**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE ISSUES EXAMINED**

**AT THE IX SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING**

**EDUCATION, TRAINING, LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

**National legal framework**

1. *In your country/region, how is the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age guaranteed in legal and policy frameworks?*

The Italian legal and political framework concerning education, training, life-long learning and capacity building – even for older people – has been developing together with the cultural maturation process which has also affected the European framework in the last few years. Even though the Member States are responsible for their own educational and training frameworks, the European Union (EU) plays a crucial role in supporting and integrating their efforts aimed at improving and modernizing the different frameworks.

In fact, all the Member States make use of trends and specific financing set and issued by the European institutions throughout the years. For what has been said, the Italian legal and political framework refers to the “Education and training 2020” (ET2020) programme approved by the European Council in May 2009. It represents a strategic framework for the European cooperation concerning the education and training sector, firstly started with the ET2010 programme. ET2020 sets out 4 strategic objectives, related also to the education of adults and older people. Moreover, it proposes the use of common working methods and to share experiences. The 4 common objectives, which are matched with a set of achievement indicators, are the following:

1. make lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
2. improve the quality and efficiency of education and training;
3. promote equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship;
4. enhance creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

The ET2020 also supports the achievement of the benchmarks at European level by 2020.

Afterwards, in 2002, the Council of the European Union adopted the Resolution on long-life learning (2002/C 163/01) referred to all the kinds of learning in the different moments of our lives: starting from early education, before going to school, until the starting period of retirement. It includes the entire spectrum for the recognition of learning activities (formal, not formal, as well as informal). Therefore, the long-life learning includes any activities with the specific objective of improving knowledge, capacity, and competences of the individual at a personal, civic, social, and/or employability level. This principle is coherent with the Chart of Fundamental Rights of the EU, Art. 14, which provides that any individual has the right to education and to access to life-long learning.

Lastly, in 2016, the Council of the EU approved a Recommendation on the key competences related to life-long learning processes. A set which was recently reconsidered and updated in 2018, and which is a benchmark for the designing of educational curricula for early and secondary education cycles in Italy. More specifically, the Italian Law 53/2003, Art. 2(1) places the promotion of a “life-long” learning at the first place within the principles and directive criteria in the current National Education and Training Framework (*Sistema nazionale di istruzione e formazione*).

**Availability, Accessibility and Adaptability***[[1]](#footnote-1)*

1. *What are the key issues and challenges faced by older persons in your country/region with regard to the enjoyment of all levels of quality education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services?*

It is necessary to analyse the education sector one by one, considering at first the primary and secondary education cycles, and secondly the university level and the education and training for older people.

1. Education until secondary school is the most complex to guarantee. It involves the recovery and consolidation of knowledges, skills, and competences, as well as the acquisition of diplomas related to the compulsory education studies and secondary school studies, strictly necessary in order to access to universities in Italy. It is particularly interesting the branch of education for prisoners, with a specific social recovery perspective, even for older people.
2. The second level of education, the one related to university studies, is not conditioned by the age of the enrolled students. In fact, it is rather conditioned by the student’s qualifications such as diplomas and/or university entrance tests. Moreover, universities propose specific programmes for older people, the so-called “University of the free age and/or the elderly”.
3. *What steps have been taken to ensure that education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services are available and accessible to all older persons, adapted to their needs, suited to their preferences and motivations, and of high quality?*
4. *In your country/region, are there studies and/or data available on the access of older persons to the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age?*

The first level of education (A) is certainly worthy of attention. The quite recent Presidential Decree no. 263/2012, enacted by the President of the Italian Republic, and the corresponding Guidelines (enacted in 2015) reformed the entire system of education for adults until secondary school. The above-mentioned legislation created, for instance, new Provincial Centres for Adults’ Education (*Centri provinciali per l’istruzione degli adulti - CPIA*) – on the experience of the previous Permanent Territorial Centres (*Centri territoriali permanenti)*.

The above-mentioned centres, “CPIA”, are functional and organisational structures which offer programmes as stardard public schools – entirely free and open to anyone. All the school directors in CPIAs are responsible for the unity of the organisation of their centre, normally one per Province.

The CPIA organizes degree courses for the fulfillment of compulsory schooling and for high school diploma in technical, professional and artistic fields, as well as Italian language courses for foreign students.

Very recently the “National Qualifications Framework” has been approved and it links the National Competences Certification System to the Europenan one EQF. Many important collaborations are promoted at local level so to guarantee the service quality. The same service is provided in prisons.

**Equality and non-discrimination**

1. *In your country, is age one of the prohibited grounds for discrimination in relation to education in older age?*

**Accountability**

1. *What mechanisms are necessary, or already in place, for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of their right to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building?*

1. Including for example: literacy and numeracy programmes; adult education; vocational and professional training; higher education; information and communication technologies (ICT); and informal, recreational and community-based programmes, including volunteering [↑](#footnote-ref-1)