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LUTTE CONTRE LE  
DÉCROCHAGE SCOLAIRE

#CCI\_Décrochage

# First steps forward in the fight against early school leaving

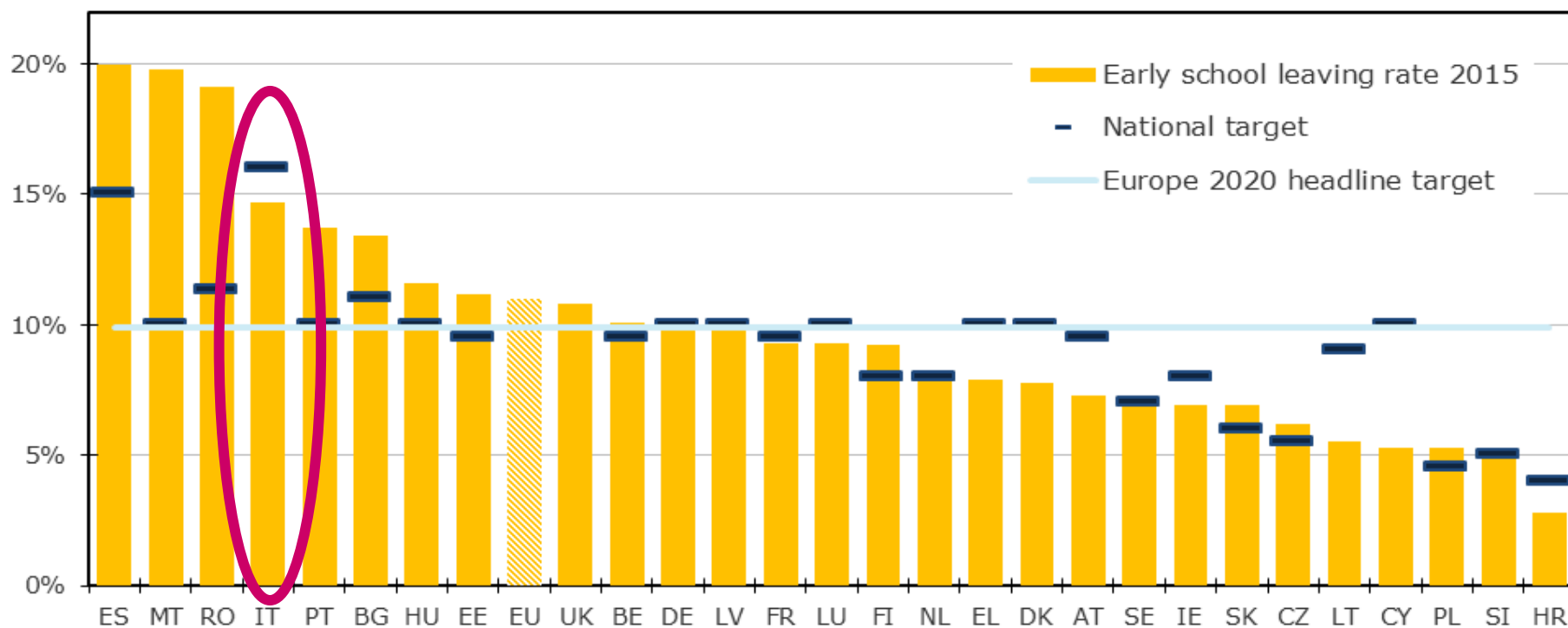
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9 & 10 NOVEMBRE 2017

# > Current early school leaving rates

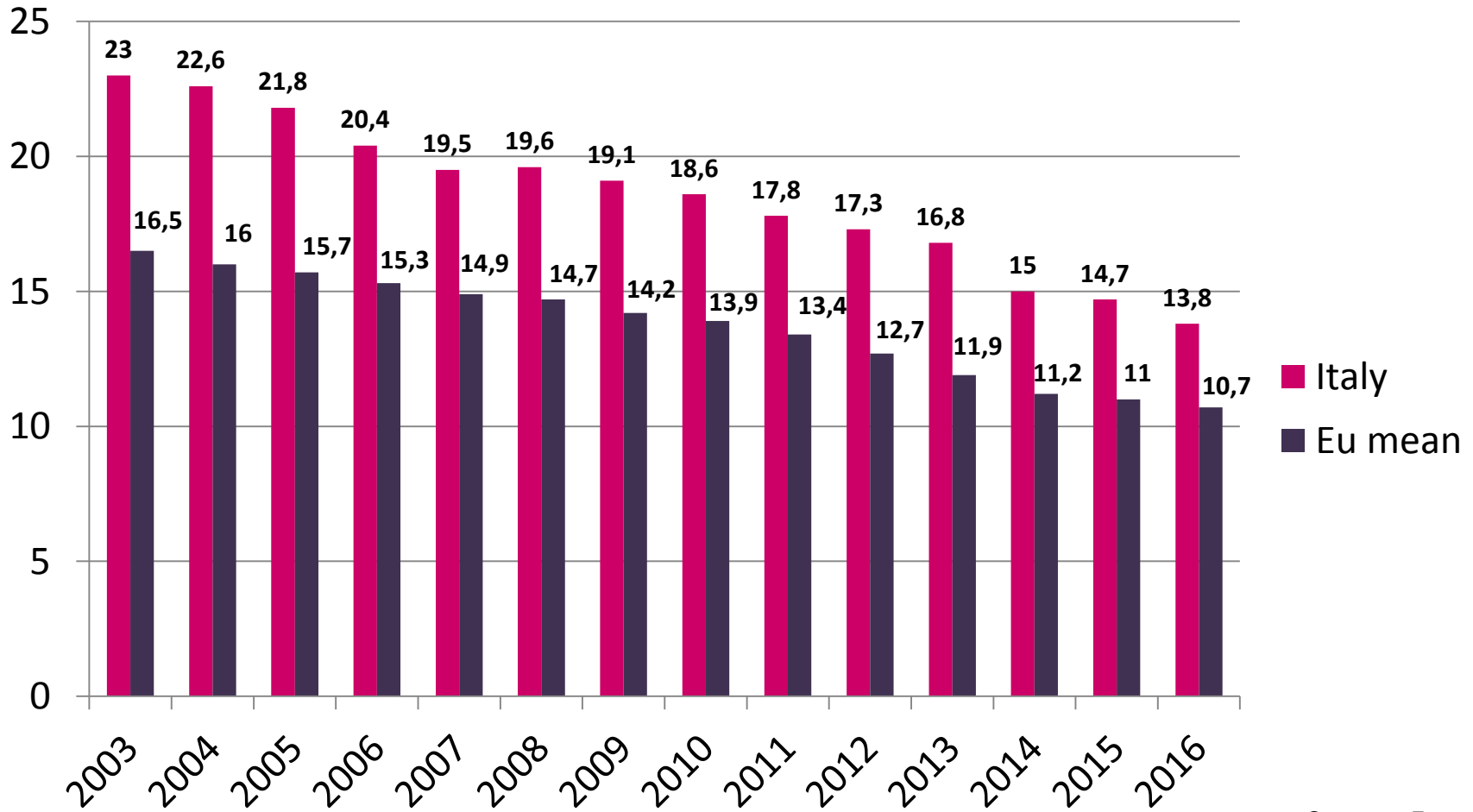
- More than 4 million young people (18-24 year olds) across EU28 countries are considered early school leavers (ESL)
- Only 40% of these young people are employed



Eurostat (LFS, table [t2020\_40])



# Change in the ESL rate among 18-24 year olds in Italy, 2003-2016



Source: Eurostat

# Reducing ESL : Europe 20/20 headline target

**Statistical definition :** *The share of the population aged 18 to 24 years old that has not received a qualification from completing upper secondary education and was not enrolled in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey.*

## High ESL rates are:

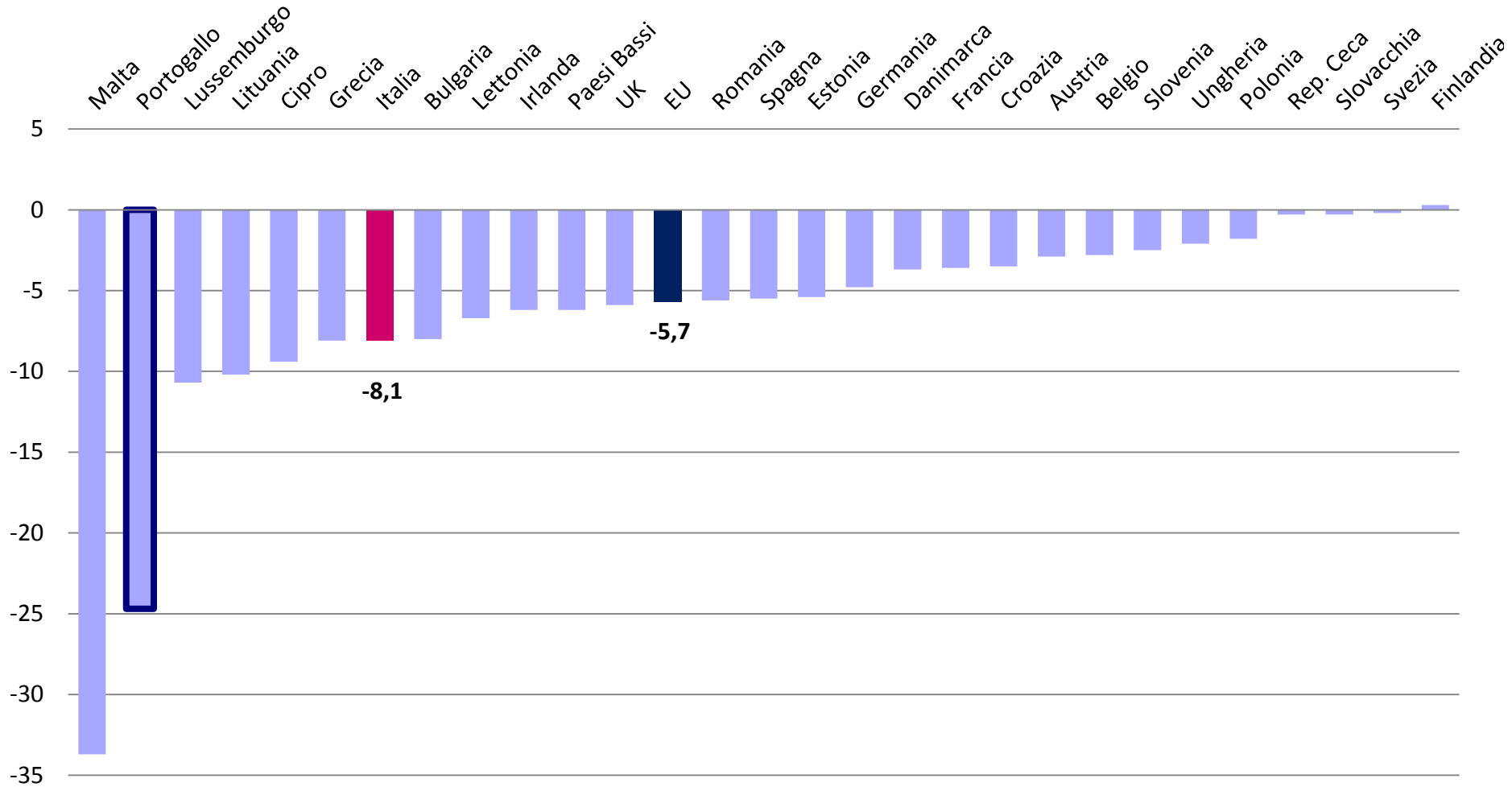
- A waste of educational investments, which go to benefit only a portion of the population
- A betrayal of the main objective of *public* education, which is to give citizens equal opportunities to succeed

## Reducing ESL rates is associated with improvements in:

- The social economic status of educated individuals
- A country's competitiveness globally
- Enrolment rates in tertiary education



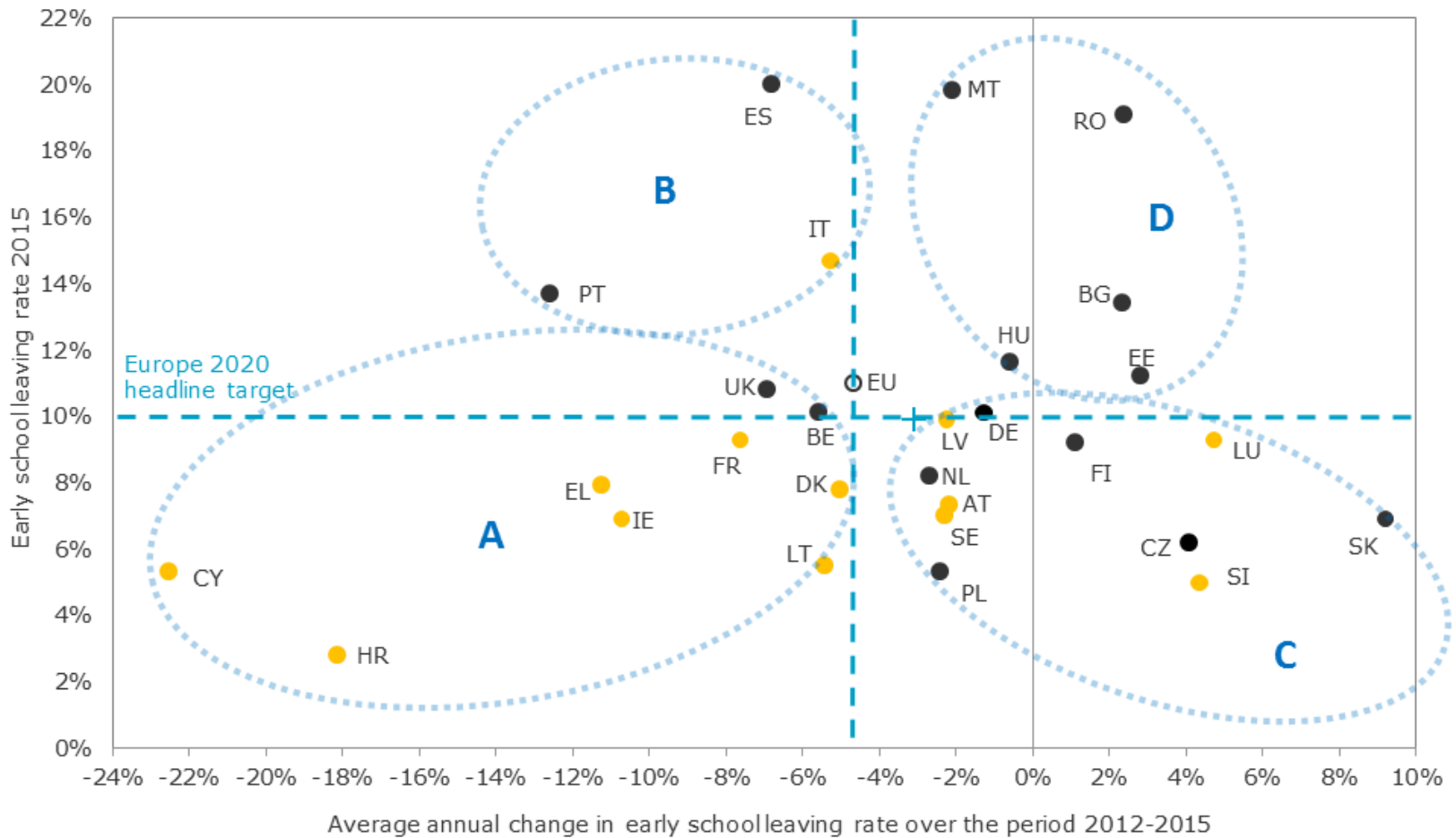
# Percentage point net change in ESL rates among 18-24 year olds in selected European countries, 2000 - 2013



Source: Eurostat



# ESL: Current performance and recent change



**Source:** European semester thematic factsheet early school leavers, DG EAC calculations based on Eurostat (LFS, data table [t2020\_40]).

**Note:** EU Member States having already reached their national targets are depicted in yellow.

## The strange case of Italy

- Over the long term → there seems to have been significant positive effects from measures to reduce ESL as a result of huge economic investments from European Social Fund and Operative National Program budgets (275 million Euro)

### HOWEVER

- It is not known which levers have contributed to this result because there is a lack of:
  - Explicit and comprehensive policy measures
  - Cost-benefit analyses, student and teacher assessments, and follow-up studies
  - Evidence-based evaluations allowing us to learn from our actions

# > Three facets of the fight against ESL

## 1. STRATEGIC LEVEL RESPONSES

Monitoring; coordination between measures...

## 2. PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Targeted, structural measures; innovations to teaching practices; teacher training; guidance activities...

## 3. INTERVENTION & REINTEGRATION STRATEGIES

Second chance classes; services and support for at-risk students and NEETS; school-work vouchers or checks...

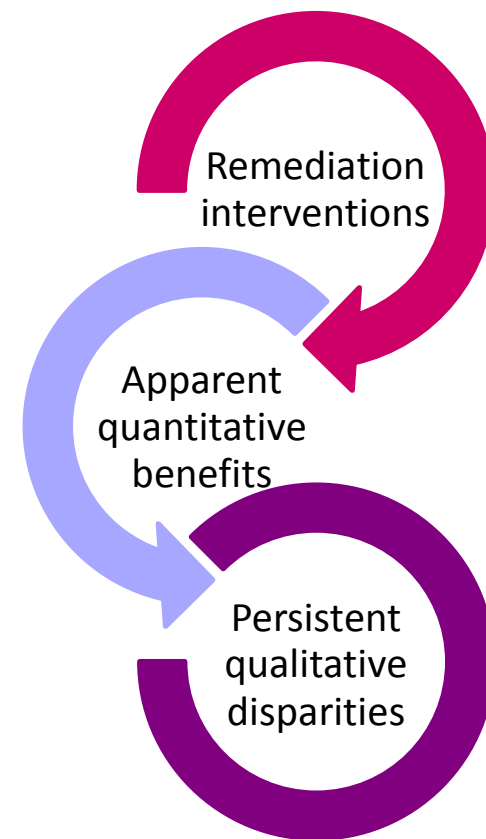


## ➤ Prevention strategies at the national level in Italy

1. In 2007, Italy raised the minimal school leaving age to 16 years old in line with much of the rest of the European Union
2. Also in 2007, Italy changed the structure of secondary education to add a second pathway to incorporate initial professional education
3. Since 2004, Italy has been strongly promoting early school entry for children starting at 5 years old (school is mandatory at 6 years old)

# ➤ Remediation interventions at the school level in Italy

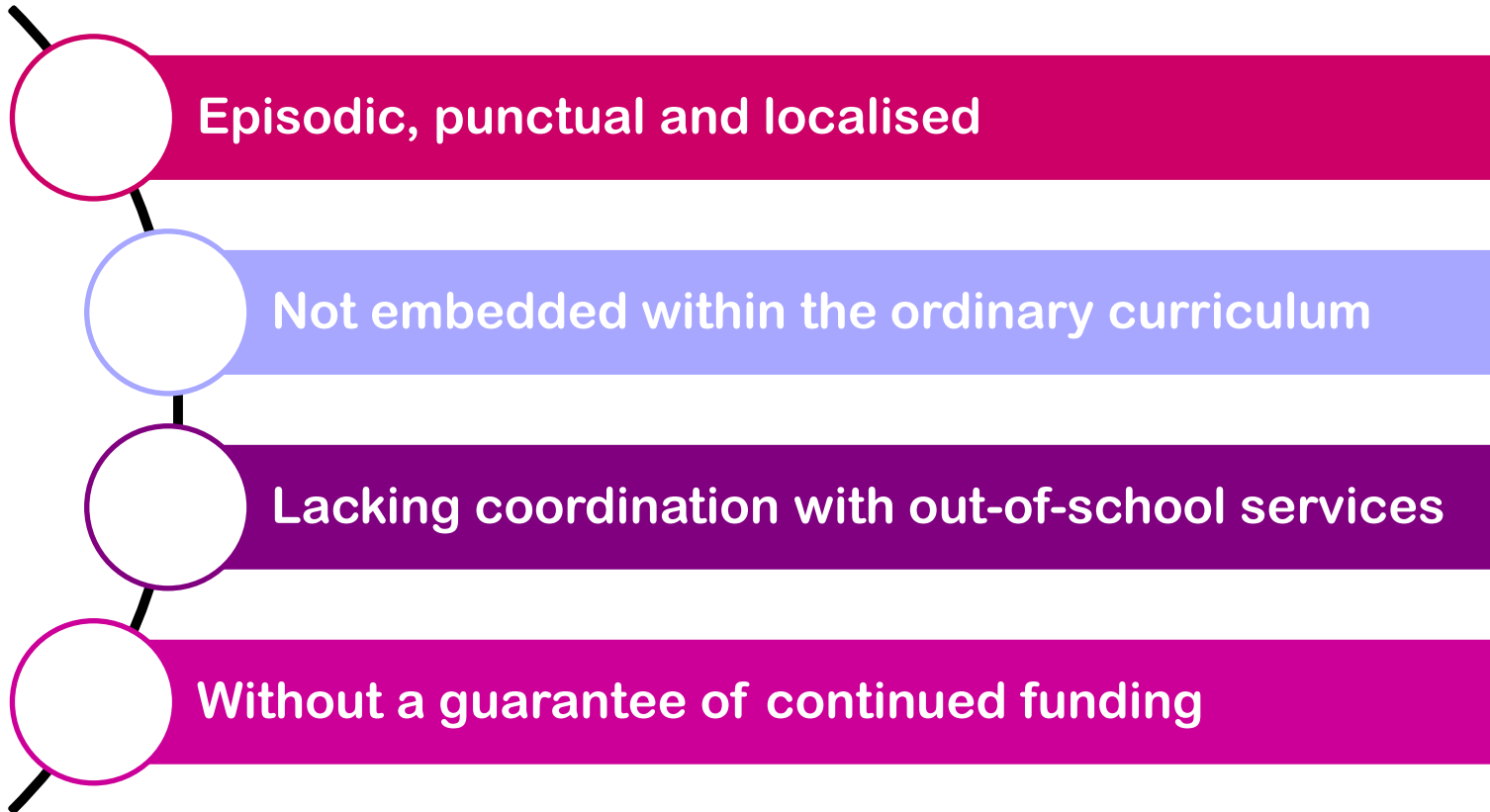
1. Strengthening of ordinary didactic activities in small groups of students with the same level of achievement (60% of projects)
2. Laboratories (arts and crafts activities, entertainment) aiming at improving the school-classroom climate (50% of projects)
3. Guidance, mentoring and coaching single students (33%) with the aid of private services and church associations
4. Activities with ITC and student empowering (33%)
5. Activities to promote parents' involvement (20%)



*Source: Checchi, 2014 – Mapping devices in 4 cities : Milano, Roma, Torino and Palermo*

## > Limitations to these strategies

For the most part, these actions are:



## ➤ Teacher involvement



- About 1-5 teachers are regularly involved in such activities in their schools (even more on an occasional basis)
- Fewer teachers explicitly participate in opportunities designed to innovate their teaching methods
- Unfortunately, even if the overall ESL rate was to decrease, the inequity within the social distribution of educational opportunities would remain unaltered

## ➤ Territorial gap: the «southern issue»

- Southern regions and the islands have fallen behind Northern regions when it comes to economic development, unemployment rates, market income differentials, social institutions, etc.
- In terms of education, this translates into:
  - Higher rates of ESL – NEET
  - Larger proportion of low-performing students

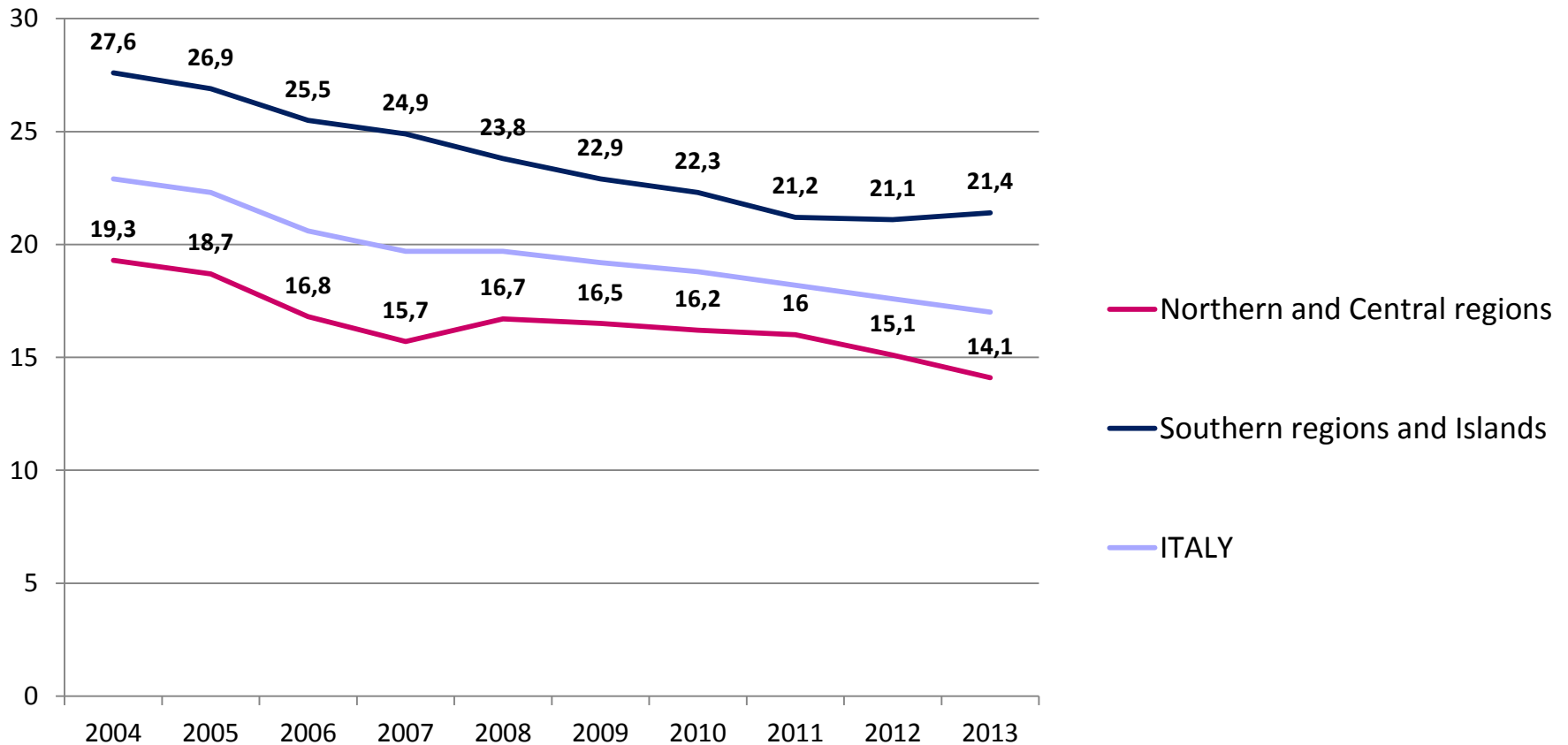


AS A RESULT...

Southern manpower has a bad reputation: workers are perceived as being less skilled



# North vs. South: ESL rates among 18-24 year olds, 2004-2013



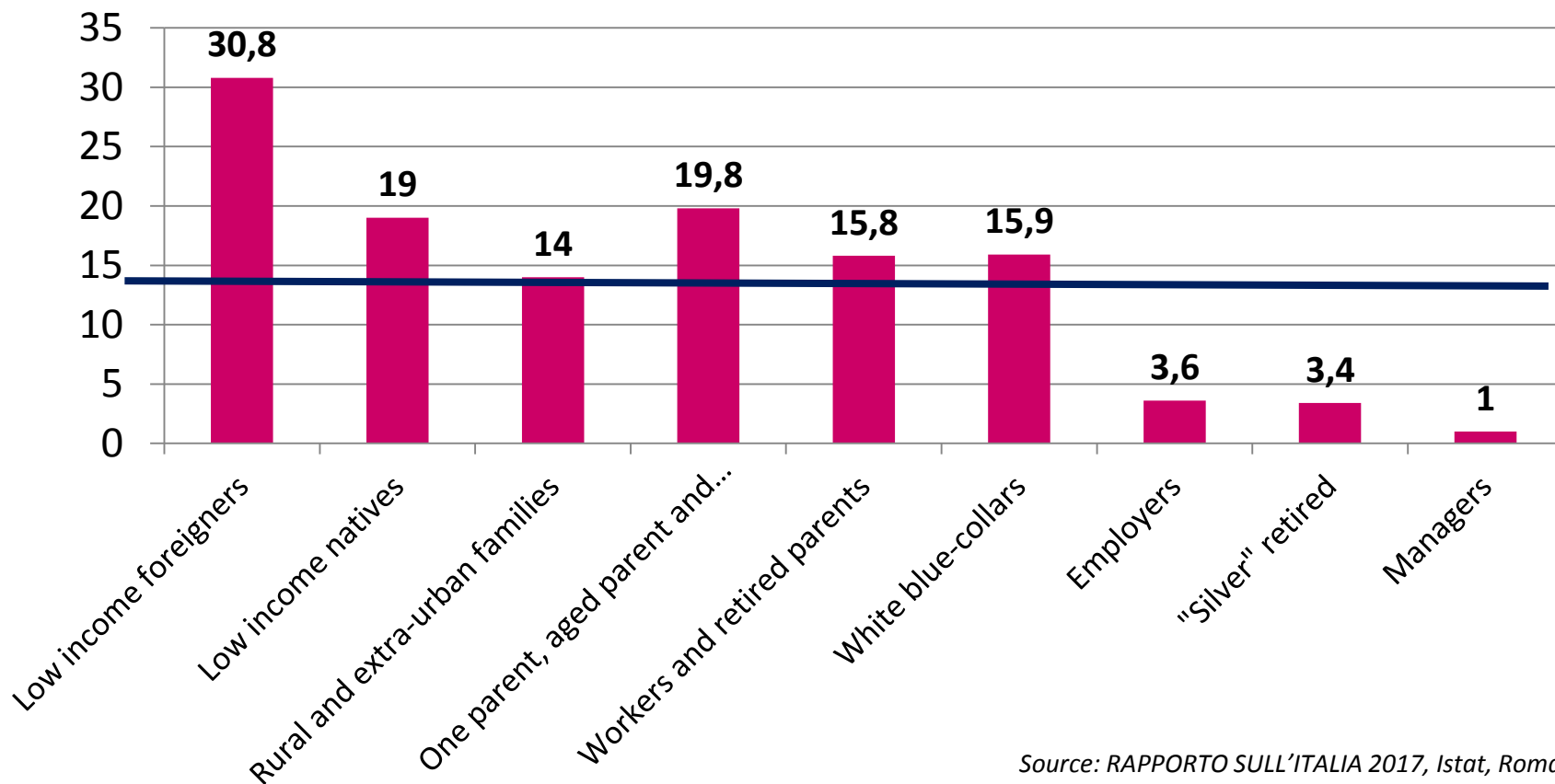
Source: Istat



## Percentage of students with limited skills in reading – 4 territorial partitions (PISA 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015)



## > ESL rate among 18-24 year olds, by social group

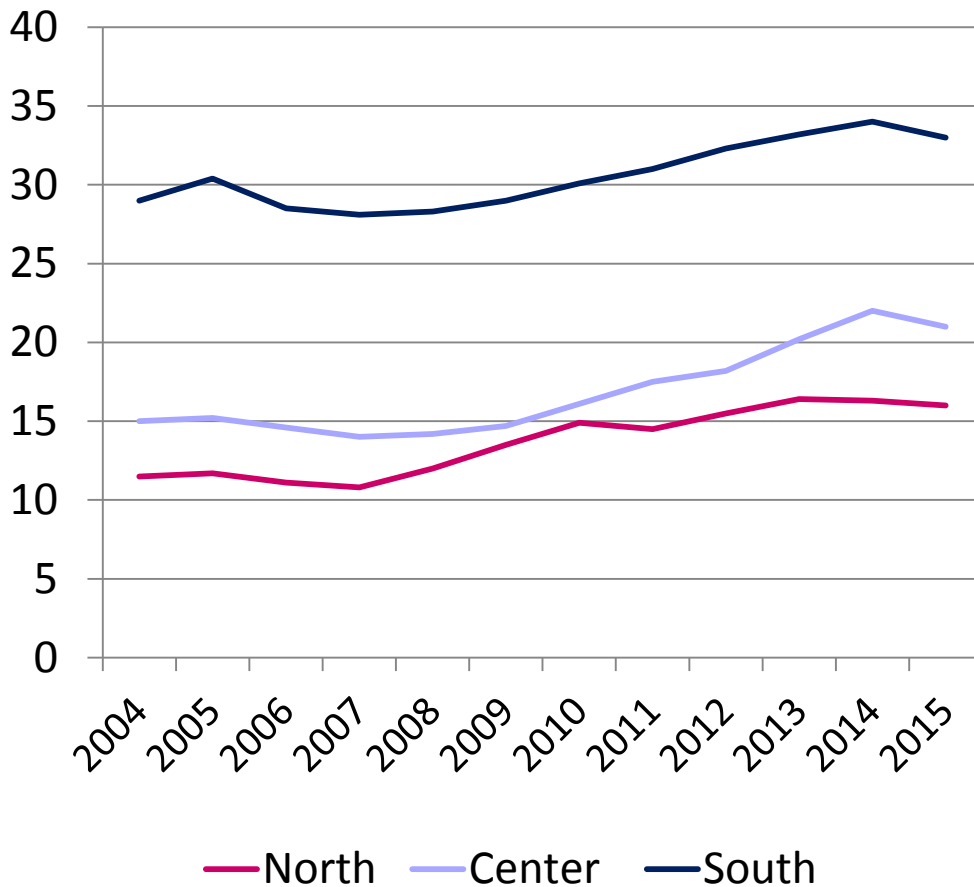


>> Having a disadvantaged background is still the main explanatory variable for ESL in Italy <<

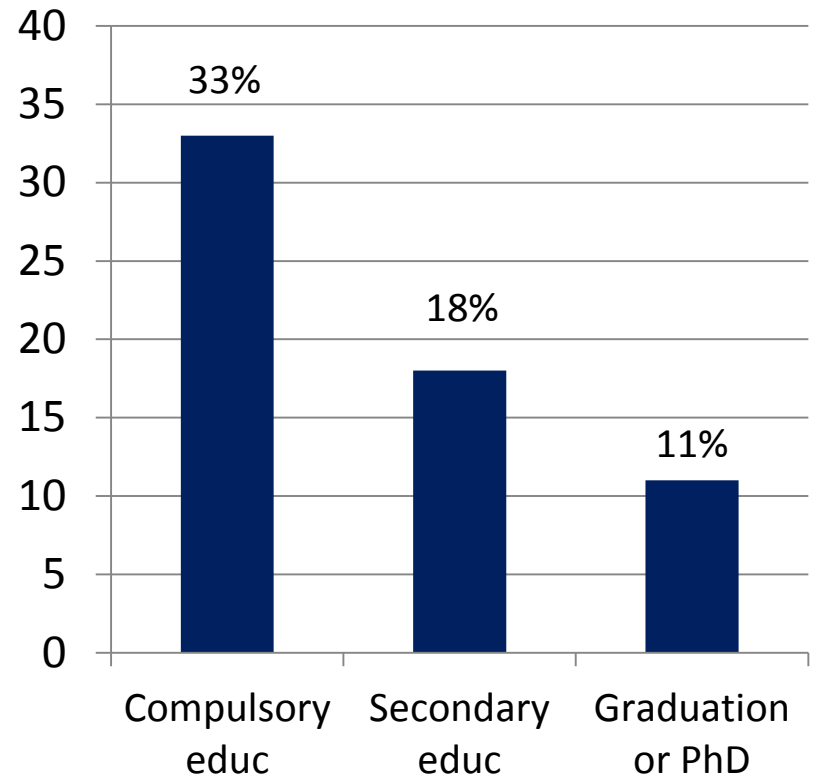




# NEETs (15-29 years old): by territory and by father's education



Source: BES 2016 – Benessere, Equo e sostenibile, Istat, Roma

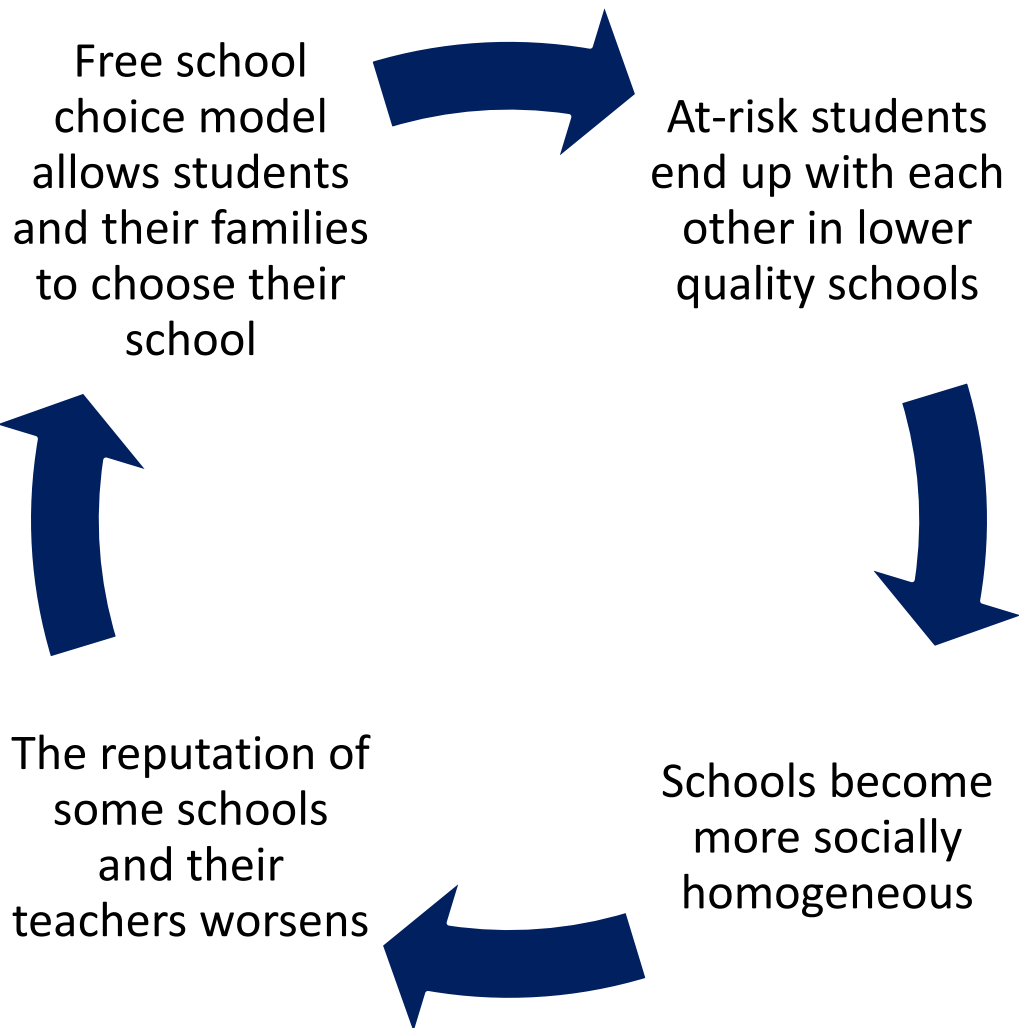


Source: BES, Istat 2014

## ➤ Remote factors for dropping out

- Wide-spread acceptance of a *school-free model* of self actualisation in the workplace (work culture in opposition with academic achievement) ...
- «*Self-fulfilling prophecy*»: if young people think : *I am not going to study anymore because it is not going to pay off* → this increases the amount of youngsters with no job
- *Elitist pedagogical model* : teachers are unable to deal with «bad students», to increase their motivation or recognize their informal learning

# > A vicious cycle



# Need for a multi-level approach

## 1. MONITOR

- Prioritize the completion of a national registry of pupils
- Follow their school pathways
- Follow their cognitive and social profiles (including goals)

## 2. TARGET

- Aim at identifying non-conventional «at-risk» students → Not only pushed out of school but also pulled in by other options
- Reach out to teachers, as the main actors in students' relationship with school

## 3. FOSTER « SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY »

- Promote educational partnerships → it is essential to engage all «non-schooling» agencies and local community

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