



Youth employment policies in Greece

EXCEPT working paper no. 26
May 2018

Sofia Boutsiouki

www.except-project.eu
twitter.com/except_eu
www.facebook.com/excepteu

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 649496





EXCEPT Working Papers are peer-reviewed outputs from the <http://www.except-project.eu/> project. The series is edited by the project coordinator Dr. Marge Unt and by the project co-coordinator Prof. Michael Gebel. These working papers are intended to meet the European Commission's expected impact from the project:

- i. to advance the knowledge base that underpins the formulation and implementation of relevant policies in Europe with the aim of enhancing the employment of young people and improving the social situation of young people who face labour market insecurities, and
- ii. to engage with relevant communities, stakeholders and practitioners in the research with a view to supporting relevant policies in Europe. Contributions to a dialogue about these results can be made through the project website <http://www.except-project.eu/>, or by following us on twitter @except_eu.

To cite this report:

Boutsiouki, S. (2018). *Youth employment policies in Greece*, EXCEPT Working Papers, WP No 26. Tallinn University, Tallinn. <http://www.except-project.eu/working-papers/>

© Author

ISSN 2504-7159

ISBN 978-9949-29-395-7 (pdf)

Responsibility for all conclusions drawn from the data lies entirely with the author.



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| National labour market developments..... | 4 |
| Labour market developments in Greece since '90s. – main trends and challenges | 4 |
| The key risk groups in the labour market in Greece..... | 9 |
| Labour market policies | 13 |
| Youth employment policies: a general overview..... | 16 |
| Youth employment policies: focus on selected interventions..... | 21 |
| Detailed description and evaluation of the selected measures | 23 |
| Diffusion of EU youth employment initiatives | 51 |
| Other policy measures | 54 |
| Consistency of the youth policies | 56 |
| Estimation of effectiveness of policy measures | 59 |
| References | 66 |



National labour market developments

Labour market developments in Greece since '90s. – main trends and challenges

The capacity of the labour market in long-term perspective

During the last decades Greece has been greatly affected by the transformation of the global socioeconomic conditions. Since mid-'90s the Greek labour market has undergone dramatic changes, many of which are still developing and create a rather unfavourable environment for all individuals, regardless of their age, employment status and their educational and professional qualifications.

The major driving forces that influenced the changes in the Greek labour market and caused the fluctuation in unemployment during the '90s, which led to the gradual shift from passive to active labour market policies, can be explained by different factors (Dimoulas & Michalopoulou, 2008). The increase in the participation in the workforce, mainly of women, the structural transformation of the economy and the improvement of the educational level that changed the labour supply and demand played an important role (Mitrakos & Nikolitsa, 2006). In addition, the influx of thousands of immigrants mostly from the Balkans after the collapse of the communist regimes changed the composition of the workforce, as well as the structure and the operation of the Greek economy (Karasavoglou, 2002). During the first years of the decade of 2000 the unemployment rates showed a small decline because of the dynamism of the Greek economy due to the country's accession in the eurozone, and of the implementation of a number of measures that targeted employment and were funded by the EU (Lolos, 2009). In addition, the increase of job positions in the public sector contributed to reduced unemployment, although with short-term results.

Other factors were related to the changes that took place out of the country, but aggravated its dynamics. Globalisation seems to have influenced the structure of the Greek economy. There has been a significant de-industrialisation that was followed by the development of the services sector or by sectors with limited extrovert/export orientation (such as the construction industry). Also, the fact that for many years it was easy for someone to get a business or a consumer loan from a bank not only aggravated the banking system, but also harmed the country's credibility in the international financial markets and led to unprecedented challenges for the national economy. The lack of a strategic developmental plan for the future led the country into limited ability to confront the arising challenges timely (especially after the 2008 economic crisis), many businesses were unable to cope with the new changes and were forced to cease their operations. Under such conditions, thousands of employees, as well as employers (or self-employed) exited employment and the rates of unemployment have risen at unprecedented levels.



It would be useful to proceed to a more concrete analysis of the developments in the Greek labour market. The capacity of the national labour market to absorb the existing labour force seems to become smaller over the years. The 2008 crisis seems to be a significant reference point (ILO, 2012). Before becoming affected by its outcomes, the Greek labour market presented a satisfactory and rather stable trend of integrating individuals in employment. Since 2010 the conditions in the Greek economy became much worse, with one out of four individuals being excluded from the labour market.

The participation in employment in the 15-64 age group showed a gradually increasing trend from 54.4% in 1995 to 61.4% in 2008, when the economic crisis began. However, it has always been much lower than the EU average by 7.7-4.3 percentage units. When the economic crisis began in 2008, the employment rates started to be affected as in most other European countries. Nevertheless, the economic conditions in Greece deteriorated very fast since 2010 and onwards. The employment rates decreased steeply from 59.1% in 2010 to 55.1% in 2011 and continued to decrease during the next years very fast (50.8% in 2012, 48.8% in 2013, 49.4% in 2014 and 50.8% in 2015). At the same time the gap from the European average grew bigger reaching the 15 percentage units. As regards youth 15-29 years of age, their participation had always been much smaller than that of the total population. Young people's employment rates were 39.9% in 1995 and gradually increased to 42.9% by 2008, when the first signs of the crisis started to affect Europe. From 2009 (42.3%) until 2015 (28%) youth employment lost almost 15 percentage points and reached a level that was much lower than that of twenty years ago. The already difficult transition of young people to the labour market has been aggravated further by the difficult conditions in the Greek economy.

As regards unemployment, in mid-'90s and until the years before the crisis its rates were slightly above the EU average and fell from 11.1% in 1998 (no Eurostat data available for the previous years) to 7.8% in 2008. They have followed a strongly increasing pattern since the crisis, which had dramatic effects. In the beginning, the decrease was slow (9.6% in 2009, 12.7% in 2010), but during the following years, when the influence of the crisis became more apparent and the national fiscal problems were aggravated, there has been a big increase in unemployment, which reached its peak in 2013 (27.5%) and then experienced a small deescalation to 24.9% in 2015. Moreover the gap between the EU and the Greek unemployment rates became bigger, even more than 16 percentage points in particular years. In addition, it seems that the transition from unemployment to employment has fallen from 8.6% in 2010 to only 4.3%, showing a great difficulty for someone who is unemployed to enter employment.

Youth unemployment appears to have reached alarming heights, whereas special reference has to be made to NEETs (young people 15-29 years of age who are not in Employment, Education or Training). More analytically, youth unemployment has always been almost double the total unemployment. From 20.9% in 1995 it decreased to 16.2% in 2008; however, there has been a dramatic increase from 18.8% (in 2009)



to 48.7% (in 2013) followed by a minor decrease to 41.3% (in 2015), although it still remains the higher in the EU. It is also important to observe the different levels of unemployment rates between different age groups of young people. Young people 15-24 years old appear to face more problems in entering employment, as it is usually expected for persons who are entering the labour market for the first time. From 27.9% in 1995 their unemployment rates fell to 21.9% in 2008. During the following years unemployment rose even by more than 26 percentage points; in 2015 it was 49.8%, the highest in the EU. The unemployment rates for the age group 25-29 years were lower; in 1995 it was 14.3%, but during the next years it showed slightly increasing trends. In spite of managing to limit itself to 13.1% in 2008, the crisis ignited a new stronger increase and it reached 40.8% in 2014 and 36.7% in 2015. The particular group of young people appears to face fewer difficulties in entering employment either because they have already managed to find a first job and thus have some working experience or it is due to the fact that a large number of young people of this age chose to emigrate in other countries after finishing their studies in order to pursue better professional opportunities and, therefore, they are no longer included in the cohorts of unemployed. The Central Bank of Greece in its annual report for the year 2015 (Central Bank of Greece, 2016) states that from 2008 to 2013 almost 223.000 people 25-39 years of age left Greece and this phenomenon of “brain drain” continues without changes.

Trends in wages

During the last decades wages¹ had been following an ascending trend until the beginning of the crisis. The latter incited a number of new legislative interventions concerning labour issues, in order to make the Greek economy more competitive and therefore more attractive for potential investors. One of the interventions was the reallocation of the wages at lower levels in an attempt to help the country to return to positive growth trends by reducing the labour cost.

The living costs have risen, while the in-work poverty has remained rather stable, although there has been a peak in 2012 (2010-2015: 13.9%, 11.9%, 15.1%, 13.1%, 13.4%, 13.4%). It has to be underlined that during the same period of time the rates of people at risk or social exclusion in general increased substantially (2009-2015: 27.6%, 27.7%, 31.0%, 34.6%, 35.7%, 36.0%, 35.7%) (ELSTAT, n.d.).

Level of labour market security, employment protection legislation and trade unions role

During the years before 2008, when the financial crisis has started, the national labour legislation had been very rigid. It was strongly regulated and many of its operational dimensions were determined by the collective bargaining processes with the participation of the employers' associations, the trade unions and the state authorities. The crisis and the country's obligations due to the Memoranda of Understanding have

¹ For more details, see 1.1.3.



led to gradual reforms in the legislative framework, which are still under development and aim at greater flexibility.

The minimum wages followed an increasing trend since the end of the 1990s until the first years of the crisis rising by 63% from € 537.86 in 1999 to € 876.62, but without being accompanied by an increase in productivity and competitiveness. The reforms concerning the minimum wage started in 2012 and until today they have led to a decrease by 22% which limited the wage to € 683.76 for workers above 25 years of age. Nevertheless, the pressures exercised on the private sector employees were stronger and led to an even lower minimum wage for them (€ 586.08). At the same time, as a means of enhancing the attractiveness of young employees under 25 years old, the minimum wage for this age group was set to € 510.95.

The legislation regarding the social protection at work is also under reform during the last years. There has been a significant increase in the flexible forms of employment with part-time employment becoming twice as high than the years before the economic crisis (1998: 5.3%; 2015: 9.4%)² (Matsaganis, 2013), while all forms of flexible employment have risen to 53.38% of the total new employment positions in the period January-September 2016 (Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, 2016). Serious concerns exist about the extent and the effects of the shadow economy on the country's economy and the labour market conditions (Bitzenis & Vlachos, 2015). Moreover, employees feel insecure about their career prospects and their ability to find another work with similar remunerations, if they lose their current one (67.1%) (Eurofound, 2014; 2015). Also, reforms in the provisions for collective bargaining led to negotiations that can take place not necessarily at national level, but at regional or even at the company level. In addition, the coverage of the unions is significantly low (although above the EU average of 23%) and is limited to only 25%, while the coverage of collective bargaining is 65% (worker-participation.eu, 2016). For these reasons it can be argued that the collective bargaining processes have lost a significant part of their dynamics, as the crisis and the high unemployment rates have altered the labour market conditions dramatically and the sense of security has been lost.

Beside the minimum wage, the promoted reforms that concern the collective bargaining and the working relations are decided by the government and usually are strongly related to the country's obligations according to the memoranda.

Educational trends and the mismatch of youth qualifications

The phenomenon of mismatch of qualifications has been observed in many EU countries for many years. Not only has it been designated as a serious deficiency of the labour market which results in it losing its capacity to deploy its full potential, but also is able to undermine the future efforts of the EU for development. In the next years the European labour market expects an increase in medium and high level skilled

² See also Eurostat statistical data (various years).



workforce, whereas the low skilled workforce is expected to decrease significantly (Cedefop, 2010a; 2010b).

The mismatch of qualifications in Greece can be mainly traced in over-education and in under-education (lack of the skills). Nevertheless, the greater danger is located more in the inability of the labour market to mobilise the existing labour force and deploy its talent and less in the actual lack of competences (Cedefop, 2010a; 2010b; 2014; INE/GSEE, 2016; McGowan & Andrews, 2015). For this reason, qualifications mismatches are strongly related to the phenomenon of “brain drain”, which has reached alarmingly high levels in Greece³; being unable to secure permanent jobs matching their qualifications many people, usually of young age, pursue better career opportunities in other countries with stronger economies and more inclusive labour markets.

As regards the incidence of over-education, it concerns 32% of the total employment and 16.6% of youth (ILO, 2014). The phenomenon has deteriorated as individuals tend to participate more in education, but the labour market does not provide adequate numbers of jobs for them, thus obliging them to accept work positions that often require lower qualifications than those obtained. It is obvious that this phenomenon has deteriorated since the beginning of the crisis, which has ignited a dramatic fall in entrepreneurial activities and thus in the available job positions. Of course, it has to be taken into account that a large number of university graduates or other groups of skilled individuals work in undeclared employment and cannot be included in the official statistics.

The incidence of under-education is lower (23.7% of the total population; 7.1% for youth) (ILO, 2014). Participation in all forms of education has been gradually increasing during the last two decades and young people tend to remain in education for longer periods of time. Therefore, this form of mismatch presents a descendant trend.

An additional dimension of mismatch is the lack of the appropriate skills and competences in relation to the labour market needs. The qualifications acquired in different educational levels do not always correspond to the existing demand. This can be identified both in tertiary education and in vocational education and training; the numbers of students in different specialisation fields are not always defined according to the actual demands in employment. In addition, the participation in VET remains very low compared to other EU countries and results in the country being unable to develop the necessary technical professions and the relevant economic sectors that would improve the country’s productivity and competitiveness.

In an effort to avoid mismatches the Greek regulatory system provides for the definition of the specialisations offered in vocational education (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary) through the tripartite cooperation of stakeholders at national or regional level: representatives from the education institutions, employers’ associations

³ For more comments on “brain drain” see also 1.1.1 and 1.2.4.



and employees' unions meet in order to exchange well-founded opinions and expertise and to determine the fields of specialisations that should be included in (or excluded from) the VET curriculum with regard to the demand in the labour market. However, a regulatory mechanism that would affect the training offers or content or other aspects of the education-labour market interaction is missing. Also, the aforementioned tripartite cooperation often lacks dynamism and cannot make the decisions which should be seriously taken into consideration in reforms. The approach remains mostly administrative and less oriented towards preemptive actions.

The key risk groups in the labour market in Greece

Main risk groups in labour market

The opinion of the national statistics authority and of the national policy making actors about the definition of the groups at risk in the labour market coincides, has not changed during the last decades and is stated in several official documents⁴. More analytically, the main groups at risk in the Greek labour market are young people in general during their transition to employment for the first time, as well as NEETs. Young people with learning difficulties are also considered a risk group because they are more vulnerable to early school leaving, do not develop the necessary professional skills and lack professional experience.

Also, the definition includes individuals who are disabled, unemployed or long-term unemployed, low-skilled, women, individuals who come from poor families or belong to special social groups, who have a migrant background or are of a minority origin (especially Roma); in some cases mothers of young children or students may be included in these key risk groups. Finally, persons with addictions and recently released from prison may be included in the vulnerable social groups in some of the official documents.

The significance of urgent interventions targeting immigrants in particular as a risk group has to be highlighted. According to fairly recent estimates, the number of immigrants in Greece amounts to 1,300,000 people and amongst them approximately 390,000 people are undocumented (Maroukis, 2012). Also, according to indicators provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority, the unemployment rate is higher for persons of foreign nationality (28.6%) compared with those of Greek nationality (23.7%). Immigrants' higher unemployment is mainly the result of the collapse of economic sectors where they were mostly employed (such as the construction industry) due to the crisis and causes multiple effects. Beside the danger of large numbers of

⁴ Indicative policy documents for the definition of the vulnerable social groups: Operational Programme for the Development of the labour force 2007-2013; Act 4019/2011 (Government Gazette 216 A') on Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship, art. 1.4; Operational Programme for the Development of the labour force – Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020; Balourdos, D., Sarris, N., Tramountanis, A. And Chrysakis, M. (2014). *Vulnerable social groups and discriminations in the labour market* (pp 52-53). Athens: Papazisis; Ministry of Finance (2015). National Reforms Programme.



immigrants experiencing professional exclusion and social marginalisation, their ability to secure their residence and work permits, as well as to enjoy social security and benefits, depends on their employment status. Nevertheless, issues concerning their employment and social inclusion are not always given the appropriate emphasis. Consequently, measures supporting the employment integration of the specific risk group should be considered a top priority in the policy making and in the design of relevant actions.

Structural and individual deficits

There is no distinction between risks resulting from structural deficits and social segmentation and from individual deficits in the public documentation. Usually, the distinction among individuals is related to the probability of them having less or no skills and qualifications, to having acquired or lacking professional experience, as well as to family status. The structural deficits in the Greek labour market have already been mentioned, but these deficits do not always seem to be successfully coordinated with the appropriate measures that have to be implemented.

Youth (15-29) in the labour market

The dramatic increase of youth unemployment in Greece has already been previously analysed, so it is completely justified to argue that youth as a whole constitute a risk group. Youth, either as a whole or divided in different sub-groups, are defined as a risk group in various official documents⁵. Their employment situation is extremely difficult as three out of five young individuals are employed (61.9%), while the unemployed persons of 15-29 years of age amount to 38.1% of the total labour force of the particular age group⁶.

However, the sub-group of NEETs constitutes an additional dimension in the case of youth activation. Their unemployment rates have grown more steeply than those of other groups and for this reason they are designated as one of the main target groups of the youth employment policy measures. In 2015 unemployment rates of NEETs were 24.1% for the 15-29 age group, while they had reached their peak during the years 2012-2014. The difficulty of the particular group in entering the labour market increases the danger of them becoming economically excluded and socially marginalised. In addition, if Greece is not able to deploy youth potential, it cannot avoid the significant costs that result from the social benefits and other programming

⁵ Operational Programme for the Development of the labour force 2007-2013; Act 4019/2011 (Government Gazette 216 A') on Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship, art. 1.4; Operational Programme for the Development of the labour force – Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020; Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, Directorate of employment (2014). Greek Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (April); Ministry of Finance (2015). National Reforms Programme, p. 52-53; Balourdos, D., Sarris, N., Tramountanis, A. And Chrysakis, M. (2014). *Vulnerable social groups and discriminations in the labour market*. Athens: Papazisis; Various calls of the Greek PES (OAED) inviting youth or broader groups of the population to participate in the active labor market projects favouring education/training or employment.

⁶ Author's elaboration of data from the National Statistical Authority of Greece.



interventions targeting young unemployed, as well as from the fact that young individuals cannot contribute to the country's economic activities with their human capital. In 2011 the total cost of 419,102 NEETs 15-29 years of age aggravated the country's finances with €7.1 bn (3.28% of GDP, almost triple the EU average) (Eurofound, 2012), thus hindering the national efforts for recovery. Moreover, there is a different situation for different sub-groups of NEETs; according to Eurostat (last update 13.10.2016), the rates of NEETs who were 25-29 years old (36.2%) were bigger than those of NEETs who were 15-24 years old (17.2%) in 2015. This is probably due to the fact that most young people aged 15-24 years are still involved in education and training activities, whereas the majority of individuals aged 25-29 years are expected to have already finished their studies and to be actively seeking for work. However, most of them are not successful towards that end.

It must also be stated that unlike other EU countries, Greece has relatively low rates of early school leaving (13.3% in 2005 and 7.9% in 2016, much lower than the national EU 2020 target), which has to be related to the social mindset of the country favouring educational qualifications and to the high unemployment rates that oblige young people to stay in education for longer periods of time in an attempt to secure more skills and official certification of their competences.

Youth – public perception and expectations

Young people are perceived as a very important driving force in the Greek society. They are seen both as potential economic and social actors, as well as the future citizens. For this reason the broader attitude has not changed and the interest in investment in their educational development and their professional integration remains high. During the years of the crisis young people have been designated as a group that runs great risk for professional and social marginalisation and exclusion, while the dimension of “brain drain” has become a major issue of concern. Moreover, although the skills mismatch is a big problem, and seems to be broadly recognised (Cedefop, 2010a; 2010b; 2010c; ILO, 2014; Pelletier, 2011), the education system has not yet managed to develop a holistic approach of the issue in close cooperation with the world of work, in spite of some efforts for them to develop closer relations and partnerships. The culture of the entrepreneurial world is another issue of importance. The employers do not seem to follow the new trends for cooperation with other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of measures for the support of young individuals to enter employment. On the contrary, they expect the state to promote various initiatives, but they are not always willing to participate proactively.



Table 1. “Risk group” construction⁷

| Potential risk groups | Importance by actors | | |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| | Public opinion/ Media* | Mainstream policy | Research |
| All young people | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Young unemployed | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Early school leavers | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Young people with low skills | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Young people with outdated qualifications | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Young people without qualifications | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| NEET | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Higher education graduates | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Migrants/Ethnic minorities | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Teenage/single parents | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Young people from workless families | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Young people from remote/ disadvantaged areas | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Young people with a disability | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Other (please indicate & if necessary include new row/s) | - | - | - |

⁷ Check the risk groups for example from Youth Guarantee country reports 2015/2016, country specific recommendations: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1161&langId=en>



Labour market policies

Main trends in active and passive labour market policies⁸ since the mid-1990s. Effects on employment, with particular focus on youth employment.

Since the mid-1990s until the first years of the 2008 crisis the Greek labour market had been suffering from serious structural rigidities. The pressures exercised on the labour market resulted from the economic crisis (decrease of the economic activities and of business, extreme unemployment) and the commitments for transformation undertaken by the Greek state according to the Memoranda of Understanding.

The need for activation measures for a large part of the population, especially the unemployed –but without being limited only to them– led to recent initiatives that target these deficiencies. For many years the Greek state following the developments in other European countries tried to support the less privileged groups of the population mainly through the implementation of passive labour market policies, such as employment or family benefits and incentives for early retirement. The participation in ALMPs remained relatively limited until the time when unemployment reached alarming levels.

LMP formulation process and stakeholders competences

The selection of the target groups of the policy interventions is based on the state estimations regarding the size of the various groups and the challenges that these groups face. The definition of each target group is in accordance with the general definition and the guidelines of the EU, as well as with the criteria used by other member states and are indicated in many of the official documents.

The Greek law encourages the participation of stakeholders in a tripartite organisational form (state-trade unions-employers' associations; civil society only in limited cases) in the decision making regarding interventions in employment. The social partners' participation is usually related to the provision of information on the labour market needs and on details concerning certain aspects of ALMPs (i.e. work placements for practical experience or skills in demand). However, their role is mostly advisory and less operational.

⁸ OECD defines active and passive labour market policies as follows:

Active labour market programmes include all social expenditure (other than education) which is aimed at the improvement of the beneficiaries' prospect of finding gainful employment or to otherwise increase their earnings capacity. This category includes spending on public employment services and administration, labour market training, special programmes for youth when in transition from school to work, labour market programmes to provide or promote employment for unemployed and other persons (excluding young and disabled persons) and special programmes for the disabled.

Passive or income maintenance programmes in the context of labour market programmes consist of unemployment compensation programmes and programmes for early retirement for labour market reasons.



In general, the process is highly centralised and to a great extent policy making is guided by the aforementioned commitments of the country to proceed to significant labour market interventions. The role of regional and local authorities is limited to the implementation of ALMP measures and projects according to the national operational plans and the decisions of the central government. Although the consultation with the ministries regarding the overall design of the policies is not extensive, local authorities are free to decide the content and the beneficiaries of the actions according to their local needs⁹. Similarly, the coordination between the centre and the different regions is not always successful, if there is any. For this reason the interventions are often piecemeal and the diffusion of good practices not effective.

The interaction of stakeholders is done through regular meetings with the state authorities, but seems to have weakened during the last years. Many of the interventions in the labour market are indicated by the three Memoranda of Understanding that have been signed since 2010 and which oblige the Greek state to undertake particular structural reforms that are considered necessary for the enhancement of the country's economy and developmental prospects.

Public employment services

Until now the governance of Public Employment Services (PES) is centralised, although there are several different local offices all over the country. The decisions are taken in the capital and the social partners do not play a significant role in the delivery of services, except for when they get involved in guidance services. In some cases certain municipalities try to establish some form of such services, but usually without coordination with other potential actors. In addition, the small numbers of public employees in the Greek PES and the lack of expertise for the confrontation of the new labour market demands in combination with the unfavourable business environment made the situation worse. For all these reasons OAED (the Greek PES) was unable to offer successful services to young job-seekers as well as to other groups in need of such services.

Currently, the Greek PES are under a big reform, as all similar public services are encouraged to do in all member states, in order to increase the effectiveness and the coordination of the measures. This reform –which is an obligation according to the memoranda of understanding– has been planned in cooperation with other services (PES of Sweden, United Kingdom and Germany, as well as the EU Directorate of Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and representatives of the Task Force for Greece) and includes a roadmap organised in different axes. The Programme includes two action plans (phase A: 2013-2015 and phase B: 2016), whose implementation is drawing near; during 2013-2015 the new action plan was designed in order to adjust to the arising challenges by introducing new services and reorganising the existing ones.

⁹ Regional authorities have the opportunity to design and implement their own plans for development within the framework of the European regional policy, but they usually target dimensions that have already been designated by national policies.



In 2016 the implementation plan has been finalised and is expected to be put into action within the next few months¹⁰. A significant part of it focuses on the improvement of the ALMPs, of the programmes and of the feedback procedures, in order to establish a better overview of the projects and their short- and long-term outcomes.

Towards evidence-based labour market policies

The labour market policies implement the required assessment processes according to the EU guidelines and demands, as most of the actions that are undertaken receive EU funds through various funding schemes (especially the ESF and recently the Youth Employment Initiative). However, there is a continuous effort of the national authorities to improve the existing assessment processes and to develop additional and more flexible evaluation tools in order to enhance the involvement of the social partners, to contribute to the greater effectiveness of the schemes and to strengthen the establishment of the evaluation processes in the broader social mindset.

Unfortunately, one can become aware of the lack of assessment reports. This, combined with the great diversification of authorities implementing the programmes, results in the absence of relevant evaluation documents regarding the entire volume of programmes or at least to a great difficulty in locating and accessing them (INE/GSEE, 2016). However, by the end of 2016 the project regarding the modernisation of the PES is expected to start implementing new forms of services. These services include arrangements for OAED to become the national authority that will gather all information and other supplementary material and will proceed in concrete and structured evaluation interventions¹¹.

¹⁰ Programme for the redefinition of the operational model of OAED. More details can be found at the official website of OAED: <<http://www.oaed.gr/reengineering>>.

¹¹ Programme for the redefinition of the operational model of OAED. An overview of particular actions is available at: <<http://www.oaed.gr/reengineering>>.



Youth employment policies: a general overview

Table 2. An overview of active labour market programmes at national level (2005-2015)¹²

| | Year Indicator | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 or the last year of available data, specify |
|-----|--|---|---|---|
| 1 | Total number of active labour market programmes | | | |
| 1.1 | including youth-targeted | | | |
| 2 | Number of participants (stock) in active labour market programmes: | | | |
| 2.1 | Total number | 41,646 (2006) | 91,855 | 73,750 (2013) |
| 2.2 | % of the labour force (15-64) | 0.85 (2006) | 1.83 | 1.52 (2013) |
| 3 | Number of youth participants (up to 29 years old) in active labour market programmes: | | | |
| 3.1 | Total number | | | |
| 3.2 | % of the labour force (15-29) | | | |
| 3.3 | % of the total number of participants (stock) | | | |
| 4 | Expenditures on active labour market programmes: | | | |
| 4.1 | Total amount (EUR) | 119,545,380 (or 226.46 PPS per person wanting to work) | 497,269,080 (or 717.19 PPS per person wanting to work) | 550,434.140 (2014) (or 456.51 PPS per person wanting to work) |
| 4.2 | % of GDP | 0.06 | 0.22 | 0.31 (2014) |
| 5. | Expenditures on all active labour market programmes for youth participants: | | | |
| 5.1 | Total amount (EUR) | | | |
| 5.2 | % of GDP | | | |
| 6 | Expenditures on youth-targeted active labour market programmes: | | | |
| 6.1 | Total amount (EUR) | | | |
| 6.2 | % of GDP | | | |
| 6.3 | % of the total expenditures on active labour market programmes | | | |

¹² Some of the data that should be filled in are not available in the requested form either from Eurostat and the Greek statistical authority or from other sources (i.e. particular age groups, total numbers of programmes and participants). This constitutes an indicative example of the difficulty which a researcher faces due to the fragmentation and to the limited coordination of the involved authorities for such purposes.



Table 3. Overview of types of measures and schemas against youth unemployment in the last years

| Type of measure | Importance ¹³ | Youth specific (yes/no) | Target groups ¹⁴ | Main source of funding ¹⁵ | Linked to EU initiatives (if yes, which one) ¹⁶ | Main actors of delivery ¹⁷ | Evaluation present (Yes, Partly, No) |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (Re-)orientation courses, preparation for training or employment | 1 | No | 2 | 2 | 1, 2 | 1, 3, 7 | No |
| vocational guidance, career counselling | 2 | Yes | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1, 7 | No |
| Training (with certificates) | 3 | Yes | 1 | 1 | 1, 2 | 1, 3, 6, 7 | Partly |
| Training (without certificates) | 2 | No | 1 | 1 | 1, 2 | 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 | Partly |
| Employment incentives, subsidies for employer | 3 | Yes | 1 | 1 | 1, 2 | 1 | Partly |
| Direct job creation | 3 | Yes | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | Partly |
| Start-up incentives, self-employment programmes | 3 | Yes | 1 | 1 | 1, 5 | 1, 2 | Partly |
| Other | | | | | | | |

Main aim of ALMP and dominant type of measures

The fact that youth unemployment persistently remains at very high levels for many years certainly incites the introduction of measures regarding youth. Therefore, it could be argued that the measures are mostly reactive and less preventive (Petkovic & Williamson, 2015). The interventions came as a late response to an already existing

¹³ Importance depends on the comparative scale of the program (coverage & expenditure) -> Does not exist = 0; Not relevant = 1; Quite important = 2; Very important = 3

¹⁴ *Insert:* targeted youth = 1, universal = 2, targeted risk group =3, targeted to youth risk group = 4

¹⁵ *Insert:* EU = 1; national = 2, regional = 3, local = 4; other -5

¹⁶ *Insert:* Youth Guarantee =1; Youth Employment Initiative =2; Framework for Quality traineeships and apprenticeship =3; Eures =4; Support to youth entrepreneurship =5; Other - 6

¹⁷ *Insert:* state = 1, region = 2, municipality = 3, church = 4, foundations, NGOs = 5, private sector = 6, educational institutions=7 Other, please specify=8 If several, please list all



reality. However, their preventive dimension cannot be overlooked. The phenomena of unemployment and “brain drain” would be easier confronted and the prospects of young people would be improved, if they are offered the skills that are necessary for the labour market, enjoy a reliable system in order to have access to work placements that enhance their working experience, receive job search assistance or are motivated to create their own ventures.

Besides, the implementation of ALMPs is very effective depending on the broader conditions and on their ability to be combined with other measures (i.e. incentives for employers, favourable conditions for entrepreneurship, etc.). Youth Guarantees are an interesting example; there is considerable evidence which indicates that, over the years, youth guarantee projects proved to be rather successful in improving youth transition to the labour market, but they seem to lose part of their dynamics because of the economic crisis (ILO, 2013).

There is not a unique definition of employability. Cedefop (2014b) defines employability as a “combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to progress during their careers”. Therefore, in general, the term refers either to the personal differences that can be attributed to knowledge, educational qualifications, skills and personal characteristics that constitute each individual’s competitive advantage in the labour market, or to the environmental, social and economic context, such as the economic and the labour market circumstances, the educational system, the supportive institutions and the particular systems that help the individuals find and maintain their job position. Most of the policy interventions focus on the increase of opportunities for education and training in order to offer skills that match the labour market needs and help participants to correspond to companies’ recruitment processes and demands. In addition, several interventions target the creation of employment positions in the form of practical experience and apprenticeship schemes.

Some of the interventions aspire to increase the employability of young people, although to a smaller extent. These include measures for the modernisation of the PES and incentives for young entrepreneurs and start-ups, or for employers to create new permanent (quality) jobs for young people. However, the latter appears to be quite difficult under the present circumstances.

Specific risk groups among youth

In general, it can be argued that people with disabilities, migrants and Roma, although specifically mentioned in the policy documents, are not offered adequate opportunities to improve their skills and their employment prospects through the programmes (Petkovic & Williamson, 2015). The number of measures targeting at disadvantaged groups is very limited. Members of these groups may also participate in universal policy measures aiming at socioeconomic inclusion according to specific criteria; nevertheless,



they are not always in the position to fulfill them or to be properly informed and guided with regard to the procedural details.

Migrants constitute a risk group that should receive greater attention and support, because of its particular social and professional conditions and needs¹⁸.

‘Good jobs’ for youth

The inclusion of measures that promote the creation of new entrepreneurial ventures and start-ups that are based on innovation can be considered an action of assistance for young people to secure a quality job which matches their interests and can offer them real opportunities for progression. In addition, many of the programmes include provisions for the young individuals to remain employed in a company after the conclusion of the programme with particular incentives for employers. This is based on the concept of an employee becoming more competent in the end of the programme's period and, therefore, more attractive and even irreplaceable for the employer. The latter should be expected to prefer to recruit the former trainee or subsidised employee under a permanent employment contract instead of hiring a person without previously testing one's skills and competences in practice, although in many occasions their attitude indicates that this is not always the case. Finally, some programmes offer job search assistance and counselling services. These can help young people to improve their CV and their job search skills and to designate their competences in order to be more attractive to employers and successful in recruitment procedures for permanent positions.

Youth perception of ALMP measures

The lack of coordination among the various ministries, public services, research centres and academia results in a great difficulty in reaching robust conclusions about the extent of existing research on young people's experiences. We were not able to locate any relevant research on youth experiences regarding policy initiatives, programmes and individual measures on employment activation. The main reasons for the non existence of research evidence is that interested researchers have difficulty in finding young participants, that the programmes expand in many different fields and regions and that there is not a unique authority that could facilitate the organisation of and the access to relevant data.

The importance of the creation of an accessible tool developed and operated by the state authorities has to be underlined. Such a tool would help relevant data to be documented and future research to actually produce more tangible results. The same applies to the evaluation of such programmes, which seems almost non-existing (and thus, not accessible) (Giannaki, 2014)¹⁹. The reforms in the PES that have already

¹⁸ See also 1.2.1.

¹⁹ The only evaluation report on the YEI programmes we were able to locate constitutes a deliverable of a broader ongoing programme for an external evaluation of the YEI actions implemented in Greece and refers to interviews exploring the attitudes and perceptions of participants. INE/GSEE (2016). *Evaluation*



been mentioned above, include the development of such specific methodology, tools and procedures. Their implementation should be expected to facilitate further research on youth experiences from the various programmes. In addition, the interviews contacted within the framework of the EXCEPT actions give a useful insight to young people's experiences from their participation in youth programmes in Greece and could serve as a basis for the development of broader approaches of the issue.

report: Evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative interventions. Deliverable B. Institute of Labour of GSEE. The members of the research team are: Goulas, Ch., Kordatos, P., Boukouvalas, K., Sidira, V. and Simopoulos, G.



Youth employment policies: focus on selected interventions

Table 4. A brief overview of selected youth employment interventions

| No | Name | Level (national, regional, local) | Main target group ²⁰ | Type ²¹ | Starting year; end year (if not ongoing) | Funding source | Part of EU initiatives (if yes, which one) | Evaluation (Yes, positive; Yes, negative, Yes, mixed results; No) | “Good practice” ²² example (Yes/Partially/No) |
|----|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--|----------------|--|---|--|
| 1 | Voucher | National | b, c | 3 | 2011 | EU, National | No (ESF funding) | Yes, mixed results | Partially |
| 2 | Youth Guarantee | National | a, d | 3, 4 | 2014 | EU, National | Yes (YG) | Yes, positive | Yes |
| 3 | Entrepreneurial education | National, Regional, Local | a | 1 | 2005 | Other | No | Yes, positive | Yes |
| 4 | Stage | National | b | 3, 4 | 1998; 2009 | EU, National | No (ESF funding) | Yes, mixed results | No |
| 5 | New self-employed workers | National, Regional | a, b | 6 | 1997; 2013 | EU, National | No (ESF funding) | Yes, mixed results | Partially |

Comments about the table 4

The particular interventions that are presented in the report conform to the selection criteria that are described in the national reports’ guidelines. More analytically:

- **Reference in the interviews.** The intervention regarding the use of vouchers is mentioned by many interviewees who took part in such projects²³.
- **Different types of actions.** The particular interventions are unique because they include a variety of actions. Voucher schemes are designed to combine training courses at training institutions and practical experience in the form of traineeships in enterprises. The Youth Guarantee uses different forms of interventions in order to support the professional integration of young people, such as vocational training courses, apprenticeships or traineeships, preparation of the personal profile and guidance by the PES and

²⁰ a. targeted youth, b. universal, c.targeted risk group, d.targeted to youth risk group;

²¹ (re-)orientation courses, preparation for training or employment = 1; vocational guidance, career counselling = 2; training (with or without certificates) = 3; Employment incentives, subsidies for employer = 4, direct job creation = 5, and start-up incentives, self-employment programmes =6

²² EU Database of national labour market ‘good practices’ definition: “A specific policy or measure that has proven to be **effective** and **sustainable** in the field of employment, **demonstrated** by evaluation **evidence** and/or monitoring and assessment methods using process data and showing the **potential for replication**. It can cover both the formulation and the implementation of the policy or measure, which has led to **positive labour market outcomes** over an extended **period of time**.”

²³ For more details see 4.2.



encouragement of companies to recruit young people in permanent job positions. The promotion of the entrepreneurial culture involves the incorporation of courses about entrepreneurship in the curricula of all education levels, the implementation of relevant programmes for students to proactively participate in study visits or in organisational and operational simulations of a company's activities, the launching of events offering information and guidance for aspiring entrepreneurs and the organisation of institutional or national competitions for students who create innovative products and services or present new ideas for start-ups. The Stage programme included work placements in various organisations (public or private) and encouraged young trainees to become involved in a large variety of their activities, thus broadening the set of competences acquired. Finally, New self-employed workers programme supported young aspiring entrepreneurs to tackle all the administrative and organizational requirements of a company's creation and helped them develop a more complete image of the economic environment.

- **“Good practice”**. The introduction of the Youth Guarantee is an important youth employment measure that is implemented in Greece and can be designated as a “good policy”. It has already been implemented for two years and is currently under evaluation in order to continue its operation. It has proved to be effective to some degree, because it has mobilised different actors and resources for the support of young people who are at greater risk of professional and social exclusion. However, the levels of the sustainability of its outcomes depend on the conditions in the labour market, which remain very unfavourable for the entire population.
- **Opportunities for progression in work**. All policy interventions which are presented in this report and have been implemented in Greece aim at helping the beneficiaries to enter the workforce. Nevertheless, it has to be underlined that the current situation of the Greek labour market is very difficult and jobs are very limited. Therefore, it is not easy to ensure that some of the participants will actually have good opportunities for long-term employment after the completion of a training programme or a traineeship in an enterprise. Furthermore, the lack of an effective monitoring process and of an organised system of incentives for employers often hinders such a prospect and may lead to the abuse of the measure (i.e. the possibility of companies using apprentices and trainees instead of recruiting permanent employees).
- **Ongoing interventions**. Three out of five of the presented interventions are still under operation (no 1-3). However, particular dimensions of the other two (no 4-5) have actually been incorporated in current policy measures in a new processed form, as they were considered useful and effective.



- **Target only or mainly young people.** The particular interventions target young people in an effort to adjust the activities to their specific needs. The Youth Guarantee interventions are addressed to young people up to 25 years old, while the initiatives in favour of the creation of an entrepreneurial culture are intended for students at all education levels. The training voucher is mainly addressed to young people, although in some cases unemployed people of older ages may be recognised as beneficiaries. The other programmes (Stage, New self-employed workers) targeted young people up to 35 years old; the first one placed them in job positions usually in the public sector in order to enhance their professional experience; the second one offered financial support to new aspiring entrepreneurs to create their own venture, but it was not necessarily connected with innovation.
- **Different youth target sub-groups.** Eligible young individuals belong to various age groups, vary in their employment and family status, as well as their educational qualifications. In addition, many of the supportive initiatives target young people who are included in the group of NEETs.
- **Complimentary selection criteria.** The selected policy interventions meet all four criteria²⁴ regarding the budgets and the number of participants, the duration of projects, the funding sources and the connection with European initiatives.

Detailed description and evaluation of the selected measures

| Name of the initiative | Voucher programme |
|------------------------|--|
| Short description | <p>(Primary/Main) aim of the measure: Opportunities for participation in a combination of theoretical training and a work placement.</p> <p>Intended effects: Improvement of skills and competences in theory and practice, acquiring work experience, official recognition of the training and of the work placement period, enhancement of professional prospects.</p> <p>Target groups: Unemployed people registered with Greek PES (OAED) with or without benefits.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria for beneficiaries: The main eligibility criteria are the status of unemployed with an official registration in the list of unemployed and belonging to the specific target group to which each voucher scheme is addressed. In addition, long-term unemployment and social criteria, such as family status, income or disabilities, may be taken into account.</p> |

²⁴ National reports' guidelines, Complimentary selection criteria a-d, p. 12.



| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| | <p>Type of intervention: Training and traineeship. Often counselling services are provided.</p> <p>Level: All.</p> <p>Start/ end date: Started in 2011; ongoing.</p> <p>Are stakeholders involved in the formulation/implementation of this measure: Besides the state authorities and the PES that participate at all stages of the interventions, other stakeholders take part only in the stage of implementation. These can be training providers (for the training part) and employers or NGOs (for the part of the work placements in their organisations).</p> <p>How/through which institutions is this measure implemented?: As regards the training part, it takes place in accredited private education providers. Each beneficiary is given a voucher that allows him/her to select the education provider independently; consequently, the number of students attracted to the training centres depends on the quality of their services.</p> <p>As regards the traineeship part, employers and various not-for-profit organisations or NGOs offer trainee positions ensuring a real working environment.</p> <p>Budget (EUR, thousand) and source: ESF and national funds (budget n/a, because of the fragmentation of organisations involved).</p> |
| <p>Achieved results</p> | <p>Number of young people covered (entire running period) (data on number of people who are entitled and who actually take part)/ number of young people who have found a job. Total expenditures for the program on annual basis; total expenditure per beneficiary? If not available, other expenditure data what is available.</p> <p>No evaluations or other data available, due to the fragmentation of actors involved and to the lack of a common national database with relevant information.</p> |
| <p>Targeting</p> | <p>Which are the target groups of this measure? Is this program especially targeted to young people or to all unemployed? If it is targeted to all unemployed, does it include special focus to young people (for example, by providing more incentives if young unemployed are targeted)</p> <p>In general, the measure targets unemployed people who are</p> |



| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| | <p>registered with the Greek PES (OAED). The measure is implemented in many different forms in order to include different groups in different actions. More analytically, many of the interventions target all unemployed, whereas others target particular age groups (i.e. youth 18-24 or 25-29) or individuals according to their educational qualifications (i.e. university graduates) or professional expertise.</p> |
| Youth involvement ²⁵ | <p>Are there specific activities planned in the programme to include targeted youth actively in designing the programme or other way; please describe if Yes</p> <p>There are no provisions for youth involvement in the designing or in other stages of the process. The only provided advantage is the ability of young beneficiaries to select the education provider for the training scheme independently.</p> |
| Links to EU initiatives | <p>Is the program linked to an EU initiative (like Youth Guarantee, Youth Employment Initiative, Framework for Quality traineeships and apprenticeship; EURES Job; Support to youth entrepreneurship). If yes, to which one</p> <p>The programme is not linked to an EU initiative. It only receives funding from the ESF.</p> |
| Available evaluations | <p>Are there evaluations on this program available? (Sources)? If yes, are the evaluations: ex-ante; mid-term, ex-post and/or permanent monitoring? Are they internal (by the agency implementing it) or external (e.g. by scientific institutes); If evaluations of this program are available how detailed is the information provided? (please, consider, do they include only basic information or more information, including evaluation of deadweight loss (hiring to subsidized jobs of individuals who would have found regular employment nevertheless); substitution effect (original regular workers possibly better paid and qualified are displaced with participants in the intervention possibly with lower salaries); displacement effect (rises in public sector spending drive down or even eliminate private</p> |

²⁵ In general, there have been efforts to increase youth involvement in policy planning and implementation and to establish processes that help young people become proactive in cross-sectoral initiatives and actions. However, experience shows that such an involvement remains very limited and suffers from discontinuity. General Secretariat for Youth/GSY (2012). *National report for youth*. General Secretariat for Youth. Accessed 5 October 2016 from <www.neagenia.gr/appdata/documents/book-eng.pdf>; Petkovic, S. and Williamson, H (2015). *Youth policy in Greece*. Council of Europe international review. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.



| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>sector spending).</p> <p>The only evaluation report on the YEI evaluation we were able to locate²⁶ constitutes a deliverable of a broader ongoing programme for an external evaluation of the YEI actions implemented in Greece. The particular report makes reference to interviews exploring the attitudes and perceptions of participants who had participated in voucher programmes.</p> <p>We did not locate any other evaluations of the programme available. The fragmentation of the programme in too many different institutions makes such an effort extremely difficult. It would be very interesting though for a researcher to pursue such an objective; however, this aim would require contact with a lot of different authorities and stakeholders, ability to secure access to such information (not always easy and fast) and considerable time and resources in order to see each call separately, since a complete national database on these programmes does not exist. The same applies to the funding provisions, which present similar difficulties in defining their details.</p> |
| <p>In your view: How would you assess the quality of the intervention?</p> | <p>Does this program achieve its stated goals and intended effects?</p> <p>The particular programme entails specific positive dimensions that would designate it as a useful tool against unemployment and would help to the transition of unemployed to the labour market. The participation in training offers unemployed the opportunity to update their knowledge and skills, while the work experience placements help them to remain professionally active, test or enhance their competences further, develop connections with the entrepreneurial world and acquire recognised professional experience, which is an advantage in the recruitment processes. Nevertheless, the lack of a broader assessment and monitoring of the results and especially the lack of job positions in the Greek labour market decrease the measure's dynamism and undermine its outcomes in terms of actually securing permanent jobs for</p> |

²⁶ INE/GSEE (2016). *Evaluation report: Evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative interventions*. Deliverable B. Institute of Labour of GSEE. The members of the research team are: Goulas, Ch., Kordatos, P., Boukouvalas, K., Sidira, V. and Simopoulos, G. Available at <http://www.edull.gr/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/PARADOTEIO_B_INE_GSEE-1.pdf>.



| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>participants after its conclusion.</p> <p>Assessment of the magnitude of the effect? Coverage and take-up: are there problems concerning coverage? Possible barriers for participation (lack of information, complexity of system, conditionality, degree of attractiveness for young people, etc.)?</p> <p>The coverage of the programme is satisfactory, because it offers schemes addressed to multiple groups, in an effort to be as inclusive as possible, taking into consideration the financial and administrative limitations. However, potential barriers exist: the range of subjects offered in different parts of the country is not the same; certain groups of people have fewer opportunities/more difficulties in participating (i.e. disabled persons, residents of remote/disadvantaged areas); the financial remuneration is considered inadequate; participants often express their concerns about the quality of training, the conditions of the traineeship and, most importantly, about the inability of such interventions to help them actually find a job. Unfortunately, many choose to participate mainly in order to receive the remuneration, while at the same time they can improve their résumé, and less because they believe in its effectiveness.</p> <p>Does the program/intervention provide quality and sustainable employment?</p> <p>The quality of the voucher schemes depends on the ability or the willingness of each training provider or employer to offer good quality services. It is the author's opinion that in most cases these services are of good quality. Nevertheless, the particular programme lacks sustainability because of being unable to secure a smooth transition to employment; the dramatic decrease in economic activities has resulted in lack of job positions and in very low levels of labour market integration.</p> <p>Effectiveness of the program: Impact of the program in preventing and reducing youth unemployment; Possible incentive or disincentive factors for participating in the program? Does the program have any unintended consequences: positive or negative?</p> <p>The combination of training and traineeship constitutes the</p> |
|--|--|



| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>measure's main incentive for participation, because it is projected as a skills and employment enhancing process. Moreover, such participation, if it is even partially effective, helps people avoid inactivity and remain close to the labour market, thus maintaining their interest in pursuing a permanent job, while at the same time it can encourage future involvement in lifelong learning activities. In spite of its aspiring design, the programme's effectiveness relies on the labour market's ability to include more people in permanent positions. Such ability has been limited for many years now. Therefore, the measure can reduce unemployment during the period of participation, but its preventive role is undetermined, since the transition to employment is uncertain.</p> <p>In your opinion which are the main weaknesses of this intervention in terms of: adequacy; coverage; take-up; effectiveness of this intervention?</p> <p>Particular weaknesses can exercise a negative influence on different aspects of the measure. Its organisational adequacy cannot be doubted because of the combination of the processes included. Its coverage, as it has already been mentioned, may exclude from its actions particular disadvantaged groups, while the programme's limited financial resources do not correspond with the country's augmented needs for such schemes. Finally, the measure's effectiveness is strongly related to the economy's developmental activation and its capacity to create adequate and sustainable numbers of quality jobs.</p> <p>Consider and comment the opinions of the young people interviewed if for WP3 young people involved in this measure were interviewed.</p> <p>The aforementioned comments have taken into consideration the references of young people interviewed for WP3, which seem to coincide to a large extent with the author's personal assessment (see above), as well as to the documented evidence of the INE/GSEE evaluation report (INE/GSEE, 2016).</p> |
| <p>Only for interventions assessed as 'good practice' example</p> | <p>Explain shortly which the reasons are and what the main "success factors" of this intervention are. Give a reason why you value it as a good practice?</p> |



| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>The training voucher is one of the national active labour market policies (ALMPs). The beneficiaries are designated through a highly competitive process which involves particular selection criteria. Its implementation allows beneficiaries to select a training programme according to their personal needs. The combination of vocational training courses with work placements offers participants the opportunity to improve their skills or to develop new ones and to acquire professional experience, thus enhancing their human capital and increasing their employment prospects. Moreover, if it is properly designed, it can offer support to young people in order to develop a closer interaction with the labour market and to create broader professional networks; thus, they can enhance their ability to locate job positions or even increase their willingness to become involved in corporate ventures.</p> |
|--|--|

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Name of the initiative | Youth Guarantee |
| Short description | <p>(Primary/Main) aim of the measure: Ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months after becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.</p> <p>Intended effects: Increase of employability, improvement of knowledge and skills for young people, offering of opportunities for apprenticeships/traineeships, dependent employment or entrepreneurship for young people. The interventions have to be timely implemented so that young people take advantage of such opportunities within a short period of time after their graduation from education/training or the termination of employment. In this way there is greater probability for them to avoid unemployment, skill erosion and professional and social marginalisation.</p> <p>Target groups: Young unemployed people and NEETs up to 29 years of age. The age group has been extended from 24 to 29 years due to the aggravated situation of youth employment in Greece after the economic crisis of 2008.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria for beneficiaries: A point system has been determined for the evaluation of the candidates who fulfil the eligibility criteria. These criteria include the status and the</p> |



| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| | <p>duration of unemployment, personal or family income, participation in previous similar interventions, education level.</p> <p>Type of intervention: Training, apprenticeships/traineeships, promotion of employment or entrepreneurship, counselling and guidance services.</p> <p>Level: All education levels.</p> <p>Start/ end date: Started in August 2014; ongoing.</p> <p>Are stakeholders involved in the formulation/implementation of this measure: Besides the state authorities and the PES that participate at all stages of the intervention, other stakeholders take part only in the stage of implementation. These can be training providers (for the training part) and employers or NGOs (for the part of the work placements and the recruitment in their organisations).</p> <p>How/through which institutions is this measure implemented?: As regards the training programmes that are offered, they take place in accredited private education providers.</p> <p>As regards the apprenticeship/traineeship or the employment part, employers and various not-for-profit organisations or NGOs offer positions ensuring a real working environment or professional advancement respectively.</p> <p>Budget (EUR, thousand) and source: Approximately € 260,000,000 for Youth Guarantee funding from YEI and ESF resources and national resources.</p> |
| <p>Achieved results</p> | <p>Number of young people covered (entire running period) (data on number of people who are entitled and who actually take part)/ number of young people who have found a job. Total expenditures for the program on annual basis; total expenditure per beneficiary? If not available, other expenditure data what is available.</p> <p>Youth Guarantee opportunities will be offered to 180,956 young individuals.</p> |
| <p>Targeting</p> | <p>Which are the target groups of this measure? Is this program especially targeted to young people or to all unemployed? If it is targeted to all unemployed, does it include special focus to young people (for example, by providing more incentives if young unemployed are targeted)</p> |



| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| | <p>The programme targets young unemployed people and NEETs 18-29 years of age who are registered with the Greek PES (OAED). In some cases provisions have been made for a special call to young people who for various reasons are not registered, yet they would be eligible. The measure is implemented in many different forms in order to include different groups with diverse educational, social and professional backgrounds and to address different needs.</p> |
| Youth involvement ²⁷ | <p>Are there specific activities planned in the programme to include targeted youth actively in designing the programme or other way; please describe if Yes</p> <p>There are no provisions for youth involvement in the designing or in other stages of the process. It receives funding from the Youth Employment Initiatives.</p> |
| Links to EU initiatives | <p>Is the program linked to an EU initiative (like Youth Guarantee, Youth Employment Initiative, Framework for Quality traineeships and apprenticeship; EURES Job; Support to youth entrepreneurship). If yes, to which one</p> <p>The programme concerns the implementation of the respective European Youth Guarantee Initiative in the Greek context.</p> |
| Available evaluations | <p>Are there evaluations on this program available? (Sources)? If yes, are the evaluations: ex-ante; mid-term, ex-post and/or permanent monitoring? Are they internal (by the agency implementing it) or external (e.g. by scientific institutes); If evaluations of this program are available how detailed is the information provided? (please, consider, do they include only basic information or more information, including evaluation of deadweight loss (hiring to subsidized jobs of individuals who would have found regular employment nevertheless); substitution effect (original regular workers possibly better paid and qualified are displaced with participants in the intervention possibly with lower salaries); displacement effect (rises in public sector spending drive down or even eliminate private sector spending).</p> |

²⁷ In general, there have been efforts to increase youth involvement in policy planning and implementation and to establish processes that help young people to become proactive in cross-sectoral initiatives and actions. However, experience shows that such an involvement remains very limited and suffers from discontinuity. (GSY, 2012; Petkovic & Williamson, 2015).



| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>Our research has not managed to locate any available evaluations of the programme. Since the programme is still ongoing, it is possible that an overall evaluation is programmed to take place at the end of the implementation period²⁸.</p> |
| <p>In your view: How would you assess the quality of the intervention?</p> | <p>Does this program achieve its stated goals and intended effects?</p> <p>The particular programme’s design has positive aspects, which, if implemented properly, can designate it as a useful instrument that would help young people to acquire skills that match the labour market needs and to achieve a successful transition to employment. The participation in training offers unemployed youth the opportunity to update their knowledge and skills, while the work placements and the promotion of employment schemes help them to remain professionally active, test or enhance their competences further, develop connections with the entrepreneurial world and acquire recognised professional experience, which is an advantage in the recruitment processes. Moreover, the inclusion of provisions for counselling and guidance to young beneficiaries can improve their job search skills and autonomy. Nevertheless, the lack of adequate job positions in the Greek labour market and the reluctance of many enterprises to participate challenges the measure’s ability to reach its goals.</p> <p>Assessment of the magnitude of the effect? Coverage and take-up: are there problems concerning coverage? Possible barriers for participation (lack of information, complexity of system, conditionality, degree of attractiveness for young people, etc.)?</p> <p>The coverage of the programme is satisfactory, because it offers schemes addressed to multiple groups, in an effort to be as inclusive as possible, considering the financial and administrative limitations. However, potential barriers exist: the subjects offered in different parts of the country are not the same; particular groups of people have greater difficulty in securing an opportunity to participate (i.e. disabled persons,</p> |

²⁸ The INE/GSEE report makes references to the Youth Guarantee, since it evaluates acts that are part of the national YU plan and are related to the YEI implementation; nevertheless, it lacks an overall approach. (INE/GSEE, 2016).



| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>residents of remote/disadvantaged areas); the financial remuneration is considered inadequate; the participants often express their concerns about the quality of the training, the conditions of the traineeship and, most of all, the inability of such interventions to help beneficiaries get into employment. Unfortunately, many of them choose to participate mainly in order to receive the remuneration and to improve their résumé, and less because they believe in its effectiveness to secure permanent jobs.</p> <p>Does the program/intervention provide quality and sustainable employment?</p> <p>As many other similar programmes in the past and especially under the current circumstances due to the socioeconomic crisis, the Youth Guarantee seems unable to secure a smooth transition to employment and to provide quality and sustainable employment. The dramatic decrease in economic activities has resulted in lack of job positions and in very low levels of labour market integration.</p> <p>Effectiveness of the program: Impact of the program in preventing and reducing youth unemployment; Possible incentive or disincentive factors for participating in the program? Does the program have any unintended consequences: positive or negative?</p> <p>Offering opportunities for training or for apprenticeships and traineeships constitutes the measure's main incentive for participation. These activities are considered essential for the development of transferable skills and professional competences and for the increase of people's employability. The participation in Youth Guarantee projects strengthens the connection of young people with learning activities and probably can stimulate an inclination towards lifelong learning. In spite of its aspiring design, the programme's ultimate effectiveness in securing quality employment relies of the labour market's ability to include more people in permanent positions. Such ability is very limited in Greece due to several structural deficiencies and the unfavourable context. Therefore, the measure can reduce unemployment during the period of participation, but its preventive role is undetermined, since the transition to employment is uncertain.</p> <p>In your opinion which are the main weaknesses of this</p> |
|--|--|



| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>intervention in terms of: adequacy; coverage; take-up; effectiveness of this intervention?</p> <p>Some weaknesses can exercise a negative influence on different aspects of the programme. Its organisational adequacy cannot be doubted because of the variety and of the clarity of objectives of the included interventions. Its coverage endangers the ability of particular disadvantaged groups to take part in the schemes, whereas the programme's limited financial resources cannot fully correspond with the country's augmented needs for such projects. Finally, the measure's effectiveness is strongly related to the economy's developmental activation, which would create adequate and sustainable numbers of quality work placements or permanent jobs. Therefore, the danger of attributing great emphasis on training and work experience opportunities might eventually narrow the path towards actual professional inclusion.</p> <p>Consider and comment the opinions of the young people interviewed if for WP3 young people involved in this measure were interviewed.</p> <p>The references of interviewed young people to their experiences from employment programmes have been taken into account and appear to largely coincide with the author's opinion.</p> |
| <p>Only for interventions assessed as 'good practice' example</p> | <p>Explain shortly which the reasons are and what the main "success factors" of this intervention are. Give a reason why you value it as a good practice?</p> <p>The Youth Guarantee schemes offer opportunities to different groups of young people (NEETs included). The projects are organised according to the European guidelines and include a combination of measures. The most important of them refer to the participation in education and training programmes for the improvement of skills, to actions encouraging enterprises to recruit young people, to the deployment of work placement schemes in the form of apprenticeships or traineeships, while counselling and job search assistance services can also be developed. In this way young people have a broad range of activities to use in order to make their transition to the labour market easier and under better conditions. Nevertheless, it must be underlined that the overall success of the initiative is</p> |



| | |
|--|---|
| | closely related to the developments in the Greek economy. |
|--|---|

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Name of the initiative | Entrepreneurial education by Junior Achievement Greece This report refers to entrepreneurial education activities offered by a specific not-for-profit organisation (Junior Achievement Greece – ΣΕΝ/JA Greece). Other forms of entrepreneurial education exist, but this is an indicative one. |
| Short description | <p>(Primary/Main) aim of the measure: Development of entrepreneurial mindset in young people and enhancement of their dynamics for the creation of corporate ventures.</p> <p>Intended effects: Development of experiential learning on the organisational and operational dimensions of an entrepreneurial venture; Familiarisation with the corporate environment and implementation of case studies of virtual enterprises.</p> <p>Target groups: Students of primary, secondary and tertiary education.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria for beneficiaries: No particular criteria. The participation is voluntary.</p> <p>Type of intervention: Diverse actions (orientation programmes, preparation for training or employment, vocational and career guidance, experiential learning, case studies of economic activities).</p> <p>Level: All education levels.</p> <p>Start/ end date: Started in 2005; ongoing.</p> <p>Are stakeholders involved in the formulation/implementation of this measure</p> <p>The particular intervention is exclusively designed and implemented by stakeholders. Junior Achievement Greece is a not-for-profit organisation, member of an international network that offers innovative entrepreneurial education programmes for students.</p> <p>How/through which institutions is this measure implemented?</p> <p>The activities are implemented through different institutions on a voluntary basis. The overall planning and coordination of activities and the support and guidance are done by the</p> |



| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| | <p>members and the associates of the organisation, the cooperating enterprises and the students, the teachers and the administrative authorities of the educational institutions that are attracted to participate.</p> <p>Budget (EUR, thousand) and source: Budget n/a, because the interventions are based on volunteerism and cooperation.</p> |
| <p>Achieved results</p> | <p>Number of young people covered (entire running period) (data on number of people who are entitled and who actually take part)/ number of young people who have found a job. Total expenditures for the program on annual basis; total expenditure per beneficiary? If not available, other expenditure data what is available.</p> <p>Over 50,000 students of all levels have participated in projects of the particular organisation. Data on expenditure cannot be provided, because the implementation of the projects is based on the volunteering participation in the activities of all parties involved.</p> |
| <p>Targeting</p> | <p>Which are the target groups of this measure? Is this program especially targeted to young people or to all unemployed? If it is targeted to all unemployed, does it include special focus to young people (for example, by providing more incentives if young unemployed are targeted)</p> <p>All students who attend primary, secondary and tertiary education are targeted. The participation is optional, but beside the interesting types of activities, the projects include dissemination actions and competitions at national and European level in order to motivate young students to be engaged in the projects.</p> |
| <p>Youth involvement</p> | <p>Are there specific activities planned in the programme to include targeted youth actively in designing the programme or other way; please describe if Yes</p> <p>All activities are planned with particular objectives and methodology for action by the organisation's associates and partners and use their long expertise. They also offer support and guidance throughout the duration of each project. However, most of the projects are implemented according to the interests and the initiatives of the students involved. An indicative example is the virtual enterprise, which is fully organised and implemented by young aspiring students-</p> |



| | |
|---|---|
| | entrepreneurs according to their innovative idea. |
| Links to EU initiatives | <p>Is the program linked to an EU initiative (like Youth Guarantee, Youth Employment Initiative, Framework for Quality traineeships and apprenticeship; EURES Job; Support to youth entrepreneurship). If yes, to which one</p> <p>There is no relation to specific EU initiatives. However, entrepreneurial education is among the issues of interest for European youth policy and such a concept is often mentioned in the EU initiatives.</p> |
| Available evaluations | <p>Are there evaluations on this program available? (Sources)? If yes, are the evaluations: ex-ante; mid-term, ex-post and/or permanent monitoring? Are they internal (by the agency implementing it) or external (e.g. by scientific institutes); If evaluations of this program are available how detailed is the information provided? (please, consider, do they include only basic information or more information, including evaluation of deadweight loss (hiring to subsidized jobs of individuals who would have found regular employment nevertheless); substitution effect (original regular workers possibly better paid and qualified are displaced with participants in the intervention possibly with lower salaries); displacement effect (rises in public sector spending drive down or even eliminate private sector spending).</p> <p>Our research has not managed to locate any evaluations of the programme available, because of the many different authorities and stakeholders involved and of the lack of relevant aggregate data at national level. The same applies to the funding provisions, which present similar difficulties in defining their details.</p> |
| In your view: How would you assess the quality of the intervention? | <p>Does this program achieve its stated goals and intended effects?</p> <p>The stated goals and intended effects are achieved with great success. This is depicted in the increased numbers of motivated schools and students who become involved in the projects, as well as in the international awards and distinctions that Greek teams have won over the years.</p> <p>Assessment of the magnitude of the effect? Coverage and take-up: are there problems concerning coverage? Possible barriers for participation (lack of information, complexity of</p> |



| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>system, conditionality, degree of attractiveness for young people, etc.)?</p> <p>The various projects with a focus on entrepreneurial education do not present significant deficiencies. The Greek authorities have been very supportive and regard the schemes as being both interesting and successful. Moreover, information about the projects and the access to them is very easy to find, since all activities are decentralised and the number of professionals offering guidance is adequate in most parts of the country. Also, the close link with the real professional environment and the prospect of participating in an international community focusing on innovative ideas makes the programmes very attractive to young participants. Finally, students can participate in the projects regardless of the type of institution (i.e. public or private) they attend. Thus, the overall initiative has a clear inclusive character.</p> <p>Does the program/intervention provide quality and sustainable employment?</p> <p>The programmes of entrepreneurial education do not directly relate to employment; nevertheless, they do enhance the prospects of employment indirectly, because they cultivate a positive attitude towards corporate ventures among students and help them to familiarise with different aspects of the labour market.</p> <p>Effectiveness of the program: Impact of the program in preventing and reducing youth unemployment; Possible incentive or disincentive factors for participating in the program? Does the program have any unintended consequences: positive or negative?</p> <p>The programmes do not have a direct impact on employment, since they are addressed to young students and do not incorporate the dimension of transition to work positions. However, in the long-term they can influence their educational and professional decisions and their employment prospects through their familiarisation with the labour market and the corporate environment from a young age. In addition, the projects by including counselling and guidance services, hands-on experiences and actions that incite innovation, become increasingly attractive among young people, who seek for diverse opportunities. Finally, the participation in such</p> |
|--|--|



| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>projects increases the probability that many of the students will become engaged in entrepreneurial ventures themselves. At the same time they develop a positive attitude towards extra-curricular activities and lifelong learning.</p> <p>In your opinion which are the main weaknesses of this intervention in terms of: adequacy; coverage; take-up; effectiveness of this intervention?</p> <p>The main weakness of the projects that are included in this intervention is the fact that they have not managed to exercise a significant influence either on the official state approach on entrepreneurial education or on the curriculum design of the education providers; such an influence would be very useful, because it would contribute to their innovative reform concerning the issues of entrepreneurship and the operation of the economy.</p> <p>Consider and comment the opinions of the young people interviewed if for WP3 young people involved in this measure were interviewed.</p> <p>No references on such programmes in interviews.</p> |
| <p>Only for interventions assessed as 'good practice' example</p> | <p>Explain shortly which the reasons are and what the main "success factors" of this intervention are. Give a reason why you value it as a good practice?</p> <p>The promotion of the entrepreneurial culture through innovative educational methodologies and experiential learning appears to have deeper and more permanent results compared to common theoretical learning. For this reason, the incorporation of entrepreneurial education at all levels of the education system is a "good practice" and helps young people to acquire useful knowledge and to develop relevant skills easier, while the opportunity to engage proactively in such projects tests their competences in practice. Participants in such projects may formulate the pool of future innovators, entrepreneurs and business executives.</p> |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <p>Name of the initiative</p> | <p>Stage programme</p> |
| <p>Short description</p> | <p>(Primary/Main) aim of the measure: Opportunities for unemployed people to acquire professional experience and to develop their skills.</p> |



| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| | <p>Intended effects: Test skills and competences in practice, acquiring work experience officially recognised, connection with the labour market and employers, enhancement of professional prospects.</p> <p>Target groups: Unemployed people registered with Greek PES (OAED) with or without benefits.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria for beneficiaries: The main eligibility criteria are the status of unemployed with an official registration in the list of unemployed and belonging to the specific target group to which each stage programme is addressed. In addition, long-term unemployment and social criteria, such as family status, income or disabilities, were taken into account. In some cases natives of the area of implementation were preferable for participation.</p> <p>Type of intervention: Work placement/work experience scheme. Employment incentives and subsidies for employers.</p> <p>Level: All.</p> <p>Start/ end date: Started in 1998; ended in 2009.</p> <p>Are stakeholders involved in the formulation/implementation of this measure: Besides the state authorities and the PES that participated at all stages of the interventions, employers took part only in the stage of implementation by offering placements in their enterprises; they should conform with specific eligibility criteria and receive a subsidy for each employee they recruited through the Stage programme.</p> <p>How/through which institutions is this measure implemented?: Stagiaires could be recruited either in private enterprises or in the public sector. Employers offered positions for beneficiaries of the Stage programme and received a subsidy for each one of them.</p> <p>Budget (EUR, thousand) and source: ESF and national funds (budget n/a, because of the fragmentation of organisations involved).</p> |
| <p>Achieved results</p> | <p>Number of young people covered (entire running period) (data on number of people who are entitled and who actually take part)/ number of young people who have found a job. Total expenditures for the program on annual basis; total expenditure per beneficiary? If not available, other expenditure</p> |



| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| | <p>data what is available.</p> <p>No available evaluations due to the fragmentation of involved actors and to the lack of relevant aggregate data at national level.</p> |
| Targeting | <p>Which are the target groups of this measure? Is this program especially targeted to young people or to all unemployed? If it is targeted to all unemployed, does it include special focus to young people (for example, by providing more incentives if young unemployed are targeted).</p> <p>In general, the measure targeted unemployed people who were registered with the Greek PES (OAED). Many of the interventions targeted all unemployed, whereas others targeted young people in particular.</p> |
| Youth involvement ²⁹ | <p>Are there specific activities planned in the programme to include targeted youth actively in designing the programme or other way; please describe if Yes</p> <p>There were no provisions for youth involvement in the designing or in other stages of the process. In many cases young people had to find an employer willing to hire them as stagiaires by themselves, because the PES were not able to mobilise and communicate with the business world due to limited resources and administrative deficiencies.</p> |
| Links to EU initiatives | <p>Is the program linked to an EU initiative (like Youth Guarantee, Youth Employment Initiative, Framework for Quality traineeships and apprenticeship; EURES Job; Support to youth entrepreneurship). If yes, to which one.</p> <p>The programme was not linked to an EU initiative. It only received funding from the ESF.</p> |
| Available evaluations | <p>Are there evaluations on this program available? (Sources)? If yes, are the evaluations: ex-ante; mid-term, ex-post and/or permanent monitoring? Are they internal (by the agency implementing it) or external (e.g. by scientific institutes); If evaluations of this program are available how detailed is the information provided? (please, consider, do they include only</p> |

²⁹ In general, there have been efforts to increase youth involvement in policy planning and implementation and to establish processes that help young people become proactive in cross-sectoral initiatives and actions. However, experience shows that such an involvement remains very limited and suffers from discontinuity. (GSY, 2012; Petkovic & Williamson, 2015).



| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>basic information or more information, including evaluation of deadweight loss (hiring to subsidized jobs of individuals who would have found regular employment nevertheless); substitution effect (original regular workers possibly better paid and qualified are displaced with participants in the intervention possibly with lower salaries); displacement effect (rises in public sector spending drive down or even eliminate private sector spending).</p> <p>Our research has not managed to locate any evaluations of the programme available, because of the many different authorities and stakeholders involved. The same applies to the funding provisions, which present similar difficulties in defining their details.</p> |
| <p>In your view: How would you assess the quality of the intervention?</p> | <p>Does this program achieve its stated goals and intended effects?</p> <p>The particular programme entailed some positive dimensions that would designate it as a useful tool against unemployment and would help to the transition of unemployed to the labour market. The participation in the Stage schemes offered unemployed the opportunity to update their skills in practice and to acquire work experience, while at the same time they were able to develop connections with employers and acquire recognised professional experience, which was an advantage in the recruitment processes. Nevertheless, in most cases they did not actually secure permanent jobs for participants, while the schemes were often criticised of being a vehicle for political exploitation of potential voters by all political parties.</p> <p>Assessment of the magnitude of the effect? Coverage and take-up: are there problems concerning coverage? Possible barriers for participation (lack of information, complexity of system, conditionality, degree of attractiveness for young people, etc.)?</p> <p>The coverage of the programme was quite satisfactory, because it offered a lot of subsidised jobs to unemployed people and achieved a relative inclusiveness. However, potential barriers existed: the number of positions was not allocated on equal terms in different parts of the country; particular groups of people had fewer opportunities/more difficulties in participating (i.e. disabled persons, residents of remote/disadvantaged areas, or even people with no political</p> |



| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>acquaintances); the financial remuneration was considered inadequate; the participants often expressed their concerns about the working conditions and, most of all, about the inability of such interventions to help them actually enter employment. Many individuals participated in order to receive the remuneration and did not believe in its effectiveness very much.</p> <p>Does the program/intervention provide quality and sustainable employment?</p> <p>The particular programme was not able to provide quality and sustainable employment, because it was based on a fixed term contract. Thus, it was unable to secure a smooth transition to a permanent job position, although in some cases temporary employees were assigned the duties of permanent ones.</p> <p>Effectiveness of the program: Impact of the program in preventing and reducing youth unemployment; Possible incentive or disincentive factors for participating in the program? Does the program have any unintended consequences: positive or negative?</p> <p>The ability of the programme to reduce youth unemployment was limited especially in the long-term, since it offered only fixed term employment contracts. Also, there were serious concerns about the objectivity of the recruitment processes, as well as about the possibility of young people working without social security to be recruited in the same company, so that no new jobs were actually created.</p> <p>There were positive effects, too. The participants had the opportunity to develop their skills further in a professional environment and to acquire valuable work experience, which was officially recognised and could be taken into consideration in future recruitment procedures. Also, they could avoid inactivity and remain close to the labour market maintaining their interest in pursuing a permanent job.</p> <p>In your opinion which are the main weaknesses of this intervention in terms of: adequacy; coverage; take-up; effectiveness of this intervention?</p> <p>First of all, particular disadvantaged groups were not properly supported in order to avoid exclusion. Moreover, the</p> |
|--|---|



| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>programme's remuneration was considered to be rather low, it provided health insurance, but no social security. In addition, the monitoring of the programme was not fully effective and in some cases the programme's schemes were exploited against the interests of the stagiaires.</p> <p>Consider and comment the opinions of the young people interviewed if for WP3 young people involved in this measure were interviewed.</p> <p>No references to the Stage programme in the EXCEPT interviews.</p> |
| Only for interventions assessed as 'good practice' example | <p>Explain shortly which the reasons are and what the main "success factors" of this intervention are. Give a reason why you value it as a good practice?</p> <p>n/a (see 4.4)</p> |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Name of the initiative | Programme for New self-employed workers |
| Short description | <p>(Primary/Main) aim of the measure: Offer opportunities to individuals to create their corporate venture</p> <p>Intended effects: Creation of more enterprises especially by young people and contribution to the growth of the national economy. Opportunity for young people to be proactively involved in the economic activities, advance their autonomy and create jobs for other people in their businesses.</p> <p>Target groups: Unemployed of all ages or people who had recently created a company with a share of at least 51%. Particular calls of the programme were addressed to young individuals up to 35 years of age or to women especially.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria for beneficiaries: The main eligibility criteria were the status of unemployed with an official registration in the list of unemployed (priority group) or the possession of at least 51% of a recently created business.</p> <p>Type of intervention: Start-up incentives and self-employment programmes.</p> <p>Level: All.</p> <p>Start/ end date: Started in 1997; ended in 2013.</p> <p>Are stakeholders involved in the formulation/implementation of</p> |



| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| | <p>this measure: Besides the state authorities and the PES that participated at all stages of the interventions, no other stakeholder took part in the schemes' design and implementation.</p> <p>How/through which institutions is this measure implemented?</p> <p>Besides the design and the administrative dimensions exercised by the public authorities (ministries and PES), no other institution was engaged in the implementation of the programme.</p> <p>Budget (EUR, thousand) and source: ESF and national funds were used for the implementation of the programme (budget n/a, because of the fragmentation of organisations involved).</p> |
| Achieved results | <p>Number of young people covered (entire running period) (data on number of people who are entitled and who actually take part)/ number of young people who have found a job. Total expenditures for the program on annual basis; total expenditure per beneficiary? If not available, other expenditure data what is available.</p> <p>No evaluations or other data available, due to the fragmentation of actors involved and to the lack of a common national database with relevant information.</p> |
| Targeting | <p>Which are the target groups of this measure? Is this program especially targeted to young people or to all unemployed? If it is targeted to all unemployed, does it include special focus to young people (for example, by providing more incentives if young unemployed are targeted)</p> <p>In general, the measure targeted unemployed people who were registered with the Greek PES (OAED). Also, it aimed at supporting new entrepreneurs in the first steps of their ventures. Special projects were addressed only to young people up to 35 years belonging in different sub-groups (i.e. nascent entrepreneurs, unemployed, disabled, women, university or secondary education graduates).</p> |
| Youth involvement ³⁰ | <p>Are there specific activities planned in the programme to</p> |

³⁰ In general, there have been efforts to increase youth involvement in policy planning and implementation and to establish processes that help young people become proactive in cross-sectoral initiatives and actions. However, experience shows that such an involvement remains very limited and suffers from discontinuity (GSY, 2012; Petkovic & Williamson, 2015).



| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>include targeted youth actively in designing the programme or other way; please describe if Yes</p> <p>There were no provisions for youth involvement in the designing of the process. Young individuals were able to design only their own corporate venture's plan and to submit their proposal in order to be financed by the programme.</p> |
| <p>Links to EU initiatives</p> | <p>Is the program linked to an EU initiative (like Youth Guarantee, Youth Employment Initiative, Framework for Quality traineeships and apprenticeship; EURES Job; Support to youth entrepreneurship). If yes, to which one.</p> <p>The programme was not linked to an EU initiative. It only received funding from the ESF.</p> |
| <p>Available evaluations</p> | <p>Are there evaluations on this program available? (Sources)? If yes, are the evaluations: ex-ante; mid-term, ex-post and/or permanent monitoring? Are they internal (by the agency implementing it) or external (e.g. by scientific institutes); If evaluations of this program are available how detailed is the information provided? (please, consider, do they include only basic information or more information, including evaluation of deadweight loss (hiring to subsidized jobs of individuals who would have found regular employment nevertheless); substitution effect (original regular workers possibly better paid and qualified are displaced with participants in the intervention possibly with lower salaries); displacement effect (rises in public sector spending drive down or even eliminate private sector spending).</p> <p>Our research has not managed to locate any evaluations of the programme available, because of the many different authorities and stakeholders involved. The same applies to the funding provisions, which present similar difficulties in defining their details.</p> |
| <p>In your view: How would you assess the quality of the intervention?</p> | <p>Does this program achieve its stated goals and intended effects?</p> <p>The particular programme entailed some positive dimensions that would designate it as a useful tool against unemployment and would help to the transition of unemployed to the labour market. The participation in the schemes of the new self-employed workers offered unemployed people the opportunity to create a new enterprise, whereas new entrepreneurs had</p> |



| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>the opportunity to receive the funding that was necessary for their venture's advancement.</p> <p>Assessment of the magnitude of the effect? Coverage and take-up: are there problems concerning coverage? Possible barriers for participation (lack of information, complexity of system, conditionality, degree of attractiveness for young people, etc.)?</p> <p>The coverage of the programme was quite satisfactory, because it included provisions for the creation or the support of large numbers of enterprises in all regions of the country. However, potential barriers existed: particular groups of people had fewer opportunities/more difficulties in participating (i.e. disabled persons, residents of remote/disadvantaged areas). Also, many of the businesses that benefited from the programme were not related to innovation or lacked a close connection with the broader developmental strategy and an extrovert orientation. Therefore, their overall contribution to the country's economic development and growth can be seriously doubted.</p> <p>Does the program/intervention provide quality and sustainable employment?</p> <p>The particular programme's ability to provide quality and sustainable employment relied on the financial investment in enterprises with an orientation to the improvement of products and services in high demand in the market, although this was not always attainable.</p> <p>Effectiveness of the program: Impact of the program in preventing and reducing youth unemployment; Possible incentive or disincentive factors for participating in the program? Does the program have any unintended consequences: positive or negative?</p> <p>The ability of the programme to reduce youth unemployment was significant, because it gave young people the opportunity to create their own ventures, while at the same time they could create new jobs for their peers. Nevertheless, there were some concerns about the objectivity of the allocation processes, as well as about the ventures' innovative character. Also, the new entrepreneurs could avoid inactivity and participate in the labour market developments.</p> |
|--|---|



| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>In your opinion which are the main weaknesses of this intervention in terms of: adequacy; coverage; take-up; effectiveness of this intervention?</p> <p>First of all, particular disadvantaged groups were not properly supported in order to avoid exclusion. Moreover, the programme often invested in ventures that did not have a major contribution to the national economy and to its growth. In addition, the monitoring of the programme was not fully effective and the development of synergies between the new businesses and others already existing has not always been confirmed.</p> <p>Consider and comment the opinions of the young people interviewed if for WP3 young people involved in this measure were interviewed.</p> <p>No references on such programmes in interviews.</p> |
| <p>Only for interventions assessed as 'good practice' example</p> | <p>Explain shortly which the reasons are and what the main "success factors" of this intervention are. Give a reason why you value it as a good practice.</p> <p>The way in which the particular programme has been implemented does not designate it as a "good practice", for reasons that are presented in 4.4. However, it constitutes a useful experience for the projects that are currently being implemented for the support of young entrepreneurs. The latter have drawn useful lessons from the previous programme on youth entrepreneurship and are oriented towards ventures that are innovative and serve broader objectives for improved production and sustainable development.</p> |

Most effective policy in addressing youth unemployment

Greece is one of the countries that have been affected by the 2008 economic crisis dramatically. Severe financial deficiencies resulted in deep recession and societal implications. Young people appear to face the most complex challenges especially during their transition to the labour market. The decrease of the demand for labour aggravated the already high unemployment rates and the skill mismatches and erosion, thus undermining youth employment prospects and intensifying the danger of social exclusion.



Among the mentioned policies targeting youth at national level, three can be considered as the most successful so far, in spite of externalities that impose unfavourable conditions and hurdles on their full effectiveness.

- The training voucher is one of the national active labour market policies (ALMPs). The beneficiaries are designated through a highly competitive process which involves specific selection criteria. Its implementation allows the beneficiaries to select a training programme according to their personal needs. The combination of vocational training courses with work placements offers participants the opportunity to improve their skills or to develop new ones and to acquire professional experience, thus enhancing their human capital and increasing their employment prospects. Moreover, it helps them develop a closer interaction with the labour market. At the same time, it can proactively strengthen their professional networks and improve their job search skills. However, there are justified concerns regarding the schemes' limited outcomes in the long-term, especially regarding their ability to offer knowledge and skills that actually match the labour market demand and to secure permanent employment for participants. In spite of the training voucher being a promising tool of action, the reduction of economic activities, the absence of a system of motives for businesses and the lack of successful monitoring of the outcomes are main causes of its limited efficiency.
- Youth Guarantee schemes are being implemented in Greece since 2014. The country is eligible for funding both from the ESF and the YEI and different groups of young people (NEETs included) can benefit. The projects are organised according to the European guidelines and include a combination of measures: enhancement of participation in education and training programmes for the improvement of skills; actions encouraging enterprises to recruit young people; deployment of work placement schemes in the form of apprenticeships or traineeships.
- The promotion of the entrepreneurial culture has been included in the national policy scope. Mainly universities invest in the development of such a culture among their students by incorporating special courses in their curricula or by organising thematic seminars and events on issues related to entrepreneurship. Similarly –although on a much smaller scale– special extra-curricular projects in the primary and the secondary education aspire to make the students familiar with the entrepreneurial activities and to prepare them for potential participation in such ventures in the future.

Overall, there are plenty of policy measures that can be used in order to support young individuals during their transition to the labour market or to help them remain and advance their career. However, their attractiveness and the prospects for their success rely greatly on the broader socioeconomic context of the country. Therefore, the



unfavourable conditions in the Greek economy have to be taken into account and such interventions must be coordinated with measures that concern other fields of policy.

Least effective policy in addressing youth unemployment

The Stage programme and the programme for New self-employed workers seem to be the least effective measures for the following reasons, although they were not completely unsuccessful.

As regards the Stage programme, beside placements in the private sector, it included work placements in the public sector; this fact often caused concerns about the state's intentions to use this programme mainly as an instrument for the regulation of unemployment and less as an action enhancing employability. In addition, there are justified concerns as to whether some of these placements were used for political purposes in order to attract potential voters, while in many cases the participants exploited the law and raised demands for permanent recruitment. Also, Stage programmes did not offer “quality” work opportunities. When each programme period ended, the participant did not have any prospects to remain in that job, although he or she had provided the same services with permanent employees.

The programme for New self-employed workers, although it offered valuable financial support to new people to create their own company, was not necessarily connected with innovation. Therefore, most of the ventures were directed in industries that lacked sustainability, innovation and long-term vision for production.

Finally, both programmes lacked careful planning, monitoring and evaluation, so it remains unclear whether participants had actually improved their skills, their opportunities and their prospects. Thus, it was not quite clear in which way and to what extent they had benefited from the programmes, when they reach their end.



Diffusion of EU youth employment initiatives

Table 5.

| EU initiatives | When adopted by a policy document? | Date of regulation if available | Start of implementation | Presence in basic relevant national documents like NRP, CSR, National Employment Strategies | Number of young people involved (absolute number and as a share of all young people concerned) | Envisaged expenses (in absolute terms and as a share of employment programs; as a share of GDP, etc.). |
|--|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|---|--|--|
| Youth Guarantee Schemes | December 2013 | May 2014 | August 2014 | Official documents ³¹ | 180,956 | € 260,000,000 |
| Youth Employment Initiative | 2013 | 2013 (through its funding to particular interventions) | 2013 | Official documents ³² | The initiative supports various pro-youth interventions | €171,517,029 (for 2014-2015) It is expected to contribute € 392,000,000 approximately, the larger part of which concerns the Youth Guarantee |
| Quality traineeships and apprenticeships | 2013 | 17.09.2013, 15.02.2016 and 17.05.2016 | 2013 | Official documents | The interventions that promote quality in work placements are incorporate in the various pro-youth actions | The interventions that promote quality in work placements are incorporate in the various pro-youth actions |
| Eures Job | Reference in various documents | Reference in various documents | Different Eures interventi | Official documents ³³ | The initiative supports various pro- | The initiative supports various pro- |

³¹ Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, Directorate of employment (2014). Greek Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (April); Operational Programme for the Development of the labour force-Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020; National Reforms Programme of Greece 2015; European Commission (2015). The Youth Employment Initiative-Greece. Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

³² Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, Directorate of employment (2014). Greek Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (April); Operational Programme for the Development of the labour force-Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020; National Reforms Programme of Greece 2015.

³³ Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, Directorate of employment (2014). Greek Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (April); Operational Programme for the Development of the labour force-Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020.



| | | | ons in different periods of time | | youth interventions | youth interventions |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Supported young entrepreneurs | Reference in various documents | Reference in various documents | Different interventions in different periods of time | Official documents ³⁴ | | |

Comments about the table 5

Table 5 refers to five different actions that target youth employment. However, each one of them participates in the Greek youth policy-making in a different way and usually interacts with others at legislative and operational level. In addition, with the exception of the Youth Guarantee, there is great difficulty in estimating the total number of the young people concerned, as well as of those who participate in their actions due to the lack of a relevant national database.

Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) has been designed by European authorities in order to support countries where the unemployment rates of youth <25 years of age were over 25% in 2012. The YEI not only constitutes a main funding source of the Youth Guarantee in Greece, but also contributes to other pro-youth provisions included in the national strategy for development, the national reforms programme and the operational programme for the development of the labour force. The fragmentation of its resources in multiple interventions makes the estimation of the number of participants not possible.

The concept of “Quality traineeships and apprenticeships” (not a specific EU initiative) has been incorporated in various interventions for the improvement of youth prospects in the labour market; however, aggregate quantitative data are not available. The institutional framework of work placements (apprenticeships, traineeships) has been under reform for the last few years and every effort is made in order for the interventions to establish quality conditions for participants according to the EU guidelines (Council of the European Union, 2014).

As regards the concept of “Eures job”, it probably refers to the “Your first Eures job” initiative. Interventions related to the particular initiative are also incorporated in different actions; therefore, data on the participation in it of youth exclusively cannot be provided. Nevertheless, the Eures Network has been active in Greece for many years aiming at the facilitation of professional mobility in the EU. Greek PES are the national authority of the network; 19 Eures Advisors and 22 Assistant Advisors in different

³⁴ Operational Programme for the Development of the labour force-Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020.



regions offer their services to people who want to find work in other countries of the network.

Finally, the concept of “supported young entrepreneurs” has been integrated in many actions favouring the professional activation of young individuals in the country. For many years a lot of interventions are being introduced in order to promote youth entrepreneurial culture through public measures or privately organised and implemented projects. Aggregate data on the number of participants are not available. In 4.2 the report presents one of many, which is considered indicative of the private sector’s contribution to the matter.

EU initiatives

The EU initiatives are very important for the implementation of labour market inclusion measures in the Greek pro-youth agenda³⁵. First of all, they set the main focus and establish the general guidelines on which the measures are built. Secondly, they offer the opportunity to other countries’ good practices to be recognised and to act as useful motivating and guiding forces. Thirdly, in many cases EU funding makes the implementation of measures attainable, because of the limited state resources. However, the EU initiatives encourage (or even push) countries to actually undertake some form of action under a common umbrella programme, but with every country being able to adjust the guidelines and the suggestions to its needs and priorities.

In the case of particular cases, it would be interesting to mention two:

- The Youth Guarantee: it provides interventions with measures for young people in general and for NEETs in particular, increasing prospects for accessibility.
- Work placements: the EU initiatives encourage the development of legislation for the integration of such schemes in educational institutions in which they did not exist before. Currently, the new legislation introduces work experience opportunities in vocational schools (apprenticeships in upper secondary and traineeships in post-secondary education). Still, there are not any particular provisions for other educational institutions at national or regional level nor piecemeal provisions appear to be implemented. Work placements have been implemented at tertiary education institutions in two forms: either as part of the official curriculum (Technological Educational Institutions or particular university departments) or as an extra-curricular initiative of specific Universities under their own regulatory framework. The Erasmus+ work placements also appear very attractive for students.

³⁵ Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, Directorate of employment (2014). Greek Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (April); Operational Programme for the Development of the labour force-Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020; National Reforms Programme of Greece 2015; European Commission (2015). The Youth Employment Initiative-Greece. Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion; Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, Directorate of employment (2014). Greek Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (April); Operational Programme for the Development of the labour force-Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020; National Reforms Programme of Greece 2015.



Other policy measures

Table 6. Policy measures and their impact on the employment of different risk groups

| Policy measures | Risk groups in the labour market | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| | All young people | All young unemployed | Early school leavers | Young people with low skills | Young people without qualifications | Migrants/ethnic minorities | Teenage/single parents | Young people from workless families | NET | Young people with disability | Young people from remote/disadvantaged areas | Other risk groups specify |
| Early intervention and activation measures (outreach strategies etc) | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | - |
| Apprenticeship/vocational training | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | - |
| Grant for school enrolment/Scholarship addressed to specific juvenile sub-groups | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | - |
| Training in basic skills and competences | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | - |
| Second chance education programmes | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | - |
| Family/ child benefits | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - |
| Early childhood care | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | - |
| Policy measures related to housing | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | - |
| Minimum income schemes | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | - |
| Subsistence benefits | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | - |
| Promotion of employment/labour mobility | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | - |
| Micro-credit/Promote/fund self-employment | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | - |
| Other measures | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |



Table 7.

| Policy measures | Significant improvement | Improvement | No change | Deterioration | Significant deterioration |
|--|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Early intervention and activation measures (outreach strategies etc) | | X | | | |
| Apprenticeship/vocational training | | X | | | |
| Training in basic skills and competences | X | | | | |
| Second chance education programmes | | X | | | |
| Family and child benefits | | | | X | |
| Early childhood care | | | | X | |
| Policy measures related to housing | | | | | X |
| Minimum income schemes | | | | X | |
| Subsistence benefits | | | X | | |
| Promotion of labour mobility | | | X | | |
| Other measures (please specify) | - | - | - | - | - |

Comments about the table 7

The case of Greece presents certain particularities. In some cases of the new policy measures led to the introduction of new legislation and to an increase in the provisions. However the influence of other factors, the economic limitations and the fragmentation of the institutions implementing the projects often pose obstacles. In spite of the implementation of measures regarding the improvement of the educational qualifications and the professional experience of people (especially young people), the lack of a holistic approach regarding the future development strategy of the country undermines the results. The sectors, where investment in skills or employment should be oriented, remain unspecified and vague. Also, labour mobility cannot be increased, because the unemployment challenges are intense in most parts of the country, whereas the wages and the working conditions are not so attractive in order to mobilise young people to move to other regions. If the country fails to formulate a detailed developmental plan that increases businesses and therefore job positions, the interventions' outcomes and the final success of the programmes will remain uncertain.



Consistency of the youth policies

Youth employment policies and universal labour market policies

The fact that unemployment has remained very high for many years led to the mobilisation of large part of employment policies that distinguish for their universal character rather than for targeting particular groups at risk, such as youth. The introduction by the EU of several initiatives targeting youth multiplied relevant policy measures in Greece, as in many other countries. Nevertheless, due to the lack of data on the evaluation of the programmes, an overview of their outcomes and achievements cannot be formulated. In general, measures that help the development of entrepreneurial initiatives can be considered to create the aspiring synergies towards the increase of jobs for youth. In terms of consistency it can be argued that the programmes do not always achieve satisfactory levels of coordination. From a different point of view, the creation of policies especially targeting youth and the mobilisation of EU and national funds exclusively for them seem to exercise a positive influence; they allow for especially designed interventions to be established and minimise the danger of contradiction or contradictory interests between them and other groups. So, the expansion of pro-youth actions would contribute to their employment better, whereas universal measures may deactivate part of their dynamism and their capacity for larger numbers of beneficiaries.

Youth employment policies vs. educational policies

Youth employment policies are greatly related to educational policies. The significant supportive role of each policy field's actions towards the actions of the other, as well as the interaction is evident. Moreover, the establishment of such an interaction is necessary and can contribute to quality opportunities and more comprehensive and effective interventions.

Many of the projects that are being implemented include two dimensions: training and work placements either in the form of an apprenticeship or (usually) in the form of a traineeship. Also, many employment policies require particular educational foundations in order to achieve better and sustainable outcomes. Interventions aspiring to support youth entrepreneurial ventures are an indicative example of such a potential synergy. In addition, the systems for the development of work-related skills or the acquisition of accredited qualifications and properly recognised certificates can increase their efficiency by investing on the coordination of these policy fields. Furthermore, the recognition of professional rights and the licensing of the occupational activities would greatly benefit from such synergies. Finally, youth employment policies may indicate the appropriate skills and competences, as well as the required reforms in the educational system in order to serve youth professional purposes and social inclusion.

It can be argued that educational policies seem to exercise greater influence on the employment status of young individuals. Better education in terms of organisation and



content may lead to innovative ideas and to positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship, may improve the quality and responsiveness of trainees and employees and increase lifelong learning.

Youth employment policies vs. other components of social policies (income policies, social assistance & social insurance)

The employment policies targeting young people try to establish positive social provisions for them by securing special benefits and wages for young unemployed and persons <25 years or by attempting to increase their participation in employment under particular job schemes, so that they have their own income and social insurance.

However, the difficult financial condition of the country limits the national resources, while the EU funding appears to be insufficient for the size of the group of young people at risk. Moreover, employment and social policies are often contradictory and divergent. In many cases they do not take into account the cost of living or the danger of making young people victims of labour abuse; the allocated remunerations for young people are very low; also, the monitoring of the working conditions and of the compensation is not effective and often leaves room for employers to take advantage of placement schemes and to use young trainees in positions for permanent employers, without keeping them at the company when the project (and the funding) reaches the end³⁶.

The coordination of youth employment policies; educational policies; universal labour market policies; social policies.

The main motive of coordination of all these different policy fields is the financing dimension of employment, education/training and social interventions. Mainly there is coordination at administrative and financing level. There is great fragmentation of the actors who generate these policies (different ministries, PES, regional authorities), but there isn't a unique central authority to document the actions, to monitor, to collect aggregate data, to evaluate, to offer information to or about them, etc.

In several legislative and administrative documents there are specific instructions for coordination among different institutions, authorities and stakeholders. However, the extent to which such a coordination is actually succeeded and the accomplished objectives remain largely unknown.

Towards the synergy to improve employment and social inclusion of young people

It cannot be doubted that these different policy fields would greatly benefit by the development of coordination and synergies among them. Universal labour market policies can contribute to the establishment of distinguished actions for other age groups and for young people in particular.

³⁶ Such dangers are mentioned in both the interviews of young people for EXCEPT WP3 and in those of the INE/GSEE evaluation report (2016).



Education policies seem to play the most important role as they can secure the necessary qualifications and thus enhance the prospects of young people in employment, as well as in social activation, citizenship and volunteerism activities.

In addition, if some of the measures prove successful, the new entrepreneurs will be more willing to recruit participants in similar programmes.

Major changes, reforms or policy innovations

In general, most of the interventions focus on education/training or work placement opportunities and do not directly aim at the quality of jobs available to young people. However, it can be argued that there are measures that indirectly incorporate such aims. New legislation has been introduced, which promotes apprenticeship and traineeship schemes according to a structured process. The participants are encouraged by provisions that upgrade the level of their certificate in the NQF and secure higher level of qualifications for them, while there is a serious attempt for a national database to include potential employers for cooperation.

In addition, incentives for employers to keep the trainee for 12 months after the conclusion of the traineeship are promoted by several programmes in order to facilitate the incorporation of young individuals in the work environment and increase their prospects for a permanent position.

In any case, the positive developments in the Greek economy would be the strongest change and a motivational factor towards this direction.



Estimation of effectiveness of policy measures

The dominant causes of youth unemployment and social exclusion

Unemployment and social exclusion are the most intense and complex challenges experienced by young people in modern Greece. In most cases, social exclusion results from the difficulty of young individuals to integrate in the labour market. They become trapped in a situation that gradually marginalises them and leads to their social exclusion and personal deactivation (Sen, 1997; Wisman, 2010).

Such a situation is the result of different causal factors.

- **Lack of adequate numbers of jobs in the Greek economy.** Since the beginning of the crisis the levels of consumption have fallen significantly and the companies' financial turnover decreased, thus leading to limited investments. As a result, thousands of enterprises ceased their activities, while others were forced to reduce their personnel in order to confront the difficult circumstances and to survive. Young people, who had already been experiencing difficulties in their transition to the labour market, found themselves in a situation where very few jobs were available for them. Moreover, they are often obliged either to take up a job that is subsidised by the state and usually is not permanent, or to accept unfavourable working conditions. In addition, the lack of jobs due to the limited economic activity often results into young people being employed in jobs that require lower qualifications or even in unskilled jobs as a means of remaining in the labour market and coping with the needs of everyday life.
- **Serious skill mismatches.** On one hand, the education system offers training in different fields and early school leaving is low in the country. However, it is not always successful in establishing skills and competences that are relevant to the market demands. For this reason –and in combination with the broader labour market conditions– over-education is a quite common phenomenon. Moreover, a lot of young people remain in education longer and pursue higher educational qualifications in an effort to improve their attractiveness to employers and to become more competitive in a very unfavourable labour market for them. This does not always ensure that they receive the type, quantity and quality of competences that are appropriate in the modern labour market³⁷.
- **Limited participation in VET.** The limited participation in VET results into low-skilled or unskilled individuals, who form a poorly qualified workforce, and into

³⁷ It would be useful to take under consideration the “brain drain” phenomenon, which, among others, results into the deployment of the skills of emigrating Greeks by other economic centres.



limitations in the dynamism of the national economy. The VET programmes are not attractive due to neglected infrastructures, outdated curricula, uncertainty about their actual outcomes in the real labour market. Also, the mindset in the Greek society shows preference for tertiary education and white collar jobs and not for technical professions, and reduces the interest in VET. The lack of jobs since the crisis aggravates such attitudes.

- **Labour market deficiencies.** Beside the unwillingness of employers to create new jobs, there is lack of a holistic approach for the development of a system for work placements for youth. Such a system should include provisions for the establishment of apprenticeship and traineeships schemes for young people that would potentially lead to a permanent job, for the creation of a system of incentives for employers to proactively participate in such projects (financial and tax benefits, special training for them to become trainers and mentors of young people, etc.), and for the encouragement of young people to participate by offering a relatively satisfying package of guaranteed social security and remunerations. Furthermore, labour market rigidities and over-regulation make the situation even more complex.
- **Limitations in preschool education** hinder young parents, especially women, from seeking for employment. Moreover, the *absence of benefits* and the *low remunerations* often create more difficulties and discourage them from undertaking a job and oblige them to stay at home, because they cannot pay private preschool infrastructures.

Individual and structural causes of youth unemployment

The causes of youth unemployment are mainly structural and not individual. A number of interrelated factors undermine young people's efforts to enter employment; the lack of quality jobs (as well as of jobs in general); the unwillingness of employers to proceed to the recruitment of new personnel (especially of young age) because of the market over-regulation and the limited youth prospects; the serious skills mismatches between the education/training programmes and the actual labour market needs; the increase of flexible working arrangements; the lack of previous working experience; the unavailability of relevant apprenticeship/traineeship schemes. Moreover, the unfavourable conditions in the economic environment, the limited funding sources (i.e. personal/family resources, bank loans, access to EU funding) and the uncertainty regarding their ability to promote a new product or service in the particular market or to receive guidance and support in order to develop an extrovert orientation, usually discourage young individuals from undertaking their own venture.

Adequacy of ALMP intervention

In general, the policy interventions focus on confronting the primary causes of youth unemployment. The ones that are currently being implemented mainly attempt to offer education and training opportunities to young people in order to help them improve



their competences and to acquire certified qualifications. Some of the training programmes may include a period of working experience in enterprises. The participants receive remuneration for the training period. Some of the programmes even allow them to choose the training provider themselves by using a voucher that is given to them by the state. Also, their eligibility is determined by particular criteria which target specific risk groups, although not with an intense focus.

Similarly, the promotion of youth entrepreneurship aspires to create the appropriate conditions for young people to establish their own ventures. The most recent schemes tend to focus on the innovative dimensions of an enterprise, whereas in other cases they try to encourage ventures in the social economy. In this way, young people may increase their probability to escape the danger of unemployment and to create new jobs for their peers.

Support for unemployed young people

The policy initiatives in Greece attempt to confront the existing barriers for youth employment and use EU funds and previous policy experience quite successfully and within the country's contractual obligations. Nevertheless, certain gaps seem to exist and some of them are highlighted in interviews of young people (Athanasiaides, Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, Figgou, Flouli, & Sourvinou, 2017).

First of all, there is significant lack of positions for apprenticeships and traineeships for young people that would enable them to acquire working experience. The lack of a positive mindset regarding such institutions among employers and the young people themselves aggravates the situation, as both groups seem unprepared and often unwilling to participate and regard their outcomes with skepticism. In addition, the creation of an institutional framework on such schemes was not followed by immediate action; on the contrary, its implementation has started with a few years delay. Many of the Greek young individuals who were interviewed by EXCEPT researchers mentioned the importance of having working experience in the recruitment processes. They also referred to their determination and to their efforts to acquire such experience, which often lead them to accept unfavourable working conditions or even to work without being paid.

Secondly, the use of vouchers does not include provisions for the continuation of employment after the conclusion of the training period. For this reason, often young people consider such projects unsuccessful and regard them more as opportunities for the state to increase the absorption of EU funding and less as a mechanism to help youth to have access to more permanent placements and to sustainable employment solutions.

Thirdly, one can observe that to some degree there is lack of coordination among the different implementation actors, either state and regional authorities or private sector benefactors especially as regards the content of the interventions and the accumulation of outcomes. In some cases projects seem to be ill-prepared and more focusing on



using the EU funding and less to a comprehensive approach of employment creation.

In addition, beside the unavailability of sufficient work experience positions and the limited provisions for the continuation of employment after the conclusion of the training, the difficulty in establishing common assessment processes and instruments and in diffusing the results constitute additional gaps.

Finally, the delays in the modernisation of public employment services –mainly in the fields of counselling and guidance, job search assistance, job offering and interaction with the labour market– and the small number of personnel in contrast to the large numbers of young people in need of these services introduce additional hurdles in tackling the challenges.

Approach to active involvement of the youth into designing policies

The various groups of young individuals who are targeted by the measures do not participate in the process of designing, delivering and developing policies and interventions regarding the improvement of their employment prospects. It is possible for them to express their opinion through their participation in youth associations, although reliable data about such interventions are not available. It must also be highlighted that the expression of their opinion through the internal evaluation of the projects usually remains unknown and unexploited, and future policies cannot be clearly redefined. Consequently, young people appear in their interviews discouraged by the inability of the implemented policies to tackle the deeper causes of their employment deficiencies and to focus on ensuring better future prospects (Athanasiaades, Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, Figgou, Flouli, & Sourvinou, 2017).

Strengths and weaknesses in approach to tackling youth employment

- Strengths

The role of the family is very important, because families in Greece are very supportive and positive as regards the participation of young individuals in projects (employment or education/training related) that may enhance their opportunities.

Also, young people are proactive and show great determination to take advantage of such opportunities, especially when they concern activities that strengthen their educational qualifications.

- Weaknesses

It is very difficult to create a full overview of youth policies in the country due to the extended fragmentation of the authorities and of the programmes related to them (Giannaki, 2014).

The public employment services present several organisational deficiencies, which hinder them from having a complete overview of the situation of young people and of the groups at risk. Moreover, they do not have the ability to easily locate and communicate with them when they intend to mobilise their participation. In addition,



there is lack of interaction with employers, in order to encourage their involvement in pro-youth interventions at all stages of the process (planning, financial support, implementation, evaluation) and to offer them adequate guidance regarding their engagement.

Employers, on the other hand, are not willing to be involved in pro-youth projects and lack a mindset that would incite their interest in offering professional opportunities to young people.

In addition, in several cases many employers place trainees in permanent job positions, thus intercepting their training and limiting the actual benefits from the practical experience programmes. Of course, the lack of a system that would create concrete and effective incentives for employers to offer more work placements or permanent job positions has a negative influence on the opportunities for young people.

Also, to a large extent many of the promoted interventions do not appear to be targeting the actual prospects of youth employment by introducing actions with a long-term vision. On the contrary, they remain mainly focused on offering short-term interventions, which cannot contribute to more consistent and sustainable solutions.

Finally, the lack of assessment instruments is an important weakness. Such tools would help to the monitoring of activities and to the introduction of corrective interventions timely in order to secure positive outcomes.

Lessons learned

- Bad practices

The lack of organised and large scale assessment processes constitutes a bad practice of the Greek youth employment policies. Without evaluation the outcomes cannot be defined with accuracy and the projects cannot undergo the necessary transformations and reforms in order to address the challenges and to become more effective.

- Good practices

The implementation of voucher schemes –which combine periods of training and traineeship– could be very effective in environments where the ability to offer job positions to young people after the end of the projects is already secured. Young individuals are able to acquire new skills and work experience in enterprises and, thus, to pursue work opportunities easily avoiding the danger of skills erosion and without experiencing periods of inactivity. It should also be taken into consideration that, during the period of voucher schemes, young individuals remain active, interact with the labour market and continue to expand their professional networks further, facts which help them maintain their dynamics regarding employment. Greek interviewees of the EXCEPT project have recognised the positive aspects of voucher programmes; nevertheless, they underlined the fact that the programme is not capable of influencing



their transition to permanent jobs positively.

Recommendations

The confrontation of the problems faced by youth in Greece under the current unfavourable circumstances is very challenging, yet essential. There are many interventions that would prove useful towards such an aim.

First of all, broader action has to be undertaken for the definition of a national strategy that would indicate which particular fields of the economy should develop and would determine the share of youth in such a plan.

Also, the projects have to be evaluated at all stages of implementation according to a fully developed, transparent and credible system of assessment. Moreover, the development of more and better positions for apprentices and trainees would improve the qualitative characteristics of the projects and the competences of the future workforce. The cooperation and the interaction between education/training and the business world should be a main component of youth employment policies, because they constitute the only way to formulate projects that cultivate skills matching the labour market needs without ignoring the social qualities and the transferable competences that shape the human personality. Furthermore, the coordination of both fields can build strong foundations for the development of systems that will be able to recognise and accumulate the outcomes of the programmes and to define them as results of lifelong learning.

Finally, the establishment of realistic incentives addressed both to employers (or other stakeholders) and to young people and encouraging their proactive engagement would enhance the dynamics of the promoted policies.

Further opportunities to support national policies through international cooperation

Certain areas of policy appear to incorporate added value for youth prospects. First of all, it is very important to develop the entrepreneurial education at different levels of the education and training system with a long-term vision and with the support and guidance of enterprises, employers' and youth associations or NGOs with similar interests. In addition, an increase in investment in VET and lifelong learning not only would make them more attractive and effective in skills development, but would also create stronger links between them and would achieve better coordination of their content, methodology and services. Moreover, incentives for the creation of bigger numbers of quality work placements would ensure the involvement of more stakeholders and the delivering of more programs. An additional parameter is the ability to offer more inclusive schemes, so that targeted groups at risk can participate as beneficiaries to a larger extent. Finally, the coordination of all actions under a single national authority would allow for the establishment of better monitoring and the creation of an online and constantly updated database with useful information for



policy-makers and researchers, while it would falso acilitate the exchange of suggestions, practices and expertise.



References

- Athanasiaides, C., Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, V. Figgou, L., Flouli, A. & Sourvinou, M. (2017). Young adults in insecure labour market positions in Greece – The results from a qualitative study, EXCEPT Working Papers, WP No 22. Tallinn University, Tallinn. <http://www.except-project.eu/working-papers/>
- Bitzenis, A., & Vlachos, V.A. (2015). The fight against the shadow economy as an exit from the Greek sovereign debt crisis. In A. Bitzenis, N. Karagiannis, & J. Marangos, (Eds), *Europe in Crisis: Problems, Challenges, and Alternative Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cedefop, (2010a). *Skill supply and demand in Europe: medium-term forecast up to 2020*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Cedefop, (2010b). *The skill matching challenge. Analysing skill mismatch and policy implications*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Cedefop, (2010c). Skill mismatch in Europe. Briefing note (June). Available at <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/el/publications-and-resources/publications/9023>
- Cedefop, (2014). Skill mismatch: appearances are deceptive. Briefing note (March). Available at <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/el/publications-and-resources/briefing-notes>
- Cedefop, (2014b). *Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 130 terms. 2nd edition*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Central Bank of Greece, (2016). *Report of the Governor for the year 2015*. Athens: Bank of Greece-Eurosystem.
- Council of the European Union (2014). Council recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships. Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs. Available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/141424.pdf.
- Dimoulas, K., & Michalopoulou, K. (2008). Active labour market policies. The case of the comprehensive interventions in the prefectures of Arta, Thesprotia, Preveza, Larissa and Fthiotida. *Studies*, 28. Athens: INE/GSEE-ADEDY.
- ELSTAT, (n.d.). Greece in figures, July-September 2015 and July-September 2015. Available at http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/301069/GreeceInFigures_2015Q3_EN.pdf
- Eurofound, (2012). *NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*. Dublin/Luxembourg: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- Eurofound, (2014). *Mapping youth transitions in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.



Eurofound, (2015). Sixth European Working Conditions Survey 2015. Available at <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/data-visualisation/sixth-european-working-conditions-survey-2015>.

Eurostat, (2013). *Labour market policy statistics: Methodology 2013*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

General Secretariat for Youth/GSY, (2012). National report for youth. General Secretariat for Youth. Available at www.neagenia.gr/appdata/documents/book-eng.pdf.

Giannaki, D. (2014). Youth work in Greece: a historical overview. In M. Taru, F. Coussée & H. Williamson, (Eds.), *The history of youth work in Europe. Relevance for today's youth work policy, Volume 4*. (pp. 91-106). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

INE/GSEE, (2016). Evaluation report: Evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative interventions. http://www.edulll.gr/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/PARADOTEO_B_INE_GSEE-1.pdf.

International Labour Organization (ILO), (2012). *Eurozone job crisis. Trends and policy responses. Studies on growth with equity*. ILO/International Institute for Labour Studies. Geneva: ILO Publications.

International Labour Organization (ILO), (2013). Youth guarantees: a response to the youth employment crisis. Employment Policy Brief. Available at http://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_209468/lang--en/index.htm

International Labour Organization (ILO), (2014). *Skills mismatch in Europe. Statistics Brief*. International Labour Office, Department of Statistics. Geneva: ILO.

International Labour Organization/ILO, (2014). *Skills mismatch in Europe. Statistics Brief*. Geneva: ILO.

Karasavoglou, A. (2002). *The role of migration in the European labour market. The case of Greece. Migrants and Migration – Economic, political and social aspects*. Athens: Patakis.

Lolos, S. (2009). The effect of EU Structural Funds on regional growth: Assessing the evidence from Greece, 1990-2005. *Economic Change and Restructuring*, 42 (3), 211-228.

Maroukis, T. (2012). The number of irregular migrants in Greece at the end of 2010 and 2011. ELIAMEP Briefing Notes 21/2012. Available at http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Briefing-Notes_21_June-2012_Thanos-Maroukis.pdf.

Matsaganis, M. (2013). *The Greek Crisis: Social Impact and Policy Responses*. Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

McGowan, M. A., & Andrews, D. (2015). Skill mismatch and public policy in OECD



countries (Working Papers No 1210). OECD/Economics Department: OECD Publications.

Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, (2016). Flows of salaried employment in the private sector. Information System Ergani

Mitrakos, T., & Nikolitsa, D. (2006). The duration of unemployment in Greece: developments and characteristics. *Central Bank of Greece Economic Bulletin*, 27, 7-46.

Pelletier, B. (2011). L'Europe en crise e.t la fuite des cerveaux. *Gestion des Risques Interculturels*. Available at <http://gestion-des-risques-interculturels.com/pays/europe/italie-pays-2/leurope-en-crise-et-la-fuite-des-cerveaux/>.

Petkovic, S., & Williamson, H. (2015). *Youth policy in Greece*. Council of Europe *international review*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Sen, A. (1997). Inequality, unemployment and contemporary Europe. *International Labour Review*, 136 (2), 155-172.

Wisman, J. D. (2010). The moral imperative and social rationality of government-guaranteed employment and reskilling. *Review of Social Economy*, 68 (1), 35-67.

Worker-participation.eu (a service of ETUI). (2016). Map of European Industrial relations (Greece): Available at <http://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Greece>.