



COUNTRY STUDY

GREECE

Country monitoring report 2016

The situation of young Greeks on the labour market is the most precarious in Europe. Greece has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment – 45%, and NEETs – 26.7%. In comparison with previous years, the situation of young people is slightly improving, however, it is far behind the EU average and desired national targets. The majority of young NEET Greeks are long-term unemployed (48.8%), about half of the entire NEET population is registered with employment services, albeit only 7.1% receives any financial assistance. The global financial situation of not only NEETs but the entire population of youth in Greece is worse than in any other EU country as they are significantly prone to risk of social exclusion.



GREECE

Promoting access and participation in Lifelong Learning

Adult participation rates in Lifelong Learning (LLL) continue to be very low and remains at 3.3% level since 2012, in comparison to an EU average of 10.7%. Since the introduction of law No 3879/2010 on Lifelong Learning that provides, in principle, the basis for planning and implementing a national holistic strategy on Lifelong Learning, moreover it recognised non-formal and informal learning (NFIL) as part of Lifelong Learning and the providers of such learning as parts of the National Framework for Lifelong Learning. This law has recognised providers of all forms of learning what made them an official part of the education and training system in Greece.

In 2016 the Greek government has adopted amongst others a strategy on Lifelong Learning. The policy framework sets as priorities to: Increase provision of LLL opportunities for adults to aspire a truly Lifelong Learning culture; Intensify cooperation with stakeholders (education and training providers, social partners, civil society organisations), and ensure the complementarity of Lifelong Learning with i.e. Vocational Education and Training (VET). The aim is to provide opportunities for development of skills and competences for diverse target groups depending on their needs. This is to be supported by the implementation of transparency tools and quality assurance tools.

According to our Greek members, low level of participation in Lifelong Learning and adult education is explained by the fact that they are not yet deeply rooted in Greek educational culture. Adult education as such 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 such as training of their staff, due to financial constraints. In addition, social partners, civil society and local authorities are not very strong when it comes to LLL and therefore little impact is made on the LLL sector.

Vocational Education and Training

Participation in VET is traditionally fairly low in Greece. Data from 2013 show that participation in initial VET was at 33.7% compared to the EU average of 48.9%. To better promote VET and propose it as an educational pathway to a large group of NEETs, the Greek government set a priority on reforming their VET system. The legislative works started in 2013 with the introduction of a law on secondary education (Law 4186/2013 on 'New Lyceum'). The overall aim of the modernisation of the current VET system is to 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.

As of 2016 there is a strong focus on development of quality frameworks for VET, updating learning outcomes in occupational profiles, modernisation of apprenticeship schemes, establishment of skills forecast mechanisms, facilitating cooperation between local authorities and employers in the shape of pilot projects in order to ensure private funding contributions to VET programs.

It is important to work on strengthening vocational education and training by ensuring that its curricula's follow and anticipate the needs to the labour market in terms of the provision of competences needed. In the process of development of study plans social partners should be involved.



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 still under development. Validation practices are in place, however, fragmented and correspond to certified occupational profiles. Development of validation of non-formal and informal learning is more challenging, despite of its huge popularity to acquire knowledge and competences in Greece through this form of education. This results from a low level of recognition and valuation by society in general. Therefore, one of the prerequisite for development and implementation of validation of learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning would be an **awareness raising campaign** to aspire a cultural shift within the Greek society.

Over the past few years a lot of positive developments towards validation took place in Greece. Since 2010, steps have been taken towards the validation of non-formal and informal learning, especially regarding 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 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 education.¹

Introduced legislative changes will allow now individuals to receive certification for their qualifications regardless of the learning environment in which they got developed, the *Hellenic Qualifications Register* was established with a clear references to *European Qualifications Framework*, and work around *National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning* began.

Early-school Leaving

For a couple of years Greece has successfully reduced the early school leaving rates. From 11.3% in 2012 to 7.9% in 2015. This is way below the EU-28 average of 11%, and below the national EU2020 target of 9.7%. There is still a gender gap within the school drop outs rate, with 9.5% of it being men and 6.4% for women.² Greece has a particularly high early school leaver rate in its migrant community 24.1% in comparison to 6.8% for native-born pupils.

Despite of already achieving good results, Greece continues to carry out its national strategic policy framework for early school leavers, especially with regards to the collection and analysis of data on this phenomena and to provide remedial, compensatory and supportive measures at regional and national level.

A set of educational reforms were voted in 2016 to enhance cohesiveness of primary schools that got a diverse opinion regarding its effectiveness and quality of provision. Lots of efforts were taken to combat shortcomings in education. Through a pilot project

¹ European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014

² https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2016-el_en.pdf



“*educational priority zones*” intercultural activities are being provided and classes are open for diversity. Special reception classes were opened to better cater the needs of socio-economically vulnerable students (migrants, Roma, ethnic minorities etc.).

As a country placed on the migration route of the recent migration/refugee crisis, Greece has started to address the issue of education for refugee kids staying currently in Greece either temporarily in camps or for longer period. In August 2016 the Ministry has presented a program for school integration that offers subsidies to stimulate the opening of kindergartens in the reception centres, and for kids aged between 7-15 integration in reception classes in public schools, where they will be taught Greek as a second language.³

NEETs

The situation of young Greeks on the labour market is the most precarious in Europe. Greece has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment – 45%, and NEETs – 26.7%. In comparison with previous years, the situation of young people is slightly improving, however, it is far behind the EU average and desired national targets. The majority of young NEET Greeks are long-term unemployed (48.8%), about half of the entire NEET population is registered with employment services, albeit only 7.1% receives any financial assistance. The global financial situation of not only NEETs but the entire population of youth in Greece is worse than in any other EU country⁴ as they are significantly prone to risk of social exclusion.

A roll-out of the Youth Guarantee program for youth became a top priority for the politicians to offer the needed support to youth. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was finalised in 2014⁵ however its full speed implementation didn't start until 2016.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2016-el_en.pdf

⁴ <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef1602en2.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.ypakp.gr/uploads/docs/8338.pdf>

The program's objective is job creation and provision of training vouchers for young people to get work experience. The voucher scheme resulted to be a very successful measure with much higher demand than expected. The training vouchers are available for NEETs aged between 18-24 (funded by Youth Employment Initiative) who can benefit from vocational training or on-the-job training. There is as well an incentive of subsidising social security contributions for an employer to encourage hiring a young person in the end of their training period. Another initiative available is the apprenticeship programme available in 51 vocational schools, where 15-24 old NEETs can follow courses that are complemented with on-the-job training.

Moreover there are other actions that offer subsidies for self-employment and start-up initiatives (operational costs, social security contributions and wage costs for one person for one year)⁶ as well as training and counselling of young entrepreneurs.

Citizenship education

In Greece, citizenship is compulsory at primary and secondary levels. ‘Social and Civic’ education has existed as a subject since the ‘80s 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; Development of a Greek identity; And finally the cultivation of social relations, social cohesion, personal responsibility and social solidarity. However, according to a study http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016_greece_en.pdf



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 Greece.⁷

With regards to implementation of Paris Deceleration measures put in place by the Greek government mostly target formal education and are included in compulsory citizenship education classes and through projects run via eTwinning.⁸ Yet many civil society actors are enhancing intercultural and human rights education and practical development of civic competences via non-formal and informal learning.

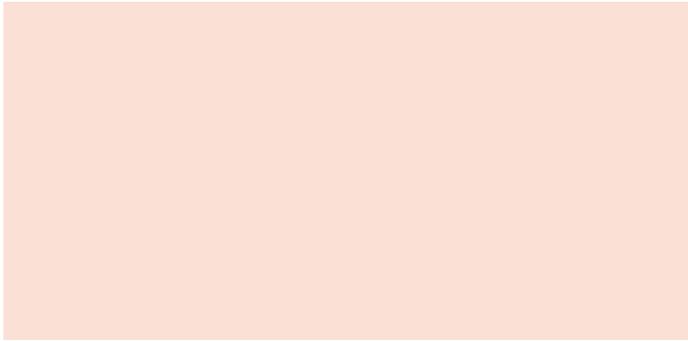
Council recommendations

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

⁷ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/139EN.pdf

⁸ <http://www.etwinning.gr/>



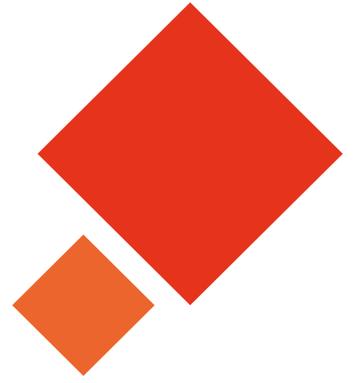


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As part of the Lifelong Learning Watch SOLIDAR Foundation has developed 12 country studies in 2016 covering the status in different Member States when it comes to; Promoting access and participation in Lifelong Learning, Vocational Education and Training, Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (NFIL), Early-school Leaving, NEETs and Citizenship education in reference to 2016 Council's country-specific recommendations.

The SOLIDAR Foundation is the cooperation platform of SOLIDAR; a European network of NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR brings together 60 member organisations based in 25 EU member states and in 6 candidate countries. We work together in Social Affairs, International Cooperation and Lifelong Learning. The Building Learning Societies pillar includes 23 members, covering 18 EU member states.

SOLIDAR Foundation engages through member and partner organisations citizens in EU decision making processes, empowers people through lifelong learning and VET, and voices their concerns to the EU institutions by carrying out active lobbying, project management and coordination, policy monitoring, research and awareness-raising.



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