



**The European Commission Mutual Learning Programme  
for Public Employment Services**

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

**“YOUTH GUARANTEES: PES APPROACHES AND  
MEASURES FOR LOW SKILLED YOUNG  
PEOPLE”**

Peer country paper Youth Guarantees  
(Input to Peer Review, Austria, 22/23 March 2011)

OAED (Greek Public Employment Service)  
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*The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.*

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# 1 LABOUR MARKET SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The Greek PES divides unemployed people into three age groups, 15-30, 30- 55 and more than 55 years of age. It might be interesting to start with some statistical data, exported on 16/02/2011:

From the 689 558 unemployed people registered in the Greek PES information system, 195 046 are between 15 and 30 years, equal to 28.3 %, which is an impressive result, clearly declaring the difficulty of young people in entering the labour market. Further analyzing the stats, as mentioned above, gives us a more detailed result concerning the structural character of youth unemployment:

## Youth unemployment for the age group up to 30 years of age

Registered = 195 046 (28.3% of total registered unemployed)

Long-term unemployed (more than 12 months) = 56 550 (29%)

Benefited = 56 215 (28.8%)

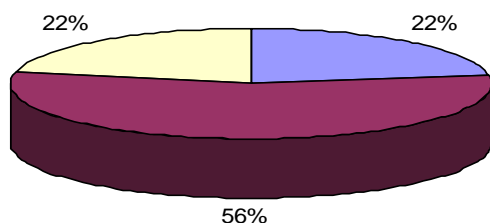
Men = 81 541 (41.8 %)

Women = 113 505 (58.2 %)

### Long term Unemployed (more than 12 months)

	Compulsory Education (up to 9 years)	Secondary education	Higher Education	Total
Men	4 796	10 510	2 521	17 827
Women	7 861	21 154	9 708	38 723
<b>Total</b>	<b>12 657</b>	<b>31 664</b>	<b>12 229</b>	<b>56 550</b>

Long term unemployed young people (>12 months)

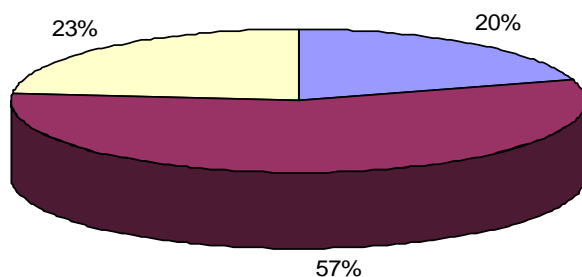


■ Compulsory Education (up to 9 years)	■ Secondary Education
□ Higher Education	

## Unemployed less than 12 months

	Compulsory Education (up to 9 years)	Secondary education	Higher Education	Total
<b>Men</b>	17 176	37 095	9 443	63 714
<b>Women</b>	10 923	40 920	22 939	74 782
<b>Total</b>	28 099	78 015	32 382	<b>138 496</b>

### Young people unemployed for less than 12 months



■ Compulsory Education (up to 9 years)	■ Secondary Education
■ Higher Education	

The statistics above refer exclusively to PES registered unemployment and may not reflect the true total figure of unemployed population for the selected age group. We believe that there are many young people seeking jobs, who are not registered to our PES local offices, especially because of lack of information about the offered services.

The Greek educational system offers the following ways of preparing young people up to the age of 19 for the world of work:

- Technical vocational schools (after 10 years of school, 2 years);
- Vocational training institutes (after 12 years of school, 2 years); and
- General school/lyceum (leading to higher education institutes through exams).

The Greek PES runs its own Technical vocational schools and Vocational training institutes, apart from the ones that administratively belong to the Ministry of Education.

Of course, not all young people pass through these educational forms to be regularly prepared before entering the labour market. A percentage of young jobseekers quit education as soon as (or before) they complete compulsory education (9 years of

school at the age of 15). As a result, we notice that 20.9 % of young jobseekers, with absolutely no vocational training and skills, try to get a job in a labour market where low-skilled vacancies are rare (see the table above). Unfortunately, our educational system is missing a “key” service, a vocational guidance service, that could reduce the specific negative result, if it was functioning in an effective way.

In addition, given the fact that our country is in a major financial crisis for the last two years, jobseekers, in general, are having few opportunities to (re)enter the labour market. The gradual but significant decrease of the secondary factor of production leaves almost the entire national economy based on the services sector, meaning that the few remaining vacancies usually demand high skilled candidates. As a result, unskilled young people are practically given even less opportunities to find a job, compared to the past years. Hence comes the strong necessity for the Greek PES to interfere, taking drastic measures to handle such a sensitive group of the population.

## **2 PES ORGANISATION AND SERVICE PROFILE**

The Greek Public Employment Service - Manpower Employment Organization (OAED from the Greek initials) - was constituted in 1954 and is functioning under the surveillance of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance.

The Greek PES is financed by the

- Government budget
- Social security contributions/indirect salary costs
- European Social Fund (ESF)

In 2010 the Greek PES spent for

- Active Labour measures : € 520 million
- Unemployment and related benefits : € 2 066 million
- Operational costs (staff, premises, IT etc) : € 175 million
- Total : € 2 879 million

Its fundamental role is to put in action all the government's policies for the employment. It is targeting the following basic goals:

- Vocational guidance for the jobseekers
- Technical vocational training
- Interference in the labour market in order to achieve better matching between supply and demand
- Benefits for the unemployed

To achieve the goals above, the PES concentrates on the following tasks:

- Counselling for jobseekers
- Placing jobseekers in the open labour market
- Providing a wide range of active measures (such as funding businesses for creating new vacancies, funding jobseekers for starting up their own business etc.)
- Providing unemployment benefits & some special benefits for employees
- Counselling for employers
- Acquiring and filling of vacancies
- Vocational training for employees

All these tasks are performed by the following administrative units:

- 1 central administration unit, based in Athens
- 121 local PES one-stop-shop offices
- 1 centre providing vocational guidance to jobseekers 15-18 years (in Athens)
- 6 centres providing services to special groups of unemployed people (handicapped etc.)
- 52 technical vocational schools
- 31 vocational training schools

At the moment, almost 3 422 employees are working for the Manpower Employment Organization. 1 851 employees are working for the 121 local PES (one-stop-shops offices) and 700 among them are trained to work as labour counsellors. Every one of them has passed through a 4-week training program to provide counselling services at the local PES offices. Some of them have passed through further special training programs (start-up business consulting, vocational guidance, techniques for searching a job) and have become special counsellors in the referred domains. Unfortunately, due to the enormous lack of personnel, they now have to deal with a number of tasks irrelevant to counselling services such as administrative procedures, unemployment benefits, programs' control etc.

Especially for our young unemployed customers, there's just one special centre of vocational guidance (in Athens) accepting approximately 160-180 people (15-18 years old) every year, most of them with a migration background, due to the nature of population at the center of Athens and the guidance needed for foreign non-adults to obtain a working license. For the rest of the country, this age group is registered and serviced by the local PES offices.

### **3 ENSURING ACCESS TO PES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Information about PES services and active measures is available and spread through:

#### **PES website**

Detailed information about the services, measures, benefits and contact info of PES local offices is published on the PES website [www.oaed.gr](http://www.oaed.gr). The new PES portal is under construction. We expect the revised online system to handle the matching between supply and demand and will surely be more functional for our clients. Especially for young people, useful information can be found at <http://.epas.oaed.gr> (portal concerning the PES' technical vocational schools).

#### **Printed material**

Occasionally, informational leaflets are distributed on PES premises (our local offices and technical schools), some among them concerning special services and measures for our young clients.

#### **Outreach activities**

Local PES offices are also charged with the task to organize one-day events, usually in co-operation with the local social partners, as a means of spreading the information about PES activities into the local community.

On occasion, special employment fairs take place, but not specifically targeting young people.

#### **Interconnection offices in technical vocational schools**

Interconnection offices inside the premises of our technical vocational schools are scheduled to be founded, to develop close co-operation with the local employers. We strongly believe that these units will positively affect the creation of work experience positions for graduate students and finally transform them into high skilled employees.

#### **Media and press**

Short TV spots are occasionally used to promote PES services, as well as informational articles or announcements published in general, local and special press.



## **4 PES SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Service delivery to young job - and apprenticeship - seekers**

Young people from 15 to 18 years, living in Athens, are accepted, registered and serviced in the one (and only) special centre of vocational guidance of Athens. This special office of the Greek PES is responsible for registering and counselling young people, providing them the information needed about possible re-entry into the educational system or helping them choose among different forms of vocational apprenticeship or training available. Information is also provided on the necessary procedures to get the special license needed, by the Greek law, to enter the labour market (labour license for non-adults).

For the rest of the country, jobseekers from 15 to 24 years are accepted and serviced by the local PES offices, the same as other unemployed people. After their registration, they get an interview appointment with a labour counsellor who records their vocational profile (education, working experience, skills etc), as well as their level of readiness for entering the labour market, their special needs and preferences. Labour counsellors are then ready to provide all the essential information concerning the available vacancies, programs (PES' active measures) or choices for vocational training or apprenticeship. A co-operative effort with the jobseeker ends up by defining the appropriate action plan, which is considered by both sides as a type of "contract" between the counsellor and the jobseeker. From that moment on they are both engaged to take parallel actions until the action plan is carried into effect. The whole process can be completed in one or more prearranged appointments, according to the complexity of each case.

The following actions can possibly be proposed to young jobseekers, according to their vocational profile, vocational preferences and level of readiness for entering the labour market:

- To directly apply for a job into the open market
- To apply to a vacancy collected and announced by the PES local office
- To be benefited by an active PES measure (hired in a funded job position in the private sector or be financed for starting up a new business)
- To obtain work experience for the preferred vocation (usually with some financial motivation for the company)
- To attend seminars concerning missing skills to achieve the final goals of the action plan (in collaboration with private educational institutes, approved by the Ministry of Education)
- To receive start-up business plan consulting services by our specialized counsellors (in group classes or in private appointments).

- To receive counselling services on vocational guidance or job searching methods by our specialized counsellors (in group classes or in private appointments)
- To re-enter the educational system by registering to one of PES technical vocational schools or vocational training institutes.
- To apply for the unemployment benefit

Of course we have to admit that the services' model described right above appears not to function properly in many local PES offices due to the enormous lack of personnel according to the rising series of tasks.

**Eligibility for receiving unemployment benefit:** A salaried worker is entitled to receive unemployment benefit for a maximum of one year, if fired, laid off, or otherwise terminated from a job after 2 consecutive years of employment.

Eligibility Rules for unemployment benefit

Applying for first time:

- Employed for the past 2 years
- Worked at least 80 days per year, but a total of 200 days for the past 2 years, not including the last 60 days prior to dismissal

Second and subsequent applications:

- Must have worked a total of 125 days in the past 14 months, not including the last 60 days prior to dismissal.

Young people undergoing technical vocational training are not eligible to receive the unemployment benefit, since they are already provided with the trainee's salary and insurance.

### **Mediating jobs and apprenticeship positions**

All counsellors working at the PES local services should provide 60% of their total working time and effort to jobseeker's counselling and 40% to employers' services. Thus, after defining the action plan for every jobseeker, the counsellor has to take direct actions to assure jobseeker's entrance to the labour market. One of them concerns the acquisition of job or working experience positions in the local private sector. To achieve that goal, every counsellor (not specially trained ones) visits local companies to detect potential personnel needs and fulfill them according to the available jobseekers profile. Of course, this procedure concerns all our clients and not only young people. What specially refers to young unemployed people is fulfilling work experience positions offered by employers, usually financed by work experience programs.

Employers usually report their available apprenticeship positions to the PES technical schools administration staff, which undertake the responsibility to match them with their apprenticeship students' profile.

## **5 EFFECTIVE PES MEASURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Successful practices**

The Greek PES considers the following practices have shown positive results on young people's employment:

- Combined active policies for 16-24 years old unemployed people, such as recent programmes funding an up to 12-month work experience in a private company (covering a part of the trainees' insurance costs), giving the further possibility to both employer and trainee to extend to another 12-months of funding for evolving into a permanent job position.
- Counselling services, especially group counselling classes, on PES premises, concerning start-up business plan consulting, vocational guidance and methods to search for a job. Young "customers", who have attended either of the counselling classes above firstly have expressed high level satisfaction and, secondly, presented higher percentages of success in entering the labour market.
- All PES technical vocational schools' educational program combines theoretical lessons in class along with real training at local companies in the field of the studied vocation. This practice offers the young people a high level of skill development and more than satisfactory readiness to enter the labour market after completing the 2-year studies.
- Most PES active measures, such as programmes financing the creation of new businesses or new job positions, give first level priority to registered young unemployed people (up to 30 years old).

Interconnection offices inside the premises of our technical vocational schools are due to be founded, to develop close co-operation with the local employers. We strongly believe that these units will positively affect the creation of work experience positions for graduate students, as one of the main problems at the moment is the lack of work experience opportunities, and finally transform them into high skilled employees.

### **Key obstacles to success**

The following factors have a negative influence on the outcome of the successful practices mentioned above:

- External factors (such as the economic crisis, growing unemployment ratio etc).
- Lack of effective interconnection between the entire educational system and the PES local offices, which is a fundamental key factor to success, of course not only concerning young people.
- Lack of personnel in the local PES offices
- Lack of measures - targeting young people's employment - designed and realized by the local PES offices, which would cover the special needs of the local labour market

## **6 ASPECTS OF TRANSFERABILITY AND CONCLUSIONS**

OAED, as a Public Organization for Employment, considers youth unemployment as a very sensitive matter and is trying through consultancy services, vocational guidance, apprenticeship and specialized active labour market measures to handle the needs of the specific target group as a first priority goal. Of course a lot has been done to be proud of over the last decade, however there is a long road ahead until we can effectively adopt and put in action policies like the ones used by the Austrian PES.

Youth unemployment results in our country definitely indicate that there is plenty of room for PES services improvement on so many levels, starting from our local offices organization, special training for personnel and following procedures inside and outside PES premises. Clearly, such a sensitive social matter derives the necessity for a number of social partners to develop a network of co-operation, whose action must be driven by a specific strategic plan. As representatives of the Greek PES, we believe that Vienna's Dialogue Programme was very interesting and we hope to seize on every possible opportunity to exchange opinions and experiences with our European colleagues and gradually adopt any successful practices that could fit in our organizational model and national (or regional) labour market's needs.

Our special interest concerning the transferability of effective peer countries' policies for youth integration is mostly concentrated in possible implementation of:

- Co-operation with schools in order to inform the students about the labour market
- Building closer relationships with employers to achieve higher levels of working experience and training positions
- Effective use of online tools, especially targeted to young people
- Special centres for young people or special (& trained) counsellors inside the local PES offices