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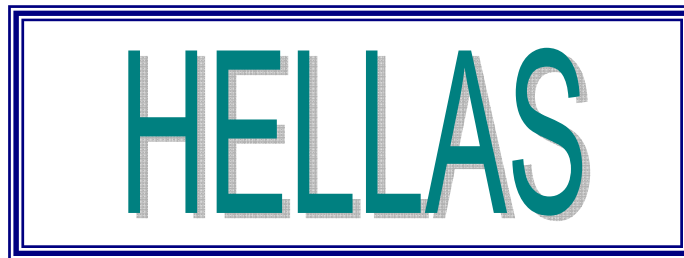
Lifelong Learning: Education and Training policies
Coordination of Lifelong Learning Policies

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IMPLEMENTING THE 'EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010'

WORK PROGRAMME

2005 Progress Report



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THE HELLENIC NATIONAL REPORT :

Greece's contribution to the 2006 joint report on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

Introduction

Greece, like all EU Member States, considers education and training nodal points to achieve the Lisbon strategic objectives, mainly because of their contribution in the development of the knowledge society and economy. In addition, the plausibility of education to balance two, quite contrary concepts, namely competitiveness and social cohesion, is considered of great significance. Furthermore, equally crucial is its contribution to an overall personal development, cultural development and the promotion of citizenship.

Over the last period, more and more organisations* and policies in areas such as initial education and training, life long learning and higher education are oriented and or even include similar policies that are founded in the EU, in order to be enriched with new aims, ideas and good practices.

A particular interest is demonstrated by the Greek educational system with regards to the contribution of the EU in policy areas, such as the widening of access to all learners in the new technologies, the professional development of teachers/trainers, the creation of an open learning environment for all forms of education, the enhancement of links between training and the world of labour, the development of youth entrepreneurship etc. All of the above objectives are quite pertinent with the current policy planning that is put forward in order to introduce changes within the Greek education system.

Undoubtedly, however, the overall care remains for each distinct objective to be governed and monitored by the reasoning of quality and equal opportunities.

The systematic effort so that all levels of education and training can have reference points to the European targets, is enhanced also by the procedure of adopting national benchmarks, similar to the European ones, but based on reliable research findings and on the grounds of national conditions and needs.

The basic mechanisms to record the progress achieved vis-à-vis the education and training related targets, are on one hand the Centre for Education Research (*Kentro*

* Organisations such as the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training, the Adult Education General Secretariat, the Pedagogical Institute etc.

Ekpedeftikis Erevnas) which investigates systematically and traces the achievements and shortcomings at the level of educational structures, procedures and results, and on the other, a series of independent surveys in fields of innovative actions of great interest.

Within the framework of evaluation and the subsequent adaptive responses, data provided by surveys that are carried out by international organisations such as the OECD, have a serious impact on the public debate and the on-going dialogue in the context of the National Education Council. Moreover, the performance of our pupils as recorded in the PISA urge the leadership of the Ministry of Education, along with all agencies involved, to consider alternative ways to organise and operate our educational system in all its aspects. Eventually, during the last year arguments and proposals focusing on what should be changed at the level of structures and practices to improve the quality of the education provided, have multiplied.

Many of the changes that are being promoted in our country have, undoubtedly, references to the EU «Education and Training 2010» work programme. This correlation strengthens the reform efforts and further provides prestige, resources, educational knowledge and experience. It has been ascertained that there is a need for an active response in a manner, that will allow the EU targets to acquire a meaning and content suitable to the conditions and needs of Greek education and training. An effort is made to change established cultures in education and to promote stances that favour innovation and an on-going quest of quality mainly through cooperation and exchanges beyond the Greek borders.

In order to overcome such reactions and reservations, the Ministry of Education has launched a systematic effort to provide information at central and regional level about the EU «Education and Training 2010» work programme, by organising seminars and conferences. The aim is through a broader dissemination, to create ownership conditions regarding the programme, for an ever growing number of executives and active teachers. In other words the effort is to secure an understanding that the above EU programme constitutes a significant foundation for them to expand and renew their work to the benefit of their educational organisations. On the other hand, over the last year, we have had an enormous promotion in the press of EU communications and reports on education and training, which publicise the Union's priorities to the broad public.

2. INVESTING MORE AND MORE EFFICIENTLY : Focusing reform on the key areas

The basic reform priorities of the education and training systems are:

- a) **quality improvement** for the provided education services, mainly through the introduction of integrated changes in the structures and practices of education and training systems. This attempt has already started but requires time to build up consensus and a systematic co-operation of all major actors and agencies. The starting point of these efforts is based not only on the procedure of recording and evaluating needs and weaknesses, but also on the analysis of the good practices being developed in the EU through the peer learning process;

- b) **systematic professional development of teachers** by means of inservice training. Characteristic is the training of 75,000 teachers in ITC during this and the next school year, that is taking place in the context of similar successful actions developed in the recent past;
- c) **forging links between education and training and the employment sector** through researching the needs and competences that are on demand or will be required in the future by the labour market. In this context, emphasis is given to the enhancement of the vocational training status and on establishing lifelong approaches to guidance. A special interest is given to training programmes that are promoting equal opportunities, thus enabling all to have access to the labour market, especially those endangered by social exclusion;
- d) **development of actions at all levels of lifelong learning**, mainly thanks to the co-ordinated activities of the Adult Education General Secretariat, with an aim to approach the relevant 2010 European Benchmarks;
- e) **establishment of appropriate infrastructures** or upgrading existing material and resources available to Greek education, putting special emphasis on the development of educational materials and methods and technologies in teaching and learning;
- f) **promotion of European languages**, by taking active measures to introduce from next year a second foreign language at the last grades of primary school.

It is worth mentioning that the greatest part of the aforementioned actions and/or programmes are supported and co-financed by the EU Structural Funds, which consequently are considered the basic levers to promote innovations in Greek education and training.

However, beyond the important assistance provided by the Union Funds, the Greek state has decided to increase investments in education and training to the level of 5% of GDP by 2008. And this is done, because of the consolidated perception that sufficient financing of education constitutes the best investment for the future of the country and its citizens. However, this significant increase is not to be spent without detailed planning and accountability procedures.

On the contrary, the additional funds will be considered as targeted investments in order for the one hand to support area that substantially provide qualitative and innovative services and on the other to lead to the enhancement of equal opportunities through actions supporting vulnerable groups of students. An important parameter of increasing resources, is also to further develop research activities at the tertiary education level, which are anticipated to broaden the possibilities and range of activities of our Universities at a European, national and regional level.

Naturally, a policy of efficient investments in education and training will require a gradual, nevertheless, massive increase of funding, equal to more than 1.20% of the GDP. In this respect, attitudes founded on obsolete concepts regarding the uniformity in methods and amounts of financing, need to change gradually, nevertheless convincingly.

Above all, however, the basic pursue of the Ministry of Education is to establish sophisticated methods and specialised mechanisms to evaluate and record the performances and needs for the purpose of facilitating the development of crucial areas/sectors in education and training. The drafting of a series of indicators and the elaboration of EU data is creating a good basis for the Education Research Centre upon

which to found its endeavour to monitor the progress of the basic aspects of education and training.

One of the basic impediments that the development of innovations has to confront, is the highly centralised nature of the Greek educational system. In the context of the national dialogue corrective interventions are being negotiated, aiming to decrease many of the system's rigidities and to allow a broader community participation in the functioning of educational organisations without, in any case, compromising their effective functioning. These initiatives are furthering the scope of the already existing reform policies. For example, structures developed in the past, both at a regional and local level and which have led respectively to the establishment of regional education directorates and to municipal education committees will be even more supported. The objective is not only to enhance the decentralised structures, but also to provide the possibility for the development of more autonomous pedagogic initiatives at the level of schools. Indicative is the effort made for school curricula to reflect and take into account the local particularities and to focus more on the needs of the areas where they are located. In line with this is the possibility that is being considered, which will allow teachers to develop, by taking their own responsible initiatives, innovative actions, a step further to the predetermined curriculum.

This entire endeavour will, by all means, require from educational planners to take into consideration several important impediments that are mainly related to well entrenched structures and convictions of decades, which eventually require constant dialogue, consensus, sufficient preparation and time in order to change. The debate, however, regarding alternative organisational models has already been launched and its outcome is anticipated to be interesting.

Further to the foreseen by law public nature of Greek education, we also have in our country a large number of private agencies providing education and training services, mainly due to the large demand and interest for this type of services. At this point it should be mentioned that large amounts are spent both by families and individuals for formal and non-formal learning provisions as they are considered to be by the majority of Greeks important means to social mobility. Therefore, the motive to provide for even more educational sources and opportunities is included in the structures and culture of the Greek society.

In light of these developments, it is worth mentioning that the paramount objective of the current educational policy is to push through in a co-ordinated and integrated fashion, at a central and regional level, major innovations in all forms of education and training in the context of lifelong learning. This is the reason why the Ministry of Education has proceeded to draft co-operation memoranda and structures, in the areas of lifelong learning and training, with the Ministries of Employment and Culture. More information is provided below.

PUTTING IN PLACE TRULY COHERENT AND COMPREHENSIVE LIFE LONG LEARNING STRATEGIES

Greece has fully accepted the necessity of lifelong learning. The strategy selected for its implementation is focused on the following guidelines:

- A) to establish of a manpower, capable of renewing/updating knowledge and skills for the entire life span, ready to support individual and collective prosperity in our country and Europe;
- B) apart from employment orientation and the needs of the labour market, lifelong learning should enhance the human personality, from a many-aspect view, to develop broader social and cultural skills, especially from an active European citizen dimension;
- C) to make available to citizens a multitude of quality learning alternatives for their participation in lifelong learning programmes, in such a fashion as to adapt to individual needs and inclinations;

Obviously, the effective implementation of the lifelong learning strategy requires a creative partnership from diverse policy areas and sectors of public and private spheres. In our country this is achieved by the National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ESSEEKA) (L.3191/2003). The supervision and co-ordination of this system is performed by a council with the participation of social partners.

The System's basic action priorities are:

- A) the recording of needs/trends of the labour market, performed by the Employment Observatory Research-Informatics S.A. (PAEP). on the account of the Ministry of Employment;
- B) on the grounds of the evolving reality in labour market, to formulate the job descriptions, which consequently are to lead to the development of reliable initial and continuing training curricula. This procedure is applied through a co-operation of the Ministries of Education, concerned with initial training, and Employment, managing continuing training. The competent implementation agency is the National Accreditation Centre (EKEPIS) and the model applied is based on two principles: a) qualitative training and b) the possibility to gain and transfer credits.
- C) to accredit infrastructures and trainers. As regards the latter the law foresees a Unified Registry of Accredited Adult Trainers.
- D) To accredit knowledge, skills and vocational qualifications of trainees on the grounds of a common model, which is to designed jointly by the Ministries of Education and Employment.

To support all the aforementioned actions a network of competent agencies and services have been developed for some years now. This network is related directly or indirectly to lifelong learning and includes: the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK), the Vocational Training Institutes (IEK), the Vocational Training Centres (KEK), the adult educational system of the relevant General Secretariat which comprises of 32 Second Chance Schools, 43 Adult Education Centres, 52 Parents Schools and the Department Committees for Adult Education (NELE). In higher education one can record the Greek Open University and the Elective Study Programmes.

However, in the course it was deemed necessary to have a more efficient co-ordination, a systemisation of the actions and an operational networking of all the existing agencies under an integrated strategic approach to life long learning. This is why a bill was drafted and is being promoted to pass through Parliament, under the title: «Systemisation of Lifelong Learning and other Stipulations».

In its preparation, further to the contributions of the educational community, a large number of other social agencies were also involved; most characteristic is the involvement in the dialogue of the Economic and Social Committee, which has put forward specific recommendations, many of which were adapted. This is an endeavour reflecting the intent to establish an integrated legal framework for the development of Lifelong Education and Training on one hand, and on the other to provide for practical support to implementing measures, mainly in the post-secondary and tertiary level.

The new bill includes a series of provisions, referring mainly to two fields:

- Lifelong Education and
- Lifelong Training.

When describing Lifelong Learning, essentially, we talk about every procedure for obtaining general and scientific knowledge during the life span of a person. The quote of the actual legal text is : «LLL is aiming at either acquiring or improving knowledge, skills and capabilities in order to achieve a complete personality as well as to have access to the employment.» (A. 1.2.1) Lifelong Training, on the other hand is more diversified but also specific to procedures of acquiring specialised education and skills. Again, during the life span of a person the aim is : «to achieve a vocational specialisation within the framework of a specific vocational activity» (A.1, paragraph. 2.b.)

The legal framework that is being formulated for the provision of Lifelong Learning services, eventually, attempts to cover all the levels of education by the competent agencies, while at the same time it cares for public servants and provides the possibility to various social partners to establish Lifelong Learning organisations.

The total policy concerning Lifelong Learning and the consequent actions are anticipated to finally be co-ordinated, on the grounds of the bill in question, by an enacted body, foreseen by the bill under the name “the Lifelong Learning Committee” which will include high level political representations from the Ministries of Education and Labour along with representatives of those involved in issues of lifelong learning, including the social partners and ESSEKA bodies.

Moreover, such an inter-ministerial co-operation aims to systematise the co-ordination and the complementary nature of the Secondary Vocational Education Systems, of Initial and Continuing Training, in the context of an integrated concept about education and training and its link to the labour market.

More specifically, under Lifelong Training rules compulsory and secondary education graduates can enrol in Vocational Training Institutes. In line with this, the Vocational Training Centres accept both compulsory and secondary education graduates, along with higher education graduates. Agencies providing such services are either public or private ones.

A number of Vocational Training Centres (KEK) already operate in Universities and in Higher Technical Institutions (TEI) and are a) accredited in accordance to the stipulations set by the National Accreditation Centre of Continuing Vocational Training

Structures and Supplementary Supportive Services (EKEPIS) b) incorporated in the national system of vocational training, while remaining as individual structures in the Higher Education Institutions.

For Higher education graduates (university and technological sectors) the provision of lifelong learning services has been undertaken by the Lifelong Education Institutes, that are to have their premises and operate in Universities.

As already mentioned, a new «legislative landscape» is being established, and aims to enhance/upgrade already existing structures and to promote new ones. The objective deals with an integrated endeavour a) to redefine major aspects of the educational system and b) to develop life long provisions for the entire population to acquire certain fundamental skills.

In that sense, the participation of adults in non-formal education aims at providing basic knowledge (linguistic, cultural etc.) along with vocational training fundamentals, thus enabling these adults to integrate or reintegrate with equal chances in the working life and to cope with the constant social and vocational changes. In other words, apart from covering the needs of the labour market by providing adequate professionals, another basic aim is to satisfy the very personal and social needs of the individuals with knowledge and skills that they aspire to.

For example, the new programmes launched by the Adult Education General Secretariat (GGEE) aim at enhancing lifelong learning and have as an objective to activate citizens in all fields of their life (labour, family, society). The basic guideline in the field of adult education is the assumption that these institutions are learning environments and that this dimension should constantly be enhanced in order to provide the needed feedback to the formal and non-formal educational system.

Many of the aforementioned Lifelong Learning programmes demonstrate a flexibility and take advantage of the good practices that have already been applied (such as those from the Greek Open University in distance education) and invest in the enhancement and promotion of innovation.

Apart from the traditional teaching methods, there is a significant application (depending of course on the groups of trainees and the specific programme) of special audio-visual material, with films or video tapes and recently computers; along with the employment of multimedia and specialised educational software. In Second Chance Schools (SDE) emphasis is given to group collaborative teaching and project assignments, together with learning at the work. It is anticipated that after the bill on «Systemisation of Lifelong Learning» and the subsequent formation of the new legislative framework, these trends are to be generalised. The bill in question foresees specifically that lifelong learning can be applied with the use of distant learning methods, while at the same time the further application and development of new technologies in open and distant learning is promoted.

For the efficient functioning of all these, obviously it is necessary to enhance the education - training of trainers. The Adult Education General Secretariat is planning to co-operate with the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK) in the «Adult Trainers Education» project. This project aims at educating and qualifying trainers of adult trainees in the fields of education, training and adult training.

Similarly, the Institute of Continuing Education for Adults (IDEKE) has already organised numerous educational seminars for Secondary and Primary Education Teachers on various thematic fields, related to lifelong learning, non-formal and adult education. The Institute has been commissioned by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and applied programmes, such as “Consumer’s Education at Schools” and the “Hellenic School Network”, while it also utilises Community programmes of inter – european co-operation (Socrates (Grundtwig), Leonardo, Phare, Adapt, Tempus, Employment, Esprit etc.).

Apart from providing qualitative educational services the basic pursue of such a system is to provide to individual citizens the possibility to recognise and accredit their vocational skills, regardless of the way and course they followed to obtain them such as in cases of non-formal learning. In the context of the new legislative framework that is currently been advanced, certification of knowledge is provided by means of various Certificates. For each of the latter a Supplementary Certificate is to be provided in a form of an analytic document referring to the Learning Units included in the Programme, their level of difficulty, their assignments, any other educational activities and the grades obtained.

Lifelong Learning constitutes a dynamic policy factor for social integration. A series of programmes focusing on socially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are being applied and promoted; their implementation is co-ordinated by the Adult Education General Secretariat. Even in cases of non-formal adult education that lack of specific curricula (since they are formulated depending on the educational pursues and the specific target groups), there are specific examples that actually demonstrate this major policy concern.

For instance:

- Education of adult gypsies which includes: literacy, vocational training, health education, parental counselling.
- Education for repatriates which includes: Modern Greek language, History, Literature, Geography, Labour, Legislation, information about the operation of the Hellenic public Services, etc.
- For present or past prison inmates of Hellenic reformatory institutions, education includes: literacy, social and psychological support, vocational training, in various trades such as carpentry, pottery, silver work, motor mechanics and new technologies.

It is worth mentioning, that individual Adult Education Centres (KEE) emphasise on vulnerable social groups such as citizens with a low educational level, immigrants, gypsies, inmates etc. On the other hand, especially for KEEs, special programmes have been drafted for Romanies, inmates, repatriates, Muslims, immigrants.

A special emphasis is also given to the operation of the Second Chance Schools (SDE), concerning individuals that have not completed compulsory education. Existing planning foresees the significant increase of the number of SDEs, consequently apart from the 32 operating today, from September 2005, 11 more SDEs are to operate in various regions of the country.

What is interesting also is the development trend of all these structures of Lifelong Learning, that is recorded in a quantitative fashion.

More specifically, concerning the SDEs and data from the educational periods 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 we have:

- a. A 77% rate increase of the school units;
- b. A 101% rate increase of the number of classes;
- c. A 99% rate increase of the number of trainees.

Further, women participate at a greater rate compared to men. This rate increases over the years.

We should also note that women have also a higher rate of participation in the KEE educational programmes, compared to men.

It should be mentioned that evaluation of all the above mentioned Lifelong Learning programmes is foreseen, and to this end, eventually, indicators and standards are being drafted (utilising the good practices applied elsewhere and in the EU). Evaluation is both internal and external. Internal evaluation is done by the head of the providing services body on an annual basis, whereas for the external evaluation, an evaluation body is selected, following an open bid, under the responsibility of a supervising agency. This procedure is set to take place every four years

REFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION

This section deals with the main policies/measures, which enhance the contribution of higher education to the Lisbon strategy. In the following paragraphs we will refer, in order of presentation, to: a) the administrative arrangements for the recognition of degrees and professional qualifications, b) the two-cycle degree system, c) the implementation of ECTS and Diploma Supplement, d) the promotion of competitiveness and attractiveness of EHEA, e) the new law of Quality Assurance, f) measures for making higher education more responsive to the needs of LLL.

· Administrative arrangements for the recognition of degrees and professional qualifications

In order to avoid burdensome administrative arrangements, which have been a prominent feature in the old system of recognition of degrees, the Greek ministry of education has established a new organization.

Presidential Decree 165/2000 (Official Journal 149, Á') has integrated adaptation to regulation 89/48/EEC concerning the minimum 3 year course Tertiary education diploma recognition scheme. Further, by L3328/1-4-2005 "Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Centre (Hellenic NARIC)", was established, with headquarters in Athens and supervised by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. Aims of the Centre are: a) the recognition of degrees granted by foreign higher education institutions of the same rank, from the university and technological sector and b) the provision of information related to higher education studies in Greece and abroad. The new organisation is equipped with the professional background and resources to provide for speedier degree recognition and greater transparency.

On the other hand, we emphasize that the recognition of periods of studies is the responsibility of the Higher Education Institutes in which the applicant wishes to further his/ her studies. Fair procedures are followed in good faith and in an effort to remove barriers to study mobility.

In applying regulation 89/48/EEC, on the grounds of Presidential Decree 165/2000 we have the Council for the Recognition of Vocational Equivalence for Tertiary Education Degrees (SAEI), whose task is to recognise vocational qualifications obtained in a n EU Member State (other than Greece) and whose holders wish to practice their profession in Greece. SAEI is responsible for the application in Greece of the community directives on tertiary education diplomas certifying a professional education of a minimum duration of three years. Greece participates in all international networks dealing with the recognition of higher education degrees, such as NARIC and ENIC networks.

Furthermore, with the adoption at a European level of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees and the establishment of a European System of Credit all the major difficulties with recognition will be overcome.

- **Two-cycle degree system**

In Greece, a political decision providing for full implementation of two-cycle structure is still pending. *Ptychio* is the Greek name for the bachelor –level degree. It normally takes four years of full-time study program which carries 240 ECTS credits. The second cycle degree, which is called a *postgraduate diploma (metaptychiako diploma)*, is offered in many university departments. In general terms, the entry to the second cycle requires a completed bachelor degree at a recognized higher education institution.

- **ECTS and Diploma Supplement**

Several faculties of universities and ALL Technological Education Institutes (TEIs) use the ECTS in their study programmes. A new law, which has already been prepared by the Ministry of Education and will be issued before the Ministerial Conference in Bergen, will make the use of ECTS as an accumulation and transfer system compulsory for ALL Higher Education Institutions at the two cycle programmes.

The Diploma Supplement will be established by the same law. It will be issued automatically on a compulsory basis, free of charge, in Greek and English.

- **Initiatives and national measures regarding the promotion of the competitiveness and attractiveness of the EHEA**

Greece takes initiatives, actions and national measures regarding the promotion of the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area. Indeed, Greek institutions are involved in various European Projects and programmes (ASEM, Tuning Project, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus Tacis, etc.) which link Europe with other continents. Greece actively takes also part in international organizations (OECD, CoE, UNESCO/CEPES), in regional co-operations (Stability Pact/Graz Process, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Adriatic Ionian Cooperation, South East Europe Cooperation) and their educational projects and networks. In addition, the legal framework for the recognition of degrees has been simplified after the establishment of the new organization (Hellenic NARIC, established by law 3328/1.4.05) and a new law (3255/22.7.04) for Joint Masters has been established. In this law a legal obstacle to the establishment of joint study programmes concerning teaching language was removed by the article 4. Finally, the implementation of ECTS and of the Diploma Supplement by the new law will soon constitute another feature of attractiveness of the EHEA.

· **Quality Assurance**

A new law about Quality Assurance in higher education will have been approved by May 2005. In general terms, the new quality assurance system is certain to be composed of internal assessment as well as external evaluation and review schemes. A single national agency will aim at quality Improvement through external evaluation. The responsibilities of the agency are specified within the legislative framework and mainly involve the evaluation of study programmes and institutions, as well as organizational audit. The governing body of the agency and the external evaluation panels will consist of distinguished academics, foreign experts and experts from the world of education. Certified experts will be selected to perform evaluations from a registration list compiled for this purpose. The agency will work in close-cooperation with the higher education community and take into account the needs of society –particularly public and private stakeholders, including students, parents and the labor market- when devising its strategies. In addition, higher education institutions are encouraged to set up their own internal quality assurance mechanisms to provide a sound basis for external evaluation. The aim is to effectively combine institutional autonomy and accountability within the national quality regulations framework. Each institution has the right to independent decision-making and is therefore responsible for devising its own QA system for assessing education, administrative and research functions, although general provisions are set out in the legislation. Furthermore, it is expected that teaching staff and administration staff as well as students will be the main participants and contributors to this process. The new law for Quality Assurance provides for student participation during the internal evaluation process.

· **Higher Education and Lifelong Learning**

The Hellenic Open University (EAP), established by law 2552/97 (amendments in law 3260/2004), constitutes an independent and fully-administrated University in the form of a legal entity under public law. Based in Patras, it may establish branches throughout the country or abroad, and organizes both undergraduate or postgraduate study programmes leading to degrees, or to certifications of training, professional development degrees and PhDs. It addresses a great number of candidates, covering a very large spectrum of ages, wishing to follow undergraduate or postgraduate studies. Furthermore, Lifelong learning Institutes in Universities and TEIs Implement educational programmes addressed to either Higher Education or Secondary Education graduates of over 25 years of age, aiming at providing knowledge to broaden their educational and professional skills and prospects. Finally, Optional programmes of Studies (PSE) in Universities constitute a flexible framework enabling students to combine various programmes of studies.

Increasing the Quality and Attractiveness of VET

The competent body appointed to implement the Copenhagen objectives in Greece is the **Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK)**. Hence,

the OEEK is the **national reference point for information related to the Europass and the competent authority to monitor the Europasses**. Further, it supervises the **Vocational Training Institutes (IEK)** in line with article 2 of L.2009/1992. The Administrative Board of OEEK regulates the contents and methods of providing vocational training, the timetables and the detailed programmes of studies and workshop exercises per skill, class and training, the format, duration and terms of training periods and implementation, which can be done in the workshops; the services and product units of private sector

Under presidential decrees which are issued through the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, following a proposal of the Administrative Board of the Organisation of Vocational Education and Training (OEEK), the vocational rights of the holders of certificates of vocational education and training per skill and level are defined.

Activities of the OEEK related to the Copenhagen objectives, are the following:

Being the «Europass National Centre» the OEEK is competent of co-ordinating all relevant thereto activities, namely:

- manages transparency documents (Europass);
- manages the information system and the data base;
- performs co-ordinated efforts to promote the «Europass File» and documents to all levels;
- is in charge of promoting information and providing guidance to interested parties, in order to run these documents;
- participates in the network that is to be co-ordinated by the European Commission;
- is in charge of organising the appropriate information system to store all completed documents so they can be available to their holders.

The Europass has been quite successfully applied in Greece up to now. Up to date 3,200 Europasses have been issued out of 70,000 all over Europe. The rate at a European level is quite higher than the anticipated one, on the grounds of population data.

Aiming to make the documents included in the Europass file relevant and reasonable, the «**National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications**» has been created. It is among the best organised ones at the European Union level, a fact proven by the participation of Greece (represented by the OEEK) in the co-ordination nucleus of the 4 countries that introduce steps at an EU level (together with Sweden, Austria and the United Kingdom).

More than 500 young trainees in public IEKs participate on an annual basis in mobility projects with the other EU countries, turning to account the **LEONARDO** programme. The OEEK participates successfully in 15 LEONARDO pilot projects and is implementing actions in 5 **EQUAL** development partnerships. It is applying pilot training programmes structured in **modules** and **units**, and aims to apply a system to transfer training credits.

Moreover, regarding the transfer of training credits, OEEK is represented in the European working group and has had a special contribution through its **Sustainable Vocationalism** initiative. This is a methodology to set up common study programmes

(«common diplomas») that was launched in France, Greece and Italy, have been positively evaluated by the European Commission and are considered as a rather successful good practice, which promotes transparency, quality and transfer of training credits related issues. The initial proposal included common planning of the training curriculum, by establishing common diplomas in the field of hotel reception services and logistics. Eventually, a common methodology was established, concerning the professional profile of the staff members of these two categories; further, certificates, with the participation of countries, organisations, professionals, specialists and a co-ordinating team, were founded. In the context of the second phase of Sustainable Vocationalism the Greek-Italian team proposed the establishment of a permanent system that is to entitle the partners to elaborate certificates in a vast number of sectors and to establish professional profiles.

The OEEK has groups working under the action plan **linking initial and continuing vocational training with employment**. Currently, initiatives related to the common registry of lifelong learning trainers, a single accreditation system for training programmes and single systems accrediting structures and qualifying vocational skills, are being promoted.

The Greek Government has drafted a bill on **lifelong education**, developing national and international experience in this field. The bill in question after a systematic dialogue with the agencies involved, was publicised in January 2005 and is going to pass soon. This is an integrated legislative framework falling under the manpower development strategy and investment on human capital. In this context a priority, to the development and activation of the **National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ESSEEKA)** has been given.

ESSEEKA was enacted under Law 3191/2003, in order to contribute to the achievement of the double target

- of linking the vocational education and training with employment and
- of applying a co-ordinated policy to the specific domain

Efforts are being made to co-ordinate and complement the systems of Secondary Vocational Training, of Primary and Continuing Training, within the framework of a total and complete perception for education and training of the manpower and its channelling to the labour market. The basic target of such a system is to provide to each and every citizen the possibility to certify his/hers qualifications and vocational skills, regardless of the way and path he/she followed in order to obtain them. Pillars of such a single system are the two national bodies, the National Accreditation Centre (EKEPIS) and the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK), which are expected to develop the right mechanisms, procedures and ways, in order to ensure the credibility of the result. So a single accreditation of vocational qualifications system in the base of these two bodies is created, and a clear and determined environment is promoted to the labour market, which guarantees safety conditions for employees and businesses.

With the realisation of ESSEEKA and with the promotion of the subject of a single accreditation, the bill provides the possibility, to the social partners to create lifelong learning bodies, aiming, eventually to active participation and the strengthening the social effectiveness of lifelong learning.

On the other hand, the OEEK structure foresees the **participation of social partners** at all levels (the Administrative Board, at the level of Regions, in the procedure of accreditation). At the level of the Regions we have the **Three Partite Consulting Committees** (TSE) with the participation of the state, employers, social partners and employees. The TSEs observe and record the economic and social profile of the local markets, investigating the economic activities in each prefecture, demographic development, the saturation of the labour markets and the dynamics of each region. They also participate in the procedure of vocational training qualification examinations and make proposals to the OEEK, concerning the needs for qualifications and fields of specialisation that consequently will be applied in the IEKs.

Further, programmes promoting the implementation of the **links between vocational education and training and the labour market** are being promoted. Specifically, for instance, under the pilot programme that is being implemented in the Thessaloniki area, the local Career Bureaux bring together trainees and public IEK graduates with enterprises. The first results of this effort are encouraging, as 200 graduates, over a period of a few months, have found a job. On top of that, the first programme agreements with the local enterprises community, assuring labour contracts to IEK graduates, have been drafted and the first one of them is to be implemented in the region of Thrace.

Emphasis is given to the **qualitative upgrading** of training at IEKs, by updating the fields of specialisation that are offered, by equipping them with modern workshops and upgrading the manpower.

Further, the institution of vocational training is being promoted in **penal establishments** upon a joint initiative of the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Justice.

Regarding the **development of skills of employees at an older age** we should mention that a substantial number of trainees in IEKs are working people, over the age of 25. This is why, the possibility to operate classes with a flexible timetable and curriculum, is being examined, in order to entail a larger participation of people of that category. Further, the implementation of the LEONARDO pilot project «Diaplus Training Employment» has been launched. This is a European lifelong tool enabling the management of careers, and OEEK participates as a basic partner. As enterprises have to develop in the best possible fashion their manpower by means of training schemes, the «Diaplus» project assists the employees to redraft their future course in each stage of their professional life. The sector of **Information Technology and Communications** (ITC) has been selected, and an integrated intervention regarding lifelong career management has been proposed; this scheme is suitable to be used both within the structures of initial and continuing vocational education and training, and by the specialised human resources departments of ITC enterprises. In the proposed scheme we have the participation of 7 partners from 4 countries: Greece, United Kingdom, Germany and Cyprus, and more specifically:

- the Institute of Educational and Vocational Guidance, as co-ordinator (IEKEP);
- the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK)
- the Federation of Hellenic Information Technology and Communications Enterprises (SEPE);
- National Institute for Careers Education and Counseling (NICEC) (UK);
- Frauencomputerzentrum Berlin (FCZB) (Germany);

- Cypriot Association of Counselling and Vocational Orientation Teachers
- MITINGAS, Training and Research Institute (Cyprus)

CONSOLIDATING THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING MOBILITY

Over the last few years a systematic effort has been made to lift a series of legal and institutional impediments in the development of mobility, especially of students and graduates*. We consider that the course covered on this issue is quite satisfactory and that it will continue.

Indicative are the good practices in the field of teacher and student mobility, mentioned hereunder:

- ◇ On the grounds of bilateral Cultural Agreements, Greek and foreign teachers, with the support of the ministry, **exchange visits**, in order to be informed on issues related to their competence. These visits depending on the country, specialisation and visit programme last from 4 to 14 days.
- ◇ Primary and Secondary School teachers are entitled to a paid sabbatical for post-graduate studies or to elaborate a thesis, not only in Greece, but also in a country abroad. Furthermore, the academics in Greek Universities are entitled to a sabbatical.
- ◇ Further, in the context of mobility, the **Organisation for the professional Development of Teachers (OEPEK)** is planning trans-national exchanges for trainers and trainees. In addition, assistance is provided for exchanges and mobility of the scientific staff of AEI and TEI : a) through the financing of international networks, such as the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, the Euro-Mediterranean Co-operation etc and b) in the context of Bilateral Educational Programmes with other countries

As far as the development of the quality of mobility we note that:

- ◇ The **selection** of students to participate in mobility programmes is made on the grounds of criteria such as their academic performance and the good knowledge of foreign languages, mainly the official one of the host country. For the current year the amount of €200,000 has been allocated by the State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) to promote the mobility of **ERASMUS** students.
- ◇ A bill that is to be submitted to the parliament in May regulates the issue of the European Credit Transfer System (ETCS), in order to facilitate mobility and the recognition of periods of studies abroad.
- ◇ by setting up the Bologna Promoters team, who by means of one-day conferences, lectures and printed material contribute to update the public on the Bologna procedure.
- ◇ by the broadest possible dissemination of the **SOCRATES** programme by the National Co-ordination Unit (IKY) through one-day conferences, mailing information material, updating the agencies involved (students, AEI-TEI professors), along with annual meetings of the AEI/TEI ERASMUS Bureaux.

* Regarding legislative interventions please see the annex

- ◇ Here we should note that there is provision for the ERASMUS foreign students to be provided accommodation, meals, Greek language courses, health insurance, activities to incorporate in the life of the educational Institution etc.
- ◇ As far as the mobility in **vocational education and training** is concerned, the Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) implement a large number of **LEONARDO da VINCI**, mobility programmes, enabling more than 500 young trainees to follow training courses in other EU countries.
- ◇ Concerning virtual mobility in Primary and Secondary Schools, the participation of Greece in the **Associated Schools Project Network (ASPNET)** aims at promoting international co-operation and peace through Education.
- ◇ Over the last few years, there has been a development of educational exchanges and the **twining** of Greek Primary and Secondary schools with schools abroad; these include a large range of activities such as communication on the Internet and the exchange of projects which usually leads to the exchange of visits.
- ◇ Greek schools and teachers participate in the **South Eastern Mediterranean sea Project (SEMPEP)**, which is a Greek initiative, and combines interdisciplinary teaching and holistic learning. On top of that, Greece is one of the founding members of the e-learning programme **EUN – European Schoolnet**, an organisation established in 1997 aiming at the co-operation and communication of all the Ministries of Education of the EUN member states on issues related to e-learning and the use of ITC in education.

From the above, one concludes that the aim is to adapt national legislation and to implement all procedures relative to mobility, taking into consideration what is applied in the member states. Legislative reforms in the sector of recognition, participation in the EU SOCRATES LEONARDO programmes, further education of teachers and trainers, exchanges, participation in networks **but also the introduction of teaching a second foreign language in Primary education starting from the next school year (2005-2006)** fall under the more general context of overcoming impediments and improving the quality of mobility.

Practices to promote European dimension

This year, ‘The 2005 European Year of Citizenship through Education’ (EYCE) has been included in the large-scale civic programme on ‘Education for Democratic Citizenship’ (EDC).

An All-European Study on Education for Democratic Citizenship Policies published by the Council of Europe in November 2004 offers some information regarding the approach developed by Greece. Civic education modules are linked with cross-curricular activities and subject-specific themes at primary and upper secondary educational levels, with emphasis on democratic citizenship, introduction to law and political institutions, ancient Greek literature, history of the social sciences, European civilisation and its roots, and sociology. To give an example, the module ‘European Civilisation and its Roots’, taught at the first grade of secondary education (upper level), examines the history and evolution of Europe and its distinct social and political formations.

At the second grade of secondary education (upper level), there exist a module under the title ‘Introduction to Law and Political Institutions’, which brings together the disciplines of law and political science, focusing on the nature of politics and the role of political science, the theory and practice of active citizenship, elements of democratic government, the legal and political system of the European Union, social norms and the

law, the Greek political and judicial system, and issues in international organisation and dynamics of European integration.

At the third grade of lower level secondary education, students engage themselves in the study of forms of citizenship, the organisation of social institutions and social groups, the understanding of culture, the process of socialisation and social accountability, the democratic process and the Constitution, the notion of civil society, the nature of international society, issues in international relations and the European Union. Linked with the above are the themes and concepts examined at the secondary upper level under the heading 'History of the Social Sciences', with emphasis on the relationship between science and the social sciences, the evolution of the latter, leading thinkers in social and political thought, the study of social methods and social behaviour, and the contribution of the social sciences in contemporary Greece and the European Union.

Through these modules, among others that are currently being taught at the fifth and sixth grade of the elementary educational level, it is expected that students cultivate a series of specific educational and social skills that would allow them to develop an active interest in the governance of the polity but also with the view to acquainting themselves with international processes and institutions of governance that are founded upon the norms and principles of power-sharing.

The EYCE in Greece forms part of a wider civic education strategy with the aim to promote and to raise awareness about the principles of the EDC project. The opening ceremony of the Year was officially launched on 2 April 2005 in Athens.

The Launching Conference was characterised by a fruitful discussion on the prospects for the EDC project to develop further its principles in the rapidly changing environment of civic education in Europe, with particular reference to the notion of civic competence, social solidarity, intercultural toleration and intercultural learning. The Conference also offered the opportunity to link the EDC project with initiatives taken by other international organisations and civil society agents. The principal focus of the Year in Greece is to foster and support the active and continuous participation of schools and other educational institutes in issues linked with the development of democratic citizenship as the basis of an open, deliberative and participatory society. A series of other events have also taken place or are about to take place in the context of developing the EDC project in Greece. The principal aim of these activities was to develop greater awareness on the objectives of educating active citizens, to link these objectives with existing and emergent civic initiatives, especially in the field of secondary education, to establish creative synergies between national, subnational and European educational institutions and to disseminate information on civic education and democratic citizenship to as wide an audience as possible.

EDC aims and objectives have been linked with other activities in the field of civic education, which involve the participation of pupils with special needs in the workings of the EDC project through collaborative relations with civil society organizations such as the Soma Hellinon Proskopon (Scouts of Greece), in relation to its programme 'We are All Unique'. Moreover, EDC activities have been linked with a project advanced by the European Union under the heading Spring Europe on the Constitutional Treaty and with a project relating to the promotion of Peace Studies at school level in the context of WINPEACE - Women's Initiative for Peace Between Turkey and Greece' - which is expected to advance mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue among young people. Other initiatives that promote social inclusion and solidarity and are linked with the EDC project include the activity of the Scouts of Greece through its programme 'Friends Living Next Door', which aims at developing the norms of social inclusion and to promoting intercultural toleration.

Integrated with many teacher professional development inservice training programmes are seminars and workshops related to civic education and particularly its European dimension. An example can be the project EDC which has been linked with the Council's programme 'Teaching History'. The outcomes of this programme will be presented at a Symposium on the Balkan Wars, to be held in Athens in May 2005, as well as with a series of teachers' training seminars on 'Civic Education and the European Union', organized by the Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs in 2005. A second phase of this activity will take place from October 2005 throughout the country. There have also been synergies with the Deputy Ombudsman Head of the Children's Rights Department regarding the dissemination at school level in both primary and secondary education, of printed material raising awareness on Children's Rights. It is worth noting that the Greek delegation at the Launching Conference of the EYCE in Sofia in December 2004 proposed, together with the Cypriot and Italian delegations, the institutionalization of a Citizenship Day to raise awareness on issues of active citizenship in Europe and to encourage a form of participatory and deliberative governance. In preparing the Launching Conference, the Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs has produced in Greek a poster and printed material related to the EYCE.

The Greek Report on EDC has been forwarded for dissemination purposes to: the Greek Politics Specialist Group, the Hellenic University Association for European Studies that co-organised educational seminars for teachers in secondary education, the European Centre of Communication, Information and Culture, the National Documentation Centre, the Research Centre for Gender Equality, the National Hellenic Research Foundation, the National Centre for Social Research, to the Hellenic Parliament Foundation for Parliamentarism and Democracy, the Parliament for Youth, the General Secretariat for Youth, and the Greek School Network. The Greek translation of the *Glossary of Terms on Education for Democratic Citizenship* can be found at the official site of the Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs together with a PowerPoint presentation on the EDC and some general guidelines about its implementation: www.ypepth.gr/el_ec_page3900.htm

As with any formative stage in implementing a large-scale project such as the EDC and EYCE, there emerge some organisational difficulties, particularly in the field of disseminating information to as wide an audience as possible. In that regard, the role of the media could have been more active in promoting the aims of these programmes. These problems, however, are balanced out by the enthusiasm shown by those schools that have expressed an active interest in participating in these projects with the aim to establish a new kind of civic solidarity through the learning process.

An indicative example is the participation of Greek schools in the EU initiative for Spring Day in Europe, in co-operation with the Schoolnet. The promotion in the media, the information material that was sent to all the schools, the setting up of website on the Panhellenic School Web, talks of specialists on EU related issues in school units, TV broadcasts dedicated to the Spring Day in Europe with the participation of Madame Minister of Education, the awarding of pupils in a competent competition, are some of the good practices for the consolidation of the European dimension in the field of education. It is worth mentioning that such actions are gaining momentum, the number of schools that stated participation in this year's events (2004-2005) has increased considerably compared to the previous school year (448 participants compared to 261 in 2003-2004). The increase rate for this year is 71.6%.

ANNEX

A. Adaptation of national legislation to community directives and policy frameworks by means of the following Presidential Decrees (P.D.):

1. Presidential Decree 231/1998 (Official Journal 178, A') has integrated adaptation to regulation 92/51/EEC concerning the recognition scheme of vocational training, as supplemented by regulation 89/48/EEC. In applying regulation 92/51/EEC (P.D. 231/98) we have the Council for the Recognition of Vocational Education and Training Certificates (SEATEK). The same P.D. incorporates also the amendment regulations 94/38EC, 94/43/EC, which was consequently amended by Presidential Decrees 301/1999, 372/2001 and 385/2002, in order to adapt regulations 97/28/ EC, 200/5/ EC and 2001/19/ EC to national legislation.
2. Presidential Decree 165/2000 (Official Journal 149, A') has integrated adaptation to regulation 89/48/EEC concerning the minimum 3 year course Tertiary education diploma recognition scheme. In application of regulation 89/48/EC, on the grounds of P.D. 168/2000 the "Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Centre (Hellenic NARIC)", was established, for the recognition of vocational skills gained in another EU country (other than Greece) and the holders of the certificates in question wish to perform their profession in Greece.
3. P.D. 134/1999 (Official Journal 132, A') concerning the appointment to or recruitment of EU citizens by Higher Educational Institutions (AEI) of Higher Technological Education Institutes (TEI) and other Legal Persons under Public Law and Public Services of the Tertiary Education Field, of which the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs is competent.
4. P.D. 69/2003 (Official Journal 72, A') adaptation to the stipulations of Regulation 1999/42/EC of the European Parliament and Council concerning the enactment of the recognition system of qualifications governed by the liberation directives, along with the completion of the general system recognising degrees.
5. P.D. 339/2000 (Official Journal 284 A;) concerning the appointment or the recruitment of EU citizens as educational personnel in Secondary Education.
6. The new law 3328/2005 (official Journal 80A') foresees the alterations in the system of academic recognition. The old organisation (DIKATSA) is abolished and its competencies were transferred to the new organisation the "Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Centre (Hellenic NARIC)". The state deemed necessary to change the way degrees were recognised as the previous agency was held responsible for timely delays in recognition. With the entire structure and the way the new agency operates, it is pursued to have faster transactions, compared to the insufficient procedures that used to be followed. Further, the regulation concerning academic recognition is modernised and adapts to EU requirements, and to the standards in the majority of member states. To enable the NARIC to actually function as an information centre, it will follow up the developments at the European level and more specifically in the context of the European Network of similar centres for Academic recognition and information (NARIC), and naturally, developments at the international level too.