



COUNTRY REPORT
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Association for International and Comparative Studies
in the field of Labour Law and Industrial Relations
Modena, Italy

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Introduction

The fact that, as indicated by Turner and D'Art, no viable alternative to trade unions for workers' representation has been found (Turner, D'Art, 2012), coupled with the evidence that the power of trade unions is falling notably in the EU with almost no exception (Belgium registering inverse trends due to the Ghent system which is in place) (Visser, 2006), may suggest the possible existence of a lack of representation for young people and an increasing distance between them and trade unions.

In the insider-outsider framework trade unions are not supposed to be real representatives or supporters of youth interests, as young people are on the margins of the labour market. Some studies and surveys¹ have, however, suggested the possible existence of an unsatisfied demand for trade unions from young people which is worth further investigation.

In this light, the present report aims to analyse the relationship between young people and trade unions in Italy, explaining what Italian trade unions are doing in order to get in contact with young people and better organise them and represent their interests by giving them a voice and supporting their specific interests through collective bargaining.

The report will use primary and secondary research data to highlight in greater detail the specific interests of Italian young workers and young job-seekers who could potentially be represented by trade unions, some successful and unsuccessful examples of trade unions' efforts and campaigns and initiatives undertaken in the last three years in order to organise, represent and support young workers. Moreover, the communication strategies used by the main Italian trade unions to connect with young people, with specific attention given to social media, will be assessed in order to show the extent to which trade unions are effectively communicating with young people or what more could be done to improve this aspect.

¹ European Social Survey (ESS) 2002/2003.

Table 1 – Overview of the collected primary data

	Data collection
CGIL	Andrea Brunetti (Coordinator of the Youth Policy Department at CGIL Nazionale) Gaetano Sateriale (National Coordinator of CGIL Labour Programme)
CISL	CISL Research Centre Francesco Lauria (CISL Research Centre) FILCA CISL (Construction industry) Salvatore Scelfo (National Secretary) CISL Emilia Romagna Stefano Franceschelli (Secretary CISL Emilia Romagna) Claudio Arlati (Coordinator of the training unit at CISL Emilia Romagna) Monica Lattanzi (Dispute coordinator at CISL Emilia Romagna)
UIL	Guglielmo Loy (Confederal Secretary)
UGL	Paolo Varesi (National Vice-Secretary) Antonio Polica (Confederal Secretary)

The rest of the report is organised as follows. Section 1 will describe the labour market position of young people in Italy, assessing labour market conditions, youth membership and young people's views on trade unions and other institutions in the country. Section 2 will analyse collective bargaining for young people by providing a benchmark for the main measures for improving the employability of young people, for improving working conditions for young people and finally the key role of trade unions in the regulation of apprenticeships.

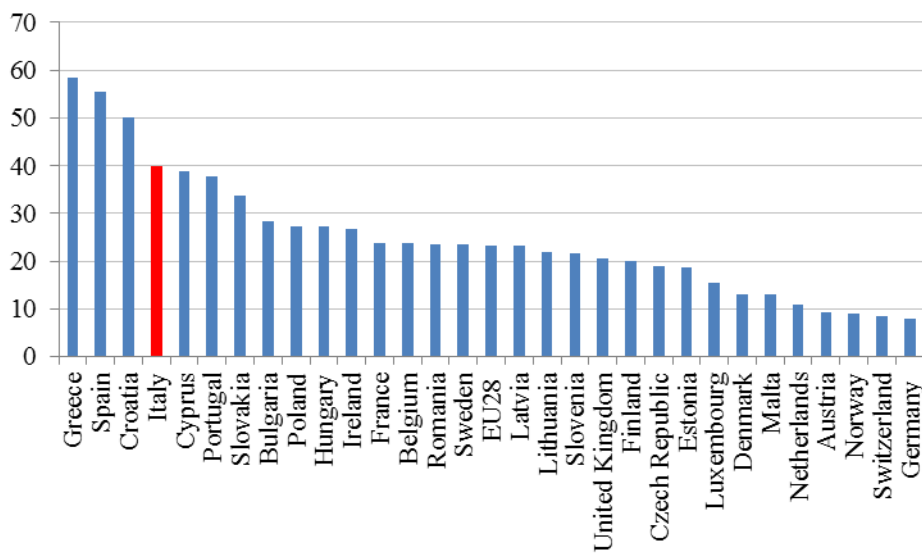
Section 3 will review institutional aspects, initiatives and measures which have been adopted by Italian trade unions (CGIL, CISL, UIL, UGL). Section 4 will provide an analysis of the communication strategies of Italian trade unions and Section 5 will provide a conclusion.

1. Youth and the labour market in Italy

1.1. Labour market condition of young people

Young people have historically experienced greater difficulties in the labour market, particularly in highly dualistic contexts such as that of Italy. These difficulties culminated in the recent economic crisis, which caused the youth unemployment rate to increase to more than double of that of adults, and which is, according to statistics, still higher than pre-crisis levels almost everywhere in Europe. As a structural characteristic, the youth unemployment rate is higher in Southern European countries, especially in Spain (55.5% in 2013), Greece (58.3%) and Portugal (37.7%), but also in Italy (40% in 2013, and as high as 43.7% in June 2014). Italy is far from registering rates lower than 10% as in Germany (7.8%) and Austria (9.2%).

Figure 1 – Youth unemployment rate in 2013 (in %)

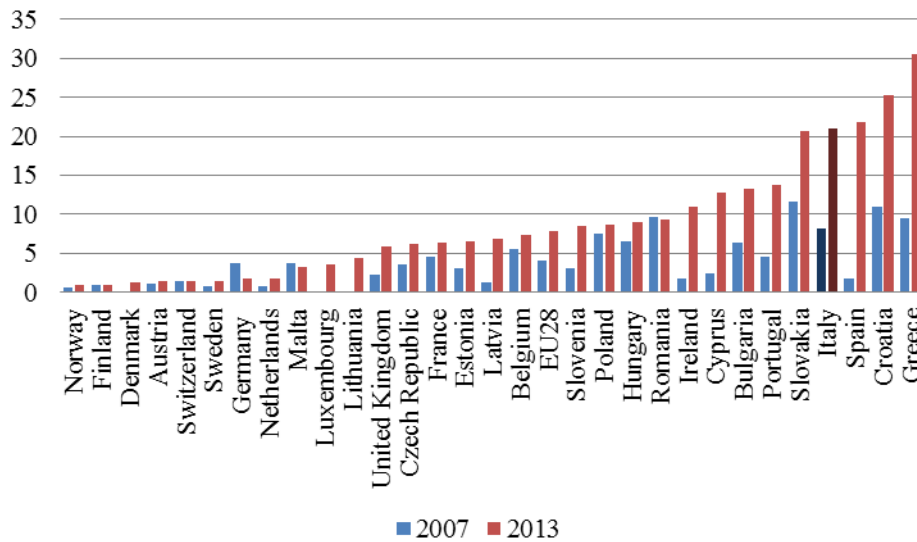


Source: Elaboration on Eurostat

Due also to the double dip of the recession, six years after the start of the crisis the youth unemployment rate in Italy is still almost three times higher than its pre-crisis level, again strongly contrasting with Germany, where youth

unemployment is actually lower than it was in 2007. As a consequence, the long-term unemployment rate (over 12 months), which was already structurally higher compared to other countries, has soared both for young people and as a total.

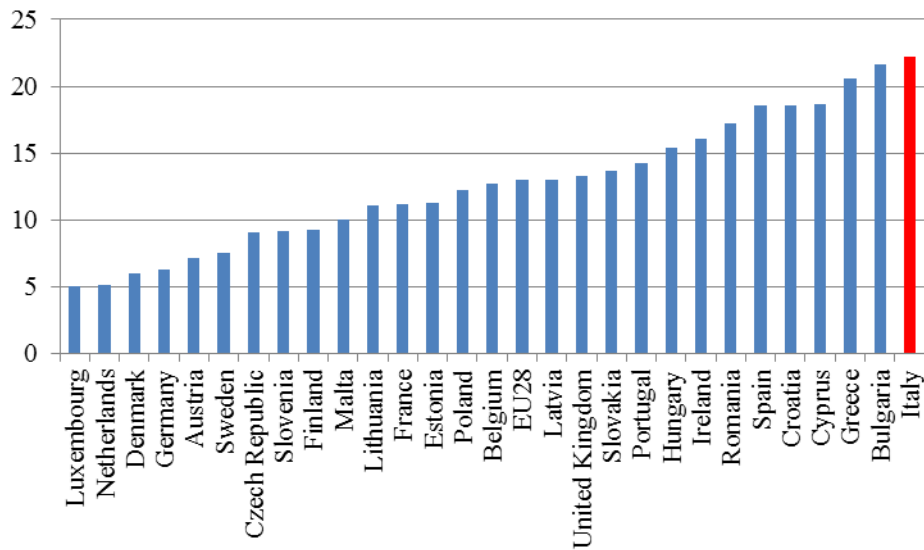
Figure 2 – Long-term unemployment rates (those aged 15-24 and total) 2007 - 2013



Source: Elaboration on Eurostat

In comparison to 2007, in 2013 much longer queues outside the employment office are to be found almost everywhere, with the notable exception of Nordic and dual-system countries, where youth and total long-term unemployment rates are low, equal to or even lower than pre-crisis levels. Italy emerges as one of the countries hardest-hit by long-term youth unemployment. Although the proportion of long-term unemployment represents an important sign of the degree of labour market dynamism, this indicator alone does not reflect the actual difficulties faced by young people in finding jobs. Young people in education and so-called NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training) are indeed not represented by this indicator since they are not part of the labour force. The youth unemployment ratio, i.e. the number of young people unemployed as a share of the whole youth population is a useful indicator. Also according to this figure, although the youth unemployment ratio in Italy is much lower than the unemployment rate, it is still 11.7% (2014), which corresponds to 701,000 persons aged between 15 and 24, a higher proportion than that of most other EU countries and one which has increased since the crisis.

Figure 3 – Neet rates, 2013 (in %)

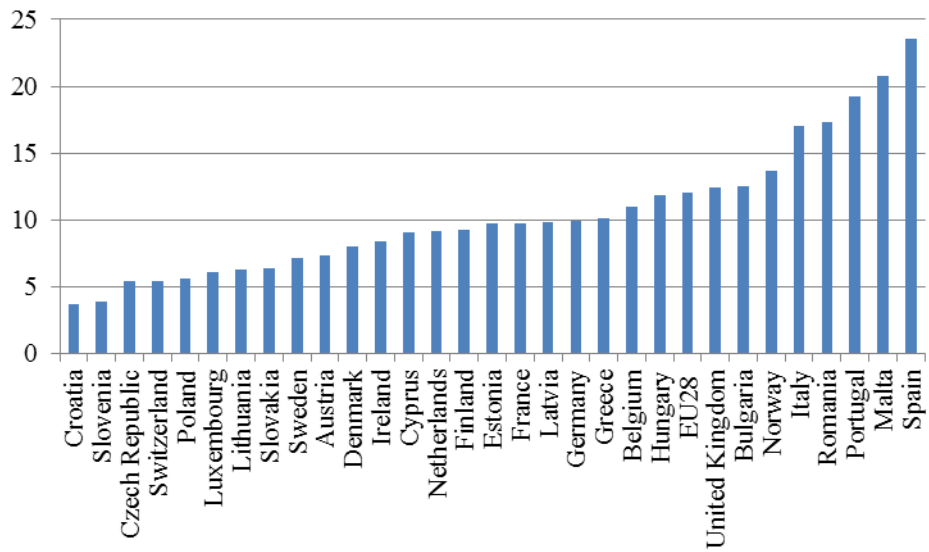


Source: Elaboration on Eurostat

In the debate concerning the condition of young people in the labour market, the NEET rate is an even more worrying indicator than the unemployment rate. Italy stands out negatively in Europe for its very high NEET rate among people aged between 15 and 24 years old. More than one young Italian in five is neither employed nor in education, representing the highest loss of human capital for society and the highest risk of unemployment, inactivity and ‘shadow jobs’ for his/her future career. Education plays an important role for youth labour market prospects, and it has been demonstrated how better-educated young people have a lower probability of experiencing unemployment, higher employment rates and a higher quality of job. Conversely, many of those who are uneducated or drop-out of school risk falling into the NEET category or experiencing unstable jobs and low quality career prospects. However, education is not always a guarantee for high quality employment. Indeed, besides unemployment, one of the main problems of Italy’s youth is attaining a full education rather than dropping out of school¹.

¹ Early leavers from education and training are defined by Eurostat as those with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training.

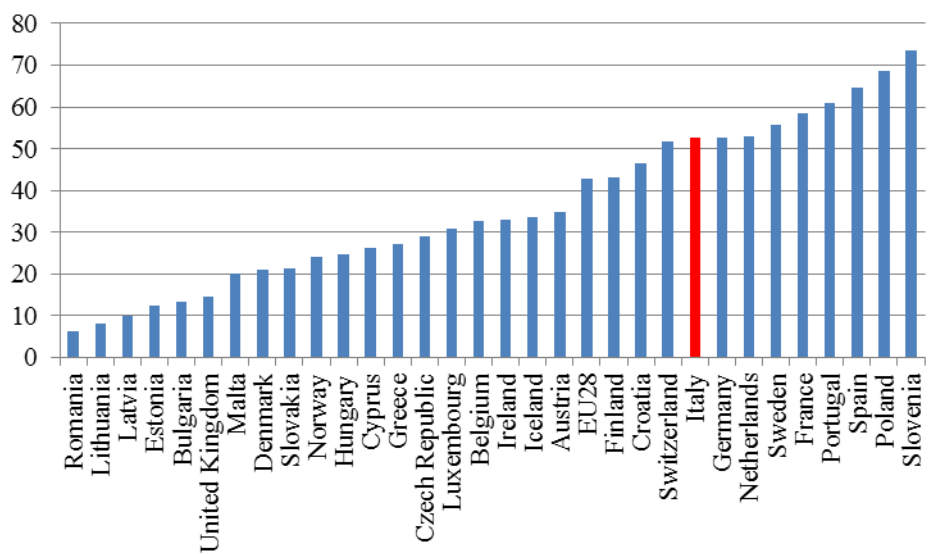
Figure 4 - Early leavers from education and training



Source: Elaboration on Eurostat

With 17% of young people aged between 18 and 24 years old leaving education and training early, Italy is one of the countries which suffers from its high rate of ‘drop-outs’.

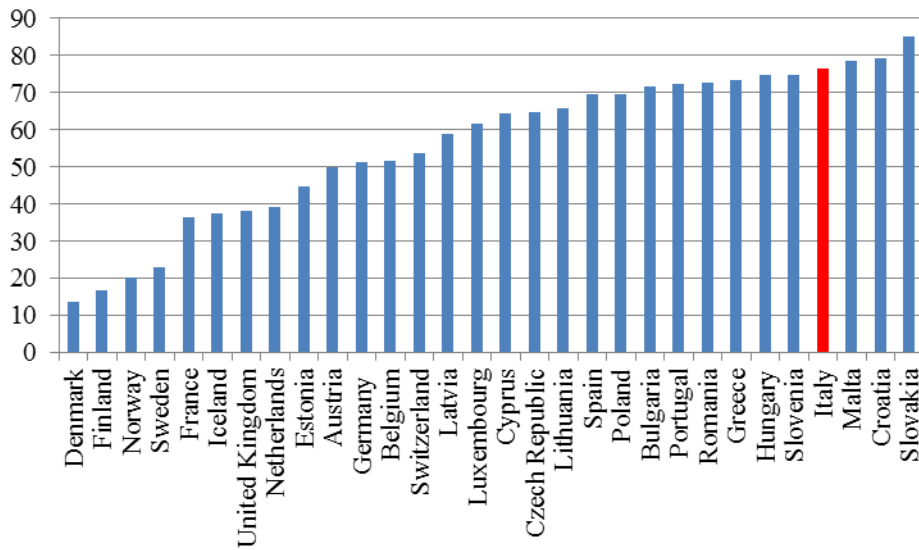
Figure 5 – Young temporary employees as a percentage of the total number of employees, 2013 (in %)



Source: Elaboration on Eurostat

The dualistic nature of the labour market, together with the structural characteristics that make young people more likely to obtain only temporary employment, results, in Italy as in many other countries, in more than a half of young people working on a temporary basis. To sum up, the condition of the youth labour market in Italy is difficult due to the presence of high unemployment (including long-term unemployment) and NEET rates, combined with a high proportion of young people under-qualified and employed on a temporary basis. This situation hinders young people’s opportunities to find a job, to create a family, have a stable career and be an autonomous member of society. In addition to the general structural characteristics of young people in the labour market making them more difficult to organise, in Italy this difficulty may be even greater due to the later entrance of young people in the labour market and the later start to their independent social and economic lives.

Figure 6 – Proportion of young people living with their parents, 2012 (in %)



Source: Elaboration on Eurostat

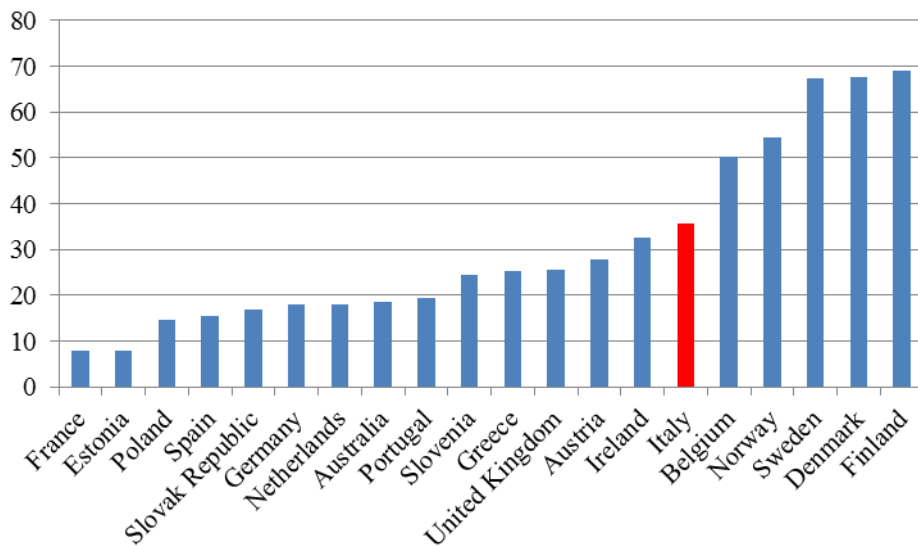
The fact that almost 80% of young people aged between 20 and 29 years old in Italy live with their parents (versus 50% of young Germans, less than 40% of young Brits and the Dutch and less than 20% of the Scandinavian youth) may suggest that young people are not as adequately represented by trade unions as they might be in countries with a more independent youth culture.

1.2. Trade unions and young people

In Italy there are three major trade unions - CGIL (Confederazione Italiana Generale del Lavoro), CISL (Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori) and UIL (Unione Italiana del Lavoro) and a minor trade union called UGL (Unione Generale del Lavoro).

Together, the three largest trade unions have a total of 12.5 million members over a working population of 22,420,000. The average trade-union density, defined as net union-membership as a proportion of wage and salary earners in employment, is about 35.2% (2011) in Italy, placing the country sixth in a classification of trade-union density taking into account EU Countries, New Zealand, Norway, the USA and Japan.

Figure 7 – Trade-union density, 2011 (in %)



Source: Elaboration on OECD

Italian trade-union density is higher than that of countries which have adopted a liberal welfare structure, but lower than that in the Scandinavian countries and Belgium which have adopted a social welfare state and where the Ghent system is in place.

Looking at the individual characteristics of Italian trade-union members, one can find confirmation of the more general trend according to which trade-union membership is increasingly composed of non-active members, i.e. retired people.

Indeed, according to the OECD, the number of active trade-union members in Italy (wage and salary earners who are members of a trade union) is 6,053,856, half of the total number of members of the three most representative trade unions while the other half is indeed represented by retired persons (2011, OECD administrative data).

Attempts to understand and analyse the (long-term) relationship between young people and trade unions are hindered by the scarcity of data and available information sources. Indeed, even if the topic has entered daily discussion and trade unions support the need for a greater involvement of young people in trade unions, comparable data is still insufficient and it is not easy to detect trends and developments in this relationship. Notwithstanding this gap in information, the existing information deriving from trade-union data enables us to make some important considerations.

CGIL, with 5,712,642 members, is the biggest trade union in Italy. As Table 1 shows, CGIL's membership base is mainly composed of retired persons (52.4% of the total number of members), though almost half of the members (47.5%) are active in the labour market (employed and unemployed). The number of employed members is 2,666,101, representing 11.6% of the total number of employed Italians.

Among these, the vast majority is made up of people in full time and permanent work (89.9% of the employed members), while those with temporary contracts are fewer (6% of working members). Notwithstanding the fact that CGIL has different organizations (such as NidiL, Agenquadri, Sinagi, Siam, Alpa, CLB, CGIL Medici, Studi professionali, etc.) aimed at specifically representing non-standard workers, very few members are semi-subordinated employees (0.5%) and/or unemployed (1.9%). Young people and immigrants are, however, quite numerous, representing respectively 21.6% and 15% of CGIL's employed members.

The number of CGIL members between 15 and 34 years old out of the total population of the same age (youth density rate) is around 9%, while the representation of immigrants is 16%. The high presence of young people and immigrants is connected to the fact that very many immigrants fall into this age group (15-34).

To sum up, CGIL represents standard workers but cannot reach the same level of representation for precarious workers, and this seems to be the main reason for the distance between young people and this particular trade union.

Table 1 – CGIL membership, 2012

2012	CGIL (Membership)		ITALY (Istat, Inps)		Union density rate
Employed	2,666,101	100%	22,899,000	100%	11.6%
Employed aged 15-34	575,902	21.6%	5,622,000	24.6%	9.0%
Immigrants	400,000	15.0%	2,357,000	10.3%	16.0%
Employees:	2,559,669	96.0%	17,214,000	75.2%	12.0%
Permanent	2,396,060	89.9%	14,839,000	64.8%	
Temporary	163,609	6.1%	2,375,000	10.4%	6.9%
Active (employed + unemployed)	2,716,519	100%	25,642,000	100%	
Semi-subordinated workers	10,664	0.4%	856,460	3.3%	1.2%
Unemployed	50,418	1.9%	2,744,000	10.7%	1.8%
Total (>15 years old)	5,712,642	100%	51,068,990	100%	
Retired persons	2,996,123	52.4%	16,668,585	32.6%	18.0%

Source: CGIL

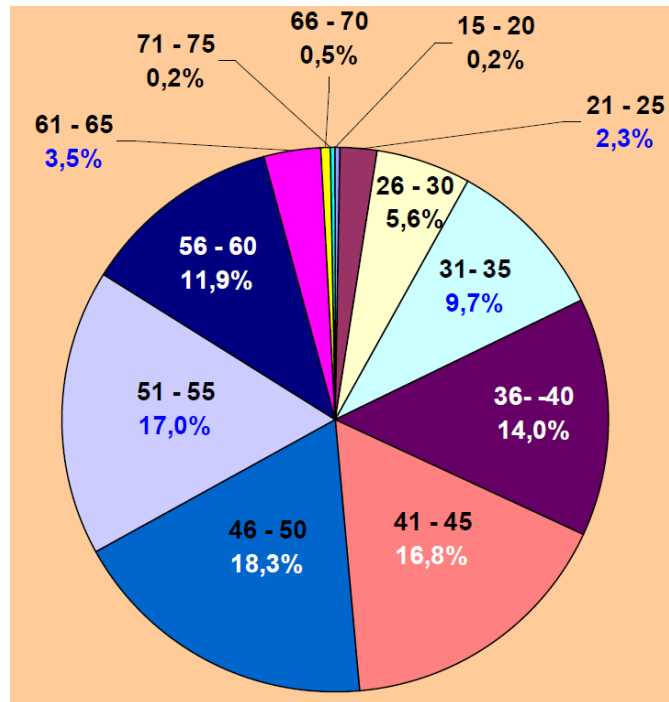
According to the latest membership administrative statistics made available by CISL, the total number of active members in 2013 was 2,311,276 (-0.72% compared to 2012), mostly concentrated in the industry sector² (706,010 corresponding to 30.5% of total membership), followed by the public sector³ (585,174 corresponding to -0.81% compared to 2012) and the service sector⁴ (475,224 corresponding to 25.3% of the total). Non-active members, i.e. retired persons (represented by FNP CISL) are as numerous as active ones, totalling 2,006,515 in 2013.

² Represented by the following federations: FEMCA - Energia, Moda, Chimica; FLAEI - Elettrici; FILCA - Costruzioni; FIM - Meccanici; FISTel - Inform. Spett. Telecom.

³ Represented by the following federations: Cisl FP - Funzione Pubblica; Cisl Medici; Cisl Scuola; Cisl Università; FIR - Innovazione e Ricerca; FNS - Sicurezza.

⁴ Represented by the following federations: FISASCAT - Commerciali e Turismo; FIBA - Bancari e Assicurativi; Cisl SLP - Lavoratori Poste; FELSA - Somministrati Autonomi Atipici

Figure 8 – CISL active members by age group, 2013



Source: CISL

Young people between 21 and 25 years represent 2.3% of CISL’s active members, a proportion that increases to 5.6% for those between 26 and 30 years old and again to 9.7% for those between 31 and 35. The majority of CISL’s active members are mature workers between 46 and 50 years old (18.3% of total active members).

Table 2 – UIL membership, 2009-2013

	Members 2009	Members 2010	Members 2011	Members 2012	Members 2013
Agriculture	221,949	223,658	224,747	225,616	225,940
Industry	370,690	373,292	373,334	368,325	350,928
UILTEC (textiles, energy, chemistry)	121,318	120,878	120,901	120,450	109,359
FENEAL (construction)	160,265	162,133	162,017	157,452	151,131
UILM (mechanics)	89,107	90,280	90,416	90,423	90,438
Tertiary sector	226,245	229,094	229,788	232,706	234,538

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UILCA (credit/insurance)	44,698	45,121	43,957	43,967	44,061
UILCOM (communication)	40,457	40,544	40,547	40,584	40,937
UILPOSTE (post service)	29,459	29,473	29,487	29,540	29,540
UILTUCS (tertiary)	111,631	113,956	115,797	118,615	120,000
Transport	107,749	107,846	107,584	107,846	117,846
Atypical workers	20,100	22,195	53,579	67,208	70,528
Public administration	340,812	340,233	339,551	341,177	345,543
Total active workers	1,287,545	1,296,318	1,328,583	1,342,878	1,345,323
Retired persons	574,985	575,865	575,266	574,071	582,147
Sub Total	1,862,530	1,872,183	1,903,849	1,916,949	1,927,470
II affiliation	311,621	312,728	292,593	289,232	288,973
General total	2,174,151	2,184,911	2,196,442	2,206,181	2,216,443

Source: UIL

UIL has 2,216,443 members (2013). A quarter of UIL members are retired (26%) while 60% are active workers. Among those who are active in the labour market, 16% work in the industry sector, 15% in public administration, 10% in agriculture and the service sector, 5% in the transport sector and 3% are 'atypical' workers (agency and project-based). Geographically, UIL members mostly come from southern regions (40%), one third from northern regions (31%) and 15% are from the centre regions. No data are available from UIL concerning the age distribution of its members.

It is possible to identify some likely causes for the low level of youth trade-union membership in Italy.

As has been noted in literature, one of the main explanations for the distance between trade unions and young people should be sought in the modern features of the youth labour market, characterised by the prevalence of non-standard contracts (project-based and/or time-contingent). Temporary work, as underlined above, does not foster aggregation in terms of trade-union membership, and the Italian labour market is highly dualistic, with more than half of young employees being employed on a temporary basis (52.5%), compared to 12% of adults aged between 25 and 54 years old.

Furthermore, the more general structure of the Italian labour market, constituted by micro-enterprises, may hamper the organization of trade unions. In

Italy, indeed, 10 million workers are employed in companies with up to 20 employees, compared to only 3 million workers being employed in companies with 250 employees or more.

Commenting on the difficulty in attracting and engaging young people, trade union representatives who were interviewed mainly confirmed **(youth) labour-related structural characteristics** (precariousness and inactivity on the one side and small average firm size on the other side) as the main determinants.

“Trade unions organise employees. Youth membership within this category, especially in the case of full-time permanent workers, is not that low compared to adults. What is low is the number of young people who become members of trade unions among those who do not have a permanent and stable employment who make up the majority of young employed people. There is no trade union representation for the unemployed, inactive and discouraged (NEET)”.
[Gaetano Sateriale, National Coordinator of CGIL Labour Programme]

“The presence of young people among trade-union members has decreased together with the increase of unstable and temporary forms of employment. This is due to a number of factors including the difficulty of recognising new jobs, the fact that trade unions’ rights are often barely guaranteed, and because precarious jobs produce uncertainty (or mistrust) towards trade unions. Subjective difficulties also exist. For a long time trade unions (and CGIL in particular) have opposed increased precariousness by trying to remove it (or reduce it), regulating it by law and not by contract; in doing so there was no need to affiliate young people to trade unions because it was more important to influence politics. However, as youth unemployment is one of the main national economic and social emergencies, it is crucial to inform young people about the role of trade unions and their activities. This is a priority both for the process of the renewal of trade unions and for the protection of tomorrow’s workers”.
[Gaetano Sateriale, National Coordinator of CGIL Labour Programme]

“The main reasons that the relationship between young people and trade unions is difficult are to be found in the increased precariousness of the young. Atypical forms of work and the ‘molecular’ capitalism of the Italian economy, made up of micro-enterprises in which it is difficult for trade unions to organise, break unity at the workplace. [...] It is also possible to observe major societal transformations entailing a decrease in collective values and a consensus crisis currently hitting the trade unions”. [Andrea Brunetti, Coordinator of the Youth Policy Department at CGIL Nazionale]

“Trade unions mainly organise workers in companies where it is possible to bargain. Therefore the presence of trade unions in companies (at least those with more than 15 employees) is a prerequisite as regulated by the “Statuto dei lavoratori”. Moreover, membership is more likely for more stable workers and less likely for temporary ones, and this reduces the number of young people who are interested in joining a union”. [Guglielmo Loy, UIL Confederal Secretary]

“Subscription to trade unions nowadays happens later in working life. Therefore, given the late entrance in the labour market, it is clear that in Italy the first contact with trade unions happens when people are already adults”. [Guglielmo Loy, UIL Confederal Secretary]

“[...] new jobs have to be better represented. Italian trade unions, and primarily CISL, have been trying to do this since the mid-nineties. Unfortunately, considering the huge turnover of ‘atypical’ members, it is not easy”. [Francesco Lauria, CISL Research Centre]

“Membership duration strongly varies by sector, contract type and labour market dynamics. We do not register much higher turnover rates among young members than among members of other ages, provided that they are employed with the same contract. Clearly, given that 70% of new employment contracts are on a temporary basis, this has an effect on the duration of youth membership”. [Francesco Lauria, CISL Research Centre]

Besides labour market structural characteristics, literature suggests the importance of individual characteristics, particularly those related to **social transformation and individualistic values**. According to Peetz (2010) the general perception of the very meaning of trade unions among university students, neo-workers and young job-seekers is less attached to a social and collective attitude than in the past, and is indeed more related to an individualistic and utilitarian tendency. According to this view, young people wish to ally themselves with a trade union in order to be protected and receive advice about individual rights and not for a sense of belonging to a collective organism, often becoming members only temporarily (the so-called ‘disposable union’).

The representatives interviewed partially recognise this as a problem, though it appears to be considered less important than the labour market’s structural characteristics.

“The reasons are multiple. The first is represented by the structural characteristics of young people in the labour market (precariousness and subject to a greater impact of the crisis) [...]. The second problem is a cultural one: individualism and the fragmentation of values: there is a different view of the relationship between individuals and of the concepts of society and solidarity. [...] The third reason concerns the internal aspects of trade unions, which can only partially understand and answer young people’s needs. [...] Trade unions still have a ‘70s organizational model.” [Claudio Arlati, Coordinator of the Training Unit at CISL Emilia Romagna]

“[...] In the background there is the problem of reduced consensus and mistrust toward trade unions, something that concerns all representative organizations and not only those of social representation.” [Guglielmo Loy, UIL Confederal Secretary]

As Peetz also stressed (2010), the reason for this distance might, however, be the failure of trade unions to engage with young workers, rather than the lack of collectivist attitudes (Peetz, 2010). Moreover, young workers often tend to exhibit a somewhat neutral attitude, probably reflecting a lack of knowledge about trade unions (Vandaele, 2012).

Concerning trade-union related characteristics, several interviewed representatives recognised that the problems may also stem from **trade unions themselves**.

“The reason why young people are difficult to organise is not age-specific, but rather something related to their needs and expectations. Young people have expectations which trade unions do not understand and cannot relate to”. [Stefano Franceschelli, Secretary CISL Emilia Romagna]

“Young people are difficult to organise because of their characteristics and because of their different needs, social dynamics and means of communication. [...] There is also an image-related problem surrounding trade unions and an internal organisational problem. Trade unions are highly hierarchical and unable to interpret new needs”. [Paolo Varesi, UGL National Vice-Secretary]

“Trade unions are rather conservative. [...] The only way to fight this is to quantitatively and qualitatively enlarge young people’s access to trade unions, through training and information”. [Guglielmo Loy, UIL Confederal Secretary]

“What do trade unions do for young people? According to the media, nothing. However, the daily activity of trade unions is aimed at preserving existing work and enlarging the hiring base, as well as redistributing wealth. This activity is substantial but it does not receive recognition from the media”. [Guglielmo Loy, UIL Confederal Secretary]

Trade unions therefore seem well-aware of the difficulties connected to the organisation of young people, but still claim this as a priority and not as a waste of resources. Indeed, most trade unions feel the challenge of youth organisation is crucial:

“Trade unions depend on their members, activists and representatives. Young people are important for trade unions because they bring the capacity to innovate, allowing trade unions to protect and better represent workers in the future. Young people do not expect much from trade unions because they do not recognise them as institutions that protect them in their employment relations. In the historical development of trade unions great evolutions have always occurred thanks to a new generation of members and leaders. There will be no trade union able to protect precarious workers if young precarious workers do

not support trade unions.” [Gaetano Sateriale – National Coordinator of CGIL Labour Programme]

“CGIL has a membership rate of 21% among active under 35s and these people became members through the traditional channels without extra effort. Given that the share of people of the same age of the total active workers is 27%, 6% of young people are not represented which might be normal. The problem therefore is not youth membership per se, but membership of atypical workers in general. Indeed, 21% of young members are employed on a permanent basis. Given the increasing flexibility of the labour market, for different age-groups, it therefore becomes crucial for trade unions to be able to attract and organise flexible workers in order to preserve future their membership base”. [Andrea Brunetti, Coordinator of the Youth Policy Department at CGIL Nazionale]

“Information, guidance and dialogue with young workers is a requirement and an ambition for UIL. Even though this does not reflect immediately on subscriptions. Membership is the result of material and cultural conditions that require long-term progress”. [Guglielmo Loy, UIL Confederal Secretary]

“All economic and human resources available should be used to develop and strengthen trade unions’ capacity to attract young people. The young are the future of the country and we should act to contrast brain drain migration of the most talented young people going abroad.” [Salvatore Scelfo, FILCA - CISL National Secretary]

Given the importance, expressed by all Italian trade unions, of attracting and informing young people about their role and activities, it is worth analysing the level of trade union (national, sectorial, local, company) best suited to their activities.

Despite the significant amount of importance which is nowadays attached to mass- and virtual-communication through the use of information communication technologies, it nonetheless seems that traditional and face-to-face channels work better than any other method for attracting young people to trade unions and increasing their membership numbers. Indeed, all trade unions which were interviewed named the company level dimension as the most effective for making contact with and increasing the membership of young people, followed by the local level through the services provided by the Chambers of Labour, while the national level seems less effective in achieving this aim.

“The company level is the level at which it is easier for trade unions to get in contact with young people and it is therefore the most important in terms of youth membership and activism, both in the public and private context. The involvement of young activists or elected delegates also occurs through sectorial and confederal organisations, though still not sufficiently. At the confederal level there are also youth coordinating organisations. Finally, it is

worth mentioning the fact that the consultancy activities (so-called ‘services’) conducted in all the Provincial Labour Chambers are usually provided by young experts and professionals”. [Gaetano Sateriale – National Coordinator of CGIL Labour Programme]

“A second channel, which is not the ‘natural’ one, is to approach trade unions based on political interest and desire for participation. In this way, the opportunities for young people to get in contact with trade unions are available in the same way as many other social activities: voluntary work, political interest, work placements. Nowadays, given the late entrance of young people in the labour market, this second channel is likely to become the main one”. [Guglielmo Loy, UIL Confederal Secretary]

1.3. Perceptions of trade unions in Italy

As pointed out by Turner and D’Art, “contrary to expectations, a substantial majority of respondents perceived a need for strong trade unions to protect their pay and working conditions” (Turner, D’Art, 2012) and “irrespective of the respondent's occupational level, the extent of job autonomy, gender, age or political orientation, positive attitudes towards unions are consistently in the majority” (Turner and D’Art, 2008).

When looking at the (scarce) survey evidence, it seems that although membership is low and actually decreasing in Italy, there is a demand for trade unions which remains unsatisfied.

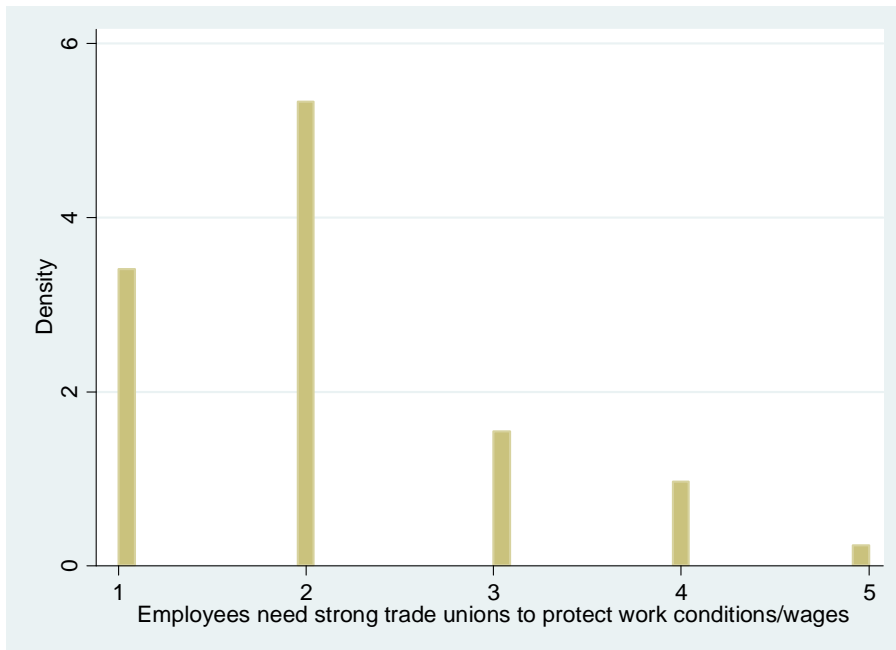
Unfortunately comparable survey-data are limited, although one of the most useful pieces of information is the 2002/2003 European Social Survey (ESS) survey covering 15 EU member states⁵.

The variable of interest is the extent to which people believe that trade unions are still necessary; the responses are based on the claim “Employees need strong trade unions to protect their working conditions and wages”, and the 5 possible answers are 1 = Strongly agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree or disagree; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly disagree. The information is summarised in the following graph⁶.

⁵ Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, UK, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, France, Portugal, and Sweden.

⁶ ESS data elaborated using Stata.

Figure 9 - Employees need strong trade unions to protect their working conditions and wages, 2002/2003



Source: Elaboration on European Social Survey 2002/2003

As the graph shows, the majority of respondents express agreement on the importance of trade unions for protecting and promoting workers' interests and wages.

However, more recently, a general disenchantment about institutions and politics has been registered (European Commission, 2012), also reflected in the extent to which people trust trade unions.

According to a national survey (Istituto Toniolo, 2012) of 7,500 young people aged between 18 and 29 which asked them to express on a scale of 0 to 10 their trust of certain institutions, only 26.6% of young people expressed a sentiment of trust toward trade unions (rate equal to or greater than 6, 'satisfactory').

Young people, according to the same survey, perceive trade-union action as "insufficient, with room for improvement" in 30% of cases. Compared to other institutions surveyed, trade unions, however, have a higher appreciation than the Italian Government, the Italian Regions and Municipalities (rated 'unsatisfactory'), political parties (rated as 'extremely unsatisfactory'). Trade unions received worse rates than those expressed toward the educational system, the police and the Catholic Church (only amongst Catholics).

The average rate given to trade unions is 3.77 out of 10, slightly higher for women (3.92) than for men (3.62). As for geographical distribution, young people

seems to be more likely to express trust in trade unions in the southern regions (28% given a rating of 'satisfactory or better'), compared to the northern (26%) and central ones (25%), though the result is not statistically significant.

2. Collective bargaining for young people

Membership, though important, is only a partial indicator of the actual power of trade unions. Indeed, if declining membership can be interpreted as a sign of the declining power of trade unions, their collective bargaining capacity is instead better represented by the bargaining or union coverage (also called adjusted union coverage). This indicator considers employees covered by wage bargaining agreements as a proportion of all wage and salary earners in employment with the right to bargain, expressed as a percentage (the indicator is adjusted for the possibility that some sectors or occupations are excluded from the right to bargain).

When looking at the adjusted union coverage indicator, it is possible to notice a greater (bargaining) power of trade unions in Austria, Belgium, Sweden, France, Finland, Spain, the Netherlands, Italy and Denmark, where collective bargaining coverage reaches 80% of employees.

If most trade-union action is expressed through collective bargaining, in analysing the relationship between young people and trade unions it is worth stressing trade-union action in this field.

Are young people a bargaining topic?

The analysis of collective agreements in 21 sectors says that they are not. What does emerge is that collective regulations apply to the entire workforce, irrespective of diversities based on age, sex, and so on. When it comes to training measures, for example, in most cases they include all employees. Furthermore, collective bargaining does not really deal with the external labour market: they generally set measures for those who already have a job.

A major exception to these results is the apprenticeship. Since statutory legislation on apprenticeships devolved specific regulation to collective bargaining at a national level, national sectorial collective agreements have addressed the issue in all industries. Another relevant exception is found in cross-generation and solidarity measures taken to improve the employability of young people.

The following paragraphs will examine what collective bargaining concretely does to boost the employability and working conditions of young people. The information presented comes from a data set of 21 sectorial collective agreements signed by the most representative employers' associations and trade-union federations at the national level. The sectors analysed are: the food and beverage industry; transportation and logistics (road ways); banks and credit institutions

(financial); cement; the chemical industry; building; electricity; energy and petrol; plastics; gyms and sports centres; stone products; the wood industry; metalworking; bread and pizza; temporary agency work; professional studies (e.g. workers employed in the legal, medical and paramedical fields); commerce (wholesale and distribution); the textile industry; tourism; crystal; private security. The 21 collective agreements are all currently in force, and they have been all considered in their consolidated versions, thus taking into account the original accord as it has been renewed and amended.

2.1. Measures to improve the employability of young people

2.1.1. Cross-generation solidarity

Following chronological order, mention should be made of the renewal of the national collective agreement in the chemical industry which took place on 22nd September 2012. A range of innovative elements were set down, particularly in relation to the Intergenerational Solidarity Pact, also known as the '*Progetto Ponte*'. This project has been included in Chapter III on employability and draws on "the willingness of the employers to recruit and invest in young people, provided that older workers who approach retirement accede to convert their full-time employment contracts into part-time contracts". The main purpose is once again to increase youth employment, and, at the same time, to promote the involvement of older people by creating a link between different generations, with the wealth of skills to be transferred from older to younger workers. In order that the project be implemented effectively, the legislator has been encouraged to make changes to relevant legislation, and particularly to remove certain limitations regarding the use of 'working-time accounts'. The section discussing organisational flexibility is also of interest as it empowers company-level collective bargaining to derogate from national collective agreements in order to favour the recruitment of young people who cannot be hired through apprenticeships – e.g. due to age limits (art. 25).

When discussing intergenerational solidarity reference should also be made to the collective agreement in the transport sector which was renewed on 3rd December 2012. The new collective agreement states that managers who are about to retire can convert their employment relationship into a part-time one and act as tutors for their younger colleagues or middle managers. This provision is intended to favour youth employment and, above all, generational renewal through the mutual exchange of knowledge particularly if one considers the new legislation on retirement which allows workers over 60 to stay on at work.

In a similar vein, the collective agreement concluded on 5th December 2012 between Federmeccanica, Assisital, Fim-Cisl, Uilm-Uil concerning the metalworking industry encourages the recourse to part-time work as a useful instrument for employee-turnover and the transfer of skills. Also in this case, practical implementation should be accompanied by a review of the relevant legal framework.

Still on the same issue, the collective agreement concluded on 22nd January 2013 in the energy sector deserves a mention as it represents an attempt on the part of social partners to review work organisation in order to increase productivity and competitiveness in the global market. This is done with an awareness of the changes that have taken place in the working life due to the postponement of retirement age. Spending more time at work calls for alternative forms of employment which take account of the new retirement criteria in order to promote the wealth of skills gained by older workers, who should be seen as a resource for the whole of society, not only within the company. To this end, the foregoing agreement in the energy sector draws on the idea of ‘intergenerational exchange’, according to which young workers can be hired through apprenticeships provided that their older peers convert their employment relationships into part-time work. As pointed out earlier, the effective implementation of this project hinges on the support of public entities, which should sustain the social security contributions arising from the conversion of the employment contracts which would otherwise be paid by the workers. In acknowledging this aspect, social partners have stressed the need for an investigation into age levels at a sectorial level to be carried out by experts in the field in order to gain a better understanding of the solutions and the issues related to a longer working life and the increased average age of workers. It is clear that such ‘intergenerational solidarity’ cannot be the sole answer to youth unemployment. It could, however, provide a significant contribution, for example by generating innovative thinking concerning active ageing, a question which can no longer be overlooked.

Finally, reference should be made also to the provisions included in the national collective agreement signed in the financial sector on 19th January 2012 which, although from a different perspective, takes steps to encourage employers to invest in young workers. Social parties agreed on the setting-up of a national bilateral fund to support employment, particularly in the credit sector. The main aim is to help employers to reduce the costs arising from taking on workers on a permanent basis. Financed by the employees themselves, the fund will support employers for a period of up to three years or, within the limitations of the availability of these resources, granting them an annual allowance of 2,500 euros for each unemployed person under 32 years old who is hired with an open-ended

employment contract, which therefore includes those recruited through vocational apprenticeships. This sum is also allocated in cases of hiring the long-term unemployed, those covered by wage guarantee funds, and women who are resident in the most disadvantaged geographical areas. Employers are also entitled to this sum of money if they provide employees recruited under other contractual arrangements with open-ended employment contracts. One might also note that the social partners have committed themselves to raising the allowance granted to companies based in the south as southern regions have higher unemployment rates, particularly among the lower age groups.

Moreover, collective agreements in the banking sector make provisions for also allocating the 2,500 euro allowance to employees who are willing to reduce their working time – and therefore their remuneration – by means of special forms of work-sharing. These are agreements concluded between employers and trade unions according to which new workers are hired while a reduction of working time for employees takes place.

2.1.2. Classification system: the two-tier wage structure and entry-level salary

Article 85 of the national sectorial collective agreement for cement industry workers states that workers who have a degree relevant to their job shall be hired at least at the second level of the classification system. Those who graduated in subjects not relevant to their job shall be hired at least at the third level of the classification system. If they are hired at the third level, they will be entitled to an indemnity equal to 4.15% of the wage set for that level.

According to article 1, letter A, section IV, title II of the national sectorial collective agreement for metalworkers, employees who have the role of a tutor and mentor apprentices or newly hired employees, are placed in a higher category within the classification system than they otherwise would be.

Social partners in the tourism sector agreed that inexperienced workers over the age of apprenticeship (i.e. 29), can be hired with an open-ended contract and, for the first year, be remunerated with an entry-level salary one level below the ordinary one.

In 2011, social partners in the commerce sector agreed on the following mechanism: newly employed workers are entitled to 50% of the total amount of hourly leave starting from the second year of work; after four years of work, the full amount of hourly leave will be recognized.

The collective agreement in question includes further steps to promote employment in relation to the newly-hired, which also apply to those recruited

with apprenticeship contracts. A reduction of 18% in remuneration up to the 4th year from recruitment applies to those workers falling within a certain pay scale – i.e. entry-level salary. This pay reduction is compensated by a 4% contribution to be paid by the employer to those workers who enter company pension schemes.

2.2. Measures to improve the working conditions of young people

2.2.1. Training measures and bilateral institutions

The national sectorial collective agreement in the food and beverage industry created a bilateral committee consisting of employers' and workers' representatives to deal with training issues. Among its tasks a general reference is made to the search for "appropriate instruments for involving young people in training measures to develop the required skills and competences required to get a job".

Article 11, paragraph 5 of the national collective agreement for employees in the electricity industry requires the sectorial bilateral committee for training to programme training schemes for newly-employed workers.

According to article 5 of the national sectorial collective agreement for professional studies, the national sectorial bilateral committee shall implement and promote specific initiatives to improve young people's entrance into the labour market.

Article 24 of the national sectorial collective agreement for employees in the textile industry states that, within the sectorial bilateral committee consisting of employers' and workers' representatives, the parties shall improve the school-to-work transition and monitor the training initiatives focused on newly-employed young workers.

2.2.2. Information and consultation institutions concerned with youth employment

According to article 2 of the national sectorial collective agreement in the food and beverage industry, employers' associations and companies shall provide information on trends related to youth employment focusing on first-entry employment contracts and apprenticeships.

In the transportation and logistics industry, social partners agreed on the possibility of asking for information meetings at a regional level, related to mobility, training schemes and occupational trends of young people.

Article 2 of the national sectorial collective agreement for the crystal sector establishes an annual meeting between the signatory parties in which Assovetro, the employers' association, shall inform the trade-union federation about sectorial occupational trends, focusing particularly on youth employment.

2.2.3. Work-life balance measures and institutions specifically devoted to student workers

According to article 20 of the national sectorial collective agreement for the food and beverage industry, in converting full-time employment contracts into part-time contracts, priority should be given to study requirements linked to the attendance of secondary school, as well as university courses. Furthermore, article 44 states that student workers should be assigned to shifts which allow them to attend classes and sit exams. They are also exempt from mandatory extra-time and work in rest days, and they are entitled to extra leave in order to sit their exams.

In order for undergraduate students to combine theoretical knowledge with on-the-job experience, article 54-bis of the national sectorial collective agreement for professional studies allows employers to hire them in periods of university breaks with a fixed-term contract, from a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 14 weeks. Employers agree to provide students with relevant and proper training to develop their knowledge and competences related to the job they are doing, thus avoiding repetitive tasks and activities not requiring training.

According to article 72 of the national sectorial collective agreements for employees in the commerce sector, employers are entitled to hire student workers with a part-time contract of 8 hours on Saturdays or Sundays.

Social partners in the cement sector allow student workers 150 hours of leave in three years in order to attend education and training courses at school or university (article 59). Leave for exams and attending classes is also given to student workers in the chemical sector (part X, point 4). Similar provisions are foreseen by collective agreements in all of the sectors analysed.

2.3. Regulation of apprenticeships

A major exception to collective bargaining being neglectful of young people, are apprenticeship contracts. Since statutory regulations empower collective agreements to regulate contracts in detail, specific national sectorial collective agreements have been negotiated in almost every industry. When it comes to the relationship between the law and collective agreements, however, mention should be made of the fact that when the law on apprenticeship was passed, the legislator looked at the results of collective bargaining on that issue. To date, 90% of national sectorial collective agreements in Italy have adapted the statutory regulation of apprenticeship within their relevant industry, focusing on the second type of apprenticeship contract, that concerned with the achievement of a contractual qualification. Conversely, scant attention has been paid to the first and third types of apprenticeship, i.e. those related to the achievement of the school diploma and higher education respectively.

Collective bargaining hardly deals with the procedure for hiring apprentices. In most cases, collective agreements recall the provisions of law which cover the issue widely. It is also unusual for collective bargaining to regulate the topic of limits to the number of apprentices that can be hired by a given company at the same time.

On the other hand, social partners frequently agree on conditions for the confirmation of apprentices at the end of the training period, as well as on the maximum and minimum duration of the contract, despite the fact that the latter is now fixed at 6 months by law. Another issue concerns the possibility for the worker to cumulate different periods of apprenticeship. Many collective agreements, for instance, establish that the days/months/years of apprenticeship done for other employers must be recognized by the new employer within 12 months, when they refer to the same job and qualification.

Collective agreements also deal with apprenticeship wages. The statutory regulation entitles collective bargaining to introduce two-tier wage structures for apprentices, either in the form of entry-level salary (up to two levels below the relevant one), or in the form of a percentage, which collective bargaining normally links to the years of experience or to the competences of apprentices. However, only three collective agreements (artisan, tourism, and transportation sectors) opted for the second solution, while in other industries social partners agreed on entry-level salary systems.

Other contractual provisions include: the length of the trial period; norms to be applied in the event of illness or occupational injuries; hourly leave; occupational-based pension and health funds.

Training targets and the content of apprenticeships are major issues in collective bargaining. Although most of them recall the legal provisions, a significant number of collective agreements reduce the training period when the apprentice already has a training diploma or has graduated in a subject related to the discipline in question.

A limited number of collective agreements provide a tutorship scheme. The collective agreement in the chemical sector is an exception in this respect: it requires the tutor to participate in the drafting of the training programme and to facilitate the learning process of apprentices.

2.4. The opinions of trade unions regarding collective bargaining for young people

We asked trade unions if the current collective bargaining system is suitable to properly represent young people's interests and, if not, what changes should be made to create a more inclusive system of collective bargaining. In addition, given the recent trend of decentralisation experienced by several systems of industrial relations in Europe, how could this have a positive or a negative impact on young people?

“The representative function of trade unions is generally differentiated by contract, professional classification level, experience, economic sector etc. Notwithstanding this, the capacity to take into account the different situation existing in the sphere of precarious and semi-subordinated work is poor. For this reason CGIL has the objective of providing a more inclusive collective bargaining system in the workplace. This objective implies greater attention from trade-union representatives but also a greater presence of young people in trade-union organisations”. [Gaetano Sateriale, National Coordinator of CGIL Labour Programme]

“The current system of collective bargaining is inadequate because it does not represent the whole world of work, especially as it misses out semi-subordinated work. CGIL aims to develop a more inclusive bargaining system, in order to include all types of employment contract within the national contract”. [Andrea Brunetti, Coordinator of the Youth Policy Department at CGIL Nazionale]

“We need to strengthen company level bargaining in order to better represent young people through agreements aimed at facilitating new hiring, training, apprenticeships and so on. However, almost 7 million workers work in small companies without company-level bargaining, so a general protection system has to be maintained with certain essential functions - minimum bargained

salary, working time and other universal conditions". [Guglielmo Loy, UIL Confederal Secretary]

"The collective bargaining system in place is able to answer to young people's needs when it comes to regulating apprenticeships or introducing fiscal incentives for the young in order to ease their entrance into the labour market. It can be affirmed that this system is one of the most advanced in Europe". [Salvatore Scelfo, FILCA-CISL National Secretary]

"The current collective bargaining system does not mention youth interests and is excessively standard, failing to take into account different regimes. There have been some favourable actions, but it is possible to see strong resistance, often from companies, who are reluctant to bargain youth interests regarding, for example, education benefits which are almost disappearing from collective bargaining. The professional classification system on which wage bargaining is based is obsolete and should be revised to take into account new professions and job profiles that did not exist when this system was designed". [Paolo Varesi, UGL National Vice-Secretary]

"The major problem is that the professional qualification systems in place are inadequate because they were designed in the seventies; they should all be revised and, in all sectors, specific commissions and work groups have been created to do that. One other possible solution to deal with this would be company-level bargaining. In order to better represent youth interests and increase membership it is necessary to bargain training and career development issues. [...] One other aspect on which trade unions should focus is performance evaluation which is in most cases left entirely to the company. [...] Finally, a crucial aspect of work organization is related to tasks, job enlargement and job enrichment, team work etc. These dimensions are critical for workers and are probably the subject of young people's needs and expectations". [Claudio Arlati, Coordinator of the Training Unit at CISL Emilia Romagna]

"Young people would be better off if decentralised bargaining worked properly. In the construction sector in particular territorial bargaining is working well thanks to the good functioning of the bilateral system in place". [Salvatore Scelfo, FILCA-CISL National Secretary]

"Young people would be worse off in the labour market in the case of increased decentralisation because this level of bargaining is mostly based on productivity. On the other hand, collective bargaining can include measures to protect those who are less strong and could be damaged by decentralised bargaining". [Paolo Varesi, UGL National Vice-Secretary]

"Young people would benefit from an extension of company-level bargaining which would enable the creation of a more custom-made contract which cannot be achieved through standard bargaining. [...] Both trade unions and

companies should accept this challenge". [Claudio Arlati, Coordinator of the Training Unit at CISL Emilia Romagna].

3. Institutional aspects, initiatives and measures adopted by Italian trade unions

The analysis of institutional aspects, initiatives and policies related to young people is based on the analysis of primary sources (interviews) and secondary sources (website, reports, documents).

3.1. CGIL

The Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL – Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro) is the oldest trade-union organisation in Italy. Article 8 of the CGIL Statute requires the organisation to “pursue the promotion of active participation of its membership and workers, to make every effort towards democracy and trade-union unity, as well as to widen its presence in the field, i.e. at the workplace and an institutional level”. Young people are mentioned twice in the CGIL Statute, in article 6 in the paragraph on Trade Union Democracy. Here the Confederation sets the target of 20% of young people under 35 years old in executive confederations and sectorial bodies.

From the beginning, CGIL has maintained a double level structure: the vertical level, consisting of industry federations; and the horizontal level, consisting of the Territorial Chambers of Labour. To date, 13 national federations and 134 Chambers of Labour are in place.

Within its organisation, there is no autonomous youth constituency, but a dedicated Department for Youth Policies has been set up at national and local levels to provide representation, campaigning and policy-making. Youth representation within the organisation is mainly effectuated at the territorial level through the Youth Consultancy Bodies.

In addition to this department, however, youth issues are also addressed by other organisations belonging to CGIL, such as the Professions Consultancy (‘Consulta delle professioni’), which is dedicated to professionals, also including semi-subordinated workers through the ‘partita IVA’ (‘tax code’) and new professions linked to ICT, both involving many young people, and Nidil CGIL, which represents to all ‘atypical’ workers in a transversal and trans-sectorial way.

Although young people are not formally represented in the structure by an autonomous organisation, they are at the centre of several campaigns – not only as

‘targets’ but also as organisers and activists. Since 2010, CGIL has organised the national celebration of youth in order to share ideas, experiences and best practices. The initiative has been replicated at federation and territorial levels.

In the last three years CGIL has also organised a number of initiatives and projects for young people.

Designed by the Department for Youth Policies in 2010, the campaign ‘**NON+ disposti a tutto**’, i.e. ‘NO LONGER available for anything’ aimed to put precariousness at the centre of debate and increase awareness of this phenomenon. The campaign, designed by an expert in communication, was launched without showing that it was being organised by CGIL, but rather as a form of ‘guerrilla marketing’. A fake labour agency was created online, publishing fake job announcements for indecent and provocative job offers. After a while this turned in a mass phenomenon and went viral, with young people protesting against the increased precariousness and the existence of indecent job offers targeting them. At this point, CGIL started to attach to the announcements labels saying ‘NON+’ (‘No longer’). The campaign evolved into a network called ‘**il nostro tempo è adesso**’ (‘our time is now’) which aimed to discuss the issue of youth precariousness within the territorial Chambers of Labour and to campaign about more general fields of youth interests.

The proposals included in the ‘NON+’ campaign concerned the improvement of youth conditions in the labour market and in society through the promotion of investment in research, the renewal of public administration with the entrance of young and highly-qualified workers, the improvement of public employment services, the fight against precariousness by increasing the cost of labour in cases of temporary contracts, strengthening collective bargaining coverage, increased rights for pro-interns, the extension of social security to all (including young atypical workers), the introduction of wage support forms, equal retirement contributions for all contract types, new investment in education and the support for affordable accommodation for young people.

The campaign is innovative in its strategy and results. All the initiatives were organised and advertised on the internet and social media through a ‘guerrilla marketing’ communication strategy: this is a concrete example of how a trade union can be attractive to and involve non-affiliated young people in line with the US ‘organising’ model. As far as results are concerned, the campaign gave voice to many young people and mobilized them collectively, thus overcoming problems of fragmentation. However, as the Coordinator of the Youth Policy Department commented, this great mobilization paid dividends in terms of image but not in terms of membership.

Another initiative born within the ‘NON+’ campaign, ‘conilcontratto.it’ (i.e. ‘with a contract.it’), was directed at young practitioners and autonomous workers

of professional studies. Organised by Filcams-CGIL (the CGIL Federation of Commerce, Services and the Tertiary Sector), 'NON+' movements and the precariousness network, the campaign was launched in 2011 during the renewal of the national sectorial collective agreement for the professional studies sector with the aim of informing non-standard workers about the negotiation and contents of the new agreement. The campaign was promoted through a dedicated website, social networks and a newsletter, as well as through events and meetings at the territorial level.

In coordination with the 'NON+' initiative, Filcams-CGIL and Nidil organised a campaign named '[Dissociati](#)' ('disassociated') to combat abuse of employees working as 'associati in partecipazione' or with a 'joint venture contract', i.e. with a contract under which the employer shares the profits of its company with an 'associate' in exchange for the associate's work. Given the widespread abuse linked with these contractual arrangements, the initiative aims to be a channel through which instances of abuse can be reported and information about bogus forms of 'associazione in partecipazione' can be provided so as to make workers aware of the risks associated with this type of contract. Hundreds of workers reported their negative experiences on the website, where a sort of 'black list' of companies has been created. Reported companies have also been contacted by trade unions to verify whether or not the contract was being used legally.

According to our interview with the Coordinator of the Youth Policy Department, Andrea Brunetti, this campaign is an example of a membership campaign because it started as a denunciation of this abuse and has resulted in the regulation of these employment contracts and in increased subscription to trade unions.

Another campaign that had a good return in terms of membership is the '**Invisibili**' ('Invisible') campaign by FLAI CGIL, launched in 2010 to fight against '*caporalato*' (a phenomenon existing in southern Italy entailing the recruitment of day labourers in agriculture without respecting the law) and this actually resulted in the workers in question, who are mainly immigrants, joining trade unions, and in the regularisation of their employment conditions.

In May 2013, young trade unionists involved in the 'NON+' project launched a new campaign named '[Datevi una regolata](#)' ('Regulate yourselves') calling for the statutory regulation of internships. From the north to the south of Italy, young trade unionists organised protests and events to ask the regions (which have regulatory power over internships) to pass a law introducing minimum wage for interns and to provide them with a concrete training experience to improve their employability.

Two other initiatives have been launched at a local level in order to advise young people in the labour market. The first one is named '[Toolbox](#)'. Open in

Bergamo since March 2012, Toolbox is a social centre to bring young people together and to support them. A number of workshops and cultural events have also taken place. The second initiative is named ‘Spazio sociale del lavoro’ (‘Social work space’), an information centre set up in 2012 to help orientate young people in the labour market and to assist them in work related practices. The peculiarity of both projects is their practical and direct approach to increasing young people’s capabilities (how to request unemployment and safety net contributions, how to turn to courts and so forth) in the labour market.

3.2. CISL

The Italian Confederation of Workers’ Trade Unions (CISL – Confederazione Italiana Sindacato Lavoratori) has a dual-level structure: a vertical part consisting of industrial federations and a horizontal part consisting of the territorial articulations of both confederations and federations. The executive bodies are elected every four years by the congress at each level of the structure in line with directives and targets set by the national congress.

In 2008, CISL established the Association of Young People in order to create a new frontier of representation and participation, with the aim of organising, protecting and involving young people both in and out of the workplace. More specifically, the association is devoted to the orientation of young people in the labour market, as well as to the promotion of their active and democratic participation within CISL.

On the day when the Association was created, guidelines for the organisation of young people at the local level were presented, the Statute was registered and a dedicated website was launched. In the CISL Statute the term ‘young people’ is used once, in relation to the composition of the secretariat of local committees according to which young people should not be taken into account when calculating the number of members.

The association is structured at national, regional and local levels. At the national level, the bodies are: the Assembly, consisting of all the regional and local presidents; the Coordination Committee, with organisation and managing power; and the President.

The integration of new generations within the Confederation is promoted through a direct relationship between its various structures, as well as with other existing or future associations. Subscriptions are made directly with the local associations. Members who are less than 32 years old can join the association for free. Within the Confederation the association is articulated throughout all of the federations, and its constituency has access to all the services that CISL offers to

its members. Nonetheless, members of the Association do not have full rights of participation in the internal democratic life of the Confederation, and they only have an advisory role in committees.

Another example of CISL's attention towards young people is the Department for Youth Policies established within the Department for Migrants, Women and Young People, the aim of which is to strengthen young people's participation and representation through policies of active citizenship and social inclusion.

Among the initiatives dedicated to young people, mention should be made of the training course organised by CISL and ETUI (European Trade Union Institute) named '**Il rinnovamento del sindacato per i giovani**' ('trade union renewal for young people'). The course was organised in January 2014 and was aimed at promoting the development of young people's active involvement and participation in the Confederation.

As an example of the successful membership campaign promoted by CISL in the last three years, Francesco Lauria (CISL research centre) indicates the **campaign aimed at fighting against the abuse of semi-subordinated and autonomous workers** (as 'partite IVA'), the actions developed to promote **supplementary social security for young people**, as well as campaigns promoted by Felsa CISL regarding '**atypical**' work.

Other campaigns aimed at promoting youth interests in general are those of CISL '**Campiscuola**' ('Summer Camp'): training courses of 5 days promoted each year by CISL and dedicated to 50 young trade unionists (2014) to be given training on crucial topics and to help improve their careers within the trade union.

"Through the summer camp young people imagine building their role in society and become more aware of the role of trade unions, giving good feedback".
[Salvatore Scelfo, FILCA-CISL National Secretary]

This year the topic of the summer camp was how to develop protection for workers in SMEs through bargaining, bilateralism and life-long learning. Last year topics were legality, social justice, economics and finance.

A 'best practice' is also '**Anolf**', an association of young immigrants and second generation immigrants, created 30 years ago by CISL to foster integration between Italians and migrant workers and their families.

A useful initiative, '**Amico Lavoro**' was launched in 2011 by FILCA-CISL (CISL's organisation for the construction sector) to facilitate young people's entrance into the labour market through more appropriate matching of labour demand and supply in the construction sector.

CISL also promoted the 'Policoro' project, launched in 1995 by CEI (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana) and Caritas Italy to foster youth employment in

southern regions (Policoro is indeed the name of a city in the south of Italy); since then CISL has organised over 100 meetings with the participation of 4,000 young southerners.

3.3. UIL

UIL (Unione Italiana del Lavoro), as stated in article 9 of the Labour Statute, is an Italian confederational trade union composed of Unioni Nazionali di Categoria (sectorial national unions), Unioni Regionali (regional unions), Camere Sindacali Territoriali (territorial unions). The sectorial unions are composed of all worker-members of the same sector and are organised at the territorial level through entities at regional and provincial levels. Young people seem to be very central in the UIL Statute. Indeed, the word ‘youth’ is repeated 18 times in the institutional documents. References concern the scopes and goals of the Confederation and, besides workers, retired individuals.

In article 3, for example, the UIL Statute pledges, amongst the goals of the confederation,

“a) to organise workers, retired persons and young people to guide them in their struggles for the promotion and protection of rights and common professional and economic interests, intervening actively on all the problems that, directly or indirectly, influence and put them at risk; (...) c) promote the membership of workers, retired persons and young people at the organisation through representing organisations at work and throughout the territory (...)”.

There are 16 UIL federations covering all sectorial subgroups, both public and private, and retired persons.

Over time, UIL has also created associations, companies and cooperatives that provide information, consulting and administration, legal, pension, tax, allowance and consumer assistance.

UIL funded the youth organisation, ‘Coordinamento UIL giovani’ (‘UIL Youth Coordination’), in the occasion of the IV National Conference in March 1985 and launched in February 1986. The first Assembly meeting was held on 12th December 1987 and in January 1988 UIL Youth started its membership campaign.

UIL’s youth organisms are the national direction, the national secretary coordinated by the national secretariat, the president of the national assembly, the national accounting board (‘*collegio nazionale dei revisori dei conti*’), the board of arbitrators (‘*il collegio nazionale dei probiviri*’) which is located at regional and provincial levels through local associations.

The stated mission of UIL Youth is to interpret young people’s problems, in

particular, the problems of those who are not yet in the labour market or who have entered it but find themselves in a precarious situation.

Information on the UIL Youth Association is scarce, both on the institutional website and on the internet, and the authors' main source of information was the website '[Forum nazionale dei giovani](#)' ('National youth forum') where UIL youth is included, together with over 75 associations representing around 4 million young people.

Neither in the Statute nor in institutional information can the presence of young people in the hierarchy of UIL be found. Young people do, however, have a coordination role within some local associations. A better understanding of young people's presence in UIL does indeed come from local level associations. UIL Youth in the province of Bari, for example, is composed of around 50 young people representing local associations with the aim of improving the conditions of young people in the labour market by providing them with training and information. Another example is UIL Youth in the region of Lazio, which is very active in the framework of the Youth Guarantee. Like other trade unions, UIL has also created an organisation dedicated to 'atypical' workers, UIL Temp, of which many young people are members.

If we look at the campaigns and initiatives implemented by UIL over the last three years very few of them concern young people. The most recent initiative, disseminated through social media, is the project '**Green economy and youth employment in Lazio**', an event concerning the possible implications and potential of the green economy for youth employment in Lazio. Less recently, UIL promoted some specific campaigns addressing young people. '**Partiamo Bene! La sicurezza sul lavoro comincia da giovani. Settimana europea 2006**' ('A good start! Health and safety in the work place begins with the young. European week 2006') was a project promoted by the European agency for health and safety at work and coordinated at the national level by UIL, with the involvement of the Ministry of Education, with the aim of ensuring that young people have 'a safe start' in the labour market.

3.4. UGL

In the Statute of UGL (Unione Generale del Lavoro), young people are cited in article 2 "Principles and Aims" which states that the Social State is a way to fight against social exclusion, especially with reference to the unemployed, young people entering the labour market, the elderly and the handicapped.

UGL's national coordinating youth organisation began in 1995. The organisation gathers together all workers who are members of the trade union and

aged up to 35, as well as all non-working persons (students and young people in search of an occupation) who wish to join. Membership to UGL for young people who do not work is free.

The mission of UGL's organisation targeting young people is, on the one hand, to promote youth interests and conditions in the labour market and, on the other hand, to provide opportunities for them to approach the trade union, favouring the start and growth of inter-generational renewal.

Youth UGL is constituted by a national coordinating organisation and, at the local level, by regional and provincial coordinating organisations, and it is present mainly in the south of Italy, while no UGL youth organisations exist in the Valle D'Aosta, Lombardy, Trentino Alto Adige, Veneto, Tuscany, Abruzzo or Molise.

Activities conducted by UGL youth organisations are mostly round the table, with conferences, training courses and others paid for with regional, national and European funds. Since 2006, UGL has been part of the National Youth Forum. Among the campaigns undertaken by UGL in the coming year one can find the 'GeM 2.0' project. GeM 2.0 (*Young people and mobility*) is a project on the transnational mobility of young people. The aim of this project is to inform and guide young people on the opportunities arising from transnational mobility. UGL also includes among its activities targeting youth the Youth Guarantee programme, although it is not clear what this effectively implies as the planned activities are mainly events and video conferences.

4. Communication strategies of trade unions in Italy

Information and communication are in the midst of a revolution with tangible and undeniable effects. Experiencing a moment of redefinition and the rethinking of their roles and responsibilities in societies, all trade unions seem to recognise the importance of being active and representing today's workers, including through innovative communication strategies, and they also seem to be aware of their limits in terms of communication.

“All methods of communications (traditional and modern) should be used. Today the internet and social media allow us to speak to people directly, something that was previously impossible. However, without communication at the workplace it is still difficult to get in contact with young people. In the social media arena, trade unions are users the same as others, while at the workplace they have a unique and irreplaceable function”. [Gaetano Sateriale, National Coordinator of CGIL Labour Programme]

“Undoubtedly the use of the internet and social media has an important function in attracting young people. CISL has strongly invested in communication, launching its own web TV. The organisation of targeted campaigns to be disseminated through new media is a useful instrument for reaching young people in and out of the workplaces”. [Francesco Lauria, CISL Research Centre]

“The communication problem trade unions have is remarkable. The difficulty derives from our role which entails a complicated and technical language. [...] Trade unionists often think they have to speak about everything with anyone, but in this way the final message is a bit confused. Today the communication trend is toward extreme simplification and trade unionists often lack the capacity to be concise, at times using a rhetorical style”. [Stefano Franceschelli, Secretary CISL Emilia Romagna]

“Trade unions do not communicate effectively. One reason for this is related to the content of our position which is neither black nor white, but often the result of compromise, going beyond slogans. The second reason is the fact that our style of communication is old. [...] We still communicate like we did in the seventies: we give everyone the same thing. Today communication needs to be more targeted”. [Claudio Arlati, Coordinator of the Training Unit at CISL Emilia Romagna]

“A web communication expert told us that our website is typical of the nineties, something to think about. For us the nineties are yesterday but not for young people”. [Monica Lattanzi, Dispute Coordinator at CISL Emilia Romagna]

“In general the complexity of communication in the world of work has increased. It is therefore necessary to implement new forms of communication, starting from new technologies”. [Salvatore Scelfo, FILCA-CISL National Secretary]

One way to achieve this aim lays in the new opportunities generated by the web. It is widely believed that the internet is the technology that has caused and will continue to bring about remarkable changes within trade unions, given the wide opportunities it provides for connecting and communicating with workers.

Trade unions, after all, are communicative by nature. ‘Acting as a trade union’ means getting in contact with the employer-company-representative and informing public opinion about its own conduct and position. In other words, trade unions are all about communication.

Trade unions in Italy first started using the internet in about 1994 when CGIL uploaded its first web page. Although information has improved in quality and quantity over the years, the internet’s potential is yet to be fully explored and exploited.

Thanks to web pages and social networks, new media channels in the ‘access age’ allow trade unions to find new spaces for representation where, as a social actor, they can promote themselves and experiment new practices and ventures. Unions are now able to join the web and participate with ambition, finding the chance to deeply renew themselves, getting in contact with young people and creating a link with them. Through its modern language the internet may be able to help restore a proper contact with those younger workers who have IT knowledge and seem alien to the concept of union participation.

In this sense the use of the internet and of new media could represent a real opportunity and the results that have been achieved, where they have been managed in a proper way, prove it. For this reason, unions include the new means of communication in their toolbox on different levels, since a good contract or a good campaign are not enough in terms of union representation which requires clear, fast and pervading information. This is why this report has examined not only CGIL, CISL, UIL and UGL campaigns regarding young people (reported in the previous paragraph), but also how and the extent to which these campaigns have been disseminated on the web.

With a focus on trade-union initiatives and channels of communication, the following analysis seeks to understand the role of communication as a means of promoting the image and activities of trade unions, as well as as a means of attracting and encouraging the active participation of young people within the

trade unions themselves. Moreover, the analysis reviewed and benchmarked what has been done, focusing on weaknesses and strengths regarding the subject of communication.

The main content aspects taken into account were the existence of youth sections, the frequency of update of the various active channels, the level of interaction with the users, the grade of integration with social networks and the type language and communicative style used.

4.1. Web pages and multimedia

The webpages of Italian trade unions differ from each other in their communication styles, the usage of images and language.

CGIL's website (<http://www.cgil.it/>) is easy to browse and it seems the most advanced and appropriate for a young audience in terms of communication style. In general, a certain amount of investment into graphics and a process of homologation of the various channels can be perceived. The language is direct, engaging and focused on images, headlines and slogans aiming to for an emotional approach towards the user.

CISL's website (<http://www.cisl.it/>), conversely, cannot be considered as engaging from the point of view of communication: it is plain and looks as if it aims to be comforting to traditional users rather than to encourage new visitors. The language used by CISL does not seem to target a young audience and it makes great use of words rather than images and effective slogans.

UIL's website (<http://www.uil.it/>) displays a huge amount of information which is rather indistinct both conceptually and visibly, thus possibly reducing its clarity and attractiveness. The language seems clear; the images are present and placed in key spots on the page, even if they are often improperly used and do not add value to the web page, but are used as content and not as a message.

In terms of contents and updates, results are quite different.

CGIL's webpage represents the preferred channel for interaction with young people. The section devoted to them (<http://www.cgil.it/Lavoro/Giovani.aspx>) contains research material on work-related politics for the young and details of the awareness campaigns. The youth section of the web page – there is no a national independent website – is the most frequently updated. Moreover, this page contains all documents relative to the 'CGIL youth' campaigns. Furthermore, it contains a section with news related to young people such as the CGIL youth party. The CGIL webpage is easy to browse with its various sections being updated constantly.

CISL's webpage is structured in menus that guide the user through the different sections. The subpages of the website at times look neglected: many links on the webpage do not work or lead to non-existent pages. Publications – not always in chronological order – do not seem to be well valued: an easier way of browsing and explicative graphics could ease users' visualisation of the contents.

CISL's youth association website (www.cisl.it/associazionegiovani), with a horizontal and left vertical menu, replicates the main website. The presence of a forum, where there have been no activities for months, is to be underlined. www.cisl.it/giovani is updated to one year ago: the last document was uploaded on 11th of November 2012.

UIL's webpage does not include a section dedicated to young people. The main website is constantly updated with information and documents but lacking on the communication side (<http://www.uil.it/>). The website includes sections that may be of interest to young people, such as that on 'Education and Training Policies' and that dedicated to 'University and Research'. However, these sections are not updated with contents dating back to 2012.

Finally, the 'UGL youth' webpage is independent from UGL's main page (the only one of the four unions analysed). On the homepage there is, in addition to the general references, a photo gallery of the main events and initiatives organised. In plain view in the lateral columns there are links to all the programmes organised, the chance to sign up to the newsletter and access to the reserved interactive area. The website provides sections dedicated to 'School and university', 'European funding opportunities', 'Labour law', 'Youth and the EU' and 'Documents' – all these section linking back to information and documents, but they are infrequently updated and the graphics are plain.

In the wave of increasing digital interaction between citizens and social institutions (something that falls under the concept of E-government and E-democracy), and therein, the increasing use of social media in politics and by civic, social and democratic institutions, trade unions have also started to sort out their social media presence. This seems particularly crucial for trade unions' claims regarding the necessity to renew by becoming better at reaching out to young people.

All the trade unions include appropriate links to social networks on their webpages.

CGIL is also well-connected to the typical social networks (such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube). As an additional media source CGIL has its own online information channel (www.rassegna.it) and its own web-radio (<http://www.radioarticolo1.it/home/desktop.cfm>), both of which are coherent in style/colour and language with the main webpage.

CISL's portal includes links to social networks (and a link to the Giovani CISL association on Facebook), to the YouTube channel, to iPhone/iPad/Android applications to facilitate the use of the webpage on mobile devices, to the online news portal called '[Conquiste del Lavoro](#)' and finally with the '[LaborTV](#)' channel. In terms of media CISL is very active, publishing reports, the news of the day, interviews and a show schedule from 10am to 8 or 9pm. Always up-to-date, well integrated with the national webpage and with short and good quality videos, 'Labor TV' seems to be the best communication tool now in use by CISL.

UIL's webpage does not seem to give space to social channels other than Twitter. The Web.Tv ([UILwebTV](#)) is UIL's most versatile channel of communication which combines the potential of interaction and multimedia on the web with the rapidity and creative force of television. It nonetheless appears to be little visited.

UGL has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, RSS feed and Google Plus.

In conclusion we can affirm that, with the partial exclusion of UIL, all Italian trade unions have an area for the access to various social networks on their main webpages. However, not all of these use an effective means of communication. CIGL appears to have a perfect browsing system, from the clarity of the webpage to the use of engaging images. CISL stands out for its effective integration of alternative channels – especially video – such as its web TV and the YouTube Channel. UGL has the merit of dedicating a specific webpage to young people rather than a single section, whereas UIL, despite the information shared on its webpage, does not seem to follow a completely coherent communication strategy. All four unions, based on the representatives interviewed, appear to be well aware of the need to integrate their webpage with social networks.

4.2. Campaign communication

The following analysis of the communication strategies of CGIL, CISL, UIL and UGL focuses on the main campaigns launched for young people and on their dissemination.

The campaign that appears to be the most widely-disseminated and which therefore represents best practice is CGIL's 'NON+ disposti a tutto' campaign.

This communication strategy was effective in putting youth at the centre of their own campaign, making them protagonists and enhancing mobilization. The webpage www.nonpiu.it, now closed, was the heart of the initiative. A symbol was used to mark the campaign and make it recognisable ('NON+'). This 'tag' became an identifiable symbol, graphically captivating and well-balanced in terms

of language: short but with a strong message launched by the ‘NON+’, meaning that new generations were not willing to accept further exploitation. The campaign was launched through all available means, each one coherent in language and in the mission of its own channel. These were the Facebook page (with 10,762 likes), the Twitter account (@dispostiatutto, with 2,069 followers and almost 1,600 tweets), promotional and personalized videos/adverts on YouTube and on the main webpage.

The use of images on every channel worked in order to attract the attention through colours and slogans and to have an effect on the young people who were out of the labour market because they had no references, had been exploited and/or underpaid, with no rights and often frustrated in their attempts to apply their job-related skills. The language of the campaign was direct and attractive, for example ‘Lab - The thousand-jobs generation gets ready’ or ‘Are you a temporary worker chasing your social security?’, ‘You must act properly, no more internship-scams’. The level of interaction was not particularly high, but the usage of the tool is excellent: posts clearly explained the initiative; there were many images, videos or external links, always evident to everyone and with references to other profiles in order to increase visibility.

Numerous videos were launched on the National CGIL’s YouTube channel. They related to the promotion or explanation of the campaign through interviews with good levels of visualization (for example the [campaign commercial](#) was viewed 4,521 times and the [interview with the then-policymaker for young people, Ilaria Lani](#), was watched 2,355 times). At the end of the campaign a brief book about the initiative was published.

As reported in the previous chapter, in April 2014 CISL’s awareness campaign, which hopes to bring down the wall of indifference towards jobs where there is real job insecurity, was launched. Its aim is to protect the genuine self-employed jobs on which part of Italy’s economy is based. Addressing temporary workers (fake VAT numbers, co.co.pro, joint venture partners etc.) the recently launched campaign inevitably refers to all the young protagonists of this working environment and this is why it is analysed here. The document with all the answers regarding theme is available online, and shared on various channels. The flier is very appealing: it is now shared on Twitter and Facebook, as is the whole campaign, but in none of the two cases has a dedicated page been created. As there is no Twitter account for the campaign, it is spread through its dedicated hashtag: #bastaomertàsuiveriprecari (#stop to the silence about precarious work). However, although this could be a good slogan, it is a bit too long for the 140 characters available in a tweet: the risk is that the hashtag takes up too much space, and is not easy to memorise or use. As mentioned before, there is not even a dedicated Facebook page: the campaign is shared on CISL’S Labour TV page

and, although the campaign manifesto is currently the 'image of the campaign' and is appealing, the initiative has not really been diffused thus far, and so information about it is rather confusing.

5. Conclusions

The analyses carried out have investigated the relationship between young people and trade unions in Italy examining four dimensions: the youth labour market context and youth membership in trade unions, trade unions' collective bargaining actions, institutional frameworks and finally campaigning and communicational aspects. Besides 'desk research' into the above mentioned aspects, trade unions' opinions, strategies and considerations have been highlighted through semi-structured interviews with their representatives.

The condition of the youth labour market in Italy which is characterised by a high level of youth unemployment (over 40%) and inactivity, a low employment rate coupled with high flexibility (temporary and project-based contracts, agency work etc.), can be considered to be in a state of emergency and one of the main causes of the distance separating young people from trade unions. Flexibility, high turnover and instability are associated with fewer chances for young people to get in contact with and become a member of a trade union.

If, as seen in international trends and trade-union membership statistics, workers are more likely to join trade unions later in their working lives when they have greater job stability, one critical aspect from a strategic point of view would be for trade unions to find out whether it is worth developing targeted actions for young people or if it would be more effective to simply inform them and wait for them to enter the labour market more permanently.

All Italian trade-union representatives underlined the importance of putting young people at the top of their agenda because the protection and representation of the more vulnerable workers in the labour market is seen as a duty by trade unions in terms of inclusive bargaining and social representation. Moreover, in addition to considerations about values and identity, from a strategic and membership point of view, there is awareness of the fact that the sooner trade unions organise themselves to be representative of flexible workers the more they will expand their membership base and ensure future representativeness and existence. All in all, therefore, the distance between young people and trade unions does not seem to be related to age but rather to labour-status.

Other determinants of this distance are linked to the framework of the economy which is made up of micro-enterprises that do not have trade unions, thus making it very difficult to organise workers and trade unions. Concerning the latter, in most of cases trade unions are aware that their institutional and

organisational framework should be updated to make the institution more open to include and attract young people.

There are indeed several things that trade unions are doing to bridge the distance between them and young people, though generally through campaigns rather than collective bargaining.

The analysis of collective agreements in 21 sectors of the economy reveals that young people do not appear to be a bargaining topic. What emerges is that collective regulation applies to the entire workforce, irrespective of diversities based on age, sex, and so forth. When it comes to training measures, for example, in most cases they apply to all employees. Furthermore, collective bargaining hardly deals with the external labour market: measures are generally set for those who already have a job. A major exception to these results is the apprenticeship. Since statutory legislation on apprenticeships devolves specific regulation to collective bargaining at national level, national sectorial collective agreements have addressed the issue in all industries. Other relevant exceptions are cross-generation and solidarity measures in order to improve employability of young people.

In the last three years trade unions have been more active in campaigning for young people. All Italian trade unions, and especially CGIL, have conducted a campaign specifically addressing young people. CGIL's 'NON +' campaign of 2010 can be cited as a success in terms of youth mobilisation capacity and communication strategy, being an example of 'guerrilla marketing' as well as well-planned social media coverage and interaction. Notwithstanding the viral echo throughout the media and among young people, this campaign did not result in increased membership for the trade union.

In terms of membership best practice was seen in 'Invisibili' and 'Dissociati' campaigns by CGIL, which were aimed at reducing the phenomenon of '*caporalato*' in southern Italy and, thanks to the information and services provided to field workers (mostly immigrants) many of them have had their contracts regularised.

Finally, trade unions are conscious of the potential and the benefits that an integrated and coherent communication strategy can bring and they have started to create the tools needed, including those using ICT. The number of trade-union webpages, social network profiles, web radios and webTVs is constant on the rise. The webpage is the main communication tool for disseminating documentation and information about initiatives to the general public. However, it is interesting how in three cases out of four there is no webpage dedicated specifically to young people and they are instead referred to in sub-sections of the main website. Even where there is a section dedicated to young people on the main webpage, it has often not been updated for years and it is not possible to access useful information

on youth rights or on opportunities within the labour market. All trade unions seem aware of the importance of communicating through the use of all the media tools available, although they tend to be of the opinion that digital communication should not replace face to face communication at the company level because this is the place where affiliation begins and continues.

The most commonly used social network is Facebook, where a large number of accounts are frequently updated. However, there is a lot of confusion regarding the features of the platform and the opportunities that the site offers trade unions. Often in the place of a fan-page, the proper tool for an organisation, there is a personal profile or a group with different features, indicating an incomplete understanding of the site. The same happens on Twitter where it is common to find profiles which have not posted a single tweet or have been abandoned for years.

Independently from the use of social networks there is a generally poor usage of multimedia tools: images, videos, graphic information and audio are still used too rarely. Content is often uploaded onto the main webpage, whereas on a social network there is just a simple external link. Furthermore, content is often similar to that of a newspaper, dealing with general news and political quarrels rather than providing useful information to young workers or to the unemployed. On many accounts, on the other hand, there is evidence of a greater vivacity of communication thanks to the use of less formal language, content relevant for workers, to multimedia and to the high amount of interaction with users. In conclusion trade unions have started to use new communication tools, but they still too often tend to follow old paths and old communication strategies which need to be updated.

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