



# Youth Guarantee country by country

*Greece*  
*October 2020*

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## Introduction and context

The [Youth Guarantee](#) has become a reality across the EU. It has facilitated structural reforms and innovation in policy design across EU Member States.

This document provides extracts from official Commission documents on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Greece. It contains extracts from:

- The country report drawn by the Commission for Greece in the context of the [European Semester](#);
- The conclusions of the thematic multilateral surveillance review of the [Employment Committee \(EMCO\)](#).
- Results from the data collection on Youth Guarantee schemes.

A section at the end of the document is devoted to the assessment made by the Commission the previous year.

Greece submitted a [Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan](#) on 31 December 2013, updated in May 2014 and November 2018.

Greece is eligible for money from the [Youth Employment Initiative](#).

## Commission's assessment

### From the 2020 country report (EN -EL):

**"The labour market is gradually recovering, but the employment rate remains well below precrisis levels and that of other EU countries.** Employment continued to expand in 2018 and 2019. In the third quarter of 2019, there were 67,000 more people in employment than the same time in 2018. [...] Greece continues to have one of the lowest employment rates in the EU, while the activity rate (73.9%) is also considerably lower than the EU average (78.7%)."

**"Labour market improvements are reducing poverty and resulting in a fairer income distribution, but substantial social challenges remain.** Unemployment – including long-term and youth unemployment – has continued to fall steadily, but at around 17%, it remains very high."

**"Greece has made substantial progress towards meeting its sustainable development goals over the past years.** [...] On the other hand, the country is still struggling to generate sustainable employment for its population, notably the youth (SDG8) (3)."

**"Unemployment has continued to decrease steadily, but is still the highest in the EU.** The unemployment rate decreased to 16.6% in October 2019, down from 18.5% in October 2018, and is forecast to reach 15.4% in 2020. [...] Youth unemployment declined from 37.8% in the third quarter of 2018 to 34.2% in the third quarter of 2019, but remained significantly above the EU average of 14.4%."

**"The labour market is gradually recovering, but unemployment is still very high compared to other EU countries or pre-crisis levels.** [...] Youth unemployment rate is still at around 35%, prompting young people to look for employment abroad and thereby limiting future potential growth. Furthermore, Greece has one of the highest qualification mismatches among EU countries and one of the highest over-qualification rates among tertiary graduates, while skill shortages exist in energy and technology sectors."

**"The labour market situation is improving but employment is still lower than pre-crisis levels.** [...] Despite the substantial wage increase brought about by scrapping the exemption from the general minimum wage that had been applied to young workers, the rate of youth unemployment declined in the second quarter of 2019. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate among people below the age of 25 is still the highest in the EU."

**"Despite improvements, the employment situation of young people remains a challenge.** At 13% in the third quarter of 2019, the share of young people (aged 15-24) not in employment, education or training) was 7 percentage points lower than in 2013, but is still among the highest in the EU. In the 25-29 age group, the rate of young people who are not in employment, education or training reached 29.5% in 2018, far above the EU average of 17.1%. Over 63,000 people not in employment, education or training aged 15-29 have so far benefited from the youth employment initiative, an EU funding programme, which in Greece offers, among others, training programmes in sectors with growth potential. Stronger partnerships with employers and other stakeholders, and increasing outreach to inactive people would further increase the effectiveness of such initiatives."

**“More investment in active labour market policies, along with a broader reform of the system would help the unemployed get jobs.** [...] Training programmes have become more limited recently, mostly targeting young people under the Youth Guarantee. The new quality framework for training programmes, legislated in 2018, which, among others benefits, introduces accreditation of training curricula, has not yet been implemented.”

**“The employment situation of young people is still a problem. Despite a continued decline, the share of young people not in education, employment or training remains among the highest in the EU.** Of particular concern is the situation for the 25-29 age group, which has almost double the number of people not in education, employment or training as the 15-24 age group. The remarkably low share of early school leavers may partly reflect a lack of job opportunities for young people. Performance on basic skills continues to be weak, while self-reported digital skills have recently improved.”

**“School education continues to suffer from numerous deficiencies.** The share of young people (18-24) who left school early was — at 4.7% in 2018 — among the lowest in the EU. However, the share was much higher among the foreign-born population (17.9%) and the gap between them and native-born people widened.”

*For further youth-related matters please refer to the country report.*

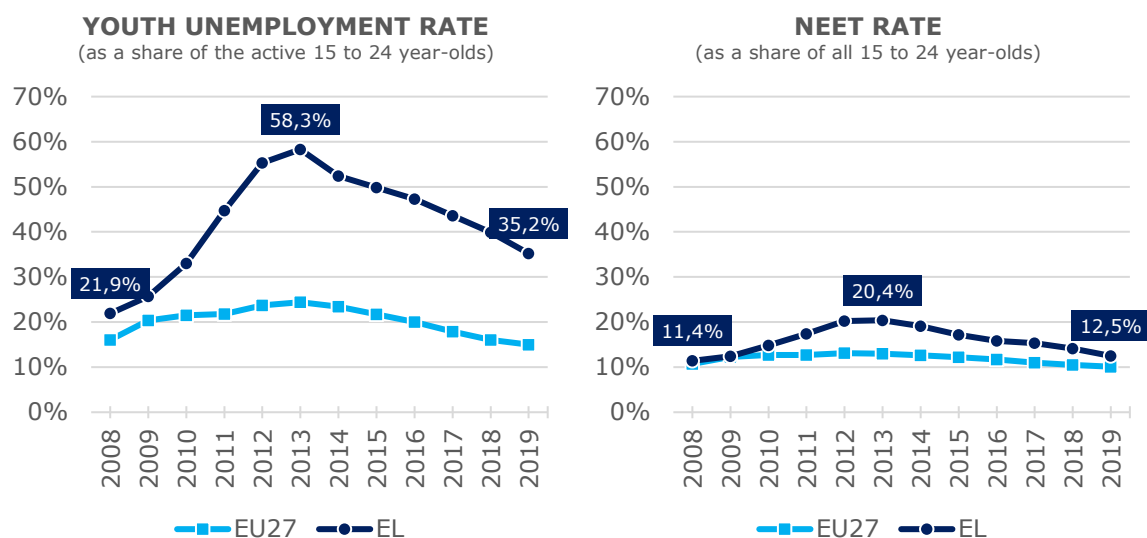
## EMCO's assessment

### **Conclusions of the Employment Committee's multilateral surveillance review on youth employment, October 2019:**

The implementation of the Youth Guarantee is advancing, with improvements taking place in the context of a broader reform agenda. The Youth Guarantee action plan has been revised and a number of new measures and initiatives are being pursued to improve activation policies, including measures to improve the functioning of the public employment services. The effectiveness of partnerships has improved but further efforts are needed to improve the delivery mechanism with a view to activate NEETs faster. New initiatives are being pursued, such as the policy design initiative 'ReBrain Greece'. Media campaigns are being pursued as part of outreach activities for NEETs but further efforts are still needed to reach out to non-registered NEETs. The profiling system which is being put in place, along with the monitoring and evaluation systems (currently at the design stage), should further increase the effectiveness of ALMPs. Efforts to address the quality of activation initiatives have been acknowledged, while the involvement of international organisations is welcomed. The new certification system for Continuous Vocational Training and the setting up of continuous monitoring of training action are also welcomed.

## Youth Guarantee monitoring – Key data<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Main trends in young people's labour market performance



Source: Eurostat, LFS (une\_rt\_a, edat\_lfse\_20)

### 2. Youth Guarantee delivery

The Greek Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was presented in December 2013 and updated in June 2014. The design of the YG scheme drew upon the experience gained from the "Action Plan of Targeted Interventions to Strengthen Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship within the Operational Programme of NSRF"<sup>2</sup> (January 2013), which was the first cohesive effort to tackle youth unemployment. The scheme is based on the broader national strategy laid out in the "Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework, 2014-2020" and the "Action Plan for Creating New Jobs and Supporting Unemployed People" (May 2013).

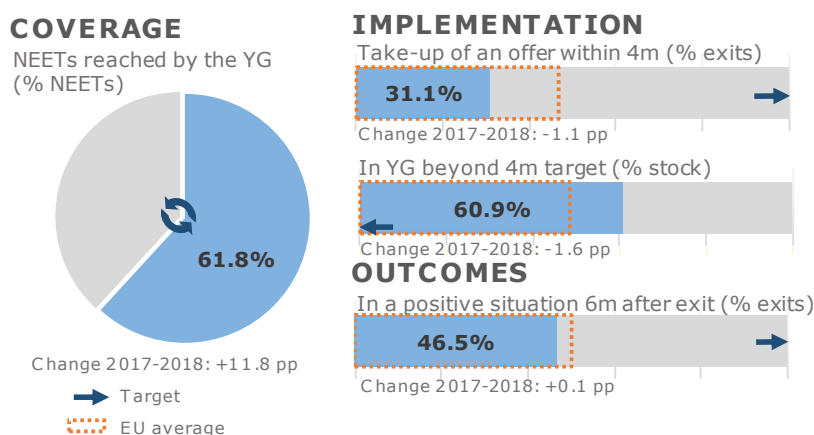
The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare is in charge of the strategic planning and implementation of the YG, with the Employment Directorate of the Ministry appointed as the National Coordinator and responsible for fostering dialogue and cooperation with all institutions involved. The Ministry of Labour is supported by the PES (OAED) and other actors including the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the Ministry for Development and Competitiveness, the Ministry of Merchant Marine and Island Policy, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Culture, local authorities and social partners.

Further information is available in the national [YG Implementation Plan](#).

<sup>1</sup> The information below is taken from the country fiche related to the Youth Guarantee Data collection (full results can be found on <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1143&langId=en#YGIF>).

<sup>2</sup> National Strategic Reference Framework.

## YG monitoring data 2017-18



Source: DG EMPL, YG monitoring database, data extracted 09 December 2019.  
NEETs data were extracted from Eurostat, Labour Force Survey on 21 June 2019.

Three in five (60.9%) of those registered in the YG scheme at any point during 2018 had been waiting for an offer for more than 4 months, slightly fewer than in 2017 (-1.6 pp) but still a long way above the EU average of 48.6%.

Fewer than a third (31.1%) of those leaving the YG in 2018 took-up an offer within the 4-month target. Slightly decreased compared to 2017 (-1.1 pp) and still well below the EU average of 46.7%.

On average, 61.8% of NEETs aged 15-24 were registered in the YG preparatory phase at any point during 2018, significantly more than in 2017 (+11.8 pp) and well above the EU average of 38.9%.

Of those that left the YG in 2018, well over two in five (46.5%) were known to be in a positive situation 6 months after leaving, but still behind the EU average of 50.3%.



## Previous year

From the 2019 country report (EN -EL):

**Although the Greek labour market still feels the effects of the crisis, major improvements have taken place.** During the crisis, employment in Greece dropped by a sharp 19 %. Employment levels stabilised in 2014 and started rising more markedly from 2017, while the unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing from its peak of 27.9 % in July 2013 to 18.5 % by November 2018.

**Although still very difficult, the labour market situation for young people has been improving.** Youth unemployment has fallen considerably from its peak of almost 60 % in mid-2013 although, at 39.1 % in November 2018, it continues to be one of the highest in the EU. As reported in the Social Scoreboard, the proportion of young people (aged 15-24) not in employment, education or training (NEET) remains particularly high (15.3 % in 2017, compared to an EU average of 10.9 %). While the share of young unemployed (NEETs) has declined in line with the reduction in youth unemployment, the number of inactive youth (i.e. NEETs not seeking employment) has remained stable. Meanwhile, the reduction in youth unemployment has not been driven so much by an increase in youth employment, but rather by an increased participation in education (see Graph 3.3.3). The EU has been supporting the fight against youth unemployment through the Youth Employment Initiative. Over EUR 250 million have been allocated to Greece since 2014, reaching over 57 000 unemployed youth (NEETs 18-29 years old) but further investment is needed.

**Wages are expected to recover, following a sizable increase in the minimum wage and with collective bargaining once again playing a stronger role in wage formation.** ... Furthermore, the government increased the minimum wage by 10.9 % on 1 February 2019, eliminating also the sub-minimum wage for workers under 25 years of age. This increase in the minimum wage leads in the medium term to higher risk of negative employment effects, especially on low-skilled, young workers and workers with a long tenure.

**European Structural and Investment Funds have supported various actions concerning educational and vocational training, efficient public administration, social inclusion, and sustainable and quality employment.** These actions supported more than 410 000 participants, including more than 58 000 young people (18-29 years old) under the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI);

**Improving digital skills and increasing the proportion of information and communication technologies employment remains a challenge.** Improving digital skills among young adults is crucial given the urgency of the digital transformation of the economy and society.

For further youth-related matters please refer to the country report.

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## Links to further information

**Youth Guarantee Knowledge centre** – *Including promising examples from Greece*

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1327&langId=en>

**Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan**

<http://youthguarantee.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Αναθεωρημένο-Σχέδιο-Δράσης-της-Εγγύησης-για-τη-Νεολαία-2018-2020.pdf>

**Where to register for the Youth Guarantee?**

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1218&langId=en>

**Youth Wiki Greece**

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>