



# Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Greece

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## Introduction

The first significant efforts to develop career guidance services in Greece date to the early 1950s, with the term '*Epagelmatikos Prosanatolismos*' (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, 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, 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 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 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/b/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; Σιδηροπούλου -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 counseling 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 (Σιδηροπούλου - 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:

- a. 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.);
- b. 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;
- c. provision of information and counselling support on issues related to admission in tertiary education.

As of June 2018, KESYPs services were incorporated in the newly established Centres for Educational Support and Counselling, namely KESYs, described below.

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). Reforms 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. (Σιδηροπούλου - 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, Social Security and Social Solidarity. The two ministries 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 the Ministry of Labour 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 currently (2019) 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 Ministry of Labour from 1998 until 2010. EOPPEP focuses on enhancing the quality, efficiency and reliability of lifelong learning and guidance services in Greece, supporting the respective public authorities within the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as

well as in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity to design and implement 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.

The responsibility for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee scheme, which includes also career guidance interventions in connection to vocational training and certification of qualifications, belongs to the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity. A special working group has been established by the ministry with the participation of several stakeholders, such as representatives from the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, EOPPEP, the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED - Greek PES), other ministries and relevant services as well as regional and municipal authorities. The Youth Guarantee group has been working on the establishment of a Roadmap for: a) updating and implementing the national Youth Guarantee Action Plan; b) providing the necessary data and know-how to the State Guarantee Coordination Authority; c) composing technical proposals; and d) continuously monitoring and evaluating respective actions. Experts may also be invited to the Working Group to express their views on specific issues when required. Youth Guarantee actions are co-funded by the Operational Program "Human Resources Development - Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020".

The National Council of Education and Human Resource Development (ESEKAAD), which constitutes an advisory body to the Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, was established by the [Law 4452/2017](#). The Council was founded with the intention of providing advice and scientific guidance for issues of importance related to educational policy design. The context lies within that of promoting knowledge, viable development, best possible use of knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, inclusive employment and interconnection of education with the labour market and employment. The Council consists of 22 members for a period of three years. At its meetings, the Council may invite various experts or bodies for providing additional information, advise or recommendations pertinent to the issues being discussed.

The national Lifelong Guidance Forum "[IRIDA](#)", was established by EOPPEP, aiming to serve as the key online platform for both meaningful communication and constructive dialogue on issues related to guidance, amongst guidance providers, guidance practitioners, social partners and other stakeholders within the public and private sector at local, regional and national level.

The [Hellenic Society of Counselling and Guidance](#) (He.S.Co.G./ EL.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 EL.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](#)):

- a. [TEENS GATE](#), is an interactive guidance portal developed 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;
- b. the Lifelong Career Development Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#) has been developed 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 (e.g. former KESYPs incorporated to KESYs in June 2018) 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.

Access to guidance is also promoted by:

- a. the 71 Centres for Educational Support and Counselling (KESYs) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 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. The KESYs' mission is to provide support to school units which are under their responsibility, in terms of ensuring equal access to education for all and promoting pupils' harmonious psychosocial development and growth. KESYs are responsible for investigating pupils' educational and psychosocial needs, as well as all types of difficulties and possible educational, emotional, psychosocial and other barriers to learning. Furthermore, KESYs play a crucial role in promoting equal access to education for all, including pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs, as well those from social vulnerable groups. The services include conducting evaluations, designing and implementing educational and psychosocial interventions as well as vocational guidance, supporting the overall work of school units, providing information and training and raising awareness of the society as a whole. KESYs staff members, such as teachers of KESYs specialising in career counselling and guidance, psychologists, social workers and other teachers, collaborate with each other in the context of the joint planning and programming of tailor made educational and counselling interventions and services according to students' needs;
- b. career liaison offices, internship offices and innovation and entrepreneurship units, operating in tertiary education institutes provide career support to students and graduates, facilitating labour market integration, entrepreneurship, and career development;
  - c. centres for promotion to employment (KPA2), operating by the Manpower Employment Organisation of Greece, provide personalised approach, including individual career guidance as well as targeted workshops for the unemployed, which focus on improving job-searching skills, career management skills and entrepreneurial skills;
  - d. 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). Centres for promotion to employment (KPA2) provide personalised services, including individual career guidance as well as targeted workshops for the unemployed, which focus on improving job-searching skills, career management skills and entrepreneurial skills.

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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. 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;
- b. 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);
- c. development of the [Greek Code of Ethics for guidance provision](#) (EOPPEP, 2013);
- d. 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.

According to Law 4547-12/6/2018, 71 Centres for Educational Support and Counselling (KESYs) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs at the Regional Directorates of Education were established. In addition, the Ministerial Decision No 211076/ΓΔ4-13/12/2018/FEK B 5614 established the Uniform Rules for the operation of KESYs and includes general principles of Ethics as well as particular duties and responsibilities of KESYs staff; for instance acting within the limits of their speciality, education and experience, according to the principles and practices of equal access for all pupils to education and support services, with respect for diversity and against all discriminations. Especially in cases where the request to be evaluated relates to vocational guidance issues, the evaluation takes the form of a "personal interview" between the teacher with specialisation in counselling and vocational guidance and the pupil. During the personal interview, if appropriate, following the written consent of the pupil's parents or guardians, other teachers or members of the special educational staff of KESYs may also participate in the evaluation process. After the end of the interview, all the data collected are recorded and the objectives of the counselling procedure are set in view of the follow-up of career guidance services. KESYs are also responsible for providing information and training to the school community in cooperation with the relevant Regional Center for Educational Planning (PEKES), involving students, teachers and parents, according to

the needs and priorities of the schools in the areas of their responsibility, as well as organize targeted informational and sensitisation activities of the local community.

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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:

- a. the end users by providing them with innovative guidance tools and services in order to help them acquire career management skills;
- b. 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 promote 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](#)).

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:

- a. readiness to happenstance: allows people to identify, create and capitalise on fortuitous situations, be they positive or negative;
- b. creating alternative career perspectives: helps people invent practical ideas about how they can promote themselves and how they can discover new career opportunities;
- c. career adaptability: enables people to cope and “negotiate” successfully with changes and transitions within the world of work (Porfeli and Savickas, 2012; Savickas, 2013);
- d. social awareness: helps people develop an empathic understanding as well as more effectively act as a part of the society;
- e. 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;
- f. 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);
- g. 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;
- h. job search skills, social networking skills, mobility skills, and leisure time management skills (E.O.Π.Π.Ε.Π., 2013)

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, all members of the educational community collaborate with each other, under the instruction of guidance practitioners working at regional career guidance services of the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, namely KESYs - Centres of Educational and Counselling Support (ex KESYPs). According to Law 4547/2018 and the Ministerial Decision No 211076/ΓΔ4-13/12/2018/FEK B 5614, in the framework of career guidance activities, KESYs are responsible for the administration procedures regarding the approval of career education programs submitted by schools, as well as the organisation and supervision of those programmes in cooperation with other staff members of KESYs and school teachers.

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 3 to 4 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, KESYs, 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 1 to 3 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.

In the field of employment and specifically of the active employment policies, the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation - PES (OAED) introduced new interventions 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 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, organises 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:

- a. cultivate their creativity and develop critical thinking;
- b. 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;
- c. are trained in basic economic concepts;
- d. develop important professional and social skills such as teamwork, negotiation, problem solving, presentation skills, etc;
- e. are "connected" with the working environment, understanding the efficient organisation of the production process, working conditions, opportunities for future work;
- f. learn through role playing and simulation games, as well as educational visits to enterprises.

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## Evidence, monitoring and assessment

Mainly the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has been monitoring the implementation of services offered by the regional counselling and guidance centres (KESYPs), operating until June 2018, mostly based on client satisfaction and quantitative indicators. The Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) is responsible for monitoring the relevant services offered by employment counsellors at centres for promotion to employment (KPA2). Limited data are available concerning the assessment of the effectiveness of career guidance provided by these services. The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) has established mechanisms for the monitoring and the improvement of the online guidance portals [TEENS GATE](#) and the [e-STADIODROMIA](#) portal.

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 recent 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).

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, collecting information about education, training and employment, keeping databases updated, and disseminating information. The situation is becoming even worse, due to the lack of cooperation between the different guidance bodies. Finally, one should also mention here 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).

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. 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).

The external evaluation delegated by EOPPEP in 2016 to an independent organisation has been a key mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of the TEENS GATE portal and for identifying 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:

- a. 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;
- b. 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;
- c. 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.

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

- a. 2.029 career education programs were implemented in 835 schools, in which 17.121 secondary education students participated;
- b. 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 visitors/users of the then KESYPs that received guidance and counselling services.

The newly established Centres of Educational and Counselling Support (KESYs) by Law 4547/2018 and the Ministerial Decision No 211076/ΓΔ4-13/12/2018/FEK B 5614, incorporate 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 KESYs' staff visits to school units, after relevant planning and consultation with the responsible communication teachers. It is foreseen that KESYs staff should keep a record of meetings, namely the date, purpose, duration and content of the visits-interventions.

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## ICT in lifelong 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), 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 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.

The [TEENS GATE](#) is an interactive guidance portal targeted to adolescents, students, young people as well as guidance practitioners, in the field of education and training. The portal was officially launched in 2012 to offer friendly online career guidance tools such as: digitised tests regarding interests, values and decision-making, an e-portfolio development tool (also available in English), thematic information catalogues and useful links. 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) and a self-help tool enabling education and employment transitions. Teenagers, students and youngsters can also be informed about the available career guidance services administered by the Ministry of Education at regional level (Centres for Educational Support and Counselling, namely KESYs) and ask for further personalised support. TEENS GATE has been widely used free of charge by students, youngsters, and guidance practitioners with more than 850.000 registered users so far.

The Lifelong Career Development Portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#) has been developed within the activities of EOPPEP as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, providing innovative career development services targeted to adults of all ages. The portal has been continuously updated since the end of 2013, providing digitised career tests, an e-lifelong career portfolio development tool (also available in English), as well as career and mobility resources. A special part of the portal deals with career management skills, including relevant interactive activities. The portal has already over 98.000 registered adult users, serving as a preventive rather than a therapeutic intervention against unemployment, with the aim to support a lifelong learning culture and lifelong career development.

Both EOPPEP's portals have been used as the official career tools by the competent guidance services of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (e.g. KESYPs incorporated to KESYs in June 2018) as well as by teachers 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.

The portals have been connected to the Greek PES services offered by the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), in order to be used by the registered unemployed and the students of OAED 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, Social Security and Social Solidarity, 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". Also, 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 often 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 "[PLOIGOS](#)", 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. PLOIGOS is connected to the European Portal for [Learning Opportunities and Qualifications](#) in Europe promoting educational mobility throughout Europe.

Concerning a more systematic monitoring of the labour market, a national [Labour Market Diagnosis System](#) was created by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity in 2016, following an action plan adopted by the European Commission in 2015. The system includes a broad operational network of stakeholders and social partners contributing inputs to the labour market monitoring mechanism and harnessing its outflows. The National Institute for Labour and Human Resources (EIEAD), an entity supervised by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, is responsible for coordinating the network, supervising and managing the IT system and producing results. The Labour Market Diagnosis System presents the results of its surveys released every 6 months, aiming 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.

The Labour Market Diagnosis System consists of two pillars. The first pillar refers to data concerning employment, unemployment and entrepreneurship, collected from multiple sources and organised and visualised in a way that allows interactive browsing and searching for information. The system is publicly accessible via the LMDS website. The second pillar refers to relevant data analysis carried out by EIEAD, that highlights the most dynamic professions and their characteristics; it also facilitates the designing of targeted active policies to support specific sectors, occupations, demographics, skills and geographical areas. Diagnostic data and analysis are continuously renewed and enriched. Initially, the dynamism of a profession or industry is estimated based on the absolute size and rate of change in employment over the last three years. Further processes include the assessment of the dynamism by considering more criteria based on multifactorial and multi-criterion analysis, econometric employment forecasting and the use of input-output tables to assess professional and sectoral changes in the economy.

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## Training and qualifications

In Greece, for more than twenty years counselling and career guidance services have been offered mostly by staff serving in the relevant public structures of education and employment. In this respect, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as well as the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, in cooperation with EOPPEP or Universities, have been providing in-service training in the field of career guidance, targeted to teachers serving at the Counselling and Guidance Centres (KESYPs) incorporated in the Centres of Educational and Counselling Support (KESYs) since June 2018 and other designated employees (e.g. employment counsellors working at the Greek PES services offered by the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED)). 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.

In order to successfully carry out their tasks, practitioners working for the Division for Career Guidance and Counselling of the EOPPEP, are required to possess at least a Master's degree in the field of guidance and counselling.

Guidance practitioners working at the KESYPs of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs until June 2018 were former secondary education teachers of different specialisations, who received in-service training

in career guidance and counselling. However, many of them also possess postgraduate diplomas or Master's level of education in career guidance and counselling. In the newly established Centres of Educational and Counselling Support (KESYs), pursuant to Law 4547/2018, 140 teachers of all specialisations of secondary education with a specialisation in career counselling and guidance were appointed to provide career guidance services targeted to students of schools in areas of each KESYs' responsibility. In addition, six specialists in vocational orientation of blind people are also employed in KESYs, being also trained in respect of mobility and daily living skills of the blind, sign language and the Braille writing system.

Employment counsellors working at the Centres for Promotion to Employment (KPA2) are public servants - permanent employees of the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), who regularly receive in-service training in career guidance and counselling, as well as possess postgraduate diplomas or Master's level of education in career guidance and counselling as well as related professional experience. Up to 2018, 304 employment counsellors were involved in personalised services that targeted the unemployed and promoted networking with employers, while 21 employment counsellors are assigned to provide career counselling services. In early 2019, in the framework of OAED's reengineering, the organisation recruited 335 new employment counsellors for the unemployed as well as employment counsellors for employers; the aim was 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 new approaching employers, so as to increase the effectiveness of updated OAED's services in relation to the integration of the unemployed into the labour market.

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

- a. MSc Career Counselling and Guidance (duration: four semesters, plus 400 hours internship, provider: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, School of Philosophy);
- b. MSc Educational Sciences - specialisation "Counselling and Career Development" (duration: four semesters, provider: University of Patras, Department of Primary Education);
- c. MSc "Counselling and Vocational Guidance" (duration: three semesters, provider: ASPETE - Higher School of Pedagogical & Technological Education, Department of Education);
- d. 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:

- a. elaboration of a study mapping the competences of the career guidance practitioners in Greece;
- b. 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:

- i. 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.);
  - ii. level A career guidance counsellor (upper 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)
- c. development of a model continuing vocational training program for guidance practitioners, 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 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, when the process of certification will be officially established;
- d. according to the Ministerial Decision BO / 64529 / 27-11-2017- Government Gazette B317 6-2-2018 the terms and conditions for the establishment of relevant registries of career guidance counsellors have been determined, in view of the official establishment of their certification process. In this respect, the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), through and [open call](#) procedure has begun to accept applications from interested Career Guidance Counselors who hold level A (upper level) credentials so as to be included in the relevant EOPPEP Sub-Register A1 level of Career Guidance Professionals

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 Counselors in Greece.

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## Funding career guidance

Career guidance services in Greece 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, Social Security and Social Solidarity. Currently all new and innovative career guidance and counselling interventions in the field of education, training and employment, addressed to different target groups of all ages, are co-funded by the Operational Program ‘Human Resources Development - Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020’, which includes also the national Youth Guarantee actions.

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## Career guidance for school pupils

Nowadays, the subject of career guidance is neither taught at lower nor at upper secondary schools. The subject is only formally incorporated in the curriculum of vocational upper secondary education —Grade A – first year of Vocational Lyceum (EPAL)—, as well as in Special Education, at Special Vocational Lower Secondary Schools and Special Vocational Upper Secondary Schools (see section [Career management](#)

[skills](#)).

As from June 2018, students in secondary education have the opportunity to access and benefit from free of charge career guidance services provided by the 71 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 (see section [Access to guidance](#)). In respect of career guidance, KESYs implement programs aiming to support students to take educational and professional decisions and plan their careers. In particular, through counselling and career guidance programs, pupils are provided with the opportunity to:

- a. acquire an overall knowledge of their interests, skills and competences and other factors that may affect their career decisions;
- b. receive information on education, occupations and the labour market, as well as the relevant knowledge for searching and exploitation of such information;
- c. investigate alternative educational and vocational paths and decide on the course of their career;
- d. receive individual support in completing the computerised application form for admission to higher education;
- e. draw up individual action plans for their future educational and professional life.

KESYs also support school units to design and implement specific student transition activities between different levels of education, as well as to pupils' transition into adulthood. For the implementation of the targeted educational and psychosocial interventions as well as the career guidance interventions, KESYs' staff visits the school units, after relevant planning and consultation with the responsible communication teacher. Teachers with specialisation in career counselling and vocational guidance are employed in KESYs and are responsible the provision of vocational guidance services, as following:

- a. support pupils' smooth transition into adulthood and the development of their professional identity;
- b. organisation and supervision of school career education programmes in cooperation with other staff members of KESYs and the school teachers as well as the administration procedures for the approval of career education programs submitted by schools;
- c. organisation and implementation of visits to the school units in the area of KESYs' responsibility, aiming at informing pupils, teachers, and parents about issues related to changes of the education system, transition processes and characteristics of post-secondary and tertiary education, labour market trends and life skills. In addition, raise pupils', teachers', parents' awareness for the necessity of timely and valid investigation and information on educational and professional choices, the usefulness of counselling before and during the decision-making process and the usefulness of self-information skills;
- d. exploration of perceptions, dysfunctional beliefs or prejudices of pupils, teachers and parents about gender, social or economic class, nation, language, disability, religion, etc., which hamper a satisfactory educational and career choice for the individual, as well as the cultivation of a positive attitude towards change;
- e. organisation and implementation of animated workshops, informative meetings and training sessions in local community with the participation of pupils, teachers, and parents, on general and specific themes related to career counselling and guidance as well as particular school issues;
- f. organisation and implementation of students' visits to workplaces to familiarise with old and new professions, in collaboration with teachers' associations, local community bodies (Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Mass Media, career guidance and professional associations) as well as students' visits to higher education institutes;

- g. organisation and implementation of professionals' and labour market representatives' visits to schools, in collaboration with the teachers;
- h. implementation of individual counselling sessions with students of Grade B (2<sup>nd</sup> year of Lyceum) and Grade C (3<sup>rd</sup> year of Lyceum) with the aim of exploring desires, aspirations, feelings, beliefs, difficulties, special abilities and skills that determine career choices, facilitating the handling of internal or external obstacles to exploit their potential and develop an appropriate action plan in order to enable students in their transition to new educational and/or career paths, strengthening their self-awareness and self-esteem as well as provide assistance in applying for admission to tertiary education.

In terms of a holistic approach the teachers of KESYs specialising in career counselling and guidance collaborate on a regular basis with other KESYs staff members, such as psychologists, social workers and other teachers, in the context of the joint planning and programming of KESYs. Furthermore, the online portal [TEENS GATE](#) and the [Real Game](#), developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, are extensively used by adolescents, students, young people and guidance practitioners, in the field of education and training (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

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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.

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".

In addition, the 71 centres for educational support and counselling (KESYs) support the process of career planning and development of VET students, in order to help them follow their preferable career path, such as:

- a. enter the labour market according to the obtained vocational skills;
- b. continue for further studies in tertiary education;
- c. continue for further studies in vocational training institutes (IEK);
- d. participate in apprenticeships;
- e. attend vocational education courses for two years.

In addition, the online portal [TEENS GATE](#) and the [Real Game](#), developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, are extensively used by adolescents, students, young people and guidance practitioners, in the field of VET (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

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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 innovative career development 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

Adult Education is offered either through the formal education system (Second Chance Schools - *Sxoleia Deferis Efkairias*) or in the form of non-formal education (Vocational Training Schools, Vocational Training Institutes - *Institouta 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 (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 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, students are supported 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, through the Operational Programmes of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (Operational Program "Human Resources Development - Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020) 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 - *Institouta 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 guidance and counselling services are provided to IEK students and graduates in both public and 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 I and II - *Kentra Dia Viou Mathisis* (KDVMs) (Law 4111/2013 and Law 4186/2013), 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), 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. KDVM training subjects focus on entrepreneurship, career counselling, social skills and actions, environmental and health issues, vulnerable social group programs, language courses, parent counselling etc. 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, Social Security and Social Solidarity.

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. 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, Social Security and Social Solidarity with the support of the Manpower Employment Organisation (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:

- a. theoretical training programs in several cutting edge occupational disciplines;
- b. 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);
- c. career guidance and counselling services for the trainees before the training and during the internship, aiming to:
  - i. the selection of the training program to be attended by the beneficiaries based on their educational and professional profile, skills and interests;
  - ii. the appropriate linking of beneficiaries' profile with available internship positions in the cooperating enterprises;
  - iii. the preparation of the unemployed for their transition to the work environment as well as their integration / reintegration into the labour market;
  - iv. the placement, monitoring and supervision of the trainee during the internship
  - v. 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.
- d. certification of the knowledge, competencies and skills acquired by the training program attended.

Also, the lifelong career development portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), which has been developed within the activities of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, provides innovative career development services targeted to adults of all ages (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

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## Guidance for the employed

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 work changes 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 Office & Business Staff of ACCI](#) (Athens Chamber Of Commerce and Industry), 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, Social Security and Social Solidarity 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 Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), through the [Special Fund for the Employment and Vocational Training](#) (LAEK), formed by the social insurance contribution paid 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.

In addition, the lifelong career development portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), which has been developed within the activities of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, provides innovative career development services targeted to adults of all ages (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

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## Guidance for unemployed adults

The core structures of the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), aimed at implementing active employment policies and contribute to the reduction of unemployment, are the Centres for Promotion to Employment (KPA2), supervised by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity. The process of supporting the unemployed by the employment counselors is one of the core KPA2 functions, based on the key tool of personalised approach, aiming to reconcile labour supply and demand by linking the unemployed with active forms of employment. The methodology and implementation of the specific process is based on the core principles of Career Counselling, aiming to empower and activate the individual to make the right professional decisions, while respecting the uniqueness of his or her personal characteristics, skills, needs, and professional interests. The approach focuses on defining the individual's professional goals, preparing an individual action plan, successfully pairing and linking the profile of the unemployed professional to the requirements of the job as well as linking individuals to training programs. At the same

time the unemployed receive professional and educational information, individual career counselling, career planning support and reorientation for a smooth transition to the labour market; placements and tracking individuals' professional career are also included. All registered unemployed who hold a valid unemployment card are eligible to participate.

The personalised approach process requires the person's presence in the service where he or she has issued the unemployment card. The process may be carried out after a fixed appointment between the person concerned and the employment counsellor or after his direct referral from the reception of the service to an employment counsellor. Within the process of the ongoing OAED business reengineering, KPA2 services include profiling and categorisation of the registered unemployed, in order to receive appropriate support through suitable employment and/or training programs, career counselling services and social benefits. OAED career counselling services are dynamic interventions and aim at mobilizing, empowering and facilitating the unemployed as part of their labour market integration, including:

- a. counselling for the activation - mobilisation of the unemployed;
- b. career guidance counselling and re-orientation;
- c. job search counselling;
- d. entrepreneurial counselling.

To provide these services, OAED has developed a network of specialised consultants that have been continuously trained to effectively implement the above actions. Also, a new job portal, introducing [e-service s](#) for the registered unemployed as well as employers, provides the possibility for online job search and job matching to better respond to the needs of different categories of users, as well as a call centre and systematic actions to networking with employers, contribute dynamically towards the upgrading of the services provided to the unemployed. Finally, information and support on employment mobility is also provided by OAED in the context of the EURES (further info can be found [here](#)).

Also, the lifelong career development portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#), which has been developed within the activities of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, provides innovative career development services targeted to adults of all ages (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

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, Social Security and Social Solidarity 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). The programs are co-financed by the European Social Fund and delivered mainly by the Manpower Employment Organisation (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.

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. Supporting services to the unemployed may include:

- a. provision of information on:
  - i. education and training opportunities;
  - ii. subsidised work experience programs
  - iii. new job vacancies;
  - iv. professional rights;
  - v. occupational profiles.
- b. 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. The [EMPLOYABILITY CENTRE](#) program, which is operated by the NGO PRAKSIS in the framework of the [Athens Solidarity Centre](#) operated by the Municipality of Athens, provides free of charge services of support to the unemployed. Job consultation, online job search with the help of experienced consultants, group workshops, networking actions and seminars, are some of the implemented actions with the purpose of supporting and developing skills. In addition, an innovative element of the Employability Centre is the [networking platform](#) that connects jobseekers with the enterprises that participate through their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes. The job consultation services of the Center are also addressed to additional unemployed groups in need, which include: families facing social and financial issues, single-parent families in crisis, unemployed women, jobseekers over age 50, low-skilled unemployed, long-term unemployed, those with disabilities, immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees.

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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.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity with the cooperation of the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) has been implementing several programs targeted to unemployed older adults aged up to 64 years old, subsidizing their wage as well as the insurance contribution paid by companies, or financing training, career guidance services and the certification of acquired qualifications.

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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. Today, the need to reduce the early school dropout rate at 9.7% by 2020 (National Country Target) has been 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:

- a. the development and implementation of diversified counselling and career guidance systems and services at school level;
- b. a broader implementation and quality assurance of career guidance and educational counselling;
- c. psychosocial support and counselling of pupils and their families;
- d. coaching of young people;
- e. systematic and personalised priority support for early school leavers through quality;
- f. 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 new 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).

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 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.

[TEENS GATE](#), the interactive guidance portal developed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)), as well as the 71 Centres for Educational Support and Counselling (KESYs) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, established at the 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 newly created category of social vulnerability, is relatively unknown in Greece. 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. These findings have been 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 feel socially excluded as being financially and psychologically supported by their families. As far as their psychological profile, they feel pessimistic and frustrated; show more anxiety, lower wellness feelings and lower self-efficacy (Παπαδάκης, κ.ά. 2016).

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 Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), public employment service of Greece, operates Apprenticeship Vocational Training Schools (Apprenticeship EPAS) that combine student's theoretical and practical education (school-based) with workplace training placements. Beneficiaries are graduates of the Grade A - first year of the General or Vocational Lyceum of age 16 to 23, who are out of employment, education and training. The EPAS training and apprenticeship lasts two years and includes Classes A - first year and B - second year, which are organised in specialty departments. Graduates of the Apprenticeships EPAS can directly access the labour market by acquiring a Diploma corresponding to the professional qualification level four of NQF or can be enrolled in Grade B - second year of the Vocational Lyceum (EPAL). Career Liaison Offices operate in 30 OAED Apprenticeships EPAS, with the aim to find more apprenticeship positions for students and monitor graduates' career development. Career guidance services include coordination of apprenticeship placements in private or public enterprises, career days and information lectures by entrepreneurs and employers, career counselling and job search techniques workshops.

In addition, the following ICT tools and services of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) support guidance practitioners working with NEETs:

- a. the interactive guidance portal [TEENS GATE](#);
- b. the [Real Game](#) for adolescents aged 12-15 and 15-18;
- c. the lifelong career development portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#) (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

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## Guidance for young people at risk

The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity as well as the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has been supporting the implementation of several programmes targeting young people at risk, co-financed by the European Social Fund and national resources.

[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 the 71 Centres for Educational Support and Counselling (KESYs) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 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 (see section [Access to guidance](#)). Additionally, the following ICT tools and services of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) support guidance practitioners working with young people at risk:

- a. the interactive guidance portal [TEENS GATE](#);
- b. the [Real Game](#) for adolescents aged 12-15 and 15-18;
- c. the lifelong career development portal [e-STADIODROMIA](#) (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

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## Guidance for special needs and disabilities

The currently in force institutional framework for special education of individuals with disability and special educational needs, is laid down mainly in Law 3699/2008 and the subsequent complementary Laws 4115/2013 and 4186/2013, 4368/2016, 4415/2016, 4452/2017 and 4547/2018. Pursuant to Law 3699/2008 as amended by article 51 of Law 4547/2018, the special educational needs of pupils with disabilities are examined and noted by:

- a. Centres of Educational and Counselling Support (KESYs);
- b. Interdisciplinary, Educational, Evaluation and Support Committees (EDEAYs);
- c. the Community Centres for the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents of other Ministries which are certified by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

The 71 Centres for Educational Support and Counselling (KESYs) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, established by Law 4547/2018 and the Ministerial Decision No 211076/ΓΔ4-13/12/2018/FEK B 5614 at the Regional Directorates of Education, aim to provide support to school units in the area of their responsibility for ensuring equal access for all pupils to education and for promoting their harmonious psychosocial development and progress (see section [Access to guidance](#)). KESYs can evaluate students who are under 18 years old, while those 18 years who have previously been evaluated by KESY as persons with

disabilities or special educational needs, fall into the responsibility of KESY to issue assessments and advice on studying in educational structures, until the age 30 years old. KESYs implement interventions of individual or group support following a request from the parents or guardians, at the premises of KESY or in the school, in collaboration with EDEAYs.

In terms of a holistic approach, the Teachers of KESYs specialising in career counselling and guidance collaborate on a regular basis with other KESYs staff members, such as psychologists, social workers and other teachers, in the context of the joint planning and programming of tailor made career guidance interventions and services according to the needs of students with disabilities. Also, each KESY employs a specialist for career guidance of blind students, responsible for evaluation, intervention and counselling in vocational guidance for visually impaired students. KESYs are also responsible for counselling provision to school teachers on issues of optimal teaching practice, responding to the needs of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, acceptance of diversity and exploitation of pupil heterogeneity, promotion of integration practices, development of collaborative activities, fostering basic skills of effective communication, psychosocial support for pupils, empowerment of specific members or vulnerable groups of the school community and dealing with situation of crisis in schools.

The Interdisciplinary, Educational, Evaluation and Support Committees (EDEAYs), established in 2014, offer organised support targeted to students with special needs and/or disabilities that includes diagnosis of their educational needs, educational and psychological assessment and support in each school of general education (up through upper secondary) in the field of Special and Inclusive Education. In particular, the personnel of EDEAYs is active in the field of educational diagnostic evaluation procedures at school, aiming to tackle difficulties or obstacles in education, provide solutions, respond to student needs, and develop an inclusive school. Every EDEAY committee consists of special education teachers, a psychologist and a social worker, aiming to support the personal development of students with special educational needs or disabilities and the improvement of their skills and abilities. EDEAYs focus on the development of a differentiated teaching and social support programme for students with learning and behavioural difficulties, following an interdisciplinary approach, in cooperation also with other social services and other competent bodies. Skills, abilities and interests of the students are identified in the process of educational assessment, while special support towards social or vocational rehabilitation is provided in cooperation with career guidance services available in KESYs to prepare those who are going to graduate. Information and counselling services are provided to the students and their family, as well as interventions promoting self-esteem, diversity, coping with anxiety and providing conflict management. Students, that despite the support received, continue to have learning or behavioural difficulties in the process of their integration into the school environment, are referred to the Centres of Educational and Counselling Support (KESYs), for further assessment, differentiated support and enrolment in the appropriate special education structure according to individuals' needs.

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' special 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 special educational needs, according to KESYs' recommendation, can be enrolled at the Special Vocational Education and Training Workshops (EETEK). 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. EETEK 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.

Career counsellors can be recruited as temporary special educational - auxiliary staff to work in the different special education structures of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, for the special support of students with disabilities and/or special educational needs, mostly by using ESF funding (Operational Program " Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning " 2014-2020).

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## Guidance for immigrants

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.

The Information Center for the Employed and Unemployed (KEPEA) operated by the Greek Workers' Confederation (GSEE) provides, inter alia, personalised information 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.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, as well as several NGOs and other competent bodies provide training, social support, including career guidance and counselling services to various vulnerable social groups, such as refugees, immigrants. 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.

The free job consultation services of the Employability Centre run by [PRAKSIS](#) NGO, in the framework of the Athens Solidarity Centre (see section [Guidance for unemployed adults](#)) operated by the Municipality of Athens, are addressed in particular, to unemployed groups in need, which include: families facing social and financial issues, single-parent families in crisis, unemployed women, jobseekers over age 50, low-skilled unemployed, long-term unemployed, those with disabilities, immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. An innovative element of the Employability Centre is the relevant [networking platform](#) targeted to the beneficiaries of the services.

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

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## Guidance for other groups

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.

Training programs and career support services offered by the Lifelong Learning Centres I and II (KDBMs) (Law 4111/2013 and Law 4186/2013) and Municipal Lifelong Learning Centres (Law 3879/2010), ensure equal access to adult members of vulnerable social groups, migrants and residents of remote - inaccessible areas. The development of independent training courses for vulnerable social groups (Roma, prisoners, Muslim minority, immigrants - repatriates, persons with disabilities) aims at their equal integration into modern society.

Second Chance Schools (Sxoleia Defteris Efkairias) 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 Programmes of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (Operational Program "Human Resources Development - Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020) and administered by the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (INEDIVIM), supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

The [Research Centre for Gender Equality](#) (KETHI) has been using EU funds to develop information and counselling centres, for women's employment and social integration as well as regional Centres of Counselling Support for female victims of violence. The centres promote the development of psychosocial and legal support actions for female victims of violence and/or multiple discrimination (e.g. immigrants, refugees, single parents, people with disabilities, unemployed, etc.), while pursuing actions to promote employment, as well as networking actions with the local community in raising awareness and disseminate information to combat violence against women.

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