

# Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Greece

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CareersNet Contributor:	Fotini Vlachaki
Reviewed by:	Cedefop
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Disclaimer:	
Previous versions:	2020
Update	In June 2023, the Presidential Decree No. 77 renamed several ministries and created new ones. These changes are not reflected in the current record. Forthcoming updates will take this into consideration.

## Introduction

[Update ] According to Presidential Decree No. 77 (Government Gazette 130/27.6.2023) titled “Establishment of a Ministry and Renaming of Ministries – Establishment, Abolition and Renaming of General and Special Secretariats – Transfer of competences, organizational units, staff positions and supervised entities”:

- A new Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family was established.
- The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs was renamed the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports.
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was renamed the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Within the new organizational structure of the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty was transferred from the Ministry of Labour, along with key competences related to social inclusion and social cohesion policies, welfare income support and benefits, and targeted interventions for vulnerable social groups, including people living in extreme poverty, persons with disabilities, Roma, the chronically ill, the homeless, and the elderly. Additionally, two new General Secretariats were established: the General Secretariat for Demographic and Housing Policy, responsible for family, housing, and youth policies, including competences transferred from the Ministry of Education; and the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights, which brings together gender equality and human rights policies, along with the relevant services and responsibilities transferred from the Ministries of Labour and Justice.

Forthcoming updates will take this into consideration.

The first significant efforts to develop career guidance services in Greece date to the early 1950s, with the term ‘Epagelmatikos Prosanatolimos’ (Vocational Guidance) being used to refer to career guidance until the end of 1970s.

In 1953, vocational guidance services were firstly introduced among the innovative measures taken by the Ministry of Labour, aiming to improve workforce employment; the services’ implementation started in 1957 with the appointment of the first Vocational Guidance Advisors to the Employment and Insurance Organisation for Unemployment (OAAA) —established in 1954 by Decree 2961/1954 and later renamed in 1969 to Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) by Decree 212/1969—. The first Vocational Guidance Advisors were trained at the Research Centre for Psychological Testing and the relevant school that was set up in 1954, which operated only for two years. 65 Vocational Guidance Advisors graduated, but only 30 were appointed to OAAA in order to offer their services in some of the Employment Offices that had been operating since 1937. Finally, most of them were assigned other administrative duties

Later in 1971, 1973 and 1983 OAED organised three new series of training for Vocational Guidance Advisors. Furthermore, the Directorate for Vocational Guidance was created within OAED by the Decree 405/71, as well as a Model Center for Vocational Guidance in Athens (EKEP, 2007). The Law 1837/86 introduced several efforts related to career guidance provision and decreed that guidance assistance should be provided to all jobseekers – an ambitious objective that has, however, not been attained (Kassotakis, 2017). Starting from the mid-1980s up to the establishment of the Centres for Promotion to Employment (KPAs) in the end of the 1990s (1998), operating at regional level under the responsibility of OAED, the career guidance services offered, were not systematically and adequately organised, while employment counsellors’ role had not yet been clearly defined. Pursuant to Law 2956/2001, KPAs aim to integrate or reintegrate the unemployed persons, as well as the unemployed belonging to social vulnerable groups, into the labour market by implementing the so-called “personalised intervention”. The intervention is mainly based on systematic assistance regarding administrative procedures, while counselling provision is rather limited. In 2006, 119 KPAs operated throughout the country; KPAs also collaborate with businesses, professional trade unions and scientific bodies. In addition, OAED services provided to the unemployed include group information sessions on job opportunities, training and entrepreneurial programs and seminars regarding job search techniques.

At the same period in the field of education, a model Centre for Vocational Guidance was also established by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, while in 1953 vocational guidance was introduced as a course in the curricula of the in-service teacher training schools as well as the two Pedagogical Academies for primary school teachers. In the curriculum of secondary education, a subject called ‘Professional Exploration and Career Guidance’ was first introduced by Law 129/1967 (Σιδηροπούλου-Δημακάκου κ.α., 2008). Later in 1976 Law 309/1976 introduced Scholikos Epagelmatikos Prosanatolimos (SEP) (Educational and Vocational Guidance) – a term used broadly ever since – and the relevant subject was incorporated in the curriculum of the lower secondary school grade C (Gymnasium), while its implementation began in 1979 (Law 309,1976). During this time, the coordination of SEP implementation in schools was assigned to a relevant working group that was set up at the Centre for Educational Studies and In-service Training (KEME), later known as the Pedagogical Institute (PI). In addition, several career guidance trainings in Greece and abroad were delivered to a group of teachers – of various disciplines, that undertook the teaching of SEP in schools. Later in 1980, SEP was also introduced as a subject in the curriculum of first grade (Class A) of both the upper secondary general and the technical and vocational schools (Lyceum). Appropriate educational materials, recourses and tools were developed by the relevant Pedagogical Institute’s (PI) working group and were used in the implementation of SEP in schools by competent teachers. Until then, SEP has served primarily to provide students with information on future pathways, post-secondary education opportunities and career choices. (Kassotakis, 2017).

Law 1566/85 further regulated the issues of the implementation of SEP in Secondary Education, with the “appointment of guidance teachers to each administrative district of education in order to coordinate SEP in schools and also organise the training of SEP teachers” (Kassotakis, 2017). Also, the implementation of SEP in schools initiated the organization of several career education activities to support the development of students’ self-awareness as well as familiarization with the world of work and school to work transition. Under the same Law, a SEP Section was established in the Department of Technical and Vocational Education of the Pedagogical Institute in 1993, which had since then been responsible, until Pedagogical Institute’s termination in 2012, for the scientific support of the development of Vocational Guidance in Secondary Education (Law 1566, 1985). Considerable efforts have been initiated by the SEP department of the Pedagogical Institute (PI), to embed the objectives of vocational guidance in the curricula of various courses in secondary education. In addition, through the department’s website <http://sep.pi-schools.gr>, as well as the Nestor Web Portal for career guidance, important and useful information was widely disseminated to students, teachers and, career guidance practitioners for more than a decade.

Additionally, in 1996, according to Ministerial Decision No. 3204 / 21-5-96, a relevant department was established at the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs with the aim to administer and coordinate the implementation of SEP activities and services in Secondary Education. Later in 2002, by Law 2986, a Directorate of School Vocational Guidance and Educational Activities was established in the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as an administrative and supervision authority of career guidance structures and issues in the secondary education. According to Kassotakis (2017), “the education reform of 1997–2000 (Law 2525/1997) sought also to respond to the current needs for better collaboration between the guidance services in

the education sector and the employment sector, better coordination of guidance-related activities, for collaboration in the development and implementation of a uniform policy, for better-qualified personnel, and for structural changes in the guidance services provision.

Law 2525/97 marked the significant upgrading of the implementation of SEP in Secondary Education, introducing more holistic goals with aim to support students at different stages of their development to realize their inclinations, interests and abilities, to develop their skills and make wise educational and vocational decisions to achieve their social and labour market participation (Law 2525, 1997). The Law also decreed the establishment of: a) the National Centre of Vocational Guidance (EKEP), under the joint responsibility of the Ministries of Education and Labour; b) 68 Counselling and Guidance Centres (KESYPs) throughout the country; and c) 200 School Career Counselling Offices (GRaSEPs) in secondary schools, which started functioning as from the late 1990s onwards, introducing various career-related activities including personal counselling.

KESYPs personnel consisted of secondary school teachers holding postgraduate degrees in counselling, education and social sciences or having attended guidance seminars, as well as information and documentation experts. After 2000, the number of the guidance services in secondary education was increased to 81 KESYPs and 570 GRaSEPs in total (according to the ministerial decisions 125865/Γ7/ 23-11-2006 (FEK 1831/β/15-12-06 and 140178/Γ7/11-12-2003). KESYPs had been operating in the major cities of the Greek prefectures, while GRaSEPs in 570 secondary schools throughout the country with the support of ESF funding (Βλαχάκη, 2015). Additionally, in 2002, under the Ministerial Decision 130807/Γ2/5.12.2002, 105 Career Liaison and Vocational Guidance Offices (GRaSYs) were established in equal number of Technical Vocational Lycea (EKEP, 2007; Σιδιροπούλου - Δημακάκου κ.α., 2008; Kassotakis, 2017).

With the support of European Social Fund, between 2000 and 2013 several discrete actions were implemented nationally to enhance the operation and expansion of counselling and vocational guidance services and career education programs in secondary education, including the infrastructure upgrading, the development of scientific career guidance material and instruments and the training of career guidance teachers. According to many scholars "EU funding, can be considered as one of the main factors contributing to the accelerated pace of the development of guidance in the last two or three decades (Vretakou, 1990; Kosmidou, 1990; EKEP, 2001; Kassotakis, 2004, 2009; and Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 2006 in Kassotakis, 2017).

In the field of tertiary education, Career Liaison Offices have been established in higher education institutions since the early 1990s, mainly financed by EU funds, aiming to: a) inform students about postgraduate studies and employment opportunities in Greece and abroad, b) provide job search techniques training, and c) facilitate their transition to the labour market. Similar career liaison services have been offered in post-secondary vocational training institutes (IEKs) but not systematically organised for several years (Σιδιροπούλου - Δημακάκου κ.α., 2008) Kassotakis, 2017, ΕΟΠΠΕΠ, 2015).

Since 2010, due to the outbreak of the economic crisis in Greece, significant disruptive changes have occurred that have limited the implementation of career guidance provision in secondary education. Since September 2010 the operation of GRaSYs as well as since September 2011 the operation of GRaSEPs throughout the country has been suspended. Since 2010 until late 2018 career guidance services in secondary education were offered solely by the 79 KESYPs operating at a regional level to provide counselling and guidance services daily, to students of lower and upper secondary education schools of general and technical vocational education, as well as to parents and young people up to 25 years of age. Trained and qualified teachers appointed as KEPYPs' career counsellors (usually 2 persons per KESYP) were responsible for visiting the schools in each area of their responsibility (approx. each KESYP served the students, teachers and parents in around 80 up to 100 schools of its region; that means each guidance counsellor is responsible for 40 to 50 schools). Their main role is to implement informative workshops as well as labour market connection activities and provide support in the design and implementation of annual Career Education Programs to be organised by teachers with the involvement of interested students in schools. In addition, KESYPs' career counsellors are responsible to provide support and training to secondary education teachers teaching SEP as well as to provide face to face career counselling and information services as following:

- provision of information to students about potential educational paths and counselling support to students in transition phases (e.g. from lower to upper secondary education, choosing between general secondary education and technical vocational education etc.);
- provision of individual career counselling to students in order to help them identify their skills and interests, as well as assist them in the process of making educational and professional decisions;
- provision of information and counselling support on issues related to admission in tertiary education.

As of June 2018, KESYPs services were incorporated in the Centres for Educational Support and Counselling, namely KESYs, established at the Regional Directorates of Education pursuant to Law 4547-12/6/2018 and the Ministerial Decision No 211076/ΓΔ4-13/12/2018/FEK B 5614, with the aim to provide support to school units which are under their responsibility. KESYs staff forms a multidisciplinary team, including teachers specialising in career counselling and guidance, psychologists and social workers. KESYs services support the overall work of school units for investigating pupils' educational and psychosocial needs, through conducting educational and psychosocial evaluations and interventions as well as vocational guidance and counselling, career education workshops, provision of career information and awareness raising activities.

In 2021, a new law 4823 (Government Gazette 136A' 3.8.2021) reshaped KESYs to Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASyS), which are no longer provide mainstream career guidance services to students (article 11) but mainly to disabled students. Especially, it is foreseen that specialists in career guidance or mobility, orientation and daily living skills of the blind, or in the sign language of the deaf will be employed in KEDASyS (article 15). The new law establishes the Offices of Counselling and Guidance (GRASYPs) per group of neighbouring schools, as well as the appointment of a teacher responsible for School Career Guidance in each Directorate of Secondary Education to support school units in career guidance issues and activities.

While in secondary education, career guidance (SEP) has been systematically taught for more than 30 years as a separate subject in the curriculum of secondary education, it should be noted that in a strongly exam-oriented system, the SEP subject was not formally assessed and did not generate much interest, acknowledgment or enthusiasm both by students and teachers (Kassotakis, 2017). Reformatations of the educational curricula in secondary education after 2010 have led to the gradual abandonment of teaching SEP as a separate course embedded in the curriculum and resulted in the introduction of new methods of addressing career guidance issues, such as research work (project), school and social activities and modern online career development tools.

Significant weaknesses of the system in general, persisting for many years and to some extent until today include: a) lack of reliable labour market information data; b) lack of systematic synergy, collaboration and coordination of activities among different guidance services, providers and stakeholders in the fields of education, training and employment; c) lack of development and implementation of a national career guidance policy; and d) lack of an institutional framework for the career guidance and counselling profession, which often results to the provision of relevant services by persons that are not adequately qualified to provide quality services to citizens. (Σιδιροπούλου - Δημακάκου κ.α., 2008; Kassotakis, 2017, ΕΟΠΠΕΠ, 2012).

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## Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

In Greece, the governance of the national lifelong guidance system, along with the available respective services in the fields of education, training and employment, falls under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as well as of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The two ministries develop policies and interventions in this field and supervise all activities from all relevant institutions or organisations taking action in career guidance, while the main basis for collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs lies within the responsibilities and activities of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP).

The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), is supervised by the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is situated in Athens and was formed in November 2011 by merging three previously distinct national bodies, namely the National Centre for the Accreditation of Lifelong Learning Providers (ΕΚΕΠΙΣ), the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications (ΕΟΠΠ) and the National Centre for Vocational Guidance (ΕΚΕΠ), which was originally supervised by both Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and Ministry of Labour from 1998 until 2010. EOPPEP focuses on enhancing the quality, efficiency and reliability of lifelong learning and guidance services in Greece as well as on the design and implementation of the national policy of the country in this respect. In fact, within this context, EOPPEP serves as the national coordination body and implements systemic guidance interventions aiming at safeguarding the quality and professionalisation of guidance and the meaningful networking amongst different guidance stakeholders, including career guidance services in the field of education, training and employment, in the public and private sector, operating at regional or local level, occasionally with the involvement of municipalities, NGOs and other social partners. Furthermore, EOPPEP's role refers to the continuous development of information, guidance and counselling tools and respective material for practitioners who are working in education and employment settings in both the public and private sector. In addition to guidance interventions, EOPPEP also designs and develops innovative lifelong guidance services for users of all ages at national level.

A new Law 4763/2020 redefined the National system of vocational education, training and lifelong learning, extending over levels 3, 4 and 5 of the National Qualifications Framework, in line with those of the European Qualifications Framework. In this scope, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs - General Secretariat for Vocational Education and Training, Life Long Learning and Youth is responsible for formal and non-formal adult education & Lifelong learning, while the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is involved in the provision of VET, in the scope of preventing and tackling unemployment, workforce skills development and social integration of vulnerable groups. Within this framework, a new area of coordination and synergies has been strengthened, focusing on the provision of guidance services as part of VET Lifelong Learning & accreditation practices, involving different stakeholder bodies and organisations, as well as cooperation and coordination mechanisms for the connection of VET and LLL with labour market needs. Law 4763/2020 established the Central Board for Vocational Education and Training (KSEEK), a central governance structure with the task to formulate policy proposals to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs on issues of Vocational Education and Training and Life Long Learning, flexibility and openness of the VET system and linking education with labour market and employment. Also, the Boards for Connection with Production and Labour Market (SSPAE), operating at regional level, submit proposals and suggestion to the Central Board for Vocational Education and Training (KSEEK) for the domains and specializations that should be introduced in the curricula of the public Institutions for Vocational Training (IEK), Post-Secondary - Apprenticeship Programme, public Schools for Training (ΕΣΚ), Vocational Apprenticeship Schools of PES (former OAED).

The new "Strategy for the Workforce Skills Upgrading and the Interconnection with the Labour Market", established in June 2022 by the Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, according to the provisions of Law 4921/2022 (par. 1, Article 26), focuses on the development of necessary knowledge, competences and skills as the main cornerstones for appropriately qualified workforce, the effective matching of skills supply with the labour market needs, the timely skills forecasting, the development of fundamental transversal skills of the workforce, and the investment in future oriented professions and competences. According to Law 4921/2022, the governance of the National Skills Development System foresees the establishment of the Government Committee, responsible for the coordination of Ministries, institutions and agencies active on lifelong learning and skills policies and in the design and management of related co-financed programs, as well as the National Skills Council and the Workforce Skills Scientific Committee for the design, scientific documentation, implementation and monitoring of the Workforce Skills Strategy. The Public Employment Service DYPA, the Skill Forecasting Mechanism and the Social Partners Council play central role in the framework of the new Workforce Skills Strategy.

EOPPEP has taken several efforts to develop a national Lifelong Guidance Forum, mainly through the establishment of a web Guidance Forum called "IRIDA" in 2014, with the aim to serve as a mechanism of cooperation, coordination and networking of the career guidance stakeholders, social partners, bodies and services at national level. While "IRIDA" Guidance Forum has not been satisfactorily active, in 2021, EOPPEP has established a Career Guidance Forum called "Synergieia", in the form of a Facebook group, to promote communication and synergies amongst guidance providers, practitioners, and other stakeholders within the public and private sector at local, regional and national level. Members are also encouraged to publish and disseminate information on career guidance activities, projects, tools and good practices.

The **Hellenic Society of Counselling and Guidance** (He.S.Co.G./ E.L.E.SY.P.) is a scientific society established in 1985 with the aim to contribute to the development of career guidance in Greece; namely to enhance communication among career guidance professionals working in different fields, to diffuse best practices in career guidance and to organize national and international career guidance seminars and conferences. The journal of E.L.E.SY.P., titled "The Review of Counselling and Guidance", has been regularly issued since 1986, publishing scientific articles according to international standards.

The **Association of Greek Career Counsellors and Guidance Practitioners** (SESEP) has been established in 2000 as a professional and scientific association with the aims to promote career guidance development, and to support the collaboration and cooperation between different career guidance stakeholders.

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## Access to guidance

In Greece there is no law or unified legal framework to ensure universal access to guidance for all age groups. Career guidance services aim to assist individuals make informed decisions about their educational and professional path, as well as to diminish labour market shortages and skills mismatches, to reduce the early school leaving rates and improve NEETs prospects, to provide support to women returners, inmates, ethnic minorities and individuals with an immigrant background. In this framework, a wide range of different services has been set up by different guidance stakeholders in education (secondary and tertiary), training and employment, including social partners, to allow broader access to career guidance services for different groups of beneficiaries. A major initiative improving the access level to career guidance services has been the launch of the online career guidance portals, operating at national level (see section ICT in Lifelong guidance):

TEENS GATE, is an interactive guidance portal developed in 2012 by EOPPEP of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, targeted to adolescents, students, young people and guidance practitioners, in the field of education and training;

the Lifelong Career Development Portal e-STADIODROMIA developed in 2014 within the activities of EOPPEP, as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, providing innovative career development services targeted to adults of all ages.

Both EOPPEP's portals are being used as the official career tools by guidance services of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and Religious Affairs as well as by teachers in all educational levels during the process of familiarizing students with career issues, and by other career guidance providers in the field of Lifelong Learning. As of 2021, EOPPEP's portals have been unified into the National Lifelong Career Guidance Portal e-STADIODROMIA, targeting students, youngsters and adults but also serving as a useful tool for guidance practitioners. The portal is systematically updated to provide comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and questionnaires and information on existing guidance services for diverse end users. Also, the national and European activities of EOPPEP as the National Euroguidance Centre are being disseminated through the portal to guidance practitioners all over Greece.

Access to guidance is also promoted by:

- teachers specialised in CGC appointed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs at the Directorates of Secondary Education, which operate under the respective Regional Directorates of Education, so as to be in charge of CGC and support school units in career guidance issues (law 4823 (Government Gazette 136A' 3.8.2021, article 27, 28). Also, Offices of Counselling and Guidance (GRASYPs) staffed by teachers in CGC, are established per group of neighbouring schools with the responsibility of providing School Counselling and Guidance services to the students of the respective schools. Similarly, secondary education teachers will act as Apprenticeship Liaison Officers in the special needs vocational lower - upper secondary education schools (ENEeGy-L) to facilitate students' labour market integration (article 94). Students with disabilities and learning difficulties receive personalised career guidance services and psychosocial assessment and support at the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASyS), established by law 4823/2021. Especially, it is foreseen that specialists in career guidance or mobility, orientation and daily living skills of the blind, or in the sign language of the deaf will be employed in KEDASyS (article 15).
- career liaison offices, operating in tertiary education institutes provide career support to students and graduates, facilitating labour market integration, internship, entrepreneurship, and career development;
- centres for promotion to employment (KPA2), operating by the Public Employment Service (D.YP.A) of Greece (former Manpower Employment Organisation, OAED)(Law 4921/2022). KPA2 implement the process of the Personalized Approach (Law 4837/2021, article 63) targeted to registered persons, following thorough skills profiling and development of the Individual Action Plan, reflecting the professional goals of the job seeker, the existing knowledge, abilities and skills and those that must be acquired, formal qualifications. The personalized approach process focuses on the identification of adequate counselling, employment or training actions or programs available for the unemployed as well as to successful matching of the registered unemployed with the available job positions. The Individual Action Plan is co-decided by the DYPA employment advisor and the job seeker. KPA2 services include also individual career guidance, career information as well as targeted workshops for the unemployed, which focus on improving job-searching skills, career management skills and entrepreneurial skills. At the same time, D.YPA. specialised counselling services are provided to social vulnerable groups and students. Vocational Education Liaison Offices with the labour market operate in 30 Vocational Apprenticeships Schools (EPAS) and are addressed to NEETs (young people outside of education, training and employment), students of EPAS Apprenticeships, EPAS graduates, high school students, businesses, representatives of employers, chambers, etc. Access to D.YPA. counselling services is recently enhanced through advanced digitalisation, enabling the preparation of the Digital Individual Action Plan, which can only be developed and reviewed digitally. DYPA in collaboration with the General Secretariat of Information Systems created myDYPAlive appointment platform, so the unemployed and businesses can be served digitally via video conference (video call), avoiding attendance at local service points. Through myDYPAlive it is possible to schedule a "digital appointment" on a specific day and time and for specific services provided by specialized DYPA staff. DYPA is also focused on matching labour supply and demand services, in consultation with employers and reaching out activities and partnerships to constantly develop the network of businesses and large companies offering job vacancies. In addition, the unemployed can submit an online appointment request to visit the local offices of Public Employment Service (DYPA), namely a Centre for promotion to employment KPA2 or a Office of Special Social Groups (EKO), so as to receive services that are not provided online.
- Vocational Education Liaison Offices within the labour market operate in 30 Vocational Apprenticeships Schools (EPAS) of the Public Employment Service DYPA (former OAED) and are addressed to NEETs, students of EPAS Apprenticeships, EPAS graduates, high school students, businesses, representatives of employers, chambers, etc. Their aim is to find internship positions for the EPAS students, as well as to strengthen the EPAS extroversions. Liaison Offices organize annual joint events at local level, such as skills competitions, career days, etc., involving employers, chambers, businesses, etc.
- Counseling Offices at Second Chance Schools (SDE) are addressed to SDE adult students aged over 18, who have not completed compulsory secondary education. Counseling is provided by a Career Counselor and a Psychologist in each school, putting emphasis on the development of personal skills and the overall support of the students for their individual, professional and social development and the facilitation of their access to the labour market.
- Career Development Offices (GEAs) are established by the Law 4763/2020 in public Vocational Training Institutes (I.E.K.) operating under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, so as to provide information, advisory support, organization of apprenticeships and internships and action to promote the inclusion of IEK trainees and graduates in the labour market.
- Lifelong Learning Centers provide career guidance services to adults, in individual and/or group sessions, with the aim of formulating an individual plan to upgrade skills and be integrated into the labour market.
- several free of charge services are administered by social partners and trade unions, such as the Information and Counseling Support Network for employees and unemployed of the Labour Institute (INE) and the Information Center for the Employed and Unemployed (KEPEA) operated by the Greek Workers' Confederation (GSEE).

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## Quality assurance

In Greece, the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, has carried out relevant studies in order to establish a National Quality Assurance System for career guidance services, on the basis of continuous monitoring and evaluation of their operation and performance. In 2011, quality criteria relating to career guidance provision were also introduced in the [National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning \(P3\)](#) developed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs; however the framework was never implemented (2017). Activities towards the establishment of a national Quality Assurance System of Guidance Services include:

- a [mapping study of international systems on quality assurance and management in the field of career guidance provision](#) and a proposal for a National Quality Assurance Model of Guidance Services in Greece (EKEP, 2007). The proposed quality assurance model consists of 33 quality criteria divided into six groups: a) leadership; b) organizing-planning; c) guidance practitioners-human resources; d) client-citizen satisfaction; e) delivery of services; and f) premises and equipment. Every criterion of the system is followed by specific indicators and evidence data;
- a [preparatory research on the quality criteria used in career guidance settings operating in the field of education and initial vocational training in Greece](#) (EOPPEP, 2012);
- development of the [Greek Code of Ethics for guidance provision](#) (EOPPEP, 2013);
- development of the [career guidance practitioner occupational profile](#) as a preparatory action towards the institutional framework for the certification of qualifications of the guidance practitioners.

The above-mentioned quality assurance model as well as the Greek [Code of Ethics](#) were never legally institutionalised, but they have been tested and piloted in different career guidance settings and are now followed by the guidance providers in every day professional practice.

In the field of education, recent reformation by law 4823/2021 (article 6 and 8) introduced one (1) position of Regional Education Quality Supervisor in each Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education. Regional Education Quality Supervisors are assigned the task of pedagogical supervision, coordination, training and empowerment of teachers and other educational staff, and especially monitor the work of the Education Quality Supervisors, which are assigned in each Directorate of Primary Education (one (1) position) and in each Directorate of Secondary Education (one (1) position). Among other issues, the Education Quality Supervisors are responsible for the pedagogical supervision and coordination of the work of the teachers that are in charge of School Vocational Guidance. The Education Quality Supervisors prepare quarterly and annual reports, conducting evaluation of the outcomes and quality of the educational work in their area of responsibility.

In the context of the Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A. (former OAED) Re-engineering, with the active participation of representatives of the European Commission, but also of the Public Employment Services of the United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany and France, the organization proceeded with structural changes, so as to increase internal management and organisational efficiency and to better respond to the needs of the unemployed and businesses. In this respect, KPA2 have been reorganised with the aim of improving the quality and efficiency of the services provided to job seekers and employers, and to increasing accessibility for all through the provision of digital services.

In addition, career guidance services provided by public structures; may fall under the "Management by Objectives" system (Law 3230/2004). This system establishes the measurement and evaluation of the effectiveness of services, based on predefined objectives, with the aim of strengthening transparency in the administration, serving the citizen, and increasing trust and the degree of satisfaction of clients' needs.

Finally, the framework of quality specifications for the design and implementation of Continuing Vocational Training (CVT) programs co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) sets necessary conditions regarding the implementation of counseling support sessions for the beneficiaries, with an emphasis on the provision of remote services (e-counseling) through an integrated information system.

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## Career management skills

The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, has focused on the issue of "career management skills" in Greece by implementing several activities to:

- the end users by providing them with innovative guidance tools and services in order to help them acquire career management skills;
- guidance practitioners at national level in order to develop the relevant knowledge, competencies and skills required to serve the needs of different target groups in acquiring career management skills.

Interactive internet guidance portals developed by EOPPEP since 2012 have been promoting the development of career management skills of adolescents, students, young people and adults in Greece. The [TEENS GATE](#) for adolescents, students and young people, includes self-assessment digitised career tests, an e-portfolio tool, career videos, a self-help tool enabling education and employment transitions, thematic information catalogues and useful links. [Real Game](#) is also included in the portal, providing support for the development of career management and life skills to students aged 12 to 15 and 15 to 18. The lifelong career development portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), targeted to adults of all ages, includes digitised career tests, e-lifelong career portfolio development tool (also available in English language) and career and mobility resources. A special part of the portal deals with career management skills (see section ICT in lifelong guidance).

As of 2021, EOPPEP's portals have been unified into the National Lifelong Career Guidance Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), targeting students, youngsters and adults but also serving as a useful tool for guidance practitioners. The portal is systematically updated to provide comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and questionnaires and information on existing guidance services for diverse end users. Also, the national and European activities of EOPPEP as the National Euroguidance Centre are being disseminated through the portal to guidance practitioners all over Greece.

In 2013, EOPPEP in collaboration with the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Center of Research in Career Guidance) organised several trainings for Guidance Practitioners on the issue of career management skills. The relevant training material has been based on the ELGPN definition for career management skills, with a wider perspective derived from recent career theories. Skills analysed highlight the meta-competencies, which are considered to facilitate career management within the framework of the current circumstances of change and uncertainty, connected to the concepts of "protean", "circular", "transitional", "boundaryless" and "portfolio" career (Sultana 2011), such as:

- readiness to happenstance: allows people to identify, create and capitalise on fortuitous situations, be they positive or negative;
- creating alternative career perspectives: helps people invent practical ideas about how they can promote themselves and how they can discover new career opportunities;
- career adaptability: enables people to cope and “negotiate” successfully with changes and transitions within the world of work (Porfeli and Savickas, 2012; Savickas, 2013);
- social awareness: helps people develop an empathic understanding as well as more effectively act as a part of the society;
- career resilience: refers to the inner ability of people to cope with adversities and changes which take place in career exactly at the moment they occur;
- self-efficacy in career planning: pertains to self-efficacy beliefs in performing the actions and activities required to effectively cope with career issues (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, Mylonas, & Argyropoulou, 2012);
- positive orientation to the future: to know ourselves better through various phases of our life and have positive images, thoughts and emotions about them in the future;
- job search skills, social networking skills, mobility skills, and leisure time management skills (E.O.Π.Ε.Π., 2013).

In 2021, EOPPEP has published the [National Life/Career Competences Framework](#), which was developed in cooperation with the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The framework identifies the following five key life and career competences: a. emotional intelligence, b. ability to learn - metacognitive ability, c. communication skills (interpersonal communication and professional relations), d. ability to search and analyze training and / or work opportunities, e. ability to plan careers and make decisions. These five competencies of the Framework are divided into three thematic areas, developed through 39 descriptive indicators leading to 156 learning results. Self-assessment tools are also proposed aiming at the individual self reflection and learning as well as the promotion of personal and / or professional development.

In the field of secondary education in Greece, the development of relevant skills (without introducing the term CMS) has been enhanced for more than 30 years through the teaching of the course of School Vocational Guidance (SEP) in Gymnasium (third year - Class C) and Lyceum (first year - Class A). At the same time considerable efforts have been made to embed the objectives of vocational guidance and acquisition of relevant skills in the curriculum of various courses. In addition, various Career Education Programs have contributed to career management skills' development, which have operated for more than 10 years in the field of secondary education (Vlachaki, 2016). In these programs, interested teachers and groups of students may collaborate with each other, under the instruction of teachers specialised in CGC, appointed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs at the Directorates of Secondary Education operating under the respective Regional Directorates of Education, so as to support school units in career guidance issues, as well as those appointed in the Offices of Counselling and Guidance (GRASYPs).

With the support of their teachers, general education students may address issues related to career guidance, professions and career planning in the framework of school career education programmes, which are not an obligatory part of the school programme but can be arranged by teachers. During these programmes, lasting approximately three to four months, schools are able to organise visits, career days and exhibitions, information sessions, interviews with professionals and short scope research projects, in collaboration with local authorities and enterprises, GRASYPs, employment services, and other stakeholders. Students are encouraged to take a leading role in the process, so that they can actively get involved in obtaining up-to-date information on career matters and in developing social and career management skills. Completed career guidance programmes are presented as part of the general activities of the school, during dedicated school-organised events or through school's website. They can also be included in the activities of “Career Days”, that schools may organise from onw to three days during the school year.

Since 2010, the traditional approach of career and vocational guidance, through teaching an embedded course, has gradually been abandoned and new innovative methods have been initiated; for instance research work (project), school's career and social creative activities and modern online career development tools ([EOPPEP's online portal](#)). As far as the research work is concerned, teachers receive guidelines on introducing projects related to career issues, though there are no official regulations.

According to the directive no. 94236/GD4/04-08-2021 Career Guidance is included as an "umbrella" thematic module" in the curriculum framework of “Skills Labs”, which were introduced by Law 4692/2020 as amended by Law 4807/2021. In this context, the Institute of Educational Policy proposed teaching instructions regarding the implementation of the School Career Guidance (S.E.P.) in the 3rd grade of High School and its connection with the Skills Labs. The instructions include indicative guidelines, methodologies and experiential activities to enable exploratory-discovery learning on the ground of four fundamental axes of S.E.P.: 1. The world of work in the 21st century, 2. Understanding of own self, 3. Exploring, understanding, and learning about studies and professions 4. Envisioning the future (choose plan, participate, act, create, and innovate).

In the field of employment and specifically of the active employment policies, the Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A (former OAED) implements counselling actions supporting the unemployed to enter or re-enter the labour market. These services, organised systematically in several Greek cities, include group counselling workshops focusing on counselling and career guidance, career management, job searching techniques and entrepreneurial counselling.

Several other initiatives also promote skills development. [Junior Achievement Greece](#) (SEN/JA Greece) is a non-profit organisation established in November 2005 and constitutes a member of the education and entrepreneurship Junior Achievement Worldwide Organisation. SEN/JA Greece implements educational programs in Greece, with the aim to help young people in acquiring entrepreneurial and career-related skills, as well as in creating their own jobs through their global experiential and collaborative approach which is mainly based on learning by doing. All programs are approved by the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and implemented within or outside the curriculum (on a voluntary basis). The main contributors of each program include the teacher who chooses to support the program and the volunteer/consultant, a business executive, who volunteers to implement the program. The counsellor/volunteer visits the classroom and in collaboration with the teacher, directs the discussions, shares his or her knowledge and experiences with the students and acts as a channel of communication between the school environment and the labour market. The teacher, in cooperation with the counsellor/volunteer, adapts the program to the needs of the students, organizes the activities that take place at each class meeting and ensures the smooth running of the program. Through the SEN/JA educational programs, implemented in primary, secondary and tertiary education, students:

- cultivate their creativity and develop critical thinking;
- familiarize themselves with the concept of entrepreneurship, the importance of economy, the role of business in the global economy, the value of competitiveness and innovation;
- are trained in basic economic concepts;
- develop important professional and social skills such as teamwork, negotiation, problem solving, presentation skills, etc;
- are “connected” with the working environment, understanding the efficient organisation of the production process, working conditions, opportunities for future work;
- learn through role playing and simulation games, as well as educational visits to enterprises.

The new “Strategy for the Workforce Skills Upgrading and the Interconnection with the Labour Market”, established in June 2022 by the Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs and D.Y.P.A. according to the provisions of Law 4921/2022 (par. 1, Article 26), focuses on the development of necessary knowledge, competences and skills as the main cornerstones for an appropriately qualified workforce, the effective matching of skills supply with the labour market needs, the timely skills forecasting and the investment in future oriented professions and competences. The development of fundamental transversal skills, such as interpersonal and communication skills, social and emotional skills, digital literacy, team working, problem solving, responsibility/autonomy, creative thinking, flexibility, initiative and entrepreneurship, languages literacy are considered as a one of the main strategic domains, contributing to the enhancement of citizens' adaptability and resilience to changing labour market demands.

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## Evidence, monitoring and assessment

In general, limited data are available concerning the assessment of the effectiveness of career guidance provided by the career guidance services in Greece. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has been monitoring the implementation of services offered in secondary education, mostly based on client satisfaction and quantitative indicators. The Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A. (former OAED) is responsible for monitoring the relevant services offered by employment counsellors at centres for promotion to employment (KPA2). National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) has established mechanisms for the monitoring of career guidance services, provided mainly in the private sector, as well as for the monitoring and improvement of EOPPEP online guidance portals.

The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) has been monitoring the provision of career guidance services operating in the private sector (specifically Lifelong Learning Centers (Kentra dia Viou Mathisis), Private Job Finding Bureaus (Grafieia Evreseos Ergasias) and the Temporary Employment Enterprises (Epixirisis Prosorinis Apasxolisis) through its Catalogue of Private Career Guidance Services. The monitoring refers to the collection of qualitative data when these services are applying for entering the catalogue, such as: career guidance services they provide, target groups, career guidance methods and tools they use, professionalization of career guidance counselors employed in each service etc. EOPPEP provides counselling support to these services in case specific improvements in the quality of services is needed, although this is not a formal QA evaluation. However registering in the Catalogue of EOPPEP is a prerequisite for applying as a career guidance provider for voucher programmes for supporting the unemployed under co-funding programmes of the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. (e.g. "Human Resource Development, Education and Lifelong Learning").

EOPPEP also monitors the use of Euroguidance and Europass Tools in Greece through several surveys conducted at network level for each programming period. (each country is responsible for providing qualitative and quantitative data at national level). Surveys are conducted to both career guidance stakeholders and the end - users and the findings are used to improve planning and provision of the work of the networks at national and European levels) e.g. relevance and impact of EOPPEP's (National EuroguidanceCenter) actions regarding the work of career guidance services in Greece. EOPPEP also monitors the number, learning outcomes, sending and host institutions etc of mobility experiences that take place from Greece to another EU country for educational and employment reasons. The monitoring takes place through the Europass Mobility Application of EOPPEP that is used by EOPPEP for publishing Europass Mobility Documents (EMD). According to EOPPEP, the monitoring has shown that education providers hold Europass Mobility Documents in high esteem, which they report has resulted in an increase of the number of documents published.

EOPPEP through its responsibility for the certification of the competence of career guidance counselors and the quality assurance of career guidance providers is monitoring the number of candidates and career guidance qualifications of candidates applying to the National Register of Career Guidance Counselors maintained by EOPPEP according to DS/64529/2017 decision (Government Gazette B '317) of 286/24-11-2017 meeting of the Board of Directors of EOPPEP.

As of 2021, EOPPEP's portal TEENS GATE was merged with the National Lifelong Career Guidance Portal e-STADIODROMIA, targeting students, youngsters and adults but also serving as a useful tool for guidance practitioners. The TEENS GATE external evaluation delegated by EOPPEP in 2016 to an independent organisation has highlighted the effectiveness of the tool, as well as identified areas for improvement. To this end, the evaluation comprised of a questionnaire-based survey which targeted users and practitioners, as well as a more in-depth focus group in which only practitioners participated. In result, practitioners of EOPPEP were able to gather comprehensive and unbiased evidence to properly demonstrate the results of the TEENS GATE to all stakeholders. Mechanisms were also established for collecting continuous feedback for the improvement of the practices; interested stakeholders may communicate with EOPPEP practitioners who are tasked with the implementation of the practice through the dedicated contact point available at the TEENS GATE (via e-mail or telephone). Practitioners also collect feedback from stakeholders during activities such as seminars, school visits, etc. organised across the country. The main conclusions of the TEENS GATE portal external evaluation in 2016 indicate that:

- career tests are the most preferred (53%) features amongst the users of the TEENS GATE, followed by the thematic information catalogues (29%) and the "Ask the counsellor" section of the web portal;
- users think that the portal can help them identify new interests and talents and better understand different issues that influence the choice of a future education and career;
- practitioners think the portal is a valuable tool in support of adolescents and youngsters but also for practitioners in the framework of their personalised guidance practices.

An important step towards the evidence-based monitoring and assessment of the effectiveness of career guidance in Greece, has been the survey carried out by EOPPEP from June to October 2011 assigned by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The survey was based on a quality manual to investigate the compliance of career guidance services in education to certain quality criteria, benchmarks and quality indicators about provision of services, human resources as well organisation, management, adequate infrastructure and equipment, and client satisfaction, according to the National Quality Assurance Model of Guidance Services in Greece (EKEP, 2007, EOPPEP, 2012) (see section Quality assurance). The process included 50 field visits-interviews with guidance practitioners of selected career guidance services in secondary and tertiary education (the then KESYPs, Universities career offices, Counselling Offices of Second Chance Schools etc). Also, an expert panel was organised with the participation of specialists, scientists and experts in the field of career guidance as well as representatives of institutional bodies providing career guidance services. Important conclusions of the EOPPEP's survey highlighted a satisfactory level of quality regarding career guidance methodology, information material, guidance tools, while there is a significant need for wider promotion of career guidance services provided and a more systematised referral system. The majority of guidance staff (58%) have the required competence (knowledge, professional experience, skills) for the provision of services, but the enhancement of the complementary skills of guidance practitioners and guidance managers is required, as well as continuous support for their professional development. Administrative deficiencies were observed in all types of services, in relation to network development cooperation, effective information management, programming of actions and evaluating their performance. Regarding infrastructure and equipment, it was acknowledged that there is a clear need for upgrading the existing infrastructure in all career guidance services to increase users' access to them. As far as the satisfaction of users' criterion, it was reported that the services do not follow an official or standardised system to explore the needs of their users and that client satisfaction is not being explored sufficiently (EOPPEP, 2012).

According to the 2016-2017 data of the then Career Guidance Department of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs:

- 2.029 career education programs were implemented in 835 schools, in which 17.121 secondary education students participated;
- students on Grade C - 3rd year of Lower secondary school and students on Grade C - 3rd year of Upper secondary school, were the most frequent

[Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Greece](#)

visitors/users of the then KESYPs that received guidance and counselling services.

The Centres of Educational and Counselling Support (KESYPs) established in 2018 and operated until 2021, incorporated all the responsibilities of former KESYPs; namely the process of implementing the targeted educational and psychosocial interventions, as well as the career guidance interventions, organise visits to school units, after relevant planning and consultation with the responsible communication teachers. It is foreseen that a record of meetings, namely the date, purpose, duration and content of the visits-interventions should be kept.

According to the new law 4823 (Government Gazette 136A' 3.8.2021, article 27, 28) teachers specialised in CGC have been appointed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs at the Directorates of Secondary Education, which operate under the respective Regional Directorates of Education, so as to support school units in career guidance issues. Offices of Counselling and Guidance (GRASYPs) staffed by teachers in CGC, are established per group of neighbouring schools with responsibility for providing School Counselling and Guidance services to the students of the respective schools. Similarly, secondary education teachers will act as Apprenticeship Liaison Officers in the special needs vocational lower - upper secondary education schools (ENEEGy-L) to facilitate students' labour market integration (article 94). Students with disabilities and learning difficulties receive personalised career guidance services and psychosocial assessment and support at the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASyS), established by law 4823/2021. Especially, it is foreseen that specialists in career guidance or mobility, orientation and daily living skills of the blind, or in the sign language of those with hearing impairment will be employed in KEDASyS (article 15). The teachers who serve in the Directorates of Primary or Secondary Education as Responsible School Vocational Guidance are evaluated by the Education Quality Supervisor, in terms of the quality of their supportive, organizational and pedagogical work and by the Head of the Department of Educational Affairs of the Directorate of Primary or Secondary Education in terms of their service consistency and adequacy.

Most of the independent, academic studies evaluating career guidance in Greek education show that pupils, their parents and SEP teachers consider that it is highly important and useful. Most of them, and especially those from lower socio-economic groups and remote geographical areas, have positive views about the way guidance is offered in schools, expressing favourable attitudes towards it (Demetropoulos, 1986; MNERA/PI, 1989; Teteri, 1992; Krivas et al, 2010; Balta, 2010, in Kassotakis, 2017). The available studies, however, do not allow any firm conclusion regarding the effectiveness of the Greek school guidance system from the perspective of its contribution to the economy. On the other hand, a survey based on a large sample of secondary school teachers has indicated that 55.9% of them believe that students who are intending to enter higher education are poorly - if at all - informed about the branch of study they select to follow. In addition, the study has also shown that many professors believe that the lack of adequate guidance in secondary schools is the reason why most higher education students do not choose an appropriate area of study (Kassotakis, 2015 in Kassotakis, 2017). Similarly, studies conducted among students of tertiary institutions indicate that they are not very satisfied with the help that they received in making the transition from education to work, claiming that the support they get in facing issues related to future educational or professional trajectories is at best limited (Kassotakis et al, 1995; Kassotakis, 2012 in Kassotakis, 2017).

Latest PISA results (2018) on career aspirations of Greek 15-year-old students have indicated that 16% experience increased uncertainty in career expectations (9% in 2010), 51% expect to work in 1 of the 10 most frequently reported occupations (49% in 2000), 45-46% of occupations they report most often are according to PISA analysis at high risk of automation, while they express very low interest in 'technical occupations' (1% girls - 8% boys) and 19% experience 'career confusion', having incompatible educational and professional expectations. These results are also linked to low rates of participation in career guidance services, as only 40% of students have spoken to a career counselor at school, 30% have participated in a career fair/fair, while 34% have not received vocational guidance at school (OECD, 2019, 2020).

Further, recent studies reveal that 68,5% of young university students in Greece (first 1 to 2 years) declare that career guidance at school has not been a factor influencing the choice of their studies in the university, 25,2% that they are uncertain of their career preferences (beyond first cycle university studies), 18,8 % that they remain uncertain about their interest in specific professions, 26,6% that they do not have sufficient information about their skills and personal characteristics (strengths, abilities). On the other hand, the more systematic information on career prospects (76,5%) and more systematic acquaintance with professions (82,9%) have been highlighted as possible influencing factors on future educational and career decisions (Kuriδης, 2022).

Several studies identified that the reported low efficiency of the Greek career counselling and guidance system may be attributed to many reasons, such as the disjointed policy implementation in various sectors of socio-economic life, the ineffective organisation of services, the inadequate training of staff (as attested by, among others, Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou & Pavlakos, 2007; Krivas & Mihalou, 2009 in Kassotakis, 2017), and the absence of a quality management system. Other problems include the difficulties repeatedly encountered, such as poor funding, understaffing, weak technological infrastructure, collection of information about education, training and employment, and keeping databases updated, and disseminating information. Continued lack of cooperation between the different guidance bodies risks worsening the situation. An additional factor reported is the strong bonds that Greek parents traditionally have with their children, where parents tend to play a lead role in the decision-making process, readily rejecting career advice given by other persons such as guidance experts, especially when that advice is not compatible with their own expectations concerning their children's futures (Kassimati, 1991; Flouris et al, 1990; Boutura, 2007; Kalouri et al, 2007 in Kassotakis 2017).

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## Career information, ICT in guidance

The use of career information in Greece is considered to be critical in the connection between education and employment. However, the level of effective use of systematically collected and reliable career information is quite low and the range of relevant available tools is limited. The information about careers and the labour market has no unified strategy documented, as various social actors cooperate to some extent, such as the Manpower Employment Organisation - OAED (in 2022 was renamed to Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A.), the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV), the various Chambers of Commerce, etc. analyse the current situation in various business sectors and carry out foresight activities (Kassotakis 2017).

SEV has conducted a labour market survey in 2013, on the needs of businesses in occupations and skills. The survey identified 90 crucial jobs by 2020 in the areas of energy, information communications and technology (ICT), food products, environment, supply chain, metal and health, providing career information on emerging jobs in the Greek labour market, relevant for guidance practitioners and end users.

A quite important initiative to provide a single source of information for careers and the labour market to be used for career guidance purposes is provided through the ICT interactive guidance portals (TEENS GATE and E-stadiodromia) developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, targeted to youngsters, adolescents and adults. EOPPEP collects and uploads the existing career information resources and data at national level and presents them on the thematic catalogues of both portals. EOPPEP's interactive portals also offer self-evaluation career tools that can be used free of charge by different target groups.

As of 2021, EOPPEP's portals have been unified into the National Lifelong Career Guidance Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), targeting students, youngsters and adults but also serving as a useful tool for guidance practitioners. The portal is systematically updated to provide comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised questionnaires regarding interests, values and decision-making, an e-portfolio development tool (also available in English), thematic information catalogues, useful links and information on existing guidance services for diverse end users. The portal includes the [Real Game](#) for adolescents aged 12-15 and 15-18, videos for various occupations (along with the basic skills needed). The national and European activities of EOPPEP as the National Euroguidance Centre are being disseminated through the portal to guidance practitioners all over Greece. EOPPEP's digital tools have been used as the official career guidance resources by the guidance services of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (e.g. KESYPs incorporated to KESYs in June 2018 followed by Offices of Counselling and Guidance (GRASYPs) according to law 4823/2021) as well as by teachers and trainers in all educational levels, in the process of familiarizing students with career issues, and by other career guidance providers in the field of Lifelong Learning.

EOPPEP's digital tools have been connected to the Greek PES services offered by the Public Employment Service DYP (former OAED), in order to be used by the registered unemployed and the students of DYP vocational apprenticeship schools. They have also been introduced as tools for counselling services offered within the ongoing vocational training voucher programs targeted to the unemployed of all ages, administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as to the portals hosted by the Ministry of Defence targeted to those serving in the Greek military forces.

EOPPEP has conducted several studies and produced informational material on the current labour market trends, such as the study "Upcoming Professional Fields in Greece and New Skills Required" and the study "Green Professions in Greece and New Skills Required". In the context of upgrading the skills of guidance practitioners in using ICT in career guidance, career guidance guides for education and employment (2007), as well as relevant training material and a short training course (2009) were implemented. Following the development of EOPPEP's ICT tools and online portals several seminars are regularly organised on this issue in order not only to equip career guidance practitioners with the necessary knowledge and skills, but also motivate them in order to use ICT tools in their everyday work.

Regarding educational information, the Greek National Database of educational opportunities "PLOGOS", developed in 2009, provides information to students, job seekers, parents, guidance counsellors, teachers etc. about learning opportunities of all types (General Education, Vocational Education and Training, Special Education, etc.) and the educational levels in all geographical regions of Greece. The database contains more than 13.000 educational opportunities which are regularly updated by EOPPEP with the support of educational providers. PLOGOS is connected to the European Portal for [Learning Opportunities and Qualifications](#) in Europe promoting educational mobility throughout Europe.

The national Labour Market Diagnosis Mechanism <https://lmd.eiead.gr> of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was established in 2016, with aim to enable a more systematic monitoring of the labour market. The processes included relevant surveys, collection and analysis of data concerning employment, unemployment and entrepreneurship, econometric employment forecasting, so as to provide timely and valid information to stakeholders and interested citizens on the key features and developments in the Greek labour market, the dynamism of professions and the economic activity, as well as on the qualifications and skills needs. In 2022, the new "Strategy for the Workforce Skills Upgrading and the Interconnection with the Labour Market", established by the Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs and DYP according to the provisions of Law 4921/2022 (par. 1, Article 26, Article 29), focuses on the development of necessary knowledge, competences and skills as the main cornerstones for appropriately qualified workforce, the effective matching of skills supply with the labour market needs, the timely skills forecasting and the investment in future oriented professions and competences. The Skills and Labour Market Needs Forecasting Mechanism plays a central role in the Workforce Skills Strategy for the effective monitoring of labour market supply and demand, the identification of future professional trends and required skills, so as to enable the design of targeted policies for the effective adaptation and evaluation of continuing vocational training programs to ongoing labour market demands and the increase of access of all citizens to vocational training and retraining programs that can support their employability. The Skills and Labour Market Needs Forecasting Mechanism is supported by an Experts Unit of Employment, Social Security, Welfare and Social Affairs, which reports directly to the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, assigned with the task of skills and labour market needs diagnosis, taking into account the data provided by the social partners and by chambers, institutions, international organizations and services, and other public and private sector bodies.

Recently, Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A. (former OAED) counselling services is recently enhanced through advanced digitisation, enabling the preparation of the Digital Individual Action Plan, which can only be developed and reviewed digitally. DYP in collaboration with the General Secretariat of Information Systems created [myDYPAlive appointment platform](#), so the unemployed and businesses can be served digitally via video conference (video call), avoiding attendance at local service points. Through myDYPAlive it is possible to schedule a "digital appointment" on a specific day and time and for specific services provided by specialized DYP staff. DYP is also focused to matching labour supply and demand services, in consultation with employers and reaching out activities and partnerships to constantly develop the network of businesses and large companies offering job vacancies. In addition, the unemployed can submit an [online appointment request](#) to visit the local offices of Public Employment Service (DYP), namely a Centre for promotion to employment KPA2 or a Office of Special Social Groups (EKO), so as to receive services that are not provided online. (Also see Career guidance for persons with disability)

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## Training and qualifications

Since the 1950s, career guidance practitioners have been a highly heterogeneous group in terms of their formal qualifications, knowledge, skills, and competences. While the licensing of the career-related entities has been governed by specific legal provisions, there is no specific work permit for CGC professionals. Consequently, many people with different educational or academic backgrounds and professional capacities have been involved in CGC provision. Most are university graduates from different disciplines (psychologists, sociologists, educators, business consultants, economists, researchers) or have attended relevant in-service training, while only a relatively small percentage has completed university level education in CGC (Cedefop, 2021).

In the fields of education and employment, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A. (former OAED), often in cooperation with EOPPEP or Universities, have been providing in-service training in the field of career guidance, targeted to career guidance practitioners in secondary education and other designated employees (e.g. employment counsellors working at the Greek PES KPA2 services, managers of EPAS Career Liaison Offices, counsellors of University Career Liaison Offices).

Guidance practitioners working at the guidance services of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs are secondary education teachers of different specialisations, who may have received in-service training in career guidance and counselling. However, many of them also possess postgraduate

diplomas or a Masters in career guidance and counselling.

Formal provisions for a mandatory CGC qualification EQF 7,8 for practitioners employed in public vocational training and (adult) lifelong learning structures have been established by the new Law 4763/2020 (Government Gazette 254 A '). According to Law 4547/2018 (Government Gazette 102 A '), secondary education teachers specialised in CGC were appointed in the centres of educational and counselling support (KESYs), providing career guidance and counselling services until August 2021. A new law 4823 (Government Gazette 136A' 3.8.2021) reshaped KESYs to Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASYs), which provide psychosocial assessment and career guidance services only to students with disabilities and learning difficulties (article 15). It is foreseen that specialists in career guidance or mobility, orientation and daily living skills of the blind, or in the sign language of students with hearing impairments will be employed in KEDASYs (article 15). Similarly, secondary education teachers will act as Apprenticeship Liaison Officers in the special needs vocational lower - upper secondary education schools (ENEEGy-L) to facilitate students' labour market integration (article 94). Law 4823 foresees that secondary education teachers specialised in CGC are appointed at the Directorates of Secondary Education, which operate under the respective Regional Directorates of Education, so as to support school units in career guidance issues, as well as in Offices of Counselling and Guidance (GRASYPs) per group of neighbouring schools (Articles 27, 48).

In addition, since 2017, relevant qualification requirements have been included in the Greek PES D.YP.A (former OAED) call for recruitment (Government Gazette A.S.E.P. 34/15K 2017), as well as in various ESF funded vocational training voucher programmes, implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Employment counsellors working at the Centres for Promotion to Employment (KPA2) are public servants - permanent employees of the DYPA (former OAED), who regularly receive in-service training in career guidance and counselling. Many of them possess postgraduate diplomas or Master's level of education in career guidance and counselling as well as related professional experience. In early 2019, in the framework of the Greek PES reengineering, 335 new employment counsellors were recruited, with the aim to strengthen the consultation process of the personalised approach with individual interviews and labour market connection activities. The recruitment occurred in light of the new procedures regarding the profiling of unemployed and the activities to approach new employers.

EOPPEP, being responsible for the education and training of the career guidance practitioners, has been organizing several trainings on an annual basis, in cooperation or complementarily to the training initiatives of both ministries. For instance, EOPPEP, within its Euroguidance activities, aims to promote the European dimension in counselling and guidance and upgrade career guidance professionals' knowledge and skills on issues related to mobility for learning purposes in the EU and the latest career guidance developments.

Also, EOPPEP staff working for the Division for Career Guidance and Counselling, are required to possess at least a Master's degree in the field of guidance and counselling.

Since the early 1990s, several CGC university-level courses and programmes (mainly master level) have been offered, ranging from two to four semesters (60-120 ECTS/ EQF 7, 8). There is no undergraduate / bachelor degree for CGC available at Universities in Greece. A few undergraduate courses/programmes (EQF 6) include CGC lessons and specialisations in their curricula, mainly in programs of education/social/humanistic studies. A good example is the University of Macedonia, School of Humanities and Art, Department of Educational and Social Policy. At the Department of undergraduate students study the majors of either (i) Adult or (ii) Special Education. During their studies they are offered four courses in CGC which are combined to a few other counseling courses, offering the students a sufficient basic background in CGC (Cedefop, 2021).

Several postgraduate courses are offered by tertiary education institutes in the field of career guidance and other related topics, as following:

- MSc Career Counselling and Guidance (duration: four semesters, plus 400 hours internship, provider: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, School of Philosophy, operated for more than 20 years until 2018);
- MSc Counselling, Career Guidance and Lifelong Learning, operated since 2020-2021 academic year (duration: four semesters, plus internship, provider: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Secondary Education)
- MSc Educational Sciences - specialisation "Counselling and Career Development" (duration: four semesters, provider: University of Patras, Department of Primary Education);
- MSc "Counselling and Vocational Guidance" (duration: three semesters, provider: ASPETE - Higher School of Pedagogical & Technological Education, Department of Education);
- Specialisation Program "Counselling & Guidance (PESYP)" (duration: two semesters, provider: ASPETE - Higher School of Pedagogical & Technological Education, Department of Education).

Tertiary education graduates in various fields such as humanities, educational sciences, social sciences, economics etc., are admitted to the above postgraduate programs. Most of the master's degree holders cover mainly the needs of the private sector for skilled career guidance staff (EOPPEP, 2015).

Moreover, universities, research organisations, social partners and other providers organize short training courses in several career guidance emerging subjects targeted to guidance practitioners, adult trainers and other relevant professionals.

EOPPEP's institutional responsibilities include, inter alia, the establishment of the conditions and rules for the operation of counselling and career guidance bodies and for the certification of guidance practitioners' qualifications, as well as the establishment of relevant registries. In this context, the following actions have been taken:

- elaboration of a study mapping the competences of the career guidance practitioners in Greece;
  - development of the career guidance counsellor occupational profile, mapping the tasks and responsibilities of guidance practitioners in different career services, the necessary knowledge, competences and skills, as well as the relevant educational paths. This applies to all practitioners/professionals working in their particular setting. The profile defines two distinct levels of professional hierarchy and areas of competence for career guidance professional practice (see also Table 1), as following:
1. level B career guidance counsellor (basic level) performs all the basic professional functions and tasks related to primary service provision in education, training or employment, in order to meet the needs of different target groups (e.g. students, young people, adults, the unemployed, vulnerable social groups, etc.);
  2. level A career guidance counsellor (expert level) performs both professional functions and tasks related to the primary provision of career guidance services to different target groups, as well as professional functions with increased responsibility requirements and higher scientific expertise, such as planning, conducting and evaluating career guidance training programs, supervising, designing and development of career guidance assessment tools, scientific research etc. (EOPPEP, 2015).

The profile also includes a model modular CVET programme in CGC, which defines the essential knowledge, competencies and skills need to be acquired on level B (basic level), according to the requirements of the career guidance counsellor occupational profile. The training program serves as a basis for the development and evaluation of relevant trainings leading to basic level certification (B). will be a prerequisite for those who wish to be certified as level B career guidance counsellors and can be implemented by public or private bodies.

Table 1. Main professional functions of career guidance counsellor according to level of hierarchy

Level of practice	Areas of practice	Main professional functions (Mpf)	EQF level	Education paths/Accreditation requirements
LEVEL B (BASIC) MPF 1,2,3	Performs all the basic professional functions and tasks related to primary service provision in education, training or employment, in order to meet the needs of different target groups (students, young people, adults, the unemployed, vulnerable social groups)	MPF 1 (Level B+A): Plans, organises and prepares the framework for the provision of CGC services	EQF 6	University degree in any subject + CVET in CGC of at least 250 hours + 2 years of professional experience or 200 hours of internship in CGC public or private
		MPF 2 (Level B+A): Provides CGC services		

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	(MPF 1,2,3);			services + Written examinations including evaluation of a model counselling session
LEVEL A (EXPERT)	Performs both professional functions and tasks of level B, as well as advanced professional functions with increased responsibility requirements and higher scientific expertise, such as planning, conducting and evaluating career guidance training programmes, supervising, designing and development of career guidance assessment tools, scientific research etc. (MPF 1,2,3,4,5,6)	MPF 3 (Level B+A): Evaluates redesigns and expands access to CGC services and his/her professional practice.		
MPF 1,2,3,4,5,6		MPF 4 (Level A): Supervises and ensures the quality of CGC services	EQF 6,7,8	University, master or doctoral degrees in CGC No examination procedure is required for certification
		MPF 5 (Level A): Conducts research and provides training on CGC		

Source: Cedefop, 2021

The Register of Career Guidance Counsellors Level A1 was already established in 2019, following an open call targeted to university degree holders in CGC (EQF 6,7,8) (According to the provisions of Article 21 of Law 4115/2013 and the Ministerial Decision D5/64529/27-1-2017, Government Gazette B' 317/6.2.2018.). The ministerial decision defines the conditions and examination process for the accreditation of Level B' practitioners, and their subsequent enrolment in the Level B' Register of certified career guidance counsellors. EOPPEP has been assigned the responsibility to validate the CVET programmes provided by the lifelong learning centres (adult continuing and vocational education), including those in the field of CGC, regarding their content, training curriculum and material, and expected learning outcomes (According to Article 57 of Law 4763/21.12.2020 (Government Gazette 254 A') National system of vocational education, training and lifelong learning).

According to Article 155 of Law 4763/21-12-2020 (Government Gazette 254 A') National system of vocational education, training and lifelong learning. the development of a system for the certification of the Career guidance counsellor qualifications, their classification into levels A' and B', and their enrolment in the relevant registers that will be maintained by EOPPEP has been foreseen. Subsequently, the Joint Ministerial Decision of the Ministers of Finance - Education and Religious Affairs published in 2022 (No. 13173/K6/7.2.2022 Government Gazette 617/B/14.2.2022) established the System for the Certification of Qualifications of Career Guidance Counsellors, defining the terms, required qualifications, conditions and all the necessary supporting documents for the participation of all interested practitioners in the candidate examinations and certification processes. According to the relevant provisions, the Examinations and Evaluation Committee has been set up by EOPPEP in 2022, so as to proceed with the preparation activities required.

In 2021, the Labour Institute (INE) of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) has developed a CVET curriculum and adequate training material, as part of an ESF part-financed project, also involving the creation of an examination thesaurus to facilitate self-assessment and official evaluation of the respective learning outcomes, as well as a training pilot for Level B' guidance practitioners (Cedefop, 2021).

The **Laboratory of Career Guidance and Counseling "Michael Kassotakis"** was founded in 2016 at the Department of Philosophy, Pedagogy and Psychology- Faculty of Psychology of the University of Athens, in order to serve academic, research, teaching and training needs in subjects within the scope of Vocational Guidance and Counseling. The Laboratory exploits the long-standing experience of the two scientific centres of the Department of Philosophy, Pedagogy and Psychology, namely the Center for School Vocational Guidance (SEP Centre) and the Center for Research and Evaluation in Professional Counseling (KEAES) which have been merged and transformed into the "Michalis Kassotakis" Career Guidance and Counseling Laboratory. The Laboratory performs research, teaching, educational and social work and has a recognised high level of experience and expertise in the implementation of education and training programs in the subject of Vocational Guidance and Counseling. Currently (2019), EOPPEP is preparing the institutional framework for the Certification of Qualifications of the Career Guidance Counsellors and the establishment of an official Registry of Certified Career Guidance Counsellors in Greece.

The **Laboratory of Counselling Science and Career Guidance** operates since 2020 (Government Gazette 4971 / τ.Β' / 31.12.2019) within the Department of Secondary Education of the School of Philosophy of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. It performs research, teaching, training and social work in the subjects of Counselling and Career Guidance, promoting the implementation of education and training programs for specialists in career counselling and related professions and production of relevant educational, scientific and research material

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## Funding career guidance

Career guidance services in Greece are co-funded by European and national resources, mainly through the Operational Programmes of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. In the programming period 2021-2027 all new career guidance and counselling interventions in the field of education, training, employment, and social inclusion addressed to different target groups of all ages, are co-funded by the Operational Program "Human Resources & Social Cohesion 2021-2027", as well as in the Regional Programmes 2021-2027. Also, there are a number of actions including counselling services, which are foreseen within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0" (Pillar 3: Employment, skills and social cohesion).

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## Career guidance for school pupils

According to the new law 4823 (Government Gazette 136A' 3.8.2021, article 27, 28) **teachers specialised in CGC** in charge of School Career Guidance have been appointed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs at the Directorates of Secondary Education, which operate under the respective Regional Directorates of Education, so as to support school units in career guidance issues. Also, Offices of Counselling and Guidance (GRASYPs) staffed by teachers in CGC, are established per group of neighbouring schools with the responsibility of providing School Counselling and Guidance services to the students of the respective schools. Similarly, secondary education teachers will act as Apprenticeship Liaison Officers in the special needs vocational lower – upper secondary education schools (ENEeGy-L) to facilitate students' labour market integration (article 94). Students with disabilities and learning difficulties receive personalised career guidance services and psychosocial assessment and support at the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASyS), established by law 4823/2021. Especially, it is foreseen that specialists in career guidance or mobility, orientation and daily living skills of the blind, or in the sign language of the deaf will be employed in KEDASyS (article 15).

Career guidance services for secondary school students include:

- individual career counselling in order to help students to acquire an overall knowledge of their interests, skills and competences and other factors; that may affect their career decisions;
- career education programs and activities aiming to support students to take educational and professional decisions and plan their careers;
- career information events on educational opportunities, occupations and the labour market;
- individual support in completing the computerised application form for admission to higher education;
- transition activities between different levels of education;
- teachers' and parents' awareness for the necessity of timely and valid career information on educational and professional choices.

According to [law 4692/2020](#), two (2) school life counsellors – members of the school unit's teachers are appointed at the beginning of each school year in each secondary education school unit, by decision of the educational co-ordinator. Their responsibilities include constant communication with the students and the teachers of the school, as well as the parents and guardians. They intervene, guide and inform students, parents and guardians on student issues relating to crisis and behavioural management, learning difficulties, particular capabilities, gifts and talents, transition to other grades, school mobility, counselling and parent groups.

The School Vocational Orientation (S.E.P.) applies to the 3rd grade of High School from the school year 2021-2022.

According to the directive no. 94236/GD4/04-08-2021 Career Guidance is included as an "umbrella" thematic module" in the curriculum framework of "Skills Labs", which were introduced by Law 4692/2020 as amended by Law 4807/2021. In this context, the Institute of Educational Policy proposed teaching instructions regarding the implementation of the School Career Guidance (S.E.P.) in the 3rd grade of High School and its connection with the Skills Labs. The instructions include indicative guidelines, methodologies and experiential activities to enable exploratory-discovery learning on the ground of four fundamental axes of S.E.P.: 1. The world of work in the 21st century, 2. Understanding of own self, 3. Exploring, understanding, and learning about studies and professions 4. Envisioning the future (choose plan, participate, act, create, and innovate).

The National Lifelong Career Guidance Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, targeting also students and youngsters provides comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised questionnaires regarding interests, values and decision-making, an e-portfolio development tool (also available in English), thematic information catalogues, useful links, and information on existing guidance services for diverse end users. Furthermore, the portal includes the [Real Game](#) for adolescents aged 12-15 and 15-18, videos for various occupations (along with the basic skills needed).

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## Guidance for VET participants

Since 2016, VET's upgrade has been designed and implemented through the 'National Strategic Framework for Upgrading Vocational Education and Training and Apprenticeship' of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The new framework is based on the holistic view of the VET system, aiming to recognise and strengthen its social role, reduce social inequalities, as well as address the need for continuous harmonisation of VET with the Greek socioeconomic conditions and the need for quality educational and professional pathways to VET students. The ultimate goal is to make vocational upper secondary education an equal choice for lower vocational school graduates and to provide students with the knowledge and appropriate technical and professional skills that respond to their interests and inclinations, as well as the needs of the Greek labour market. Law 4763/2020 introduced a holistic reform of Vocational Education and Training and Lifelong learning

In particular, the new Vocational Lyceum (EPAL) (upper secondary) provides students with solid general knowledge as well as specialised technological and professional knowledge and skills in nine professional fields and 35 vocational specialties, avoiding early specialisation. Students are given the opportunity to choose the preferable vocational specialty, based on their interests and abilities. For this reason, a program of supporting actions is available for students, including counselling and support teaching (tailored to their learning needs), as well as support for EPALs' teachers, mainly through relevant training programs. Vocational Upper Secondary Schools (EPAL) also offer a post-secondary study cycle, the "Apprenticeship Class", in which attendance is optional. Eligible for enrolment are holders of EPAL school leaving certificate and secondary cycle study degrees. Apprenticeship Class enables students to follow a real work education program under the school's supervision, providing full working rights (75% of the minimum wage and insurance), in subjects corresponding to their specialisation, as well as a complementary practical school course of their specialisation.

In Vocational Education, the curriculum of Grade A (first year of day-vocational upper secondary school versus evening general and vocational schools) includes the subject "School Career Guidance - Security & Health in the workplace". The subject aims to supply students with the necessary information, knowledge and skills that will allow their integration in the dynamically changing labour market and active social life. Also, newly-arrived students are systematically supported by "Teachers - Advisors" introduced to EPAL School Units for School Year 2018-2019. Furthermore, a relevant Ministerial Decision in 2019 defined the role of Supervisor-Psychologist, providing counselling support and supervision of psychologists, serving in vocational upper secondary schools within the framework of the programme "A New Beginning for EPAL".

According to the new law 4823 (Government Gazette 136A' 3.8.2021, article 27, 28) teachers specialised in CGC have been appointed by the Ministry of

Education and Religious Affairs at the Directorates of Secondary Education, which operate under the respective Regional Directorates of Education, so as to support school units in career guidance issues. Also, Offices of Counselling and Guidance (GRASYPs) staffed by teachers in CGC, are established per group of neighbouring schools with the responsibility of providing School Counselling and Guidance services to the students of the respective schools. Similarly, secondary education teachers will act as Apprenticeship Liaison Officers in the special needs vocational lower – upper secondary education schools (ENEEGy-L) to facilitate students' labour market integration or progression to post-secondary options (article 94). Students with disabilities and learning difficulties receive personalised career guidance services and psychosocial assessment and support at the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASyS), established by law 4823/2021. Especially, it is foreseen that specialists in career guidance or 'mobility orientation' and daily living skills of the blind, or in the sign language of the deaf will be employed in KEDASyS (article 15).

**Vocational Education Liaison Offices** with the labour market operate in 30 Vocational Apprenticeships Schools (EPAS) of the Public Employment Service DYPA (former OAED) and are addressed to NEETs (young people outside of education, training and employment), students of EPAS Apprenticeships, EPAS graduates, high school students, businesses, representatives of employers, chambers, etc. Their aim is to find internship positions for the EPAS students, as well as to strengthen the EPAS extroversion. Liaison Offices organize annual joint events at local level, such as skills competitions, career days, etc., involving employers, chambers, businesses, etc.

**Career Development Offices (GEAs)** are established by the Law 4763/2020 in public Vocational Training Institutes (I.E.K.) operating under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, so as to provide information, advisory support, organization of apprenticeships and internships and action to promote the inclusion of IEK trainees and graduates in the labour market.

The National Lifelong Career Guidance Portal **e-STADIODROMIA**, developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, targeting also students and youngsters provides comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised questionnaires regarding interests, values and decision-making, an e-portfolio development tool (also available in English), thematic information catalogues, useful links, and information on existing guidance services for diverse end users. Furthermore, the portal includes the **Real Game** for adolescents aged 12-15 and 15-18, videos for various occupations (along with the basic skills needed).

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## Guidance for higher education students

From the early 1990s, career liaison offices (LOs), financed mainly by EU funds, began to operate in higher education institutions. Nowadays, tertiary education students and graduates in Greece may receive support in their transition towards the labour market through the Employment and Career Structures, consisting of career liaison offices, internship offices as well as innovation and entrepreneurship units which operate within several Universities and Technological Educational Institutions of the country. Employment support and information services provided to students and graduates through these structures encompass liaison with the labour market, opportunities to participate in career days and meet with potential employers, workshops for job searching techniques, information events and material on postgraduate studies and scholarships in Greece and abroad as well as mentoring, career coaching and individual or group counselling, aimed at enhancing their career management skills.

Several career offices have also developed career portals, ICT career tests, career tools and online counselling services targeted to tertiary education students and graduates. According to the legislative framework of Higher Education, students may carry out their internship or practical training in the public or private sector domestically or abroad, when this is included in their study program accordingly. The conditions and terms of practical training are regulated by the organisational charter of each Institution. Normally a tutor or mentor in the receiving organisation is assigned to each student; special care is also taken to facilitate students with disabilities in completing their practical training on equal terms with every other student.

**Students' counselling centres operate in all Higher Education Institutions**, aiming to provide free of charge student support services, psychological support and counselling to undergraduate and postgraduate students. The centres also support students with special educational needs, as well as raising awareness and sensitise the university community in mental health issues. The **students' psychological counselling workshop** of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the **counselling and psychological support centre** of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the **counselling centre** of the University of Crete constitute indicative examples of such efforts.

The Lifelong Career Development Portal **e-STADIODROMIA**, developed within the activities of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, provides comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised questionnaires regarding interests, values and decision-making, an e-portfolio development tool (also available in English), thematic information catalogues, useful links, and information on existing guidance services targeted to adults of all ages; therefore university students and graduates are also included (see section ICT in lifelong guidance).

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## Guidance for adult learners

Law 4763/2020 introduced a holistic reform of Vocational Education and Training and Lifelong Learning. Adult Education is offered either through the formal education system (Second Chance Schools – Sxoleia Deferis Efkaïrias) or in the form of non-formal education (Vocational Training Schools, Vocational Training Institutes - Institututa Epaggelmatikis Katartisis, Lifelong Learning Centres I and II Kentra Dia Viou Mathisis I and II, Colleges - Kollegia and Higher Education Institutes programmes).

Second Chance Schools (SDE) (first established by Law 2525/1997) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs are targeted to adult citizens over 18 years old, providing a "second chance" for those who have not completed the nine-year compulsory education and are out of the system of education and training. Second Chance Schools' graduates are granted a certification equivalent to the Lower Secondary Education Leaving Certificate (Gymnasium), corresponding to level ISCED 2, and are also given the opportunity to continue their studies in Upper Secondary Education Schools of all

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types. Second Chance Schools aim to offer adults opportunities to enter again the education and training system, form a positive attitude towards learning, acquire general knowledge and competencies, enhance their personal development and finally, facilitate labour market integration. Emphasis is placed upon the acquisition and development of basic skills, the use of new technologies, learning a foreign language, counselling and vocational guidance, in order to significantly improve access to the labour market. Moreover, the [Counseling Offices of the Second Chance Schools \(SDE\)](#) support students through targeted career guidance counselling services, which entail a psychologist and a career counsellor for each school, emphasising the development of personal skills with a view to supporting the inclusion of the students in society and the world of work. Second Chance Schools are co-funded by European and national resources, and administered by the [Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation \(INEDIVIM\)](#). INEDIVIM is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and implements LLL policies, mobility schemes and innovation and entrepreneurship programmes for young adults.

Vocational Training Institutes - Institutouta Epaggelmatikis Katartisis (IEKs) (public and private) provide initial vocational theoretical and laboratory training to adults, graduates of formal non-compulsory education (general and vocational upper secondary education schools), in several training fields. Attendance lasts five semesters including also an internship or apprenticeship semester in public or private work settings. Graduates of IEKs are awarded a Vocational Training Certificate, which entitles them to take part in Vocational Training Certification Examinations implemented by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) for the acquisition of a Vocational Training Diploma - NQF Level 5, as well as specific professional rights, according to the chosen specialisation. [Career Development Offices \(GEAs\)](#) are established by the Law 4763/2020 in public Vocational Training Institutes (I.E.K.) operating under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, so as to provide information, advisory support, organization of apprenticeships and internships and action to promote the inclusion of IEK trainees and graduates in the labour market. Career guidance and counselling services are provided to IEK students and graduates also by private IEKs, especially during the internship or apprenticeship, with the aim to facilitate their labour market integration and the development of career management skills. Career guidance activities may include career visits, short scope projects, career days, job searching techniques workshops, information events etc.

Lifelong Learning Centres - Kentra Dia Viou Mathisis (KDVMs) (Law 4111/2013, Law 4186/2013 Law 4763/2020), which are private entities granted an authorisation by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), provide services of non-formal education, general adult education and continuous vocational training, as well as professional guidance and counselling. Municipalities may also operate Lifelong Learning Centres (KDVMs) (Law 3879/2010, Law 4763/2020), implementing general adult education programs with learning activities taking place at national and local level. Training programs implemented by the Lifelong Learning Centres are addressed to all interested adults, unemployed and workers, regardless of gender, educational level, country of origin, religion, place of residence, as well as young people, students, etc. Lifelong Learning Centres provide career guidance services to adults, in individual and/or group sessions, with the aim of formulating an individual plan to upgrade skills and be integrated into the labour market. The operation and training programs of KDVMs are co-funded by European and national resources, through the Operational Programmes of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Colleges, providing post-secondary education and training services to adults exclusively based on validation agreements and franchising with foreign higher education institutions, can also offer career guidance and counselling services to their students. Also, face to face and distance lifelong learning programmes can be provided by the Higher Education Institutions according to Law 4009/2011 and Law 4485/2017, but these programs are focused mainly in updating and deepening the knowledge of higher education graduates in specific science disciplines as well as the training of the general adult population, with no specific career guidance services for the trainees. Also, private bodies offering counselling services and/or vocational orientation services, as well as bodies set up by the tertiary union trade organisations of employees and employers, such as the Institute for Small Businesses of the General Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (IME-GSEBEE) and the Centre for Education Policy Development of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (KANEP-GSEE) are included in the area of lifelong learning, providing informal education training and career guidance services targeted to adult learners.

Guidance services for adults can be also provided by the Private Employment Agencies and Temporary Employment Companies (Law 4111/2013 and Law 4052/2012).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs with the support of Public Employment Service D.YP.A (former OAED) and other direct stakeholders, implements [Vocational Training Voucher Programmes](#) co-funded by national resources and the European Social Fund. These continuous vocational training programs are targeted to unemployed individuals of various professional fields, with the aim to enhance and upgrade their occupational skills, as well as to promote their labour market re-integration and potentially lead to a placing in the private sector. The operational criteria and procedures as well as the duration, content and the geographical distribution across the country are defined for each programme. Registered unemployed individuals can be chosen as beneficiaries of a Vocational Training Voucher, enabling them to receive vocational training, career counselling and certification services from certified providers, according to their own choice. Vocational Training Voucher Programs usually include:

- theoretical training programs in several cutting edge occupational disciplines;
- internship in the private sector, aiming at job placement and active labour market re-integration of the trainees. The duration of the internship is limited (usually up to 5 or 6 months in total);
- career guidance and counselling services for the trainees before the training and during the internship, aiming to:
- the selection of the training program to be attended by the beneficiaries based on their educational and professional profile, skills and interests;
- the appropriate linking of beneficiaries' profile with available internship positions in the cooperating enterprises;
- the preparation of the unemployed for their transition to the work environment as well as their integration / reintegration into the labour market;
- the placement, monitoring and supervision of the trainee during the internship
- the provision of additional services for converting an internship into an employment contract and trainees' placement in the company where they have completed their internship.
- certification of the knowledge, competencies and skills acquired by the training program attended.

Law 4921/2022 establishes an Individual learning account ('Individual skills account') for adult learners who participate in subsidized continuing professional training, including career guidance or certification services, provided through training vouchers or in another way. It includes credits by any form of education and training received by the account holder, all the subsidized training he/she has engaged in regardless of whether the beneficiary successfully completed this training or not, the amounts of the subsidy corresponding to all the training participation, as well as to each individual subsidized vocational training in which the person has participated. The management of the individual skills account is implemented through a special platform (forthcoming) to which the trainees have accredited access, their employers in the case of in-company training and the employment advisers of the Public Employment Service D.YP.A for the purposes of matching the offer and labour market demand. The individual skills account also functions as a digital archive, used by the account holder as a means of proof of existing and new acquired skills, in the process of re-training or job-seeking.

The Lifelong Career Development Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), developed within the activities of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, provides comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised questionnaires regarding interests, values and decision-making, an e-portfolio development tool (also available in English), thematic information catalogues, useful links, and information on existing guidance services targeted to adults of all ages.

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## Guidance for the employed

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Several structures administered by social partners provide information and guidance for the employed.

The Labour Institute (INE) of the Greek Workers' General Confederation (GSEE) has developed a specialised [Information and Counseling Support Network](#) for employees and unemployed nationwide, co-funded by the European Social Fund and the Greek State. The Network provides free information and consultation services targeted to private sector employees in the fields of industrial relations, insurance law and employment policies. The supporting services for employees include personalised information on employment and insurance legislation (pension, compensation, 'harmful changes in employment' etc.), as well as group workshops for information and counselling on issues related to work stress, workplace conflicts, communication at the workplace, etc.

Furthermore, the [Information Center for the Employed and Unemployed](#) (KEPEA) operated by the Greek Workers' Confederation (GSEE) provides personalised information services to workers, Greek and economic migrants, for implementing the provisions of labour, insurance and immigration legislation. Interested users can register, upload their CV and get information on employment issues, while employers can search for staff via a modern online application. The KEPEA Counseling Office is addressed to workers, unemployed as well as economic migrants by providing personalised support and multi-faceted guidance towards their career development. KEPEA also operates several regional information offices in cooperation with the labour centres as well as prefectural and local authorities of the country.

Relevant services and information are also provided at the Employment Support Service of the Athens Chamber Of Commerce and Industry (<https://career.acci.gr/home>), the [Entrepreneurship Support Network for Small Businesses](#) of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (GSVEE).

Career counselling and guidance are also introduced in various training programs and supporting services targeted at young entrepreneurs and workers, which are designed and financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and co-financed by the European Social Fund and the [European Globalisation Adjustment Fund](#) (EGF). Several programs including career counselling and retraining are also targeted to redundant workers or employees at risk of redundancy or to the self-employed who have ceased their activity.

The Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A (former OAED), through the [Special Fund for the Employment and Vocational Training](#) (LAEK), formed by the social insurance contribution payed by all employers, supports the implementation of continuing training courses for employees working in private or public organisations and enterprises, with the aim to human resources career development and the skills upgrading of the work force.

The Lifelong Career Development Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), developed within the activities of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, provides comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised questionnaires regarding interests, values and decision-making, an e-portfolio development tool (also available in English), thematic information catalogues, useful links, and information on existing guidance services targeted to adults of all ages.

The Rebrain platform (<https://platform.rebraingreece.gr/en>) is established by the Directorate-General for Labour Relations, Health, Safety and Employment of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. It is a mechanism for the Liaison of Experts and Researchers (LEE) with Companies operating in Greece, aiming to attract employees, scientists and researchers of high know-how, professions and skills of the future. This is achieved digitally by the Rebrain platform, through the publication of the requested high specialization positions with ESCO coding by the companies in the Greek territory and the expression of interest for a specific position by the EU. The aim is to achieve the strengthening of the competitiveness and extroversion of the Greek labor market and address the consequences of brain drain.

The launching of four "day-centers for workers" operating in Athens and Thessaloniki aiming at psychosocial support of workers was initiated in 2023. It is an initiative aiming to mitigate the psychosocial effects of the pandemic and the economic crisis in Greece. The day-centers are staffed by psychologists, career counsellors, social workers, psychiatrists and lawyers offering a wide range of services addressed to people working in the public or private sector or in NGOs. These centers are funded by the National Recovery and Resilience program and will operate under the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Hellenic Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Professional Reintegration (PEPSAEE).

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## Guidance for unemployed adults

[Centres for promotion to employment \(KPA2\)](#), operate by the Public Employment Service (D.Y.P.A) of Greece (former Manpower Employment Organisation, OAED) (Law 4921/2022). KPA2 implement the process of the Personalized Approach (Law 4837/2021, article 63) targeted to registered unemployed, following thorough skills profiling and development of the Individual Action Plan, reflecting the professional goals of the job seeker, the existing knowledge, abilities and skills and those that must be acquired, formal qualifications. The [personalized approach](#) process focuses on the identification of adequate counselling, employment or training actions or programs available for the unemployed as well as to successful matching of the registered unemployed with the available job positions. The Individual Action Plan is co-decided by the D.Y.P.A employment advisor and the job seeker. KPA2 services include also individual career guidance, career information as well as targeted workshops for the unemployed, which focus on improving job-searching skills, career management skills and entrepreneurial skills. At the same time, D.Y.P.A. specialised counselling services are provided to socially vulnerable groups and students. Access to D.Y.P.A. counselling services is recently enhanced through advanced digitisation, enabling the preparation of the Digital Individual Action Plan, which can only be developed and reviewed digitally. D.Y.P.A in collaboration with the General Secretariat of Information Systems created [myD.YP.Alive appointment platform](#), so the unemployed and businesses can be served digitally via video conference (video call), avoiding attendance at local service points. Through myD.YP.Alive it is possible to schedule a "digital appointment" on a specific day and time and for specific services provided by specialized D.Y.P.A staff. D.Y.P.A is also focused to matching labour supply and demand services, in consultation with employers and reaching out activities and partnerships to constantly develop the network of businesses and large companies offering job vacancies. In addition, the unemployed can submit an [online appointment request](#) to visit the local offices of Public Employment Service (D.Y.P.A), namely a Centre for promotion to employment KPA2 or a Office of Special Social Groups (EKO), so as to receive services that are not provided online.

Finally, information and support on employment mobility is also provided by D.Y.P.A in the context of the EURES (further info can be found [here](#)).

The Lifelong Career Development Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), developed within the activities of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, provides comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised questionnaires regarding interests, values and decision-making, an e-portfolio development tool (also available in English), thematic information catalogues, useful links, and information on existing guidance services targeted to adults of all ages.

Career counselling and guidance are also an essential part in various [vocational training voucher programs](#) aiming to support the unemployed regarding labour market integration. Such programs are mainly administered and financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and co-financed by the European Social Fund and national resources. The Training Voucher refers to a system for the provision and management of education and vocational training services that enables prospective beneficiaries to receive training services from certified providers, that is Lifelong Learning Centres I and II - Kentra Dia Viou Mathisis (KDVMs) (see section Guidance for adult learners). The use of the above service model enables recipients to choose the service themselves as well as the training provider. Within this frame, specific interventions include short training programs, covering horizontal and specialised skills in combination with career guidance, and placement of trainees in private sector enterprises in order to acquire their first work experience for up to 6 months. Through PES, employers can be subsidised to hire the former voucher beneficiaries on a full-time basis for a

supplementary period of six months. Other temporary programmes focus on the promotion of youth innovative entrepreneurship, aiming at strengthening new innovative enterprises established by young entrepreneurs (previously unemployed). These active labour market policy programs, including mainly employment subsidy programs, vocational training programs for the unemployed and employees, reskilling programs, apprenticeship and internship programs, job retention programs, are co-financed by the European Social Fund, as well as the National Recovery and Resilience Plan “Greece 2.0” and delivered mainly by the Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A (former OAED); they involve financial assistance for the establishment of new enterprises by young entrepreneurs in almost all sectors of economic activity as well as mentoring of young individuals who have already established an enterprise after having received financial support from other actions. Services include participation in career workshops, training, guidance, entrepreneurial counselling and support services. The above programs are divided into closed framework programs (programs that have a definite duration and number of beneficiaries) and open framework programs (programs that are permanently available to businesses and the unemployed). They also target specific age and social groups in the labour market.

According to Law 4921/2022 “Jobs again”, an Individual Skills Account has been established, as a digital tool for unemployed and employed beneficiaries to enable mapping of their existing skills and competences, as well as those acquired by vocational training and reskilling programs. Each unemployed person is entitled to participating in vocational training, counselling and accreditation services up to a maximum limit of 1.100 € or 1,500 €, so as to improve their skills and employability.

Also, several structures and services operated by social partners are offered to the unemployed, in the fields of employment, education and training with a view to their integration / reintegration into the labour market, such as the [Information and Counseling Support Network](#) for employees and unemployed operated by the Labour Institute (INE) of the Greek Workers’ General Confederation (GSEE), the [Information Center for the Employed and Unemployed \(KEPEA\)](#) operated by the Greek Workers’ Confederation (GSEE), the Employment Support Service of the Athens Chamber Of Commerce and Industry <https://career.acci.gr/home>, the [Entrepreneurship Support Network for Small Businesses](#) of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (GSVEE). (See also section E1: Career guidance for the employed) Supporting services to the unemployed may include provision of information on:

- education and training opportunities;
- subsidised work experience programs
- new job vacancies;
- professional rights;
- occupational profiles.
- individual counselling and/or group workshops, aimed at empowering the unemployed in career planning, job search techniques, professional and social skills development.

Several other initiatives operate providing support to the unemployed, mainly delivered by civil society organisations, NGOs etc. PRAKSIS NGO operates a Business Coaching Center (<https://praksisbcc.gr>), providing a free of charge 4-month entrepreneurship education, consulting, and coaching program, to candidates who wish to acquire knowledge and necessary skills to implement their business idea. ActionAid (<https://athens.actionaid.gr/symboyleytiki-eyresis-ergasias>) provides job counselling services by a team of qualified employment advisors and networking experts, who assist unemployed beneficiaries in professional issues, career planning and job search.

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## Guidance for older adults

Due to the economic crisis, the labour market institutional framework has undergone rapid developments, especially after 2010. This dramatic deterioration of the Greek economy has had a direct impact on employment; namely, there has been an unprecedented loss of the work force, adverse effects on the private sector, a rapid increase of long-term unemployment and high unemployment rates for adults over 45 years old. While, today, the proportion of people over 65 in Greece is over 18%, it is expected to reach 24% by 2020 and at the same time the employment of this group is steadily declining. According to [Economic and Social Council of Greece \(ESC\)](#), which has been monitoring the issue of active ageing, in some cases, the new legislation arrangements favour active ageing management, but basically they either do not favour or even discourage it. Paradoxically, this has been guided by or led to policies and interventions that do not appear to favour workers’ active ageing.

The Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESC), in cooperation with other stakeholders, has developed a road map 2012-2020 for active ageing in Greece and established a relevant observatory for the promotion of social dialogue on this issue. ESC has also implemented several actions and programs on active ageing management to support and maintain employability and social inclusion of older adults. Lifelong learning is considered to be the main approach for retaining older workers in the labour market, especially to prevent gradual depreciation of their knowledge and skills, which will result in their inability to keep up with technological developments. In addition, access to training remains limited for the majority of this target group, partly due to the absence of targeted actions that meet their needs. Among the critical factors for services’ improvement has been the development and implementation of support mechanisms, including counselling procedures and tools, mentoring services and training targeted to older adults.

Unemployment also in Greece has a strong age dimension, since it disproportionately affects young people (under 30) but also older people age (60 years or older). In Greece unemployment rate for the age group 60-64 is one of the highest in the EU-27 (11.2% in 2020 and 10.8% in 2021, instead of a European average of 5.2% and 5.6% respectively), while a corresponding distance is also observed for the 65-69 age group (unemployment rates 9% in 2020 and 9.1% in 2021, instead of a European average of 2.3% and 3.1% respectively) (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2022).

The National Strategy for Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs), developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, is a comprehensive strategic document for the formulation and implementation of ALMPs in Greece during the period from 2022 to 2030, along with Passive Labour Market Policies (PLMPs), aiming at boosting employment and tackling unemployment, at enhancing the capacities, skills, and employability of the labour force, as well as at improving the current conditions within the labour market. The formulation of the National Strategy for ALMPs draws on the implementation of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and of the Declaration of the Porto Summit, incorporating the three national overarching targets set for 2030, including the target that “At least 71.1% of people aged 20 to 64 should be in employment by 2030 (compared to 61.1% in 2020)”. The strategy introduces measures covering also older workers, (55+) mainly through the Strategic Axis 3: Development of the labour force and increase of its employability and Strategic Axis 4: A Labour Market without exclusions.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs through the Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A (former OAED) has been implementing several programs targeted to unemployed older adults aged up to 64 years old, subsidising their wage as well as the insurance contribution paid by companies, or financing training, career guidance services and the certification of acquired qualifications.

A recent study implemented by the Labour Institute (INE) of the Greek Workers’ General Confederation (GSEE) Indicates that in Greece the measures to increase the employability of people over 55 years old are limited to cover the remaining prerequisites (employment stamps) so as to receive the statutory pension, and do not aim to support the continuation of their career after retirement. The study also presents a set of proposals for the active

engagement of the aging workforce in Greece, focused mainly in the field of adult learning and counselling. These include the revision of legislation to remove barriers for the extension of working life, mainly through flexible forms of employment, awareness raising of the society in the fight against age discrimination, creation of incentives for employers to recruit and retain the aging workforce playing a role in empowering new workers, lifelong learning and reskilling opportunities for older workers, provision of career counselling services up to the retirement stage. In addition are business reward programs for companies that employ a large percentage of people over 55 years old; counselling programs for employees over 55 years old such as time management, work related stress management etc., counselling support for employees 45+ who are long-term unemployed, with the aim of their reintegration into the labour market, training programmes for older employees to become mentors (to supervise and to guide) for younger workers; the operation of social partners to create training and counselling support programs for older people; as well as training of public and private sector employment counsellors so that they can support older adults in their professional transition. (INE GSEE, 2020).

The Lifelong Career Development Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](https://www.e-stadiodromia.gr), developed within the activities of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, provides comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised questionnaires regarding interests, values and decision-making, an e-portfolio development tool (also available in English), thematic information catalogues, useful links, and information on existing guidance services targeted to adults of all ages.

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## Guidance for early leavers

In Greece, there is a wealth of research data on the issue of Early School Leaving from various public and private agencies, already in the mid-1980s, which were further elaborated in the 90s using cohort methodologies (Pedagogical Institute, 2007, 2008). Nevertheless, these attempts at forming a picture of early leaving were mostly fragmented and until recently there was no unified national strategy to reduce early school leaving in Greece.

Regarding ESL rates, Greece's performance has been steadily decreasing since 2007 (14.3% in 2007 and 10.1% in 2013) and is slightly better from the EU average, which stood at 11.9% in 2013, mainly demonstrating the success of the recent new school interventions. The need to reduce the early school dropout rate at 9.7% by 2020 (National Country Target) was identified.

Following a 2013 law on Secondary Education Restructuring, the 'Observatory for Early School Leaving' was established within the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP), supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The Observatory is responsible for monitoring the ESL strategy in Greece, as well as for creating quality and quantity indicators and criteria for data processing, drawing conclusions and suggestions for early diagnosis methodology and preventative measures at national, regional and local level.

A special working group has been set up within the Observatory to gather information both from international experience and the Greek educational system and to propose actions and interventions in the context of the [Strategic Policy Framework to Reduce Early School Leaving](#) in Greece, developed in 2015 by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. In this strategic framework, measures are divided into three dimensions: prevention, intervention and compensation; however, the boundaries between these three pillars are not always clearly defined, while in the case of comprehensive measures, such as coaching of young people and apprentices they may be described both as preventive and intervention measures. The main areas of intervention "Education - School Unit - Individual" are assisted by secondary action areas, for which extracurricular organisations, local authorities, social partners, etc. are primarily responsible.

Guidelines for action include, among other issues, the enhancing of professionalism for teachers and those providing counselling and guidance on VET issues, the strengthening of co-operation between teachers and guidance providers (in-school or out-of-school), as well as tailor made personalised intervention and voluntary use of counselling to deal with specific early school leaving incidents.

Indicative measures in the three fields of intervention "Educational System - School Unit - Person" include also:

- the development and implementation of diversified counselling and career guidance systems and services at school level;
- a broader implementation and quality assurance of career guidance and educational counselling;
- psychosocial support and counselling of pupils and their families;
- coaching of young people;
- systematic and personalised priority support for early school leavers through quality;
- effective training and lifelong learning programs.

Information, counselling, educational and vocational guidance are now considered important measures to prevent ESL, which forms part of the strategy for early leaving. Information through several educational activities is complemented by counselling, which clarifies reflection and facilitates orientation and making informed decisions between existing educational and professional choices. In the context of the coaching intervention, cooperation among teachers providing counselling, school psychologists and social workers is important. Students at risk of exclusion will be motivated to discover their strengths, interests and abilities and continue school attendance in order to complete the particular educational grade or to receive support in their transition to a next education/training system that ensures social inclusion. Out-of-school organisations should help young people who have been out of school and have not entered the labour market to return at school or follow another training option (Ινστιτούτο Εκπαιδευτικής Πολιτικής, 2017).

The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) has prepared a set of proposal the measurement methodology, regarding early school leaving, with a reference to the general institutional framework and the need for coordination of related stakeholders to student dropout and finally, proposed actions (preventive, intervention, compensatory) to combat student dropout (IEP, 2015).

It must be also noted that strategies are complemented by the development of an information system for collecting and processing data which are related to addressing the phenomenon of early school leaving. The information system, entitled "[My School](#)" and commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, is a unified system established in 2013 by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs aiming at providing electronic support and networking for all school units and administrative educational structures in the Greek territory. In respect of early school leaving, the system was expanded to include the appropriate data and indicators (for the individual student profile, school units, student performance, etc.) that allow the measurement, monitoring and evidence of ESL.

The National Lifelong Career Guidance Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](https://www.e-stadiodromia.gr), developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)), as well as the Offices of Counselling and Guidance (GRASYPs) established per group of neighbouring schools and [teachers specialised in CGC](#) in charge of School Career Guidance appointed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs at the Directorates of Secondary Education, which operate under the respective Regional Directorates of Education, (see section [Access to guidance](#)) also support and contribute in the sector of ESL.

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## Guidance for NEET

The NEET concept, as a category of social vulnerability, is relatively unknown in Greece but there are some recent strategies, actions and studies to refer to. The designation includes young people with tertiary education and no work experience, who are mostly inactive and still well protected by their families as the main support factor. There is a high proportion of women and 'discouraged workers' (who have given up the search for employment, due to its futility). According to Eurofound (2012), the percentage of NEETs in Greece was 17.4% of young people 15 to 24 years old and up to 23.2% for those aged 15 to 29 years.

The National Strategy for Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs), developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, is a comprehensive strategic document for the formulation and implementation of ALMPs in Greece during the period from 2022 to 2030, along with Passive Labour Market Policies (PLMPs), aiming at boosting employment and tackling unemployment, at enhancing the capacities, skills, and employability of the labour force, as well as at improving the current conditions within the labour market. Unemployment also in Greece has a strong age dimension, since it disproportionately affects young people (under 30) while it demonstrates one of the highest rates of NEETs in the EU-27, with the percentage of NEETs 15-29 years for 2021 is 17.3%, falling from 18.7% in 2020, instead of average at EU-27 level 13.1% in 202 and 13.8% in 2020. The strategy introduces measures covering NEETs, mainly through the Strategic Axis 2: Enhancing youth employment and improving the access of young people to work (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2022)

The NEETs high rate findings have been also confirmed by two nationwide surveys in 2013 and 2016 which were implemented by the Centre for the Development of Educational Policy (KANEP) of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE), in cooperation with the University of Crete (Center for Human Rights of Political Science Department). According to these surveys, NEETs in Greece are high school graduates or tertiary education graduates mostly of 20-24 years old; they are unemployed, usually resident in urban centres and have Greek citizenship and moderate family income. Most of them have not attended training programs; they do not report feeling socially excluded as being financially and psychologically supported by their families. As far as their psychological profile, they reported feeling pessimistic and frustrated; show more anxiety, lower wellness feelings and lower self-efficacy (Παπαδάκης, κ.ά. 2016).

Recent studies focusing on the effect of COVID on the NEET identity, especially regarding their expectations, indicate that, although it has had an impact, the effect of COVID is relatively small, the impact is temporary, and no relevant consequences are observed for the NEET identity generation processes (Herod et. al, 2022; Pesquera et. al., 2022).

Based on the above results, the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) - Euroguidance Centre of Greece in cooperation with KANEP - GSEE, in the context of the "Guiding the NEETs Project", developed a targeted counselling and career guidance methodology and relevant scientific material (see [here](#) and [here](#)), as well as organised broad national seminars targeted to guidance practitioners in 2016. The aim was to enhance guidance practitioners in order to implement effective guidance interventions, according to the needs of "NEETs" and to tackle social exclusion, dropouts etc. Additionally, a practical guide, including activities and exercises has been developed so that guidance practitioners can activate NEETs during the counselling process, either at individual or group level (ΕΟΠΠΕΠ, 2016, Βλαχάκη, 2016).

The Labour Institute (INE) of the Greek Workers' Confederation (GSEE), with the aim of actively supporting, protecting and reintegrating unemployed people and NEETs into the labour market implements actions co-financed by the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). These individual interventions include provision of education, vocational training and retraining, career guidance and counselling, employment search services, promotion of entrepreneurship and assistance in setting up businesses.

The National Strategy for Youth Employment concerns the period 2021 - 2027 until 2030 aiming to update and expand the previous Action Plan for the Youth Guarantee (2018 - 2020), and to incorporate the new principles and directions of the Enhanced Youth Guarantee, the principles and directions of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the new Porto Declaration, the Recommendation on a Bridge to Youth Employment, and the European Skills Agenda. The National Strategy for Youth Employment is structured in 6 distinct Axes, emphasising the provision of individualised career support, as well as skills development and career placement services, to promote equal access to employment and strengthening youth entrepreneurship.

**Vocational Education Liaison Offices** with the labour market operate in 30 Vocational Apprenticeships Schools (EPAS) operate by the Public Employment Service (D.Y.P.A) (former Manpower Employment Organisation, OAED) (Law 4921/2022). They are addressed to NEETs (young people outside of education, training and employment), students of EPAS Apprenticeships, EPAS graduates, high school students, businesses, representatives of employers, chambers, etc.

In addition, the tools and services developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) support guidance practitioners working with NEETs: The National Lifelong Career Guidance Portal e-STADIODROMIA, developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, targeting also students and youngsters provides comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised questionnaires regarding interests, values and decision-making, an e-portfolio development tool (also available in English), thematic information catalogues, useful links, and information on existing guidance services for diverse end users. Furthermore, the portal includes the **Real Game** for adolescents aged 12-15 and 15-18, videos for various occupations (along with the basic skills needed).

The project "A Place for Youth in Mediterranean EEA: Social and Sharing Economy for NEETs" (YOUTHShare) (<http://www.youthshare-project.org/>) coordinated by the University of the Aegean in Greece aims at reducing youth unemployment, as well as youth disengagement and inactivity across regions of the Mediterranean EEA, especially in the coastal and island regions of Greece, Italy, Spain, and Cyprus. As part of the YOUTHShare project a transnational Research Network (<http://www.youthshare-project.org/about-the-research-centre>) and an Employment Centre (<http://www.youthshare-project.org/employment-center>), have been established so as to facilitate an informed bottom-up agency and institutional engagement for NEETs in the southern regions and countries of the EU and contribute to the creation of new knowledge and implementation of innovative solutions. A set of tools and best practices has been developed, including toolkits for counseling and training enhancing better employment opportunities. It is also foreseen that a selected group of NEETs will be empowered through work-based training and entrepreneurial counseling, so as to be engaged in upskilling and start-up activities in the Social and Sharing Economies and other trans-locally resilient sectors, such as agri-food production and the pertinent circular economies. The YOUTHShare is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment,

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## Guidance for young people at risk

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as well as the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has been supporting the implementation of policies and strategies for young people at risk (ages 18 to 29).

In August 2022, a new National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction has been established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, following the update of the National Strategy of Social Inclusion of 2018, in cooperation with the responsible ministries and other stakeholder bodies. The aim of the new National Strategy is to define an integrated policy to prevent and combat labour market and social exclusion, mainly for at risk and vulnerable groups of the Greek population. Actions for labour market inclusion, improvement of employability and access to employment, mainly of the unemployed and precarious workers, as well as vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion, have been incorporated in the new strategy. Main aim is to promote active inclusion, promote equal opportunities and active participation, and enhance adaptability and management of change.

Several actions and programmes targeting young people at risk, co-financed by the European Social Fund and national resources have been implemented and new actions have been designed for the programming period 2021-2027, including career guidance and counselling interventions in the field of education, training, employment, and social inclusion co-funded by the Operational Program "Human Resources & Social Cohesion 2021-2027", as well as in the Regional Programmes 2021-2027. Also, there are a number of actions including counselling services, which are foreseen within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0" (Pillar 3: Employment, skills and social cohesion).

Public Employment Service D.YP.A, following the profiling of each registered unemployed who belong to vulnerable social groups, provides individualised counselling services, including specialized information regarding training, employment and entrepreneurship issues, well as personalized support for labour market integration and social and economic autonomy. The employment counselors who address the vulnerable unemployed focus on the development of an Individual Action Plan, personal empowerment and activation, psychosocial support and counseling, creating a professional career plan and placement in a suitable working position.

**Labour Market and Vocational Training Vouchers** for young citizens up to 29 years old include training courses, internships for acquiring professional experience, career counselling and guidance, with the aim to upgrade their skills and qualifications and enhance their social and labour market integration. Each voucher programme is targeted mainly to those under 30 at risk, though the legal framework varies per call. Each call supports community outreach strategies (see sections Guidance for adult learners and Guidance for unemployed adults).

Young people at risk may also reach for support at the Community Centers ("Kentra koinotitas") operating by Municipalities all over Greece. The Community Centers are first reception structures, which provide holistic support to the residents of the respective Municipalities, through the provision of a comprehensive network of services aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion, as well as promoting employment. The Community Centers employ social workers, psychologists, sociologists, and employment counsellors. Their main responsibilities include reception, information, registration, support of citizens during the process of joining social programs/ benefits and cooperation with other services and structures to connect citizens and refer their requests, as well as cooperation with the local labour market to promote the employment of the unemployed. Other activities may include the provision of counseling and psychosocial support services.

The "Housing and Work for the Homeless" program <https://www.astegoi.gov.gr/index.php/en/gia-polites/stegasi-ergasia> established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is aimed at individuals and families facing housing deprivation. The program runs in Municipalities and provides two years rent subsidy for the beneficiaries, coverage of basic household expenses, as well as subsidised work, career liaison and psychosocial support services.

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## Guidance for persons with disabilities

The **National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2020-2023**, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, follows the priorities set by the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021 - 2030. This aims to ensure the full participation of PWDs in society on an equal basis with other citizens, both within the EU and beyond, in accordance with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which establish equality and non-discrimination as cornerstones of EU policies. The **National Action Plan on the Rights of People with Disabilities 2020-2023** ensures the accessibility of people with disabilities to basic goods, essential services and supporting means, participation in fundamental rights, equality, access to education and employment, tackling poverty and social exclusion, the prohibition of discrimination, etc. The National Strategy for Deinstitutionalization, developed and implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, is part of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2020-2023, which is based on the principles of equal participation, inclusion, non-discrimination, choice and control of life and the right to receive support according to the specific needs and characteristics of the beneficiaries. The vision of the deinstitutionalization strategy is to develop a stable framework of social support systems so that children - with a special emphasis on neglected children and children with disabilities - adults with disabilities and the elderly with various support needs can be fully integrated to society through community service. The aim is to gradually reduce the placement of adults in institutions and facilitate the transition of adults, elderly, and children with disabilities into supported living structures in the community (home support services, outside of

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institutions) and develop a range of services within the community to prevent and avoid institutionalisation.

Following the above, the "National Disability Portal" (<https://amea.gov.gr>) has begun its operation, where disabled persons can submit their application for disability certification. Also, the National Accessibility Authority has been established as an advisory body to the State, to enhance the access for persons with disabilities in all areas of human activity, monitor issues related to the right of access of persons with disabilities and formulate proposals of relevant public policies.

In addition, the Strategic Action Plan for the Equal Access of Students with Disabilities, which constitutes an extension of the National Action Plan on Disability in the Field of Education, sets thirteen (13) operational objectives, including among others, the promotion of integration education programmes, the strengthening of both early educational intervention and vocational education and the equal access to Lifelong learning and higher education. In the framework of inclusive education and ensuring equal access of students with disabilities, the Ministry of Education has put in force the relevant institutional framework for special education of individuals with disability and specific educational needs, laid down mainly in [law 3699/2008](#), as in force, and the subsequent complementary laws [4115/2013](#) and [4186/2013](#), [4368/2016](#), [4415/2016](#), [4452/2017](#), [4547/2018](#), [4589/2019](#), [4638/2019](#), law [4713/2020](#) and law [4823/2021](#). Pursuant to law [4823/2021](#), students with disabilities and learning difficulties receive personalised career guidance services and psychosocial assessment and support at the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASyS) (former Educational and Counselling Support Centres (KESyS)). KEDASyS responsibilities include the assessment of students' educational needs or barriers to learning, the promotion of students' psychosocial health and emotional well-being as well as the provision of advisory support to the teaching, special education and special support staff, parents and guardians. In addition, it is foreseen that specialists in career guidance or mobility (barriers), orientation and daily living skills of the blind, or in the sign language of the deaf will be employed in KEDASyS (article 15). In addition, secondary education teachers will act as Apprenticeship Liaison Officers in the specific needs vocational lower - upper secondary education schools (ENEeGy-L) to facilitate students' labour market integration (article 94).

In Special Secondary Education, the subject of "School Career Guidance" is taught at all levels of Special Vocational Lower Secondary Schools and also in A' Class - first year of Special Vocational Upper Secondary School. In 2017, all previously existing Secondary Specialised Vocational Education schools were transformed into Unified Special Vocational Gymnasiums and Lyceums, offering 4-year studies respectively, adapted to students' specific educational needs in several sectors and specialisations, providing equivalent academic qualifications and professional rights (i.e., which occupational skills and legal rights graduates are entitled to in order to practice a profession in the labour market).

A Career Guidance Zone is included in the curriculum of Special Vocational Gymnasiums, aiming at the development of students' related knowledge, creativity, and skills, so that the school becomes a place of creation and professional preparation. In this context, the Vocational Guidance Zone includes two hours of vocational guidance per week, focusing on key theoretical and practical training relevant to the sectors and specialisations offered, with the aim to prepare and familiarize students with the relevant subjects. Secondly, is the creative activities zone, giving to students and the school the flexibility to jointly form a set of educational - vocational activities, according to the needs of both pupils and the local community. This zone covers more general thematic areas relating to culture, the environment, health, students' personal development, providing also the opportunity to fill in cognitive gaps in various fields and professional interests of students.

Accordingly, two hours of teaching the subject "School Vocational Guidance - Safety and Health in the workplace" as well as two hours of creative activities are included in the weekly curriculum of Special Vocational Lyceums.

General or Special Education Primary School graduates aged up to sixteen, who face serious difficulties in meeting the curricular requirements of lower secondary education, and students with disabilities or/and specific educational needs, according to KEDASyS' recommendation, can be enrolled at the Special Vocational Education and Training Workshops (EeEeK). The students attend six grades (A, B, C, D, E and F) for up to eight years, obtaining a diploma equivalent to the Gymnasium Certificate, which does not allow for the continuation of studies at Lyceum, as well as a Level 1 Vocational Training Certificate. EeEeK students attend both general education and practical courses and mostly receive support in the development of general academic skills, social skills, independent living skills and pre-vocational and professional skills.

Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A has lately increased the accessibility of PWDs to employment support services. Through the myOAEADive appointment platform developed by D.Y.P.A in collaboration with the General Secretariat of Information Systems, the unemployed and businesses can be served digitally via video conference (video call), avoiding attendance at local service points. Through myOAEADive it is possible to schedule a "digital appointment" on a specific day and time and for specific services provided by specialized OAEADive staff. MyOAEADive Services includes: Counselling services for registered vulnerable unemployed, Consulting services for businesses, Counselling services from the EURES advisers network, Update of the unemployed Special Social Groups Register. In addition, some of the above services are offered with interpretation in Greek sign language/lip reading etc. D.Y.P.A platform is established according to the WCAG 2.1 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) to include PwD and elderly persons. It includes pre-recorded videos with subtitles, audio description, color-coded information, while the text size can be increased to 200% without auxiliary technology without requiring horizontal scrolling + keyboard can be used in focus mode, giving the ability to move from one element to the other. So far it does not cover all types of disability, but it works on being as accessible as possible.

D.Y.P.A focus on work placement and an individual support approach for PwD through incentives and programmes providing strong incentives to employers, with the aim to integrate 1,200 vulnerable unemployed into full-time and part-time positions, in private and public enterprises, as well as in businesses of Municipalities and Regions.

For example, the program for the Ergonomic Arrangement of the workplace facilitates the access of PWDs to the workplace. Each organisation/company participates in the 90% of the cost of the required expense for ergonomic arrangements of the workplace (customized auxiliary technological facilities, adaptation of the working conditions, special equipment, purchase of software for people with disabilities and other arrangements) and up to the amount of two thousand five hundred (2,500) euros.

DYPA also operates two training structures for persons with disabilities in Athens and Thessaloniki. These structures aim at vocational training (theoretical and practical) as well as social and labour market inclusion of unemployed persons with disabilities. At the same time, the trainees receive psychosocial and counselling support from specialised scientific staff (psychologists, social workers, psychiatrist, etc.).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in the framework of the [National Action Plan on the Rights of People with Disabilities 2020-2023](#) and the National Strategy for Deinstitutionalization, has recently established by Law [4837/2021](#) (articles 32-39) a pilot program for the provision of Personal Assistant services for PWDs, with the aim to combat institutionalization and to strengthen the independent living and their equal participation in all aspects of social, economic, political, cultural life of persons with disabilities. Personal Assistance refers to the support of the Persons with mobility, intellectual and/or developmental or mental health barriers and people with sensory disability by a Personal Assistant so as to strengthen PWDs independent living and inclusion in society, based on individualized needs and life circumstances, individual choices and interests. Personal assistant services includes the following: a) daily life activities such as feeding, clothing, personal hygiene, b) work and studies c) participation in leisure time activities, and d) social participation activities. The Pilot Program of the Personal Assistant (<https://prospikosvoithos.gov.gr>) starting in 2022 initially addresses 1,000 PWDs selected from the Attica region to receive the service of the Personal Assistant for two years. In 2023 1,000 more PWDs from other Regions of the country will receive Personal Assistant services, while in 2024, the services will be expanded nationwide. Those interested will be evaluated by special interdisciplinary scientific committees, which will consist of a social worker, an occupational therapist and a psychologist. The assessment will be individualized and will take into account the candidate's social and daily life characteristics, as well as the type of disability and level of functionality. The Pilot Program is financed by the Recovery and Resilience Fund, while the nationwide implementation will be financed by ESF funding.

Also, the Supported Employment model for persons with disabilities is currently promoted in Greece, with the aim to support PWDs to acquire and maintain a paid job and insurance in the open labour market. According to this model, the prospective employee with a disability, before being placed in a company, receives the appropriate training to perform specific tasks as well as the required counselling support from a specialized career coach, who trains, supports and guides the disabled person until finding the desired job, while acting as a liaison between the employee and the employer. The establishment of the Supported Employment model has been included as a priority for the first time in Greece in the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, while the relevant institutional framework for supported employment will be developed. In this scope, a pilot program of supported employment will be soon implemented for 200 persons in the autism spectrum, who will receive counselling and support services and full subsidy of their salary costs for one year. The Hellenic Society of Supported Employment [EL.ET.YP.E] was created in 1997 as a non-profit organization aiming to promote the Supported Employment model to professionals, parents and persons with disabilities.

Several labour market activities and services are developed by NGOs and private stakeholders. "My Job" platform <https://ergasiamou.gr> developed by the Special Education Laboratory "Margarita" was launched in 2021 and it is supported by private companies. The aim of the platform is to help people with mental disabilities to find work that suits them and also to support employers in finding workers with talents, interests and strong will to work. The platform provides an accessibility menu and pre-recorded videos with instructions. The information provided is easy to read. Success stories are included in the platform website.

In addition, the National Lifelong Career Guidance Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs supports guidance practitioners working also with PWDs. It provides comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised career guidance questionnaires.

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In 2010 PEPSAEE established the first "Support for Employment" Office for mental health service users in Greece. The Pan-Hellenic Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Work Integration (PEPSAEE) (<http://www.pepsaee.gr>) is a Scientific Not-for-Profit Organization that was established in 1996. It aims at facilitating the social inclusion of individuals with psychosocial difficulties, specializing in supporting, coordinating and empowering rehabilitation and work integration initiatives for mental health service users. From 2012 to 2014 PEPSAEE designed, organized and implemented the "Bridges for Employment" project (Code: MIS 365136), a holistic intervention program for supporting employment of mental health service users in the free labor market, which was co-financed by the Greek government and the EU. These initiatives constitute the most organized attempts to develop a supported employment model for mental health service users in Greece (Drosos & Theodoroulakis, 2019). As of 2017, article 28 of the Law 4488/17 allows mental health service users to work in the free labor market and, simultaneously, to maintain their benefits and allowances. The new legislative framework creates new employment opportunities for this group and removes a major obstacle to achieving a fulfilling career. In the draft of the new National Plan for Mental Health is a description of the launching of 7 new Supported Employment Offices.

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## Guidance for immigrants

The responsibility of immigrants and refugees' inclusion in Greek society lies mainly in the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. Without advance notice, Greece has faced an unprecedented extent of migrant inflow from Ukraine and other countries even prior to 2021. It has been affected by the ongoing migration flows, requiring immediate and effective solutions for migrant reception and integration policies as well as integration systems, structures and measures, with special focus on social and labour market inclusion.

The Migrant Integration Centers (M.I.C.) were established by law [4368/2016](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2016/0000/eng/s1/1) and function as branches of Community Centers in municipalities. The Directorate of Social Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum co-ordinates and monitor the operation of M.I.C. Their mission is to provide specialized services to migrant groups, that are third-country nationals who lawfully reside in Greece, beneficiaries of international protection (holders of residence permit) and applicants of asylum (holders of an Applicant's Card). M.I.C. provide information, service, and career counselling for social inclusion, to third-country nationals with regards to social integration, legal information (e.g., residence permits, refugee identification cards, issue of "AMKA" social security number, etc.) and social networking issues and proceed to referrals to other competent associations, services, or bodies (e.g., Associations of Migrants/Beneficiaries of International Protection, Non-Profit Organizations, Social Services, etc.). Other activities include the provision of Greek language, history, and culture teaching, intercultural activities which facilitate the co-existence between third-country children/young people and native children/ young people, as well as activities that facilitate third-country nationals' access to the job market. In this respect for career-related support and guidance, M.I.C. refer requests and form collaborations in order to help third-country nationals participate in language-learning courses, trainings, professional programs, as well as certification courses and foreign degree or skills recognition programs. They collaborate with local job markets via counselling and mentoring schemes in order to help third-country nationals find jobs. Moreover, they offer social and psychological support, especially to vulnerable groups of third-country nationals (e.g., females, children, etc.), provide information on the education of children and raise awareness in local communities with regards to diversity and social issues such as xenophobia, racism, and human trafficking. Social workers who handle first-order needs for these groups also provide career support. M.I.C. personnel consist of:

- Intercultural mediators, who are familiar with the language and ethnic or cultural characteristics of migrant and refugee communities.
- Social Workers, specialized in migrant/minorities and/or social exclusion issues.
- Lawyer, specializing in immigration and labour law.

Psychologist, specializing in post-traumatic stress disorders and the needs of vulnerable migrants (eg women, children, the disabled etc.).

The Ministry of Migration and Asylum has set up a special website <https://migration.gov.gr/en/ukraine/> for the provision of adequate urgent information for the provision of adequate urgent information for displaced persons from Ukraine as well as education and employment related information. The information is provided in English, Ukrainian and Greek, containing also frequently asked questions (FAQ) about the procedures entering Greece, staying in Greece and applying for temporary protection. It also contains useful information on access to health, social benefits, accommodation, education, car use etc. The website provides information on the All-Ukrainian online interactive schedule created by the Ukrainian state for displaced students in grades 1-11, as well as the All-Ukrainian online school platform to support remote and hybrid learning of students in grades 5-11 and methodological support for teachers.

Support for students with a migrant background, in addition to other vulnerable social groups, is implemented as a measure to prevent early school leaving, through the implementation of several programmes co-funded by European and national resources, through the Operational Program of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Such intervention within the formal educational system focuses on addressing linguistic and cultural diversity at school, enhancing language skills, learning Greek as a foreign language and mentoring to achieve smooth adaptation of refugees.

Regarding Ukrainian refugee children the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs <https://www.minedu.gov.gr/oukraniki-ekpaideftiki-koinotita>, has taken specific action for their inclusion in the Greek education system with self-help career information and support actions related to education and their well-being, as following:

Integration of students in Reception Classes (15 hours / week for intensive lessons in Greek as a foreign language), as well as enhancing the attendance of courses within the general curriculum that verbal communication is not of primary importance such as art, music, gymnastics.

Providing telephone and live interpretation in Ukrainian and Greek for parents and teachers, for enrollment in schools or other issues, through the joint cooperation of UNICEF.

Creation of information material in Ukrainian (in collaboration with UNICEF) promoted by the websites of the Ukrainian community, Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Embassy of Ukraine etc. The material includes a guide about the Greek educational system and enrollment procedures in all educational levels is provided in Ukrainian language and a dictionary for school in Ukrainian.

Expanding the implementation of a training program for intercultural education and creation of a training guide for the reception of displaced Ukrainian students by teachers.

Psycho-emotional support of students and teachers is provided by psychologists and social workers of the Centers for Interdisciplinary Assessment Counseling and Support (KEDASY) to enhance psychosocial development and progress of students and to ensure equal access to education for all students. KEDASY also provide counseling support to teachers in diversity issues and student heterogeneity, promotion of inclusive education practices, empowerment of vulnerable groups in the school community and dealing with crisis situations.

Provision of psycho-emotional support services to refugee students are also provided by UNICEF psychologists and social workers at UNICEF Creative Employment Centers.

With the aim to provide psychosocial support to refugees from Ukraine a telephone helpline "10306-option 4" has been set up, available from Monday to Friday, from 9 am to 9 pm. Support is free of charge and anonymous and it is provided by professional psychologists originally from Ukraine after relevant training. The "psychosocial support line" is funded by the Ministry of Health with the participation of: the University Research Institute of Mental Health, the Federation of Institutions of Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Mental Health "ARGO" and the NGO "Smile of the Child".

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, within the European Child Guarantee, promotes the development and implementation of an Action Plan for the protection of the displaced Ukrainian children in Ukraine, which will include access to housing, food, health care and education.

The Information Center for the Employed and Unemployed (KEPEA) operated by the Greek Workers' Confederation (GSEE) provides, inter alia, personalised information and advice to economic migrants related to the implementation of provisions as stated by the labour, insurance and immigration legislation. KEPEA Office for Financial Immigrants aims to welcome and inform them about their rights and obligations within the Greek labour market. Furthermore, immigrants and refugees have the opportunity to register their CV and get information on employment issues, while employers can search for staff via a modern online application. The KEPEA Counseling Office also addresses the economic migrants providing personalised support and multi-faceted guidance in their career development.

Several other initiatives providing training, social support, including career guidance and counselling services to migrant groups, are mainly delivered by civil society organisations, NGOs etc. Guidance for migrants focuses on providing access to language classes, data about recognition and validation of the prior learning, information about the educational and the health system, and study permits. PRAKSIS NGO operates a Business Coaching Center (<https://praksisbcc.gr>), providing a free of charge 4-month entrepreneurship education, consulting and coaching program, to candidates who wish to acquire knowledge and necessary skills to implement their business idea. ActionAid (<https://athens.actionaid.gr/symboleytiki-eyresis-ergasias>) provides job counselling services by a team of qualified employment advisors and networking experts, who assist unemployed beneficiaries in professional issues, career planning and job search.

The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, developed a training curriculum and relevant training material on the issue of multiculturalism in career guidance provision. The outcome of this project, was a "train-the-trainers" seminar in 2010 and 20 regional nationwide trainings targeted to guidance practitioners in 2011, focusing on multicultural counselling and guidance, with the aim to improve the multicultural skills of career guidance practitioners serving migrant groups.

In addition, the National Lifelong Career Guidance Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](https://e-stadiodromia.eoppep.gr), developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs supports guidance practitioners working also with migrant groups. It provides comprehensive career information, career planning resources, career self-assessment activities and digitised career guidance questionnaires.

An Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme (No 822601 -DT-MIGRATION-06-2018-2019) called NADINE - digital integrated iNtegrAted system for the social social support of migrants / and refugees, has recently finalized with the participation of several partners from Greece. It is a novel system to support migrants and refugees through ICT-enabled personalized solutions, delivering tailored career information and career guidance, social services, careers and administrative procedures in the host country, through a career guidance system and an administrative companion (chatbot). The NADINE system (<https://nadine-project.eu>):

1. provides functionalities for skill assessment (both hard and soft skills),
2. dynamically creates tailored suited training programs to adapt existing skills into host societies needed skills (skills shifting),
3. provides a digital companion that will suggest and assist the end-users through administrative tasks and
4. provides a data lake available to public administration bodies and NGOs for better organization of services.

Data about local services for migrants/refugees feed user-friendly tools for employability and career guidance, whilst assessing supply and demand of migrants' skills. The platform also focuses on the social, educational and cultural needs of migrants and how these fit to existing services offered by local hosts. Overall the system allows public authorities and guidance professionals to offer a personalised service to migrants based on real needs and the opportunities available to them. Similar tools inspired by NADINE has been also developed to be provided by the Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A so as to facilitate career and social inclusion of vulnerable unemployed.

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## Guidance for other groups

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as well as the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has been supporting the implementation of policies and strategies for several groups at risk of social exclusion.

The General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs holds the responsibility for the specialization and implementation of a comprehensive, effective, fair and sustainable model of social solidarity, as well as the planning, organization, control and evaluation of social inclusion and social cohesion policies, actions and interventions targeted to vulnerable social groups, including people with disabilities, Roma, the chronically ill, the homeless and the elderly.

In August 2022, a new National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction has been established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, following the update of the National Strategy of Social Inclusion of 2018, in cooperation with the responsible ministries and other stakeholder bodies. The aim of the new National Strategy is to define an integrated policy to prevent and combat labour market and social exclusion, mainly for at risk and vulnerable groups of the Greek population. Actions for labour market inclusion, improvement of employability and access to employment, mainly of the unemployed and precarious workers, as well as vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion, have been incorporated in the new strategy. Main aim is to promote active inclusion, promote equal opportunities and active participation, and enhance adaptability and management of change.

Support for students from vulnerable social groups is implemented as a measure to prevent early school leaving, through the implementation of several programs co-funded by European and national resources, through the Operational Program of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Such interventions within the formal educational system focus on addressing linguistic and cultural diversity at school, enhancing language skills, learning Greek as a foreign language and mentoring to achieve smooth adaptation of refugees.

Vocational training programs and career support and counselling services targeted to all interested adults, unemployed and workers, regardless of gender, educational level, country of origin, religion, place of residence, as well as young people, students, etc., are offered by private or Municipal

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Lifelong Learning Centres - Kentra Dia Viou Mathisis (KDVMs) (Law 3879/2010, Law 4111/2013, Law 4186/2013 Law 4763/2020) implementing general adult education programs with learning activities taking place at national and local level. Lifelong Learning Centers provide career guidance services to adults, in individual and/or group sessions, with the aim of formulating an individual plan to upgrade skills and be integrated into the labour market. Targeted programs for adult members of social groups, migrants and residents of remote - inaccessible areas and other groups at risk of social exclusion (Roma, prisoners, Muslim minority, immigrants - repatriates, persons with disabilities) aims at their equal integration into society and access to employment. The implementation of training programs of KDVMs are co-funded by European and national resources, through the Operational Programmes of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. (See section ET4: Career guidance for adult learners).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs with the support of Public Employment Service D.YP.A (former OAED) and other direct stakeholders, implements [Vocational Training Voucher Programmes](#) co-funded by national resources and the European Social Fund. Actions may include Public Benefit Programs enabling job placement to Municipal and Regional services, Vocational Training and upskilling Programs including career counselling and certification services, targeted also to vulnerable social groups.

Second Chance Schools (Sxoleia Deferis Efkaírias) operate in 11 prisons around Greece, targeted to adult prisoners who have not completed the nine-year compulsory education. The objective is to be equipped with foundational knowledge and skills and to obtain a certificate equivalent to the Lower Secondary Education Leaving Certificate (Gymnasium). Studying at the Second Chance Schools also benefits learners through reducing their penalties/sentence (one day in school equals two days penalty). Supporting services are offered by guidance counsellors and psychologists in cooperation with social workers of the prison and other external services, to facilitate students' labour market transition and social re-integration. Second Chance Schools are co-funded by European and national resources, through the Operational Program of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and administered by the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (INEDIVIM), supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

The General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is the government body responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring the implementation of policies for promoting women to employment and combating the equality gap in the labour market, preventing and combating violence against women, combating gender stereotyping through use of educational programmes and reinforcing women's participation in decision-making processes. The recently adopted National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025 promotes gender equality and empowerment of women, by implementing a number of actions with the aim of preventing and combating gender and domestic violence, reconciliation of personal and professional life, equal participation of women in the labor market, and in decision-making positions and leadership roles and the integration of the gender dimension in sectoral policies. The General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality operates Counseling Centers for Violence against Women in several Greek cities, with the support of ESF funding and national resources. There are currently 14 Centres staffed by psychologists, social workers and lawyers, providing free of charge information and counseling services as well as integrated actions psychosocial support addressed to women. Moreover, it operates a nationwide SOS year-round 24-hour telephone helpline for female victims of violence, which provides immediate expert assistance (psychologist and social workers) in emergency incidents of violence, and counseling services to victims of all forms of gender-based violence...

The [Research Centre for Gender Equality](#) (KETHI) is an organization supervised by the General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. KETHI is activated towards elimination of gender discriminations, stereotypes and inequalities as well as integrating gender mainstreaming in all policies and actions, and supports the development and operation of the Counseling Centers for Violence against Women. Psychosocial and legal support actions are targeted to female victims of violence and/or multiple discrimination (e.g. immigrants, refugees, single parents, women with disabilities, unemployed, etc.). Specific actions are also implemented to promote women in employment, as well as networking actions with the local community in raising awareness and disseminate information to combat violence and discrimination against women.

Several other initiatives providing training, social support, including career guidance and counselling services targeted to women, are mainly delivered by civil society organisations, NGOs etc The Diotima Centre for Gender Rights and Equality <https://diotima.org.gr/en> is a non profit, non-governmental women's organization, established at the end of the 80s through an initiative of a group of women from different academic backgrounds and aiming at systematically highlighting discriminations against women on all levels of social, political and economic life. It also provides counselling and information services to unemployed and employed women, including migrant women, on careers including labour market conditions, and upskilling opportunities, so as to achieve women's financial independence for their empowerment and social emancipation. The Diotima Centre is activated in data monitoring, research, and development of tools, methods and techniques, and policy proposals to promote gender equality in employment and in the labour market. Legal aid is also provided for low-income women (Greek citizens or migrants) survivors of gender-based violence, without access to information and legal support.

Several actions and programmes targeting young people at risk, co-financed by the European Social Fund and national resources have been implemented. New actions have been designed for the programming period 2021-2027, including career guidance and counselling interventions in the field of education, training, employment, and social inclusion co-funded by the Operational Program "Human Resources & Social Cohesion 2021-2027", as well as in the Regional Programmes 2021-2027. Also, there are a number of actions including counselling services, which are foreseen within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0" ([Pillar 3: Employment, skills and social cohesion](#)).

Public Employment Service D.YP.A, following the profiling of each registered unemployed who belong to vulnerable social groups, provides individualised counselling services, including specialized information regarding training, employment and entrepreneurship issues, well as personalized support for labour market integration and social and economic autonomy. The employment counselors who address the vulnerable unemployed focus on the development of an Individual Action Plan, personal empowerment and activation, psychosocial support and counseling, creating a professional career plan and placement in a suitable working position.

[Labour Market and Vocational Training Vouchers](#) for young citizens up to 29 years old include training courses, internships for acquiring professional experience, career counselling and guidance, with the aim to upgrade their skills and qualifications and enhance their social and labour market integration. Each voucher programme is targeted mainly to those under 30 at risk, though the legal framework varies per call. Each call supports community outreach strategies (see sections Guidance for adult learners and Guidance for unemployed adults).

Vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion may also reach for support at the Community Centers (GREEK NAME HERE) operating by Municipalities all over Greece. The Community Centers are first reception structures, which provide holistic support to the residents of the respective Municipalities, through the provision of a comprehensive network of services aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion, as well as promoting employment (see section XXX). The Community Centers employ social workers, psychologists, sociologists and employment counsellors. Their main responsibilities include reception, information, registration, support of citizens during the process of joining social programs/ benefits and cooperation with other services and structures to connect citizens and refer their requests, as well as cooperation with the local labour market to promote the employment of the unemployed. Other activities may include the provision of counseling and psychosocial support services.

Roma people do not constitute a minority in Greece. They form an integral part of the Greek population and as Greek citizens they fall within the Constitution and the laws of the Greek State. Subsequently, they fully enjoy all civil and political rights entitled to Greek citizens, including all economic, social and cultural rights safeguarded for Greek citizens. However, poor living conditions, poverty and social exclusion define Roma as a socially vulnerable group, for which the state takes special measures in order to create the necessary conditions for their social inclusion and prosperity. The Roma Branches established in Community Centers of Municipalities hosting significant rates of Roma, provide reception, support and interconnection services at local level, as well as individualized support to Roma in all fields of social integration (access to primary healthcare, school enrolment and attendance, renewing of unemployment cards and receiving Minimum Guarantee Income. Roma are offered counseling and psychological support, primary health care services and targeted actions for education, tackling school dropout and promoting literacy, as well as actions to promote their employment integration and social inclusion. The Roma mediators play a key role in the smooth operation of the Roma branches of the Community Centers since they act as a bond between the local Roma communities and the Community Centers. The General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Fight against Poverty of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for the coordination and monitoring of Roma social inclusion policies at national level, acting also as the National Contact Point for Roma Inclusion. The General Secretariat is also responsible for designing the National Strategy and Action Plan for Roma Social Inclusion 2021-2030 in accordance with the guidelines and priorities set in the European Framework for Roma equality, inclusion and participation. The issues of housing and improvement of living conditions in Roma settlements at local level, raising access of Roma population to healthcare, education and employment, as well as the promotion of equal social, political, economic participation and combating Roma stereotypes and discrimination are main issues of concern. Today 56 Roma Branches operate in Municipalities throughout Greece, while their contribution to the social inclusion of Roma at local and regional level is considered particularly important. According to data available, a total number of 49.520 Roma have been served during 2017 - 2020, while about 45% of the Roma population has been served at least once.

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