



spotlight on VET GREECE

VET in Greece

Following new legislation strengthening its work-based component, vocational education and training (VET) in Greece is in transition. The dual learning approach in VET was reinforced with expansion of apprenticeships at secondary level and more work-based learning opportunities at post-secondary and tertiary levels.

For graduates of lower secondary education, the recent law on secondary education (2013) foresees that those who do not wish to follow general education (Geniká Lykeia, GEL) may choose between the following VET options:

- school-based programmes and specialities leading to a vocational certificate (Apolitirio EPAL, EQF level 4) or a vocational specialisation degree (Pthío Epaggelmatikís Idikótitas, EQF level 4) at vocational education school (Epaggelmatiká Lykeia, EPAL, three years). Graduates may then enter the labour market, become an apprentice, or proceed to post-secondary VET or tertiary education through general exams (for all types of higher education) or special exams (only for certain technological higher education institutes);
- programmes combining school-based and work-based instruction that lead to a vocational qualification (Pthío Epaggelmatikís Idikótitas SEK, EQF level 3) at vocational training school (Sholés Epaggelmatikís Katártisis, SEK). After two years of school-based learning, learners enter an apprenticeship year. Apart from the possibility to enter the labour market, graduates may proceed to post-secondary VET but not directly to tertiary education;
- learners who have completed first grade of GEL or EPAL may enter two-year dual learning programmes supervised by the employment service (OAED) at apprenticeship school (Epaggelmatikés Sholés Mathitías, EPAS). Studies are mainly work-based and lead to a vocational qualification (Pthío EPAS, EQF level 4). Typical programmes are car engineering, electrical engineering and automation, web design and heating and cooling technology.

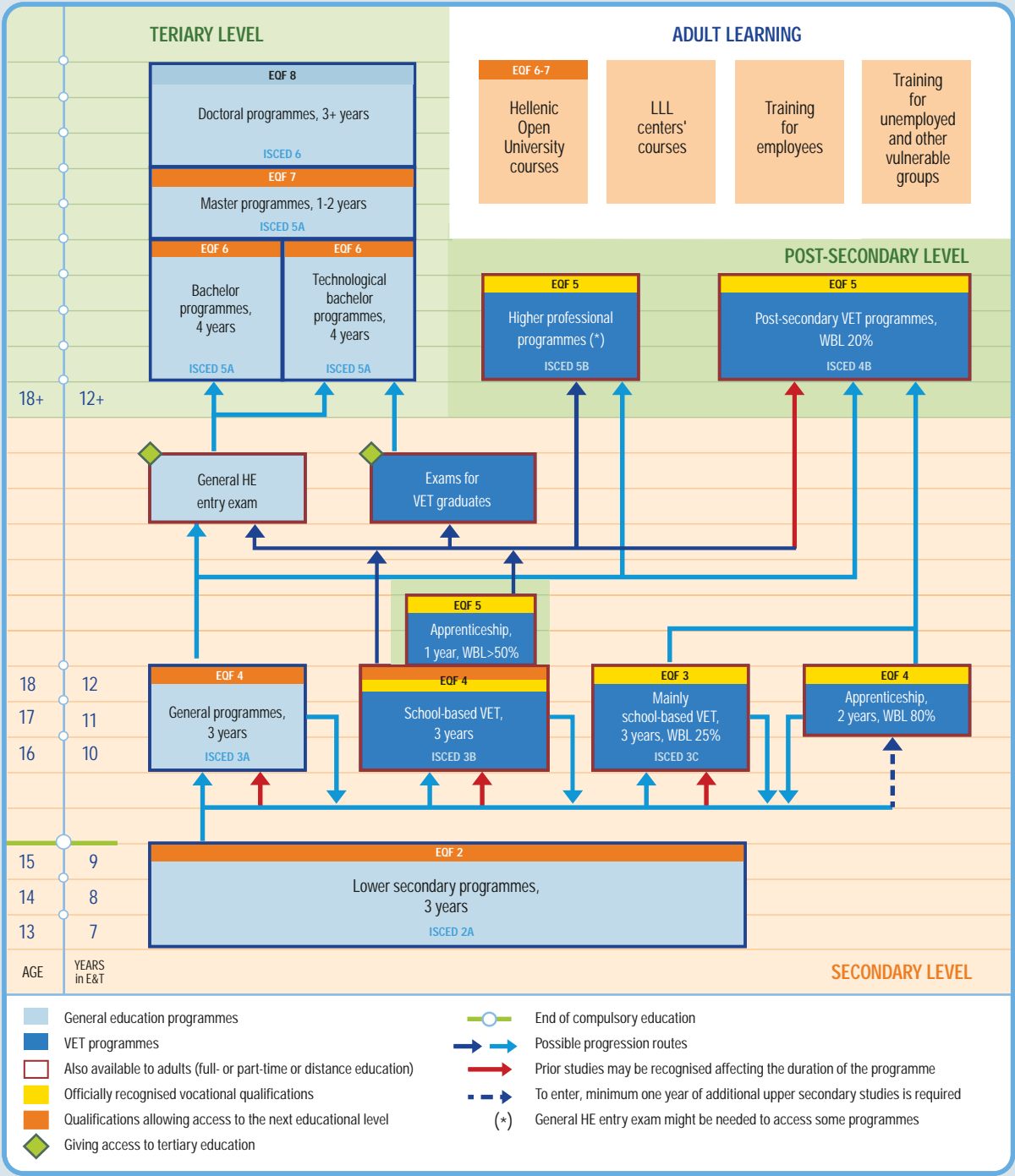
At post-secondary and tertiary levels, the following VET options are available:

- vocational training programmes offered by IEK (Institúta Epaggelmatikís Katártisis). Studies last two years (plus an optional semester of practical training) and lead to a post-secondary vocational training diploma (Díploma IEK, EQF level 5) allowing labour market access. Access to IEK is available to graduates of all general and vocational education and training programmes;
- higher professional programmes (in tourism, maritime, army, arts, etc.) offered by higher schools (Anóteres Sholés) have strong work-based elements and lead to a post-secondary VET qualification (Pthío Anóteris Sholís, EQF level 5). In some cases, access is only granted to graduates of secondary education (GEL/EPAL) who pass entry examinations. Graduates may enter the labour market or access some higher education programmes;
- for EPAL graduates, an apprenticeship year (Étos mathitías) is foreseen (Law on secondary education, 2013). It is based on dual learning and leads to a vocational specialisation degree at EQF level 5. Graduates have the same progression opportunities as EPAL graduates that have not taken part in the apprenticeship year.

Horizontal mobility in the education and training system is possible, but not very common. Students can move between general schools (GEL) and vocational ones and between vocational education (EPAL) and training (SEK).

Continuing VET (CVET) is primarily offered by lifelong learning centres run by regional authorities, municipalities, social partners, chambers of commerce, professional associations, and higher education institutions. These CVET programmes are partially regulated by the National Agency responsible for Qualifications (EOPPEP) and the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (GGDVM), but they do not lead to formal qualifications. The Hellenic Open University and post-secondary private colleges provide CVET programmes that may lead to a recognised qualification. Many recent initiatives that involve social partners and local authorities promote vocational training and work placements for the unemployed or aim at retraining/upskilling employees.

VET in the Greek education and training system



NB: EQF levels are placed according to the January 2014 EQF-NOF referencing report.
ISCED 1997 was used on the chart. Conversion to ISCED 2011 is ongoing.
Source: Cedefop.

Distinctive features of VET

In Greece, national legislation reserves the term 'formal vocational education' at upper secondary level for programmes offered by vocational schools (EPAL). These programmes allow access to higher education through general or specific exams. Although they are fully or partially regulated by the State and lead to officially recognised qualifications, other programmes at upper secondary level or post-secondary level and some CVET programmes are considered non-formal VET.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for VET provision in most cases (EPAL, SEK). It also supervises GGDVM and EOPPEP that have a substantial role in regulating post-secondary VET (IEK) and CVET. The employment service (OAED) supervises apprenticeship schools and has also been mandated to support apprenticeship years in vocational education (EPAL) and vocational training (SEK). For higher professional programmes (Anóteres Sholés), several ministries are coresponsible in areas in which they have competence. Social partners, regional authorities and municipalities are involved in designing and providing CVET/lifelong learning programmes.

Schools providing secondary-level VET (EPAL, SEK) usually offer a wide range of programmes. Institutes offering post-secondary VET (IEK) tend to focus on some fields, while higher professional schools (Anóteres Sholés) typically offer a programme in a single occupational field.

Vocational programmes for important sectors to the Greek economy, such as tourism or shipping, are available at secondary, post-secondary (non-tertiary) and tertiary levels. In these programmes, workplace-based learning has traditionally been a strong element, especially at post-secondary and tertiary levels, and has recently also been reinforced at secondary level.

Enterprises can make use of the national training fund (LAEK), by claiming financial resources to train their staff (in-house, informal or non-formal learning).

Challenges

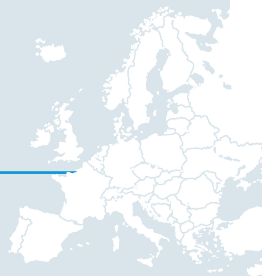
The recent law on secondary education (2013) promotes VET and increases links to the labour market. The action plan for youth employment (2012) aims to link education and training and work better, upgrade VET, reinforce apprenticeship, establish school-to-work programmes, and expand career and guidance for young people. Full implementation of the changes set in motion by legislative reform is a key challenge for the coming years.

With only 25% of learners at upper secondary level pursuing it, overall VET participation is low. Most popular VET programmes (EPAL) were so far inadequately linked to the labour market and offered little or no opportunities for work-based learning. Secondary VET was also poorly linked to local or regional authorities and social partners. Despite its dual set-up and favourable labour market transition, the apprenticeship system, which has existed for decades (EPAS), has had limited capacity. Many students do not view VET as an attractive learning pathway due to sociocultural stereotypes, actual or perceived deterioration of VET, poor links to the business world, and limited existence of occupational rights in VET-related professions.

Not all schools and programmes in post-secondary VET are valued by learners and the labour market, as systematic assessment of quality in terms of input, processes and especially outcomes is still limited.

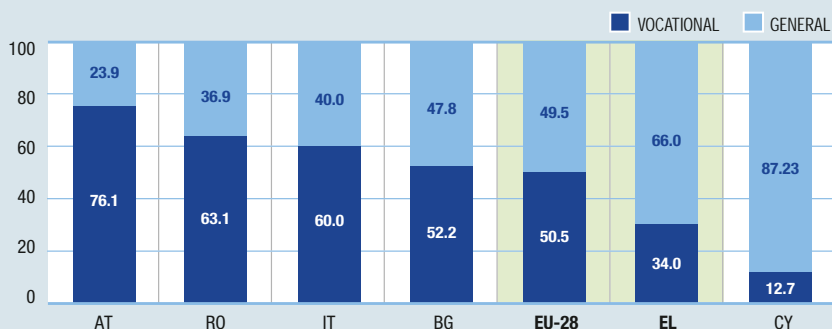
There is no comprehensive mapping of available skills or established skill needs forecasting mechanism that could inform the recent regulatory and financial initiatives. Skills and labour market intelligence needs to become an integral part of policy-making to steer reforms and students' choices.

Overall participation in CVET and adult learning is low and below the European benchmark for lifelong learning (ET 2020).



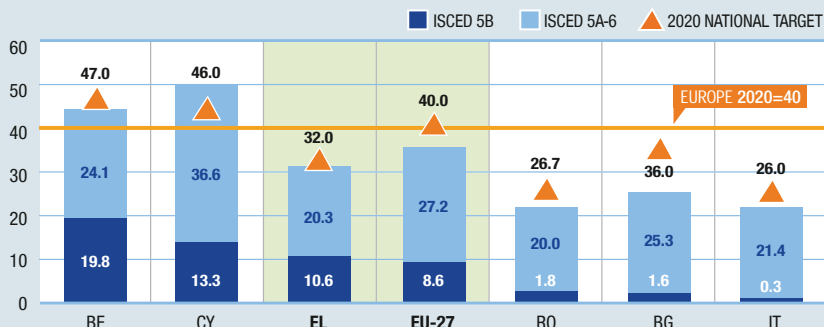
Education and training in figures

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2011



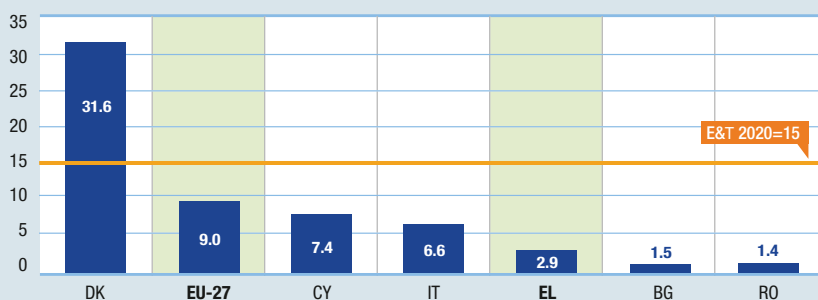
Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 28.6.2013.

Tertiary education by type
% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2012



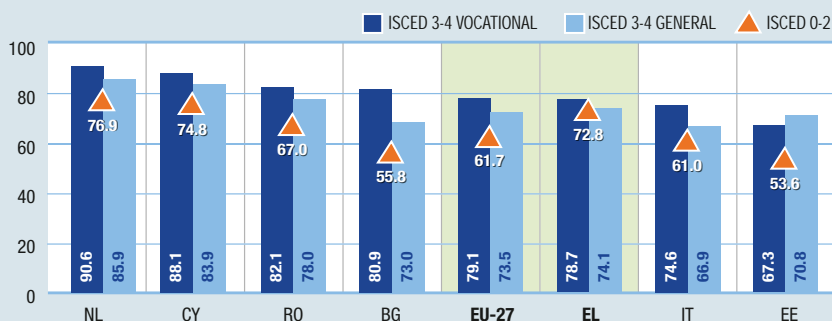
Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 8.7.2013.

Lifelong learning
% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2012



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 3.7.2013.

Employment rates by highest level of educational attainment
20-34 year-olds no longer in education by highest level of educational attainment, 2009



Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, 2009 ad hoc module of the EU labour force survey, date of extraction 19.9.2012.



Further information

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www.minedu.gov.gr	Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
www.ypakp.gr	Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare
www.gsae.edu.gr	General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning
www.eoppep.gr	National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance
www.oaed.gr	Manpower Employment Organisation
www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE	Hellenic Statistics Authority
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu	Eurostat
www.eiead.gr	National Institute for Employment and Human Resources



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