

Youth policy in Greece



Council of Europe
international review

Sladjana Petkovic
Howard Williamson

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Youth policy in Greece

Council of Europe international review

Sladjana Petkovic
Howard Williamson

The international review team:

Mr Alexis Ridde
(CDEJ, European Steering Group on Youth) (Chair)

Ms Aušrinė Armonaitė
(CCJ, Advisory Council on Youth)

Ms Anna Trigona
(Secretariat)

Prof. Dr Maurice Devlin
(researcher)

Ms Sladjana Petkovic
(researcher) (rapporteur)

Prof. Dr Howard Williamson
(researcher) (co-ordinator)

The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be translated, reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic (CD-Rom, Internet, etc.) or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the Directorate of Communication (F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or publishing@coe.int).

Cover design: Documents and Publications Production Department (SPDP), Council of Europe
Cover photo: Shutterstock
Layout: Jouve, Paris

Council of Europe Publishing
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
<http://book.coe.int>

ISBN 978-92-871-8087-2
© Council of Europe, June 2015
Printed at the Council of Europe

Contents

PREFACE	5
INTRODUCTION	9
The 20th international review and the review process	9
Young people in Greece	10
CHAPTER 1 – YOUTH TRANSITIONS	13
1.1. Youth employment	14
1.2. Military service	31
CHAPTER 2 – ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE	35
2.1. Supporting the development of more active generations of young people	35
2.2. Minorities and marginalisation	44
CHAPTER 3 – THE GOVERNANCE OF YOUTH POLICY IN GREECE	47
3.1. Strategic framework and vision for youth policy in Greece	48
3.2. Delivery structures	49
3.3. Cross-sectoral co-operation	50
3.4. Evidence-based approach to youth policy	52
3.5. Legal framework	53
CHAPTER 4 – CONCLUSIONS	55
4.1. Coverage	57
4.2. Youth employment	57
4.3. Other relevant aspects of youth transitions	60
4.4. Military service	62
4.5. Crosscutting policy domains	63
4.6. Competences of those working in the youth field	64
4.7. Capacity of government and youth NGOs	65
4.8. Co-ordination	66
4.9. Costs	67
4.10. Development	67
CHAPTER 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS	71
BIBLIOGRAPHY	79
APPENDIX: PROGRAMME OF THE FIRST AND SECOND STUDY VISITS	83

Preface

Greece, officially the Hellenic Republic and known since ancient times as Hellas, is strategically located at the crossroads of Europe, western Asia and Africa. It forms the southern extremity of the Balkan peninsula in South-Eastern Europe, and shares land borders with Albania to the north-west, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Bulgaria to the north, and Turkey to the north-east. The geopolitical position of Greece largely conditions the dynamics of its internal and external economic, political, cultural, and social processes.



Ancient Greece is credited with great advances in philosophy, medicine, mathematics and astronomy. Moreover, Greek city-states were pioneers in developing democratic forms of government. Greece is often called the birthplace of western civilisation, and it is reasonable to say that “[t]he historical and cultural heritage of Greece continues to resonate throughout the modern world – in literature, art, philosophy and politics.”¹ The culture of Greece, however, has evolved over thousands of years, being influenced by other cultures and nations to the present day. The international review team notes that while the signs of Greek history and culture are very visible, those indicating crisis and recession, however, are not immediately obvious. The dominant patterns of both traditional culture and contemporary youth culture appear to be especially resilient to the economic crisis, as seen for instance in the cafés full of young people in the central areas of Athens and Thessaloníki. On the other hand, the available data and the statements of many of our respondents reveal rather different circumstances and perspectives.

The modern Greek state, which comprises much of the historical core of Ancient Greece, was established in 1830 following a war to liberate itself from the Ottoman Empire. In 1974, after a seven-year period of dictatorship, a referendum was held and the constitutional monarchy was discarded in favour of a presidential parliamentary democracy. Modern Greece has a republican structure based on the constitution of 1975. The country became a member of the Council of Europe on 9 August 1949, and acceded to the European Union (EU) on 1 January 1981, joining the eurozone in 2001. It is also a founding member of the United Nations, and a member of many other international institutions, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

According to the 2011 census, the population of Greece is around 11 million. The country consists of nine geographic regions. Athens is the capital and the largest city, and more than half of Greek industry is located there. The main economic sectors are agriculture, tourism, construction, and shipping. While Greece’s economy is the largest in the Balkans, lately it has been in the headlines for its high public debt levels. According to an OECD report (2010), the economic difficulties that contemporary Greek society and economy face go deeper than the direct effects of the recent economic crisis. Besides the severity of its fiscal problems, Greece has gradually but consistently undergone a loss of international cost competitiveness, resulting in widening current account deficits and a deteriorating international investment position, followed by a poor record of inward foreign direct investment. Resolving these problems, the OECD asserts, requires policy action on a broader front.

Accordingly, the member states of the EU have sent a clear political message of solidarity, and demonstrated their willingness to take co-ordinated action. Increased pressure on the euro and a still-deteriorating financial situation has led to several bailout packages agreed on by the “Troika” – the EU, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund – to address the country’s financial woes.

1. See <http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/greece>, accessed 18 December 2014.

While attempts by the Greek Parliament to reduce the deficit and secure another round of aid were reflected in the introduction of additional austerity measures, including wage and job reductions, these initiatives were resoundingly criticised by the political opposition and the general public, and met with mass protests. The international review team received the impression that many in Greece worry that several years of recession, austerity measures and soaring unemployment risk sending the country into a violent tailspin.

Recent OECD data² show that Greece, which has been under an internationally co-ordinated adjustment programme since 2010, has made impressive headway in cutting its fiscal deficit and implementing structural reforms to raise labour-market flexibility and improve labour competitiveness. Despite fiscal measures which cushioned the impact on inequality, the recession and fiscal consolidation have worsened income distribution and poverty as unemployment has risen and real incomes have declined. The reports stress that economic recovery, even once firmly established, should not be expected to quickly put an end to the social and labour-market crisis. To prevent economic difficulties from becoming entrenched, Greece now needs to invest in better and more cost-effective social support measures.

Although major structural reforms have been introduced in several domains, the governance of the social programme remains a challenge. The sharp rise in the unemployment rate, especially for young people, has not been adequately matched by activation policies. Various current analyses, however, stress that the crisis has opened a window of opportunity for Greece to engage in deep fiscal structural reforms and address its structural weaknesses. Special attention should be given to developmental opportunities in alternative areas such as the green economy, as well as resources embedded in human capital, especially Greek youth.

2. OECD economic Surveys 2013: www.oecd.org/eco/surveys/GRC_Overview_Eng_2013.pdf; "Society at a Glance 2014 – The crisis and its aftermath", © OECD March 2014, www.oecd.org/social/societyataglance.htm. Websites accessed 14 January 2015.

Introduction

THE 20TH INTERNATIONAL REVIEW AND THE REVIEW PROCESS

Greece was the context for the 20th Council of Europe international review of national youth policy, at the invitation of the (former) Secretary General of the Greek General Secretariat for Youth (GSY), Mr Giannos Livanos. Given the time lapse between the preparation and execution of such an international review, and the fast-changing social condition of young people in Greece, it was entirely reasonable for the Secretary General of GSY Mr Panagiotis Kannelopoulos to ask: “What impact do these reviews have on young people, now that circumstances for the young are so radically changed?”

To address this question, it is important to convey that the Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policies are a two-way process of exchange, dialogue, and learning, wherein the value of the final outcome is highly contingent on mutual understanding of complementary needs, subsequent collaboration, and the collation of relevant information. Bearing in mind the complexity of the crisis and its impact on youth in Greece, the fulfilment of these distinct objectives becomes even more important. These objectives are to reflect and advise on national youth policy, identifying elements that may provide useful ideas and lessons for national youth policies elsewhere, and to identify components of national youth policy that assist in the elaboration of a framework for thinking about youth policy across Europe (Williamson 2002). The international reviews are thus designed to contribute to a learning process about the broad development and implementation of youth policy in Europe.

The members of the 20th international review team in Greece were: Mr Alexis Ridde (nominee of the CDEJ, the European Steering Committee on Youth, and chair of the review), Ms Aušrinė Armonaitė (nominee of the Advisory Council on Youth, representing youth organisations), Ms Anna Trigona (Secretariat, from the Youth Department of the Council of Europe), Ms Sladjana Petkovic (researcher/rapporteur), Prof. Dr Maurice Devlin (expert/researcher), and Prof. Dr Howard Williamson (researcher/co-ordinator). The team, comprising members from France, Lithuania, France/Malta, Montenegro/Serbia, Ireland, and Wales respectively, brought diverse experience and expertise to the review.

It is important to note that, prior to the first visit by the international review team, the GSY produced the “National report for youth” in an attempt to capture the diverse policies targeting Greek youth in the period 2010 to 2012. Preparing this report at a time of economic and social crisis was seen as an urgent task, and its purpose was to map youth-related activities and programmes implemented by various institutions as well as to reflect on the impact of socio-economic measures on youth-related issues in Greece. Along with other contemporary studies, the report was used as a point of reference by the international review team in reviewing current developments in the youth policy field in Greece.³

YOUNG PEOPLE IN GREECE

According to available data, the concept of “youth” is not clearly defined in Greece. While the national report (GSY 2012) states that, in line with EU standards, youth represents that part of the Greek population aged between 15 and 29, the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy country sheet (EKCY 2012)⁴ emphasises that “youth policy” in Greece targets young people aged 15 to 35. In some cases, such as “young farmers”, the age limit extends up to 40, while statistical definitions of “youth” vary between 15 to 24 and 15 to 30.

According to the census, “youth” aged between 15 and 30 are decreasing as a proportion of the total population of Greece, going from 5% of the population in 2011 to 4.9% in 2012.⁵ This is in line with European and international trends, as a result of lower fertility rates and increased life expectancy. As in other societies across the world, the youth population in Greece is not a homogeneous group, but is rather diverse in terms of social, economic, ethnic, religious, and other criteria.

In profiling contemporary Greece’s youth population, the international review team was reliant on survey results presented in the national report (GSY 2012). These show that the main problem faced by both the population as a whole and by young people is unemployment (23% and 59% respectively). In addition, 69.8% of the respondents said that things in their lives were “not so good” and that they felt disappointment, disbelief, fear, fatigue, and pessimism with regard to the future. The priorities of the new generation of Greeks are to find work, education, professional development, and financial rewards. However, 65% of the young people surveyed said that it was not possible to fulfil their dreams and professional goals in Greece. They adopted a negative attitude towards opportunities for the development of business in Greece, with 89.1% believing that there is no future for business there. Their perspective on the future evolution of Greece was also quite pessimistic, expressed in terms of a “crisis” (70.8%) of which the “worst is yet to come” (73.8%) (GSY 2012: 52).

3. After a national hearing that took place on 7 February in Athens, some relevant data were updated.

4. Annual country report submitted by the nominated correspondent to the EKCY 2012.

5. Eurostat: the youth population in 2011 was 571 559; in 2012 it was 557 336; and in 2013 it was 546 389.

Along the same lines, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) reports⁶ important differences among age groups in relation to quality of life and social inclusion, detecting declines of over 20% in levels of optimism and happiness in some EU countries in the past five years. The results largely reflect the economic reality, with the highest optimism reported in Denmark and Sweden and the lowest levels in Greece, Italy and Portugal. Nevertheless, the international review team was impressed by the high level of optimism and enthusiasm still being expressed by various respondents in Greece, both youth activists and governmental representatives, especially those at local level.

As a result of limited employment opportunities, young people in Greece face many obstacles along their transitional trajectories to adulthood in times of economic crisis. Uncertainty, inequality, and exclusion are increasing among young people. It is not surprising, therefore, that the family (still) represents the most important value (51%), and probably the main source of support for a majority of contemporary youth in Greece (GSY 2012: 53), making it one of the most “familial” countries in Europe, in terms of both culture and social policy.

At the same time, young people represent the most vulnerable group in the labour market in Greece. While the national report shows that the most important features that working young people seek from their jobs are safety (permanency) and economic comfort (money), they are often forced to accept jobs with an uncertain future, low wages, temporary contracts, and insufficient social insurance (GSY 2012: 52). Contemporary data confirm that throughout Europe, young people are particularly affected by job insecurity, with 42% of young EU workers on a temporary contract (EU-OSHA 2013). This uncertainty negatively influences the autonomy and independence of young people.

Furthermore, although there are no available data on the impact of the crisis on the mental health of Greek youth, experts note that: “it is well known that in periods of crisis, children and adolescents can be affected because their parents may adopt a less supportive and without control attitude towards their offspring” (Kolaitis 2013). Therefore, in the short term, young people may exhibit externalising symptoms (such as hyperkinetic and disruptive behaviour or problems with peers) but, in the long term, they may suffer from internalising symptoms (such as depression and anxiety). In this regard, the impact of the Greek economic crisis and austerity on young people’s psychosocial situation should be further assessed (Kolaitis 2013).

Finally, the national report records that 45.8% of young people do not trust any public authority mandated to defend the interests of their generation (GSY 2012: 68). Very few have trust in political parties, trade unions, politicians, and student political parties. Intriguingly, 78.1% of respondents said that young people were willing to organise and express themselves through alternative means such as protest marches, strikes, or online communities (GSY 2012: 69). Reflecting on broader European trends, the international review team emphasises that trust in key public

6. Eurofound, *Third European Quality of Life Survey 2012*, available at <http://eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-quality-of-life-surveys-eqls/european-quality-of-life-survey-2012>, accessed 18 December 2014.

institutions, governments and parliaments has fallen over the past five years, but it is significant to note that the largest declines are most obvious in those countries facing the most serious economic difficulties, such as Spain and Greece.

In the light of much of the evidence presented in the national report and the empirical data gathered during two study visits, the international review team concluded that special attention should be given to youth transitions in Greece, as a complex process influenced by various internal and external factors, as well as to the current policy responses related to it. Two main aspects of youth transitions will be subject to particular scrutiny in this review: first, the transition between the education system and the labour market; and second, the related issue of military service and conscription, which is an integral part of the life paths of young men in Greece.

Chapter 1

Youth transitions

The international review team feels that recognition and prioritisation of the transitional challenges the youth generation is currently facing across Europe, and particularly in Greece, is very timely. After all, it is the responsibility of policy makers and practitioners in the youth field to make this transition as smooth as possible.

Although the integration of young people into society has traditionally been institutionalised as a linear sequence – school, followed by involvement in training or studies that correspond to the demands of certain occupational positions, which in turn validate citizenship status – such linear transitions have never been the norm for all. They relate to a standard life course model constructed around adult status based on paid work and the family. In late modern societies, however, young people’s “niches”, “pathways”, “trajectories” and “navigations” (see Evans and Furlong 1997) need to be understood in terms of fluidity and change (Chisholm, Kovacheva and Merico 2011).

Furthermore, youth transitions are increasingly marked by de-standardised pathways that not only take longer to complete but are also individualised. A major source of diversification among youth is the fragmentation of life course transitions (Chisholm, Kovacheva and Merico 2011). For contemporary youth, the transition from education to the labour market is often not a seamless or straightforward path. De-standardisation and the lack of reliable trajectories can reinforce vulnerability and exclusion, and young people may find themselves oscillating between autonomy and dependency.

Acknowledging the “transitional” nature of youth, the youth policy objectives of the Council of Europe (2003a) state that the social task of youth transition is:

[t]o enable young people to be active citizens socially, as well as in the work life. To be an active citizen requires the autonomy to develop and express one’s ideas and identity. This is why youth policy should promote young people’s access to autonomy, and help young people be autonomous, responsible, creative, committed and caring for others.

Recent analysis (Eurofound 2014) emphasises that in designing policies, it is crucial to recognise that young people are a very diverse group with different characteristics and often multiple needs. Policies, while sharing the same aim, should have different approaches and be tailored to individual needs, with support from personal advisers who seek to optimise the match between the individual and any intervention.

In line with the current socio-political climate, and the characteristics of contemporary youth transitions, the Youth Department of the Council of Europe has newly focused on the transition to autonomy and the working life as part of its programme for the period from 2014 to 2015 (and beyond). The proposed aim is to develop innovative youth policy and youth work responses to the current challenges faced by young people, and to advance the work previously done on access to social rights, youth participation, human rights education, and recognition of non-formal education.

Future aims for the Council of Europe appear to be well grounded in previous work carried out by the Organisation, while at the same time they are tied to a wider, emerging political agenda. Yet the contemporary youth policy debate continues to revolve around the balance between creating greater opportunities for autonomy and individual responsibility, and ensuring more possibilities for access to support and public services. In the Council of Europe's youth policy reviews, this forms the context for thinking about appropriate youth policy responses at local, regional, national, and supra-national levels (Williamson 2002).

In addition, the report from the consultative meeting "Addressing challenges to transition to working life and autonomy of young people in Europe", held in Strasbourg on 18 and 19 February 2014, states that the Youth Department of the Council of Europe seeks to further strengthen the work of the member state governments, youth organisations, and youth workers following guiding principles such as:

- ▶ a human rights-based approach;
- ▶ going beyond the focus on youth employment by addressing youth transition from a broader perspective;
- ▶ undertaking a constant needs assessment and fostering dialogue among stakeholders;
- ▶ paying special attention to the needs of vulnerable groups;
- ▶ a cross-sectoral approach;
- ▶ contextualising youth policy and youth work responses to youth transitions, while encouraging community-based solutions and integrated approaches (Pandea 2014: 20).

1.1. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Transitions into and through the labour market are important milestones for young people, but there can also be significant obstacles as young people navigate education, training, and employment, and sometimes experience none of these. Much more than in other age groups, young people are often compelled to juggle study and employment, and increasingly, unpaid work experience and volunteering (or, as it is sometimes put rather more casually, "learning and earning, loving and living"). This makes a simple categorisation of the population aged 15 to 24 years into those who are employed, unemployed, or economically inactive harder to achieve.

1.1.1. Youth employment trends in the EU

According to Eurostat (2013a), the Euro Area (EA17) seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 12.2% in September 2013, which was stable compared to August 2013. The EU28 unemployment rate was 11%, also stable compared with August. In both zones, rates have risen compared with September 2012, when they were 11.6% and 10.6% respectively. Among EU member states, the lowest unemployment rates were recorded in Austria (4.9%), Germany (5.2%), and Luxembourg (5.9%), and the highest in Greece (27.6% in July 2013) and Spain (26.6%). In 2013, compared with the previous year, the unemployment rate increased in 16 member states. The highest increases were registered in Cyprus (12.7% to 17.1%) and Greece (25% to 27.6% between July 2012 and July 2013).

Reflecting on youth unemployment trends in the EU, it is important to stress that they are generally much higher than unemployment rates for all ages. Until the end of 2008, the youth unemployment rate in the EU27 was around twice as high as the rate for the total population, reaching its minimum value (18.1 %) in the first quarter of 2008.

The economic crisis, however, has affected the young more than other age groups. This is reflected in several aspects: more than 30% of unemployed young people are long-term unemployed; 7.5 million young Europeans aged 15 to 24 are not in employment, education, or training (the so-called “NEETs”); and young people are overrepresented in temporary and part-time work (Eurostat 2013b). In September 2013, 5.584 million young people (under 25) were unemployed in the EU28, of whom 3.548 million were in the Euro Area. Compared with September 2012, youth unemployment decreased by 57 000 in the EU28, but increased by 8 000 in the Euro Area. In September 2013, the youth unemployment rate was 23.5% in the EU28 and 24.1% in the Euro Area, compared with 23.1% and 23.6% respectively in September 2012. In September 2013, the lowest unemployment rates were observed in Germany (7.7%) and Austria (8.7%), and the highest in Greece (57.3% in July 2013), Spain (56.5%), and Croatia (52.8% in the third quarter of 2013).

Comparative data show that in 2011, almost 30% of European youth were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, as opposed to 24.2% for the entire population (EYF 2013). The risk of being part of the “working poor” is higher in southern European countries such as Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain as well as in some new member states, including Poland and the Baltic nations (Eurofound 2013). The data also show that these “at risk” groups are closely related to those who are at risk of being NEETs (Eurofound 2012). Those who fall into two or more of these groups, for example young migrants, face a further elevated risk of falling into the working poor category. Therefore, a secured minimum income that allows for a dignified and autonomous life is a core element of quality jobs for young people across Europe, while the reinforcement of a lower minimum wage for young people, irrespective of work experience or capability, represents discrimination on the basis of age (EYF 2013).

As youth suffers disproportionately from the crisis, it is significant that addressing the youth employment crisis has risen to the top of the EU's political agenda. The EU Youth Strategy for 2010-18 has the challenging objectives of providing more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market, as well as encouraging young people to be active citizens and to participate in society. The

European Commission has launched several initiatives over the years to tackle the steadily increasing numbers of young people out of work:

- ▶ the Youth Opportunities Initiative (2011) aims to help young people who are not in work, education, or training by providing the means for them to acquire skills and experience (through a return to school, entry to training, or work experience including volunteering). It helps unemployed and inactive young people get into stable work or training by encouraging better targeting of funds, boosting apprenticeships and traineeships, and promoting youth mobility;⁷
- ▶ the Youth Employment Package (2012) contains measures to help member states address what has been described as unacceptable levels of youth unemployment and social exclusion. The initiative focuses on a Youth Guarantee agreement, and a quality framework for traineeships, aiming to ease the transition from education to work, and ensure all young people are offered a job and training. Youth Guarantee schemes are to be implemented by EU member states at relevant levels of governance (national, regional, local), considering the needs of different groups of young people, accompanied by supporting measures such as: strong partnerships among all stakeholders; early intervention and activation; supportive measures enabling labour-market integration; full use of EU structural funds; assessment and continuous improvement of schemes; and swift implementation (additional support is available to expedite implementation in countries such as Greece with youth unemployment rates above 25%). Furthermore, the traineeships should increase the employability of young people if they are of good quality in terms of learning content and adequate working conditions.⁸

A recent statement by EU leaders stresses that “[n]ow is the time for Member States to put in place the structural reforms and infrastructure to make the Youth Guarantee a reality as soon as possible.⁹ Participating in the second EU summit on tackling unemployment among young people in Europe,¹⁰ the Prime Minister of Greece Antonis Samaras outlined that the general direction of the Greek Government’s new policies is focused on structural reforms in the economy and society. In this regard, Greece is preparing for a comprehensive implementation of two basic programmes for young

7. See the Youth Opportunities Initiative at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1006>, which builds on other European schemes supporting young people, such as Youth on the Move (available at http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/docs/communication/youth-on-the-move_EN.pdf). It also reflects the Europe 2020 strategy (available at http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm) and previous deliberations of the Council of the European Union on reducing youth unemployment and early school leaving (see <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st11/st11838.en11.pdf>). All websites accessed 19 December 2014.

8. Degen B. (2012), “Youth Employment Package”, European Commission – DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Unit C2, Sectorial Employment Challenges, Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship; www.ft.dk/samling/20121/almindel/beu/bilag/109/1217159.pdf.

9. The message to member states from European Commission President José Manuel Barroso and European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion László Andor to the high-level conference on youth unemployment hosted by French President François Hollande in Paris on 12 November 2013.

10. Available at www.greeknewsagenda.gr/2013/11/pm-on-youth-unemployment-paris.html, accessed 19 December 2014.

people “demanded” by Europe, the Young People’s Initiative and Youth Guarantee. Although he stressed that full implementation of both programmes is expected to be achieved from January 2014,¹¹ the international review team was not updated on any relevant developments in this regard. Prime Minister Samaras ended on a note of optimism, declaring that the European economy had to recover in 2014 so member states could deal, finally, with youth unemployment.

Accordingly, the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union, in the first half of 2014, planned to promote initiatives aimed at enhancing youth employment. Priority was given to speeding up the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative, as well as monitoring the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. Another priority for the Greek Presidency in the area of youth employment is the adoption of a recommendation on a quality framework for traineeships by the Council of the European Union.¹²

Thus, as labour markets become increasingly selective, a lack of relevant skills engenders a higher risk of youth unemployment in the EU. Ensuring a good start for young people requires co-ordinated policies to bring the education system closer to the labour market. The most recent initiative of the European Commission in this regard is the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (2013), which aims to increase the quality and supply of apprenticeships across all member states, as well as to promote national partnerships for dual vocational systems, and build on good practice among member states. It aims to do this through a broad partnership of key employment and education stakeholders,¹³ seeking to improve attitudes towards apprenticeship-type learning to boost their popularity, and supporting the effective transitions of young people from education to work.

However, the European Commission’s *Education and Training Monitor 2013*¹⁴ shows that the ongoing crisis challenges European education and training systems from two different angles. First, member states have to consolidate their public finances while investing in growth-enhancing policies. Second, the EU is faced with a youth unemployment rate of 23.2%, representing a social crisis that Europe cannot allow to persist (ACEVO 2012). These two key challenges require Europe to strengthen the outcomes of its various education and training systems and adapt them to the changing needs of the labour market so as to become more relevant. While the primary responsibility for the reform process lies at national level, the European Commission has developed significant financial mechanisms to support this process.

Finally, it is worth noting that one of the measures to combat youth unemployment at EU level refers to increasing the mobility of young job-seekers by strengthening

11. See www.amna.gr/english/articleview.php?id=4235, accessed 19 December 2014.

12. Greek Presidency programme, available at www.gr2014parliament.eu/en-gb/homepage.aspx

13. See http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_el.htm, accessed 19 December 2014.

14. Produced at the request of the Council of the European Union, the *Education and Training Monitor* is an annual report presented every autumn by the Commission Services. It sets out progress on Education and Training (ET) 2020 benchmarks and core indicators, including the Europe 2020 headline target on education and training. The *Education and Training Monitor* illustrates the evolution of education and training systems across Europe, with a particular focus on the country-specific recommendations adopted in the field.

the implementation of the Council of the European Union Directive “Your first EURES job” towards the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and the Erasmus+ programme.

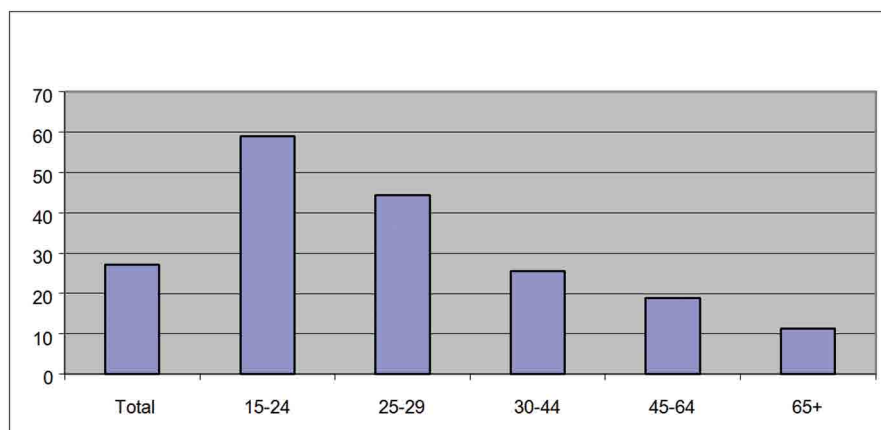
1.1.2. Characteristics of youth employment in Greece

Youth unemployment rates in Greece are not a new phenomenon – What is new is the rampant rise to alarming levels. (Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare 2013)

It is important to repeat that labour-market conditions in Greece have deteriorated dramatically during the global economic crisis, and that young people are among the most disadvantaged groups in the Greek labour market (OECD 2010). According to the “National report for youth”, new entrants to the labour market without previous experience, in the 19 to 30 age group, face the biggest problems. More than half are unemployed, while approximately one third of jobless youth are both low-skilled and long-term unemployed (GSY 2012: 24). It has been estimated that the labour-market performance and participation of Greek youth will worsen in the short term.

Furthermore, the Labour Force Survey,¹⁵ issued by the Hellenic Statistical Authority, ELSTAT, in the second quarter of 2013, shows that the highest unemployment rate is recorded among young people in the 15 to 24 age group (59%) (see Figure 1). For young females, the unemployment rate is even higher than for males. Especially relevant for the youth population in Greece is the percentage of the “new” unemployed (23%) – those who are looking for a job and have never worked in the past, as well as the “long-term” unemployed (66.8%) – those who have been looking for a job for more than a year.

(Figure 1): Unemployment rate (%) in Greece by age group, second quarter 2013



15. The main statistical objectives of the Labour Force Survey are to divide the population of working age (15 years and over) into three mutually exclusive groups covering all persons: those in employment, unemployed persons, and inactive persons. The current survey is harmonised with European legislation. An analytical description of the Labour Force Survey’s methodology and definitions can be found at www.statistics.gr, accessed 19 December 2014.

Furthermore, 36.5% of those seeking a job are looking exclusively for a full-time job, while 58.3% are looking for a full-time job but would accept a part-time job. Only 5.2% are looking for a part-time job or do not care if they find a full-time or part-time job. On the other hand, 4.4% of unemployed people did not accept a job offer because the working hours were not convenient (30.3%), the location of the job was not suitable (26.7%), or the wages were not satisfactory (22.2%).

The geographical areas (NUTS II regions)¹⁶ with the highest unemployment rate in Greece are Western Macedonia (32.9%) and Central Macedonia (30.1%), while the lowest unemployment rates are observed in the Southern Aegean (19.3%) and Ionian Islands (16.6%). The unemployment rates for the regions visited by the team were as follows: Attica (28.1%), Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (26.9%), and Thessaly (25.6%).

According to ELSTAT (2013), and with regard to levels of educational attainment, the unemployment rate is higher among youth who have not attended school (43.5%), and among those who did not complete primary education (39.6%) (see Table I). Furthermore, out-of-school youth with no or few qualifications are more likely to withdraw permanently from the labour force. On the other hand, the phenomenon of so-called “over-qualification” is widespread, with many tertiary graduates working, for example, in retail as sales personnel. The lowest unemployment rates are observed among those who have completed postgraduate studies or have doctorates (14.2%), and among those who have completed university (17.7%).

(Table 1): Unemployment rate (%) in Greece by sex and educational level

Level of education	2012			2013		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
All	20.8	27.3	23.6	24.1	31.1	27.1
ISCED 5AS, 6 (Postgraduate studies, PhD)	11.7	14.3	12.9	12.3	16.7	14.2
ISCED 5A (University)	12.8	19.4	16.2	14.8	20.6	17.7
ISCED 4, 5B (Tertiary vocational education, post-secondary vocational education)	20.7	31.6	26.0	23.5	38.1	30.6

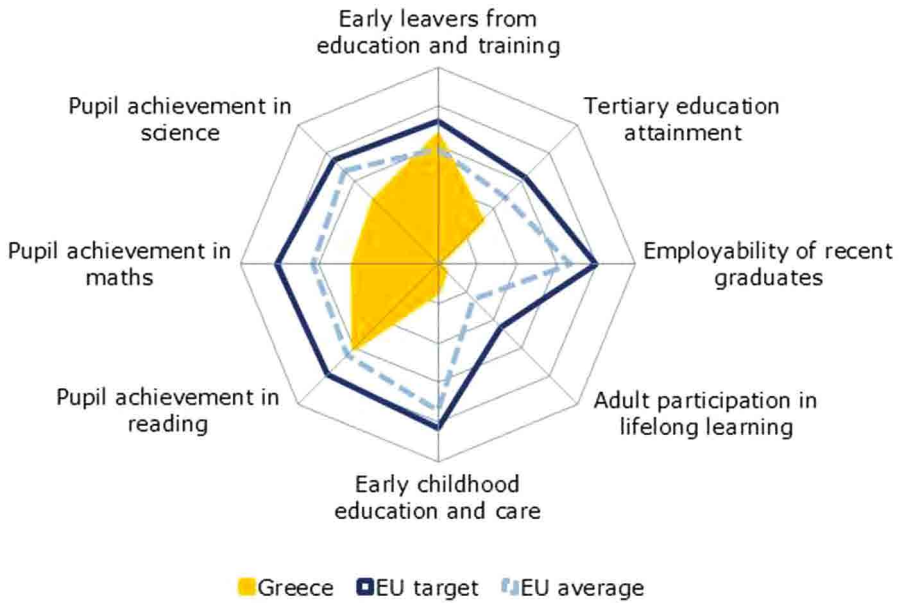
16. NUTS stands for “nomenclature of territorial units for statistics”. NUTS II areas are the lowest geographical scale for which the Labour Force Survey publishes estimates. Labour Force Survey results are not published at a lower scale (NUTS III) because, due to small populations and sample sizes, estimates in these areas have large sampling errors. We should note that in four NUTS II areas, namely Western Macedonia, Ionian Islands, Northern Aegean, and Southern Aegean, the same problem results in large sampling errors.

Level of education	2012			2013		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
ISCED 3 (Secondary education)	22.5	31.4	26.0	25.6	35.1	29.3
ISCED 2 (Lower secondary education)	23.0	30.9	25.7	30.4	36.7	32.5
ISCED 1 (Primary education)	24.0	23.8	24.0	27.4	26.5	27.0
Did not complete primary education (ISCED 1)	24.7	27.4	25.7	37.6	44.3	39.6
Did not attend school	36.0	35.4	35.8	38.7	51.4	43.5

1.1.3. Challenges for the education and training system in Greece

Going by available data (European Commission 2013), the Greek education and training system faces challenges as regards quality, efficiency, and capacity in order to ensure the successful transition of youth into employment. The main challenges are to ensure wider access, improve equity, and address geographic disparities, as well as to enhance the quality, attractiveness, and relevance of vocational education and training (VET) to the labour market. Dramatically improving the educational situation of disadvantaged groups, including migrants and Roma, was recognised as another priority by the team.

Figure 2: Performance of the Greek educational sector in relation to EU targets/averages



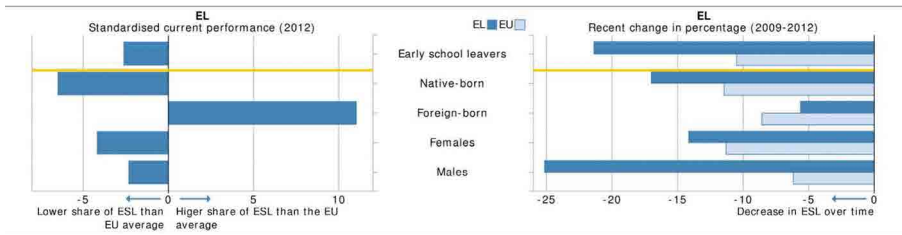
Note: all scores are set between a maximum (the highest performers are visualised by the outer ring) and a minimum (the lowest performers are visualised by the centre of the figure).

Source: European Commission, Country reports: Greece (2013: 70).

Additional data related to qualification and skill development (OECD 2011) show that school education produces rather weak results in terms of basic skills (Figure 2). In contrast, 50% of Greek youths believe that they have the required skills and knowledge to start a business, among the highest proportion in the EU. It is also worth noting that Greece performs slightly better than the EU average in terms of early school leaving (11.4% in 2012 as compared to 12.8%). The national target of 9.7% by 2020 nevertheless remains an ambitious one.

However, the international review team was informed that the national average masks significant variations among different geographical areas, types of schools, and social groups (Figure 3). The sub-group of people born abroad lags significantly behind, with an early school-leaving rate of 42% in 2012 compared to 8.3% for those born in the country. There is also a persistent achievement gap between students of migrant background and those belonging to the native population, and there are inequalities in educational opportunities and outcomes at all levels of education and training. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds have high dropout rates, and regional disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes are also very pronounced.

(Figure 3): Early leavers from education and training: sub-groups



Note: ESL – early school leaving; EL – Greece; EU – European Union.

Source: JRC-CRELL (European Commission Country reports Greece 2013: 71).

Furthermore, a large proportion of young Greeks between 15 and 24 are NEETs (approximately 15%). As the financial crisis presents an ever-greater threat to this group, Greece is strengthening its efforts to deter early school leaving and ensure reintegration into the school environment. Increasingly, it also seeks to facilitate smooth school-to-work transitions (by supporting programmes for the acquisition of work experience) and full-time or part-time employment (through incentives provided to private enterprise), with a view to encouraging people to stay in employment.¹⁷

Another important area of work is that of facilitating the access of vulnerable social groups to all grades of the educational system. More specifically, as regards young people from linguistic and cultural minorities, targeted actions are taken to assist these pupils in the educational integration process and to combat the phenomenon of early school leaving. Intercultural education is promoted primarily by supporting the teaching of the Greek language, developing students' skills, providing psycho-social support to students and their families, as well as by providing assistance to teachers and educational officials through training courses. As regards the planning and implementation of such actions, both the local conditions and the social and cultural singularities of each target group are taken into account and special emphasis is put on accepting diversity, mutual understanding, respect, and the elimination of stereotypes and prejudice.

Encouraging participation in tertiary education and modernising higher education also represent an important reform pathway in Greece. The tertiary attainment rate increased in 2012 to 30.9%, but this is still lower than the EU average of 35.7% in 2012, and has been increasing relatively slowly over the past decade: Greece is now close to its national target of 32%, set for 2020. Again, tertiary attainment remains very low for those born outside of Greece, at only 10.3% in 2012. It is worth noting that tertiary attainment is low despite a strong (but surely decreasing) employment advantage (European Commission 2013: 53).

1.1.3.1. The apprenticeship system in Greece

Apprenticeship systems, in general, combine education and training in schools or other educational institutions with workplace-based training. The apprenticeship

¹⁷ Eurofound, *European Monitoring Centre on Change*, available at www.eurofound.europa.eu/emcc/erm/studies/tn1109042s/gr1109049q.htm, accessed 19 December 2014.

system in Greece is represented through the OAED Apprenticeship-VET Schools system (EPAS). The international review team learned that participation in vocational education and training (VET) in Greece is low, although it is increasing (European Commission 2013: 54). The proportion of vocational students in 2013 was 30.9% whereas the EU average in 2012 was 49.6% (the EU 2020 target is 50.3%). In relation to VET, Greece decided to join the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and seems to be committed to the establishment of a genuine dual system, drawing on the example and support of other EU member states (for example, through a bilateral agreement with Germany).

The Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED), active in the VET sector, operates 51 Apprenticeship-VET schools, which are upper secondary schools with a total of 11 000 students that have been implementing the apprenticeship system since 1952. Currently, an increase in participation in EPAS has been noted, explained almost certainly by young people making choices that will help their integration into the labour market. EPAS students acquire work experience in actual work conditions by practising in a variety of technical specialties in enterprises across all sectors of the national economy. The team was told that the results of the integration of EPAS students into the labour market are encouraging: 73.33% of the students placed in private sector companies have retained their jobs after graduation. Despite the recession, most EPAS graduates (68.8%) are today in employment, while 21.87% of the total students are self-employed. Furthermore, based on comparative data (European Commission 2012a), our respondents concluded that there is a manifest need to enhance the importance of apprenticeships within VET studies and improve the role of all stakeholders in apprenticeship schemes.

1.1.4. Strategic approaches to youth employment

Available data show that youth unemployment in Greece is hampered by structural issues spanning the domains of education and labour-market policy (OECD 2010). This refers first to the fact that the links between the education system and the labour market have historically been weak and work-based learning opportunities have been limited. Second, the combination of relatively high minimum wages, taxes on labour, and dismissal costs has discouraged employers from hiring inexperienced youth.

In response to criticisms and concerns on these fronts, a number of measures were introduced by two Greek governments¹⁸ (2009 to 2010), aimed at sustaining youth labour-market outcomes in the context of the ongoing economic crisis. The announced actions included cuts in social security contributions, tax exemptions, work experience programmes, and more generous unemployment benefits.¹⁹ The international review team noted the description in the national report of the major changes, initiatives, and developments that took place during the years 2010 to 2012 aiming to combat youth unemployment, which mainly referred to the grant programmes designed to foster youth entrepreneurship, as well as vocational training programmes aimed to align the skills and knowledge of young people to the needs of the labour market

18. The Karamanlis Government and the Papandréou Government.

19. According to handouts given to the team.

(GSY 2012: 24-7). These have been developed and implemented by various public institutions such as the O.A.E.D., the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, the GSY, and the General Secretariat for Industry.

1.1.4.1. Youth entrepreneurship

The attention of the team was drawn particularly to the “new state initiatives” that have been established to address a lack of work experience among youth, and improve their integration into the labour force. For example, initiatives by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare had two primary methods: first, incentivising employers to recruit young people, and second, supporting entrepreneurial start-ups by young people. The first approach was mainly implemented through different types of subsidies to employers, such as:

- ▶ a subsidy to encourage the recruitment of graduates. The programme aims to create 5 000 new jobs for young people. The subsidies are provided to employers for two years, and it is expected that they will then keep employees hired under the programme for another two years. The ministry is seeking to extend the programme to accommodate 7 000 young people;
- ▶ a subsidy to create opportunities for youth to acquire work experience, aimed at 5 000 young people aged 16 to 24 who are new “entrants” to the job market. This is a subsidy of 80% of the minimum wage and a contribution to national insurance. The programme lasts for up to 12 months, with a possibility of a further 12 months (paying 70% of national insurance for a further year). So far, 940 young people have benefited from the programme.

The second approach was mainly implemented through programmes co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), aiming to promote and improve youth entrepreneurship, such as:

- ▶ a voucher for job market entry, based on both theoretical training and apprenticeships. This is directed at 35 000 young people, including 15 000 graduates. The programme totals 80 hours, while the voucher can provide €400 for theoretical training, €2 300 for graduates, or €2 000 for other participants for apprenticeships that may last up to five months. There are eligibility criteria as well as a points system for access;
- ▶ a programme supporting youth entrepreneurship with an emphasis on innovation. This was scheduled to start in 2013, and aimed to include about 7 000 young people aged 18 to 35. Innovation will be mainly focused on new sustainable technologies (such as waste management), while mentoring and grants (€10 000) will be offered to youth start-ups.

The international review team was informed that the Organisation, Planning, and Research Directorate under the GSY has implemented a range of initiatives aimed at supporting youth employment, especially entrepreneurship, over the last 15 years. Among the most important are measures under the Community Support Framework (CSF) and the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF). Currently, there are 80 projects running that are designed to provide business advice (though not funding) to young people, focusing on business plans. The directorate has also created

two entrepreneurship cells (in Athens and Thessaloníki), providing mentoring and connecting young people with established businesses. Two more cells are planned in Patras and Heraklion (in Crete). Despite the high level of young people interested in applying (some 35 000 applications for around 3 000 places), the current financial situation has already led to some reform of the programmes and cuts to initial plans. Meanwhile, information and communication technology has been set up as an example of good practice to reach young entrepreneurs (a website has been created that receives 800 visits a day from young people in Greece, Cyprus, and further afield).

The Ministry of Education, with co-funding from the ESF, also facilitates school-to-work transitions through Youth Entrepreneurship Support Structures, via the Operational Programme Education and Lifelong Learning. The objective is to provide consultancy services to young people across the country who are interested in entrepreneurship, with specialised counselling through a network of collaborating professionals. In the context of the NSRF, the support structures were redesigned so that they could be upgraded from an organisational and operational point of view, and to optimise their efficiency and increase their viability.

Two new programmes have also been implemented by the General Secretariat for Industry, targeting young people seeking to start new businesses:

- ▶ Encouraging Entrepreneurship among Young People (aged 18 to 39): this programme encourages the establishment of new enterprises by young people in almost all spheres of economic activity (e.g. services, trade, industry, tourism, environment), based on the promotion of competitiveness and entrepreneurship. It provides financial aid of up to 50% of the total eligible budget, and has been implemented in all regions;
- ▶ New Innovative Entrepreneurship: this programme seeks to promote innovative entrepreneurship to upgrade the country's production process and redirect it towards high value-added goods and services through the integration of knowledge, quality, and environmental awareness. It provides financial support for the setting up of businesses by individuals seeking to turn an innovative idea and/or proprietary know-how into enterprise innovation. In addition, it provides financial support for small and very small new enterprises with up to five approved accounting periods, aiming to commercialise innovative ideas by placing new products and services on the market, expanding and diversifying their products and services, and improving their production and service provision processes. One important achievement of the programme is the creation of an Internet community through www.startupgreece.gov.gr and social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), which helps simplify a complex administrative framework and allows for youth-friendly access to information on start-ups.

Finally, the international review team discovered the special potential for the promotion and development of youth entrepreneurial activities that is embedded in the Federation of Hellenic Associations of Young Entrepreneurs (OESYNE, founded in 2001), as well as its regional associations. One of them, the Hellenic Association of Young Entrepreneurs Thessaloníki and Central Macedonia, brings together young entrepreneurs who are under the age of 43, whose

main areas of activity are the provision of services and production. Although the association faces many administrative obstacles and systemic barriers, its main advantage is the possibility to provide opportunities for peer learning, support, and networking. Its role in advocating and lobbying for youth to be recognised as a valuable resource in business is also significant. Its threefold aims are concerned with:

- ▶ advancing entrepreneurial spirit among young people;
- ▶ supporting the contribution of young entrepreneurs to the economic, business, and social development of Greece in the context of the EU;
- ▶ organising and promoting the networking of young entrepreneurs who are active in Greece and abroad.

It is not, however, clear to what extent the necessary support has been provided to the federation and regional associations, and in what ways their role can be promoted and strengthened in the future.

On the other hand, respondents representing relevant governmental institutions stressed that:

There is a tradition in Greece that entrepreneurship is supported by Greek society and, in our experience, if young people are really committed and organised appropriately, then they can do this and be successful. Young people interested in self-employment and properly registered can go through a three-day course to see whether they really understand the challenges involved. Most of these young people are those who find it impossible to get work.

Although the international team did not have the opportunity to visit any examples of projects aiming to develop and foster youth entrepreneurship, some young respondents expressed a distrust of existing state policy which was, as they put it, “imposing entrepreneurship as the salvation” for the youth population in times of economic crisis. It was stressed, in line with some academic research (see MacDonald and Coffield 1991), that youth-led firms can be highly risky to manage and are often not truly sustainable, and also that “young people who are desperate need security first before even thinking about setting up their own businesses”. Most of our respondents were generally not aware of the state initiatives and measures delineated above. Those who had some knowledge of the programmes maintained that “due to wrong timing, things like the ‘hubs’ do not seem to have had much effect”. Our young respondents were also unaware of any young people (among their peers) who had set up their own business. They attributed this to a “lack of information”. In their opinion, the complicated bureaucratic procedures that prospective young entrepreneurs are required to follow represent significant barriers to start-ups.

1.1.4.2. Youth and rural development

A decrease in employment has been registered in all sectors of the economy in Greece²⁰ except the primary sector (based on the direct use of natural resources,

20. ELSTAT, “Labour Force Survey, 2nd Quarter 2013”.

including agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, and extraction of oil and gas). The decrease in the secondary sector (production of manufactured goods) was 9%, and the decrease in the tertiary sector (services) was 3.9%.

This tendency can be understood in the context of the efforts being made by the Greek Government to improve employment prospects in the primary sector. In this regard, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food implements its Rural Development Programme (RDP) as the horizontal national programme of the agricultural sector and rural areas of Greece for the European Commission Fourth Programming Period 2007-2013.²¹ New policy objectives for the youth generation are met through Measure 112 – “Setting up of young farmers”. The purpose of this RDP measure is to attract young people to rural areas and promote their involvement in agriculture in order to contribute positively to employment and stop rural depopulation. The measure aims to support 12 600 young farmers by the end of the programming period. Support is implemented through capital grants of €10 000 to €40 000. The international review team was told that, if the young farmers supported by this measure do not have the professional capacity, they have the opportunity to be trained through other operational programmes co-financed by the ESF. In the second and third programming periods (1994 to 2006), about 30 000 young farmers were settled in rural areas.

Importantly, the objective of the Axis 3 Measures – “Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy” is to foster entrepreneurship by providing multiple non-agricultural activities and alternative sources of income to reduce under-employment in agriculture, create equal opportunities for youth and women, as well as to improve income and retain the rural population in the countryside. The team was furthermore informed that, through the evaluation procedure of the potential beneficiaries to be supported by these measures, young people are awarded extra points in a rating system. As part of monitoring and evaluation, indicators are recorded and analysed in terms of the age of those participating and the level of their participation throughout the implementation of the programme.

Although young people seem to be willing to return to rural areas in times of crisis (if provided with an acceptable infrastructure), our respondents suggested that the beneficiaries of the programme face various challenges:

- ▶ high standards related to the application process, and unclear definition of the term “farmer”, which causes confusion in terms of access to funding and inequality in terms of competitiveness in the market;
- ▶ a lack of continuity in state support during the implementation process, in terms of funding, incentives, and guarantees, resulting in a debt crisis and risks for many young farmers;
- ▶ complicated bureaucratic procedures which stop them from being productive and efficient;

21. The RDP is co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) at an average rate of about 83%. The RDP was approved by the European Commission's decision C(2012) 3475 and EAFRD contributes a budget of €3.9 billion.

- ▶ rising costs of production (one young man noted, “Farm prices are the same as in my father’s day but the costs are eight times higher”);
- ▶ a lack of social recognition of the Union of Young Farmers (PENA) (up to 40 years of age).²²

From the evidence and perspectives gleaned by the international review team, it may be said that a majority of young farmers feel that the current state of agricultural policy, which seeks to foster internal migration from urban to rural areas, is not sustainable and is not to be recommended because of the risks involved.²³ Instead, family traditions in farming should be supported in order to create more job opportunities from which others can benefit:

City people have no knowledge of these things. It is a very dangerous idea that young people from the cities could do this kind of thing. It is a whole science and experience, and you need infrastructure and family tradition to succeed, otherwise it will fail. The state should be supporting those farmers that are still trying to sustain their businesses.²⁴

Young farmers appear to have little trust in rural entrepreneurship and innovation, since it takes a lot of effort to translate theoretical ideas into practical realities. Given serious budget constraints and the complicated bureaucracy in place, this goal seems a distant one:

You can be very entrepreneurial in agriculture, around both production and distribution. But agriculture, or tourism alone, in the long term, is not the answer. Perhaps services to industry need to be more in focus. But we are all in need of continuous learning. I may be very critical in my comments about Greek society, but there is a lot of disappointment in current state policy.²⁵

1.1.5. Discrimination in the labour market

The issue of discrimination in the labour market was raised by several respondents, in line with the fact that in recent years a number of national governments in the EU have developed new employment legislation specifically targeting youth, which deviate from universal labour laws and which demonstrate that the working rights of young people and the rights of young people to a decent and fair wage are not being respected. As previously mentioned, young people are often victims of prejudice and discrimination in the labour market. In some EU member states, young people do not have the same rights to minimum wages and social protection. The data show that discrimination against young people in the labour market, as well as in the provision of services, is a pervasive reality in Europe: they are discriminated against on the basis of their age as well as other individual characteristics – real or perceived – including gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic origin, disability, religious beliefs, or social and educational background (EYF 2013).

22. They represent only 6% of the total farmers in Greece.

23. One of the associations of young farmers is even actively advocating against this policy by using local media.

24. From the team’s official notes.

25. Ibid.

Quality employment, however, is a crucial element with regard to the professional development, autonomy, and well-being of young people in Europe. They have the right to a job that respects both their physical and psychological health and this right must be reflected in national and European employment policies.

In this regard, the international review team notes that Greece ratified the European Social Charter on 6 June 1984 and accepted 67 of the Charter's 72 articles. Greece signed the revised European Social Charter on 3 May 1996, though it has not yet ratified it (Council of Europe 2014). The Charter guarantees fundamental freedoms and rights in areas such as housing, health, education, employment, legal and social protection, movement of persons, and non-discrimination. With regard to youth employment, special attention should be directed to the following rights:

- ▶ provision of special working conditions for those between 15 and 18 years of age;
- ▶ the right to earn one's living in an occupation freely entered into;
- ▶ an economic and social policy designed to ensure full employment;
- ▶ fair working conditions as regards pay and working hours;
- ▶ protection from sexual and psychological harassment;
- ▶ protection in case of dismissal;
- ▶ access to work for persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, according to the Charter, these rights must be guaranteed to everybody concerned, including foreigners lawfully resident and/or working, without discrimination on any grounds such as race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinions, national extraction or social origin, health, association with a national minority, birth, or other status.

With respect to the application of the Charter in Greece, examples of progress exist regarding the implementation of the social rights of children, non-discrimination based on nationality, sex, and disability as well as employment, social protection, and education. Nevertheless, there are additional cases of non-conformity especially with regard to the following thematic groups: "Employment, training and equal opportunities", "Health, social security and social protection", "Labour rights", and "Children, families, migrants".²⁶

The international review team learned that discrimination in the labour market in Greece is mainly based on age. Most respondents believed that the crisis will further worsen discrimination in the labour market, and that young people will be worst affected. In response, there have been several positive actions and interventions undertaken, as noted by the Observatory for Combating Discrimination at the Institute of Social Policy, which assesses policies in terms of their impact in reducing discrimination. On the other hand, external data show that other criteria, beyond

26. In addition, Greece ratified the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter and accepted the Additional Protocol providing for a system of collective complaints on 18 June 1998, but has not yet made a declaration enabling national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to submit collective complaints. See www.coe.int/socialcharter, accessed 20 December 2014.

age, may also play an important role in the future, and that discrimination is often worse with regard to gender, ethnicity, and disability (OECD 2010).

Indeed, average labour-market outcomes for Greek youth conceal significant variations across socio-demographic groups, according to ELSTAT (2013): young Greek women, teenagers, and youth living in rural areas perform very poorly in the labour market. Greek women take longer to find their first job after completing their education and their labour-market outcomes are significantly worse than those of their male counterparts, mostly due to their higher likelihood of withdrawal from the labour force. In addition, the unemployment rate is higher for persons of foreign nationality (38.3%) compared with those of Greek nationality (26.1%), while the percentage of economically inactive persons with foreign nationality is much higher than the corresponding percentage for persons of Greek nationality (72.8% compared to 51.7%).

1.1.6. Internal and external youth migration

During the first visit by the international review team, its attention was drawn to the fact that the intensifying economic crisis in Greece has had a strong impact on the migration of young people. For instance:

- ▶ 75% of Greeks belonging to the age group between 21 and 35 are looking for a job opportunity abroad;
- ▶ job applications submitted to Europass by highly educated youth from Greece reached 50 000 during the academic year 2011/12;
- ▶ in 2010 it was estimated that approximately 120 000 Greek scientists were working abroad, corresponding to 10% of the total number of Greek scientists;
- ▶ of the Greek university graduates who had worked abroad during the last three years, 15.9% returned to Greece, while 84.1% preferred to stay abroad;
- ▶ the brain drain was not understood as a consequence of the oversupply of graduates in Greece, but as the result of the low demand for scientific staff in the Greek labour market. (Greece has the highest percentage of unemployed university graduates in the EU – about 26%).²⁷

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad is especially concerned about the proportion of young Greeks abroad, since they are highly vulnerable in terms of assimilation, yet they represent the most active part and the future of the Greek diaspora. Therefore, the ministry strives to implement a variety of programmes and actions targeting this sub-group. It also seeks to improve relationships between Greek youth in the country and those abroad, especially in times of crisis, although this seems rather challenging to achieve in practice. Although still not institutionalised, these efforts are based on the development of networks to maintain cultural identity and bonds. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also strives to gain the support of other relevant ministries in Greece, as well as embassies and consulates working abroad, in order to advocate for better co-operation. Further, the diaspora is included in consultation procedures whenever important legislative acts

27. See <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?lang=el&catId=9658&myCatId=9658&parentId=20&acro=news&function=news>, accessed 20 December 2014.

are created and adopted in Greece. The scope for action of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is, however, currently limited on account of prevailing financial constraints.

The international review team was interested in prospects for the development of business links between the Greek diaspora and the state economy, and the development of investment initiatives, including online mentoring programmes for young people in Greece. In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is trying to co-ordinate efforts and strengthen the links between businesses in Greece and Greek entrepreneurs abroad, based on existing measures, although these entrepreneurial activities with the diaspora are often not youth-oriented. The ministry also plans to develop an investment fund but, due to the financial crisis, there is a current lack of trust among those with the capacity to invest in the country.

1.2. MILITARY SERVICE

Conscription represents an important element in transitional trajectories to adulthood for the majority of young Greek men. Since 2009, Greece has mandatory military service for male citizens between the ages of 19 and 45. There is also a law providing for the voluntary service of women, though this has never been enacted. Women can join the professional armed forces, but they are exempt from conscription.

According to the “National report for youth” (GSY 2012: 30), military service in Greece is regulated both by the Greek Constitution (Article 6, paragraph 4 and interpretative declaration) and Law 3421/2005 “Conscription of Greek males and other provisions” (FEK A 302/13.12.2005), as amended by laws 3648/2008 (FEK A 38/29.2.2008), 3883/2010 (FEK A 160/24.9.2010), and 3978/2011 (FEK A 137/16.6.2011). The applicable legal framework also regulates the following:

- ▶ obligation: duration of conscription;
- ▶ reduced conscription;
- ▶ exemption from conscription;
- ▶ postponement of military conscription;
- ▶ alternative service for conscientious objectors;
- ▶ special categories of conscripts: military personnel.

The duration of military service, according to the legislation, is nine months for the Greek Army and 12 months for the Greek Air Force and Navy.²⁸ Reserve officer cadets serve five months in addition to the aforementioned periods. Furthermore, Greek males between the age of 18 and 60 who live in strategically sensitive areas may be required to serve part-time in the Greek National Guard (paid service). Matters relating to facilities and benefits provided, under certain provisions and conditions, to those under the obligation to perform military service are regulated by the existing legislation. These include the granting of postponed enlistment to the army, reduced

28. When joining the Greek Army young people are asked to fill in a form expressing a preference but the final choice is based on each service's needs, unless an individual is already trained for a particular service. However, 95% of conscripts do serve time at the borders.

military service, exemption from military service, partial fulfilment of military service, and “buying out” part of the time an individual is expected to serve in the military.

Conscientious objectors (who cite religious or ideological beliefs) are obliged to fulfil alternative service. The most frequent grounds for postponement of conscription among young men in Greece are related to their studies. Buying out of military service, on the other hand, is usually reserved for those over 35, who have passed the age for requesting postponement. The substitution of military service by alternative service (such as work in hospitals or post offices), especially if it involves longer periods, should be considered punitive, according to Amnesty International.

As various respondents testified, many young men are discouraged from joining civilian service because of the complex and time-consuming legal procedures involved. According to official data (from the Ministry of National Defence), a refusal to fulfil the requirements of military service has not resulted in imprisonment since the 1980s. In 2012, the number of young men exempted from conscription totalled 7 183, while 68 787 had their conscription postponed. Alternative service was fulfilled by 164 individuals.²⁹

The international review team was made aware of the prevalence of conscientious objection to conscription and felt that more comprehensive evidence about its character and scale was needed. Although some data can be drawn both from the relevant Greek association³⁰ and from the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection,³¹ of which the Greek association is a member, there are no systematic and longitudinal studies in this area.

On the other hand, the international review team gained useful insights into ongoing programmes, services, and benefits provided to conscripts by the Ministry of National Defence (MOD), the civilian authority for the Greek military. These include:

- ▶ education and training programmes;
- ▶ psychological support services;
- ▶ informative lectures in boot camps;
- ▶ benefits aimed to improve mobility (such as a European Youth Card for soldiers serving either in the Air Force or the Navy, and the provision of free local transportation for all).

The MOD strives to create conditions for the creative and productive use of time during conscription. It is anticipated that all young men, on completion of their military service, will be equipped with accredited knowledge, in line with the needs of the labour market, through:

- ▶ information dissemination;
- ▶ provision of certificates based on work experience gained during the service, according to the educational and/or employment background of the soldiers and the objectives that they fulfilled during service;
- ▶ provision of vocational training for soldiers at seven vocational training centres run by the armed forces and certified by the National Accreditation Centre;

29. See www.ellinikos-stratos.com/stratologia/antirrisies.asp, accessed 21 December 2014.

30. See www.antirrisies.gr, accessed 21 December 2014.

31. See <http://ebco-beoc.org>, accessed 21 December 2014.

- ▶ implementation of a career guidance programme for soldiers, depending on the level of their education (with counselling aiming to systematically inform and guide individuals so they can make the best decisions possible in relation to vocational choices).

Although the education and training programmes of the MOD aim to build on the positives of the experience of conscription in order to strengthen transition and social integration pathways for young men, it was stressed to the team that:

In Greece, the main purpose of the military service is to provide military education and a reserve force if required. It is not a school, and the primary purpose is military, not civilian or societal. For example, military physicians obviously work in (military) hospitals and this is relevant experience for future professional careers.

Nevertheless, there are various additional services provided by the MOD that seek to prevent mental health issues and substance misuse among soldiers, including that provided by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Mental Health of the Armed Forces, which provides support and advice to help soldiers overcome personal or family crises. Moreover, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health and Social Security and the Greek Organisation against Drugs, the MOD has prepared a set of activities aimed at preventing and monitoring drug addiction and related issues among conscripts.

The international review team had the invaluable opportunity to speak directly with a group of current conscripts.³² Several topics were discussed, beginning with the prevailing attitudes of the young men towards military service. Three rather different perspectives were expressed in this regard. First, in keeping with the official position that “it is part of their life plan, and something that they must do and they will do”, the prevailing perspective was that although conscription interrupts their lives, it is something that is inevitable because of the strategic position of Greece. Conscription is thus seen as honourable. Another argument for accepting conscription as inevitable and acceptable is the fact that many job offers, especially in the public sector, are conditional upon having done military service. A different attitude, on the other hand, related to the concern that military service disrupts the transitional trajectories of young men, merely putting off the need to face up to daily challenges, including unemployment. As one individual put it:

I don't want to be in the army. There is an economic crisis, and for nine months I can't pursue my dreams. My life is on hold, and I would prefer to have my life in my hands.

Finally, some conscripts have the opportunity to combine serving in the army and working (for example as part-time professors at universities). This was described as “possible but stressful”, depending on the jobs available. Official data on this topic do not exist, so research on young men's attitudes and motivations could be useful.

The redesign of military service was another topic discussed. There was a feeling that the duration of the service should be reduced (from the current eight to nine months to two to three months), and focused on basic training for young people aged 18 to 19. According to the respondents, this is how necessary skills and

32. Selection of respondents was based on their high level of education and good command of English, so the sample was not representative of the average or typical population of conscripts in Greece.

knowledge about the defence of the country could be gained without interruption of their life paths. Another idea was to broaden the options in civilian service. One or two respondents proposed ending compulsory military service completely and transforming the armed forces into a professional service “for those who want to be in the army”.

The issue of unequal conditions was also raised, notably because the international review team was clearly not engaging with a representative group of conscripts. This group had completed a higher level of education and had a sound knowledge of English. They were serving reasonably close to their homes, and described themselves as “the good side of the Greek Army”. In contrast, most young conscripts serve in border areas near Turkey (95% of conscripts do serve time at the borders), or on the islands. These postings have fewer opportunities and less support, and conscripts face various risks and psychological pressures. The fact that the respondents were highly educated had given them an advantage over most conscripts, since they had the opportunity to choose where they were going to serve. This is not an option for the majority of young men conscripted for military service in Greece.

Finally, various advantages of military service were identified, especially in terms of education and skill development opportunities (vocational training), as well as exposure to training and discipline. Vocational training does not, of course, confer much benefit to those who are already highly educated academically. But respondents argued that service in the military, for some young people, provided “a sense of belonging”, especially for those with poor professional prospects. In the end, military service was seen as a potential job opportunity:

You can do longer service and get paid €500 to €600 a month and become a reserve officer, and it is a point of entry to the police and other services.

The important point here is that military service reduces unemployment among young Greek men, at least to some extent. Ultimately, our respondents argued, it was up to every individual to determine how the services provided in the Greek Army might be utilised to support and improve their personal transitions:

It is a question of self-management and you have to find your own solutions.

Chapter 2

Engaging young people

The international review team recognised a wide range of activities and initiatives striving to actively engage young people in society at the national and local level. In this context, youth participation (social, political, and cultural), as well as youth information can be understood as crosscutting policy domains, while leisure activities represent an important, informal mode of youth engagement, one that is prioritised by the GSY.

2.1. SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE ACTIVE GENERATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

2.1.1. Youth participation

There are many formal and informal types of youth participation in Greece. Institutionally speaking, it is important to note the variety of bodies for youth representation, supported mainly by the GSY, such as the national and local youth councils, student/university associations, political youth organisations, student councils, and youth parliaments. These structures, however, differ in their level of institutionalisation.

The Hellenic National Youth Council (ESYN), founded in 1998, represents an independent, non-governmental federation of youth organisations, and is the official representative of Greek youth organisations at the European Youth Forum, the Mediterranean Youth Forum, the UNESCO Youth Council, and relevant United Nations youth bodies. The ESYN is composed of 59 youth organisations though, as the international review team was informed, many of them are underperforming or presently inactive.

The first local youth councils (LYCs)³³ at municipal and prefectural (regional) levels were established in 1997 and their institutionalisation was completed through legislation in 2006.³⁴ An LYC is defined as an “autonomous structure of expression and active participation of young people at the local level” that is responsible for:

- ▶ detecting, highlighting, and monitoring youth needs and problems at the local level;
- ▶ undertaking initiatives and activities in co-operation with local administrations;

33. See the website for LYCs at www.tosyn.gr, accessed 21 December 2014.

34. The GSY funds the ESYN and the LYCs.

- ▶ advocating measures to ensure the active and effective participation of young people;
- ▶ developing co-operation with other LYCs at the national and European level.

LYCs enable young people (aged 15 to 28) to participate in the decision-making process within a municipal context and at the level of the community. Although its actions and decisions cannot be implemented directly, these are intended to feed into official municipal channels of policy development and implementation. The international review team was informed that all municipal councils in Greece bear full responsibility for the establishment and support of LYCs. Registers of members are kept in each municipality, providing the opportunity to young people to participate in collective actions and familiarise themselves with the principles of democracy. Therefore, the aim of the LYCs is to provide the possibility for all young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, to express their concerns and be active in their communities.

It was, however, reported that LYCs have not really functioned satisfactorily from 2008 on. In one area visited by the international review team, LYC elections had been cancelled without any explanation being provided to young locals, and the LYC had not been properly reconstituted. A current strategic priority of the GSY is the restatement of the institutional framework for LYCs, in the context of the “Kallikrates” law, in order to strengthen democratic capacities and youth participation, but this will require concrete action and support at national and local level if it is to be translated into meaningful youth participation (EKCY 2012: 24):

For the first time, under the “Kallikrates” law, young people by the age of 18, have not only the right to vote but also the right to be voted for in the elections for the municipal and region counselors, because youth participation becomes recognized as important, necessary and creative.

The reform also aims to reduce the influence of youth political parties at the local level, as well as to provide wider access to the representative youth structures, especially for migrant youth. To this end, a consultation process with youth organisations was recently organised.

However, the example of the Thessaloníki European Youth Capital (TEYC 2014) conveyed clearly to the international review team how local (political) leadership as well as a willingness on the part of local government to engage youth and co-operate with both youth NGOs and individuals “outside the box” can make a difference with regard to the form and level of youth participation at local level. It is equally interesting to note that existing structures such as LYCs and the youth branches of political parties did not take part in this “new” type of youth participation, purportedly because of a lack of information and, as one respondent put it, “an excess of democracy”. TEYC 2014 conveyed to the international review team an impressive illustration of good practice in terms of trust building, as well as the exercise of democracy through the extensive involvement of young people in decisions on issues that concern them. It would have been valuable for the team to meet some of the young people involved in the TEYC in person, but unfortunately this was not possible.

2.1.2. Civil society and volunteering

The national report notes that in recent years a relatively large number of NGOs have been established in Greece, directly or indirectly addressing issues concerning youth (GSY 2012: 21). These organisations promote volunteering and job mobility for young people, provide social services, facilitate networking, and raise awareness and disseminate information among young people on various issues. New forms of informal organisation and youth expression have also emerged, such as informal groups based on spontaneous initiatives and aiming to promote creativity and youth innovation. These endeavours are based primarily on voluntary participation and social solidarity. Organisations operating via the Internet also play an important role with respect to information, training, education, networking, and raising awareness and the engagement of young people. Although the content of these websites and blogs does not always target the youth population specifically, it often touches on their interests to a significant extent.³⁵

The TEYC 2014 project, in fact, provides an example of successful collaboration among youth NGOs, volunteers, and local government. During the application process and implementation of the project, a consultative mechanism was set up through an “NGO table”. This represented a platform for collaborative policy development, in the light of municipal decisions on issues related to youth at the local level.

Overall, though, the international review team perceived the absence of a strategic and legislative framework for civil engagement and volunteering. The need for more innovative strategies and more formal youth participation is made evident by the tendency of young people to engage more often in informal movements and NGOs in times of crisis, in order to make their voices heard, gain some sense of belonging, or demonstrate solidarity. As one public sector representative commented:

Comparatively, according to Eurobarometer, young Greeks are least likely to volunteer and more likely to be doing sports, but now more young people are involved in solidarity issues – although it is not described as volunteering, and it is not part of formally organised structures.

Yet volunteering has gained a very strong developmental aspect in recent years in relation to the GSY Development Department, especially in the areas of ecology and environmental protection. One of the GSY’s objectives is to support existing structures that give an impetus to youth activities and strengthen the participation of youth representative bodies and NGOs in the formulation and implementation of youth-related policies in general (GSY 2012: 18). In this context the GSY issues calls for proposals to all bodies and organisations dealing with youth. The financing of such proposals and programmes mainly derives from European funds, through the NSRF, and is co-financed by the Greek state.

35. Some examples of these organisations are G700 (<http://g700.blogspot.gr>) and the Hellenic Union for the Utilisation of Information and Communication Technologies in Education (www.e-diktyo.eu). Both sites accessed 21 December 2014.

Several volunteer-related initiatives and programmes have taken place in recent years, including:

- ▶ European Year of Volunteering 2011 (EYV)³⁶
- ▶ Initiative Supporting Programme for Youth (ISPY)
- ▶ Support Programme for Initiatives of Students – “Students in Action”, and “Vacations and Volunteering Programme”.

In addition, the GSY has launched a Pupils' Initiative Support Programme, directed towards supporting initiatives, actions, and interventions organised on a voluntary basis by pupils in secondary education in co-operation with their educators in the broader framework of the educational programme and school activities, under the supervision of the schools' committees and the local school community councils. This is an attempt to strengthen pupils' active participation in collective activities; support creativity, initiative, and the spirit of volunteering; promote responsible behaviour and intergenerational solidarity; implement actions that promote innovation and the pursuit of excellence; and provide positive role models among young people.

2.1.3. European youth programmes

Various youth-oriented European programmes have been implemented in Greece in recent years, including the Mediterranean Office for Youth, Youth in Action, the European Youth Card, Eurodesk, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, and Comenius. Most of these programmes were implemented between 2007 and 2013 when the GSY, in co-operation with various stakeholders, was working towards promoting the mobility of young people across the Mediterranean and the EU.

The Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation is the operational institution and the national authority for the EU Youth in Action programme and Eurodesk, while the GSY represents the National Surveillance Authority. The GSY also promotes youth information and ever since 2000, has provided the European information network service in Greece. It is also the national authority and the funding entity for the European Youth Card Association (EYCA), although the programme is operated by the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation.

Taking account of the data presented in the national report, however, it is clear that in Greece, the level of youth awareness, information, and participation in EU programmes is relatively low and needs further attention. The national report states that the European programmes are popular among young people in Greece, especially for those who are studying and are graduates of universities or technical universities: specifically, 19.8% of this sample know about the Erasmus programme, 19% know about Leonardo da Vinci, 16% know about Youth in Action, 11% know about Grundtvig, and 8% know about the European Voluntary Service (EVS) programme. In contrast, 73.4% of respondents (mostly youth with secondary education living in rural areas) are not aware of any currently available European programme (GSY 2012: 62).

Even so, youth participation in EU programmes may be considered relatively low bearing in mind the knowledge and awareness (some) young people do have

36. See <http://volunteers.neagenia.gr>, accessed 21 December 2014.

about their operation. Specifically, 84% of respondents had not been involved in any European programme; 7% have participated in Erasmus, 3% in Grundtvig, 3% in Youth in Action, 2% in EVS, and 1% in Leonardo da Vinci. The reasons given by young people for not participating in European programmes are lack of information (56%), lack of time (50%), economic difficulties (40%), family reasons (28%), professional reasons (25%), and other reasons (5%).

Finally, some respondents confirmed to the international review team that although the signs of the crisis are not always easily visible, its impact on young people in Greece in the last five years has been “shocking” – quality of life has been hugely downgraded, resulting in a tendency for more and more young people to apply for European youth exchange programmes with the intention of staying abroad. Our respondents pointed out, however, that these are not equally accessible to all young people, and therefore they suggested that European programmes be more sensitive to youth from poorer countries as well as poorer young people from those countries, and that there should be special provisions for those below the poverty line.

2.1.4. Youth work

While the idea that “[y]outh activities and youth work play a central role in fostering knowledge and commitment to civil society” (European Commission/Council of Europe 2012) has moved closer to institutional recognition as a result of the Declaration of The 1st European Youth Work Convention (during the EU Presidency of Belgium in July 2010), relatively little information is available on a wide range of youth work activities and experiences in many European countries, including Greece. It was thus difficult, both at national and local level, to gain a comprehensive picture of activities undertaken in the “youth work” arena in Greece.

How complete the understanding of youth work is in a particular country does, of course, depend very much on the conceptualisation of youth work there, the allocation of responsibilities and resources at various administrative levels, and the provisions and practices that flow therefrom. In Greece, data on institutions delivering “youth work” are available only with regard to special national programmes. The only traceable structures are those set up through European programmes and reporting systems, while comprehensive data on “youth workers” and volunteers involved in youth work are missing, including precise data on participants. An exception is a recent account that seeks to capture the evolution in Greece of what others might recognise as a “youth work” history (see Giannaki 2014).

Contemporary analysis shows that in the majority of European countries youth work is defined as falling within the domain of “out-of-school” education and is thus linked to non-formal or informal learning (European Commission/Council of Europe 2013). Most definitions of youth work contain two basic orientations that reflect a double concern: to provide favourable leisure-based experiences (of a social, cultural, educational, or political nature) in order to strengthen young people’s personal development and foster their personal and social autonomy, and to offer opportunities for the integration and inclusion of young people in adult society by promoting societal integration in a general sense, or preventing the exclusion of disadvantaged groups. Countries that face greater problems with

youth transitions into economically viable, residential, and family-oriented independent life tend to have definitions more exclusively focused on the socialising aspect of youth work.

Despite the existence of legal provisions regarding youth issues, there is no official conceptual definition or legal framework for youth work in Greece. Non-official definitions exist that can be understood as descriptive attempts combining the most common national understandings about youth work. The country report states that “youth work” in Greece refers to:

Education and welfare services to support young people’s safe and healthy transition to adult life, as well as leisure-time activities which aim to contribute to the social and personal development of young people and enhance their active political participation and social inclusion. (European Commission/Council of Europe 2013: 24)

The report also lists the main areas of youth work in Greece:

- ▶ career services;
- ▶ youth information;
- ▶ youth counselling;
- ▶ education for disadvantaged target groups;
- ▶ cultural education;
- ▶ open youth work;
- ▶ social care;
- ▶ sports;
- ▶ international youth work;
- ▶ youth associations and participation;
- ▶ recreation and leisure services.

In this regard, despite a lack of institutional definition or recognition, “youth work” does exist as a social practice in Greece. It constitutes an integral part of educational and welfare work and plays a role in supporting young people’s safe and healthy transition to adult life. The range of activities described is extensive but youth work appears to be mainly related to leisure-time activity – that is, activities such as artistic and cultural programmes, outdoor recreation, and sports, which provide a space for youthful experimentation and cultural development.

Furthermore, youth work in Greece involves a complex network of providers, community groups, NGOs, and local authorities supported by a large number of adults working as full-time or part-time paid staff or unpaid volunteers (52% of “youth workers” are employees and 48% are volunteers). All these organisations share a more or less common set of youth work values, including:

- ▶ working with young people because they are young people, not because they have been labelled or pigeon-holed into one category or the other, or are considered deviant;
- ▶ starting with young people’s perspectives;
- ▶ helping young people develop stronger relationships and collective identities;
- ▶ respecting and valuing difference;
- ▶ promoting the voice of young people.

“Youth workers” in Greece are, however, mainly social workers (including social cultural workers), cultural animators, and social pedagogues (European Commission/Council of Europe 2013: 31). The data show that most are professionals with a higher level of education. The rate of professionalisation in the field of educational or social services is higher than in other areas of youth work, with only 7% of youth workers with no formal education working in these sectors. In this regard, the team is concerned that the concept of “youth work” seems to be confused with work that is done with young people by a range of professionals. For example, while two respondents from a Youth Information Centre (YIC) gave a highly impressive and articulate account of a form of engagement with young people that in many other European countries would be recognised as youth work, a respondent from another YIC conceded that she knew little about youth work, having previously worked in a completely different field. She declared: “I might have the title of Communications Officer but it is more important to be a youth worker I think,” but there was very little “youth work” in the practice she described.

Regarding target groups, the data show that in all countries youth work practice addresses young people in general, as well as disadvantaged or socially excluded groups. There are, nevertheless, great disparities in the definition of the age groups designated as the recipients of youth work. This seems to be a result of the conceptualisation of youth work in each country. In Greece, as for example in the Netherlands and Norway, the idea of social inclusion is one of the explicit aims of youth work. Furthermore, countries such as Greece, Italy, and Romania have an extended definition of youth, as they focus on labour-market insertion. Therefore, in Greece “youth workers” work primarily with young people aged between 15 and 25, but may in some cases extend either end of the age range, to those aged 13 to 15 or 25 to 30 (European Commission/Council of Europe 2013: 17).

2.1.5. Youth information

The “National report for youth” states that the Internet and social media networks have been the main tools for youth information in recent years in Greece, made use of by 92% of respondents (GSY 2012: 30). Furthermore, 48% of respondents stated that they update themselves via the Internet about the activities of NGOs and institutions for youth and volunteering in their locality. Such information is also sourced through other means: social media (44%), the announcements of local authorities and institutions (15%), radio and local authorities (13%), friends and the press (11%), the websites of NGOs as well as from school (9%), family and television (8%), and other sources (1%). Overall, 36.7% of young people feel that the level of information about the activities of NGOs and institutions for youth and volunteering is not satisfactory. They believe that public institutions and liaison offices do not disseminate systematic, organised, and correct information to them, forcing them to look for the information online. Moreover, many young people have the impression that there is a reluctance to inform them on the part of NGOs and organisations that implement programmes for youth.

However, since 1997, including through the Eurodesk project (from 2000), the approach of the Greek authorities towards youth information has become more structured with the establishment of a network of YICs (originally 54, now 14) across Greece. Primarily supported by the GSY, this network provides immediate and free access to a wide range of information adapted to the needs of young people and those who work with young people, on education, training, work, mobility, volunteering, seminars, exchange programmes, events, and funding.

YICs³⁷ are operated by the local authorities and their primary objective is to familiarise young people with information and communication technology, while providing reliable and timely information on their areas of interest (including European programmes and leisure activities). In addition, each YIC compiles and organises into a single electronic database any information relating to the following topics: education, vocational training, work and employment, art and culture, social issues, sports, tourism, the environment and its preservation, exchange programmes, and general information about public administration. It is worth noting, that according to the national report, only 6% of the youth survey sample is informed about youth-related issues by the YICs (GSY 2012: 60).

YICs also host various youth activities and scientific and artistic events. One YIC in Thessaloníki illustrates the variety and richness of practice that can be implemented, starting from the EU Youth in Action programme, youth exchanges, and vocational and educational activities. YICs are freely accessible to local youth, and represent an important source of support for more disadvantaged young people. They also maintain close co-operation with youth NGOs, relevant municipal services, and other institutions like the justice department and the police. The international review team gained the strong impression that the YICs actually play the role of youth centres and even youth clubs; as one respondent from a YIC suggested: "What we do is, in some ways, 100% of the youth policy of the municipality."

Apart from youth information, significant efforts have been made in recent years to promote non-formal education (NFE), especially by the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation. But it seems that the recognition of the principles and values of NFE, as well as its connection with youth information, youth work, and the formal system of education, have not yet been established.

Finally, the national report notes the recent establishment of the Structure for Employment and Career Progress at Greek educational institutions (GSY 2012: 28). This innovative structure was set up under the Operational Programme Education and Lifelong Learning – NSRF 2007-2013, and is co-funded by the EU. It aims to connect universities with the labour market and create a single framework for the co-ordination of institutions concerned with the career development and guidance of students (offices of career services, student and young alumni organisations, etc.).

37. List of YICs that operate in Greece is available at www.neagenia.gr/appdata/documents/kpn_list%5B1%5D.pdf, accessed 21 December 2014.

2.1.6. Culture and leisure

Engagement in leisure and cultural activities is an important form of informal participation for contemporary youth in Greece. Bearing in mind that the economic crisis has had a dramatically negative impact on Greek society, the team concluded that it is culture that, in some respects at least, provides hope for young people, in terms of their identity, perspectives, and a sense of a better future. One respondent put it succinctly: “Culture is the only way to be positive in Greece.”

Cultural policy and related activities for youth are diverse and dynamic. Activities are organised by the state target groups of school and university students, as well as young professionals and amateurs from the cultural sector. These cover the areas of education, training, entertainment, and access to cultural goods (both tangible and intangible), providing opportunities for the active and creative participation of youth. The main goals of cultural policy targeting youth are therefore cultural education, active support for young artists, and linking culture and creativity. Most activities are implemented through a combination of traditional models of cultural practice and new technologies. New topics have also been recently introduced through a focus on social phenomena (such as social exclusion, racism), culture and the environment, as well as intercultural dialogue. Moreover, important opportunities have been offered to young people through job offers in the cultural sector. The Greek Presidency of the EU was committed to the following cultural objectives:

- ▶ cultural heritage for all;
- ▶ museums and monuments in a changing reality;
- ▶ sustainable development and social integration;
- ▶ financing creativity;
- ▶ building new audiences;
- ▶ finding new opportunities for employment in the cultural sector.³⁸

Beyond these relatively formal and structured initiatives in the field of culture, the national report provides information on satisfaction with, and the prevalent ways of engaging in, youth leisure activities (GSY 2012: 64). In general, most young people are engaged in informal activities such as going out with friends or using social media. Only 25.8% of young people are engaged in sporting activities, 21.8% participate in cultural events, and 13% participate in volunteering activities organised by social institutions and NGOs. The results also show that only 15% of young people are very much satisfied with the way they utilise their spare time, 17% are satisfied, 22% are fairly satisfied, 35% are not very satisfied, and 11% are not at all satisfied.

At the same time, many young people are interested in participating in activities with NGOs and other social organisations. Specifically, environmental issues and green growth attract the most interest from respondents (40%), followed by cultural topics (32%), sports (31%), social issues (30%), European issues (22%), socially vulnerable groups such as immigrants and ex-prisoners (19.6%), and medical issues and providing help to socially excluded groups (11%)(GSY 2012: 65). This is useful information for

38. Handout provided by the General Secretariat of Culture, Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports.

future youth policy, which should not only be linked with contemporary youth culture, but should also offer a more diversified set of activities for young people, especially those based on the notion of a green economy and sustainable development.

Examples of good practice can be found at the local level. In the municipality of Veria, the international review team was told how different modes of youth mobilisation can be integrated through combinations of sports, tourism, and culture:

One main objective in these times of crisis is to provide possibilities for young people to get out of the house and do something active, and since there is a lack of funds, we try to organise mixed actions (like running, kayaking and some environmental projects at the same time). Another goal is to combine sports with tourism (for example, running with trekking), and to link these with European initiatives in these areas. When we organise events to celebrate sporting achievements from this area, we try to bring in dance and other cultural activities, combining this with sports.

Local authorities also emphasised the benefits of sports for the youth population:³⁹

Participating in sport can improve the quality of life of individuals and communities, promote social inclusion, improve health, counter anti-social behaviour, raise individual self-esteem and confidence, and widen horizons.

Furthermore, it was stressed that if young people participated in sports under the right guidance, they might even be able to pursue careers in sports. Young people were to be encouraged to take the initiative and explore healthy living and constructive ways of using their free time. Greece, respondents argued, should take advantage of its natural resources and promote sports and leisure activities in order to set up new opportunities and thereby provide a better future for its youth.

2.2. MINORITIES AND MARGINALISATION

Despite evident efforts to engage contemporary youth in various programmes and activities, issues of social exclusion, discrimination, and marginalisation remain significant, even if they are not as visible as the international review team anticipated.

As reports from the GSY (2007) show, young people have the opportunity to become acquainted with many diverse civilisations and cultures, through Greece's strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Accordingly, many have, until recently, routinely accepted multiculturalism as part of their everyday life, and have been raised on the principles of democracy, freedom, and solidarity. It seems, however, that the economic crisis, followed by dynamic demographic changes in bordering areas, has presented serious challenges. Greek population is, for example, less likely to feel that their immediate neighbourhood is secure (80%), together with Hungary (79%), Bulgaria (79%), and Romania (80%).

Current Eurobarometer data, on the other hand, indicate that younger people (especially 15 to 24 year olds) tend to have more positive attitudes towards freedom of movement and immigration than older people (especially those aged 75+)

³⁹. Based on handout provided to the review team.

(European Commission 2012b). Still, in 12 EU member states a majority disagree that immigration enriches their country, while this view is most widespread in Latvia (78%), Cyprus (75%), the Czech Republic (73%), Greece (66%), and Hungary (65%).

Importantly, the international review team found that such issues had little relation to youth-oriented policies in contemporary Greece. Nor was the field of human (minority) rights listed among the government's priority policy domains. Nevertheless, programmes do exist that seek to address minority needs, implemented by different state authorities. The Ministry of Education works with educational institutions to safeguard the right to access education, reduce dropout rates, and combat discrimination in schools towards vulnerable social groups. Specific areas of activity include:

- ▶ the education of migrant and repatriated students;
- ▶ the education of Roma pupils;
- ▶ the education of children of the Muslim minority in Thrace. Initiated in the 1990s, this policy aims to upgrade the education of minority children and foster their integration into society as equal citizens of Greece and the EU. The main objective of the programme is to enhance successful school attendance and increase rates of university enrolment;
- ▶ Educational Priority Zones, a recent initiative to combat segregation by testing flexible educational approaches under real classroom conditions to ensure the equitable integration of students from areas with low educational and socio-economic indicators, and help remove social and economic barriers to the progression of students.

The GSY has also prepared a law on emancipation to establish the rights of minors (aged 16), as equal to adult rights (similar to provisions in the Netherlands and Spain). This specifically places an emphasis on providing youth with access to the labour market in times of crisis.

Further, the Social Activity and Policy Department in the Social Participation Directorate of the GSY implements a range of programmes on social behaviour and anti-social youth behaviour, correctional systems, the use of drugs and other deviant youth behaviour, as well as the enhancement and safeguarding of youth health and the targeting of socially vulnerable groups. These include:

- ▶ the Young Legal Aid Programme, aiming to provide free legal assistance to socially vulnerable groups of young people and address minors' employment issues, and to support young rehabilitated drug addicts and young abused women up to 35 years of age, covering both their extra-judicial and court representation (young lawyers up to 35 years of age take up the cases of beneficiaries);
- ▶ programmes implemented for young people with disabilities, in collaboration with relevant parties such as associations, special schools, and training centres;
- ▶ programmes and campaigns on the sexual identity and sexual diversity of youth;
- ▶ programmes designed to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by refugees, in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);

- ▶ the EU programme PROGRESS – Action “IRIS” to combat stereotypes and discrimination, including actions for the promotion of participation, inclusion, and diversity, with an emphasis on promoting a change in attitudes towards ethnic minorities;
- ▶ community service for prisoners: this alternative way of serving prison time aims at offering community service, employment, and social rehabilitation to prisoners, while supporting the decongestion of prisons.

On the other hand, the team could not detect a real sense of ownership and political championship of the promotion of minority/human rights issues at the local level. The comment by one senior local official that “there is no social exclusion problem [among young people] here” seemed unduly optimistic (if not completely naïve) on the basis of information received from other sources. A new focus and sensitisation towards diversity and discrimination should be developed, and existing resources should be reorganised to meet the needs of both newly arrived and domiciled citizens of contemporary Greece, including young people. A comprehensive database on these groups also appears to be lacking.

Local examples of initiatives seem to suggest that attention to the issues of vulnerable groups tends to stay at the surface (many are addressed through campaigns). The concern is that these are not based on the conception and promotion of rights, although the international review team would not wish to diminish the commitment that is being made at the local level on particular fronts:

- ▶ in Komotini, the programme Social Integration Action for Vulnerable Groups was working with 150 unemployed young people, helping them to set up their own business or find employment in the green energy or farming sector;
- ▶ in Veria, the local authority has developed a framework to support marginalised young people through education, volunteering opportunities, and awareness-raising and information campaigns on addiction, delinquency, and Internet-related risks. For young people with disabilities and special needs, an action to deal with issues of sexual identity and abuse has been developed. This includes training for individuals and their families, family planning, research within the community to understand its values and attitudes, and raising awareness of those working with people with special needs to achieve a more open and flexible approach.

Apart from governmental institutions, civil sector organisations and the church play a significant role in organising a wide range of activities for minority youth groups in Greece. However, many NGOs, especially those operating in border areas (such as ARSIS, a hospitality centre for unaccompanied refugee and asylum-seeking children in Alexandroupolis), need further logistical, legal, and financial support. Some religious minorities (such as Muslims) are still struggling to secure equal opportunities and conditions for the expression and recognition of their rights. This view is, however, expressed with some caution, since it is based on a limited range of information and reports that project different perspectives.

Chapter 3

The governance of youth policy in Greece

The enactment of the New Architecture of Government Administration and Decentralisation Programme – Kallikrates – in 2010 triggered a transformation of the administrative system⁴⁰ in Greece, including a major reorganisation of the structures and mechanisms dealing with youth at all levels. Under the Kallikrates law on decentralised government in Greece, there are now three tiers of self-government:

- ▶ **First Tier of Local Self-Government:** there are 325 urban and rural municipalities, run by a mayor and municipal council, consisting of an alderman and commissioner of youth issues, among others. The municipalities are entrusted with a wide range of responsibilities concerning children and young people. Thus, the law mentions for the first time that the municipalities are obliged to form a municipal committee for consultation, which has to include representatives of their local youth council (Article 76), and also create administrative units with different responsibilities, including one with responsibility for education, culture, sports, and youth (Article 97);
- ▶ **Second Tier of Regional Self-Government:** there are 13 regions in Greece, divided into “regional units”. They are concerned with socio-economic and cultural development as well as running services for the local authorities that are members of the regions. Regional public authorities also have competences and responsibilities to develop and implement youth-related activities;
- ▶ **Third Tier:** two or three regions constitute a third tier of decentralised administrations that are not self-governing institutions, because they are headed by a government appointee who is responsible for decision making.

The international review team learned that merged municipalities (for example in Veria) face challenges in addressing differences and establishing new integrated forms of governance. Developing co-operation with other newly established municipalities is proven to be difficult, keeping in mind budget constraints as well as differences in governing structures.

40. According to the Kallikrates programme (3852/2010; FEK A 87/7.6.2010), the former system of 13 administrative regions, 54 prefectures, and 1 033 municipalities and communities was replaced by seven decentralised administrations, 13 regions, and 325 municipalities. Greece also includes one autonomous region, the Monastic Community of the Holy Mountain, Mount Athos. Regions and municipalities are fully self-governed. The decentralised administrations are run by a general secretary appointed by the Greek Government. Starting in 2014, peripheral and municipal elections are to be held every five years, concurrently with elections for the European Parliament.

The team furthermore notes that the characteristics of Greek public governance are generally but clearly reflected in the governance of youth-related policies in Greece. In this context, special attention has been given to issues such as the strategic framework and vision for youth policy in Greece, existing delivery structures, cross-sectoral co-operation, and an evidence-based approach to youth policy. The legal framework for “youth policy” in Greece was also taken into consideration, while the topic of the budget remains open for further investigation, since the team did not have any insight into the financial area.

3.1. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND VISION FOR YOUTH POLICY IN GREECE

There is no integrated “youth policy” – in the form of a strategy or document – targeting young people in Greece (GSY 2012: 13). Instead, there are various, often related, policies addressing youth from different perspectives. Programmes and activities are mostly carried out by individual state agencies, which are either specialised or partially responsible for youth issues. As a result, projects and programmes have been implemented in a fragmented way in different youth-related areas.

Furthermore, attempts to develop a platform for local youth policy draw mainly on the local strategy for civil society (as for example in Thessaloniki), even though that strategy does not specifically target young people. These efforts are based on the central European model of municipal engagement and partnership with civil society. The role of the national-level GSY is, however, designed to be integrative, and it strives to bridge the gaps between ministries, institutions, and youth by organising different mechanisms for co-operation and information sharing, thereby aiming to produce more coherent actions.

The international review team noted the absence of a strategic and shared vision of where Greece wants to take its youth policy; a sense of a broader agenda with overarching goals is missing. There is no clear central steering, or clear ownership of reforms. The team was also informed that there are no current plans to produce an integrated and comprehensive strategic document based on an inter-disciplinary approach and cross-sectoral co-operation.

Instead, the aim of the GSY is to make the diverse institutional provisions and programmes for youth more visible and recognisable to ordinary young people, and to the wider public. The central platform for such recognition, due to budget constraints, will be the GSY, which will present and promote itself as the institutional guardian of young people, communicating through its mechanisms that it will advocate for them on matters of primary importance such as education, work, employment, and social-voluntary action, while developing a set of actions related to participation, information, entrepreneurship, and leisure. On this front, it is important to note that many respondents endorsed this aspiration and stressed that plans now needed to be created by the GSY in order to provide a “compass” for the critical age group of youth.

3.2. DELIVERY STRUCTURES

The GSY is the main body of the Greek state dealing with policies for youth, and it operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports. It was established in 1983 as an executive governmental body, the main objective of which is the formulation, monitoring, and co-ordination of government policy for young people, and facilitating its connection with the community and its agencies. The GSY has significant institutional status and functional continuity, as well as a wide range of capabilities including acceptance and recognition of its public and social role regarding youth issues; ability to follow medium and long-term planning and implementation of youth-related projects; and the capacity to increase public funding for the support and completion of its goals (GSY 2012: 17). Apart from the GSY, many other ministries have responsibilities in the youth field.

As noted above, the GSY works to mainstream the youth dimension, given that all governmental organisations may conceivably develop policies that ultimately touch upon the younger generation. The GSY comprises departments covering employment and development, culture and leisure, education and social participation, and international co-operation and information. Its main role is to promote a cross-sectoral youth policy, taking into consideration all the relevant developments in the youth sector at European and international level.

With regard to the complicated structure of the GSY (see Figure 4), however, the international review team gained the distinct impression of overlapping fields of action and responsibilities, leading to duplication. This perspective was expressed tellingly by a respondent:

A more general problem in Greece is that it is never clear who is in charge of what. There is often far too much overlap and duplication, and temporary initiatives rather than permanent structures. This makes people suspicious of the central administration; it is not credible. Central government sends instructions to different bodies at the regional and municipal level and it is never really understood who is meant to take actions [responsibility].

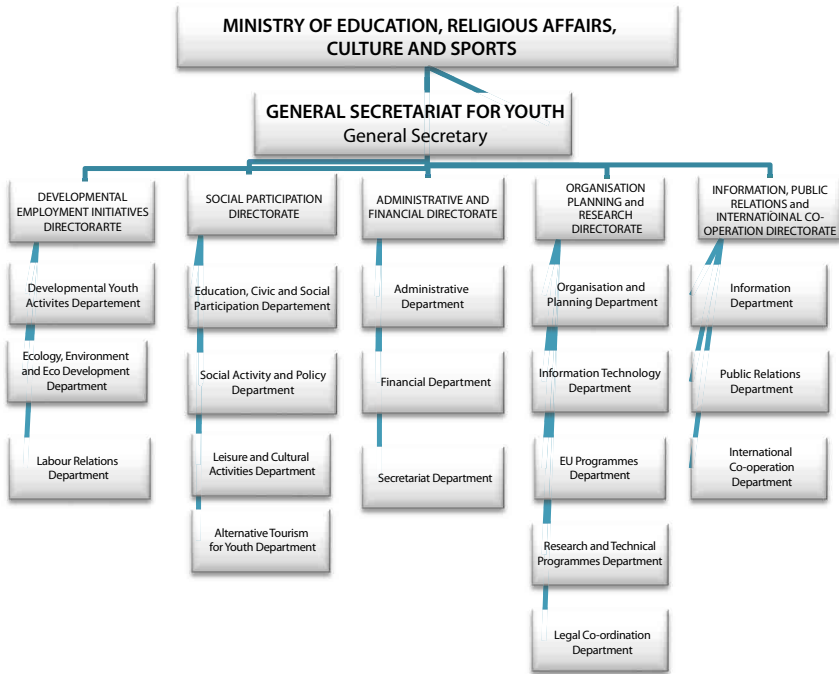
Another issue lies in human resource management, since the work is often carried out based on personal interest and endeavour, rather than competences. The team notes furthermore that there is very limited mobility within the Greek public sector, since it involves complex procedures.

Although very little attention has been paid, in general, to reporting, control, and monitoring, the GSY annually prepares a national report on youth policy in Greece⁴¹ and submits it to the EKCYF.⁴² This provides valuable insights about the prevailing framework to support young people in Greece.

41. See http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668139/Hellenic_county_sheet_2011.pdf/05049a39-c832-4c53-ae44-1e5fa985204e

42. See <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/knowledge/-ekcyp>

Figure 4: Structures responsible for youth policy in Greece



3.3. CROSS-SECTORAL CO-OPERATION

The GSY has an active role in several networks aiming to improve horizontal policy implementation in the youth field (GSY 2012: 18). In this regard, the Group Inter-sectoral Collaboration for Youth, which consists of 13 ministries and departments with programmes for youth, has been set up (GSY 2012: 43). From the outset, however, its work has been marked by discontinuity. It met only once in 2013, focusing mainly on preparation for the Trio Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and the provision of data to the different international organisations (such as the UNESCO questionnaire on youth participation). The international review team believes, however, that this group can and should play an important role in strengthening horizontal relationships among youth-related sectors, and that its deliberations and capacity should be improved.

The national report states that, based on the principle of inter-sectoral co-operation on issues related to young people, the GSY engages in various working groups and committees. These were, at the level of government (inter-ministerial level):⁴³

- ▶ the working group on the reform of the institutional framework of LYCs, consisting of representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of

43. Note: The International review team acknowledges that multiple changes in the administrative structures were taking place during and since the study visits of the international youth policy review team (2012-2013). Only working groups relevant to this report have been listed above, as they were listed in the national report.

Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and the Central Union of Municipalities and Communities of Greece;

- ▶ the inter-ministerial working group on the reform of the institutional framework for volunteering, involving the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, the Ministry of Citizen Protection, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Nutrition and Sports, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs;
- ▶ co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to link the European Year of Volunteering 2011 with the European Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity 2012;
- ▶ the DESKE Group on Drugs for inter-ministerial co-operation on the implementation of a co-ordinated national drug policy;
- ▶ the Central Scientific Council for the Prevention and Treatment of Victimisation and Juvenile Delinquency (KESATHEA) at the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights;
- ▶ the legislative committee on the review of family law recommended by the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights.

In 2012, the GSY constituted a Counselling Committee, in the framework of public consultation, with members of the Citizens' Movement organisations. This initiative aimed to collect and evaluate the youth organisations' views, and bring on board innovative proposals and ideas from other institutions and organisations of the state. The GSY has decided to develop more direct contact and consultation with civil society, mainly through the ESYN but also through various working groups and committees attached to particular national or international events, such as the National Working Group to promote the Structured Dialogue (composed at the start of each respective Trio Presidency and focused on its priority topics).

At the level of transnational co-operation the GSY is involved in a number of bodies and initiatives, such as:

- ▶ the Youth Working Party of the Council of the European Union and other working groups, as well as the Councils of Ministers responsible for Youth Affairs;
- ▶ the statutory bodies of the Council of Europe related to youth: the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ), the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ), and the Programming Committee on Youth (PC);
- ▶ the EKCYP, in the framework of the co-operation between the Council of Europe and the EU on youth issues;
- ▶ the working group for the establishment of EU indicators on youth;
- ▶ the group of experts on the mobility of young volunteers across Europe.

The GSY also carries out study visits to countries that have implemented policies or have established support structures for young people that may be considered good practice, in order to examine the possibility of their adaptation at national level. Such visits may also result in the signing of protocols of co-operation with counterparts at European and international level, in the framework of the development of bilateral

co-operation, in particular to exchange views, experiences, and best practices among experts in the field of youth. Such collaboration and exchange is highly commendable.

The international review team noted, however, that relationships with the private sector have been hindered to a great extent by legal constraints. For example, the GSY cannot receive donations from the private sector, and although there are many initiatives to support business hubs (through sponsorship, mentoring, advice, etc.), the GSY cannot be a “direct intermediary”. It can only work with young people and direct them towards sponsorship. It is thus imperative that alternative modes of co-operation be explored, and legal reform be undertaken to allow greater flexibility.

3.4. EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO YOUTH POLICY

The systematic use of data and the adoption of an evidence-based approach to policy making in Greece will require a profound cultural change across the administration (OECD 2012). Currently, the administration does not appear to keep robust records of relevant data. Inadequate knowledge management means that reform strategies lack a strong supporting evidence base. Fragmented, piecemeal research related to the youth population has been undertaken by different universities since 1983, but more recently the GSY’s institutional initiatives have endeavoured to strengthen the coherence of research in the youth field:

- ▶ in 2011, co-operation with ELSTAT was established to adopt eight thematic development policies, reflected in the “fields of action” in the renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field;
- ▶ in 2012, the Research Network for Youth Affairs was set up as an institutional initiative at the national level, and tasked to formulate a targeted policy for youth based on evidence on the current status of young people in Greece (GSY 2012: 42).

The international review team was told that Greek researchers welcomed the initiative for a network, as well as the fact that it was created through an open call and is composed of 10 members and 10 substitutes, with diverse profiles and areas of interest. As our respondents stressed, the research network’s contributions so far have been diverse, including the dissemination of questionnaires and providing advice to the Greek Presidency of the EU in 2014. The network has sought to follow the best practices of the EU and Council of Europe youth agendas and strategies, gather youth trends that might inform a strategy for youth in Greece, and take an active part in projects developed by the GSY. In the context of the lack of funding associated with the economic crisis, the involvement of researchers within the network is based on a voluntary commitment. The network nevertheless represents a good opportunity to meet, discuss, and find channels of communication with and through the GSY, and other ministries addressing youth issues, and special attention should be paid to strengthening and supporting the initiative.

For the time being, youth research in Greece tends to be focused on pedagogical and psychological studies, child development, and issues such as bullying. Other prevalent areas of research are criminology and youth delinquency, and historical studies about

youth. In 2011, the European Commission-funded MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement) was initiated, focusing on quantitative and qualitative studies of, *inter alia* (16 countries in all were covered), young people in Greece.

3.5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Greek Constitution, and various articles in education, culture, sports, and labour laws, contain provisions for youth (GSY 2012: 13). Article 16 of the Greek Constitution contains an indirect reference to young people by highlighting the role of formal education in developing intellectual, professional, moral, and physical capacities of young people, aiming to contribute to their formation as “free and responsible citizens”.⁴⁴ Direct reference to youth, furthermore, has been made in the new Article 21 of the Greek Constitution, which declares the obligation of the state to take measures to ensure the good health of young people and protect them.⁴⁵

The existing national legislative framework in the youth field concerns itself primarily with the following issues (EKCYP 2012):

- ▶ youth employment (e.g. protection of juvenile employees, special measures for young employees);
- ▶ sports (e.g. special measures for young athletes with outstanding performance, such as easier entrance to state universities);
- ▶ education (e.g. legislation regarding the structure and function of the educational system, including the participation of students in the governing bodies of state universities);
- ▶ family (e.g. special legislation that determines and protects the rights of the child, as well as particular measures against the abuse of children within the family);
- ▶ military service (e.g. exemption from military service through alternative social service);
- ▶ deviant behaviour (e.g. special courts and treatment for juvenile delinquents).

In 1996, the Greek Government passed a law on intercultural education (Law 2413/1996), while in February 2006, as already mentioned, it passed a new law instituting the local youth councils (Law 3443/2006). New provisions have been created more recently to merge existing institutions or establish new institutions concerned with young people (such as the Observatory Centre for Entrepreneurship),⁴⁶ followed by a series of legislative provisions aimed to strengthen youth employment and entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, significant legal barriers still exist to implement these innovative measures of the GSY, especially related to co-operation with the private sector and the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities for youth, as noted above.

44. Greek Constitution, Article 16, paragraph 2: “Education is a core mission for the State and for the moral, intellectual, professional and physical training of Greeks, the development of their national and religious consciousness and their formation as free and responsible citizens.”

45. Greek Constitution, Article 21, paragraph 3: “The State shall care for the health of citizens and shall adopt special measures for the protection of youth, the elderly, the disabled and the needy.”

46. See www.paratiritirio.gr, accessed 22 December 2014.

While the national report stresses that youth-related legislation has several shortcomings and suffers from institutional gaps, mainly related to the level of its co-ordination with European legislation, it is important to note that an integrated legal act in the youth policy field does not exist in Greece. The general impression gained by the international review team is that the youth field in Greece is certainly well regulated, but the question of the implementation and monitoring of these laws remains open.

Chapter 4

Conclusions

This concluding chapter starts with the overall impression of the international review team regarding the impact of the economic crisis and reform on youth-related policies in Greece. It continues with reflections on priorities and crosscutting policy domains within the framework of the new focus on the transition to autonomy and the working life of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. It also elaborates on the concept, coherence, and dynamics of “youth policy” in Greece in line with the synthesis reports of earlier international youth policy reviews (Williamson 2002, 2008), where references were made to the five Cs (components)⁴⁷ and the four or eight Ds (dynamics) of national youth policies.

Although the international review team did not come across many overt signs of the economic crisis, its strong impact on youth-related policies in Greece is undeniable. It is crucial to link youth policies to the changing social conditions and aspirations of young people, but the team found there is a substantial lack of evidence and knowledge regarding the current psychosocial situation of young people, and the impact of austerity and the economic crisis on youth transitions. This observation is aligned with the wider tendency of the Greek administration to neglect the keeping of robust records of relevant data. This absence of knowledge management means that reform strategies lack a strong evidence base to support policy decisions.

In the youth field, the knowledge gap is mainly reflected in the lack of any sociological or anthropological studies of youth, despite wide recognition that social research is a key tool for informing policy. Existing university research in Greece is often fragmented and disconnected from policy debates, and linked with the low level of engagement of researchers in programmes and projects directed at youth. This raises questions about the communication channels between researchers and policy formulation, development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Of particular note is the fact that no studies were found on the impact of the recent government measures related to youth entrepreneurship. In fact, the team could not find any studies evaluating policy in areas related to youth.

47. The five Cs refer to the following: Coverage (geographical areas, social groups, policy domains); Capacity (structures for delivery with public and NGO sectors); Competence (the professional knowledge and skills available); Co-ordination (communication/collaboration by youth field actors); Cost (human and financial resources available). The four/eight Ds refer to the following: Decision and Drive (decentralisation); Delivery (difficulties); Debate (dissent); Development (direction).

Furthermore, it was observed that externally imposed reform has affected youth-related policies in Greece, *inter alia* in terms of their priorities, which have shifted from leisure activities and sports to entrepreneurship, employment, and business (as well as some aspects of leisure). While engagement in leisure and cultural activities still represents an important form of informal youth participation providing some sense of identity, hope, and even job opportunity, the international review team concluded that special attention should be placed on youth transitions marked by de-standardisation and diversification of transitional trajectories. This is in line with European and global trends, although the uncertainty, inequality, and increased exclusion of young people in Greece, which has negatively influenced their autonomy, has resulted in more extreme manifestations.

Nevertheless, one of the main obstacles to an efficient and effective policy response to the complex issues that young people face in contemporary Greece is the absence of an integrated youth policy, or any kind of coherent shared vision, sense of purpose, or coherent cross-departmental strategy in the youth field. Attempts to develop a platform for local youth policy are random and lean mainly on the local strategy for civil society, even though that does not specifically target young people.

On the other hand, this has been recently recognised as a high priority issue, and one of the most urgent challenges to be tackled by the GSY. As the team was informed, through development and implementation of the Youth Action Plan launched in January 2013, a concerted effort has been made to create a cohesive framework that includes youth-related actions initiated by several ministries, including the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture. Pursuant to the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union of 22 April 2013, a co-ordinating authority for youth employment has been appointed in Greece (under the Employment Directorate of the Ministry of Social Security and Welfare) in order to co-ordinate all actions and all stakeholders, while the OAED is geared to become a focal point of information for all relevant policies designed and implemented for young people.

Although co-operation and co-ordination among relevant institutions seems to have increased on account of the economic crisis, there is still concern that the ongoing process of change and reform leads to a lack of continuity and stability, a lack of institutional capacity, and a lack of institutional memory, which makes further strategic planning in the youth field more difficult. In this regard, the role and responsibilities of the GSY, as well as political championing of reform and the process of social and institutional change, have to be clarified.

The paramount concern on this front is that administrative processes appear to be more important than substantive policy action in Greece. This phenomenon is mainly related to the fact that laws, regulations, and formal processes shape the work of the public administration, leaving little room for effective policy making, or incentives related to it. The team also notes that although “legal formalism” was originally established to preclude political interference, it has over time produced inefficiency on a massive scale, blocking innovation, initiative, and even entrepreneurial spirit (the bedrock of aspiration for young people, across policy domains). On the positive side, there are encouraging initiatives on the part of regional and local “youth policy” actors

that demonstrate increasing desire, willingness, and determination to make use of creativity, new thinking, and new partnerships in addressing current youth issues.

The key youth policy challenge for Greece in the short term, therefore, is to establish mechanisms that can release the entrepreneurial and participatory spirit of its youth, in order to restore to them hope and belief in their future and their country, but also in their regional and local administrations, youth organisations, and local youth councils, by enabling these in providing timely and purposeful interventions appropriate to local needs and circumstances.

Ultimately, the international review team felt that the political cycle has had some, though not dramatically influential, effect on the “youth policy” agenda in Greece, as described by the Secretary General of the GSY:

Obviously when political systems change and political leaders change, then perspectives will change as well. This is, however, more a question of detail than of overall strategy.

4.1. COVERAGE

Youth policy in Greece is highly centralised. However, the efforts that have recently been made to decentralise policy development and implementation to regional and local authorities are to be welcomed.

Decentralisation is likely to have particular value in the youth field, where youth policy challenges are invariably most intense at the local level. Particular merit is seen in the restructuring of the LYCs, as key mechanisms for youth participation at the municipal level that need to be depoliticised if a broader constituency of young people are to become politically aware and involved in democratic processes, especially in the light of the increasing problems of radicalisation. The team notes, in this regard, that the TEYC 2014 project represents an impressive example of good practice in building partnerships and involving youth (both organised and non-organised) in dialogue and the decision-making process on issues that concern them at the municipal level.

On the other hand, the main challenges of the administrative reform, especially at the local level, are manifested in the attempts to overcome differences and establish new integrated forms of governance among merged municipalities, as well as in developing co-operation with other newly established municipalities (keeping in mind budget constraints), but also with respective national governing structures.

4.2. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Improving the performance of youth on the labour market is a crucial challenge in most EU member states facing persistent youth unemployment, including Greece. The labour-market conditions in Greece, however, deteriorated significantly during the global economic crisis, and young people are among the most disadvantaged groups. Root causes of youth unemployment in Greece are the overall economic

situation and the labour-market environment (in line with EU trends),⁴⁸ early school leaving, lack of qualifications, lack of work experience, and lack of relevant skills.

A delayed process of transition to the labour market can have a severe impact on the life projects of young people in Greece (and across Europe), affecting as it does their access to social security schemes, professional development and, not least, self-esteem and resilience. Recent analysis shows that the prolonged employment crisis may have also forced young people to be less selective about the type of jobs they are prepared to accept. Part-time employment, especially temporary contracts, are much more common among younger workers, and may force some individuals to put on hold their plans for the future and their transition into adulthood (Eurofound 2014).

Access to quality education, training, and apprenticeship schemes are also of concern with respect to young people's capacity to choose their life projects independently, and questions may be raised as to how these schemes are driven both ways by those shaping the labour market and young people themselves.

Policy makers, therefore, must acknowledge that young people making the transition from education to employment are faced with specific risks due to their lower levels of working life experience and their vulnerable position in a labour market that is often dictated by a "last-in, first-out" policy. In order for young people to escape discrimination in the labour market, these risks should be more widely recognised and taken seriously by all relevant social actors and the decision makers (EYF 2013). The team supports the idea that the European institutions, civil society organisations, and trade unions have an important role to play in highlighting the issue of discrimination against young people and in actively working for its eradication.

Ensuring a good start for youth on the labour market will, therefore, require co-ordinated policies to bring the education system closer to the labour market, help disadvantaged youth find jobs or participate in training courses, and facilitate the hiring of young people by firms. In this regard, the Greek Government has introduced various policy responses, taking into account both EU trends and national strategic priorities, and focusing mainly on areas of youth entrepreneurship and agriculture (especially in the framework of the NSRF). To combat youth unemployment, the proposed measures sought to incentivise employers to recruit young people (through various subsidies), and support entrepreneurial start-ups by young people. Furthermore, fast-track training programmes have been introduced, aiming to encourage youth to move back to the traditionally neglected countryside and thereby make a contribution to the economy. Priority has been given to speeding up the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative, monitoring the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, and the adoption of the Council of the European Union's recommendation on a quality framework for traineeships.

While the majority of policy interventions targeting youth unemployment in Greece appear to be based on top-down approaches, it was not clear to the international review team what type of evidence (if any) was used to inform them. Keeping in

48. The international review team notes that this is in line with the findings of the international literature, which consistently suggests that the primary factor influencing youth unemployment is the overall economic climate rather than characteristics of young people themselves.

mind that the aforementioned measures are implemented by a range of public institutions, one has to draw the conclusion that there seem to be no obvious links among these programmes, and no coherent strategy behind them. Their efficiency and effectiveness often remains unknown. Therefore, the impact of existing measures should be explored, especially in relation to vulnerable groups such as new entrants to the labour market, young females, and minority groups. In addition, the team concludes that existing employment subsidies should be better targeted to the most disadvantaged youth, such as early school leavers and individuals who have not been in employment, education, or training over the long term.

With regard to youth entrepreneurship, there is no doubt that it should be accorded high priority on the political agenda in order to fight youth unemployment. But the attitudes of young people towards entrepreneurship (and its related risks) do not match those of the public institutions. Again, the question of an appropriate balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches in formulating youth policy agendas needs to be raised. The team also observes that as there is no common overall strategy for promoting youth entrepreneurship, different tools are being used by different institutions. There is a distribution of relevant competencies among these institutions, and even some efforts at synergy. Yet, frequent overlaps may be noted in the implementation process, as well as a lack of co-ordination and information dissemination across departments. The first step to overcome this, therefore, might be the creation of a “wiring diagram” – a flow chart of initiatives, their content, and their connections – on policy and practice around youth entrepreneurship. For many respondents, youth entrepreneurship still represents an experimental area of programming, relying more on trial and error than on any robust evidence.

Young farmers, for example, have expressed very little trust in implementation of the rural entrepreneurship and innovation policies. A majority feel that the current state of agricultural policy, which seeks to encourage internal migration from urban to rural areas, is unsustainable and fraught with risk. Rather than struggling with budget constraints and complicated bureaucratic procedures to translate theoretical ideas into practical realities, these respondents feel that family traditions in farming should be supported in order to create more job opportunities from which others can benefit.

The team concludes that current public policies for youth entrepreneurship in Greece may be based on good intentions, but face difficult operational challenges: it is important to distinguish efficient and effective measures, identify the entrepreneurial spirit, and support it more substantially. As one of our respondents put it, “It is more about knowledge than about money.” Another stressed that existing policy measures foster equality instead of excellence: “There is a societal drive for collective equality and that is what holds Greece back.”

The Greek education and training system faces challenges in terms of its quality, efficiency, and capacity to ensure the successful transition of young people to employment. The main challenges lie in the need to ensure wider access, improve equity, and address geographic disparities, as well as in enhancing the quality, attractiveness, and relevance of VET to the labour market. The international review

team feels that serious progress is needed in improving the educational situation of disadvantaged groups, including migrants and Roma.

Due to decreased public spending and budgetary cuts, it is more likely that effective implementation of systemic reforms in the area of education and its relation to the labour market will remain the key issue in the Greek context. Given low public investment in education and training in times of economic crisis, the achievement of the national targets will be somewhat difficult. The team, however, supports the idea that investment in this field is crucial to support long-term sustainable growth in Greek society and the economy, especially in the form of “smart spending” – taking full advantage of the possibilities of EU structural funds to underpin education reforms and also finance educational infrastructure.

For the future, there is a manifest need to enhance the importance of apprenticeships within VET studies and improve the role of all the stakeholders in apprenticeship schemes in Greece. While the apprenticeship system shows encouraging results and provides in turn a significant reduction in the very high levels of youth unemployment, its consolidation and development will require closer co-operation with social partners as well as the establishment of a functioning governance structure. This is likely to be a significant challenge, given that the main obstacle in adopting the dual system in Greece is a lack of trust between employers and education/training institutions, followed by bureaucratic barriers. However, a new law reforming upper secondary education was adopted by the Greek Parliament in September 2013, aiming to introduce the notion of dual-VET and more apprenticeships in the country, and its implementation is key to the future of the education sector in Greece.

From the perspective of respondents coming from business sector, the crisis has exposed the Greek economy’s “essential lack of competitiveness”, and thus the challenges around the establishment of new business, “since the organisation of policy to develop and support innovation in business is not yet satisfactory”. Alternatives to state-implemented measures to address youth unemployment and develop entrepreneurial initiatives in Greece are twofold: independent consultancy agencies based on many different fields of expertise (e.g. Ergani in Thessaloníki), and creative initiatives on the part of NGOs (e.g. the creativity platform team), which promote the initiative and creativity of young people. Comprehensive data will be needed in order to inform alternative project development based on co-operation with the Greek diaspora, as well as exploration of the potential for online mentoring between young entrepreneurs in Greece and the Greek diaspora.

4.3. OTHER RELEVANT ASPECTS OF YOUTH TRANSITIONS

Although the current policy debate in Greece is focused on enabling young people to move into the labour market, the international review team stresses the relevance of other aspects of youth transitions, in line with the principles of the Action Plan of the Council of Europe’s Youth Department (2014-2015), which states that the “transition to adulthood encompasses more processes than just access to the labour market for young people”.

From this perspective, the sustainable inclusion of young people into society is possible by broadening employment pathways into wider social integration pathways, with work as a key element compatible with the other components of integration. The Council of Europe's approach to promoting policies that stimulate the autonomy and well-being of young people and supports human development has the added value of making young people more aware, resilient, and better protected. This is of particular relevance, keeping in mind that prolongation and fragmentation of youth transitions postpone access to social rights and citizenship based on autonomy. To ensure successful youth transitions to adulthood, particular importance should be given to social rights and related processes such as access to housing, health, or social security; access to education; and the capacity to exercise the right to participate. Access and capacity to enjoy and exercise one's human and social rights should feed back into the work already done with young people (especially vulnerable groups) and with other stakeholders in youth policy and youth work.

The social impact of the crisis has been mostly manifest in the rising number of young people (aged 18 to 24) living in jobless households, and at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare 2013). The team acknowledges the various initiatives introduced in the field of social policy in Greece aiming to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis and provide legal aid for youth at risk. But despite the diverse range of activities and actors involved, there seems to be no coherent, underpinning set of principles or strategy in this field, and many programmes have been implemented on an ad hoc, fragmented basis depending on available EU funds. Once more, it raises the question of how to go about coordinating work between organisations such as the GSY and other relevant secretariats and ministries.

Overall, social exclusion and discrimination were not covered by youth-oriented policies in Greece, nor was the area of human (minority) rights listed among the government's priority policy domains. Thus, young people's access to fundamental rights has been provided mainly through various measures aiming to, *inter alia*, prevent and combat school violence and bullying, address issues of sexual equality and freedoms, ensure mental health protection, promote intercultural education, and deliver human rights education. In addition, the Ministry of Education facilitates programmes aiming to promote safe use of the Internet (including addressing Internet addiction) (see Flora 2014), and implementing the Council of Europe campaign combating online hate speech.⁴⁹

Although examples from the municipalities of Veria and Komotini reflect a strong equality agenda (around inclusion, immigrants, Roma, migrants, gender), and a diversity of progressive ideas and initiatives have been undertaken in order to address issues facing vulnerable youth, the international review team notes that, considering the prevailing type of these activities (e.g. campaigns, competitions, and festivals), the question of reach should be raised. Little plausible evidence was conveyed to suggest that information, provision, and opportunity had actually been extended to the intended groups of young people.

49. See <http://nohate.ext.coe.int>, accessed 22 December 2014.

Furthermore, young people from other minority groups, such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT), and young people with disabilities of various kinds, were scarcely mentioned in the international review team's discussions with a range of stakeholders (other than when the team members themselves mentioned them). It appears that a considerable amount remains to be done at the local level in addressing equality issues relating to youth.

Also conspicuous by its absence during discussions with the international review team (though mentioned at the National Hearing which was taking place in Athens in February 2014) was the issue of the rise of neo-Nazi extremism and its influence among the youth population. Despite a lack of official data, an articulated response to this challenge was created through the MYPLACE project, where the problem was defined and discussed by various young anti-fascist groups.⁵⁰ Due to the absence of data and any kind of integrated vision or approach to youth-related issues in the social field, it remains unclear how, and in which direction, "appropriate" policy responses are going to be developed in the future. The team suggests that a new focus be adopted to address diversity and discrimination, with existing resources reoriented towards meeting the needs of both newly arrived and domiciled citizens of contemporary Greece, including youth.

4.4. MILITARY SERVICE

While there is no doubt that military service represents a significant part of the transitional trajectory for most young men in Greece, a lack of data in this field as well as the need for the internal reform was identified.

Still, the prevailing attitude among our respondents was that obligatory conscription interrupts the life paths of many young men. On the other hand, it was still perceived as an honourable task in the service of the country. The international review team was also curious as to whether or not military service had any "value-added" dimensions, especially in terms of utilising the capacities and specialist skills of soldiers to create new services and provide more benefits for those involved and for society (especially those with higher academic qualifications, who do not benefit much from vocational training). There was broad support for a respondent's view that "the system should be more open to new ideas which have to be institutionalised, and not just ad hoc".

Overall, drawing on statements by respondents undertaking military service, the team concluded that military service has not adapted well enough over the past 30 years to deal with the changing social, educational, and occupational circumstances of young people. Certain advantages of military service were nevertheless recognised, such as education and skill development opportunities (vocational training), especially for low-skilled adolescents. Obviously, military service also helps lower the levels of unemployment that currently prevail in Greece.

50. See <http://myplacefp7.wordpress.com/2012/12/06/racism-fascism-and-the-greek-youth>
<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/?s=greek+society+myplace>
<http://myplacefp7.wordpress.com/2012/11/14/golden-dawn-and-the-greek-schools-the-fascist-penetration-in-greek-society>, all accessed 22 December 2014.

The international review team was in addition made aware of the prevalence of conscientious objection to conscription and felt that more comprehensive evidence about its character and scale needed to be established. The exploration of young men's attitudes and motivations with regard to conscription is a potential field of research.

It is also worth noting that limited steps have been taken in recent years to turn the Greek military into a semi-professional army, leading to the gradual reduction of the duration of compulsory military service from 18 to 12 to 9 months, and the inclusion of a greater number of professional military personnel in most vertices of the armed forces. The anti-conscription movement has advanced the idea that mandatory conscription should be abolished, to be replaced by an all-professional/all-volunteer army.⁵¹ But the geopolitical situation of Greece complicates questions such as these, including whether the military should reduce spending in times of economic crisis. Greek military expenditure remains among the highest in Europe relative to Gross Domestic Product.

4.5. CROSSCUTTING POLICY DOMAINS

There are two key crosscutting areas of youth-related policies in Greece, namely youth participation and youth information. Although a significant part of the programmes targeting youth in Greece strive to motivate, involve, and actively engage young people in more or less structured activities, the level of substantive influence of formally established mechanisms for youth participation on the decision-making process within municipalities remains quite low in practice. Based on the scope of their activities, the LYCs represent more of a mechanism for the engagement of youth in volunteering and project-based activities rather than local youth advisory bodies with significant involvement in local decision-making processes.

Youth information as a service, too, has not been adequately recognised by either local authorities or youth. Young people do appreciate the service, however, and its popularity is increasing through social media networks and peer exchange. What is also significant, perhaps, is the fact that though all YICs are members of Eurodesk, none of the respondents was aware of EYRICA – the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency.

With the exception of youth information, the recognition of the principles and values of non-formal education, as well as its connection with youth information, youth work, and the formal system of education, has not yet been established. This may be of particular relevance for future policy making in the area of leisure, which should be more targeted and linked with contemporary youth culture and interests in the environment, green growth, culture, social issues, and European issues, thereby offering a more diversified set of activities for youth.

Although cultural policy and related actions for youth are diverse and dynamic, and engagement in leisure and cultural activities represent important forms of informal

51. Young people between the ages of 18 and 27 can apply to volunteer to be a professional soldier. They can join for three-year periods, without having done military service, and serve for seven years.

youth participation, young people in Greece are not satisfied with the prevalent modes of engaging in leisure activities. Apart from strongly demonstrated leadership and initiative on the part of local authorities and institutions, there is a lack of youth-led organisations at the local level, in part because of a lack of recognition.

There is little doubt, however, that “youth work” in Greece is of great social value. It connects with young people’s leisure and recreational interests, complements formal educational processes, addresses contemporary social issues such as unemployment, and reflects the particular needs and tasks of young people as they move through the transitions of adolescence and young adulthood. Other types of “youth work”, both more and less formal and informal, address issues relevant to young people such as drugs, sexual health, or discrimination. In many instances, “youth workers” help young people acquire the skills to develop and lead peer education-based activities.

The great variety of youth activities on offer means that intensive work is needed in order to define common categories, including the defining lines between different forms of professional practice and issues of professional distinction. There is no tradition of monitoring and documentation of youth work in Greece, and there are many uncertainties regarding concepts and indicators. Professional communication also needs to be improved. Youth work and non-formal education, however, play a significant role in supporting “individual agency” and helping youth navigate and manage their transitional processes more successfully. For this to be reinforced, the international review team stresses the need to advance the recognition agenda at national and local level, as a means to add to the validation of the competences acquired by young people through youth work and non-formal learning, as well as to give the sector the means necessary to further develop quality work.

Finally, joint youth policy and youth work responses to current youth issues are required. Although the transition process concerns youth work and youth policy primarily, it does not exclusively concern the youth sector – it is a shared responsibility with other policy areas, such as formal education and labour policies. To be able to address increasing risks and opportunities, “youth policy” has to be designed so it represents a conscious and structured cross-sectoral policy of the youth field, which aims to co-operate with other sectors and co-ordinate services for youth – involving young people themselves in the process (Williamson 2002).

4.6. COMPETENCES OF THOSE WORKING IN THE YOUTH FIELD

The recognition and visibility of youth information and youth work as well as the organisation of youth (information) worker training in Greece clearly needs further attention. The level of education and training of youth workers is unsatisfactory due to the lack of youth work-specific academic and training programmes within the Greek educational system. In this regard, the international review team suggests that one of the potential outcomes of TEYC 2014 could be an initiative for the development of a youth work training and development centre (building on the Council of Europe’s embryonic ideas from 2006 that followed a Youth Partnership seminar on youth work and youth policy in South-Eastern Europe). Furthermore, the re-establishment of the national youth information network and its connections to

European networks (especially ERYICA) also merits serious consideration. A lack of monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the YICs is evident, and needs to be improved on.

Most professionals involved in “youth work” in Greece are not satisfied with the current status of the field. In particular, they believe that youth work services should assume a more prominent and comprehensive role in Greek society and that more co-ordinated efforts should be made in this direction. The backgrounds and skills of the YIC workers encountered by the team were very diverse; most were municipality employees without any specialised and formal training in the field of youth information and counselling, and without any certainty that they would continue to be engaged in their posts in the future. Some had, however, been involved in various courses such as those offered by the Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities (SALTO) centres supported by the European Commission.

The development of communication skills to enable such workers to better engage young people in youth-related structures and activities can make a big difference with regard to the level and quality of youth involvement. To some extent, there is a sense of an emergent youth work profession in Greece. This needs to be facilitated in order to bring about the energisation and engagement of youth work and youth in Greece.

The competences and capacities of civil servants involved in the development and implementation of youth policy in Greece also demand attention. The international review team suggests that, apart from the management of human resources, special attention should be paid to providing systematic training for civil servants, through seminars in relevant areas such as youth participation, as well as through study visits and the exchange of experiences with other EU member states. A clear distinction also needs to be made between the political level and a technically competent, objective public administration. The team recommends improving the credibility and competences of those at senior levels in the civil service, so they can act as stewards of sustainable policies across political cycles. At the same time, the team is aware that the reform process in Greece is bringing about pressures to consolidate and compress government structures, and this is likely to affect the structure and role of the GSY in currently unforeseen ways.

4.7. CAPACITY OF GOVERNMENT AND YOUTH NGOS

There is no significant tradition of youth engagement through NGOs and volunteering in Greece. On the other hand, the team observed that most youth voluntary engagement in Greece appeared to be connected to transnational movements and organisations such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. These youth organisations were keen to emphasise that their recognition and links with the GSY and the ESYN should be improved in the coming years. The team shares this view since a great amount of youth energy, enthusiasm, and creativity is embodied in these organisations, and this potential should be constructively encouraged, especially in times of crisis.

Without appearing overly critical of progress in the youth field in Greece (though it remains a fragmented mosaic of programmes and actions), the team argues for

the development of a more coherent strategic approach towards civil society and youth volunteering. As the national co-ordinator for EYV 2011, the GSY has already undertaken a series of actions to promote the culture and practice of volunteering and foster public dialogue regarding volunteerism. The potential of the national action plan for the EYV that was created and implemented throughout 2011/2012 should be explored and used as the starting point for future programming in this area.

Special attention should be focused on the improvement of co-operation and trust building between young people and the public institutions, although there are already examples of good practice at the local level (especially in Thessaloníki). Overall, the team concluded that existing local and national youth participation structures were established based on a top-down approach that did not provide expected results and did not develop the desired sense of ownership among youth organisations. Therefore, ongoing reform should be understood as an opportunity to refocus and redefine the purpose of these structures, as well as to put more effort towards supporting bottom-up youth-led initiatives and the development of effective youth participation mechanisms at the local level. Links between structures established at the national and the local level should also be cultivated, and an understanding and recognition of the values and principles of youth participation promoted among all stakeholders, including young people themselves. Building alternative forms of youth participation, in line with Europe-wide trends, will be important as well.

4.8. CO-ORDINATION

Available sources (EKCYF 2012: 3; GSY 2012: 43) portray youth policy in Greece as horizontal, affecting many fields that lie within the purview of different ministries. Policies related to youth are, as a result, implemented by various ministries according to their thematic responsibilities. Nevertheless, the international review team remains unconvinced that youth policy in Greece is genuinely cross-sectoral. While there may be effective vertical connections within different ministries and departments, there is insufficient horizontal connection and liaison among them. Overall, the elements of “youth policy” in Greece represent a range of services for youth based on proposals and approaches from different quarters, but not a horizontally integrated approach to youth issues.

As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of cross-sectoral collaboration, coherence, and co-ordination in implementing programmes and projects targeted at youth. It is not clear to what extent the balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches has been established, and what mechanisms have been created to secure sustainability in the implementation of youth-related policies and initiatives. Similarly, relations between the central administration and the rest of the public sector need further attention. Once a coherent vision is in place, effective implementation may be achieved through co-ordination with key players from across the public administration (central and local).

The team felt that there were glimpses of progress towards such coherence, since the GSY is making significant efforts to build horizontal co-operation and co-ordination

through, *inter alia*, the establishment of a ministerial committee whose role is to co-ordinate actions targeted at young people. The Group Inter-sectoral Collaboration for Youth can play an important role in strengthening horizontal relationships between different youth-related sectors, and therefore its capacity should be improved. Given the scattered nature of the “youth field”, it faces many obstacles.

Along the same lines, the recently released Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan has made some important steps towards a networking approach, with the formation of a cross-sectoral steering committee. This was set up by the general secretaries of all the competent ministries, and it has taken over the role of strategic design and decision, as well as politically co-ordinating and establishing a political priority list. In parallel, the steering committee has responsibility for organising, monitoring, assessing, and evaluating policies for the adoption and implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative.

In addition, a working group has been entrusted with the task of implementing the Youth Employment Initiative, and particularly the Youth Guarantee. The mission of the group is to draw up a roadmap for the operation of the Youth Guarantee Plan, and provide the requested data, technical support, and know-how. Networking has already begun, alongside a consultation process with the social partners representatives, prior to the submission of the plan. The social partners are expected to participate actively in the implementation of several actions aiming to create a framework for networking and horizontal co-operation among competent actors, thereby paving the way for efficient and effective implementation in relevant policy areas.

4.9. COSTS

The international review team did not have any insight into the budget of the GSY, so more information is needed on the funding of youth-related policies, especially with regard to its breakdown: where resources have come from and what it has been spent on, as well as an analysis of trends and changes as the crisis has unfolded. It was also not completely clear which projects were EU funded and which were co-financed. Special attention should be paid to the question of building a sustainable strategy in this regard.

4.10. DEVELOPMENT

The dynamics of youth policy have been characterised by Williamson (2002) in terms of four or eight “Ds” on the face of a clock, with the critical aspect of political championship (decision and drive) at the apex of the process. This produces, after decentralisation, delivery (a quarter past the hour), then further debate (on the half hour) after the experience of unintended consequences and effects (difficulties). Debate invariably leads to dissent but demands development (at a quarter to the hour) if an agreed direction can be identified in order to enlist political support once again. The process can stop or stall at any point and proceeds at variable speeds. The international review team reflected on how this model related to what it considered to be the rather sluggish pace of youth policy in Greece.

Flowing from the implied commitment of the Greek Government to protect youth and promote entrepreneurship, there is a prevailing view that young Greeks are passive and dependent. During a discussion of the crisis and the current situation of youth in Greece, one respondent explained that this supposed tendency is reflected in:

Young people's abstinence from society, rejection, and reluctance to expose themselves to new experience and to learn from it, as well as in non-conformist inclinations that produce protest as their first reaction.

It was explained that young people rarely consider the reasons why Greece is in its current situation, and that they were inclined to think that "the old ways and structures can be restored rather than looking more actively towards the future". This may go back to the system of education, characterised by too much repetitive learning, not enough critical and analytical thinking, and virtually no initiative and creativity, leading to "a mismatch between reality and perception".

However, while the international review team concluded that the general approach to youth in Greece is "reactive" and "problem oriented", it also observed that when given proper opportunities, young people have proved to be extremely creative, active, and constructive. Thessaloníki, as European Youth Capital in 2014, provides the best example of this. The case of the TEYC 2014, more spontaneously than deliberately, has shown how European initiatives can be used to promote youth participation and direct involvement, as well as to cultivate these approaches as a valuable community resource. Bearing in mind the social task of supporting youth transitions as defined by the Council of Europe, any future framework for the development of "youth policy" in Greece should be more "proactive", and should endeavour to provide opportunities for young people to achieve autonomy in social and work life, linked with support and access to services and risk management.

Interestingly, some respondents invoked the illustrative metaphor of Greece as "the last Soviet-style society", where everything is done (or expected to be done) by the state. Thessaloníki's approach was in direct contrast to this – the local state administration adopted the slogan "I love my city, I adopt my neighbourhood" in order to promote citizens' movements facilitated by municipalities to initiate and engage in everyday life activities. As the international review team was informed:

The political parties have their views on what should be done, but the citizens should be the ones who decide what they want in their neighbourhood.

In Thessaloníki, it was also stressed that the municipalities are the nucleus of a well-governed state, with one respondent alleging that "local and community relationships have been almost destroyed by national and supra-national governmental structures". In line with the impressions gained by the international review team, it was emphasised repeatedly that a paradigm shift from expectations (from the state) to activism (by the citizen) has to be introduced and cultivated, especially at the local level. There is thus a need for a paradigm shift away from a culture of dependency and towards a more proactive role for the citizen and for individual young people in contemporary Greek society, with the idea of multiplying citizens' movements in the field of youth policy as a critical starting point for this transformation process. In this context, young people represent a development opportunity in Greece because,

as one respondent put it forcefully, “the young people are those who have not been poisoned by the old patterns”.

In the final analysis, and reflecting on the future strategic pathways of the development of “youth policy” in Greece, the international review team observes that in comparison to the EU programmes, those of the Council of Europe were to some extent neglected, especially those based on human rights and values. The team was told, however, that the GSY is seeking to implement its programmes in line with the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018), in the following policy areas:

- ▶ unemployment, employment, and labour relationships;
- ▶ social exclusion (e.g. targeted at young people living in remote areas);
- ▶ social inclusion, youth rights, and participation;
- ▶ environment, climate change, and green development.

The GSY is also planning to align its activities in the youth field with the priorities of the Council of Europe, as expressed in its 2008 youth policy formulation, Agenda 2020. Despite many overlaps with the 2009 EU strategy and the need to “read across” the two strategies (especially in the context of the social inclusion imperative), this can clearly be another direction for the future development of youth-related policies and programmes in Greece, especially in areas such as the promotion of human rights, living together in diverse societies, and active citizenship among youth.

Overall, the international review team recalls that appropriate policy responses, at European and national level must differentiate according to the increasingly complex, unpredictable, and vulnerable trajectories of contemporary youth in Greece. On the other hand, they have to be based on both the social conditions of youth and the political objectives set by the respective public authorities (Siurala 2006). To achieve this balance, Greece needs not only strong commitment and political championship for the establishment of an integrated approach to national youth policy, but also comprehensive and sound European (and possibly international) support.

Chapter 5

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

The international review team expresses serious concern at the apparent absence of an integrated youth policy, joint vision, or clear sense of purpose in the youth field in Greece. The team acknowledges the need for the development of a comprehensive and cross-departmental strategic framework for youth policy based on participatory principles, in order to provide vision, focus, and direction for future development in the youth field. A high-level structure is also needed which has the authority, responsibility, and capacity to lead the development of a strategic vision and direction for public policy in the youth field, as well as the effective implementation of this vision in practice and over time. In order to overcome these difficulties, the international review team recommends that national efforts be actively reinforced with wider European support for a more coherent and sustained framework of policy development and implementation for young people.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The international review team was alerted to a significant absence of knowledge management in the youth field in Greece, which in turn suggests that reform strategies lack a strong evidence base to support effective and efficient policy decisions. The team recommends that the Greek authorities foster a more considered knowledge-based approach to youth policy making, along with the strengthening of dialogue between researchers and decision makers. The international review team recommends that the role of the Research Network for Youth Affairs be further promoted and used as a vehicle for innovative and pioneering research. This would help inform youth policies of relevance to young people in times of crisis. Another value-added aspect of the Research Network could be to provide a voice for young people, especially non-organised youth, in order to collate and disseminate their concerns and opinions.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The international review team suggests that two particular fields of research are crucial in addressing the rapidly changing conditions and aspirations of youth in Greece: the relationship between the socio-economic circumstances of young people and their well-being, and the rise of extremist political groups, the views they express, and their capacity to win the hearts and minds (and grounded action) of the young. Other topics relevant to further investigation in relation to youth policy in Greece include the substantive social condition of young people, such as homelessness, unemployment, malnutrition, extremism and Euro-scepticism, as well as youth migration, brain drain, and the youth diaspora.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The international review team is persuaded that relations between the central administration and the rest of the public sector needs further attention, since, despite claims to the contrary, there was little evidence that youth policy in Greece has any meaningful cross-sectoral dimension. In line with the Council of Europe Youth Department's programme on the transition to autonomy and the working life, the international review team emphasises that the development of a more integrated cross-sectoral approach to youth policy in Greece is of paramount importance. The potential of specific administrations to broaden their remit and responsibilities should also be considered. Central vision and steering, once in place, will need to link with key players across the public administration (central and local) in order to secure effective (horizontal and vertical) policy implementation. The team recommends that both previously established (the Group Inter-sectoral Collaboration for Youth) and newly formed co-ordinating bodies (a co-ordinating authority for Youth Employment, a cross-sectoral steering committee, and a working group entrusted with the task of implementing the Youth Employment Initiative and the Youth Guarantee) play an important role in strengthening horizontal relationships between different youth-related sectors. Their roles and capacities, however, should be clarified and strengthened to avoid duplication, though more purposeful partnership and collaboration should be encouraged.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Delayed transitions to the labour market can have a severe impact on the life projects of young people in Greece, as it affects their access to social security schemes, and their professional development, self-belief, and resilience. The international review team recommends that the impact of existing activation measures in Greece be further examined. Existing employment subsidies should be better targeted towards more vulnerable and disadvantaged youth, such as new entrants to the labour market, young women, early school leavers, individuals who have not been in employment, education, or training over the long term, and minority youth. The

team needs to learn more about follow-up activities on the adoption of the Council of the European Union recommendation on a quality framework for traineeships, as well as about the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative and the Youth Guarantee.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The international review team stresses the need to raise the question of the appropriate balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches in formulating youth policy agendas, especially in the case of the priority attached to youth entrepreneurship. Though impressed with the number of programmes and initiatives implemented in the field of youth entrepreneurship, the team was concerned that these are largely divorced from the real needs and the wider social and economic realities of young people's lives. More incorporation and focus is needed if effective strategies are to be developed and implemented. The team further notes that there is no common overall strategy for promoting and supporting youth entrepreneurship in Greece, while frequent overlaps can be noted in the implementation process as well as a lack of co-ordination and information dissemination across departments.

The international review team recommends that, as a first step, knowledge gathering and mapping of existing programmes and initiatives be undertaken in the form of a "wiring diagram" – a flow chart of initiatives, their content, and their connections – on policy and practice around youth entrepreneurship. Needs assessment and consultation with the beneficiaries (especially young farmers) are highly recommended in order to inform the decision-making process and minimise risks. Finally, there should be a greater focus on economic and enterprise education from a wider perspective – focusing not only on "start-ups", "business innovation", and "entrepreneurship" – but also on pedagogical methods aimed at promoting initiative and creativity among young people (as in some cases in Thessaloníki). The Greek authorities should be considering the development of educational curricula that are not only "for", but also "through" and "about" enterprise.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Access to quality education, training, and apprenticeship schemes is crucial in enhancing young people's capacity to choose their life pathways and projects independently. The international review team supports the statements of the Greek authorities that there is a manifest need to enhance the importance of apprenticeships within VET studies, and to improve the role of the social partners in apprenticeship schemes. This is likely to be a significant challenge in the face of obstacles to the adoption of a dual system in Greece, including a lack of trust between employers and education/training institutions, bureaucratic barriers, and the lack of a functioning governance structure. Special attention should be put on monitoring of the implementation of a law reforming upper secondary education, introduced by the Greek Parliament in September 2013, aiming at introducing the notion of dual-VET and more apprenticeships in the country.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The current policy debate in Greece focuses mainly on enabling youth to move into the labour market. The international review team emphasises the relevance of other aspects of youth transitions, in line with the Council of Europe Youth Department's programme on the transition to autonomy and the working life. This programme attributes particular importance to social rights and related processes such as access to education, housing, health, and social security, along with the capacity to exercise the right to participate. Bearing in mind the wider social integration pathways of young people, the international review team recommends that the Greek authorities develop and implement policies that stimulate the autonomy and well-being of young people, promote human development, and have the added value of making young people more aware (informed), resilient, and protected from risk. The international review team draws attention to the cases of non-conformity by Greece with respect to the European Social Charter in the following areas: "Employment, training and equal opportunities", "Health, social security and social protection", "Labour rights", and "Children, families, migrants".

RECOMMENDATION 9

One of the risks that young people face in the labour market in Greece is discrimination based on age. It is recommended that special attention should be given to the monitoring of the implementation of the Law on Emancipation, in view of the fact that it specifically places an emphasis on providing youth with access to the labour market in times of economic crisis and austerity. The international review team stresses that other criteria, besides age, may also play an important role in the future, since discrimination is often worse in relation to gender, ethnicity, and disability.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Issues related to social exclusion and discrimination do not appear to be actively related to youth-oriented policies in Greece. The arena of human (minority) rights is not explicitly listed among the government's priority policy domains in Greece. The international review team had the distinct impression that there was no coherent strategy for this field, although many programmes have been implemented on an ad hoc and fragmented basis depending on available EU funds, which raises the question of their impact and reach. A considerable amount of work remains to be done at the local level in addressing equality for youth, and a new focus and sensitisation is needed to address diversity and discrimination, with a reorientation of existing resources towards meeting the needs of both newly arrived and domiciled citizens of contemporary Greece, including young people.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The international review team sees many merits in military conscription in Greece beyond its primary *raison d'être*, as it provides various types of VET, creates job

opportunities, and reduces the unemployment rate of young Greek men (at least to some extent). However, there are a number of possible pathways for the reform of military service in Greece. These range from reducing the duration of the service, and focusing on basic training for young men aged 18 to 19 (so that necessary skills and knowledge about the defence of the country can be gained without interrupting their life paths), to the idea that compulsory military service should be ended completely, with the creation of professionalised armed forces. The international review team also became aware of the prevalence of conscientious objection to conscription and felt that more comprehensive evidence about its character and scale needed to be collected, bearing in mind that systematic and longitudinal studies in this area are lacking. Additional issues related to modernisation, flexibility, and better management of the internal resources and expertise of the conscripts, as well as the provision of adequate psychological support to those serving in remote/ border areas, need further attention.

RECOMMENDATION 12

There is no significant tradition of youth engagement through NGOs and volunteering in Greece. Correspondingly, there is no strategic and legislative framework for volunteering. The need for more innovative strategies and more support for non-formal youth participation is evident in the context of perspectives that, in times of crisis, young people tend to engage more often in informal movements and NGOs in order to express their voice, gain some sense of belonging, or demonstrate solidarity. The international review team wishes to commend the progress made on this front, but this often remains a fragmented mosaic of programmes and actions, rather than a more coherent strategic approach towards civil society and youth volunteering. The potential of the national action plan for EYV 2011 should be explored and used as a starting point for future programming in this area.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Although a significant proportion of the programmes targeting youth in Greece strive to motivate, involve, and actively engage young people in more or less structured activities, the international review team is concerned that the level of substantive influence of formally established mechanisms for youth participation on the decision-making process remains low in practice. Existing local and national youth participation structures are based on a top-down approach that has not produced the anticipated results nor developed the desired sense of ownership among youth organisations. Therefore, ongoing reform should be understood as an opportunity to refocus and redefine the purpose of these structures, as well as to put more effort into supporting bottom-up youth-led initiatives and developing effective youth participation mechanisms at the local level. Links should be cultivated between structures established at the national and local level, and an understanding and recognition of the values and principles of youth participation should be promoted among all stakeholders, including young people themselves. The Greek authorities

should also consider building alternative forms of youth participation, in line with Europe-wide trends, in the near future.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The international review team supports the position that, despite no institutional definition or recognition, “youth work” does exist as a social practice in Greece. It constitutes an integral part of educational and welfare work and plays a role in supporting safe and healthy transitions to adult life for young people. The range of activities often described as “youth work” is extensive but mainly focused on leisure-time activities. The team is concerned that the more specific concept of “youth work” is often used as a proxy for any work done with young people by a range of professionals. “Youth work” per se has more precise objectives, and the international review team recommends that there be further development of skilled youth work contact and communication in order to persuade young people to become involved and to support their participation in various structures and activities. This can make a significant difference with regard to the level and quality of youth engagement. To some extent, there is already a sense of an emergent youth work profession that, if facilitated properly, could have a transformative effect on the energisation and engagement of youth and youth work in Greece.

RECOMMENDATION 15

Youth information as a service has still not been adequately recognised among Greek authorities and young people, not least because of a lack of understanding of the concept and consequent confusion of the roles of “youth work” and “youth information” services in practice. While the previously established youth information network needs to be reinforced and strongly supported by the Greek authorities, the team stresses the need for its better connection to the relevant European agencies such as ERYICA and EYCA.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The principles and values of non-formal education, as well as its connection with youth information, youth work, and the formal system of education, have not yet been established in Greece. The level of education and training of youth (information) workers was also less than desirable as a result of the dearth of youth work-specific studies and the absence of youth worker training programmes within the Greek educational system. The team strongly recommends that further attention should be paid to the organisation of youth (information) worker training in Greece. There is a need to advance the recognition agenda at national and local level, both to validate the competences acquired by young people through youth work and non-formal learning and to give the sector the means necessary to further develop quality work.

RECOMMENDATION 17

Though the governance of youth-related policies in Greece has hitherto been highly centralised, the recent decentralisation of the administration has led to new forms of governance at the regional and especially local level. These reforms are likely to have particular value in the youth field, with the local youth councils emerging as key mechanisms for youth participation at the municipal level. These will, however, need to be depoliticised if a broader constituency of young people are to become politically aware and involved in democratic processes (especially in the light of the currently increasing problems of radicalisation). The international review team notes that the TEYC 2014 represents an impressive example of good practice in building partnerships and involving youth (both organised and non-organised) in dialogue and decision making on issues that concern them at the municipal level.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The international review team would like to raise questions regarding the competences and capacities of (some) civil servants involved in the development and implementation of “youth policy” in Greece. The team suggests that special attention should be paid to providing systematic training for civil servants, through seminars in relevant areas such as youth participation, as well as through study visits and the exchange of experiences with other EU member states. A clear distinction also needs to be made between the political level and a technically competent, objective public administration. The team recommends improving the credibility and competences of those at senior levels in the civil service, so they can act as stewards of sustainable policies across political cycles. At the same time, the team is aware that the reform process in Greece is bringing about pressures to consolidate and compress government structures, and this is likely to affect the structure and role of the GSY in currently unforeseen ways.

RECOMMENDATION 19

The international review team would have liked to have learned more about transparency and accountability with regard to youth policy-related budgets, in terms of the provenance and destination of funds, with an analysis of trends in relation to the economic crisis. It was also not completely clear which projects were EU funded and which were co-financed. Special attention should be paid to the question of building a sustainable strategy in this regard.

RECOMMENDATION 20

The youth field in Greece is certainly well regulated, although an integrated legal act regulating “youth policy” in Greece does not exist. The international review team is

concerned that the implementation and monitoring of youth-related laws and regulations in Greece remains insufficient. Youth-related legal structures and processes should be simplified, and legal barriers removed to facilitate the implementation of the recently introduced innovative measures of the GSY (especially those related to co-operation with the private sector and the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities for youth). The international review team notes that the legal framework addressing youth issues from various perspectives in Greece has resulted in several shortcomings and institutional gaps, mainly related to the level of its co-ordination with European legislation. Further attention to harmonisation is needed in this regard.

RECOMMENDATION 21

Administrative processes appear to be more important than substantive policy action in Greece. This phenomenon is mainly related to the fact that laws, regulations, and formal processes shape the work of the public administration, leaving little room for effective policy making, innovation, and incentives. The international review team recommends identification and analysis of the parts of the legal framework that require reform, in order to shift the focus of the administration from formal compliance with detailed requirements to the achievement of strategic objectives and policies. The key youth policy challenge for Greece in the short term, therefore, is to establish mechanisms that can release the entrepreneurial and participatory spirit of its youth, in order to restore to them hope and belief in their future and their country, but also in their regional and local administrations, youth organisations, and local youth councils, by enabling these in providing timely and purposeful interventions appropriate to local needs and circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION 22

Bearing in mind the social task of supporting youth transitions, as defined by the youth policy objectives of the Council of Europe, the international review team believes that any future framework for the development of “youth policy” in Greece should be more “proactive”, and should endeavour to balance the provision of opportunities to young people to achieve autonomy in social and work life, with support and access to services and risk management. In order to challenge prevailing traditions, assumptions, and stereotypes, there is thus a need for a paradigm shift away from a culture of dependency and towards a more proactive role for the citizen and for individual young people in contemporary Greek society, with the idea of multiplying citizens’ movements in the field of youth policy as a critical starting point for this transformation. The international review team emphasises that, in this process, the values and strategic framework of the Council of Europe, based on human rights and active citizenship, should be more strongly promoted by the Greek authorities.

Bibliography

ACEVO (2012), *Youth unemployment: the crisis we cannot afford*, Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations, London.

Chisholm L., Kovacheva S. and Merico M. (eds) (2011), *European youth studies: integrating research, policy and practice*, TRIANGLES Series Reader No. 1, M.A. EYS Consortium Innsbruck.

Chisholm L. and Kovacheva S. (2002), *Exploring the European youth mosaic*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Council of Europe (1990), "Participation as a means of integrating young people at risk into society", European Steering Committee for Youth, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Council of Europe (1993), "The development of an integrated approach to youth policy", European Steering Committee for Youth, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Council of Europe (2003a), "Select committee of experts on the establishment of guidelines for the formulation and implementation of youth policies", Secretariat memorandum prepared by the European Steering Committee for Youth, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Council of Europe (2003b), *Revised European Charter on the participation of young people in local and regional life*, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Council of Europe (2006), "Essentials of a youth policy in the Council of Europe", Secretariat memorandum prepared by the European Steering Committee for Youth, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Council of Europe (2012), "The Social Charter at a glance", Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg. www.coe.int/T/DGHL/Monitoring/SocialCharter/Presentation/CharterGlance/English.pdf

Council of Europe (2014), "Greece and the European Social Charter", Factsheet – Greece, update: January 2014, available at www.coe.int/T/DGHL/Monitoring/SocialCharter/CountryFactsheets/Greece_en.pdf, accessed 22 December 2014.

Council of the European Union (2009), Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-2018), (2009/C 311/01), Official Journal of the European Union, Brussels.

EKCYP (2012), "Country sheet on youth policy in Greece", European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy, Strasbourg.

ELSTAT (2013), "Labour Force Survey, 2nd Quarter 2013", Hellenic Statistical Authority, Athens.

EU-OSHA (2013), "Pan European opinion poll on occupational safety and health 2013", European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, Luxembourg.

Eurofound (2012), "NEETs. Young people not in employment, education or training: characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe", Eurofound, Dublin, available at www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2012/54/en/1/EF1254EN.pdf, accessed 19 December 2014.

Eurofound (2013), "Wages: a working conditions and industrial relations perspective", Background Paper, Eurofound, Dublin, available at www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2013/07/en/3/EF1307EN.pdf, accessed 19 December 2014.

Eurofound (2014), "Mapping youth transitions in Europe", Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

European Commission (2007), "Young Europeans – Survey among young people aged between 15-30 in the European Union", Brussels.

European Commission (2009), "An EU strategy for youth: investing and empowering – A renewed open method of co-ordination to address youth challenges and opportunities", COM(2009) 200 final, Brussels.

European Commission (2012a), "Apprenticeship supply in the member states of the European Union", Final Report, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Brussels.

European Commission (2012b), "Awareness of home affairs", Special Eurobarometer 380 report, Brussels.

European Commission (2013), "Education and Training Monitor 2013. Country reports: Greece", Brussels.

European Commission/Council of Europe (2012), *The history of youth work in Europe. Relevance for today's youth work policy. Volume 3*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

European Commission/Council of Europe (2013), "The socio-economic scope of youth work in Europe", Final Report, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Eurostat (2013a), *Factsheet on youth unemployment in the EU*, available at www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/137631.pdf, accessed 19 December 2014.

Eurostat (2013b), "Young people in the EU. The measurement of youth unemployment", Brussels.

Evans K. and Furlong A. (1997), "Metaphors of youth transitions: niches, pathways, trajectories or navigations", in Bynner, J., Chisholm, L. and Furlong, A. (eds), *Youth, Citizenship and Social Change in a European Context*, Aldershot, Ashgate.

EYF (2013), "Quality jobs for young people", European Youth Forum, Brussels.

Flora K. (2014), "Internet addiction disorder amongst adolescents and young adults: the picture in Europe and prevention strategies", *Perspectives on Youth*. Volume 2, Council of Europe and European Commission, Strasbourg.

Giannaki D. (2014), "Youth work in Greece: a historical overview", in Taru M., Coussée F. and Williamson H. (eds), *The history of youth work in Europe. Relevance for today's youth work policy*. Volume 4, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

GSY (2007), author: Kollia, V. "about Greek Youth", Athens.

GSY (2012), "National report for youth", General Secretariat for Youth, available at www.neagenia.gr/appdata/documents/book-eng.pdf, accessed 18 December 2014.

Kolaitis G. (2013), "Greek economic crisis and the impact on young people's mental health", Athens.

MacDonald R. and Coffield F. (1991), *Risky business? Youth and the enterprise culture*, RoutledgeFalmer, London.

Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare (2013), "The labour market situation of youth", Analysis and Documentation Unit, Athens.

OECD (2010), "Jobs for youth/Des emplois pour les jeunes", Summary and main recommendations, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2011), *Education policy advice for Greece*, available at www.oecd.org/greece/48407731.pdf, accessed 22 December 2014.

OECD (2012), "Public governance reviews: Greece 2011", OECD Publishing, Paris.

Pandea R. A. (2014), "Addressing challenges to transition to working life and autonomy of young people in Europe", Consultative meeting, 18 and 19 February 2014, European Youth Centre, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Siurala L. (2006), *A European framework for youth policy*, Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Williamson H. (2002), *Supporting young people in Europe. Principles, policy and practice. The Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy 1997-2001 – A synthesis report*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Williamson H. (2008), *Supporting young people in Europe. Volume 2. Lessons from the "second seven" Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Appendix

Programme of the first and second study visits

FIRST VISIT

April 2013 – Athens

All meetings during the first visit were held at the General Secretariat for Youth (GSY).

Sunday 14/4/2013 Arrival – Informal IRT preparatory meeting (Hotel)

Monday 15/4/2013

Meetings with the GSY Heads of Directorates for information on youth policies and measures

09.00-09.45	Organisation, Planning and Research Directorate
09.45-10.30	Administrative and Financial Directorate
10.45-11.30	Information, Public Relations, and International Co-operation Directorate
11.30-12.15	Developmental Employment Initiatives Directorate
12.15-13.00	Social Participation Directorate
14.30-15.30	Meeting with the General Secretary for Youth
20.00	Informal Dinner hosted by the General Secretary for Youth

Tuesday 16/4/2013

Meeting with representatives of Ministries

09.00-10.15	Ministry of Education & Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports (European Union Directorate, Department of Programmes – Education Unit)
10.15-11.30	Ministry of Education & Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports (European Union Directorate – Culture Unit)
11.45-13.00	Ministry of National Defence, Human Resources Department
14.30-15.45	Ministry of Rural Development and Food
15.45-17.00	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad, Head of the Division of Europe

Wednesday 17/4/2013

Meeting with representatives of Ministries

09.00-10.30	Ministry of Interior
10.30-12.00	Foundation for Youth and Lifelong Learning (National Agency for YiA)
12.15-13.45	Ministry of Employment and Social Protection
14.30-16.00	General Secretariat for Industry, Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Infrastructure, Transport and Networks

Thursday 18/4/2013

09.00-10.30	Head of the European Policy and International Co-operation Division, General Secretariat for Gender Equality, Ministry of Interior
10.30 -11.45	GSY Youth Research Network
12.00-13.00	National Youth Council of Greece
14.30-16.00	Greek Scouts, Greek Guiding Association, vAEGEE-Peiraias

Friday 19/4/2013

Debriefing – International Review Team

Saturday 20/4/2013 Departure of IRT

SECOND VISIT

September 2013 – Thessaloníki, Komotini, Alexandroupoli and Veria

Sunday 01/09/2013 Arrival – informal IRT preparatory meeting (Hotel)

Monday 02/09/2013

Thessaloníki

09.00-10.20	City administration / “Thessaloníki European Youth Capital 2014”
11.00-12.30	Local youth council of Eleftherio-Kordelio
14.00-15.30	a. Youth Employment Service b. Ergani
16.00-17.30	Business confederations

Tuesday 03/09/2013

Thessaloníki

09.00-10.20	Military – conscripts
11.00-12.30	Local youth information centres a. Municipality of Evosmos-Kordelio b. Municipality of Ambelokipi-Menemeni

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 14.00-15.30 | a. Orthodox Church
b. Catholic Church |
| 16.00-17.30 | a. ESYNE (Hellenic Association of Young Entrepreneurs)
b. Creativity Platform |

Wednesday 04/09/2013

Komotini (app. 270 km from Thessaloníki) and Alexandroupoli (50 km from Komotini)

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 11.00-12.30 | ARSIS Shelter for unaccompanied minors in Alexandroupoli |
| 14.30-15.30 | Local administration – Komotini |
| 16.00-17.00 | Local youth council – Komotini |

Thursday 05/09/2013

Veria

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 11.00-12.30 | Local administration |
| 14.00-15.30 | Young farmers |
| 16.00-17.30 | Scouts/Guides environmental NGO |

Friday 06/09/2013

Thessaloníki

Debriefing – International Review Team

Saturday 07/09/2013 Departure of IRT

Sales agents for publications of the Council of Europe Agents de vente des publications du Conseil de l'Europe

BELGIUM/BELGIQUE

La Librairie Européenne -
The European Bookshop
Rue de l'Orme, 1
BE-1040 BRUXELLES
Tel.: +32 (0)2 231 04 35
Fax: +32 (0)2 735 08 60
E-mail: info@libeurop.eu
<http://www.libeurop.be>

Jean De Lannoy/DL Services
Avenue du Roi 202 Koningslaan
BE-1190 BRUXELLES
Tel.: +32 (0)2 538 43 08
Fax: +32 (0)2 538 08 41
E-mail: jean.de.lannoy@dl-servi.com
<http://www.jean-de-lannoy.be>

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA/ BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE

Robert's Plus d.o.o.
Marka Marulića 2/V
BA-71000 SARAJEVO
Tel.: + 387 33 640 818
Fax: + 387 33 640 818
E-mail: robertsplus@bih.net.ba

CANADA

Renouf Publishing Co. Ltd.
22-1010 Polytek Street
CDN-OTTAWA, ONT K1J 9J1
Tel.: +1 613 745 2665
Fax: +1 613 745 7660
Toll-Free Tel.: (866) 767-6766
E-mail: order.dept@renoufbooks.com
<http://www.renoufbooks.com>

CROATIA/CROATIE

Robert's Plus d.o.o.
Marasovičeva 67
HR-21000 SPLIT
Tel.: + 385 21 315 800, 801, 802, 803
Fax: + 385 21 315 804
E-mail: robertsplus@robertsplus.hr

CZECH REPUBLIC/ RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE

Suweco CZ, s.r.o.
Klecakova 347
CZ-180 21 PRAHA 9
Tel.: +420 2 424 59 204
Fax: +420 2 848 21 646
E-mail: import@suweco.cz
<http://www.suweco.cz>

DENMARK/DANEMARK

GAD
Vimmelskaftet 32
DK-1161 KØBENHAVN K
Tel.: +45 77 66 60 00
Fax: +45 77 66 60 01
E-mail: reception@gad.dk
<http://www.gad.dk>

FINLAND/FINLANDE

Akateeminen Kirjakauppa
PO Box 128
Keskuskatu 1
FI-00100 HELSINKI
Tel.: +358 (0)9 121 4430
Fax: +358 (0)9 121 4242
E-mail: akatilaus@akateeminen.com
<http://www.akateeminen.com>

FRANCE

Please contact directly /
Merci de contacter directement
Council of Europe Publishing
Editions du Conseil de l'Europe
FR-67075 STRASBOURG cedex
Tel.: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 81
Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 39 10
E-mail: publishing@coe.int
<http://book.coe.int>

Librairie Kléber

1 rue des Francs-Bourgeois
FR-67000 STRASBOURG
Tel.: +33 (0)3 88 15 78 88
Fax: +33 (0)3 88 15 78 80
E-mail: librairie-kleber@coe.int
<http://www.librairie-kleber.com>

GREECE/GRÈCE

Librairie Kauffmann s.a.
Stadiou 28
GR-105 64 ATHINAI
Tel.: +30 210 32 55 321
Fax: +30 210 32 30 320
E-mail: ord@otenet.gr
<http://www.kauffmann.gr>

HUNGARY/HONGRIE

Euro Info Service
Pannónia u. 58.
PF. 1039
HU-1136 BUDAPEST
Tel.: +36 1 329 2170
Fax: +36 1 349 2053
E-mail: euroinfo@euroinfo.hu
<http://www.euroinfo.hu>

ITALY/ITALIE

Licosa SpA
Via Duca di Calabria, 1/1
IT-50125 FIRENZE
Tel.: +39 0556 483215
Fax: +39 0556 41257
E-mail: licosa@licosa.com
<http://www.licosa.com>

NORWAY/NORVÈGE

Akademika
Postboks 84 Blindern
NO-0314 OSLO
Tel.: +47 2 218 8100
Fax: +47 2 218 8103
E-mail: support@akademika.no
<http://www.akademika.no>

POLAND/POLOGNE

Ars Polona JSC
25 Obroncow Street
PL-03-933 WARSZAWA
Tel.: +48 (0)22 509 86 00
Fax: +48 (0)22 509 86 10
E-mail: arspolona@arspolona.com.pl
<http://www.arspolona.com.pl>

PORTUGAL

Marka Lda
Rua dos Correios 61-3
PT-1100-162 LISBOA
Tel: 351 21 3224040
Fax: 351 21 3224044
Web: www.marka.pt
E-mail: apoio.cientes@marka.pt

RUSSIAN FEDERATION/ FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE

Ves Mir
17b, Butlerova ul. - Office 338
RU-117342 MOSCOW
Tel.: +7 495 739 0971
Fax: +7 495 739 0971
E-mail: orders@vesmirbooks.ru
<http://www.vesmirbooks.ru>

SWITZERLAND/SUISSE

Planetis Sàrl
16 chemin des Pins
CH-1273 ARZIER
Tel.: +41 22 366 51 77
Fax: +41 22 366 51 78
E-mail: info@planetis.ch

TAIWAN

Tycoon Information Inc.
5th Floor, No. 500, Chang-Chun Road
Taipei, Taiwan
Tel.: 886-2-8712 8886
Fax: 886-2-8712 4747, 8712 4777
E-mail: info@tycoon-info.com.tw
orders@tycoon-info.com.tw

UNITED KINGDOM/ROYAUME-UNI

The Stationery Office Ltd
PO Box 29
GB-NORWICH NR3 1GN
Tel.: +44 (0)870 600 5522
Fax: +44 (0)870 600 5533
E-mail: book.enquiries@tso.co.uk
<http://www.tsoshop.co.uk>

UNITED STATES AND CANADA/ ÉTATS-UNIS et CANADA

Manhattan Publishing Co
670 White Plains Road
USA-10583 SCARSDALE, NY
Tel: +1 914 472 4650
Fax: +1 914 472 4316
E-mail: coe@manhattanpublishing.com
<http://www.manhattanpublishing.com>

Council of Europe Publishing/Editions du Conseil de l'Europe

FR-67075 STRASBOURG Cedex

Tel.: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 81 – Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 39 10 – E-mail: publishing@coe.int – Website: <http://book.coe.int>

Greece is the 20th country to have had its youth policy reviewed by an international review team appointed by the Council of Europe. The financial crisis and resulting high unemployment rate, especially among young people, was the major concern encountered by the review team. Although the crisis has compelled Greece to engage in profound fiscal reform and address many of its structural weaknesses, this has not been matched by labour market activation policies and other youth policy measures needed to reverse the mood of despondency and stem the tide of emigration of young people.

This international review focused in particular on two aspects of youth transitions: the transition from the education system to the labour market; and the related issue of military service and conscription, which is an integral part of life for young men in Greece. The review team also considered characteristics of the public administration, which dwells on bureaucratic compliance and has limited scope and licence for fostering initiative and creativity, despite incessant rhetoric about the need for “entrepreneurship”.

The review team advocates the establishment of more creative and innovative mechanisms to free the entrepreneurial and participative spirit not only of young people in Greece, but also of its regional and local administrations, youth organisations and local youth councils, in order for them to provide timely and purposeful intervention, opportunity and support according to local need and circumstances.

The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

www.coe.int



<http://book.coe.int>
ISBN 978-92-871-8087-2
€21 / US\$42

