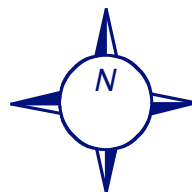


**Achieving the Lisbon Goal:**  
The Contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems

# Country Report: Greece

Author: Philip Ammerman

This report is one of a series of European country reports. It has been written to support a larger report: **Achieving the Lisbon Goal: the contribution of VET**, prepared by the **Lisbon-to-Copenhagen-to-Maastricht Consortium** for the European Commission. This report is not intended as an official view. But rather independent insight into specific aspects of National VET systems in Europe.



**NAVIGATOR**  
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### Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not represent those of the European Commission.

## List of Acronyms

AEI	<i>Anotato Ekpaideftiko Idrima</i> – Higher Educational Institution (a university offering an academic degree in tertiary education)
ASEP	Supreme Staff Selection Council
ASPAITE	Higher School of Pedagogical and Technical Education
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CFP	Community Support Framework
CVT	Continuing Vocational Training
DEPPS	Unified Cross-Curricular Approach
DIKATSA	Inter-University Centre for the Recognition of Foreign Academic Titles
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EEEEK	Vocational Education and Training Workshop
EL	<i>Eniaio Lykeio</i> – Unified Lyceum (a comprehensive senior high school)
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESDAP	National Council for Quality Assurance and Assessment
ESSEEKA	National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment
ESYP	National Education Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGEE	General Secretariat of Adult Education
GSEE	General Confederation of Labour
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
IDEKE	Institute of Continuing Education for Adults
IEK	<i>Instituto Epaggelmatikis Katartissis</i> – Professional Training Institute (a post-secondary institutes of vocational training)
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
KDAY	Identification, Evaluation and Support Centre
KEE	<i>Kentro Ekpaidefsis Enylikon</i> - Adult Education Centre
KEK	<i>Kentro Epaggelmatikis Katartissis</i> – Vocational Training Centre (a continuing vocational training institution)
MNERA	Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre

NSSG	National Statistical Service of Greece
OAED	Greek Manpower Employment Organisation
OEEK	Organisation for Vocational Education and Training
PEKESES	Regional Centres to Support Educational Planning
PI	Pedagogical Institute
SDE	Second Chance Schools
TEE	<i>Techniko Epaggelmatiko Ekpaideftirio</i> – Technical Vocational School (a vocational institute in upper secondary education)
TEI	<i>Technologiko Ekpaideftiko Idrima</i> – Technological Educational Institution (a vocational educational institution at the tertiary level)

## 1. Introduction

Vocational Training and Education (VET) in Greece is highly centralised and controlled by the state, with the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (MNERA<sup>1</sup>) playing the coordinating role. In addition to MNERA, a range of other organisations are directly involved in VET. The most important of these is the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), which reports to the Ministry of Labour.

Recent reforms in the sector have led to a new framework law: the National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ESSEEKA), which was passed in 2004. This reform is expected to bring the VET system closer to the labour market.

Other major reforms occurred in 1997/1999 and 2001/2002. An important factor in the latter round of reforms was the introduction of equivalency between tertiary education in the university and vocational streams. This policy, which has had significant implications in the award of qualifications for protected occupations, has created a significant policy rift between universities (AEIs) and technical educational institutes (TEIs), and has created challenges in implementing the reforms.

Greece has a fast-growing GDP which is above EU trend growth. While its population rose to 9.2 million in 2003, an additional 800,000 immigrant workers and their families are estimated to live in Greece today. The labour force has remained stable, at roughly 4.5 million people, while the employment rate (as a share of the total labour force) reached 90.5% in 2003.

Indicator	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
GDP (EUR '000)*	105,773	112,686	121,668	131,024	141,334	152,572
Population ('000 inh.)	8,797	8,903	9,009	9,077	9,143	9,248
GDP/Capita (EUR)	12,024	12,657	13,506	14,435	15,458	16,498
Labour Force ('000 people)	4,472	4,485	4,455	4,380	4,473	4,504
Total Employed ('000 pp)	3,973	3,933	3,979	3,901	4,035	4,077
Total Unemployed ('000 pp)	500	552	477	479	438	427
Employment Rate	88.8%	87.7%	89.3%	89.1%	90.2%	90.5%
Unemployment Rate	11.2%	12.3%	10.7%	10.9%	9.8%	9.5%

\* GDP at market prices.

National Statistics Authority of Greece, 2004

The public debt as a share of GDP is estimated by *The Economist* at 107% in 2002, while the budget balance was at -1.4% of GDP in the same year.<sup>2</sup> It is highly likely that future debt levels will rise in 2003 and 2004, brought about in no small part due

<sup>1</sup> The Greek language acronym for the Ministry is YPEPTH – this is used more frequently in CEDEFOP and other reports.

<sup>2</sup> *The Economist*. Country Profile Greece, 2003.

to higher public expenditure on public works and infrastructure, as well as the Olympic Games. Recent announcements by the new centre-right government led by Constantinos Karamanlis has estimated the total cost of the Olympics at EUR 6.5 billion, well above the EUR 4.3 billion official budget. It is likely that future expenditure on VET will be constrained due to public finance as well as the impending review of Greece as an Objective 1 country in the 2007-2013 4<sup>th</sup> Community Support Framework (CFP).

Educational attainment, as measured by the National Statistical Service of Greece's (NSSG) Labour Force Survey (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2003), points to rising educational attainment rates:

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Total Population	8,797	8,903	9,009	9,077	9,143	9,258
Received a post-graduate qualification	22	28	25	30	31	37
Received a university degree	785	789	808	812	834	851
Attended a university but did not receive a degree	8	7	6	4	4	2
Received a third-level technical - vocational degree	547	652	675	641	673	725
Completed secondary level education	2,220	2,243	2,301	2,336	2,437	2,481
Completed third stage of secondary education	1,080	1,112	1,089	1,139	1,107	1,077
Completed primary education	3,266	3,148	3,219	3,248	3,181	3,273
Have not completed primary education	563	526	500	463	487	460
Attended no school at all	306	397	386	405	389	353

*All figures in '000 individuals*

Education has traditionally played an important role in Greek society. Achievement of higher education has been a route out of poverty for a large segment of the population, while the profession of teacher is considered to be an important and stable one. In recent years, a high share of public resources have been channelled into VET, and a main priority of the system remains employment and social inclusion. A defining characteristic is the extensive use of subsidies equivalent to the national minimum wage to trainees as well as employers. Another defining characteristics is the controlling aspect of the State: while private education in VET was recently introduced in the upper secondary and continuing VET streams, private education at the tertiary level remains legally impossible, and degrees granted by private universities in Greece are unrecognised by the State. Despite the recent efforts in Greece to improve the VET system, Greece continues to be a world leader in the

proportion of students studying in foreign universities as a share of its total population.

This paper reviews the major policy initiatives undertaken in Greece in light of the Lisbon Agenda. While significant incremental policy reform has been undertaken in theory, the practical implementation of reform tends to be held up by the fragmentation of ministerial authority and competing organisations active in the VET field. The role of the private sector as well as other social partners has only recently been enhanced, but still requires much improvement. The practise of VET as a form of employment support and social inclusion has reached high levels: future VET policy may wish to design a more flexible and sustainable system that reduces potential distortions in the labour market. It is necessary to permit the role of private education in the tertiary sector, which is currently not the case, as well as to consider further non-public sector solutions to the delivery of VET services. Finally, the issues surrounding employment, such as taxation, temporary work arrangements and the minimum wage levels, must be reviewed to promote employment and competitiveness.

## 2. Progress of national VET systems towards meeting the challenges of Lisbon

### 2.1 Strategies and barriers for improving IVET

*What strategies are being used to by government, social partners and providers etc. to achieve these objectives: (a) Raise the status of IVET? (b) Improve the attractiveness of IVET? (c) Increase the flexibility of IVET? (d) What are the main barriers to achieving these objectives?*

Initial VET remains dominated by state institutions. The attractiveness of VET is not as great as that of higher education, and in many cases enrolment in VET schools is often the result of a failure to perform in the comprehensive senior high school system. There are three main institutional (school-based) options at the upper-secondary level:

- The *Eniaio Lykeio* (EL), or comprehensive senior high school, for students from 15-18 years of age. This corresponds to post-compulsive, upper-secondary education, which is largely oriented towards a future career in academic tertiary education (university education), although it is possible to move from the EL into post-secondary training.
- The *Technika Epaggelmatika Ekpaideftiria* (TEE), or technical vocational schools, for students from 15-18 years of age. From the TEE, it is possible to enter tertiary education in either further/continuing IVET or higher educational institutions: universities (AEI) or vocational institutions (TEI). There are over 600 TEEs, which are supervised by a number of authorities, including MNERA (448 schools), the Ministry of Health and Welfare (49 schools), the Ministry of Agriculture (12 schools), the Ministry of Development (8 schools) and the private sector (85 schools). Total enrolment in TEEs in the 2003/2004 academic year rose to 118,388 students, which represents a significant increase.
- The *Instituta Epaggelmatikis Katartissis* (IEK), or post-secondary vocational training institutions, for students from 19-20 years of age. The IEK are training institutions which offer training to both graduates of lower and upper secondary VET streams. There are 138 IEKs run by the Organisation for Vocational

Education and Training (OEEK), 34 by the Hellenic Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), and 41 private institutions. Other post-secondary schools are run by the Ministry of Defence, Culture, Mercantile Marine and Development. There are also private IEKs in operation that are regulated by the State.

In addition to these three school-based options, students can also opt for training apprenticeships with OAED, which reports to the Ministry of Labour. This constitutes technical alternating vocational education, provided through 52 Apprenticeship Technical Vocational Schools.

Some issues affecting the operations of the VET system are the following:

- The ELs are widely seen as preparatory schools for university entrance. As entrance depends on examinations (the “*Panellinies*”, or Pan-Hellenic exams), a significant emphasis in traditional schools is on exam preparations. This is often supplemented by widespread student attendance at private “*frontisteria*”, or “cram” schools (usually in evening sessions), that offer additional tutoring and preparation. Given that many teachers in the ELs also teach or “moonlight” at *frontisteria*, this raises a number of questions on the commitment and quality of the regular EL curricula.
- Teaching is based on curricula and materials approved by MNERA. In the past, this has led to a significant gap in the adaptation of curricula to emerging issues, such as information and communications technologies (ICT), business studies and other key areas. The fact that private education is extremely limited while the IVET system itself is heavily dependent on either MNERA or the Ministry of Labour for funding and content defines the scope for innovation in teaching. In other cases, delays in funding or procurement has resulted in delays in implementing curricular reforms or the introduction of new content or methods, such as the computerisation of schools or facility renovation.
- Until recently, the general status of the IEK and TEE institutions was perceived to be of low quality, both in terms of facilities and curricula as well as employment opportunities and status. A major reason for this has been the need to a formal degree from a higher educational institution as a pre-requisite for public sector employment, which has traditionally played a major role in the Greek workforce and society. The VET system has also been perceived as being removed from the labour market. A number of policy reforms have been implemented to address this, including upgrading the qualifications of teachers; increasing funding; and, most recently, the ratification of Law 3191/2003 developing a new national framework linking VET with employment (ESSEEKA).
- The quality of education and facilities differs from institution to institution and region to region. This is partly due to institutional fragmentation and coordination difficulties. A major issue includes the fact that while the dominant authority in educational provision in the Ministry of Education, the active link to the labour market as well as continuing and on-the-job training has been owned by the Ministry of Labour, and specifically by OAED. In other cases, schools and institutions report to Prefectural Administration; in other cases still to other Ministries or state institutions. Another issue is that of geographical centralisation: institutions in the major urban areas (Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras) tend to have greater access to resources and decision-making authorities, and reinforce their curricula through private sector contacts.

A series of policy reforms have been undertaken to make VET more attractive. These have been implemented with at best mixed success. A short summary will be made of three significant rounds of reform:

- A large-scale round of reforms was launched in 1997 and 1998 with Laws 2525/97 and 2640/98. Law 2525/97 introduced the Unified Upper Secondary School (*Eniaio Lykeio*) to replace the different types of schools which existed formerly. It also established a new admission system for higher education, established evaluation standards for teachers and trainers, and developed Regional Counselling and Orientation Centres. Law 2640/98 made significant changes to the field of secondary technical vocational education, which led to the establishment of the TEE institutes.
- Legislative amendments and revisions led to two further important laws: Law 2986/2002 on the decentralisation of education as well as the evaluation of educators; Law 2916/2001 incorporated the Technical Education Institutes (TEI) into Higher Education and “upgraded” the status of technical vocational education by making them equivalent to the academic higher education institutions (universities, or AEI).
- The new framework law 3191/2003 was ratified to rationalise services in the VET field, including the accreditation of professional qualifications and training, the improvement of counselling and vocational guidance, the coordination between ministries and the development of a national system linking VET with employment (ESSEEKA).

In addition to policy reform, a number of steps have been taken at the institutional level to improve the supply and quality of IVET. This has included issues such as the remuneration of teachers, renovation of schools, equipment and technology investments and other areas. Some major initiatives include:

- ICT in education, through equipment of all schools with computer laboratories, the integration of ICT in education and teaching, and provision of classes in software use;
- The development of the Unified Cross-Curricular Approach (DEPPS) by the Pedagogical Institute (PI);
- The integration and expansion of career counselling and vocational guidance in curricula and schools;
- Teacher training and assessment of schools, curricula and training.

Despite these efforts, major barriers to VET exist, and some reforms, such as the dual-track higher education and vocational education or the split of responsibilities between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, continue to create resistance and slow the pace of implementation. While Law 3191/2003 was intended to rationalise activities, the process of implementation has been slow. It is highly likely that future reforms will be needed, particularly in order to improve linkages between the IVET system and the labour market. The new government of Constantinos Karamanlis will be charged with the responsibility of implementing reforms in the face of deteriorating public finances and a potential adjustment of EU support under 4<sup>th</sup> Community Support Framework (2007-2013).

## 2.2 Reducing the number of early school leavers

*How does your country relate to other countries in terms of the contribution to increasing or reducing the number of young people: (a) Who leave education or training at the earliest opportunity and with few or no recognised qualifications? (b) Who leave formal education with low levels of basic skills at age of 15?*

The rate of early school leavers in Greece was 16.1% of the total population aged 18-24 in 2002, compared to an EU-15 rate of 18.5% and an EU-25 rate of 16.5%. A significant reason for departure from education is to join a family enterprise or otherwise address a family task (such as illness in family, caring for siblings, etc.). This is often the case due to the large number of micro-enterprises or single entrepreneurs, particularly those dealing with retail, tourism or agricultural occupations. A number of other young students also emigrate to join relatives living in the United States, Canada, Australia, the European Union or other countries with a high concentration of ethnic Greek residents or citizens. Still other young adults leave the educational system early for various reasons, prior to fulfilling their obligatory military service.

Second Chance Schools (SDE) have been established to provide education of young people over 18 who have not completed their compulsory education. This provides them with the skills and qualifications needed to enter the labour force.

## 2.3 Increasing VET at tertiary level

*What steps are being taken to establish or improve technological and vocational qualifications at the tertiary (higher) educational level? Please refer in particular to any attempts to make pathways more flexible, and to introduce shorter post-secondary VET courses.*

Major efforts have been made to establish and improve the tertiary VET system, again with varying success. The major policy reforms in 1997/98 and 2001/02 were an effort to introduce a broad equivalency in occupations as well as qualifications between vocational (technical) education and higher (university) education. There are two main state institutions at the tertiary level:

- Universities, including the “classical” university, or AEI (*anotata ekpaideftika idrimata*, or higher educational institutions), as well as Polytechnics, the Fine Arts School, Military Academies and the Police Academy.
- Technological vocational institutions, known as TEI (*technika ekpaideftika idrimata*, or technical educational institutions), as well as the Higher School of Pedagogical and Technical Education (ASPATE).

In addition to AEI and TEI, there are several non-university tertiary institutions, such as the Mercantile Marine Academies, the Hellenic Open University and others. There are also Institutes of Lifelong Learning as well as continuing training provided through accredited and non-accredited Vocational Training Centres (KEKs). Finally, there are a number of other training opportunities, largely financed through EU and Government sources. These include programmes such as the European Social Fund, Leader, and the National Operational Programmes (NOP) in various sectors (regional development, tourism, innovation, etc.).

Partly as a result of these reforms, and partly due to the massive supply-side approach taken by EU and state co-funding for VET, educational attainment levels have risen dramatically. Admissions to AEIs and TEIs rose from 42,000 in 1993 to

83,000 in 2002. Upper secondary (ISCED 3) completion levels are at 82.1%, compared to an EU average of 76%,<sup>3</sup> while participation in higher education of age groups 18-21 reached 58% in 2002, compared to 27% in 1993.<sup>4</sup> A further effect has been take-up of students and selection of institutions or departments. Given that admission into institutions or departments is heavily determined by individual results and rankings in the national university entrance examinations (*panellinies*), it is not always possible for individual students to attend the institution or department of their choice. This has also resulted in the “export” of students to other countries: according to CEDEFOP, some 30,000 Greek students studies in Great Britain in the 1999-2000 school year, while according to the US Educational Foundation in Greece some 5,000 students were enrolled in US universities in the same year.

A large number of initiatives have been made in recent years to establish and improve tertiary VET provision, including:

- A large increase in resources allocated to the VET system through the NOPs in Education, Labour and other areas (for instance, Research & Development, Enterprise Development);
- The increase in supply and equivalency of the TEIs within higher education;
- Support for a shorter vocational training provision through the IEK and KEK system;
- The development of the Hellenic Open University and the design of Institutes of Lifelong Learning;
- Establishment of national systems for quality management and evaluation of VET, including trainer / teacher assessment and development;
- Streamlining / improvement of recognition of foreign degrees;
- International cooperation in the VET field;
- Investment in adult and special education;
- Investment in ICT in the VET field.

Despite the real changes undertaken, there continues to be widespread criticism from many quarters, including from social partners, about the complexity, fragmentation and opacity of the VET system. Some critical issues in the tertiary VET that Greece will have to (or has started to) confront include the following:

- The Role of the Private Sector: Private education is by law not possible at the tertiary level. While this does not prevent private institutions from operating, the diplomas granted by these institutions are not recognised by the State, which is a barrier to participation in public sector employment.<sup>5</sup> This does not prevent the operation of a number of institutions from operating, with academic credentials that are highly valued by the private sector. Examples include the Athens Laboratory of Business Studies, a joint venture between the Federation of Greek Industries, the Athens Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and others; or the

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat *Labour Force Survey 2003*

<sup>4</sup> CEDEFOP *Vocational Education and Training in Greece: Short Description, 2003*

<sup>5</sup> There are, however, a number of institutes of vocational training (IEK) and vocational training centres (KEK) that are owned and operated by the private sector, but have been accredited and are to some extent supported financially by the State.

Alpine School, a leading training provider in the tourism sector. Other examples include the wide range of foreign universities offering programmes in Greece, such as the State University of New York, City College and many others<sup>6</sup>. These programmes are usually co-taught in Greece using the “standard” foreign curriculum, with part of the student’s coursework implemented in the country of origin. Besides the fact that State policy is in contravention of Directive 89/48/EEC, this restriction on private sector education should be reconsidered given its negative impact on competitiveness, innovation and labour market performance.

- Equivalency between Universities (AEI) and Vocational Institutions (TEI): Law 2916/2001 established legal equivalency of universities and vocational institutes. TEIs are now able to offer postgraduate courses and operate technological research centres. This has created controversy in Greece for a number of reasons: University degrees have traditionally been considered of higher value and more rigorous, while teachers in the AEI system have been reluctant to see their occupational levels “devalued” by the entry of TEI teachers. This also has an impact on certain professions and qualifications. While equivalency is now established before the law and has indeed opened up many more opportunities for people to enter tertiary education, the acceptance and value of the TEI degree is still being established in the market. This process is by no means complete; nor is it certain that it can be accomplished given the defined role of academic (university) education in Greek culture and society. .
- Preference for Higher Education (Universities) in the Tertiary Stream: Greek society continues to place a high value on university as opposed to vocational education. This is seen in the number of applicants for university education: some 7 of every 10 applicants from the ELs apply for universities each year.<sup>7</sup> This preference is also seen in the largely parallel tracks that have resulted from this preference: the vocational system is perceived as a “catchment” for students not able to pass university entrance examinations, or not able to compete in the more rigorous academic systems. Students leaving the (tertiary) TEI system also have the opportunity for enrolment at post-secondary institutions (KEK / IEK) for more limited or applied education: this often further devalues such institutions, even though the quality of education and chances for employment may be high or higher than the AEI / TEI institutions. Greater efforts are needed to improve the perception of VET in society.
- Recognition of International Degrees: The process of recognition of degrees granted from international institutions is regulated by the Inter-University Centre for the Recognition of Foreign Academic Titles (DIKATSA). This process can be time-consuming for institutions which are not already in the DIKATSA database. The process involves official translations, submission of documentation, approval by Committee and a number of other procedures. While the process has been streamlined for EU institutions as well as institutions participating in NARIC, this can create considerable difficulties for degrees from some countries or fields. State recognition and accreditation of a degree is usually required for employment

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<sup>6</sup> Given the structure of educational subsidies in the United Kingdom, a large number of UK institutions have established educational programmes in Greece.

<sup>7</sup> CEDEFOP *Vocational Education and Training in Greece, Short Description*. 2003.

in the public sector, and has in some past may have been used as an implicit barrier or “protection” against holders of foreign degrees.

- The Effect of EU Funding: It is unclear to what extent the provision of VET within companies as well as educational institutions is affected by EU funding. There is abundant anecdotal evidence to suggest, however, that the role of EU funding and its national co-financing has created significant distortions in supply and demand for VET services. In this subsidy environment (trainees and employers are subsidised at the minimum wage for the time of support), there is an oversupply of some VET services, while the real qualifications, motivations and suitability of some types of companies or trainee groups are open to interpretation. Other groups, for instance, some types of companies or small employers, are in fact prevented from participation in the NOP structure due to the high burden of compliance and complexity of the application process, as well as the qualifications for participation.

It should also be considered whether the application of the minimum wage has created a large volume of low-paid workers, given that (a) the minimum wage today barely corresponds to the requirements of urban family living (see footnote 9), (b) their employers may not wish to continue employment at higher remuneration levels, and (c) certain professional qualifications should not be remunerated at the minimum wage as this distorts the supply of some professions and creates competition for those workers who are not “on the dole”.

Apart from quality considerations, this calls into question the sustainability of a number of VET suppliers as well as individual trainers and teachers in the case that EU/state funding should decrease. Given that levels of EU support for Greece are widely expected to fall given (a) the new EU budget frameworks from 2007-2013 and (b) the deteriorating state of national public finances, the country needs to address this issue now in order to make progress towards the Lisbon goals.

## 2.4 Incentives for updating knowledge & skills

*What initiatives and measures are the following taking to motivate employees to update knowledge and skills? (a) Government (b) Employers (c) Other stakeholders. Please provide examples (if any) of the contribution of VET to successfully promoting inclusion*

There are a number of incentives being used by government to promote the updating of knowledge and skills. Most of these are supply-driven, and call into question the long-term sustainability of this approach as well as the distortions it produces in the labour market. There is a further real problem in Greece in terms of wage rates and overall compensation in the private sector labour market, and it is likely that these two issues will dominate the long-term future of the VET sector from 2007.

The Government and the EU provide significant resources in the VET field, which may not be fully accounted for in the classical description of public expenditure on education due to the fact that spending comes from a wide range of budget lines in different ministerial and parastatal jurisdictions. Some methods of promoting VET participation include:

- Support to public sector employees for VET participation, both in terms of differential wage rates as well as direct support (financial resources, time availability) for training and education;
- Direct subsidies offered to trainees as well as companies for vocational training and apprenticeship schemes; these subsidies are usually indexed to the minimum wage for trainees or apprentices;
- Provision of scholarships and other support for participation for needy or qualified students;
- Employment incentives for trainees, apprentices, long-term unemployed, older workers, women and other at-risk groups.

The private sector has, based on anecdotal evidence, increased its involvement in supporting VET. There is a high corporate participation rate in public or EU programmes for direct and indirect VET projects. Furthermore, the role of human resources development and training has increased in importance as a competitive factors throughout the 1990s, as Greece adapted to a liberalised market economy under the *Acquis communautaire* and also expanded in the Balkans and other regions. While this process is by no means complete, corporate expenditure on staff management qualifications as well as other specialised training opportunities has increased, while a growing number of companies has invested in the HR function. Data from ALBA, for instance, point to an increasing volume of corporate endowments, while information from TMP Hudson and other personnel/recruitment firms confirm the trends towards higher expenditures on training, HR and similar activities.

Based on the CVTS-2 survey (using 1999 data), however, only 9% of staff in Greek companies provided CVT to their staff in 1999, while only 15% provided other forms of training: these are among the lowest responses in the EU member states covered by the survey.<sup>8</sup> It may be possible that the CVTS-2 methodology eliminated a large number of potential data sources due to its methodology. At the end of 2004, an Adult Education Survey is due to be published by the Commission, and it will be useful to compare results.

Despite these two caveats, it is also important to recognise that the role of human resources development and management in Greece is only in its initial stages. This is seen in a range of corporate management issues, ranging from staff compensation (which is usually far below both comparable European market rates, but in many cases also below what would be considered a living wage, particularly for younger workers) as well as the fact that key practises, such as the role of the Human Resources Manager, are only just starting to take on importance.

Social partners, including labour unions such as the General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) as well as corporate representative bodies such as the Federation of Greek Industries have confirmed the importance of VET and have participated in a number of national and European initiatives for skills development.

Perhaps most effectively, there has been a real pressure on skills upgrading and investments in human capital from technological and regulatory changes in the global and European economy in recent years. Every economic field, from tourism to

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<sup>8</sup> European Commission: *European Social Statistics: Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS-2)*, 2002.

information technology to food processing, has seen a tremendous competitive pressure, to which Greek enterprises and workers have not been immune. Events such as the effect of the Internet on tourism or the automation and quality/hygienic management of the food chain have necessitated a large-scale change in the role, performance and development of staff at all levels. This trend has been exacerbated by Greece's relatively isolated geographic position in south-eastern Europe (given that its main market is the European Union), as well as by regional competitors with EU market access in all key industries (such as Turkey in textiles and tourism; Cyprus in shipping; Israel in food processing, etc.)<sup>9</sup>

Of course, a number of critical issues remain which must urgently be addressed by both the public and private sectors:

- Supply-Driven Investment / Subsidy: As stated previously, a major driver in the public and private sector investment in VET has been the availability of subsidised training or employment-linked support. The 4<sup>th</sup> CSF (2007-2013) is likely to result in changes in resource availability for Greece, not least due to the May 1<sup>st</sup> Accession as well as the future accession of Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia. The likely reduction in EU resources for VET as well as deficit and debt constraints may be difficult to supplement by national resources.<sup>10</sup>
- Low Wage Rates and Compensation: Apart from a few firms, private sector employees tend to suffer from low wage rates, particularly at the beginning of their careers. The national minimum wage is far below the statistical mean for family household expenditure, even taking into account a double income-earning family.<sup>11</sup> Given the recent inflation brought about by the Euro and the national housing market, even higher wage rates in the private sector are leading to real economic hardship in significant segments of the population. To cope with this situation, a number of citizens rely on "grey" market economy, such as undeclared rents or property sales, or in many cases have resorted to multiple employment. This is widespread in the public and private sectors, and is facilitated by the large informal economy as well as the high number of immigrants (nearly 10% of the total population) in Greece.

A major objective of the national VET system is the promotion of inclusion. Key groups include women, long-term unemployed, immigrants, disabled and other groups. This objective is mirrored in the strategies and policies of both MNERA as well as the Ministry of Labour. Some specific policies to promote inclusion include:

- Law 3227/2004 promotes active employment policies with special provisions for inclusion of at-risk groups into schemes such as Public Employment Service run by OAED or vocational training programmes run by KEKs. Employer contributions, for instance for hiring unemployed women with two or more children, are also subsidised. Long term unemployed people older than 55 are

<sup>9</sup> See for instance European Commission. *EU Productivity and Competitiveness: An Industry Perspective*. 2003.

<sup>10</sup> At 3.8% of GDP in 2000, public expenditure on education is low compared to other EU countries (5% average). However, public expenditure between 1996 and 2001 has been steadily growing above GDP growth. Based on budget estimates for 2003 and 2004, the increase in these two years is calculated at 6.7% and 8%, respectively. Greece's EU convergence programme has mandated reaching the EU average level in the future.

<sup>11</sup> According to the National Statistical Service of Greece (2003), the average monthly household expenditure is EUR 1,383 / month, not including accommodation costs. The national statutory minimum wage for fully-employed adults over 23 years of age on 01.01.2004 was EUR 504.83 / worker. The fact that the minimum wage is so far below average expenditure and the taxation impact on a "living wage" have contributed to the growth of the informal sector and multiple employment.

subsidised through their employer. Law 3174/2003 allows public institutions to recruit unemployed people.

- A number of vocational training schemes are on offer toward groups such as older or long-term unemployed; people entering the labour force for the first time; people classified as disadvantaged; people living in geographically isolated areas, and other groups.
- A number of gender mainstreaming policies have been crafted which contain specific quotas for women, or are oriented solely to women. The Operation Programme “Information Society” or “Employment and Vocational Training” as well as , various OAED programmes such as Youth Self Employment or Programme for Enterprises have specific provisions for inclusion<sup>12</sup>.
- Resources for education and training of special social groups, such as pupils who are immigrants in Greece as well as classes for Roma and the Muslims of Thrace are provided. A total of 50 special Vocational Education and Training Workshops (EEEK) and 22 Identification, Evaluation and Support Centres (KDAY) are in operation in Greece.

## 2.5 Meeting the challenges of an aging population

*Please identify any innovations and initiatives in VET that are being introduced to encourage older people (55+) to remain at work longer and to participate in training and other forms of lifelong learning.*

Based on the Labour Force Survey in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2003<sup>13</sup>, Greece has a total population of 9.258 million, of which 4.503 constitute active population. Women outnumber men in the total population, but have far lower employment and far higher unemployment and inactive rates. In addition to gender equality, while the unemployment rate in older age cohorts falls, it is also clear that the share of employment inactivity rises considerably for the 45-64 and over 65 age cohorts (see figure on following page).

<b>Labour Force</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Total Active</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Inactive</b>
Total Population	9,258	4,503	4,076	427	4,755
15-19	592	56	38	18	535
20-24	674	365	267	98	309
25-29	687	570	474	95	118
30-44	2,123	1,752	1,609	143	371
45-64	2,774	1,643	1,573	70	1,131
65 +	2,409	118	116	2	2,291
<b>Male Population</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Total Active</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Inactive</b>
Total	4,450	2,681	2,520	161	1,769

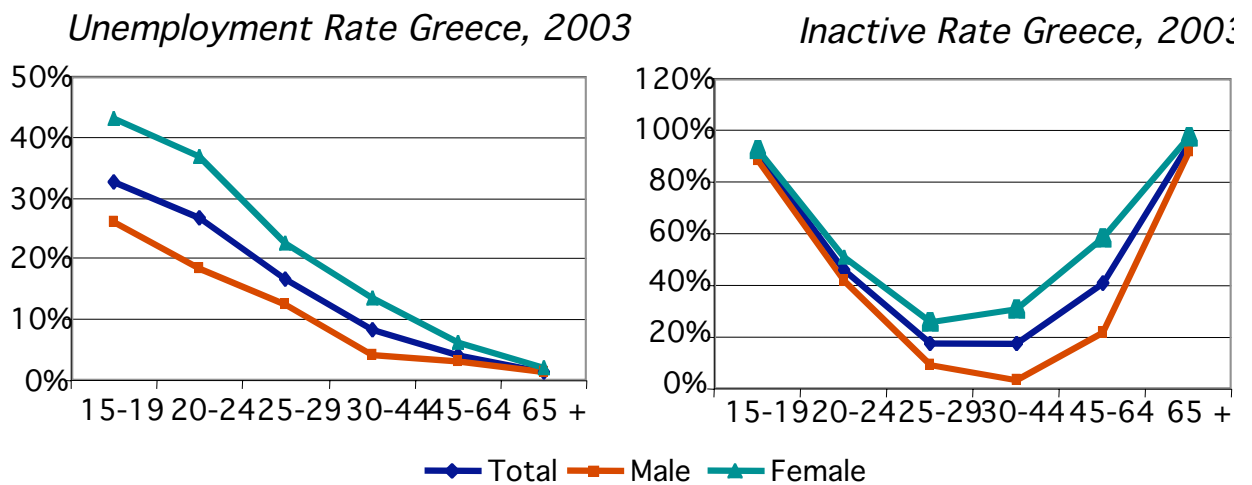
<sup>12</sup> See European Commission Expert Group on Gender and Employment. *Plans on Social Inclusion from a Gender Perspective: Greece, 2003*

<sup>13</sup> National Statistics Survey Greece, *Labour Force Survey, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2003*.

15-19	303	34	25	9	269
20-24	336	197	161	36	139
25-29	358	324	284	40	34
30-44	1,030	995	953	42	34
45-64	1,340	1,045	1,012	33	296
65 +	1,086	86	85	1	998

Female Pop.	Population	Total Active	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive
Total	4,809	1,822	1,556	266	2,986
15-19	289	22	13	10	267
20-24	338	168	106	62	171
25-29	330	246	191	55	84
30-44	1,093	757	655	102	336
45-64	1,433	598	561	37	835
65 +	1,324	32	31	1	1,293

NSSG Labour Force Survey, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2003; all figures in '000s



National Statistics Service Greece, 2003

Greece faces many of the same population growth issues as other EU countries: a declining fertility rate is expected to lead to a decrease of the population, with negative growth rates starting in 2020. At the same time, increasing longevity is expected to change the demographic mixture of the population. By 2020, some 61% of the population is projected to be over 40 years of age, versus 49% in 2000. The greatest age increases will come in the 50-59 and over 80 cohorts, while the greatest losses will occur in the 20-29 and 30-39 cohorts.

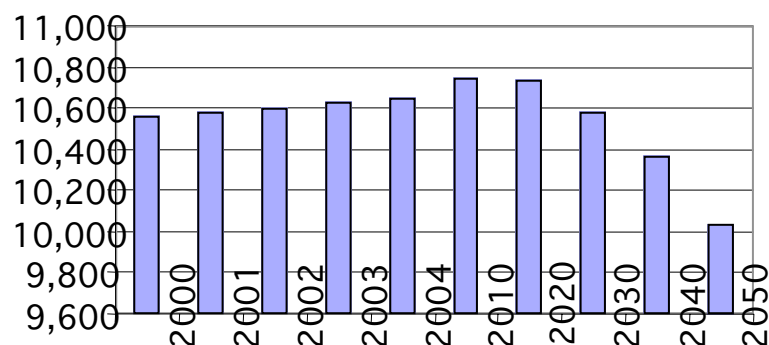
Lifelong learning has therefore become a critical priority for the Greek government. A number of policy initiatives have been undertaken to improve VET participation in older age groups, as well as to increase the working life of the population. Pension reform was attempted under the former government of Constantinos Simitis, but it is highly likely that a second round of pension reform will be necessary. On the VET side, attention has focussed on supply of VET opportunities for lifelong learning as well as financial support for employment of older workers. Some initiatives include:

- The design of Institutions of Lifelong Learning as well as integration into the curricula and operations of universities (AEIs) and vocational institutes (TEIs).

- Increased investment in Adult Education Centres (KEE) promoted lifelong learning at the prefectural level. and the activities of the Ministry of Education. This includes the “Second Chance Schools”.
- The General Secretariat of Adult Education (GGEE) operates programmes of adult education, including the Institute of Continuing Education for Adults (IDEKE).
- Support for employment and training of older workers under various OAED programmes: this includes subsidies for trainees following vocational training as well as financial support to companies employing older workers.

### Population Growth to 2050

'000 inhabitants

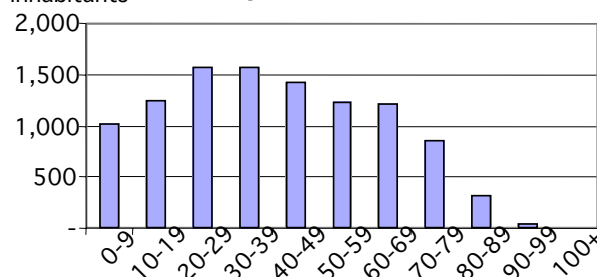


Year	Population '000
2000	10,559
2001	10,582
2002	10,604
2003	10,626
2004	10,648
2010	10,750
2020	10,742
2030	10,583
2040	10,366
2050	10,036

US Census Bureau, 2004

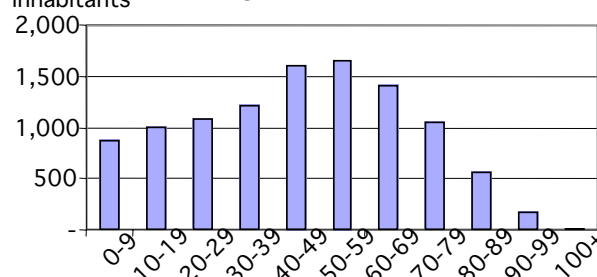
'000 inhabitants

### Demographic Distribution 2000



'000 inhabitants

### Demographic Distribution 2025



US Census Bureau, 2004

Despite these measures, key indicators such as retirement ages (particularly in the public sector), average departure ages from the workforce, and the very high inactive rates among older age cohorts point to continuing problems. It is likely that further work and coordination with social partners will be needed to define the most suitable methods for improving the supply and employment of older workers. In particular, sensitive issues such as retirement age, pensions indexing to final-year salaries, social security contributions (or benefits), restrictions on temporary employment, and other areas will have to be explored in the wider employment framework.

The current system, with its emphasis on the subsidisation of employment, risks creating a permanent underclass of older workers who are employed at the minimum wage and who depend on subsidies for continual retraining and employment. This may not a sustainable prospect, given the aging population, strained government

finances and the likelihood of reduced EU support under the 4<sup>th</sup> CSF. There are further risks when the wider economic employment and livelihoods of older people are considered: many are employed or self-employed in traditional professions such as small retail outlets, transport, tourism establishments, or agriculture, which will continue to face competitive pressures on productivity and profitability.

## 2.6 Effectiveness and efficiency of VET

- a. *In the current the national debate, how effective is the system of VET perceived to be? (Is the VET route effective in fostering individual careers, self-confidence and personal identity? Benefits of training for employers? Is the VET route effective in combating youth unemployment?)*
- b. *In the current national debate, is the VET system seen as offering efficiency/ good value for money? (These questions are given as examples and need not all be answered: Who is investing in VET - the state, the employers, and individuals – and what are their benefits? How can we make the best use of existing resources: Better balance between practical and theoretical training, accreditation of prior learning, raising completion rates, etc.? Improving management and organisation of VET?)*
- c. *What are the main trends in terms of investment in VET (Public investment? Incentives to employers as well as to individuals to invest more? Public-private partnerships?)*

The VET sector in Greece has seen a rapid growth in recent years, driven both by policy reforms as well as investment by national and EU resources. VET is dominated by the public sector. This is both due to regulatory aspects, such as the licensing of private universities, but more importantly in the control financial resources by the state and its preference for channelling these through public sector channels.

The role of alternate approaches has not been widely considered in professional literature or policy documentation on this subject in Greece. VET is largely considered a public good, and control over VET is consolidated by the role of the state in managing EU and national sources of funding. The fact that the state plays an active role in the labour market as well as accounts for a large share of GDP strengthens its presence in the market.

This role is confirmed through the recent trend in “privatising” state organisations such as the Vocational Training S.A. (a unit of OAED), Hellenic Telecom and others. In many cases, there has been a real privatisation, including for instance Stock Market flotation and the nomination of independent managers. In many other cases, however, the state has continued to own all shares, provide 100% of financial resources, and maintain labour practises consistent with the public service and the electoral cycle.

There is a widespread desire for a simplification of the VET system, an acceleration of reform, and the delivery of results in the public system, at least as expressed anecdotally by trainees, students, parents, companies and others. There are a number of competing interests in this sector, however, not least of which are the public sector unions and the large number of staff that directly and indirectly depend on the current system. This includes, incidentally, a very large number of consultants, trainers, university lecturers, and experts in the process of helping companies or individuals access the various subsidies and resources available.

To an outside observer, it is unclear to which extent to which many of the structures of the VET system are due to historical criteria rather than modern labour market

needs. It may be that some current practises in the system have historical roots in the protected labour market conditions of earlier decades, and in some cases are designed to protect public service occupations and recruitment.

The deliberate policy decision of the state to channel VET resources through state-run institutions has been important in guaranteeing issues such as equal access to education and training as well as social inclusion. Issues such as providing VET as a form of employment assistance, the training of disadvantaged groups or the provision of resources outside the main urban areas have been critical to the wider development of Greece as a country, and could not be taken for granted in recent history. However, the question remains whether this system is suitable for a more mature democracy as well as a dynamically-changing economy where the main drivers – deregulation, technology, globalisation, regional competition, interest rates and currency controls – are largely beyond the scope of government control.

In particular, the issue of moral hazard and system-wide effectiveness is rarely addressed in the larger debate on subsidies and government support. The current resource- and regulation-driven system is perceived as a public good. While incremental changes are made, the wider effects and foundations of the system remain intact. Some questions which arise to an outside observer include:

- What is the real effectiveness of public support for VET if corporate decision-making and private investment become dependent on it? What is the impact on innovation, competitiveness and investment planning if core elements of corporate operations become dominated by a “subsidy culture”?
- How will Greek entrepreneurs and companies compete against Turkish, Egyptian or Romanian firms, who do not have a subsidy system of this magnitude (although it could be argued that other protectionist barriers exist) but who face the same global competitive pressures?
- Is the system of subsidising training or employment with the minimum wage sufficient for the development of skills and knowledge required for the 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market? Do we risk creating a “captive market” of trainees, corporate recruiters, administrators, consultants and labour specialists who are participating in a repetitive, lowest-common-denominator, process?
- Are public administrations and “parastatals” able to respond to the very real and fast-moving trends in VET and provide the quality of education needed in today’s (and tomorrow’s) economy?
- The success of private business schools should be considered. These institutions offer the majority of teaching in Greece, with a degree awarded from a foreign university. How does this reflect on the public system? Given that the financing of these institutions is done exclusively through private means, what does this say about the quality of management education in state institutions? Should subsidies only be available for state institutions? Given that Greek entrepreneurs are now expanding their foreign diploma-branded institutions into other countries (FYR Macedonia, Ukraine, Bulgaria), what conclusions can be drawn from this? Should the state have the right to “disbar” private sector tertiary education?
- If the system is providing resources on this scale, how can we measure effectiveness, given that unemployment indicators remain high, economic activity falls dramatically at both ends of the age spectrum, and official real wages remain

below EU levels, multiple occupations are a standard aspect of the job market (including in the public service and the VET system) and the informal sector of the economy plays a major role?

- Is the large-scale investment by the state crowding out private sector investment? Are there more effective means of promoting and incentivising employers to participate in this process through their own resources? What is the real record of employer co-financing of the public minimum-wage subsidy? Does the private sector understand its responsibilities, or is it in danger of becoming a “free rider” in the system? Should a more flexible approach with different support options be provided to those more advanced companies that have a proven track record in seeking to develop staff qualifications?
- What non-VET issues should be addressed to promote issues such as employment, competitiveness and corporate investment in staff and CVT? What is the role, for instance, of temporary workers in the modern economy? What is the perception of human resources development? Are there conditions on employment or post-retirement work which could be made more competitive? Is the “demand” side of the VET equation being addressed as comprehensively as the “supply” side?
- Why is Greece a world leader in exporting students seeking foreign degrees at the tertiary level? In the case where this does not relate to VET conditions in Greece, but to other factors (for instance, the need to gain skills in other markets or from other sources), what should be done to support this process?
- Does the VET system in Greece need to specialise, or should it seek to cover all fields equally? What can the VET system do to promote economic fields where Greek companies have a competitive advantage? Are there specialised skills which should be offered, or should these be left to the private sector? Are there some sectors – for instance, construction – in danger from excessive reliance on public funding, which may cause dramatic short-term changes in demand? Are there others, for instance ICT, business services, tourism and healthcare, that should be expanded?<sup>14</sup>
- What is the role of immigrants at all ends of the socio-economic spectrum in Greece? How can international talent (not just cheap labour) be attracted and developed? What should be done to further develop and integrate immigrant labourers?

It is likely that a number of external (i.e., not intrinsic to the VET organisations and policies) factors will begin to play an important role in Greece in the coming few years. In particular, the revisions to the CSF and the wider range of EU funding will begin to take effect with increasing importance in 2005. This is likely to coincide with a reassessment of public finance as a result of public policy, the Olympic Games and a range of other factors. The election of a new, centre-right government led by Constantinos Karamanlis in March 2004 may provide a new framework and approach to VET, although it is currently unclear whether these will be (or can be) implemented.

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<sup>14</sup> See for instance CEDEFOP. *Learning for Employment: Second Report on Vocational Education and Training in Europe*. 2004.

### 3. Theme 2: Innovation in Teaching and Learning

#### 3.1 Improvements in learning processes and contents

*Please identify innovation in teaching and learning methods and contents for VET. (For example, developments towards student-centred learning styles; a possible shift from content/subject based learning to competences/outcomes; more problem- and project-based pedagogy, and contextualised work-based learning processes and contents.)*

At a policy level, there have been extensive changes in teaching and learning methods:

- The development of the Unified Cross-Curricular Approach (DEPPS) by the Pedagogical Institute focuses on the core skills identified at the secondary level. A “flexible zone” has been established in which each student can choose electives for 2-4 hours per week.
- ICT in learning is increasingly being adapted, although the specific rate of implementation varies significantly from institution to institution.

The development of some new institutions, such as the Hellenic Open University as well as the Institutes of Lifelong Learning, are incorporating contextualised work-based learning processes. This system is already in place to a large degree in the secondary TEE and upper-secondary IEK levels, with some variance, as well as in the tertiary AEI/TEI institutions.

There are a number of issues which impede further progress, however. These include large class sizes, an inflexible curricula as regards the official requirements for qualification or completion (for instance, university entrance examinations or vocational standards), the centralisation of administration and decision-making and a staff/institutional evaluation system that is still in its initial stages. Educational approaches in the secondary and upper secondary “classroom” environments tend to be theoretical and feature a large volume of material for memorisation (this is a generalisation and differs very widely from context to context). A unifying framework such as competency management (in either the VET or HR definitions) is lacking.

This issue is closely tied to the role of social partners in defining both the curriculum as well as requirements. There are significant differences between the approaches in the AEIs and TEIs, as well as between IEKs and TEEs run by different Ministries or organisations. It is difficult to extrapolate the “best practise” in an institution or institutional cluster with the system as a whole.

#### 3.2 Improving integration; integration of formal and informal learning

*Please Identify the institutional and organisational links (or lack of them) between learning sites at schools and companies. (How are the traditional barriers between learning at schools/colleges and learning in the workplace being overcome? How far can “simple experiencing” at work be transformed into a “reflective experiencing” by linking company-based learning with school/college based learning?)*

There are varying levels of linkage between learning sites in classrooms and companies. The secondary alternating vocational training offered by the OAED TEEs, for instance, provides parallel theoretical and applied study in the second and

third cycles: pupils will typically spend four days in companies and one day in the class per week at this stage. However, there is no standard approach between Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour (OAED)-run TEEs, and as a result this approach is not standardised. The labour market does consider work experience during study to be a competitive advantage.

At the post-secondary level, the IEKs do offer theoretical and applied subjects, and the courses are co-designed by tripartite teams (State, employers and employees). CVT courses offered by the KEKs have a differing level of exposure. At both the IEK and KEK level, the specific (or achieved) level of interaction between classroom and workplace is often at the distinction of the management of the institution and, in some cases, the initiative of the student.

At the tertiary level, there are extensive links between the classroom and workplace, but again this will depend on the institution and specialisation / occupation in question. These links are often consolidated by student as well as staff employment outside of learning hours.

Again, there are significant differences depending on whether the institution is an AEI or TEI at the tertiary level, or which Ministry or organisation it reports to in the upper-secondary level. It is difficult from this viewpoint to speak of a uniform approach in the entire system.

### 3.3 Evaluation and quality assurance of VET provision

*What systems are in place to evaluate the processes and outcomes of VET – for learners, systems and the system? (a) For the individual (assessment of competences and knowledge) (b) For the institution (internal/external quality management) (c) For the system (monitoring and evaluation)*

Individual assessments are often taken on the basis of examinations or formal qualifications systems. Examinations, including oral and written tests, are applied throughout the year and count towards the end-of-year examination. The role of year-end formal assessments or exams is still very strong, and in many cases accompanied by a large range of supplemental licenses, certificates or other attestations of completion or qualification. For instance, students that complete an IEK course receive a certificate; students that complete an IEK examination receive a diploma. The role of qualifications in assuring entrance to protected occupations or civil service employment is a major factor in this system. Other reasons for relying on an examination are rooted in historical efforts to remove potential sources of favouritism or political influence. The private sector takes into account additional considerations, including the institution attended, specialisation of study, etc.

The process of institutional and system assessment is provided by state authorities. At the tertiary level, work is underway in the design of a so-called National Council for Quality Assurance and Assessment (ESDAP), which would be independent of government and higher education, and would assess both sectors. This will complement the work of the nascent National Education Council (ESYP), which will operate an Evaluation and Certification Unit.

For secondary and upper-secondary levels, the Education Research Centre (KEE) and the Pedagogical Institute (PI) provide assessment services. KEE develops benchmarks and monitors national regional and institutional indicators, as well as

coordinates the work of the Regional Centres to Support Educational Planning (PEKESES). Reports are developed by individual institutions which include self-assessment as well as assessment by teaching staff. The PI evaluates curricula and teachers, with the objective of upgrading curricula and teaching skills. The Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK) evaluates (among other tasks), the training objectives for different vocational specialisations. For instance, it evaluates the training courses offered at IEK and their relevance to labour market needs.

### 3.4 Professional development and status of teachers and trainers

*Teachers' and trainers' professional development is now recognised as a decisive factor in improving learning processes and outcomes. Please indicate the key initiatives and innovations that are taking place in the training of teachers and trainers.*

*(These questions are given as examples and need not all be answered: Is initial training being introduced or reformed? If so, how? What provision is made for the continuous professional development of VET teachers and trainers? How do innovative education and training practices benefit students, companies and society? What is the position of trainers within organisations? How much autonomy do they have? What is the professional status - social status and self-esteem - of VET teachers and trainers in the society?*

In the public sector, the VET system establishes specific teacher and trainer qualifications at each level, with the qualifications typically linked to the subject to be taught. Basic training of teaching staff occurs in tertiary education institutions (AEI/TEI) and is subject matter oriented. The Pedagogical Institute designs pre-service training curricula for newly hired teachers (usually a three-month course is required) as well as short courses of in-service training which reflect school subject curricula, their content and their methodologies

For instance, the TEE institutions establish three qualifications types<sup>15</sup>:

- AEI graduates teach general education and the theoretical aspects of specialisation subjects;
- TEI and ASPAITE graduates teach technological or applied subjects, which often combine theory and workshop training;
- Graduates of upper secondary technical vocational training are employed as workshop instructors.

This link of teaching positions or occupations with formal qualifications illustrates one of the main objectives of the current system, and is reflected in a general sense throughout the wider public sector. This link is further consolidated by methods of recruiting teachers: in the past, a list of precedence is employed for some institutions. Now, recruitment is done on the basis of competitive examinations, for instance through the Supreme Staff Selection Council (ASEP), which comprises the state recruitment procedures for the civil service. This removes in many cases the opportunity for flexible hiring in many institutions. In others, such as the IEKs, trainers are granted 6 month employment contracts as a means of ensuring flexibility.

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<sup>15</sup> CEDEFOP *Vocational Education and Training in Greece, Short Description*. 2003

Beyond the qualifications-occupation link, there are a number of activities designed to grant or improve teacher qualifications in the public sector:

- ASPAITE is the specialised institution providing teacher qualifications in Greece. It runs a number of pedagogical training courses.
- The Education and Initial Vocational Training Operational Programme provides further training and certification of staff at different levels.
- The National Accreditation Centre of Vocational Training Structures and Accompanying Support Services (EKEPIS) provides accreditation and continuing training of trainers at various levels.
- Various OAED divisions or subsidiaries further support training of trainers in the vocational streams.

Due to concerns about the in-service induction, training and education of teachers, a new organization was founded, the Organisation of In-Service Training of Teachers (OEPEK).

The status of public sector trainers is in general assured. This is considered a “safe” profession, and the civil servant status of most positions is an important consideration in issues such as housing mortgages. The position of a trainer in the tertiary field is usually very respected. There are also a number of opportunities for multiple employment, depending on the teaching position in question. These range from acting as “*frontisteria*” trainers to trainers or advisors on various government / EU training programmes. Such employment is often in the informal sector.

The private sector situation is quite different. Employment is becoming more and more unstable, and it is necessary for trainers that are not in fixed contracts with a single institution to be highly flexible and reactive to opportunities in the market. Multiple employment or juggling short-term contracts is usually a necessity in this field. There is usually a high degree of interface or transference between private trainers and government programmes at the tertiary level: thus, private trainers often serve as trainers or advisors to their employer institutions, but also work on multiple projects or programmes as they are available. Exceptions to this are of course widespread: trainers for instance in the ICT sector with specific software experience are in high demand; these individuals often combine training with consulting.

In this respect, EU programmes such as SOCRATES, Erasmus, Lingua, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci, ESF, eLearning and others have played a major role in promoting innovation in teaching professions in Greece. This has enabled trainers to broaden their horizons significantly by comparing other EU systems as well as through incorporating best practise.

## 4. Theme 3: Building Competences for a European Labour Market

### 4.1 Challenges & policies in relation to the Lisbon employment strategy

*What are the main challenges to achieving the Lisbon employment objectives for your country, according to the European Commission 'Kok Report'? Please identify any policies and strategies*

*being developed to tackle these challenges. Please identify any obstacles standing in the way of reform of VET in relation to achieving the Lisbon objectives.*

The Kok report established the following three main challenges for Greece:

- Increasing Adaptability: Reduction of administrative burdens on business; removal of obstacles on part-time work; reduce non-wage labour costs and foster a business-friendly environment; transform undeclared work into regular employment; improve dissemination of innovation.
- Make Work a Real Option for All: Increase active labour market policies to broaden access to inactive population and unemployed; develop an efficient public service with improved staff; focus on unemployed young people; increase availability of child care; remove obstacles and provide incentives for women's employment; develop comprehensive strategies for active ageing of the workforce.
- Invest in Human Capital: Strengthen education reforms to prevent early school leaving; increase access to and strengthen quality and labour market relevance of tertiary education; strengthen incentives for lifelong learning and increase access to training of adults, particularly the low-skilled.

In the scope of this Lisbon Agenda review, Greece has responded to elements in the second and third challenges. Extensive subsidies and support is granted for the inactive population and the unemployed in the NOPs "Education and Initial Vocational Training", "Employment and Vocational Training", "Continuing Training and Provision of Employment" and "Combatting Exclusion in the Labour Market". It is estimated that nearly 1 million people will receive various forms of training and support between 1994 – 1999 (2<sup>nd</sup> CSF) and 2000 – 2006 (3<sup>rd</sup> CSF) under these programmes.

The problem seen in this approach is that the link between VET and employment may not be sustainable in the absence of public subsidies. In particular, the contribution of minimum wage-level support to employers in return for training or initial employment may be unsustainable. The unemployment or inactive rates, particularly for the young and older age groups as well as women, remains high.

It is, however, interesting to note that between 1990 and 2004, Greece has added nearly 10% of its population level through the addition of approximately 800,000 immigrants, many jobs have been created in marginal or labour-heavy occupations, such as household cleaning, farming, family care, construction and other areas. These labourers are typically outside the VET stream, although their children are increasingly participating in the system. Many of these workers are operating in the informal sector.

New initiatives are underway in the fields of lifelong learning and continual vocational training which may improve employment competitiveness. However, it is likely that further work is needed in each area outlined by the Kok report, and particularly in (a) bringing the supply of VET services closer to the demand as expressed by the private sector labour market, (b) reviewing the impact of potential future reductions of VET as a form of large-scale employment subsidy and the distortions this creates, and (c) improving non-VET related issues affecting employment, such as social contributions, restrictions on temporary work, the relationship between taxation and the living wage, and similar issues. The role of the private sector should be

addressed, and greater attempts should be made to adapt to a more flexible and results-oriented system, including through greater international cooperation. This may have to involve a fundamental re-design of the system, although it is unlikely that that political will for such an exercise exists.

## 4.2 Involving stakeholders

- a. *Please describe the role of stakeholders or social partners in the planning of VET at national, sector and company level*
- b. *Which actions to anticipate and recognise skills and qualifications needs (at national, sector or regional level) for your country do the European social partners identify as important in their recent report?*

The role of stakeholders in planning VET is, with some exceptions, very low. As previously established, VET is almost the sole domain of the State. In recent years, some efforts have been made to increase stakeholder involvement, including:

- The role of Prefectures in the administration of some secondary vocational schools. While this may make regional decision-making more effective, it is not at all certain that the knowledge of the private sector or the labour market at the prefectural administrations are suited to modern needs. The prefectures have, however, developed the KEE centres which have been important in lifelong learning.
- OAED has increased its links with the labour market through the ESSEEKA national system for VET and employment.
- The registration of private KEKs which implement continual vocational training.
- The emergence of tripartite curriculum development at the IEK level.
- The role of the Economic and Social Council, which brings together the major tripartite actors to review a wide range of policy issues.
- There has been wider social partner involvement in the National Action Plan for Employment, with trade unions, employers federations and other partners participating.

Perhaps the major issue remains the role of the private sector in VET. It will be difficult to adapt to fast-moving changes in labour market needs as long as the government retains its dominant position. In some cases, it is even impossible to implement the planned reforms, simply because of issues of coordination and fragmentation among multiple (and sometimes competing) organisations. Other issues, such as the government's refusal to license private education at the tertiary level even despite Directive 89/48/EEC, cannot possibly support the achievement of a modern and efficient VET system.

## 4.3 Transparency, recognition & mobility

*A key objective of the Copenhagen Agreement is to establish mechanisms that can lead to a European labour market. Credit transfer, qualification frameworks and Europass are specified in this respect. What measures, if any, are being developed at national and/ or sector level (a) To establish credit frameworks (b) To establish or reform a qualifications framework (c) To implement Europass?*

Secondary vocational qualifications are mostly in line with the EU accreditation systems. The IEK Diploma of Vocational Training, for instance, is awarded based in Directive 91/51/EEC.

At the tertiary level, Greece participates in ENIC, NARIC and ENQA. However, Greece has not ratified the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications. While there is support for the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) from the Rectors Conference as well as many TEIs, this has not been adapted in national law. It is, however, used by individual institutions. There is resistance against other elements of the Bologna Declaration, including the use of first-cycle degrees. DIKATSA recognises foreign degrees and qualifications.

## 5. Scoreboard: Achieving the Lisbon VET Objectives in Greece

LISBON VET OBJECTIVE	CURRENT STATUS	RESPONSE
<p><b>1. Investment in Education and Training</b></p> <p>No benchmark. However, 1999 EU average was 5.0% for public expenditure on education as share of GDP, while average of three best performing countries was 7.4%.</p>	<p>Total 2000 public expenditure is calculated at 3.79% of GDP, below EU average of 4.94%. Estimates are that private expenditure matches 40% public rate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public expenditure on education has been rising above GDP growth (6.7% in 2003 and 8% in 2004). Convergence with EU average is planned for future.</li> <li>However, future expenditure dependent on public debt and annual deficit. The notation of the 4th CSF (2007-2013) will be of critical importance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Early School Leavers</b></p> <p>Benchmark is an EU-average rate of 10% or less by 2010, down from 1999 EU average of 19.4%.</p>	<p>The rate of early school leavers in Greece was 16.1% in 2002.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Government has started Second Chance Schools and revised the basic curriculum in the Unified Cross-Curricular Approach (DEPPS) to improve primary and secondary education.</li> <li>The number of places in upper secondary education is being increased, while the role of tertiary vocational education has been brought into the higher education system.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Graduates in Mathematics, Science and Technology</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, Member States will have at least halved the level of gender imbalance among graduates in mathematics, science, technology whilst securing an overall significant increase of the total number of graduates compared to the year 2000.”</i></p>	<p>No data is available on gender imbalance in this field.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is significant investment underway in the ICT field; other support programmes are leading to the development of production automation as well as to increased research and development. This may play a positive role in the future.</li> </ul>

LISBON VET OBJECTIVE	CURRENT STATUS	RESPONSE
<p><b>4. Upper Secondary Education Attainment</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, Member States should ensure that average percentage of 25-64 year olds in the EU with at least upper secondary education reaches 80% or more.”</i></p>	<p>Greece had an 82.1% completion rate in upper secondary education in 2002.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is considerable investment underway in the development of upper secondary education, particularly with investments and support for the TEE and IEK institutions.</li> <li>• Further reforms (ESSEEKA) streamlining the VET sector and linking VET with the labour market should further improve attractiveness.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Key Competencies</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, the percentage of low-achieving 15 year olds in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy will be at least halved in each Member State.”</i></p>	<p>No data available. At 24.4%, Greece has a higher rate of PISA Level 1 literacy proficiency than the EU average of 17.2%.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reform on the Unified Cross-Curricular Approach (DEPPS) is designed to improve primary and secondary education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Lifelong Learning</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, the EU-average level of participation in lifelong learning should be at least 15% of the adult working age population (25-65 age group) and in no country should it be lower than 10%.”</i></p>	<p>Greece had only 1.2% of population participating in lifelong learning in 2002, based on the Eurostat Labour Force Survey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifelong learning has gained new importance; Centres for Lifelong Learning are being developed.</li> <li>• The Second Chance Schools as well as various other initiatives are being launched to improve learning opportunities.</li> <li>• The CSF programmes will have led to VET being provided to at least 500,000 people (5% of population) in the years 2000 – 2007; it is likely that formal participation rate is higher than 1.2%. New results will also be seen in the Adult Education Survey, to be released at end 2004.</li> </ul>

## Annex I: List of Sources

*This is a partial list of sources consulted.*

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