

Policies and practices supporting Age Management in Italy

National outlook and areas of intervention

In Italy, as well as other Member States, security and employment policies of 70's and 80's have facilitated the decline of older workers participation at working processes, anticipating retirement of 5/10 years.

Such trend, aiming at supporting reorganisation processes and at allowing enterprises to introduce turn-over among young-older workers, thus reducing labour costs, has determined a specific culture of early retirement as well as a substantial decrease in activities of older workers. Moreover, there has been a loss in terms of skills and competencies within the professional system and an increasing trend in security costs, non compatible with the financial equilibrium of the system itself.

From the ISFOL *Plus* survey emerges that between 2001 and 2021 a decrease of population under 40 years of 26,7% and an increase of 17% of population 40/64 years and of 30% of aged over 65 is likely to occur.

The lengthening of life expectancy together with the decrease of birth rate determine an ageing process of the population coupled with the improvement of health conditions and income, with direct impact on individual expectations and needs.

Possible intervention to manage demographic change and make social system sustainable affect employment policies, organisation of labour as well as education, training and welfare policies and in particular options related to health, care, quality of life, social inclusion and active citizenship.

Concerning employment of older workers, since 1995 Italy shows an increase of 4%. In 2005 employment is 32,5% in southern Regions and 31,2% in central-northern Regions, far away from 13% of EU average and 17% from Lisbon target (50% of employed within 2010) with a deep gender gap. Figures are far from best development at European level (Finland, +19,5% Netherlands +17%, Ireland +12,8%).

Since 2003 in Italy have been developed policies devoted to increase employment among over 45 years old workers and different initiatives related to age management.

Among most effective actions we mention:

a) Intervention for employment and income support of over 50

- Including of over 50 among disadvantage workers category, benefiting of incentives at normative and economic level¹;
- Promotion of equality of treatment of people according to religion, handicap, sexual orientation and age²;
- Starting of a program for income support for workers of 50 years old at 31.12.2006³.

b) Intervention on security and retirement system

- Development of a solidarity agreement (rolling young-older) among generation, aiming at supporting the establishment of new jobs and at reducing exit from productive system of over 55 workers. Such measure allows the transformation of contracts of over 55 workers from full time to part-time and activates in the same moment part-time contracts for unemployed among 25 and 29 years old, with a educational degree⁴;
- Establishment of a new system for the raising of retirement age at 60 years old, that discourages early retirement, with specific disposition for those people working in hard jobs⁵.

1 Decreto Legislativo 276/03, in attuazione della legge 30/2003 – Reform in market of labour and employment

2 Decreto Legislativo 216 del 9 luglio 2003 referred at EU Directive europea n. 2000/78/Ce

3 L. 127 del 24 marzo 2006) «Urgent disposition for the reinsertion of over 50 workers, extension of solidarity contracts and financial disposition»

4 L. 296 del 27/12/2006 – (Legge finanziaria 2007)

5 L. 247/2007 implementing Welfare protocol on security, market of labour and competitiveness

c) Actions for adaptability of older workers' skills at low educational level to new needs of labour market

- ESF 2007-2013, through Operational Programmes, both national and regional, promotes life long learning actions to support employability and productiveness of older workers with low education, usually not involved in vocational training processes, by means of updating of professional and transversal knowledge. It enhances, moreover, flexicurity options to improve employability and working conditions;
- Over 45 workers represent a priority target of continuous training, being beneficiaries of training project proposals, both submitted by individuals as well as firms, funded also through training voucher⁶.

Local interventions supporting employability of over 45 workers and age management.

The most relevant experiences in support of employability have been developed in regional and local contexts and promoted mainly by the Employment Services, outplacement agencies, or funded by EC programmes. The best examples can be found in the initiatives started up by the employment centres of some provinces that promoted apprenticeship and training sessions hosted by public bodies or enterprises for a target of older workers with a low professional level; incentives have been disbursed to the enterprises employing workers over the age of 45 in a situation of job mobility and in addition, strategies to support self-entrepreneurship have been set up.

Within replacement initiatives in contexts where employment is undergoing a crisis, some Italian Regions and Provinces have successfully involved enterprises, social institutions and job centres in a plan of activities of guidance and training (Liguria, Veneto, Lombardia, Emilia Romagna, Marche, Autonomous Province of Trento).

Some provinces have planned their intervention in support of ageing workers introducing actions aimed at preventing situations of loss of employment. These interventions feature the activation of networks at a local level and the introduction of mutual commitment agreements between enterprises, social parties, and many local economical and institutional players, as shown by the experiences of the provinces of Catanzaro, Reggio Emilia, and the "Pari" programme by *Regione Lazio*.

With regard to interventions in support of active ageing policies, Confindustria Veneto with the project "SAM" "Senior Age Management in SMEs", Ifoa from Reggio Emilia with "Active ageing for competencies transfer and training" and the Finnish partnership Activ@Work have all reached remarkable results in supporting the enterprises in the task of introducing new and alternative patterns of management as a means to prevent early exit from the workforce by over 50s.

The project AWARE "Aging Workers Awareness to Recuperate Employability" by the Autonomous Province of Trento, funded by Art. 6 of ESF Regulation designed and experimented a new pattern for the identification and analysis of training needs of over 45 workers and has established guidelines for planning, evaluating and delivering training paths to over 45 workers.

Within the Equal experience the projects "Age Management" by Regione Veneto and "Investing in People" by the province of Macerata have both reached remarkably innovative results in supporting workers over 45 and in introducing active ageing policies.

The project "Age Management" experimented a new model of intervention designed to guide and facilitate mature workers between 45 and 65 years of age through their path for research, identification and consolidation of new employment opportunities.

⁶ L. 236/93 e Articolo 6 Legge 53/2000.

"Investing in People" experimented with different targets the "VPL" (Validation of Prior Learning) model of non formal and informal Learning validation which in the past has been successfully introduced in Nederland to enhance employment of over 45 workers.

Within the EC programme "Leonardo da Vinci 2000 2006" Industriali Veneto - SIAV has started the project "Valorizzazione e trasmissione degli apprendimenti non formali" which purpose is to build an European network aimed at implementing new methodologies designed for continuous training activities and refreshing working skills of SMEs' human resources.

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