

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000565/26
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(10 February 2026)

Subject: Reorganising the school network, putting regions under special administrative measures, and NRRP cuts — consistency with EU targets on early school leavers and NEETs

In January 2026, the Italian Government put Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna, Umbria and Sardinia under special administrative measures, imposing the ‘reorganisation’ of the school network (merging autonomous schools and school leadership) and linking it to the implementation of Italy’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). At the same time, a draft measure linked to the NRRP provides for additional resources of around EUR 19 million for temporary job posts at regional school offices, and it stipulates that only regions that have independently adopted reorganisation plans for the 2026-2027 school year are eligible to receive an allocation ⁽¹⁾.

In Sardinia, an island region with large inland areas and low density, further mergers may leave people further away from educational services and have an impact on early school leavers and those not in employment, education or training (NEETs). According to the latest available data, the rate of those leaving education or training early (18-24 years old) is over 17%, and the NEET rate (15-29 years old) is around 12%, compared to the EU targets for 2030 of less than 9% and 9% respectively.

In view of the above:

1. What view does the Commission take of these measures — including the use of special administrative measures and putting conditions on access to resources — with regard to EU targets and equal access to educational services?
2. Is the ‘reorganisation’ an obligation stemming from the NRRP approved within the framework of the Recovery and Resilience Facility or a national choice based on criteria and implementation?
3. Within the scope of Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, does the Commission consider it appropriate to provide for flexibility for Sardinia, and which EU instruments can support alternative solutions?

Submitted: 10.2.2026

Answer given by Mr Dombrovskis on behalf of the European Commission
(20 April 2026)

Reform 1.3 ‘Reorganisation of the school system’, which aims to adapt the school system to demographic developments, is part of the Italian Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) under Mission 4, Component 1 as provided for by the revised Annex to the Council Implementing Decision (CID) on the approval of the assessment of the RRP ⁽¹⁾.

In this context, the Commission recalls that it is a primary responsibility of the Member State to implement measures in line with the provisions set out in the CID.

The latter does not prescribe the specific territorial configuration of school networks or the number or location of individual school mergers in each region.

It is therefore for the relevant national and regional Italian institutions, in line with national and EU law, to define the parameters and procedures for school sizing, provided that the overall implementation remains in line with the requirements of the CID.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Italian authorities have reported, within the framework of the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan ⁽²⁾ on the objectives for the reorganisation of the education system, which have enabled Italy to achieve the objectives set out in Reform 1.3 of Mission 4, Component 1.

Article 174 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union requires the EU to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion and to pay particular attention to regions which suffer from natural or demographic weaknesses, including island regions such as Sardinia.

¹ This approach risks excluding Sardinia and leading to a cut in resources for school staff.

⁽¹⁾ CID of 25 November 2025 amending the Implementing Decision of 13 July 2021 on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Italy, ST 15106/25.

⁽²⁾ https://reforms-investments.ec.europa.eu/italys-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en

Flexibility for addressing specific territorial challenges related to school access and early school leaving can be sought through the use and coordination of other EU instruments, such as the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and, where relevant, cohesion policy programmes targeting educational infrastructure and services.
