

Napoli 16th October 2009

The discussions confirmed the good results achieved through the previous programme 2000-2006 and the good start of the new Programme for the Schools 2007-2013, both in terms of content of the activities supported and in terms of programme's management. The actual 2007-2013 programme is helping to develop important synergies on the territories under the Convergence Objective (Calabria, Campania, Sicilia and Puglia) and to redefine the role of the school as a central institution in the territory able to ensure social cohesion, to develop competences and to foster human development. It is also important to underline the wide and proactive participation to the programme by the different schools involved and the enthusiasm generated among all the beneficiaries.

The National programme "*Competenze per lo Sviluppo ESF*" started in 2007 as prosecution of the similar programmes on education and training funded during 1994-1999 and 2000-2006 (In the 2000-2006 programme Sardegna and Basilicata were also involved); and it has a total budget of around 1.500 Millions of Euros, half of which are ESF funds.

During the Conference the Commission has remarked:

1) The importance of a good information and diffusion of the measures and outputs of the ESF Programme, also through the mass media. This is especially relevant since the programme supports a fundamental field, the education of young people. From this point of view, the Commission underlined the importance of the letter sent on the 15th of April 2008 (D7395) to all the Managing Authorities and the Italian Ministries involved in the management of the Italian OPs inviting them to give on-line access to all the data, books and publications concerning the implementation of European economic, cultural and social policies, interested by the European Social Fund.

2) The importance of the follow up of the Lisbon's objectives on education and school.

In particular, good results can be remarked as regards:

a) Early school leavers of the population aged 18. In Italy from 1996 to 2007 the early school leavers data reduced from 31.7% to 19.3% (in 2007 women's rate was better around 15%);

b) Percentage of young people aged 20-24 years having attained at least upper secondary education attainment level. In Italy the rate has shown an interesting increase (76.5% in 2008 compared to 65.3% in 1998), against an EU-15 average of 75.8%;

c) Patent applications to the European Patent Office (EPO). Data refer to applications filed directly under the European Patent Convention or to applications filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty. Italy had a rate of 85% in 2006, the same average of a country such as the UK;

d) Formal childcare by duration and age group - Children cared for as a percentage of all children in the same age group. As types of childcare and education (Education at pre-school, Education at compulsory school, Childcare at centre-based services outside school hours before/after and Childcare at day-care centre), in 2007 the Italian rate of children (3-6 years old) cared as a percentage of all children in the same age group was around 67%, against an EU-25 average of 41%.

3) The good financial progress of programme "*Competenze per lo Sviluppo ESF*" 2007 – 2013. Situation on 30 June 2009: the Italian managing authority (Minister of Education) has already activated 24 public calls and already paid 240 Millions of Euro for the projects, for a total commitment of 599 Millions of Euro (35.69% of total programming; at the moment it is the first Italian OP in terms of total commitment). The OP's authorities have already introduced an interim request of payment to the Commission for a total certified amount of 167 Millions of Euros. Consequently there is no risk of N+2.