



# **Independent national experts network in the area of adult education/adult skills**

## **Full Country Report – Greece**

Written by George Koulaouzides  
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Unit E.3 — VET, Apprenticeship and Adult Learning

*Contact: Mantas Sekmokas*

*E-mail: [EMPL-E3-UNIT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EMPL-E3-UNIT@ec.europa.eu)*

*European Commission*

*B-1049 Brussels*

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## **Full country report - Greece**

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Directorate-General for Employment Social Affairs and Inclusion  
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## 1.0 COUNTRY OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Trends for the entire population

#### 1.1.1 Employment rate – entire population

**Table 1.1: Evolution of employment rate - national average (2010-2016) compared to EU data**

Geographical area	Years									Targets	
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	EU 2020	National 2020
EU-28 average	:	67.9	68.6	68.6	68.4	68.4	69.2	70	71	75% of the 20-64 year-olds in employment	70
Greece	62.1	64.4	63.8	59.6	55	52.9	53.3	54.9	56.2		

*Source: Employment rates by age and educational attainment level (%) Eurostat code Ifsa\_ergaed, last updated 25 April 2017.*

*Explanatory note: This table compares the average employment rate of the population (ISCED all levels) aged 20 to 64 in a given Member State over the period 2000-2016 to EU targets and average, including the EU2020 target, national 2020 targets and the average EU employment rate for 2016.*

#### -Comparison to EU2020 target

As of 2016, the national employment rate in Greece stood at 56.2%, well below the EU-28 average rate of 71%. As the EU-28 figures gradually are approaching the 75% target defined in EU2020, the national picture in Greece falls short of this EU2020 target by a long way (falling short by nearly 20% in 2016). In the period of the economic crisis and especially after 2011 unemployment in Greece increased dramatically resulting in a rapid decline of employment rate (see table 1.1). However as of 2013 the employment rate had increased but not to the rates necessary to bring unemployment rates more into line with those seen at EU-28 average levels. In 2016 the employment rate of adults aged 20 to 64, in Greece, had increased in comparison to the previous four years, however it remained below the EU2020 targets, national targets as well as the EU-28 average rate.

#### -Comparison to National 2020 target

The national level figures for employment rates also show that the 2016 employment rate, at 56.2% is falling short of the national 2020 target (of 70%), by 13.8 percentage points. There has been some degree of progress toward this target since 2013 as the employment

rate has showed an increase from 53.3% to 56.2%, a rate of growth outstripping that seen for EU-28, whilst the overall national rate still is to be regarded as low in relation to the EU-28 average level, as well as the national (and EU) 2020 targets

*-Comparison between 2016 national data and the EU-28 average for 2016*

The employment rate in Greece has consistently stood under the EU-28 average rate, for all years between 2005 and 2016. However, there has been some divergence over time, and the national rate in 2016 stands further below the EU-28 average than was seen in 2005. For instance, in 2005, the national figures diverged from the EU-28 rate by just 3.5 percentage points, which was seen to increase to a difference of 14.8 percentage points by 2016.

*-Evolution over time*

Up to 2010, which is considered the start of the Greek government debt-crisis, the employment rate was broadly following the EU average. However, the strict fiscal austerity measures imposed to the Greek economy in exchange for European and IMF funding has led to an unparalleled social crisis that resulted in an increased in cyclical unemployment<sup>1</sup> and the increase of the risk of poverty and social exclusion. In this context and given the thirteen austerity packages enforced by the Greek governments in the last seven years<sup>2</sup>, the 1.3% positive growth of employment in 2016 in comparison to 2015 has to be considered as an encouraging development.

According to the latest official statistics for the Greek economy (published on 26/05/2017)<sup>3</sup>, the annual unemployment average showed a reduction of 1.4% in 2016 in comparison with 2015 (23.5% and 24.9% respectively), continuing the decreasing trend which started back in 2013. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate in Greece is still the highest in the EU. Moreover, a rather discouraging element according to the Labour Institute of the General Greek Workers Confederation<sup>4</sup> (INE, 2017) is that in the 2014-2016 period, 70% of the total unemployed have been unemployed for more than 12 months (long-term unemployed). Having in mind this combination of continuous high unemployment and high long-term unemployment rates, the national 2020 target for employment appears to be a challenging goal.

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1 In a detailed study about the production model and human resources in Greece, Efstratoglou (2016) notes that beyond any given methodological difficulties in measuring unemployment, strong indications like the lack of new job creation is evident for the cyclical nature of unemployment in Greece, a condition mainly created by the shrinkage in demand due to the internal devaluation and the long-term austerity policies. Available at that <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/athen/12900.pdf>

2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek\\_government-debt\\_crisis\\_countermeasures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_government-debt_crisis_countermeasures)

3 Available at <http://www.statistics.gr/el/the-greek-economy>

4 Available in Greek at <http://www.inegsee.gr/>

### 1.1.2 Participation rate – entire population

**Table 1.2: Evolution of participation rate in education and training - national average (2010-2016) compared to EU data**

Geographical area	Years									Targets	
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	EU 2020	National 2020
EU-28 average	:	9.6	9.3	9.1	9.2	10.7	10.8	10.7	10.8	15% of adults in lifelong learning (LLL)	-
Greece	1	1.9	3.3	2.8	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.3	4		

*Source:* Participation rate in education and training by sex and age (%), Eurostat code trng\_lfse\_01, last updated 25 April 2017.

*Explanatory note:* This table compares the participation rate in lifelong learning of adults aged 25-64 to EU data over the period 2000-2016.

#### -Comparison to EU2020 target

Given the trajectory of the participation rate over time (detailed below), the 2016 participation rate in lifelong learning of adults aged 25-64 is encouraging to some degree. However, as this rate stood at 4% as of 2016, the achievement of the EU 2020 target of 15% participation seems not to be a realistic target.

#### -Comparison between 2016 national data and the EU-28 average for 2016

At 4%, the participation rate in education and training stands 6.8 percentage points below the EU-28 average (4% compared to 10.8%). The national rate has consistently stood below EU-28 levels, though shows a greater rate of improvement between 2015 and 2016 (from 3.3% to 4% at national level) than for the EU-28 average (10.7% to 10.8%)

#### -Evolution over time

On first impressions, the 2016 participation rate in lifelong learning of adults aged 25-64 is encouraging. The recorded rate (4%) is in comparison with the previous six years the highest percentage achieved in Greece, although it is still one of the lowest rates in Europe surpassing only the relevant rate of four other member states (i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovakia). The comparison with the EU-28 average is showing a consistent gap (ranging from 5.9% in 2012 to 7.6% in 2014) which however shows a lessening trend. The EU-28 average seems to have remained steady for the last four years and this stability trend is more or less the tendency in most of the European states including the Nordic countries where the existing highly developed institutional framework for adult education



is fostering participation<sup>5</sup>. In Greece, there is a lack of coordination at the institutional and stakeholder levels<sup>6</sup>, which creates barriers to participation.

Moreover, according to a recent study implemented for the two largest stakeholder institutes in Greece (the Labour Institute of the General Greek Workers Confederation and the Small Enterprises Institute of the Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants) it was found that despite the participation increase, what remains unresolved is the inequality in participation with reference to educational level and employment security, while the cost of participating in lifelong learning educational activities is still acknowledged as the main impediment<sup>7</sup> during the years of the economic crisis. The participation rate in lifelong learning has shown some fluctuation, with the main shifts occurring between 2005 and 2010 (from 1.9% to 3.3%), and then between 2015 and 2016 (3.3% and 4%).

## 1.2 Trends for low qualified adults

### 1.2.1 Share of low qualified adults

**Table 1.3: Share of low-qualified adults (ISCED 0-2) – national data (2010-2016) compared to EU-28 average 2016**

Geographical area	Years								
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU-28 average	:	30.6	27.3	26.6	25.8	24.8	24.1	23.5	23
Greece	48.4	39.8	37.3	35.4	34.2	32.8	31.6	29.6	28.2

*Source: Population by educational attainment level, sex and age (%), Eurostat edat\_ifse\_03, last updated 25 April 2017.*

*Explanatory note: this table compares the percentage of the population with low qualifications (ISCED levels 0-2) in 2016 to the EU-28 average for 2016 and the period 2000-2016.*

#### -Comparison to EU-28 average

Greece's share of low qualified adults stood at 28.2% in 2016 compared to 23% at EU-28 average. Over the preceding years, the share has decreased consistently both at national and EU-28 level.

5 Rubenson, K. (2006). The Nordic model of Lifelong Learning. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, Vol. 36, 3, pp.327-341.

6 In the latest country briefing on adult education in Greece, Dr. Georgios Zarifis identifies this issue as a major weakness: "Although the national strategic policy framework for lifelong learning includes measures for the support of the development and interconnection of relevant services, the co-operation of stakeholders with relevant social partners remains insubstantial" (2016, p.19).

7 Karalis, T. (2017). Shooting a moving target: The Sisyphus boulder of increasing participation in adult education during the period of economic crisis. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Vol 23, Issue 1, pp. 78 – 96.

*-Evolution over time.*

The educational level of the Greek population has grown fast across recent decades (as has been seen in most European countries). As a result, there is an uninterrupted decrease in the share of low qualified adults as evident in table 1.3.

The divergence among the two rates equates to 5.2%, which reflects a downward rate in the share if we consider that just six years ago it was up to 10%. This evolution is a good indicator and we may claim that in the near future, Greece will meet the EU-28 average. This is not an accidental result but it is directly related with the fact that Greece belongs to the group of European Countries that managed to achieve their goals through bringing the share of early school leavers from education and training below the 10% aim set by the European Commission.

According to the relevant European Semester fact sheet<sup>8</sup>, Greece achieved a 7.9% of early school leavers for 2015, representing a 5.6% drop from 2010 when the impacts of the economic crisis began to be felt. It appears that the crisis turned people toward education/training which seems as a common-sense first step towards employment. This claim is further supported by the tertiary education attainment fact sheet which also indicates notable growth of 11.8% for the same years, resulting in the EU 2020 target of 40% being exceeded by a marginal 0.4% for 2015. Nevertheless, these positive results ought not to create the impression that the effort to further decrease the share of low qualified adults should not continue. We have to keep in mind that according to the latest OECD key findings from PIAAC<sup>9</sup>, the share of adults in Greece who scored at the highest levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy is still noticeably lower than the OECD average, while the share of adults with poor skills in literacy and numeracy is much higher than average.

*1.2.2 Employment rate of low skilled adults*

**Table 1.4: Employment rates of low skilled adults (ISCED 0-2) – national data (2010-2016) compared to EU-28 average 2016**

Geographical area	Years								
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU-28 average	:	55.7	53.8	53.4	52.7	52	52.6	53.2	54.3
Greece	56.8	57.7	58.1	53.9	48.4	46.3	46.9	48.5	48.4

*Source:* Employment rates by age and educational attainment level (%) Eurostat code *lfsa\_ergaed*, last updated 25 April 2017.

*Explanatory note:* This table compares the employment rates of those with low qualifications (ISCED levels 0-2) to the EU average over the period 2010-2016.

<sup>8</sup> Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/european-semester/thematic-factsheets/labour-markets-and-skills\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/european-semester/thematic-factsheets/labour-markets-and-skills_en)

<sup>9</sup> The report is available at [www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills-Matter-Greece.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills-Matter-Greece.pdf)

The employment rate of low skilled adults in 2016 in Greece is moderately lower than EU-28 average for the same year. The measured difference between the two rates is 5.9%, which is slightly wider (by 1.2%) from the respective 2015 difference. This result is to certain level worrying. However, if we see the evolution over time it is obvious that the difference (of around 5%) between the two rates becomes stable after 2010. Again, this is not an unexpected statistic. On the one hand, we have to consider that people of older generations with lower educational attainment leave employment for age-related reasons and are substituted in the labour force (whenever new jobs are created) with younger ones who in most cases have higher educational attainment (see table 1.3). On the other hand, according to relevant studies, during the years of the crisis the process of de-industrialisation furthered, with the construction sector facing a significant reduction in its activities (Sotiropoulos, 2014)<sup>10</sup>.

Industry and especially construction are two areas of economic activity where many low-skilled adults are employed. According to the Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research (IOBE, 2015)<sup>11</sup>, the added value of the wider construction sector has been €8.1 billion in 2013, i.e. around 4% of the GDP, clearly reduced from €22.5 billion or 11% of the GDP back in 2006. This dramatic reduction affects clearly employment in this sector which in 2013 involved only 287,000 people while in 2008 the amount of workers (usually of low skills) employed in the construction sector was 589,000 people. In general, during the years of the crisis the demand for low skilled workers declined by 10.5% (Efstratoglou, 2016).<sup>12</sup>

### 1.2.3 Participation rate of low skilled adults

**Table 1.5: Participation rate of low skilled adults – EU average in comparison to national average**

Geographical area	Years								
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU-28 average	:	3.7	3.9	4	3.9	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.2
Greece	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7

*Source:* Participation rate in education and training by sex and educational attainment (%), Eurostat code and trng\_ifse\_03, last updated 25 April 2017.

*Explanatory note:* This table compares the participation rate in lifelong learning of adults aged 25-64 with low qualification levels (ISCED levels 0-2) to EU data and over the period 2000-2016.

The rate of 0.7% for 2016 is far from the EU-28 average. Indeed, this rate is the second lower participation rate of low skilled adults in the EU28 member states (with Croatia being

<sup>10</sup> Available at <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/10743.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Available at [http://iobe.gr/docs/research/RES\\_05\\_F\\_31032015\\_REP\\_GR.PDF](http://iobe.gr/docs/research/RES_05_F_31032015_REP_GR.PDF)

<sup>12</sup> <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/athen/13243.pdf>

the first with 0.3%). Although a first look at the evolution of this rate may create the impression that the latest rate is encouraging given that after a five-year period of stability (an increase of 0.3%, which has created the best so far recorded share), we should be very cautious about this “baseline” achievement. Among other international organisations, the OECD has frequently pointed that “low-skilled workers cumulate low employment rates with poor outcomes in earnings quality, labour market security and working environment quality”<sup>13</sup>. Low-skilled adults are the first and by far the first victims of any social and economic crisis independently of the reasons and the origins of these crises (EU, 2010; Oesch, 2010).<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the provision of differentiated and well-organised lifelong learning systems that will attract low-skilled adults to participate in order to increase the skills needed to enter and progress in the labour market is a one-way policy direction (EC, 2013).<sup>1516</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/employment/ministerial/employment-in-figures.htm>

<sup>14</sup> <http://cor.europa.eu/en/documentation/studies/Documents/effects-education-training.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> European Commission (2013), PES approaches to low-skilled adults and young people: Work-first or train-first? Toolkit for PES, Authors: Ellen Murray and Helen Tubb

<sup>16</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester\\_thematic-factsheet\\_social\\_inclusion\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_social_inclusion_en.pdf)

## **2.0 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ADULT LEARNING SYSTEM**

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### **2.1 Main features and a concise summary of historic development**

Greece has a relatively short history in terms of providing systematically educational opportunities for adult learners. Although there were plenty of public and private initiatives related to adult education dating from the start of the 20th century, their nature has been characterized as unstructured and non-systematic (Karalis & Vergidis, 2004). It is generally accepted that it was the accession of Greece to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981 that increased significantly the interest in this form of education. One of the most significant features of this period was the establishment of General Secretariat of Popular Education in 1983. The Secretariat, through its country-wide network of Regional Committees for Popular Education (NELE), managed to educate close to one million adult in many different areas, from literacy to vocational training courses (e.g. photography, pottery, beekeeping, winemaking, team-working, entrepreneurship etc.) (Leftheriotou, 2014).

At the same time, another large organisation of the public sector, the Greek Productivity Centre (ELKEPA), implemented a great number of programmes mainly in the field of management and informatics (Karalis, 2002). In the period 1994-1999 the Greek adult education coincided completely with the acceptance and implementation of ESF guidelines, in order to ensure funding from European Funds. Therefore, in this period the emphasis was heavily placed on continuing vocational training. The development process for the continuing vocational training system lasted for more than three years and during that process many innovations took place like the creation of the National Accreditation Centre (EKEPIS). EKEPIS had the authority to set the specifications and certify the public and private Centres of Vocational Training (CVT), which were the sole recipients of EU funds for educational programmes aiming to fight unemployment. Within three years (1996-1998), 262 CVTs were certified throughout the country.

In the late 1990's the continuing vocational training system was a field related mainly to private sector initiatives. The private sector of the training sector absorbs approximately 70% of the programmes and their related funds (Karalis, Pavlis-Korre, 2009). However, the trend to over-emphasize CVET had as a result the almost complete eradication of general adult education. In 2001, the General Secretariat for Popular Education was renamed into General Secretariat for Adult Education (GSAE) and according to Leftheriotou (2014) this period is characterised by a more rational utilization of the EU funds since specific institutions and quality assurance processes are in place. The situation has become slightly different from 2001 onwards; with the introduction of policies and initiatives that manage to create the conditions for further developing of the field of lifelong learning. However, it is as yet difficult to draw any conclusions on the effectiveness of these policies, since many of them were adopted under the threat of a loss of financial support from the European Union and as result they were designed successfully in terms of funding absorption but not in a sustainable manner.

Later on in 2008, the Secretariat once again was renamed to General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning, and two years later in 2010 the first attempt to create a concrete legal framework is implemented through the Law 3879/2010 that is still the basic operational framework. The social and financial conditions which exist in the country after 2010 when Greece actually entered a long period of economic recession combined with the continuous change of governments has in a way affected the implementation of this framework since lifelong learning is not seen as a top priority or as a solution to the steep problems faced by the majority of the Greek population. For example, to comply with the general idea of reducing the public sector which was one of the major concerns of all the austerity programmes imposed to Greece by its external financial supporters (IMF, ECB, ESM) the General Secretariat for LLL was merged with the Secretariat for Youth Policies and they created the existing General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth, which is a governmental organization with a very broad spectrum of responsibilities and the consequential bureaucratic decision making scheme is somehow creating obstacles in the prompt implementation of directives and decisions.

However, Greece today has subtle yet active lifelong learning policy framework that largely covers all forms of adult education. Based on this framework "General Adult Education" which includes all organised learning activities (formal and non-formal) addressed to adults and seeks to enrich knowledge, to develop and improve abilities and skills (including literacy, numeracy and basic skills in ICT), to grow an individual's personality and active citizenship, is provided by a large number of educational institutions. These institutions are in most cases are funded by the government or local authorities. Depending on the nature of the programmes and the educational activities they provide, and the target groups to which they are addressed, there are three different categories of organisations active in this area in Greece:

- 1) Public providers that offer basic education programmes (formal and non-formal) to adults;
- 2) Providers that consist public, private companies, and providers that consist collective organisations (such as Chambers) and offer initial and/or continuing education and training opportunities to unemployed, employees and professionals;
- 3) Public organisations that are established as educational institutions of a higher level such as universities and technical colleges and provide initial and/or continuing education and training opportunities to students, graduates, unemployed and professionals.

Table 2.1 below presents the latest figures drawn from Eurostat concerning the participation in formal education and training in actual numbers. The figures provide a categorisation by educational level, and indicate clearly that adults engaged in formal adult learning processes, are mostly participating at lower secondary and upper secondary levels of education. The statistics do not depict the participation of adults 25+ in lower secondary education, while from our experience the Second Chance Schools students belong mainly in this category. Moreover, the increased number of adults participating in university education leading to Bachelor's degree is heavily affected by the tremendous operational success of the Hellenic Open University, which in 2016-2017 had 16,754 active students

of this age category, in its undergraduate programmes (data available in Greek at <https://www.eap.gr/el/to-eap/leitourgia/to-eap-simera>).

**Table 2.1 Number of participants in formal education and training by level of education and age**

	Age 20-24	Age 25+	Total
Level of education (i.e. basic, vocational, higher)	No data available	No data available	No data available
Primary	3	0	3
Lower secondary	3,393	0	3,393
Upper secondary	19,818	11,186	31,004
Post-secondary non-tertiary education		12,704	
Short-cycle tertiary education		0	
Bachelor's or equivalent level		85,414	
Master's or equivalent level		39,868	
Doctoral or equivalent level		10,034	

Source: Eurostat, Eurostat database table "Pupils and students enrolled by education level, sex and age (educ\_uoe\_enra02)", accessed 2017.08.21

## 2.2 Provision

In the Greek field of adult education, a number of bodies and organisations are in principle accountable to the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and operate at the administrative and coordinating level of the system. These are: (a) the General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning and Youth (see above for its evolution); (b) the regional offices for LLL; (c) the municipal offices of LLL; (d) the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP); and (e) the National Centre for Public Administration (responsible primarily for the continuing training in the public sector of the economy).

The most important of those is the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth (GSLLY) that acts as the main stakeholder involved in the lifelong learning strategy, and is responsible for implementing it through the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (INEDIVIM) that was established in 2011 and constitutes a Private Law Entity of the broader public sector, with financial and operational autonomy. It is a non-profit and of public interest institution, which is supervised by the Minister of Education. The GSLLY plans, organises and funds the majority of adult education programmes. Where appropriate, it co-operates with other state agencies, such as the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, the Manpower Employment Agency (OAED), the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Development and Ministry of Interior and Public Administration. GSLLY through INEDIVIM supervises a series of adult education programmes. Under the auspices of

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GSSLY a series of institutions offer learning opportunities for adults. A short description of these institutions according to the major learning outcomes follows.

### *2.2.1 Helps adults improve their Basic Skills*

The Second Chance Schools (SCS) are the basic state funded institution which enables adults aged 18 and over who have not completed their nine-year compulsory education to continue their studies, improve their basic skills (literacy, numeracy, digital skills and foreign language skills) and obtain a qualification equivalent to the high school certificate. The duration of the courses is 18 months (two school years) and the teaching hours are 25 per week. The lessons take place in the afternoon hours from Monday to Friday. The SCS programme, co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Greek State, started in Greece in 2000. It is a flexible training programme tailored to learners' skills and needs which in addition supports learners holistically (vocational guidance, psychological support, etc.) and had in its majority qualified educators able to respond to the complexity of the tasks they undertake. 62 Schools of this kind have been established across the country, as well as several branches (off-premises departments). Eight Schools are operating in prisons.

### *2.2.2 Helps adults achieve a Recognised Qualification*

In this category we may include the Lifelong Learning Centres Level I. According to Law 4093/2012 this is the new name for the (former) Laboratories of Liberal Studies (EES). But in the same category we include other organizations as well, like institutes for foreign language learning (leading to recognised qualifications) or even publishing houses that organise series of seminars and lectures leading to non-vocational non-validated qualifications. However, the "recognised qualifications" in Greek culture are interconnected with some kind of vocational identity that is validated by the State. Therefore, in this category we have two types of institutions that help adults to achieve a recognised qualification: (a) the Evening Vocational Lyceums and (b) the Vocational Training Institutes

Adults who either work in the morning, or wish to expand their formal qualifications (e.g. graduates of the Second Chance Schools or individuals who were forced to stop schooling after compulsory education for social reason), usually enrol in the Evening Vocational Lyceums. In 2016, the student population of the EVL's was 14,185 students. According to the Law 4186/2013 the minimum age for admission in these institutions is set at the 16th year of a person's life. According to the same law the purpose of these institutions is among other targets to provide general education, to foster critical thinking, to cultivate social skills, to assist student to enter the labour market, to foster lifelong learning skills, to enhance the values of democracy, collective action and to promote civic education.

Vocational Training Institute (IEK) is the name of those institutions that aim to provide initial vocational training services to adults who seek a recognized qualification. Both public and private IEK are operating throughout the country. The operation of Public IEK however is supervised by the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth. The certification



system for the initial vocational training of IEK is managed by the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) that is the responsible organization for the determination of the professional rights of IEK graduates within the NQF and EQF framework. The administration of all the public IEK is the responsibility of Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (see above). The subsidy for the training vouchers and the graduate's placement in places like hospitals, nurseries, banks, private enterprises and elsewhere is co-funded by the European Social Fund.

### *2.2.3 Helps adults develop other knowledge and skills, not for vocational purposes*

The Municipal Lifelong Learning Centres (MLLC and KDVM in Greek) are the basic non-formal adult education structure since 2010, and they operate at a local level (as independent units within the organizational structure of every Greek municipality). A large number of basic and liberal education programmes were offered through these centres. MLLC's were established in through the provisions of Law 3852/2010. The Law 3879/2010 created their operational framework and their initial operation was supported by public and European funds.

The programmes offered had as an aim to foster a positive attitude towards learning, promote equal opportunities in accessing education, encourage the productive use of free time and increase accessibility chances in the labour market. The only requirements for participation are genuine interest in acquiring knowledge and active participation. Moreover, especially organised classes for vulnerable social groups (Romani, prisoners, Muslim minorities, migrants - repatriates, disabled) have been set up for full and equal integration into society.

### *2.2.4 Facilitates Transition to the Labour Market for unemployed people or those at risk of unemployment (ALMPs)*

The transition to the Labour Market is facilitated mainly through the vocational training voucher programme. This programme is a joint action undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and the Social Insurance and Social Solidarity Organization. A co-funded programme by ESF, the voucher is comprised of several sub programmes and targets unemployed individuals of various professional fields. The aim is to accomplish a structured entry to the labour market for unemployed individuals, which will eventually find full-time employment in the private sector of the economy. The programme includes theoretical education and a 6-month internship in the private sector of the economy. Moreover, guidance and counselling services are foreseen in order to support the effort of the beneficiaries (unemployed individuals and companies).

### *2.2.5 Opens up Higher Education to adults*

In this category of provision there is the Hellenic Open University (HOU), which has as a mission to provide high-quality university education via distance learning at both undergraduate and postgraduate level to adult learners. For that purpose, it develops and

implements appropriate learning material and methods of teaching. HOU is the 19th Greek State University; it is a Legal Entity of Public Law, completely independent and autonomous. The University accepted its first students in 1998. It has four Schools (Social Sciences, Applied Arts, Science and Technology and Humanities) and over 30,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students are registered.

#### *2.2.6 Enables adult employees to develop their work-related skills*

In this category there is the Lifelong Learning Centre Licence II, which according to Law 4093/2012 are institutions that provide services of continuous vocational training, professional orientation and counselling. According to the same law as Lifelong Learning Centres Level II, there also are the (former) Centres for Vocational Training (see CVT's above or KEK in Greek). Lifelong Learning Centres Licence II, provide services of continuing vocational training following validation by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP).

Moreover, in this category there also is the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA), which is the authorised national agent for the development of the human resources of the public sector. EKDDA was founded in 1983 and is supervised by the Minister of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction. Its main mission is the improvement of the functioning and effectiveness of the public services and upgrading the qualifications of public servants through fostering life-long learning and through providing certified training on knowledge and skills that relate with the operation of the public sector. This mission is realised through a series of initiatives, courses and seminars that are implemented by its Institute of Training (INEP) in Athens and its decentralised annex in Thessaloniki (PINEPTH).

#### *2.2.7 Other (if any)*

There are two institutions of relevance: (a) the Schools for Parents; and (b) the Education of Immigrants. The latter is of immense importance due the migration flows that have increased the last years due to the unstable political conditions in the Middle-East Area.

The Schools for Parents is an institution of which began its operation in 2002. This programme targets parents of children of all ages, origin, education level, future parents, parents of children with disabilities, the elderly, vulnerable social groups, etc. These Schools for Parents operate in all prefectures of Greece and the main subject units include: the structure and function of the Greek family, child adaptation to school, health and safety at home, school and children's recreation areas, addiction to smoking, alcohol, drugs, driving behaviour and safety, nutrition, importance of physical exercise, health and safety at the workplace, sexual education, third age and family, free time management, educators, family and identification of aptitudes, promotion of the equality of sexes, counselling for parents of children with disabilities, stereotypes and discrimination within the family.

The programme "Education of Immigrants in the Greek Language, the Greek History and the Greek Culture - ODYSSEUS" is targeted at EU citizens but nowadays at third-country nationals irrespective of origin, aged 16 and above, who are legally resident in Greece. The programme aims at providing the language skills, as well as the social and intercultural competences required for the social inclusion of the participants and their families. The completion of the study cycle grants students the right to participate in the Examination for the Certification of Attainment in Greek Level A2. Lessons are available for free in all districts of the country.

### 3.0 ADULT LEARNING POLICIES

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#### 3.1 Context

A coherent and updated strategy for lifelong learning on which existing policies could flourish, has been implemented as a result of some serious attempts after 2000. The first serious attempt was with the seminal Law 3369/2005 on 'Systematisation of Lifelong Learning and Other Regulations', through which the operation of the already operating bodies-providers of adult education and training as well as of the newly-founded bodies was systematised and integrated into the rubric of a coherent institutional framework for LLL. The later Law 3879/2010 on 'Development of Lifelong Learning and other provisions' comes to support initiatives set by the previous Law and intends to establish an integrated legal framework for more efficient co-ordination and systemisation of the Lifelong Education and Training actions and bodies.

The reformed institutional framework attempts to cover all levels of adult education in the Public Sector, while it provides social partners with the potential to create their own adult education bodies, designed to increase active participation and strengthen social effectiveness. All policy priorities today are set in the law 3879/2010<sup>17</sup> which defines lifelong learning as an activity spanning people's life and aimed at both the acquisition and the improvement of general and scientific knowledge, skills and competencies as well as personal development and employability. In addition, common ministerial decisions<sup>18</sup> define the jurisdiction of relevant state bodies and set specific measures.

In terms of governance it must be noted that recent changes were largely triggered by relevant reforms in many authorities and institutions in the public sector such as ministries and general secretariats within ministries, local and regional authorities, was to adopt a horizontal model of governance<sup>19</sup>. This to some extent has also affected decision making processes in the field of adult education/adult skills. This is evident in the way several public authorities and decision-making bodies in this field have merged into two major organisations that essentially represent the two axes on which the national lifelong learning strategy is to be fulfilled:

The first is the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (INEDIVIM)<sup>20</sup> which implements actions for Lifelong Learning (counselling, training, etc.), as well as mobility, innovation and entrepreneurship programmes for the youth. It also oversees the maintenance and

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17Law 3879/2010 'Development of Lifelong Learning and other provisions'. Available in English at: [www.gsae.edu.gr/images/stories/tr\\_nomos\\_diaviou\\_1-23\\_articles.doc](http://www.gsae.edu.gr/images/stories/tr_nomos_diaviou_1-23_articles.doc). (accessed 11/7/2016).

18Available at <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/el/thesmiko-plaisio/ypourgikes-apofaseis>.

19 The "vertical" dimension refers to the linkages between higher and lower levels of government, including their institutional, financial, and informational aspects. Here, local capacity building and incentives for effectiveness of sub national levels of government are crucial issues for improving the quality and coherence of public policy. The "horizontal" dimension refers to co-operation arrangements between regions or between municipalities. These agreements are increasingly common as a means by which to improve the effectiveness of local public service delivery and implementation of development strategies.

20 This is a legal entity of the wider public sector, governed by private law, and independent in financial and operational terms. It is a non-profit, public serving institution, supervised by the Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. Its name and form derives from the merging of the National Youth Foundation (founded in 1947), the Institute for Continuing Adult Education and the Institute for Youth.

operation of pupil and student residences, and supports initiatives that encounter urgent social needs at local and regional levels<sup>21</sup>.

The second is the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP)<sup>22</sup>, an all-encompassing statutory body investing on better quality and more efficient and reliable lifelong learning services in Greece. EOPPEP develops and implements the National Accreditation & Certification System for non-formal education, including initial and continuing vocational training and adult education and provides scientific support to vocational guidance & counselling services both at national and local/regional levels<sup>23</sup>.

### *3.1.1 Distribution of responsibilities regarding adult learning*

The main priority in terms of governance is to provide the necessary incentives that will eventually create a space for communication and coordination between all the relevant organisations as it seems that in many ways they share responsibilities despite the shift in focus. This is also linked with the need for a more focused and targeted social dialogue between relevant stakeholders and social partners particularly in the field of VET since cohesion between relevant policies that derive from the lifelong learning strategy and policies that are more relevant to employment and skill development is not yet evident<sup>24</sup>. Another major policy priority in terms of supply and take up relates to the need to certify skills acquired in the workplace<sup>25</sup>, which cannot be acknowledged in the framework of existing education and training systems. Specifically, the need for the workplace to function as a learning place in parallel with the certification of the experience, activities and skills acquired there, is strongly emphasised in many public documents.

At the level of flexibility and access one key priority relates to the low percentage of adults participating in education. Raising participation rates therefore is a major policy concern. Greece has one of the lowest participation rates in lifelong learning (4% in 2016) based on data from Eurostat) and this essentially calls for policy incentives that will both motivate and allow adults of all ages and backgrounds to participate, but at the same time requires outreach and guidance policies that will target social groups that are more vulnerable and have limited or no access to lifelong learning provision. This is more evident for adults from cultural, religious or ethnic minorities (Roma, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) who lack basic reading and writing skills as well as for those who have limited numeracy and ICT skills. Particularly for refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq who

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<sup>21</sup> The Foundation responds to the needs of working and unemployed people, as well as vulnerable social groups, through a variety of programmes at national level which in the years 2014-2015 alone benefited more than 300.000 people.

<sup>22</sup> Its mission is geared towards linking VET with labour market needs, upgrading people's occupational qualifications, reinforcing their employment perspectives and strengthening social cohesion.

<sup>23</sup> Also see Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (2009). *Key Competences For Lifelong Learning-Hellas National Report*, Athens: YPEPTH.

<sup>24</sup> Zarifis, G. Fotopoulos, N. Zanolis, L. (2015). *Study on the quality and effectiveness of the social dialogue in the area of VET in Greece*. The study was part of the plan for joint actions by national social partners of Greece to restore confidence and strengthen their efficient participation in social dialogue: Sub-project 3 "Social dialogue for vocational education and training issues", coordinated by IME-GSEVEE. Athens: IME-GSEVEE. [available in Greek].

<sup>25</sup> See National Reform Programme (NRP), 2016. Available at [ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016\\_greece\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016_greece_en.pdf)

arrive in Greece either to apply for asylum or transit in order to arrive in countries like Germany, Sweden or Finland, placing procedures that identify the level of their skills in Greece –as the first country of their destination– is considered a major policy priority.

More specifically at the central level, the main organisation regarding governance of Lifelong Learning is the General Secretariat for Life Long Learning and Youth of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. According to Law 3879/2010, its role is to plan public policy for lifelong learning (e.g. provisions for access and flexibility), design relevant regulations prepare the corresponding national programme and monitor its implementation. Most of the programmes designed by the Secretariat are implemented by the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (e.g. Schools for Parents, Second Chance Schools, Odysseus).

On the other hand, the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) is responsible for certifying the input and output of informal education, bodies offering lifelong learning services, as well as the qualifications of educators of adult learners. In addition, EOPPEP is responsible for the development of the National Qualifications Framework and its correlation to the EQF. It is true that the Greek relevant legislation makes provision for decentralised services on behalf of the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning at regional and local level. These centres are supposed to be responsible for governing, monitoring and supervising Vocational Training Institutes (IEK), Vocational Training Schools (SEK), Second Chance Schools (SDE) and Lifelong Learning Centres (KDVM) within their area and scope of responsibility. So far, these decentralised units are either not established or are inactive<sup>26</sup>.

### *3.1.2 Major national socio-economic strategies governing the provision of Adult Learning*

The only major national strategies governing the provision of Adult Learning are those outlined in the National Reform Programme 2016. For 2017 there is no available version of the NRP. In the 2016 programme, the following strategies are mentioned (p. 36):

*"Rationalizing and improving access to lifelong learning opportunities*

*The aim is to increase the participation rate in lifelong learning and widen the range of beneficiaries. The facilitation of access to Lifelong Learning opportunities is sought after by strengthening the network of Centres for Lifelong Learning through the involvement of regional and local communities, higher education institutions, social partners and civil society organizations. In particular, the aim is to widen access to education and training through more effective and targeted actions. More specifically, these actions facilitate the participation of under-represented groups, such as low-skilled, unemployed, early school*

*leavers, older workers, immigrants and minority groups, with emphasis on those coming from marginalized communities”.*

More specifically in the same document (p.38) the following policy measures are mentioned as the accompanying the aforementioned strategy:

- “the support of the development and interconnection of LLL services, including their implementation and foreseeing the participation and the co-operation of stakeholders by providing for the involvement and co-operation of stakeholders
- the development of skills of various targeted groups, that are defined as priority groups in the national or regional strategic policy framework
- the widening of access to LLL, through the effective implementation of transparency tools (e.g. the European Qualifications Framework, National Qualifications Framework, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (VET), the European Assurance Quality in VET)”.

In addition, Greece participated in the second round of the international survey PIAAC of OECD, for the period 2012-2016. A selected sample of 5,000 adults across country was assessed on the acquisition of basic skills, namely literacy-numeracy, and problem solving through computer use. The results were announced by OECD. However, the results of the second round of the survey were never publicly made known by the Greek Government and as a result there was no elaboration on them or any suggestions about how to redesign the national “strategy”.

### 3.1.3 Main legislative act(s) governing the provision of adult learning

The main legislative act governing the provision of adult learning is the Law 3879/2010.

### 3.1.4 Main strategy(-ies)

### 3.1.5 Main implementing act(s)

## 3.2 National quantitative policy targets

**Table 3.1 Targets linked to Adult Learning in broader economic policies/LLL strategies/framework or implementing act**

General information		Progress toward target		
Target (target figure and date to be achieved by)	Adoption date (e.g. 31/03/2018)	Initial value (at date of adoption)	Current value	Summary of progress against target
The share of 30 -34 years old with tertiary education attainment to be at least 40% by	2016	37.2%	N/A	The Hellenic Open University which is addressed to adults has initiated a new open

Independent national experts network in the area of adult education/adult skills  
Full country report - Greece

2020 (Source: National Reform Programme 2016)				admissions process. As we have now entered the new academic year we are waiting for the results
Increase participation of adults (25-64) in formal and informal learning Source: (National Reform Programme 2016)	2016	4%	N/A	The Social Solidarity Income (hereafter KEA) is a new Government welfare programme. For the first time it includes as a prerequisite for participation from all adults up to 45 years of age who have not completed their compulsory education, to enrol in a Second Chance School. This provision is anticipated to assist vulnerable groups to upgrade their literacy, numeracy and digital skills in order to be able to acquire the basic lifelong learning skills towards social integration.
Facilitate the entrance of Vocational Schools and Training Institutes in the labour market through the implementation of an apprenticeship programme	11/08/2017	3.406 placements	N/A	The relevant Ministerial Decision was signed in August 2017 and the process opened in October 2017 (due date 10/10/2017)
Assist unemployed in acquiring new skills or upgrade existing skills to make a crucial step to return to the labour market on a more permanent basis.	13/12/2016	24.251 low skilled unemployed	N/A	The programme is under implementation



### 3.3 Quality assurance

In terms of **quality** what can be noted is that monitoring and quality assurance comprise the major mission of EOPPEP (see above). Despite the existence of a *quality assurance instrument* ( $\pi^3$ ) and a relevant system for impact assessment of initial VET provision in particular, there is still no evidence of the benefits. A bottom-up approach to quality assurance is needed at this level for as long as the existing quality assurance initiatives do not produce any results<sup>27</sup>.

As many social partners suggest in relevant documents, adult education structures (particularly privately funded VET structures) need to adopt specific measures for providing feedback both from their adult trainees, but also from the adult trainers. Although this does not come as an immediate policy priority, it emphasises the need to adopt formative assessment techniques as a means for quality assurance.

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### 3.5 Future policy developments

In the level of policy development regarding the provision or the broader framework of adult learning, no declared further developments have been announced by the Greek Government. In 2017 the Greek Government has not submitted yet (October 2017) a National Reform Programme since as a country under a financial assistance programme (and its adjacent MoU) is not required to submit such a plan. However, in the 2017 final

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<sup>27</sup> Expert's own opinion.

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document of the Government Budget and more specifically in page 41<sup>29</sup>, there is a special section under the title "Lifelong learning and adult training", where it is stated that:

"The Ministry of Labour, in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, has set up an inter-ministerial commission to review the institutional framework for the certification of providers of continuing vocational training and in particular the terms and conditions for granting authorization for the establishment and operation of Lifelong Learning Centers and the development of legislation to develop a Continuing Vocational Training Certification System for Lifelong Learning Centres alumni with the aim of ensuring the objective-usefulness and quality of the validation procedures of learning outcomes which are acquired through continuous professional training and thus strengthening their role".

So far, no reported progress has been published regarding the aforementioned development

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<sup>29</sup> Available in Greek at <http://www.naftemporiki.gr/documents/1173975/bouli-katatethike-o-proupologismos-2017>

## 4.0 INVESTMENT IN ADULT LEARNING SYSTEMS

### 4.1 Total investment in adult learning and change over time

Within the framework of the National Reform Programme for 2016 and in order to correspond to the constantly changing needs of the educational system, one of the basic axes of government policy is better use and rational allocation of resources. According to the latest release by INEDIVIM<sup>30</sup> the allocated budget for 2017 is €13,250,000

Most adult education programmes, particularly those provided by INEDIVIM, are free of charge for participants. According to CEDEFOP (2009)<sup>31</sup> the priorities had changed in Greece after the economic crisis, and greater importance (and funds) has been put on programmes targeted at unemployed adults. In order to respond to the global financial crisis, the General Secretariat for the Management of European Funds of the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, planned and implemented measures related to VET concerning the unemployed through the voucher programme. Concerning the unemployed, the total budget amounted to €89,000,000 (see <https://voucher.gov.gr/project/view/id/25>)

### 4.2 Public national investment

**Table 4.1 Breakdown of public national investment**

Title of public investment source	Source of funding	Amount of funding	Targeted number of participants	Targeted level of provision	Start/ end date
INEDIVIM (General adult education)	Co-funded with EU	€13,250,000	Undefined		1/1/2017-31/12/2017
Voucher (training of unemployed)	Co funded with EU	€89,000,000	23,000		1/1/2017-31/12/2017
Promoting employment through programmes of public interest training of the participants.	Co funded with EU	€20,640,366	24,251		1/1/2017-31/12/2017
Upskilling the recipients of Social Solidarity Income	Co funded with EU	Undefined	Undefined		Undefined

<sup>30</sup> Available at: <https://yperdiavgeia.gr/pdfs/web/viewer.html?file=/decisions/downloadPdf/22723951>

<sup>31</sup> CEDEFOP|Refernet (2009). *VET in Europe Country Report – Greece*, Thessaloniki: CEDEFOP.

Consultation for the delivery of a NQF in line with the EQF (2010). Occasional Paper submitted for Social Dialogue by the National Committee for Lifelong Learning (25 February 2010). [available in Greek]

### **4.3 EU support via structural funds (primarily ESF)**

#### *4.3.1 Structural fund support planned as part of 2014-2020 financial framework*

According to the data on financial support to the Member States between 2014 and 2020, available in July, 2016 for the European Commission from Operational Programmes for the European Social Fund (ESF), the planned financial support from the European Union for the investment priority most directly targeting adult learning, i.e. Investment priority 10.3 – Enhancing access to lifelong learning, is EUR 55 million.

#### *4.3.2 EU support via structural funds (primarily ESF) provided as part of 2007-2013 financial framework*

According to the CONFINTEA National Report (2008)<sup>32</sup> during the period 2004-2007 for which reliable data is available<sup>33</sup>, a total amount of €7,221,634 was spent by the Greek Government and €10,967,867 by the EU for regional infrastructures for adult education provision as opposed to €175,186 spent by the Greek Government and €525,566 by the EU between 2000-2004. Generally, in the period 2000-2007 the Greek state invested €7,396,823 for regional building infrastructures compared to €11,493,433 by the European Union<sup>34</sup>. Over the 2004-2007 period the Greek State spent €1,090,600 together with €3,271,800 by the EU for regional structures equipment compared to €99,409 spent by the Greek Government and €298,226 by the EU in the period 2000-2004.

In general terms, the Greek Government has invested €1,190,009 in Equipment of Regional Structures supplemented with €3,570,026 which was allocated by the European Union. In the period 2004-2007 an overall €22,551,901 were spent in building infrastructures and equipment compared to €1,098,389 between 2000 and 2004. Investment in adult learning was carried out using Structural funds 2007-2013.

### **4.4 Effectiveness of investment**

In terms of assessment of the effectiveness of these measures it must be noted that regarding training, a voucher for access to the labour market which targets 12,000 young unemployed people aged 18-24 was launched in September 2014 and was completed in June 2016<sup>35</sup>. It constitutes an integral part of the national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan and it is YEI (Youth Employment Initiative) financed (OECD, 2016b: 58)<sup>36</sup>. Furthermore, a voucher for 30,000 young people aged between 25-29 years old in

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32 Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, General Secretariat for Adult Education (2008). *CONFINTEA National Report for UNESCO - Greece*, Athens: General Secretariat for Adult Education.

33 After 2008 the General Secretariat for Adult Education has not issued any newsletter or briefing with similarly detailed figures.

34 Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, General Secretariat for Adult Education (2008). *CONFINTEA National Report for UNESCO - Greece*, Athens: General Secretariat for Adult Education.

35 See Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission acting on behalf of the European Stability Mechanism and the Hellenic Republic and the Bank of Greece (Done in Athens on 19 August 2015 and in Brussels on 19 August 2015). Available in English at: [ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/assistance\\_eu\\_ms/greek\\_loan\\_facility/pdf/01\\_mou\\_20150811\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/pdf/01_mou_20150811_en.pdf). (accessed 11/7/2016).

36 OECD (2016). OECD Economic Surveys: Greece is available online at [www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/GRC%202016%20Overview%20EN.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/GRC%202016%20Overview%20EN.pdf)

the private sector to gain work experience is currently in force. The action aims to facilitate the entrance of young unemployed people into the labour market mainly through internships offered by private sector enterprises.

Additionally, a voucher for access to the labour market in the tourism sector was launched for 8,000 young unemployed people aged between 18-29 and it will also be YEI financed. Public benefit employment schemes were launched as well. These programmes aim to improve the economic situation of the unemployed, to effectively support vulnerable social groups, to meet social needs and enhance the services provided to citizens. The beneficiaries are employed full-time for a period of five months in Municipalities, Regions and other public services pursuant to Law 4152/2013<sup>37</sup>. The programme intends to address the labour demand shortages in the private sector due to the recession. During 2017 the new cycle of public benefit employment schemes in municipalities and other public sector entities, that benefited a total of 24.251 adults, was implemented. The total budget of this programme amounted to €108,716,684.20 million out of which €20,640,366.23 will be assigned to training and up-skilling the beneficiaries<sup>38</sup>. In 2017, employment programmes were redesigned in order to increase their efficiency and to have the greatest possible result for the unemployed. For instance, the training voucher programme addressed to unemployed people aged between 29-64 years old will benefit 23,000 people. The total budget of the programme is €89 million.

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<sup>37</sup> This law enacts provisions for the purposes of implementing Law N° 3919/2011 on the Principle of employment freedom and the prohibition of unjustified limitations in the access to and exercise of employment.

<sup>38</sup> Numbers taken from the official Press Release of the National Manpower Association (available in Greek at <http://www.oaed.gr>).

## 5.0 ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING POLICY

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The following sub-sections assess the existing policy through the lens of the six key success factors for effective adult learning policy that have been identified in a recent study.<sup>39</sup>

### 5.1 Develop learners' interest in learning

This is largely achieved by certification of participation. Adults in Greece participate in educational programmes or activities with the condition of receiving a certificate. Certification varies from HE degrees that are largely offered by the Hellenic Open University (by distance) to Certificates of Lifelong Learning. The most common type of certification (not ISCED ranked) is the one offered by KDVM<sup>40</sup>. Adult learners that have undertaken programmes of 75 hours or more can be awarded with a Certificate of Training whereas learners that have participated in programmes of 250 hours with a Certificate of Lifelong Education.

Certification along with some economic instruments (particularly for those participating in training under the programme «Voucher for the reintegration into the labour market») is currently the major means for improving learners' disposition towards learning. The most successful initiative yet is the Second Chance Schools (SDE). The core objectives of SDE are the development of a positive learning attitude, the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills, the vocational orientation, the access in the job market and the reconnection with the formal education system<sup>41</sup>.

Nonetheless, an analysis of the effects of reforms in other educational sectors on adult learning is needed in order to first understand and then improve the disposition of learners towards learning. The most evident of relevant educational measures that affect adult learning in Greece relates to confronting school failure and early dropping-out. Although Greece has an average drop-out rate of 9,7%, there are special programmes for those over 18 who have not completed their compulsory education. The latest data<sup>42</sup> shows that a demand for raising literacy levels must be a priority.

The low levels of educational attainment and qualification amongst adults over 55 years in particular reveal a deficit in building a sustainable lifelong learning approach despite the measures foreseen in the relevant laws. In terms of progress with regard to the development and/or enhancement of skills and competences of the adult population there is still much work to be done particularly in terms of raising participation in adult education and VET but also in terms of reforming relevant programmes and structures as well as

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39 Key success factors, indicating the strength of evidence (available in all EU languages): <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/policy-tool/key-success-factors>. Study "An in-depth analysis of adult learning policies and their effectiveness in Europe" by EC (2015): <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/final-report-20150817-en.pdf>

40 Information available at <http://kdvm.gr/about>

41 Information available at <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/en/geniki-ekpaidefsi-enilikon/deyteri-efkairia/s-d-e-sxoleia-deyteris-efkairias>

42 Greece participated in the second round of the international survey PIAAC of OECD, for the period 2012-2016. The full results have not yet been released, however the general indicators show that adults in Greece score very low in ICT skills. The full report is available at <http://www.oecd.org/publications/skills-matter-9789264258051-en.htm>

improving the quality and attractiveness of VET, through the establishment of a national approach for the quality assurance in VET (according to the European Framework for Quality Assurance in VET) and the application of transparency instruments, such as the European Credit System for VET (ECVET).

## **5.2 Increase employers' investment in learning**

This is largely achieved through collaborations and partnerships between the Employment Agency (OAED) and private sector stakeholders, employers, social partners and other stakeholders in the fight against unemployment. OAED has set a subsidy called LAEK (Account for Employment and Vocational Training) for all training programmes offered to employees. OAED generates the LAEK 0.24% subsidy for any training programme for employees every year, which enables businesses to recollect the employers' contribution of 0.24%. In order to recollect this employer contribution, businesses must materialise educational and training programmes of their staff according to the rules of LAEK 0.24 programme<sup>43</sup>.

Furthermore another policy priority at this level relates to social partners' perception (see Zarifis, Fotopoulos & Zanolis 2015), that the relevant lifelong learning strategy should emphasise local diversity and form plans based on the development characteristics of each area. The issue of training adult teachers, trainers and more specifically defining the skills that they should have must be highlighted in public documents.

## **5.3 Improve equity of access for all**

Greece has to resolve inequalities in access to adult education which are reflected in extremely low participation rates, the low participation of workers, artisans and the low skilled in comparison to the highly skilled, the greater participation of residents of urban areas compared to those in suburban and rural areas, and the greater involvement of people with a high level of education compared to those with a lower level of education. The aim of the existing national lifelong learning strategy (Law 3879/2010) is to increase the participation rate in lifelong learning and widen the range of beneficiaries.

The facilitation of access to lifelong learning opportunities is sought after by strengthening the network of Centres for Lifelong Learning (KDVM) through the involvement of regional and local communities, higher education institutions, social partners and civil society organisations. In particular, the aim is to widen access to education and training through more effective and targeted actions. More specifically, these actions are expected to facilitate the participation of under-represented groups, such as low-skilled, unemployed, early school leavers, older workers, immigrants and minority groups, with emphasis on those coming from marginalised communities.

Similar initiatives were foreseen in the Operational Programme of Education and Initial Vocational Training (EPEAEK) 2000-2006 was approved in March 2001. Its six axes of

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<sup>43</sup> See CONFINTEA National Report for UNESCO (2008).

priority focus on objectives such as: the promotion of access and equity in the job market, the promotion and improvement of education and vocational training in the frame of lifelong learning and the promotion of gender equality. A profound financial gravity however was given to the axis of the "Promotion and improvement of education and vocational training in the context of lifelong learning"<sup>44</sup>.

This trend continues today despite a considerable number of initiatives that advocate for equality of access for all, such as the programme "Education and Counselling Support of Families from Roma, Repatriate and Immigrant Background" with total duration of 50 hours offered by KDVMs Greece today however has yet to resolve inequalities in access to adult education. This is reflected in the extremely low participation of those aged 55+, the minimum participation of workers, artisans and the low skilled in comparison to those with the highly skilled, twice the participation of residents of urban areas over suburban and rural areas, and in the greater involvement of people with high level of education compared to those with lower level of education<sup>45</sup>.

According to the 2016 NRP (page 17) the intensification of the refugee crisis in 2015 has disproportionately affected Greece as a transit country, with as many as 856,723 refugees and migrants crossing into Europe via the Greek-Turkish sea borders within the year, while from January 1 to March 13, 2016 respective inflows had already surpassed 143,205 according to the United Nations Refugee Agency<sup>46</sup>. This unanticipated increase in refugee and migration inflows, at a rate of 1601% in 2015 compared to 2014, and the estimated continuation or even escalation of inflows within the current year in response to the continuing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, undoubtedly entail an additional challenge in terms of educational opportunities for this particular group<sup>47</sup>.

#### **5.4 Deliver learning that is relevant**

The expert's own opinion is that learning must first serve the needs of the learners and not of the employers. Learning is a process that entails more than what the labour market asks for. Employers essentially have other needs that do not directly relate to adult learning needs as such, but to labour structuring, production and professional skills. Nonetheless, organising a long term lifelong learning thematic agenda for a fully pledged (as consistent, focused and structured) tripartite social dialogue among the state and relevant social partners representing employers and employees as well as representatives from the field of adult education and VET is essential.

Another measure that is considered important and has not been foreseen by any relevant policy in Greece is the development of mechanisms and tools for identifying and validating alternative learning paths (such as work-based learning, non-formal and informal learning). Delivering a fully structured agenda for current and future skills in order to

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44 See Zarifis (2008).

45 See Hadjivassiliou & IES (2012).

46 Information available at: <http://www.unhcr.gr/genikes-plirofories/statistika.html?L=0>

47 See National Reform Programme (NRP), 2016. Available at [ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016\\_greece\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016_greece_en.pdf)



resolve or avoid possible skill mismatches<sup>48</sup>, reform the apprenticeship systems, to promote ICT and new basic skills, but also to address transversal skills for personal and social development (such as entrepreneurship, citizenship, decision making, problem solving, etc.) is also essential. Finally, promoting uninterrupted forms of networking among existing lifelong learning structures and institutions (including initial and continuing VET structures and Universities, as well as schools and local communities, museums and cultural centres, libraries and sporting facilities) will contribute to the expansion of adult learning provision.

The reform of programmes of initial vocational training (IVET) needs to be pursued for it to adapt to the needs of the labour market, especially in sectors and actions that are decisive for future development. Any reform however needs to enhance the relevance between educational and training systems, the labour market and companies, as well as the improvement of lifelong counselling and guidance in all education and training levels<sup>49</sup>. The implementation of national strategic policy framework to improve the quality and effectiveness of vocational education and training (VET), as it is prescribed in the law 4186/2013, includes measures to improve the relevance of VET systems with the labour market in close cooperation with stakeholders.

Another major challenge in terms of supply and take up relates to the need to certify skills acquired in the workplace<sup>50</sup>, which cannot be acknowledged in the existing education and training systems framework. Specifically, the need for the workplace to function as a learning place in parallel with the certification of the experience, activities and skills acquired there, is not strongly emphasised in Greek policy documents. Specific stress must also be placed on the need to implement those qualitative learning conditions that are essentially relevant to the investments of enterprises on training and support the processes of acquiring new skills by workers in their workplace.

Finally, another aspect relates to the use of IT. Almost all the relevant public documents and relevant bodies<sup>51</sup> see it as a key issue of the reform in adult education and training systems within the framework of lifelong learning (curricula, methodology, links between the enterprises and education & training, training and re-training of teaching staff). A more targeted and less generic approach is required so as to create relevance to existing adult education and VET programmes and support the development of new ones.

## **5.5 Deliver learning that is of high quality**

The main objective of the system is the evaluation and the continuous improvement of educational provision through processes of self-assessment and evaluation of adult education providers, as well as the processes of external quality evaluation. The main

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48 See Terzakis et al. (2001).

49 Also see Karalis & Vergidis (2004).

50 See National Reform Programme (NRP), 2016. Available at [ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016\\_greece\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016_greece_en.pdf)

51 See laws 3879/2010 and 4186/2013, and National Reform Programmes for 2015 and 2016.

mechanisms, which are used to monitor and evaluate Adult Learning Education (ALE) programmes in order to ensure quality, are:

- a) The evaluation procedures of adult education and VET operation (administrational procedures, management and leadership, resources and outcomes/educational pathways);
- b) The quality of the educational process (teaching methods, training packages and contents, learner assessment model, teacher evaluation procedures and training, etc.);
- c) The assessment of learning outcomes. More specifically the GSLL is developing a National Competency Framework (NCF) to assess learner achievements and performance (mainly in the SDE and KDVM).

The tool that is proposed within the National Quality Assurance & Assessment Framework is called 'n3'. The n3 tool literally means 'quality always and everywhere' and responds to the clause on quality assurance in article 19 of the Law 3879/2010 for a system for continuing education and evaluation of all educational staff in non-formal education and second chance education, as well as a monitoring and evaluation system of all programmes operated under the auspice of the National Network for LLL.

It is certainly difficult, if not impossible to proceed to full operation of the n3 framework without the results of the pilot implementation. However, and based on the framework itself as it is implemented so far, what needs to be stressed is the devotion to the letter of the official legal documents coming from the EU as well as the national Law 3879/2010 on LLL. The n3 framework matches all legal requirements as they appear in national LLL strategy but it misses certain aspects of its added value due to lack of information on its implementation. Therefore the framework is highly relevant, but there is no score in terms of its effectiveness. Another important aspect that relates to those of effectiveness and efficiency is the degree of transferability to other learning or educational situations.

As it has been noted in the relevant literature on adult education in Greece, it is very difficult to assess transferability of the whole framework as it is; since it is quasi economic led due to its tri-elemental nature: input-processes-output. This simplistic approach removes many aspects of the learning process that relate to readiness, personal intention to participate, the role of the self in appreciating what is a learning outcome and how it can be appreciated, the difficulty in defining quality in different learning environments, and of course some reference to the socio-economic agenda that has been prioritised in the country (severe cuts in educational provision, low salaries, diminishing infrastructure, the interplay between the public and the private sectors). Finally, the selection of adult trainers and executive personnel in all adult education structures must be supervised by GSLL based on criteria that fit the needs of those who participate in relevant adult education structures<sup>52</sup>.

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52 Karasiotou, P. (2004). Identification of skill needs Projects and actions for Greece – a review (Cedefop Panorama Series), Thessaloniki: CEDEFOP.

## **5.6 Ensure coherent policy**

The law 3879/2010 was introduced to ensure and articulate a rational policy framework for lifelong learning in Greece. However, the law has been implemented partially, and in general it seems that the latest years (as of 2013) little attention has been given to make sure that there is a coherent policy in Greece. For example the last year that a comprehensive and analytic report for adult learning in Greece was produced was 2012 (see [http://www.gsae.edu.gr/images/stories/APOLOGISMOS\\_2013\\_final.pdf](http://www.gsae.edu.gr/images/stories/APOLOGISMOS_2013_final.pdf)). In addition, 2012 was the first time that the three bodies that were established with the law 3879/2010 (The National Council for Connecting LLL with Employment, The Continuous Assembly for Adult Education and the National Congress for LLL) to be responsible for ensuring a coherent policy were called for a meeting.

## 6.0 STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES OF THE ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEM

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### 6.1 Strengths

*6.1.1 The main strengths of the system are the following:*

- **The National Lifelong Learning Strategy:** The strategy is prescribed in detail in the seminal law (Law Nr. 3879/2010<sup>53</sup>) on Lifelong Learning that was voted in by the Greek Parliament in September 2010. This law sets the basis for the planning and implementation of a holistic strategy on lifelong learning and for the creation of the National Network of Lifelong Learning (NNLL), which encompasses all governing bodies and service providers operating under the auspices of different ministries<sup>54</sup>;
- **State-funded structures:** The most noticeable of the policy reforms in the field of adult education relates to the development of the Second Chance Schools (SDE); 62 in total all around the country<sup>55</sup>, and the Lifelong Learning Centres (KDVM); 258 all around the country<sup>56</sup>. Both structures operate under the auspices of GSLL and are monitored by the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (INEDIVIM) which is responsible for the administration, funding and dissemination of good practices within these structures. SDE provide formal adult education for those adults who have not completed compulsory schooling, contributing to basic skills acquisition by low-qualified people.
- KDVM programmes are non-formal and are addressed to all adults, unemployed and employed, regardless of age, gender, education level, country of origin, religion, place of residence, etc., subject only to their interest for knowledge and active participation in education. The development of independent learning courses for vulnerable social groups (Roma, prisoners, immigrants and refugees, citizens with mental or physical disabilities), aim to facilitate and aid their equal integration to society. Both these structures are the core principals of the system and need to be further developed and expanded. KDVM in particular need to be strengthened with high quality certified programmes;
- **Quality assurance framework:** Although it has not been fully applied yet, the fact base instrument for quality assurance for all lifelong learning initiatives in place demonstrates commitment by relevant authorities to quality in the field. The instrument that was proposed within the National Quality Assurance & Assessment Framework is called 'n3' (from the initial letter of the Greek word 'ποιότητα' which translates to quality)<sup>57</sup> and literally means 'quality always and everywhere'. It responds to the clause on quality assurance in article 19 of the Law 3879/2010 that takes in the establishment of a system for continuing education and evaluation of

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53 Available in English at [www.gsae.edu.gr/images/nomothesia/nomoi/Law-3879-LifeLongLearning.pdf](http://www.gsae.edu.gr/images/nomothesia/nomoi/Law-3879-LifeLongLearning.pdf)

54 See Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, General Secretariat for Adult Education (2001).

55 Available at <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/en/geniki-ekpaidefsi-enilikon/deyteri-efkairia/s-d-e-sxoleia-deyteris-efkairias>

56 Available at <http://www.e-kdvm.gr/index.php/kdvm>

57 n3 - The National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning. Available in Greek at <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/images/stories/plaisio.pdf>, and n3 - The National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning – Executive Summary available in English

all educational staff in non-formal education and second chance education, as well as a monitoring and evaluation system of all programmes operated under the National Network for LLL.

This instrument sets a framework of priorities and principles on quality assurance in non-formal adult education learning. This covers all forms of educational and learning provision for people over 16 years old and includes initial VET, all apprenticeship schemes, continuing VET, basic skills education and all liberal and/or popular adult education programmes. It also provides a tool for organising and delivering the evaluation of learning outcomes for those participating in any of the programmes provided, to all relevant structures. This is essentially delivered on the grounds that n3 defines quality by setting a number of principles and criteria in all three dimensions of education and learning, namely inputs, processes and outputs, and provides a large number of measurable quantitative and qualitative indicators for evaluating the degree of implementation of quality assurance principles by all relevant providers<sup>58</sup>.

## 6.2 Weaknesses

The main weaknesses of the system are the following:

- **Coordination between existing authorities with relevant social partners:** Although the national strategic policy framework for lifelong learning includes measures for the support of the development and interconnection of relevant services, the co-operation of stakeholders with relevant social partners remains insubstantial. According to the NRP 2016 (page 45) Greece established in 2016 a mechanism for the identification and forecasting of skills needs. This system is governed by a network of bodies with distinctive roles and responsibilities, which are involved in its inputs and outputs, and is scientifically supported by the National Institute for Labour and Human Resources (EIEAD)<sup>59</sup> for primary and secondary data analysis of labour market needs in skills and occupations. However, a more intense, targeted and focused tripartite social dialogue is particularly needed for the development of relevant action in the field of work-based learning and apprenticeship schemes with a simultaneous reform of OAED<sup>60</sup>.
- **Low participation rates:** There is a clearly identified need for policies that improve access to lifelong learning and adult education/training. The aim of the government as stated in the NRP 2016 (page 36) is to increase the participation rate in lifelong learning, to widen the range of beneficiaries and facilitate access to Lifelong Learning opportunities by strengthening the network of Centres for Lifelong Learning (KDVM), particularly with the establishment of e-KDVM in remote areas and in a number of islands, though the involvement of regional and local communities, higher education institutions, social partners and civil society

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<sup>58</sup> See General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning - *The n3 Framework* (useful documents and planned actions). Available in Greek at <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/index.php/feasts>

<sup>59</sup> Information available at <http://www.eiead.gr/>

<sup>60</sup> Expert's own view.

organisations is still poor. In particular, access to adult education and training needs to be widened through more effective and targeted actions for under-represented social groups, such as low-skilled, unemployed, early school leavers, older workers, immigrants and minority groups, with emphasis on those coming from marginalised communities (Roma, and refugees in particular).

- **Enhancement of skills and competences of the adult population:** The development of skills of various targeted groups holds a big challenge considering that the percentage of low achievers with basic skills in Greece today is 27.7%<sup>61</sup>. The percentage of people aged 18-24 who drop out of education and training is 14.2%. School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education) is 17 years (16 years for men and 17 years for women)<sup>62</sup>. The percentage of people who have completed the nine years basic education (high school) is 25.7%, while for those who hold a Master's or doctoral degree it is reduced to 12.9%<sup>63</sup>. 34% of people regularly use the Internet, while 81.8% do not have a sufficient degree of internet skills<sup>64</sup>. The literacy rate for those aged 15 and over and can read and write is 97.3% (98.4% for men and 96.3% for women)<sup>65</sup>.

Achievement of European targets becomes even more difficult because Greece has only 3.3% share of 25-64 year olds participating in lifelong learning, one of the lowest participation rates in the EU (Eurostat data 2015). According to PIAAC results (see OECD, 2016: 6)<sup>66</sup> the large expansion of education in Greece has not translated into an improvement in literacy over the generations. Some 50% of 55-65 year-olds did not complete upper secondary education, compared to only 15% of 25-34 year-olds, and only 19.9% of 55-65 year-olds have a tertiary education qualification, compared to 27.3% of 25-34 year-olds. 25-34 year-olds score only 6 points higher in literacy than 55-65 year-olds, compared with the OECD average difference of 29 points. Greece is also characterised by high poverty rates among older people - in particular among older single women, very old citizens, and ethnic minorities (Roma).

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61 See UNESCO (2015). EDUCATION FOR ALL 2000-2015: achievements and challenges, EFA Global Monitoring Report, Paris: Unesco. Available at: [unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf). (accessed 13/7/2016).

62 See CRELL 2015. Available at <https://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ET2020Indicators/makecharts.php>

63 See UNESCO (2015). EDUCATION FOR ALL 2000-2015: achievements and challenges, EFA Global Monitoring Report, Paris: Unesco. Available at: [unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf). (accessed 13/7/2016).

64 See CRELL 2015. Available at <https://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ET2020Indicators/makecharts.php>

65 See UNESCO (2015). EDUCATION FOR ALL 2000-2015: achievements and challenges, EFA Global Monitoring Report, Paris: Unesco. Available at: [unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf). (accessed 13/7/2016).

66 Available at [www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills-Matter-Greece.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills-Matter-Greece.pdf)

## 7.0 FURTHER POLICY REFORMS AND ORIENTATIONS NEEDED

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The major policy target for the Greek Government is to ensure those mechanisms that will endorse and improve the effectiveness of the existing National Strategy for Lifelong Learning, so that the ongoing as well as the planned interventions meet the local needs, are linked to the needs of the labour market and are targeted to the target groups' particular needs. To this end, initiatives for combating early school leaving, matching education and VET with labour market needs, resolving issues of access and raising adult participation rates in education appear as the main challenges for the system.

The most recent developments at policy level stress an ambitious and comprehensive reform effort that has been under way in the past ten years (2005 onwards). It cannot be predicted whether existing and new policies and measures to further develop the already established adult education and VET structures as well as the reform of the apprenticeship system, will have the expected impact, as this will demand closer collaboration between the state and the social partners (i.e. GSEE, GSEVEE, SETE and SEV) both in terms of developing a new pattern for social dialogue, and decision making based on evidence from documented good practices.

It also requires a higher degree of acceptance of these measures by Greek society. Significant measures have been legislated, but their mix and implementation so far is uneven. This ultimately demands a better dissemination strategy of the agreed measures in the field of adult education through stressing their benefits particularly for the most vulnerable adults (i.e. unemployed young adults aged between 24-30, older adults 65+, low skilled and NEETs as well as migrants and refugees). It is important to monitor who participates in adult education in Greece, assessing why, and how much it is needed. Considering the profile of those who already participate (mainly women; employed with ISCED 4 or higher) the state is also faced with the challenge of reassessing existing measures by prioritising relevant outreach projects at regional and local levels.

EU structural funds should be better exploited to boost investment in adult education. Last but not least, close collaboration with research institutes and universities as well as participation in international cyclical large scale studies like PIAAC is needed. Greece ranks around the OECD average in education and skills (OECD, 2016: 14). This can provide a basis for finally opening the discussion on human resource management, with focus on issues like increasing the relevance of VET offers and predicting anticipated future needs. Plans should be evaluated systematically, employers should be more involved, and a system to detect current and future needs in terms of skills needs has to be created.

Last but not least, other key areas<sup>67</sup> of policy concern (still under discussion by the current government) relate to the following:

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<sup>67</sup> See Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Finance (2013). *Greek National Reforms Programme 2013*, Athens: Ministry of Finance. [available in Greek]. Also see Institute for Work and Employment/General Confederation of Greek Workers (2013). *Annual Report 2013: Economy and Employment in*

- Creation of a reliable system for research on the needs of the labour market on the national and local levels.
- Co-ordination and linking of the relevant policies with direct reference to the needs of the local market.
- Strengthening initial professional training in vital sectors of the Greek economy like tourism, shipping, fishing and agricultural production. This essentially requires the development of tailored policies orientated towards human resource management.
- Creation of a system for validating skills that have been acquired in non-formal and informal learning environments. The validation of skills is of importance for all bodies that either provide adult education and training or manage actions to help increase the skills of human resources. The certification of professional skills needs to be open to all levels and for all individuals who want to certify their skills in a specific profession or job irrespectively of the way the skills have been acquired and the learning pathway/s followed.
- Emphasis on education for all in basic skills (literacy – numeracy – information technology) with fine-tuning of relevant European tools like Europass, EQF and EQAVET. This particularly needs to be emphasised considering the PIAAC results for Greece<sup>68</sup> which show below OECD average performances (literacy=254, numeracy=252, problem solving in technology-rich environments=14)<sup>69</sup>.
- Emphasis on ICT and new basic skills for each professional specialisation, broad enough so that the learner will be able to self-train and self-educate themselves in a way that is relevant to the development of their professional terrain.
- Emphasising transversal skills (citizenship and the necessary social skills) that are needed in the modern environments of mobility and intercultural understanding.

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Greece, Athens: INE/GSEE. (available in Greek only at: <http://www.inegsee.gr/ereynes-meletes/ekthesh/869-etisia-ekthesi-2013--i-elliniki-oikonomia-kai-i-apascholisi.html>). (accessed 13/7/2016).

68 Relevant report is available at [www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills-Matter-Greece.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills-Matter-Greece.pdf)

69 Information available at <http://www.oecd.org/publications/skills-matter-9789264258051-en.htm>



## 8.0 SUMMARY

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The Greek adult education and VET sector has been strongly affected by very low and decreasing public spending, due to strict fiscal consolidation. Adult participation in lifelong learning in Greece remains very low and has tended to stagnate over time. It stood at 4.0% in 2016, compared to an EU average of 10.7%. Some groups of people, such as the lower skilled (ISCED level 0-2), with a participation rate of barely 0.7% in 2016, compared to an EU average of 4.2%. Older people and those living in isolated, remote and sparsely populated areas have less access to training. The rate of 25-64 year-old adults who are low-qualified (levels 0-2) in Greece and in employment is steadily decreasing however from 53.9% in 2011 to 46.9% in 2014 with a slight increase to 48.4% in 2016. Recent legislation in the adult education sector in Greece indicates the intention to revert to the educational policy from the pre-2010 period. There is still considerable room to increase efficiency and effectiveness at virtually all levels of adult education (basic, initial and continuing VET).

As Greece is still under an economic adjustment programme, all policies (including those that relate to social and educational matters and not only those that relate to the economy, taxation and employment) are subsequently prescribed in the Third Economic Adjustment Programme. According to the 2015 and the 2016 National Reform Programme (NRP), during the six-year period 2009-2015 the reduction of funding of all educational structures and activities (including adult education and VET structures) amounted to 36%. This had destructive short-term and long-term impact on both the quality of adult education infrastructure and functions, primary and supportive ones.

Nonetheless, the structures providing adult education and learning services that are funded through public resources should be evaluated in accordance with the implementation of the goals that have been set for the respective programmes and target groups, and supported on the basis of their effectiveness and performance. There are challenges within the policy reforms that are prescribed in the 2015 and 2016 NRP, these are the development of a sustainable monitoring framework for adult education and adult skills that considers the following:

Analysis of the effects of reforms in other educational sectors on adult learning. The most relevant educational measures are those that relate to confronting school failure and early dropping-out;

- Improving the quality of provision and staffing;
- Increasing the possibilities to achieve a qualification at least one level higher;
- Speeding up the process of recognising and validating informal learning for socially disadvantaged adults.

Within the framework of the 2016 NRP and in order to correspond to the constantly changing needs of the educational system, one of the basic axes of government policy is

better use and rational allocation of resources. According to INEDIVIM<sup>70</sup> the allocated budget for 2017 was €13.250.000. However, the greatest part of the aforementioned actions and/or programmes are supported and co-financed by the EU Structural Funds<sup>71</sup>, which consequently are considered one of 'the key levers to promote innovations in Greek adult education and training. Furthermore, in Greece, consistent with the 2017 budget, and as outlined in the 2015 'Memorandum of Understanding' between the European Commission acting on behalf of the European Stability Mechanism and the Hellenic Republic and the Bank of Greece' (MoU)<sup>72</sup>, had to deliver an action plan for the modernisation and expansion of vocational education and training (VET) on the basis of the latest educational reform adopted in 2013 (Law 4186/2013). This plan consists of a key deliverable and was due in December 2015, but has still not been released.

According to the 2015 MoU this action plan will legislate a modern quality framework for VET/Apprenticeships and will:

- Set up a system to identify skills needs and a process for upgrading programmes and accreditation;
- Launch pilots of partnerships with regional authorities and employers in 2015-2016
- Provide an integrated implementation plan from the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, and OAED to provide the required number of apprenticeships for all vocational education (EPAS and IEK) students by 2016 and at least 33% of all technical secondary education (EPAL) students by 2016-2017; and
- Ensure a closer involvement of employers and a greater use of private financing<sup>73</sup>.

This is essentially work in progress that demonstrates the policy orientation for the next five years. The most recent developments at policy level stress an ambitious and comprehensive reform effort that has been in place for the past ten years (since 2005). Particular emphasis has been laid so far in the modernisation and expansion of learning platforms for facilitating adult learning. Cornerstones in this ongoing effort is the coordination and enhancement of educational providers (particularly KDVM), the upgrading of vocational training with the establishment of special vocationally oriented secondary education units, the facilitation of inter-level mobility (easier access to post-secondary non-tertiary and tertiary education for their graduates), and the substantial regulatory and institutional reform of higher education.

The major policy target for adult education and VET systems in Greece is to ensure that those mechanisms will endorse and improve the effectiveness of the existing National

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70 Available at: <https://yperdiavgeia.gr/decisions/view/17615974>

71 Overall in all sectors of the economy the absorption rate of the public expenditure of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), co-financed Operational Programmes rose from 18%, which was at the end of 2010, to 31.5% in 2011, to 45.77% in 2012, 66.5% in 2013, 80.2% in 2014 and to 96.8% in 2015 (According to the Data of the Management Information System).

72 Available at [ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/assistance\\_eu\\_ms/greek\\_loan\\_facility/pdf/01\\_mou\\_20150811\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/pdf/01_mou_20150811_en.pdf)

73 See Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission acting on behalf of the European Stability Mechanism and the Hellenic Republic and the Bank of Greece (2015). Available at [ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/assistance\\_eu\\_ms/greek\\_loan\\_facility/pdf/01\\_mou\\_20150811\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/pdf/01_mou_20150811_en.pdf)

Strategy for Lifelong Learning, so that the ongoing as well as the planned interventions meet the local needs, are linked to the needs of the labour market, and are targeted to the target groups' particular needs. To this end, initiatives for matching education and VET with labour market needs, resolving issues of access and raising adult participation rates in education appear the main challenges for the system. More specifically the key policy issues and challenges in the field of adult education include the following:

- Improving the correlation between education & training and the labour market. Despite the efforts and some relevant actions at policy level by the Council of Lifelong Learning and of Linking with Employment<sup>74</sup>, the goal to increase the employment rate of those aged 20-64 to 70% cannot be realised without rebooting the economy within a strategic framework that builds a permanent link between adult education and training with the labour market.
- With regard to the enhancement of skills and competences of the adult population there is still much work to be done particularly in terms of raising participation in adult education and VET but also in terms of reforming relevant programmes and structures as well as improving the quality and attractiveness of VET, through the establishment of a national approach for the quality assurance in VET (according to the European Framework for Quality Assurance in VET) and the application of transparency instruments, such as the European Credit System for VET (ECVET).
- Moreover, Greece has to resolve inequalities in access to adult education which are reflected in extremely low participation rates, the minimum participation of workers, artisans and the low skilled in comparison to those with the highly skilled, the greater participation of residents of urban areas over suburban and rural areas, and in the greater involvement of people with high level of education compared to those with lower levels of education. In addition, the intensification of the refugee crisis in 2015 has disproportionately affected Greece as a transit country, with as much as 856,723 refugees and migrants crossing into Europe via the Greek-Turkish sea borders within the year, while from January 1 to March 13, 2016 respective inflows have already surpassed 143,205 according to the United Nations Refugee Agency<sup>75</sup>. This unanticipated increase in refugee and migration inflows, at a rate of 1601% in 2015 compared to 2014, and the estimated continuation or even escalation of inflows within the current year in response to the continuing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, undoubtedly entail an additional challenge in terms of educational opportunities for this particular group<sup>76</sup>.
- PIAAC data<sup>77</sup> also shows that a demand for raising literacy levels must be a priority. The low levels of educational attainment and qualification amongst adults over 55

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74 This coordination policy instrument has been established with view to a better coordination, to contributing towards the improvement of the quality and of the effectiveness of lifelong learning services, as well as their linking with the labour market needs.

75 Information available at: <http://www.unhcr.gr/genikes-plirofories/statistika.html?L=0>

76 See National Reform Programme (NRP), 2016. Available at [ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016\\_greece\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016_greece_en.pdf)

77 Greece participated in the second round of the international survey PIAAC of OECD, for the period 2012-2016. The full results have not yet been released, however the general indicators show that adults in Greece score very low in ICT skills. The full report is available at <http://www.oecd.org/publications/skills-matter-9789264258051-en.htm>

years, in particular reveal a deficit in building a sustainable lifelong learning approach despite the measures foreseen in the relevant laws.

Significant measures have been legislated in the field of adult education and VET, but their mix and implementation so far is uneven. This eventually requires a better dissemination strategy of any policy measures in the field by stressing their benefits particularly for those adults who are most vulnerable (i.e. unemployed young adults aged 24-30, older adults 65+, low skilled and NEETs as well as migrants and refugees). It is important to monitor who participates in adult education in Greece, for what reasons and how much they actually need it. Advanced outreach strategies are imperative in this case. Considering the profile of those who already participate, (women in their majority; employed with ISCED 4 or higher) authorities like EOPPEP and INEDIVIM are also faced with the challenge of reassessing existing adult education and VET provision by prioritizing relevant outreach projects at regional and local levels.

EU structural funds should be better exploited to boost investment in adult education. Last but not least, close collaboration with research institutes and universities as well as participation in international cyclical large-scale studies like PIAAC is needed. Greece ranks around the OECD average in education and skills (OECD, 2016: 14). This can provide a basis for finally opening the discussion on human resource management, with focus on issues like increasing the relevance of VET offers and predicting anticipated future needs. Plans should be evaluated systematically, employers should be more involved, the quality of tripartite dialogue needs to be upgraded, and a system to detect current and future needs in terms of skills needs has to be created.

Finally, quality in adult education in Greece is largely overlooked despite the existence of a relevant quality assurance tool. The tool that was proposed within the National Quality Assurance & Assessment Framework is called 'n3'. In addition the creation of a common registry for adult trainers that is under way needs to be reassessed. A registry for trained adult educators and trainers to continue vocational training (CVET) was first created in 2000<sup>78</sup> by EKEPIS (predecessor of EOPPEP). All trained adult education and training staff entered the registry after a short period of targeted training. At the moment there are two registries organised by EOPPEP and INEDIVIM respectively. The one created by INEDIVIM however is for adult educators in non-formal adult education structures. Whereas the one organised by EOPPEP is only for trainers in CVET. The new consolidated registry will be supplemented by the trainers that work under the banner of EOPPEP so that a unified and certified registry comes to force. Social partners should also become more involved in the recognition of competences of adult learning personnel<sup>79</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> With the Ministerial Decision Nr 115911/9-10-2000, Official Journal 1263/B/18-10-2000. For more details see EKEPIS (2003).

<sup>79</sup> Expert's own opinion.

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: List of adopted legal acts, strategies, laws

Name	Date of adoption	Short description of content
Law 3879/2010	21/9/2010	The purpose of this law is to develop lifelong learning, through the identification of alternatives training paths, networking of lifelong learning operators, ensuring transparency and quality, so as to achieve the linking of lifelong learning to employment, the formation of an integrated personality of the participants and more generally, social and economic development. The Law regulates the issues that relate to lifelong learning beyond the formal education system, as well as the issues that relate to the lifelong learning initiatives undertaken by the stakeholder of the formal education system. Informal learning is governed by the provisions of this law only in so far as it concerns the recognition and certification of its learning outcomes
Law 4186/2013	17/9/2013	The partially clarifies the responsibilities of the organizations that offer no formal vocational education and defines the framework for the operation of the regional directorates of lifelong learning.

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**Annex 2: Inventory of policy interventions**

Name of intervention	Source (with hyperlink)	Budget	Further details/description (purpose, duration, responsible entity etc.)
Promoting the employment of unemployed people through programmes of public interest to the municipalities of the country, including training of the participants	<a href="http://www.oaed.gr/documents/10195/1214512/%CE%94%CE%97%CE%9C%CE%9F%CE%A3%CE%99%CE%91+%CE%A0%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%A3%CE%9A%CE%9B%CE%97%CE%A3%CE%97+%CE%93%CE%95%CE%9D%CE%99%CE%9A%CE%97%CE%A3+%CE%93%CE%A1%CE%91%CE%9C%CE%9C%CE%91%CE%A4%CE%95%CE%99%CE%91%CE%A3+%CE%9D%CE%BF+1_2017.pdf/c3fd0fd8-b81e-4ba1-9dbe-af3037f27e87">http://www.oaed.gr/documents/10195/1214512/%CE%94%CE%97%CE%9C%CE%9F%CE%A3%CE%99%CE%91+%CE%A0%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%A3%CE%9A%CE%9B%CE%97%CE%A3%CE%97+%CE%93%CE%95%CE%9D%CE%99%CE%9A%CE%97%CE%A3+%CE%93%CE%A1%CE%91%CE%9C%CE%9C%CE%91%CE%A4%CE%95%CE%99%CE%91%CE%A3+%CE%9D%CE%BF+1_2017.pdf/c3fd0fd8-b81e-4ba1-9dbe-af3037f27e87</a>	20.640.366,23 €	the new design of this project for the first time combines work with the provision of certified vocational training opportunities that will assist unemployed in acquiring new skills or upgrade existing skills and thus help them take to make a crucial step to return to the labor market on a more permanent basis. This new work/training scheme consists of four days at work and one day in training. The training module includes a total of 120 hours dedicated to upskilling digital skills and 20 hours of training in practices of social entrepreneurship.

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Facilitation of access to educational opportunities for people with low income and low skills	Official Government Gazette, Issue B, 128/24-1-2017, available in Greek at <a href="http://www.et.gr">www.et.gr</a>	N/A	The Social Solidarity Income (hereafter KEA) is a new Government welfare programme, which combines income support and supplementary social services and benefits. For the first time such a minimum income scheme includes as a prerequisite for participation from all adults up to 45 years of age who have not completed their compulsory education, to enroll in a Second Chance School in their municipality. This provision is anticipated to assist vulnerable groups to upgrade their literacy, numeracy and digital skills in order to be able to acquire the basic lifelong learning skills towards social integration
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