less, of the qualification or diploma, but the degree of competence achieved at a certain age"¹⁴.

¹³ OECD PISA 2012 SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR ITALY, Edited by INVALSI. Please remember that this detection heads student skills 15-year olds in the understanding of Reading, in Mathematics and Science

¹⁴ Doc. XVII, n.6, DOCUMENT APPROVED BY VII STANDING COMMITTEE (CULTURE, SCIENCE AND EDUCATION), in its meeting of October 21, 2014, AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SURVEY ON STRATEGIES TO CONTRAST THE EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING, deliberate in its meeting of April 16, 2014.

Finally, a recently published study¹⁵ sought to quantify precisely the phenomenon of early school leavers from school in Italy in order to estimate the loss of earnings attributable to early school leaving.

Quantification was performed by comparing data of different types and sources:

- From Istat, crossing data (residents) and administrative data from schools (members and graduates)
- Data from Ministry of Education, for two school years (2010-11 and 2011-12) for lower and secondary school
- “Labour Force Survey”, conducted quarterly by Istat
- Survey on “Financial Statements of Italian Families”, conducted by the Bank of Italy
- Istat Population Census.

The estimate of the ESL so calculated would lead to a rate of at least 10 percentage points higher than that measured by Eurostat.

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¹⁵ Lost - EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING: the cost to the community and the role of schools and Third sector, *ibidem*

1.4 Main factors contributing to Early School Leaving

In 1990, the CENSIS¹⁶ public a Research which relates the dispersion with:

- The socio-cultural family
- The activities of teaching and school facilities
- The psychological dynamics of the students
- The strangeness of schools respect to the reality outside school.

Nel 1998, la VII Commissione della Camera dei Deputati costituisce un comitato d'indagine e approva il documento Indagine conoscitiva sul problema della dispersione scolastica (2000) che presenta alcune cause alla base di tale fenomeno, distinguendole in esogene ed endogene:

In 1998, the Commission VII of the Italian Chamber of Deputies constitute a "Committee survey" and approves the document "Consultation on the problem of school dropouts (2000)", some causes behind of this phenomenon and distinguish them in exogenous and endogenous:

- The combination underdevelopment (poverty) and environmental urban (metropolitan) degradation, which produces greater push out of the education system. The Southern Italy is, with its slums of its cities, the weakest area of the Country;
- The degree of socio-economic development of the involved areas (the possibility of income, availability of infrastructure, the absence of urgencies or economic needs);
- Family culture, in particular, for the purpose of dispersion, is emphasized the "importance of the qualification of the parents more of household income";
- Dominant cultural orientations, which attribute value to the money rather than education ("intellectual poverty");
- The relationship between school and home, more and more distant and alien;
- Educational courses too rigid compared to the pupils interests and incentives;
- Discontinuity between primary and secondary school, instability of teachers;
- Increased weakness in pupils compared to group, inside and outside the school, which inculcate "gang values" unrelated to school reasons.

Over the years, it also appears that have arisen "qualitatively new forms of drop out, such as those experienced in some of the richest areas of the Country (especially the North-East)"¹⁷, which has apparently disproved the theory that the dispersion was directly dependent on poverty and under-development. This phenomenon, however, has not been characterized as an escape from compulsory education, almost non-existent, but was the result of a "work culture that often rejects the idea of the usefulness of academic qualifications to succeed in working life"¹⁸.

¹⁶ Analysis of early school leaving in Italy in the areas of risk and educational discomfort, CENSIS, 1990

¹⁷ VII STANDING COMMITTEE CULTURE, SCIENCE AND EDUCATION (Session of Wednesday, January 19, 2000), LAERNING SURVEY on the problem of early school leaving, 2000

¹⁸ VII STANDING COMMITTEE CULTURE, SCIENCE AND EDUCATION (Session of Wednesday, January 19, 2000), *ibidem*

Other studies and researches conducted in Italy¹⁹, classify the underlying causes of the dispersion in three categories:

- **Exogenous:** these are (as already seen) the different level of economic development, where the low standard of living usually is accompanied (especially in the South and Islands) to higher dropout rates; the family environment, especially poor families, where the value of training is heavily underestimated; the perception of the crisis of the school system, amplified by the media and by the behavior of politicians who have represented as a service run-down
- **Endogenous:** malfunctions operating within the school system. The structural shortage, the organizational and financial problems, school curricula “inflexible”. But there are also the teaching approaches of the teaching staff, adopting methodologies homogeneous regardless of the specific needs of students, traditional teaching methods, academic, too focused on the human sciences at the expense of science and technology, of knowledge that ignores the “problem solving”, etc.
- **Personal:** a student at risk dropping out of school comes, in all probability, from cultural and/or social groups. This aspect is combined with other aspects of character type, such as lack of motivation, low self confidence, relationship difficulties, etc. A school system like the Italian one that selects teachers based on their technical and professional knowledge is inadequate to deal with these situations.

The recent “Survey on strategies to contrast early school leaving”²⁰ confirms what resulting from the different surveys conducted over the past 15 years.

Here are some easily identifiable cluster of causes:

1. The hard core of the dispersion, that due to dropouts and evasions, is **socio-economic**, but the Eurostat or Istat values, it turns out “that between dispersion and degree of poverty there is a moderate correlation: poverty affects early school leaving, but it is not the decisive factor”. Another key issue is the students not **Italian citizens**²¹, “a theme that works as a litmus test for all situations of social disadvantage”. In fact, those “most at risk of dropping out are typically males, often of foreign origin, with a family background fragile and, above all, with a history and an educational very irregular, which starts from the middle school”.
2. In addition to socio-economic factors facilitating the dispersion, there are those produced by the **education system** itself. An important risk factor is the **type of school**. “The dispersion is greater in technical and in vocational schools”. The development of the system of education and training is strongly intertwined with the issue of the dispersion. “When the educational offer does not meet the needs of training or diverges with respect to them, it creates this phenomenon (...). In the Italian context, especially in the field of technical and professional training, there is a structuring of the training offer that still does not meet the needs and, on the contrary, the divergence increases”. Furthermore, the school

¹⁹ Prevention of Early School Leaving, Italian Report, Cipat, Firenze

²⁰ AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SURVEY ON STRATEGIES TO CONTRAST THE EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING, XVII LEGISLATURE - VII COMMISSION - October 21, 2014 SESSION

²¹ In upper secondary school are about 7%, or about 175,000 students.

dropouts occur mainly in the first two years of upper secondary school, following a rejection. This data is uniform throughout the Country; this leads to the need to focus attention **on students' orientation** that, if poorly managed, leading to choices sometimes irreversible. Equally important is the phenomenon of occasional absences frequent predictor of failure following, especially in areas at high risk of social exclusion. "Failure to improving measures **on the right to education** has a direct and indirect effect on ESL, especially in the most deprived areas".

3. In addition to these general factors, there are also some concern that certain specific categories of children. This is particularly "pupils and students indicated in the third case of **special educational needs**, who do not have a certification of learning disorder or a disease, but present still learning or insertion difficulties".

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