



Italy among the EU member states with the third lowest OJT: A new Eurofound report says

by Meysam Salimi

On March 27, 2015 a new Eurofound report published the results of [3rd European Company Survey](#) (ECS2013), in which among others, the provision of employee training at the European level, was placed in the limelight. The report looks at the incidence and objectives of training; establishment types of training; distribution of types across structural characteristics as well as scores on establishment performance and workplace well-being.

According to the report the **main objectives** for doing so were: to improve and extend the skills employees use in their current job and so enable them to better perform their normal duties; to raise awareness of health and safety issues and hazard-prevention measures; to enable staff to rotate tasks with colleagues or to take on a different job position.

Regarding the **incidence** of training the survey found the similar proportions of establishments providing two types of training, **On-the-job training (OJT)** (73%) (ranges between 38% in Denmark and 95% in Finland) and **Paid time off** to employees for training (71%) (ranges from around 35% in Bulgaria to more than 90% in Austria), when 13% of establishments did not provide any training at all.

Moreover, the report distinguishes four different types of training establishments including ‘**No training**’ (virtually no training of any kind); ‘**Selective**’ (offering both forms of training, but to a limited number of employees); ‘**Encompassing**’ (offering both forms of training to a majority of employees). Last but not least ‘**On-the-job only**’ (offering to almost all of employees, while not providing paid time off for training at all or to a limited number of employees only). According to the report, the first three types of establishments had been mainly targeted by small, medium-sized and large enterprises in the EU respectively in the 12 months prior to the survey.

However, according to the survey’s data, some firms have embraced training as fundamental to their success but many firms, especially small and new companies, appear reluctant to invest in training as it is costly and they have limited budget.

On the other hand, On-the-job training, which is company-specific and often less costly for firms, is likely to be applied in an encompassing way within the establishments. The approach for employees to take paid time off to participate in training is applied in a selective way, targeted at specific jobs and employees. Regarding the **distribution of training types across structural characteristics**, table 1 depicts some more detail of the European establishments providing training by size class, sector and countries with more prevalence.

Table 1 shows that the small establishments (10-49 employees) are most likely to be of the ‘No training’ type, compared to medium-sized and large establishments which are more of the ‘Selective’ and ‘Encompassing’ types respectively.

In concern with the distribution of the training types across sectors, there is no clear pattern. All sectors have a similar proportion of establishments of the ‘No training’ type. However, data shows that establishments in the transport sector are slightly more likely to be of the ‘On-the-job only’ type while establishments in financial services and in other services are more often of the ‘Encompassing’ type.

Table 1: European Establishments Providing Training by types of training and size class

Size of Enterprises	Small (10-49)	Medium (50-249)	Large (above 250)	SMEs	
Types of Establishments	No training	Selective	Encompassing	On-the-job only	
Training Approach	**	Paid time off for training	On the Job Training	Paid time off	On the Job
Number of engaged employees	**	Limited number	Majority of employees	No paid time off at all or to a limited number of employees	Almost all of their employees
Sector	Not clear	Not clear	Financial Services	Transport Sector	
Countries (with more prevalence)	Romania, Greece, Croatia	Denmark, the Czech Republic, Italy	Finland, Sweden, Ireland	Bulgaria, Latvia, Slovakia	

Source: Author's elaboration on ECS 2013 – Management questionnaire

The Eurofound report also highlights that Italy enjoys a high rate of over 70% paid time off for training, while has the third lowest on-the-job training rate, topping only Romania and Denmark. The report adds, while in Italy, providing paid time off is the dominant approach to training, in the other countries like Germany, the mix of training including paid time off and on-the-job training is relatively more prevalent. The report, however, provides neither any clarifications about the reasons for such a gap in Italy nor any recommendations on the issue.

The report continues, in Italy paid time off for training allows employees to participate in training but in a selective way, targeted at specific jobs and employees.

Looking ahead, the report declares a higher level of training coverage (the number of workers that participate in training) and a broader scope of training (the ways in which training is offered) coincide with better workplace well-being and especially with better establishment performance. Establishments of the 'Encompassing' type in terms of training type have the best scores on both outcomes, while establishments of the 'No training' type have the lowest scores. Interestingly, the difference between establishments of the 'No training' type and establishments of the 'Selective' and 'On-the-job only' types is particularly pronounced with regards to establishment performance, whereas the differences between these three types are much smaller in terms of workplace well-being.

The report concludes, if policymakers, managers and other stakeholders are interested in the establishment performance optimization, more investment in training and skills development of employees can be a solution. Whereas if they are looking for workplace well-being the solution might only work in large enterprises but not properly in small and medium sized firms. Therefore, defining new determinants to address workplace well-being in SMEs remains challenging.

Meysam Salimi
 @Msalimi_Adapt

ADAPT Research Fellow,
 International Doctoral School in Human Capital Formation and Labour Relations
 ADAPT-CQIA, University of Bergamo