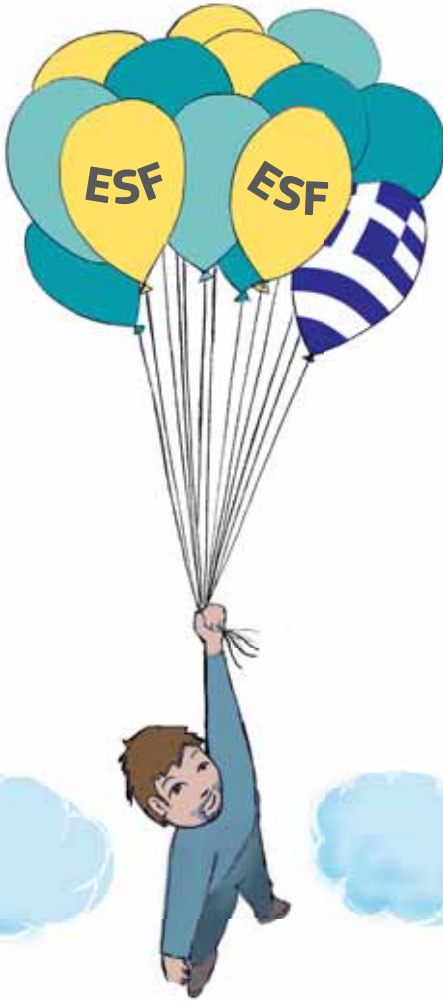




European  
Commission



# GREECE

## AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

With ESF support, Greece is taking determined measures to make its companies more competitive and export-led while giving its workers the improved skills they need to find jobs. The education system is being reformed to equip young people with better skills, and Greece is using lifelong learning as an integral tool to improve job prospects. Furthermore, ESF funding is focused on helping the most vulnerable groups to overcome obstacles to work.

# INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND JOBS: THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GREECE

The impact of the economic crisis on jobs in Greece has been severe – with total unemployment touching 20% in 2012 and for young people almost 50%. The situation is made worse by plans for shrinking the size of the public sector considerably – a policy that is critical for the sustainability of public finances, but which places great demands on job-creation capacities in the private sector. Against this background, the Greek authorities are determined to reorient the economy towards the more productive, entrepreneurial and export-led sectors that can restore competitiveness and sustainable growth. As part of this drive, Greece needs to equip its workers with the adequate skills that will help them participate in this growth in better, more productive and more sustainable jobs. This requires boosting vocational-training opportunities and embedding a lifelong learning culture into the workforce. In addition, entrepreneurship must be encouraged, especially among groups such as women and the young.

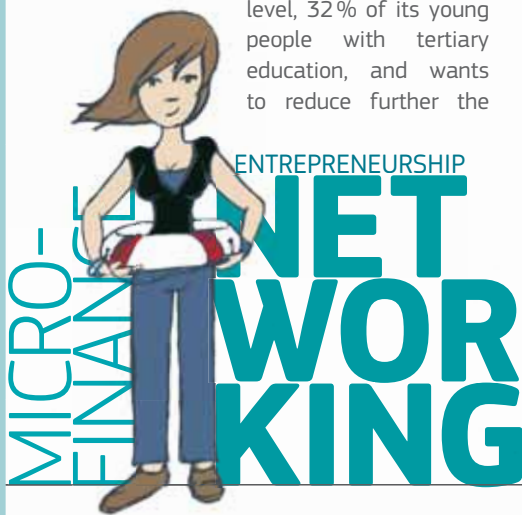
As part of its European commitments, Greece is targeting a 70% employment level, 32% of its young people with tertiary education, and wants to reduce further the

*“People must be brought into the workforce”*

number of early-school leavers, aiming for 9.7% by 2020 – a significant drop from the 18% a decade ago. Greece also aims for 450 000 fewer people to be at risk of poverty by 2020. To meet these goals, more people must be brought into the workforce, and in particular from groups who face obstacles to getting a job – such as women, young people, the disabled and minorities. These groups must be offered the training and skills that will improve their job prospects. A further opportunity for Greece is to boost the efficiency of public administration. A smaller public sector must be more productive to achieve its tasks – so public servants must be offered the training and skills that will help them achieve more with less.

## ESF spending in Greece

For 2007-2013, Greece is receiving EUR 4.4 billion in ESF funding. With national co-funding, this brings the total ESF spending on jobs to over EUR 5.1 billion. ESF programmes target the development of human resources, education and lifelong learning, the reform of public administration and address the negative consequences of unforeseen local or sectoral crises in the labour market.



# GREECE'S ESF PRIORITIES

## Bringing more people into work

ESF spending is concentrating on groups with particular disadvantages in finding jobs, such as women, young people, the disabled, minorities or the long-term unemployed. For example, a programme to help reconcile work with family life and improve the job prospects of second earners (mainly women) is supporting some 70 000 people. There are also projects to encourage female entrepreneurs in their business activities. Likewise, private companies that offer work experience and training to young people are receiving subsidies, plus further help if the placement becomes permanent.

## Better skills for better jobs

Lifelong learning projects are playing an important role in helping people bring their skills up to date and improve their job prospects. The 'Second Chance Schools' project is one such – it gives people with primary education the chance to complete compulsory education in an adult-learning environment. Educating the next generation is also receiving much support, for example in an innovative project to encourage schoolchildren to read and love books through, for

*“Encouraging women entrepreneurs”*

example, visits by authors. Likewise, the 'One education for all' initiative deploys family and student counselling in 618 schools to improve Greek language skills among immigrant children and thus support their education and integration. The 'Hero-2' project is another social inclusion project – it offers training in computer skills to groups such as older people, immigrants and Roma to boost their use of the internet to find work or training, participate in online events, and deal with the public administration.

## A more productive public administration

Greece has announced plans for making available up to 120 000 part-time jobs in local public administrations in a joint ESF- and EIB-funded programme to help unemployed older people finish their careers by making a real contribution to their towns and regions – while completing their pension contributions.

# THE ESF IN GREECE: SOME EXAMPLES

## Living life to the full

At the 'Ef-Zin' social co-operative in Athens, colourful hand-woven carpets and made-to-order furniture of all types abound. Offering a day-refuge to 45 people with mental health difficulties, Ef-Zin promotes social solidarity as well as their work, skills and quality of life. The aim is to help people suffering from mental health disabilities integrate better into everyday life and work. As well as carpet and furniture workshops, Ef-Zin also runs a successful catering service offering the best of Mediterranean cuisine at weddings, christenings, hotels and conferences. In addition, it runs a social club on its premises and has been highlighted as an example of good practice in social co-operatives for integrating vulnerable social groups.

## Supporting self-employment

With rising unemployment, many Greek citizens are looking to set up their own businesses or become self-employed as a way to make a new start and avoid long-term unemployment. A new programme is offering training, start-up finance and counselling to help them realise their ambitions, particularly in regions where unemployment is highest. Up to 100% financing is available to help self-starters kick off their new companies and support existing businesses while they weather the crisis. The project to support entrepreneurial activities is offering help to up to 20 000 beneficiaries to create their own business.

### Do you want to...?

- ...learn more about the ESF in Greece?
- ...understand better how the ESF works?
- ...see video clips on projects from across the EU?

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