

New beginning at EPAL initiative

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 GREECE

Timeline



ID number 28258

Objectives

The initiative aims to:

- (a) strengthen the social role of schools offering equal opportunities to VET learners;
- (b) combat early dropout and support learners in their transition to vocational education, while raising the profile of secondary VET for society and learners.

Interventions are targeted at first grade learners on upper secondary VET programmes (EPAL) and aim to improve their literacy and numeracy competences and assist their smooth integration into the school environment.

Description

In October 2017, implementing the 2016 strategic framework, the education ministry introduced the initiative A new beginning at EPAL, which included basic skills-enhancing measures, socio-psychological support and integration actions. The initiative was piloted in 2017/18 in nine schools. Many of the programme's actions were launched by individual schools and teachers before they were adopted and enhanced by the education ministry. Promotional events were organised in 2018/19.

A new beginning at EPAL has reached the full-scale implementation stage and is being expanded to all 407 EPALs in the country. In its current state, it includes remedial courses in Greek and mathematics as well as psychological support for learners. At the same time, schools are funded to develop creative collective projects that promote science, technology and culture and they are being equipped with teleconference and distance learning infrastructure to enable them to network and exchange good practice. The role of teachers/advisors has been instituted, aimed at establishing bridges between learners and teachers, tackling conflicts and improving the overall climate in the school community. A training course for teachers and psychologists participating in the programme was also part of the project.

The policy:

- (a) introduced the presence of psychologists in schools;

- (b) included the recruitment of Greek literature and mathematics teachers;
- (c) included a collaboration Memorandum between the education ministry and the Association of Greek Psychologists, based on which 107 psychologists were employed in 2017/18.

The initiative puts emphasis on reinforcing the teaching of modern Greek language and maths in first grade of upper secondary vocational programmes (EPAL). The approach is based on co-teaching, i.e. two teachers are present at the same time in the classroom, sharing the design, preparatory and assessment phases of the course. The initiative promotes an alternative approach in remedial courses, designed to offer pedagogical support and improve learner performance through collaborative teaching.

2017 Pilot

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

Implementation continued.

2020 Implementation

The measure was operational and ran as regular practice.

2021 Implementation

In February 2021, the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) initiated a call for in-service training for:

- (a) psychologists, who are members of the special teaching staff (EEP) serving in EPAL in the school year 2020/21;
- (b) Greek language and maths teachers and teachers of remedial courses in modern Greek and mathematics in the school year 2020/21.

2022 Implementation

Funding for the programme continued in the school year 2022-23. Innovative activities at school level embraced actions for developing projects on environmental themes, green skills, entrepreneurship programmes with gender equality perspective, technology integration in school and social life and cultural life. Since its beginning in 2017, more than 410 EPAL institutes participated and almost 1 000 actions were implemented through the initiative.

2023 Implementation

The initiative for psychosocial and emotional support of students continued in the 2023-2024 school year, as part of the project Support for literacy and socio-emotional development of vocational education students (OPS Code 6001947), included in the Human resources and social cohesion programme for the 2021-2027 programming period.

Under decision No Φ.ΜΝΑΕ/128702/Δ4/08-11-2023 (Government Gazette B' 6475) of the education deputy minister, 232 psychologists were appointed to EPAL and model EPAL schools across Greece.

Additionally, under decision No Φ.ΜΝΑΕ/133127/Δ4/20-11-2023 (Government Gazette B' 6598), teachers specialised in philology and mathematics were assigned to support the implementation of the initiative.

2024 Implementation

The initiative for psychosocial and emotional support of students continued for the

2024-2025 school year, as part of the project Support for literacy and socio-emotional development of vocational education students, which is included in the Human resources and social cohesion programme for the 2021-2027 programming period.

In particular a total of 237 psychologists were assigned to EPAL and model EPALs across Greece.

Finally, under decision No Φ.ΜΝΑΕ/119555/Δ4/11-10-2024 (B'5727),” EPAL and model EPAL (PEPAL) schools nationwide were staffed with philology and mathematics teachers for the 2024-2025 school year to implement the programme.

2025 Implementation

The initiative for psychosocial and emotional support of students continues during the 2025–2026 school year under the action ‘Support for literacy and socio-emotional development of vocational education students’, which forms part of the Human resources and social cohesion 2021–2027 programme. The action comprises a set of interventions implemented in vocational upper secondary schools (EPAL), focusing on the establishment of a network of psychologists to support students and teachers and to strengthen cooperation with other psychosocial support services, as well as on alternative remedial teaching aimed at improving literacy and numeracy, primarily for first-grade learners and, secondarily, for students in the remaining grades.

Within this framework, the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports announced the recruitment of 240 members of the special educational staff (EEP), specialising in psychology, as temporary full-time substitute staff under fixed-term private-law contracts for the 2025–2026 academic year, to serve in vocational upper secondary schools (EPAL). In addition, following a decision of the competent board of directors, two substitute psychologists were allocated for recruitment at the EPAL schools of the Sivitanidios Public School of Trades and Vocations.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)

Education professionals

Teachers
School leaders
Adult educators
Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Modernising VET infrastructure

Improving digital infrastructure of VET provision

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Acquiring key competences

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Lifelong guidance

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[The New beginning at EPAL initiative](#)

[New beginning at EPAL guidebook](#)

[New beginning at EPAL leaflet](#)

[In-service staff training](#)

[The initiative's webpage](#)

[Ministerial Decision by the Deputy Minister of Education, Religious Affairs, and Sports: Official Journal No 6475/13-11-2023](#)

[Ministerial Decision by the Deputy Minister of Education, Religious Affairs, and Sports: Official Journal No 6598/21-11-2023](#)

[Ministerial Decision on the implementation of the Alternative Remedial Teaching programme in EPAL and P.EPAL for the 2025-2026 school year](#)

[Ministerial Decision by the Deputy Minister of Education, Religious Affairs, and Sports: Official Journal No 5727/16-10-2024](#)

[Action 'Support for literacy and socio-emotional development of vocational education students, school year 2025-2026'](#)

[Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Education: Recruitment of 242 members of Special Educational Staff \(E.E.P.\) for the academic year 2025-2026](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Reform of the national system of VET and lifelong learning

In December 2020, Law 4763/2020 introduces a legal framework regulating VET and LLL and describing the organisation of each school type, the qualifications and the role of their staff (manager, teachers, career/vocational counsellors).

 GREECE

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Completed

Teacher CPD focused on apprenticeship

The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) is carrying out the project Teachers and trainers training on issues related to apprenticeship.

 GREECE

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2016 Approved/Agreed

National strategic framework for the upgrade of VET and apprenticeship

The framework sets out 10 strategic intervention areas which, in turn, contain certain implementation measures. These 10 areas are to:

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28258>

