



COUNTRY STUDY

GREECE

Country Monitoring Report

Greece had been severely hit by the economic crisis and the following austerity measures. Hence, adult participation in lifelong learning, VET and NEETs have especially suffered during the last years. Although, they have made some progress in reducing early school leaving and in terms of validation of non-formal and informal learning, Greece has a particularly high early school leaver rate in its migrant community.

Recommendations

- Further implementation of concrete measures to support the policy developments for lifelong learning
- Reduce the number of early school leavers with a migrant background by improving social inclusion in education
- Complete the creation process of a national, comprehensive framework for validation
- Monitor the implementation of the newly introduced law on lifelong learning and adjust it when needed
- Support young people not in employment, education or training by the means of the Greek Youth Guarantee, whose implementation needs to be carefully monitored and adjusted when needed.





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1. Promoting access and participation in LLL

Adult participation rates in lifelong learning (LLL) continue to be very low, at 3.0 % in 2013, in comparison to the EU average of 10.5 %. According to our Greek members, a couple of reasons could explain this situation. In Greece, LLL and adult education are not yet deeply rooted and adult education is a relatively new institution in Greece (since the 1980's). Furthermore, 90% of enterprises are of small size and

they cannot afford to take initiatives of training of their staff. In addition, both civil society (Trade Unions, NGO's,...) and local authorities are not very strong and, therefore, have little impact on the LLL sector.

In Greece, law No 3879/2010 on lifelong learning provides, in principle, the basis for planning and implementing a national holistic strategy on lifelong learning and focuses on defining the tools (in the area of regulation, administration and finance). Moreover, the law is supposed to create a national network for lifelong learning, including lifelong learning governing bodies and lifelong learning service providers who operate under the auspices of different ministries. However, there are concerns that the law will meet the EU policies to respond to global market conditions and, due to organisational and budgetary constraints, the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning considers implementation of the law, including through the national action plan for adult learning, to be problematic¹.

2. Vocational Education and Training

Participation in VET is traditionally fairly low in Greece, at 33.1 % in 2011, compared to the EU average of 50.4 %.

Based on the law 3879/2010 on lifelong which is more focused on LLL than on VET, the Ministry of Education has started to attempt to enrich the field of quality assurance of lifelong learning. The government replaced article 13, paragraph 2 of the law by article 7 of the law 4283/2014, which states that the prerequisite of the educational adequacy in non-formal education begins on the September 1st, 2015. Subsequently, in July 2011, the Ministry of Education continuous the effort to promote quality in LLL and VET by announcing the design of the National Framework for Quality Assurance in LLL, which is in

¹ European Commission (2014). *Education and Training Monitoring Report –Greece*.



alignment with the 2009 recommendation of the European Parliament and Council in order to establish a European Reference Framework for quality assurance in Vocational Education and Training.

Furthermore, the recent law on secondary education (Law 4186/2013 on 'New Lyceum') aims to modernise the current VET system and link it more closely with the needs of the labour market. The Greek authorities expect the new law to provide better practical skills to improve the relevance of VET and the transition to the labour market. Most importantly, the new law will, as of September 2016, provide for a one-year apprenticeship placement for all future VET students in Greece, to be undertaken during their final year of studies. The new law should cover both 'typical' VET (vocational lyceums, which lead to the labour market and/or to tertiary VET education) and also 'non-typical' vocational training (which provide direct access to the labour market)².

3. Validation of NFIL

According to the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), a national, comprehensive framework for validation is currently under development. Validation practices are in place but are fragmented.

Since 2010, steps have been taken in Greece towards the validation of non-formal and informal learning, especially developments in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Lifelong Learning law of 2010 has recognised non-formal and informal learning as part of lifelong learning and the providers of such learning as parts of the National Framework for Lifelong Learning. The law has also introduced new organisations and empowered decentralised authorities. Subsequently, the latest law on Restructuring of Secondary Education

² European Commission (2014). *Education and Training Monitoring Report – Greece*.

identifies entities/institutions offering non-formal learning that can lead to recognised certifications on a national level. According to the law, non-formal learning institutions (public or private) are: Vocational Training Schools that offer initial vocational training to graduates of compulsory education; Institutes of Vocational Training), offering initial vocational training to graduates of formal and non-compulsory secondary education (general or technical lyceums); Lifelong Learning Centres, offering continuous vocational training, general adult education, vocational guidance and lifelong counselling; and Colleges, which offer non-formal learning to graduates of non-compulsory secondary education³.

4. Early-school Leaving

Greece reduced its early-school leaving rate from 11.3% in 2012 to 10.1% in 2013 and performs better than the EU average in this matter (EU average is 11.9% in 2013). Therefore, it appears feasible for Greece to reach the national target of 9.7% by 2020. However, Greece has a particularly high early school leaver rate in its migrant community (42% in 2012). Furthermore, the country presents also problematic early childhood education and care rates, as the 2012 EU average of 93.9% remains far away from the Greek's performance of 75.2%.

Greece does not have a dedicated national ESL strategy, but since 2009, a package of school reforms have aimed to fight this low performance. Structured around 20 broad objectives, this 'New School' initiative focuses amongst others on teachers training. In the Hellenic Republic, initial teacher training has been adapted to address the diversity of the student population and concentrates more on the support needs of the cultural background and other issues faced by specific groups at risk of dropping out. In addition, the school reform emphasises also on foreign languages, revised curricula, all-day

³ European Commission; Cedefop; ICF International (2014). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014: country report Greece*.



provision, a culture of evaluation, reform of special needs provision, a pilot scheme of Education Priority Zones and the key 'digital school' project. The pilot programme's integration of pre-school education into the holistic Education Priority Zones concept is a step forward. Its success hinges on its future co-financing from EU structural funds for the period 2014-20. Last but not least, making pre-primary education compulsory for all five year-olds is considered to be the most promising strategy for preventing ESL in the future⁴⁵.

5. NEETs

Greece has one of the highest rates of NEETs and youth unemployment in Europe. Whereas approximately 28.2% of young 15-29 years old were not in employment, education or training in 2012, up to 59% of young people were unemployed. The young women unemployment remain much higher than the young men unemployment. Albeit, youth unemployment seems to be improved by 5% (51,9%) in comparison with last year.

A good roll-out of the Youth Guarantee scheme as early as possible in 2014 was of the greatest importance in order to effectively tackle the problem, but the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP) submitted by Greece only partially complied with the Council Recommendation of 2013. Therefore, its feasibility is highly questionable, in particular with regard to future financing, despite Greece's eligibility for Youth Employment Initiative funding⁶. Within the Greek YGIP, start-up incentives specifically target young people aged 19–24. Activities may include a combination of subsidies for start-ups (operational costs, social security contributions and wage costs for one person for one year) and training and counselling of young entrepreneurs. Some activities include a further focus on – for instance – innovative business

4 European Commission (2014). *Education and Training Monitoring Report – Greece*.

5 SOLIDAR (2014). *Building Learning Societies: Investing in Education and Lifelong Learning*.

6 European Commission (2014). *Commission Staff Working Document, Assessment of the 2014 national reform programme for GREECE*.

ideas and start-ups, young unemployed women, young people in rural areas and the creation of social cooperatives as a channel for absorbing young unemployed people⁷.

According to a EUROFOUND study, due to the severe economic crisis, young people in Greece have expressed low expectations of the effectiveness of and opportunities offered by the existing scheme, 'Education-Training-Employment'. Their reasons for not participating are mainly due to the 'distortion or shrinkage of the welfare state rather than personal choice'⁸.

6. Citizenship education

In Greece, citizenship is compulsory at primary and secondary levels. 'Social and Civic' education has existed as a subject since the 80's and forms together with the course 'Politics and Law' the compulsory four years of citizenship education. The amount of taught time in secondary education is significantly higher than in primary.

It has been the cross-thematic curriculum framework for compulsory education, introduced in 2003, that laid down the framework for citizenship education in Greece. Greek citizenship education includes the following dimensions: spiritual development; moral development; social, economic and political development; cultural development; the development of a Greek identity; and finally the cultivation of social relations, social cohesion, personal responsibility and social solidarity. However, according to a study of Euridyce, civic-related skills such as participating in society through, for example, volunteering, and influencing public policy through voting and petitioning) are not part of citizenship education in Greece⁹.

7 Eurofound (2015). *Social inclusion of young people*.

8 EUROFOUND (2015). *Developments in working life in Europe 2014: EurWORK annual review*. Retrieved from: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/developments-in-working-life-in-europe-2014-eurwork-annual-review>.

9 European Commission; Euridyce; Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2012). *Citizenship Education in Europe*.



7. Council recommendations

There are no country-specific recommendations for Greece in the past three years as this may duplicate measures set out in the Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece.

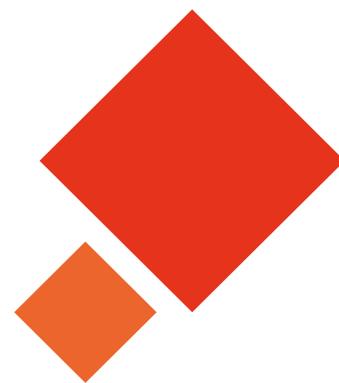






Rue du Commerce | Handelsstraat 22
1000 Brussels
Belgium
T +32 2 500 10 20
F +32 2 500 10 30

Twitter: @SOLIDAR_EU
Facebook: SOLIDAR
www.solidar.org
solidar@solidar.org



Authors in alphabetical order: Giota Chatzimichailidou – Volkshilfe Hellas, Alexis Kokkos - HAEA (Hellenic Adult Education Association), Julie Roden – SOLIDAR

SOLIDAR, together with our national members and partners, has developed 15 case studies in 2014, presenting innovative, effective, sustainable and tailor made models to promote social inclusion, the social economy and quality job creation by adapting a social investment approach. In their daily work, SOLIDAR members and partners anticipate new or unmet needs of socio-economically vulnerable people and empower them to actively participate in society and to access the labour market.

These case studies gather strong evidence of the social impact of the activities undertaken by our members and partners to help Member States making progress towards the achievement of the social and employment objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the implementation of the Social Investment Package.

SOLIDAR Foundation in cooperation with national members and partners has gathered an examples of national programmes and initiatives that present the innovative and successful approaches that contribute to the process of building inclusive learning societies. The case studies are centred on themes of lifelong learning, civic and citizenship education, the validation of learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning, and NEETs (young people Not in Employment, Education or Training).



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