



INVOLVE PROJECT:

DESK RESEARCH GREECE REPORT



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List of abbreviations

CVT: Continuing Vocational Training
DEKRA Academy: German Motor Vehicle Inspection Association
ECVET: European Credit system for Vocational Education & Training
EOPPEP: National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance
EPAL: Vocational High School / Professional Lyceum
EPAS: Vocational Educational Schools
EQAVET: European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EQF: European Qualifications Framework
ESEE: Hellenic Confederation of trade and Entrepreneurship
ESEKAAD: National Council for Education and Human Resources Development
ESF: European Social Fund
ESOM: National Coordinating Body for Apprenticeship
ESYP: National Council of Education
GSEE: General Confederation of Workers of Greece
GSEVEE: Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants
GSLLL: General Secretariat for lifelong learning
IEK: Vocational Training Institutes
IEP: Institute of Educational Policy
ILO: International Labour Organization
IVET: Initial Vocational Education and Training
KEE: Central Scientific Committee
KEEE: Central Union of Chambers of Greece
KPA: Public Employment Services
KSEK: Central Council of Vocational Education and Training
NHRF: National Institute for Work and Human Resources
NILHR: National Institute of Labour and Human Resources
OAED: Greek Manpower Organization
PSEK: Pilot Schools for Vocational Training
SEK: Secondary Vocational Education Schools
SETE: Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises
SEV: Hellenic Federation of Enterprises
SSPAE: Connection Council with Production and Labour Market
TCR: Thematic Country Review
VET: Vocational Education and Training



Introduction

Apprenticeship in Greece was established by legislative Decree 3971/1959 and is based on the German dual learning system which combines classroom education with paid practical work in a business. Apprenticeship programmes¹ are mostly run by the Greek Manpower Organization (OAED) under the Ministry of Labour. OAED is the public agency that has been implementing the apprenticeship system since 1952 and operates a total of 51 Vocational Educational Schools (EPAS), which have an average annual intake of 4.500-5.000 students, depending on the relevant annual announcement.

Apprenticeship is not a new educational methodology for Greece, as it has joined the level of upper secondary education since the 1950s, but in recent years due to the emphasis given to this issue by the policies of the European Union has a primary place in developments of Vocational Education and training policy in Greece. The 2016 National Strategic Framework for the upgrading of Vocational Education and Training (VET), including apprenticeship (hereinafter referred to as the VET 2016 strategy), includes the gradual introduction of new apprenticeship programmes, alongside the existing programme offered by the OAED. As a result of the above developments, the apprenticeship system in Greece has been expanded and includes the following:

- The programme of EPAS operated by OAED.
- The "Post-Graduate year-apprenticeship class" of EPAL (Vocational High Schools) run by the Ministry of Education
- The apprenticeship programme of Vocational Training Institutes (IEK).

As Cedefop (2020: 10) states already before 2015, work-based learning was in place in initial VET in Greece, both at secondary and post-secondary levels. In secondary VET, forms of work-based training were offered in secondary vocational education schools (SEK), in EPAL programmes, and in EPAS schools. SEK schools², established on the ground of the 2010 Lifelong Learning Act but were activated with the law N.4186 of 2013, offered programmes combining school-based training (first two years) and workbased training (third year). Further details on the current dual VET systems programmes in Greece can be found in Section **§Σφάλμα! Το αρχείο προέλευσης της αναφοράς δεν βρέθηκε..**

At this point, it should be made a necessary clarification. Dual VET in Greece constitutes only a small part of VET programmes (see chapter 3.4), as well as, a small part of in-company training programmes in general. As far as VET is concerned, only a small proportion of students

¹ Wherever is mentioned "apprenticeship programmes" or "apprenticeship system" in Greece we are referring to the three existing programmes namely EPAL (Vocational High Schools), EPAS (Vocational Educational Schools) and IEK (apprenticeship programme of Vocational Training Institutes).

² SEK programmes were discontinued in 2016 and are to be phased out in 2019.



participates in an apprenticeship programme. In addition, a similar trend is also evident when referring to in-company training, given that a large number of in-company programmes are evident, such as non-paid traineeship (e.g. universities) or programmes implemented under the framework of active labour market policies (e.g. reskilling).

1. State of the art of scientific literature on dual VET systems

During the last decade the debate on apprenticeship in Greece is getting more and more attention. Several bodies (national and transnational), social partners and researchers are trying to deal with the topic of apprenticeship covering issues like quality, regulation, institutional framework, evaluation, modernization, adaptation, train of trainers etc.

Apart from the Ministry of Education and Religions, which is the main regulatory body, the more active players in the ongoing debate for the apprenticeship in Greece are the social partners like GSEVEE (Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants) and GSEE (General Confederation of Workers of Greece), the OAED and Cedefop. In the next pages we will try to emphasize on the most important issues raised by the debate.

1.1. Main problems and topics in the field of apprenticeship in Greece

According to Cedefop (2017a, p. 57) at the beginning of 2015, the proportion of upper secondary learners enrolled in VET programmes in Greece was below the EU average: 31.5% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU. 10.5% of upper secondary initial vocational education and training (IVET) learners were following work-based programmes in 2014, against 34% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 57). The employment rate of recent upper secondary graduates was also low: 38.8% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015) compared to 70.8% in the EU; for VET graduates only, the rate was 37.5% in 2015 (European Commission, 2015), compared to the EU average of 73%. Adult participation in lifelong learning was low too: 3.3% in 2015 compared to 10.7% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 57).

VET in the country was faced with a lack of attractiveness (Cedefop, 2014, pp. 17-20) and the challenges of increasing participation, involving employers, increasing the labour market relevance of programmes, developing quality assurance and setting up information systems to guide the development of provision. Steps were being taken to address the issues. The 2013 Secondary Education Act introduced an optional final apprenticeship year for learners in formal upper secondary VET schools (EPAL), leading to a higher level of qualifications (European qualifications framework – EQF level 5). The apprenticeship scheme is not included in the ISCED 2011 mapping since it was finally regulated and implemented in 2016. A new type of VET school, SEK, had just been introduced outside the formal education system, offering three-year initial VET programmes (including one year of apprenticeship) to people having



completed compulsory education. European Social Fund (ESF) funded internship programme, targeted at supporting internships of graduates from post-secondary non-tertiary VET (IEK institutes), was being carried out. On the adult side, a 2013-15 lifelong learning programme had been adopted in 2013, paving the way for actions to increase the provision of adult education and better address the needs of priority target groups.

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Ministry of Education, were to:

- (a) revise and reorganise VET in response to current socioeconomic challenges;
- (b) make VET more attractive, of better quality, and viable despite severe socioeconomic restraints.

One of the main characteristics of Greek society is the strong demand for comprehensive education and university studies. This is reflected in the social stereotypes that developed after the Second World War and have affected the attractiveness of VET in Greek society, which has resulted in the adoption of piecemeal policies regarding vocational education and apprenticeship policies. In the last 25 years in the EU, efforts have been made at policy level to modernize VET curricula, teaching and training methods and to improve the transparency of its learning outcomes, so as to make it recognizable between different education systems (Gordon, 2015), and to be chosen by young people and recognized by society as an alternative attractive educational route (Athanasiadis & Zarifis, 2018). Tchibozo (2009) states that attractiveness means that VET is of interest to people: they are knowledgeable about it, have curiosity about it, see it as part of the educational landscape and finally its graduates are prestigious. In a more demanding sense, it is the tendency for people to see the vocational path as a way to reach their personal goals or as a source of recruits for employers. The improvement of the attractiveness of VET can be achieved by adopting and imbedding into its policies and curricula, its stakeholders' views and priorities. Such priorities may increase VET attractiveness and are linked with the quality, the transparency, the accessibility and the provision of VET programmes (Leney et al., 2004). In Greece, according to Paidousi (2016), attractiveness of vocational education is interpreted through the perceptions of society regarding the negative school performance of students who are attending vocational schools and the low educational level of their families. Furthermore, attractiveness is altered from the limited opportunities for social mobility and the gender of the students.

1.2. Main approaches, methods and outcomes of research on dual VET in Greece

The most extensive research for apprenticeship in Greece has been conducted by Cedefop in 2018 through the Thematic Country Review (TCR) methodology which is based on a participatory, evolving and iterative approach. One of the objectives of TCR is to gain in-depth knowledge and a better understanding of the situations in the countries concerned as well as the different historical, contemporary and national approaches to apprenticeship. The



ultimate aim is to gather information that will help the countries concerned and help them reflect on their practices, as well as implement reforms for improved apprenticeship programmes (Cedefop, 2018).

The TCR methodology is based on three main axes (Cedefop, 2018):

1. Use of a common analytical framework.
2. A participatory, inclusive, collaborative approach combined with political learning.
3. An evolving and iterative approach.

According to this research “the extensive policy developments that took place in 2013-16 introduced many provisions that set about raising quality while extending apprenticeship provision through new schemes. Although they provide a good starting point for national stakeholders to put the system into practice, still some key challenges remain” (Cedefop, 2018: 18). Specifically, regarding Governance, new bodies with competence on apprenticeship were introduced, alongside existing institutions and labour market actors. Their mandates, roles, responsibilities, and modus operandi are not clearly defined, while the two national technical bodies with competence on apprenticeship seem to have overlapping roles. The role of social partners and chambers is still not thoroughly defined: it is also too weak given that apprenticeship requires shared responsibility between education and labour market and direct engagement of companies. The governance framework of the new apprenticeship system is not complete; social partners and chambers are not part of the national and the technical committees for VET/apprenticeships, two of the new national-level bodies introduced by the recent reforms (Cedefop, 2018: 18).

Regarding the responsiveness (of the apprenticeship system) to the labour market Cedefop claims that the apprenticeship offer is not fully aligned with labour market needs (Cedefop, 2018: 19). As far as participation and support of companies regards Cedefop states that “lack of information among companies about apprenticeships is a widely acknowledged challenge for the system” (Cedefop, 2018: 19). Finally, Cedefop identifies some other challenges for the future system which are related to specific schemes. For instance, according to Cedefop (2018: 20) a prominent weakness of the EPAS scheme is the limited progression opportunities for EPAS graduates, who are not entitled to move into higher education. Several stakeholders have raised concerns over the one school year duration of the EPAL scheme. Concerns over apprenticeship provision by IEK include whether this will be a similar scheme or programme to EPAS and EPAL. While the latter two are designed to be delivered wholly in systematic alternance between school and company, IEK seems to take the form of a semester of alternance between school and the company (out of the five semesters of a programme) where the learner signs a contract with the company for this period.

Apart from Cedefop several researchers have dealt with apprenticeship issue on Greece (mainly Greek researchers) but on minor scale, like Varvara Lalioti who published a study on



2019 regarding “Training-Related Dimensions of Apprenticeship Programmes in Crisis-Ridden Greece”. The study draws on the findings of a large-scale, mostly qualitative research project (carried out between December 2015 and March 2017), which aimed at reviewing the Greek apprenticeship system and gathered, inter alia, the views of 150 individuals representing different groups of stakeholders. It is argued that, despite positive features, the training offered in Greek apprenticeships still suffers from severe shortcomings, which highlight the need for urgent reform and restructuring. Also in 2019 International Labour Organization (ILO) organized the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV) Roundtable on Apprenticeships in which several key stakeholders exchange their views on key apprenticeship issues and the main outcome was that the key to success is creating an ecosystem in which skilling programs are aligned with actual labour market demands.

1.3. Governance

According to Cedefop (2018: 18) “as a result of the 2013-16 policy developments, new bodies with competence on apprenticeship were introduced, alongside existing institutions and labour market actors. Their mandates, roles, responsibilities, and modus operandi are not clearly defined, while the two national technical bodies³ with competence on apprenticeship seem to have overlapping roles. The roles and responsibilities of the relevant national institutions and labour market actors need also to be revised and/or confirmed, and the links between these bodies, institutions and actors defined horizontally (on the same level: national, regional, local) and across level (how the national level governance structures link to the regional and local level ones)”.

The role of social partners and chambers is still not thoroughly defined: it is also too weak given that apprenticeship requires shared responsibility between education and labour market and direct engagement of companies. The governance framework of the new apprenticeship system is not complete; social partners and chambers are not part of the national and the technical committees for VET/apprenticeships, two of the new national-level bodies introduced by the recent reforms. The members of the steering group of Cedefop’s study seem to agree that governance issues are among the most pressing challenges for the reformed apprenticeship system. A key challenge for the country is to establish a governance framework that systematises dialogue, shares responsibilities, promotes mutual trust, balances divergent interests and allows for longer term planning. Stakeholders need to think and act in terms of a single apprenticeship system and a single governance structure.

³ ESOM (National Coordinating Body of Apprenticeship) and ESEKAAD (National Council for Education and Human Resources Development)



2. Policy Debates

2.1 Policy debate

Since 2016, the Greek education ministry has been conducting a major reform of the VET system, taking into account challenges raised by the financial crisis, such as:

- high unemployment rates;
- high NEETs (people not in employment, education or training) rates (24.2% in 2017);
- unexpected influx of refugees halted on Greek territory (requiring training and education programmes, which are currently being designed and implemented);
- ageing population;
- increased brain drain (highly qualified and mostly young people).

This socioeconomic landscape reflects enduring deficiencies in adapting to change and more specifically in equipping people in Greece with the necessary job specific skills that improve employability and well-being prospects.

To counteract these challenges, the education ministry has undertaken the following key actions:

- implementing a coherent national strategic framework for upgrading VET and apprenticeships (April 2016) aiming to promote and enhance the social role of VET, upgrade and expand apprenticeships, strengthen links between VET and the labour market, increase VET quality, and promote VET attractiveness;
- establishing (since 2016) a new structure at upper secondary vocational education programmes (EPAL) to reduce early overspecialisation by focusing more on key competences in the first year of the programme; this aids permeability between general and vocational education and allows for better allocation of the teaching staff;
- establishing (since 2016) a new pathway, a one-year apprenticeship programme at post-secondary level to offer upper secondary VET graduates the chance to acquire labour-market-relevant skills and to support them entering the labour market;
- introducing the skills diagnosis mechanism (National Labour and Human Resources Institute - EIEAD) to reduce skills mismatch and update VET curricula.

The future course of development in Greece relies on VET as a primary instrument to provide necessary skills to individuals. Apprenticeship, which is an integral part of VET, was subject to the reforms that were determined by the overall macroeconomic context, policy priorities, as well as developments that took place in this field within the EU.



In July 2013 European social partners, the European Commission and the Presidency of the Council of the European Union pledged to contribute to supply, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships in a Joint Declaration establishing the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Following that, the Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships⁴, adopted on 10 March 2014, introduced a number of principles in order to improve the quality of traineeships outside formal learning environments. According to the Copenhagen process for European cooperation on vocational education and training, the Riga Conclusions of 22 June 2015, endorsed by the Ministers in charge of vocational education and training, prioritized work-based learning, with special attention to apprenticeships, and developing quality assurance mechanisms. Furthermore, in the Communication of 10 June 2016 on A New Skills Agenda for Europe, the Commission stressed its support to social partners to take forward the results of their joint projects -for example establishing a quality framework for apprenticeships.

In response to EC recommendations, Greece adopted the law No 4186/2013 with measures to modernise and expand VET, including apprenticeships, introducing apprenticeship provision as an option at post-secondary level (NQF 5 - ISCED 3) through EPAL and vocational training institutes (IEK), that are supervised by the Ministry of Education. The law also aimed at creating a quality assurance framework for VET: setting up a monitoring mechanism to develop local partnerships to promote apprenticeships in at least six regions; gradually involving employers and private sector funding in VET; identifying future skills needs; and matching VET provision with the needs of the labour market. However, in the first years after its adoption, operationalisation and implementation of the law were very slow and partial.

In 2014, amid the increasing criticism for the reform, the government decided to postpone the abolition of OAED EPAS apprenticeship for one more year. Social partners, assessed positively the continuation of OAED EPAS apprenticeship, which is acknowledged as a good practice that has to be not only maintained but also enhanced by putting forward the development of a coherent system of social dialogue on VET (GSEE et al., 2015). Moreover, directors of OAED schools announced their opposition to the 2013 Law, by submitting their resignation, denouncing the reform as a measure that disconnects the internship from the educational process and ceases to secure the employment rights enjoyed so far by students, who are in danger of becoming a low-cost workforce⁵.

Such public intervention led to the development of the National Strategic Plan for VET putting forward the continuation of OAED EPAS Apprenticeship until 2022, the abolition of SEK, and

⁴ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014H0327\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014H0327(01)&from=EN)

⁵ https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/ekpaideysi/48018_den-ferete-piso-ti-mathiteia-feygoyme



the introduction of an optional apprenticeship year at vocational high schools (Law 4386/2016), that took place after the 2015 political change.

The 2015 national reform programme recognised the need to improve the quality and effectiveness of VET, notably through working with stakeholders, developing a well-functioning skills-forecasting mechanism and setting up a national quality assurance system. As a result the 2015 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)⁶ involved a set of key measures furthering in modernisation of VET and apprenticeships in Greece, calling for a new VET strategy that should:

- (a) introduce quality frameworks for VET and the apprenticeship system, and apprenticeship curricula;
- (b) secure apprenticeship placements via intermediary structures involving social partners (major VET partnerships);
- (c) launch two small-scale pilot projects for apprenticeships.

The 2016 supplemental MoU⁷ stated that 'By May 2016, the government will: (i) legislate the quality frameworks for VET curricula and apprenticeships; (ii) finalise and agree with the institutions the VET strategy, strengthening in particular the sections on continuous VET and securing apprenticeship placements, and (iii) deliver the modernisation and expansion of VET (key deliverable).

The provisions of the MoU were translated into key deliverables required for unlocking EU funding for VET, including apprenticeships⁸. As a result, the national strategic framework for upgrading VET and apprenticeships (VET strategy) was adopted in May 2016, (Law No 4386/2016) including measures to improve the labour market relevance of the VET system. It also aimed to increase the quality and attractiveness of VET, through establishing a national approach for its quality assurance. The VET strategy reiterated the expansion of apprenticeship through the EPAL and IEK schools, abolished schools for vocational training (SEK) programmes, and extended the EPAS programmes. It also called for enhanced cooperation among existing (EPAS) and new providers (EPAL and IEK) of apprenticeship, and stakeholders.

Under the latest European Semester⁹ assessment on Greece's progress in structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of reviews regarding

⁶ European Commission (2015). Memorandum of understanding between the European Commission acting on behalf of the European Stability Mechanism and the Hellenic Republic and the Bank of Greece.
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/01_mou_20150811_en1.pdf

⁷ European Commission (2016). Supplemental memorandum of understanding.
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/ecfin_smou_en.pdf

⁸ MoU and self-suspension clauses included in the 2014-20 Operational Programme for Human Resources

⁹ Country Report Greece 2020

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0507&from=EN>



VET and apprenticeships schemes, concluded that: (i) the development of vocational guidance services and internships or apprenticeships remains incomplete, which burdens the transition to the labour market; (ii) although attractiveness of VET still remains below of EU average, the adoption of the 2016 National Strategic Framework for the Upgrading of Vocational Education and Training and Apprenticeship improved the content and quality of teaching and apprenticeship (iii) efforts such as the nine-month apprenticeship scheme for graduates of upper secondary vocational education strengthen labour market links in vocational education and training. Overall, the “Post-Lyceum Apprenticeship Year” provides participants with better employment prospects, and has steadily increased the number of apprentices, areas of specialisation and number of schools.

In an effort to further support the institution of apprenticeship ensuring social consent, in 2018 the government launched the National Coordinating Body for Apprenticeship (ESOM), established at the Ministry of Education. ESOM was meant to be an advisory body on apprenticeships, in which social partners would participate, and could cooperate with chambers, institutes and research organizations and other bodies (Dede & Kafetzopoulou, 2019).

This development (ESOM) was in line with social partners’ request for the institution of a permanent structure of social dialogue, with the contribution of national social partners, that would promote a more productive and effective cooperation between actors actively involved in the whole process at different levels, and implementing in practice a process of co-decision which is common in most developed systems VET at pan-European level (Dede & Kafetzopoulou, 2019).

In April 2020, government submitted a roadmap for major reforms for the next four years (Greece’s National Reform Programme 2020)¹⁰, which states that "The institution of apprenticeship is being upgraded in cooperation with the chambers and the regulatory framework for the internship is being reviewed. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, a bill for apprenticeships with an emphasis on technical professions will be drafted." Following that declaration, the Ministry of Education has currently set to consultation the bill on (among others) the reform of apprenticeship that proposes the unification of all professional education structures (EPAL, IEK, etc.), establishes a National Vocational Education System, and revises the assigned NQF levels for Vocational education and training.

In addition, as stated at the National Reform Programme 2020 and based on the new strategic directions of OAED for 2020-2024 and the proposals of the European Commission (Country

¹⁰ https://oe-e.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programme-greece_el.pdf



Report), OAED interventions are oriented towards the empowerment and upgrading of Apprenticeship / Dual System.

2.2. Drivers

The Lisbon Treaty brought about a strategy for linking vocational training to economic growth and employment promotion, assisted financially by the European Social Fund (Fotopoulos et al., 2013). Since that time, many northern European countries introduced a system of apprenticeship in organizations and businesses, as a measure for tackling unemployment (especially unemployment of young people) (Fotopoulos et al., 2013). The development of an apprenticeship system requires the regulation of issues such as the recognition, transfer, accumulation and certification of qualifications, as well as educational modes for those with low educational qualifications and at risk of unemployment, poverty or social exclusion.

Germany is a pioneer in the launch of dual apprenticeship system that is broadly accepted as a good alternative career path, mainly due to the strong involvement of social partners in the design and the implementation as well as the range of the available professions (Paidousi, 2014). Dual apprenticeship system has since expanded in many other European and non-European countries such as Austria, Switzerland, France and South Korea. However, exporting a VET system cannot be easy, considering the fact that the German success case lies on the fact that it is strongly associated with the German industry and receives funds by both the federal government and German states (Euler, 2013)¹¹.

Overall, the success -and the consequent acceptance- of a system of vocational training (including the mode of apprenticeship) relies on factors like the size of the country, the structure of the national economy, the educational culture and the social value of the professions (Paidousi, 2014). In a similar manner, Cedefop (2014) identifies the following factors to be crucial in forming such a system: demographics -that indicate the economically active population and allows projections on future labour force, political and cultural framework -that defines social cohesion, economic background -that reveals sectors' dynamism, labour market and educational attainment -that allows a qualitative and quantitative assessment on the human capital.

Greece follows the same dual model of apprenticeship, varying greatly in factors that affect the special characteristics of the system design. In that sense, last decade's developments in demographics, political and cultural framework, economic background, labour market and educational attainment determined several aspects of the apprenticeship system.

¹¹ https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/BSt/Publikationen/GrauePublikationen/GP_Germanys_dual_vocational_training_system.pdf



The recent economic crisis highlighted predicaments and ways forward for Apprenticeship as an integral part of Vocational Education and Training in Greece. Apprenticeship should not act as a mechanism for “substitution” and “replacement” of employees or promoting flexible and low-paid work while at the same time should provide good prospects that should be reflected in the quality of education, earning and the shift of social perceptions on what is defined as a credible professional option.



3. Relevance of Dual VET system

3.1 Number of dual VET systems programmes in Greece: desegregated according to the existing qualification levels (secondary, postsecondary and/or tertiary education)

The dual VET system programmes in Greece include the following:

A. **Apprenticeship – Vocational Education Schools (EPAS):** OAED, which operates under the Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, is the public agency that has been implementing the apprenticeship system since 1952. The OAED operates 51 EPAS that follow the dual education system. Each year, about 10,000 students (on average) are enrolling in the EPAS Schools of OAED. The Apprenticeship EPAS are secondary education schools (ISCED 3C) that provide education for two school years (4 semesters), during which students attend theoretical and laboratory courses and carry out internships in work related to their specialty. Students admitted in EPAS aged 16-23 and must have completed at least the first grade of the Upper Secondary School (Lyceum) and are not in education, employment or training. The remunerated traineeship takes place in parallel with courses in school¹². Normally traineeship is implemented for 4-6 days per week (between 24 to 28 hours within a weekly base), in private or public sector enterprises on terms specified in the relevant Apprenticeship Contract, which is concluded between learner and employer and co-signed by the director of the relevant educational structure. The enterprises participating in the programme are subsidized for their trainees. The remuneration of the apprentices amounts to 75% of the minimum wage for the unskilled worker (22,83€), i.e. 17,12 € per day of internship. Practical trainees are normally entitled to holiday and leave allowances. On completion of their studies, EPAS graduates have obtained an EPAS specialization diploma, corresponding to Level 4 of the National Qualifications Framework, as well as Level 4 of the European Qualifications Framework.

B. **The Post-Secondary ‘Apprenticeship year’ class of EPAL (Vocational Upper Secondary Schools):** By law 4386/2016, it was adopted the ‘Apprenticeship year’ class of EPAL, operating under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. EPAL apprenticeship scheme lasts for about 9 months, is optional and is not included in formal education (post-secondary non-formal level). The scheme was launched in the school year 2016-17 as a pilot project and since then it has been constantly expanding in more schools and specialties throughout the country. Students admitted in EPAL apprenticeship scheme are aged 18+ and must have completed the upper secondary education (either vocational or general). The scheme structure consists of 203 hours in the school unit and 156 days in the workplace. The apprenticeship scheme is not included in the ISCED 2011 mapping since it was

¹² Apprenticeship students, during morning hours, accomplish their in-company training, while during afternoon hours their school based theoretical and laboratory courses.



finally regulated and implemented in 2016. The rate of compensation of apprentices is set at 75% of the legal, statutory, minimum wage for unskilled workers, which amounts to amounts to 22,83€, i.e 17,12€ for individuals under 25 years, and to 26,18€ i.e 19,64€ for those over 25 years. The subsidy for the under 25 years is 11€ per day of work and for those the over 25 years 14€ per day of work respectively. Upon completion of the Post-Secondary 'Apprenticeship year' class of EPAL and having successfully passed the accreditation exams carried out by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), students earn a Vocational Specialization Diploma corresponding to Level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework (post-secondary education).

C. The apprenticeship programme of Vocational Training Institutes (IEK):.

Apprenticeship in Vocational Training Institutes (also operated under the framework of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs), which is an option in post-secondary initial vocational training programmes, consists of two sections: "apprenticeship programme in I.E.K." and "workplace Apprenticeship Programme". The total duration is 960 hours and is divided into 192 hours of training in I.E.K. units and 768 hours of apprenticeship in the workplace. Participation in IEKs' apprenticeship programme can only take place after the completion of the first four semesters of the specialty and under the precondition that the apprentice has not participate in a traineeship. The rate of compensation for apprentices under the Apprenticeship Scheme in I.E.K. " is set at seventy-five percent (75%) on the legal, statutory, minimum wage of the unskilled worker, i.e. 17,12€ for apprentices under 25 years old and 19,64€ for apprentices over 25 years old. Employers pay wages to the apprentices, however, state subsidises the amount paid by employers. In 2017, the state subsidy was set at 11€ per day (equal to 64% of daily apprentice wage). Subsidies for apprentice wages amount to 1,872€ per apprentice per year. Learners, after completion of their programme (5 semesters in total) have the possibility to receive an NQF level 5 certificate after successful participation in national exams organized by the EOPPEP. The pilot implementation of IEKs' apprenticeship programme had started during the school year 2017-2018, in a very limited number of specialties and Vocational Schools.

3.2 Proportion of dual VET systems programmes among all formal VET education programmes existing in your country and main trends since 2010 (or the first year after 2010 in which dual VET systems were institutionalised)

Table 1: Number of school units in vocational upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (2010-2018)

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
School units									
Vocational Upper Secondary Schools (EPALs)	507	495	499	499	454	399	398	398	400
<i>EPALs that operate an 'Apprenticeship year' class⁽¹⁾</i>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	u	u
Vocational Education Schools (EPASSs)	52	51	51	49	49	51	51	50	50
Other Vocational Upper Secondary Schools ⁽²⁾	57	58	58	62	59	86	30	6	6
Vocational Training Institutes (IEK)	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
TOTAL	616	604	608	610	562	536	479	454	456
% of dual VET school units⁽³⁾	8.4%	8.4%	8.4%	8.0%	8.7%	9.5%	10.6%	11.0%	11.0%

Data Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority

(1) Unknown number of school units that operate an 'Apprenticeship year' class

(2) Supervised by the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Rural Development

(3) The proportion of school units that provide apprenticeship programmes (dual VET) in Upper Secondary Education. That is Vocational Education Schools (EPASSs) operated by OAED.

u: Unavailable Data

3.3. Distribution of dual VET systems programmes across economic sectors or occupations, and main trends since 2010 (or the first year after 2010 in which dual VET systems were institutionalised)

Apprenticeship specialties for the period 2020-2021 are the following:

A. Apprenticeship – Vocational Education Schools (EPAS):

1. Beautician
2. Silversmiths
3. Bakery and Confectionery
4. General Childcare Assistant
5. General Nursing Assistants
6. Pharmacy Assistants
7. Dairy and Cheese Science and Technology



8. Graphic Arts –Printing
9. Graphic Arts - Electronic Form Design
10. Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Installers
11. Fur Processing
12. Hair dressing
13. Culinary Art
14. Hotel Business
15. Carpenters-Furniture Makers
16. Computer Systems Support Technicians
17. Gaseous Fuels Technicians (Natural Gas)
18. Automobile Electrical Technician
19. Machine Tool Technician
20. Technician of Electrical Works
21. Automobile Mechanical and Electrical Systems
22. Technician of Electronic Appliances, Installations and Informatics Units
23. Thermohydraulic and Central Heating Installations Technician
24. Metal Constructions Technician
25. Engine Vehicle Repairing Technician
26. Shipbuilding Technician
27. Administrative Employee
28. Financial Service Employee
29. Garment design
30. Horticulture and Landscape Technician
31. Watch-making

B. Post-Secondary ‘Apprenticeship year’ class of EPAL:

1. Food and beverage technology Technician
2. Tourism Employee
3. Graphic Arts
4. Telecommunication Technician
5. Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Technician
6. Medical/Biology Laboratory Assistant
7. Childcare Assistant
8. Beautician
9. Physiotherapy Assistant
10. Crop Production Technician
11. Administrative and Financial Services Employee
12. Construction and Geoinformatics Technician
13. Electrical Systems, Installations and Networks Technician
14. Vehicle Technician
15. IT Technician



16. Nursing Assistant
17. Conservation and Restoration of Art Works
18. Structural Engineering Technician
19. Computer Network Technician
20. Pharmacy Assistant
21. Hair dressing
22. Horticulture and Landscape Technician
23. Warehouse and Supply Systems Employee (Logistics)
24. Silversmith
25. Brewery Technician
26. Garment Design and Production
27. Dental Technician Assistant

C. Apprenticeship programme of Vocational Training Institutes (IEK):

1. Childcare Assistant
2. Medical Laboratory Assistant
3. Nursing Assistant
4. Physiotherapy Assistant
5. Administrative and Financial Services Employee
6. Financial Accounting Employee – Tax Office Employee
7. Telecom Network Technician
8. IT Technician
9. Computer Applications Technicians (Multimedia / Web Designer-Developer / Video Games)

3.4. Number and proportion of students under dual VET systems programmes among all persons participating in formal VET education, and main trends since 2010 (or the first year after 2010 in which dual VET systems were institutionalised)

Table 2: Number of students in vocational upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (2010-2018)

Number of students	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Vocational Upper Secondary Schools (EPAL)	93,632	97,778	105,337	108,620	94,855	88,595	88,901	88,695	88,312
'Apprenticeship year' class in EPAL ^(b)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	1,175	3,452
Vocational Education Schools (EPAS)	13,607	12,224	11,747	11,370	11,660	10,654	9,578	9,597	8,880
Other Vocational Upper Secondary Schools ⁽¹⁾	3,532	3,656	3,924	3,999	3,402	2,512	600	276	260
IEK	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	78,443	82,860
of which in apprenticeship programmes ⁽³⁾	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
TOTAL	110,771	113,658	121,008	123,989	109,917	101,761	99,079	178,186	183,764
% of dual VET students ⁽²⁾	12.3%	10.8%	9.7%	9.2%	10.6%	10.5%	9.7%	6.0%	6.7%

Data Source: a) Hellenic Statistical Authority

b) Greek Ministry of Education - Diofantos

(1) Supervised by the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Rural Development

(2) The proportion of students under dual VET systems programmes among all students participating in VET upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education

(3) The IEK apprenticeship offered by Institutes for Vocational Training (IEK) was piloted in 2018 for the first time, under Law 4386/2016.

u: Unavailable Data

In 2017-18 there were approximately 184,000 students in vocational upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (EPAL, EPAS and IEK of public and private sector). The apprentices (students under dual VET programmes) were 12,332, which accounts for 6.7% of all students in vocational upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education. Students in the Post-Secondary 'Apprenticeship year' class of EPAL (Vocational Upper Secondary Schools) have been almost tripled in the second year of implementation of the scheme and account for the 1/3 of the dual VET students. While the number of students in Apprenticeship – EPAS has been declining since 2010 (total rate of change -34,7%).

Given the recent introduction of the IEK apprenticeship and the still low number of enrolments, the scheme is still considered as a pilot. The apprenticeship placements of public IEKs announced for the year 2020 are 378¹³, which would account for the 3.0% of students under dual VET programmes if they were added to the 12,332 students of the most recent year with available data (2018).

¹³ <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/>



4. Main institutional and governance features of alternating VET systems and dual VET Systems

4.1. Regulatory framework and recent reforms regarding alternating VET formal education systems and dual VET systems.

A law on modernising and expanding VET was approved in August 2015. It increases private sector participation in VET. As a result, apprenticeship has since then been carried out at:

- (a) EPAS apprenticeship schools, under the supervision of the national employment service (OAED) of the Ministry of Labour. This strand is planned to be continued up until the school year 2020/21, at which point the schools' operation will be evaluated;
- (b) EPAL, the formal upper secondary VET system, within the framework of the optional apprenticeship class year, combining theoretical and laboratory/workshop sessions at school with practical training in companies and organisations. Curricula are based upon the learning outcomes approach;
- (c) the vocational programmes offered by IEK, which provide a semester of compulsory internship or apprenticeship.

According to Cedefop (2020: 12) implementation of the reform proved to be a challenge as the establishing of the regulatory basis demanded four laws/amendments, one presidential decree, eleven joint ministerial decisions and eighteen ministerial decisions. Law 4610/2019 integrated all the amendments related to apprenticeship and addressed the issue of access to tertiary education. At this point, the legislative framework regulating upper secondary VET and apprenticeship is considered complete.

Following the 2016 National Strategic Framework to upgrade VET and Apprenticeship, the above-mentioned laws and implementing provisions were published in 2016 and 2017. They regulated the EPAL apprenticeship year, the key element of the reform; set the quality framework for VET curricula and the quality framework for apprenticeships; and introduced pilot apprenticeship curricula.

The national strategic framework also provided for the governance of the new VET system, instituting:

- (a) the National Committee for VET¹⁴, responsible for the overall coordination of governance of the Greek VET system, monitoring the implementation of the reform and evaluating its

¹⁴ The National Committee for VET, operates under the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and its members are the Deputy Minister of the Ministry responsible for VET, and the General Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, the General Secretary of Life Long Learning (Ministry of Education), the General Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and finally, the General Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Development.



results. The committee is supported in its work by a Technical Committee for VET. Both committees became operational in November 2017. In its first meeting (March 2018), the national committee discussed the mapping of labour market skills needs and related policy actions; the development of a VET graduate tracking system; and the monitoring and evaluation of the reform;

(b) regional PES-based apprenticeship support teams (13), to assist the search for training places. In each public employment service centre, an apprenticeship support team, composed of teachers and trainers from public schools, was established. The team has various duties: building bridges between schools, employers, sectoral organisations and chambers; maintaining a database of apprenticeship offers and distributing the offers on demand; following up the implementation of apprenticeship contracts and mediating if necessary; reporting on an annual basis to the National Committee for VET on the implementation of apprenticeship schemes.

In 2017, the National Council of Education (ESYP) was reformed into the National Council for Education and Human Resources Development (ESEKAAD). ESEKAAD included many representatives closely involved with VET issues. Its mandate had been extended to the overall link between education (the cognitive demands of society) and the labour market. Within this framework, ESEKAAD had a major say on policies regarding skills mismatches. However, ESEKAAD was also abolished during January 2020. As mentioned above, a new independent body, ESOM, was established in February 2018. ESOM is an advisory body on apprenticeship issues, with no major influence so far in apprenticeships.

At this point, an important notification should be made. By the end of December 2020 under the law No 4763/2020, the governance system of VET and Apprenticeships was reformed. As mentioned at the Article 3 (par. b) of the law “basic principles of VET and Life Long Learning are... the direct connection with labour market through the effective participation of social partners in their scheduling”. Under this framework, **within a national level** is created the Central Council of Vocational Education and Training (KSEEEK) (Article 5). KSEEEK operates under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, with main aim the submission of proposals and recommendations to the Ministry in issues related with VET and apprenticeships. In KSEEEK besides the four General Secretaries of the responsible Ministries (two from Ministry of Education, one from the Ministry of Labour and one from the Ministry of Finance), also participates three representatives of GSEE and three representatives on behalf of the national employers’ organizations. KSEEEK also includes representatives from other institutions and organizations, such as local administration, chambers, as well as, several other state organizations. **Within a local level**, in every region of the country will operate a Connection Council with Production and Labour Market (SSPAE). In SSPAE participates representatives from each one of the three Greek apprenticeships systems, two representatives from GSEE, two representatives from employers’ organizations, as well as, representatives from local administration. Main aim of SSPAE is the provision of proposals regarding VET, with special



focus on proposing specialties to operate within a local level. SSPAE proposals are submitted to KSEK. Finally, law 4763/2020 also refers to the creation of a scientific body (Article 7), the Central Scientific Committee (KEE), with main aim to support in a scientific level, both the Ministry of Education and KSEK. Members of the body, are university professors, as well as, experts from related scientific fields and institutions. So far (February 2021), no further action has taken place regarding the operation of the aforementioned institutions.

Implementation of the new scheme is steadily scaling up. This includes:

- (a) piloting apprenticeship in electrological installations and agricultural trade (Koropi, Athens, since 1.8.2016; Central Macedonia since 1/9/2016; and Prefecture of Crete since 20.2.2017) (17);
- (b) implementing the EPAL apprenticeship scheme. The first phase covered seven specialties for 1044 apprentices in 179 school units. The accreditation of the first phase graduates took place in July 2018 with 400 graduates participating. In the second phase (autumn 2017 to February 2019), nine more specialties were added; 3 450 apprentices in 406 school units were involved (19). The 3rd phase of implementation is currently under way, involving 21 specialties and 3 700 apprentices. 48% of the placements are in the private sector. Apprentice wages have increased (daily remuneration was raised from EUR 17 to EUR 21.50);
- (c) the initiation by EOPPEP of a programme for the formal certification of VET graduates at EQF level 5;
- (d) the initiation by the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth of a curriculum for the work-based learning (WBL), part of IEK's apprenticeships.

In EPAL (the formal upper secondary VET system under the jurisdiction of the Education Ministry), the possibility of offering apprenticeship schemes was introduced in 2013 by the Secondary Education Act. EPAL apprenticeships were meant to operate with the support of the national employment service (OAED), which was mandated to assist in establishing partnerships with enterprises and finding apprenticeship places. Much older were the apprenticeship programmes offered in the framework of EPAS schools, i.e. apprenticeship schools. These programmes were part of upper secondary education, and were accessible to those that had completed compulsory education. They were two-year long, and delivered four days per week at the workplace. The school would deliver the theoretical training and would find placements at companies. As of 2010, regional career offices and a central web platform were also established to assist learners in finding training places. Apprentices received remuneration for the time spent in the workplace (70% of the minimum wage) and enjoyed social security and other benefits. Training enterprises would receive a subsidy. EPAS qualifications did not lead to higher education. EPAS programmes were under the supervision of specialized ministries, i.e. mostly the Labour Ministry (through the OAED), but also the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Health. The Education Ministry was involved in updating the curricula and in the certification process. However, the 2013 Secondary Education Act had decided the gradual termination of the EPAS apprenticeship scheme.



In post-secondary initial VET, vocational training schools (IEK) offered two and a half-year programmes including optional internships (e.g. one of the five semesters). In detail, during an IEK programme it was possible for a student to participate in a traineeship -non paid or with a very small compensation- which however did not follow basic apprenticeship requirements (e.g. apprenticeship contract, compensation, social insurance etc). The 2013 Secondary Education Act introduced the possibility to also offer apprenticeships. In 2015, the workplace component (internship or apprenticeship) became mandatory part of IEK programmes. IEK were accessible to all types of upper secondary graduates (whether from general education, EPAL, EPAS, or SEK). IEKs were labelled as part of the non-formal system in the national context, but did lead to officially recognised qualifications, upon accreditation exams (?). Although not belonging to formal education, IEK belongs to NQF 5 and their diplomas in several cases are followed by specific professional rights. Social partners were involved in the design and operation of EPAS apprenticeship training. They took part in the OAED Board and in the Board of Directors of EOPPEP (the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance). Also, the 2013 Secondary Education Act set the legal basis for reinforcing cooperation between VET schools and enterprises, in particular through involving employers in funding part of apprentices' remuneration. The entire legal framework for EPAL apprenticeship was redesigned in 2015. At the time of reporting, EPAS schools are still operating following the same lines.

4.2. Institutional arrangements for implementation and distribution of roles and functions

Efforts to modernise VET and apprenticeship provision began in September 2013 with Law No 4186/2013 on secondary education aiming at modernising VET and increasing the provision of apprenticeships. The 2016 national strategic framework for upgrading VET including apprenticeships adopted through Law No 4386/2016, reaffirmed and complemented provisions introduced since 2013.

As a result, the national strategic framework for upgrading VET and apprenticeships (VET strategy) was adopted in May 2016, through Law No 4386/2016. It includes measures to improve the labour market relevance of the VET system in close cooperation with stakeholders through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and strengthening of work-based learning provision. It also aims to increase the quality and attractiveness of VET, including through establishing a national approach for its quality assurance. On apprenticeships, the VET strategy reiterated the expansion of offer through the EPAL and IEK schools, abolished the briefly introduced schools for vocational training (SEK) programmes and extended the EPAS programmes. It also called for enhanced cooperation among existing (EPAS) and new providers (EPAL and IEK) and stakeholders (Cedefop, 2018).



The roles and responsibilities of the key players in the existing EPAS scheme are clearly defined by joint ministerial decisions. OAED is the coordination and decision-making body for the scheme at national level, responsible for (re)designing and improving the regulatory and operational framework, while the EPAS schools play a major role in the implementation of the scheme at local level. OAED central administration coordinates the provision of the scheme, with its VET department having a prominent role backed by lengthy experience and know-how. OAED runs under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour. It funds the State part of apprenticeship provision (operation of schools, teachers' wages and parts of apprentices' remuneration) through public budget and mostly through contributions of companies to its budget (in a sort of training fund). EOPPEP¹⁵ (under the Ministry of Education) is responsible for running the accreditation exams, coordinates occupational profile updating, and provides certification of qualifications. The first generation of occupational profiles was developed by the social partners under the EOPPEP coordination. Updating of curricula is under the competence of the Ministry of Education, through the Institute of Education Policy.

At local level, the EPAS schools provide the school-based part of learning, and are also responsible for finding work placements for their students and for the practical training in companies. Each EPAS school has a list of private sector employers that is regularly updated by the teachers in charge of the programmes; the VET directorate in OAED maintains a central list with public sector employers. Every April, following deliberations with social partners and local stakeholders at EPAS career offices, each EPAS director reports the number of apprenticeship placements available in the private sector for the forthcoming school year to the VET directorate, for it to issue its annual call. Public institutions report their needs responding to a separate call issued by OAED that requires a longer procedure. EPAS teachers play an important role in the implementation of the apprenticeship programmes by actively searching for enterprises and supervising apprentices on site. Permanent teaching staff may be appointed as supervisors of in-company learning; they visit the training companies once a month, although this may differ across schools and supervisors. EPAS directors handle cases of conflict among companies and learners on contractual or learning related issues, in consultation with the enterprises involved. EPAS teachers take initiatives to adjust national curricula in accordance with labour market needs, as well as to reduce the existing/identified gaps between theoretical education and the more practical education offered at EPAS laboratories. In practice, teachers adapt their teaching to labour market needs. Career offices within EPAS schools were set up to approach companies, local employers' associations, chambers and other stakeholders in a more systematic way and to make visible apprentices' competences to the local labour market, for example through skills competitions. OAED local Public Employment Services (KPA) direct companies interested in providing apprenticeship placements to the EPAS schools and offer guidance and counselling services to current

¹⁵ EOPPEP is responsible for occupational profiles and their update but not for curricula. EOPPEP also runs the accreditation process. EPAS curricula are created by OAED itself.



apprentices, as exemplified by a career talk with apprentices and professional advice. These services are mainly related to supporting entrepreneurship.

Social partners sit on OAED's administration board and so are in a position to influence directly the type and nature of measures, interventions and programmes that OAED develops and implements, including apprenticeships. So far, however, the actual involvement of social partners in the design and operation of apprenticeship programmes has been limited.

The current situation shows that professional associations (which are the structures of the social partners at local level) and chambers are not greatly involved in apprenticeship provision. In most cases, chambers and employer organisations do not provide companies with information concerning the apprenticeship scheme and usually do not actively promote or support apprenticeship provision at their own initiative. Nevertheless, some examples of good practices can be identified: cases where chambers and employer organisations submit their proposals to EPAS schools for the specialities to be approved in the following school year exist.

Similar patterns are also evident when referring to EPAL and IEK apprenticeships. The institutional framework which covers their function is similar, with the exceptions mentioned above in reference to duration of in-company training and the level of NQF and EQF of accreditation. In addition, a major differentiation is the fact that although in EPAS OAED schools in-company training is implemented from the very beginning of the programme, in the rest two cases in-company training takes place after the completion of the school-based part. As a result, in both EPAL and IEK the in-company training part, is accompanied with a very limited level of school-based training. In all the rest cases the regulatory framework is common, both in reference to schools or companies' role. In that case OAED services, in close cooperation with IEK and EPAL services also implement all the related activities (e.g. placements' findings).

Moreover, since 2017, apprenticeships placements (both from public and private sector) are registered through an online platform. This platform is common for all the three apprenticeship systems. The interested organization or company is able to define the specialty for which offers the placement, as well as, to choose the apprenticeship system which aims to participate.



4.3. Funding and financial arrangements

The financial instruments supporting EU VET policy are the following:

- The Erasmus+ programme has a (initial) total indicative budget of 14.774 billion euro, of which an amount equal to 3 billion euro is available for VET in the period 2014-2020. Each year, around 130,000 trainees and 20,000 VET workers benefit from the mobility opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme. In addition, almost 500 projects in the field of VET are financed annually under the Erasmus+ strategic partnerships. The programme also funds other activities, such as sectoral skills alliances (including sectoral projects).
- The European Social Fund (ESF) is an important financial lever for VET. From 2014 to 2020 the ESF shall have a thematic objective under which a significant part of the budget is allocated to actions supporting vet. Nearly \$ 15 billion the euro has been allocated, inter alia, to enhance equal access to lifelong learning and to promote flexible access routes, as well as to improve the interconnection of vocational education and training with the labour market.
- In 2014 the European Union entered a new programming period (2014-2020). A key difference between the new programming period and the previous one (2007-2013) was the adoption of a common strategic framework at European Union level. Particular emphasis was placed on the eleven thematic objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, on which the partnership agreements (i.e. the new NSRFS of the Member States) and the operational programmes will be based. On 23 May 2014, the European Commission approved the 'partnership agreement' with Greece (i.e. the 'partnership agreement'). The new NSRF), which describes the strategy for the optimal use of resources from the structural and investment funds in the country, for the period 2014-2020. On 17 July 2014, the new Operational Programme "Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning" (EDD EDVM) was submitted. On 18 December 2017, the 1st revision of the OP "Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning" was approved.

In continuation of the 2017 review [C(2017)8798/18.12.2017], the total budget of the Operational Programme (O.P.) "Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning" (EDD EDVM) amounts to 3.135 million¹⁶.

In the objectives of O.P. included among others (selection of those most relevant to the purposes of the training programme):

¹⁶ In 2016, the public financing from national resources was 33,000,000 euros (estimate), the EU funds were 9,000,000 (estimate) making the total financing of the scheme approximately 47,000,000 euros. Source: Directorate of Initial Vocational Education and Training at OAED, the Public Employment Service.



- Tackling unemployment and increasing sustainable employment for all.
- To improve the quality and efficiency of all levels of the education system.
- To develop lifelong learning and improve the relevance of education and training to the labour market.
- To reduce unemployment among young people aged 15-29, especially those out of work, education or training structures, by facilitating entry into the labour market and strengthening their skills.
- To modernise and further strengthen labour market institutions.
- To upgrade and link technical-vocational education and initial Vocational Training Systems with the labour market.
- Upgrade the lifelong learning system and increase participation in it.

Employers pay wages to the apprentices, however, state subsidises the amount paid by employers. In 2017, the state subsidy was set at EUR 11 per day (equal to 64% of daily apprentice wage). Subsidies for apprentice wages amount to EUR 1,872 per apprentice per year. Employers pay also social insurance contributions. In total, employers contribute approximately 45% (or 35%) of the cost for the on-the-job training (both wages and social insurance). The total amount of public financing for the on-the-job training is estimated at EUR 1,000,000 per year. The figure does not include the non-subsidised part of wages paid to apprentices who are trained at public companies. EU funding for the on-the-job training is estimated to be approximately EUR 9,000,000 (both in 2015 and 2016)¹⁷.

According to Cedefop (2018) the shared funding model of the EPAS apprenticeship scheme is extended to companies willing to cooperate with EPAL and IEK, while non-financial incentives are added to the policy agenda, although not very well developed. The system is flat (same incentives available to all companies, irrespective of size and/or sector, across regions and sectors) and over-reliant on financial incentives.

Apprenticeship provision based on current flat funding arrangements will remain costly for the State, inhibiting the national effort to expand apprenticeships in a sustainable way. Models that (gradually) reduce dependency on subsidies and (gradually) increase the actual direct cost for companies have not yet been adequately explored. Similarly, the prevailing flat financing model seems to limit the opportunity for targeted approaches, under which different sectors or regions may receive a different mix of financial and non-financial incentives that matter the most to them, in line with the capacity of companies in these sectors to assume greater shares of the financial cost. Reliance on a flat incentive system also signals that development of apprenticeship does not rely on a strategic targeted approach but on an intention to develop apprenticeship in the same way across the board (Cedefop, 2018).

¹⁷ Source: Directorate of Initial Vocational Education and Training at OAED, the Public Employment Service.



As long as financial incentives are a key factor for company engagement, there are concerns among stakeholders that companies will see the expansion of apprenticeship as a means to substitute regular employment with cheaper labour, despite the extension of the EPAS contractual framework in all schemes. To upscale their financial contribution (as a share) and raise their investment in learning, companies need to recognise clearly a wide set of benefits. At the moment, they do not see proven and exclusive benefits in providing apprenticeship placements. Lack of cost-benefit analyses and systematic evaluation of apprenticeship outcomes hampers informed strategic decision-making. It prevents national authorities adjusting the features of programmes that affect perception of cost and benefits (for example cost of training mentors and their remuneration, preparedness of apprentices, duration, time spent at the workplace) or communicating them accordingly. The duration of the EPAL scheme poses a challenge in this respect, as many interviewed companies consider it too short for them to see the return of their investment in training (Cedefop, 2018).

Professional associations and chambers that could communicate the benefits of apprenticeships in a more company-friendly language and approach have not received a clear mandate in contributing and promoting apprenticeships. Regional or sectoral promotion strategies are missing. There are no coherent and coordinated national/regional/local strategies to attract companies to provide apprenticeship placements. The schools are the only institutions that reach out for companies; future involvement of chambers and social partners is currently pursued through key projects but these are not fully described or embedded at system level. The Central Union of Chambers of Greece (KEEE) maintains the most extensive and reliable company registry, which could complement the OAED registry, but it has not yet become available for the overall apprenticeship system.

4.4. Social partners' role in the governance of VET

According to the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union of 15 March 2018 on a European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships (2018 / C 153/01) the Member States of the European Union should ensure that apprenticeship programmes meet the needs of the labour market and provide benefits to both trainees and employers, based on specific criteria for learning and working conditions. Among those criteria the involvement of social partners is deemed necessary. In detail social partners, including at sectoral level, should be involved in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship programs, in line with national employment relations systems and practices in the field of vocational education and training.

In 2017¹⁸, the governance of the Apprenticeship System was determined:

¹⁸ With the sub. Joint Ministerial Decision 26385/2017 "Apprenticeship Framework" (Government Gazette 491 / BD / 20-2-2017), as amended by sub. Joint Ministerial Decision 60615 / Δ4 / 2017 - Government Gazette 1441 / B / 27-4-2017 and is valid.



- A. At the national level, ESOM is established for the Design and Implementation of Apprenticeship Programmes with the participation of the competent Ministries of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity and Education, of the social partners, the Central Union of Chambers, the Union of Regions, the Central Union of Greek Municipalities. ESOM, is authorized to deliberate with scientific institutions and bodies with a twofold aim. First to submit proposals for the improvement of institutional framework, under which Apprenticeships programmes operates. Second to submit suggestions in issues related to the scheduling, implementation and evaluation of Apprenticeship programmes. However, so far, ESOM remains, to a large extent inactive, with no major influence in the field of Apprenticeships. Social partners have participated in ESOM's meetings, which however, takes place very rare (approximately one time per year), were no formal. At this point in should be mentioned
- B. At the local level, KPA2 of OAED, operates Apprenticeship Support Teams (OYM). In those groups participate EPAS teachers and teachers of IEK or the Ministry of Education. The Apprenticeship Support Teams is coordinated by the OAED representative. KPA2 are the administrative structures that secretly, technically and administratively support the work of the Apprenticeship Support Teams and are responsible for managing the information system, registering apprenticeships and maintaining a Register of companies participating in apprenticeship programmes.

Social Partners participate in ESOM, assist in the development of the apprenticeship training programme in the company, cooperate with the Apprenticeship support teams and the Chambers in order to support companies at central and local level to find apprenticeships and inform the members on the importance of apprenticeship in the national economy and the sub-sectors and the quality standards of Apprenticeship in business.

In the aforementioned institutions, besides social partners are involved the two responsible ministries, those of Education and Labour, as well as, Chambers either in Central or local level. Within a local level, also participate local/ sectoral partnerships if exists.

On 19.6.2018, the first meeting of the ESOM was held at the Ministry of Education, Research and Religions with the aim of improving the institutional framework, planning and implementation of apprenticeships, including the way of evaluation of apprenticeship programmes.

From their part, the social partners are taking important initiatives on the issue of the quality of Vocational Education and Training and the added value for the Greek economy of the



institution of apprenticeship, with the aim of raising the awareness of their members and Greek society in general¹⁹.

On October 17, 2017, in an announcement, the Labour Center of Athens pointed out that the students of I.E.K. who participate in an apprenticeship programme after the publication of No. K1 / 118932/2017 K.Y.A. (Government Gazette 2440 / ΒΔ / 18.7.2017) "Regulation of subsidy and insurance issues of the Apprenticeship of students of public and private Vocational Training Institutes (I.E.K.) and Vocational Training Schools (S.E. K.) ", are entitled to both compensation (financed by the European Social Fund and the Greek state, under the OP" ANADEDM "of the NSRF 2014-2020) and insurance, in contrast to the students who participated in the programme students before the publication of the above K.Y.A., who are not entitled to compensation and insurance and called on the government to urgently lift this unequal salary treatment of young people participating in an apprenticeship programme I.E.K.

A central feature of the European model is the social dialogue between employers and employees as well as an institution of consultation which is recognized by the Treaty of the European Union and ratified with International Employment Contracts by each country individually. The international experience has shown profoundly that in times of crisis such as this, social dialogue can contribute to the formulation of creative and innovative responses, promoting a balanced and non-discriminatory recovery (GSEE et al, 2015).

The national social partners who are actively involved in vocational education and training issues and in the application of the dual apprenticeship model are the following: GSEE, SEV, GSEVEE, ESEE (Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship) and SETE (Greek Tourism Confederation).

The national social partners, who sign the National General Collective Labour Agreement prioritizing respect and promotion of social dialogue in its existing structures, have made efforts over time to make national bargaining as effective as possible. In recent years these efforts have intensified, as an extremely difficult landscape has emerged for both consultation institutions and industrial relations in general. At the same time, the multiple state interventions in the system of collective bargaining, such as that in the content and universal character of the National General Collective Labour Agreement, while weakening the sectoral level of negotiation and the institutions of expansion of the results, are tangible examples of the dramatic changes that the social dialogue environment in Greece has undergone.

¹⁹ Cedefop (2018). *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-17: Greece*. Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies, p. 10
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/vetpolicy-developments-greece-2017>



Sometimes social dialogue does not exist in the traditional-formal way, while at other times it is institutionalized. At the same time, contemporary social dialogue is diffused in more than one field: international, national, sectoral and/or regional, local corporate or intra-corporate. An important barometer for its success or failure is the role of the state in this process and whether it is supportive within it, especially in times of socio-economic instability (Zarifis et al., 2017). For the ILO social dialogue is both a means of achieving social and economic goals and an end in itself, as it gives citizens a "collective voice" and an active participation in their workplace and social space.

One of the most basic procedures taking place in the context of social dialogue is exchanging information, a condition which constitutes a prominent starting point for launching a meaningful dialogue. Through this consultation, both the social partners and the government, not only share information but participate in an in-depth targeted dialogue. Consultation is therefore defined as an exchange of views involving either the discussion of a proposal or the testing of a political choice. Although consultation does not necessarily involve the power to take decisions, in specific cases and conditions it may also function as such (Zarifis et al., 2017).

One could say that the most intense process of social dialogue is negotiation. During this, discussions are held between the parties involved which may have different or even conflicting interests. This is why negotiation becomes the most formal and binding form of social dialogue, as it results in consensual agreements. Collective bargaining is considered to be an important barometer of industrial relations within a country, as it is through them that the effectiveness of social dialogue becomes evident in terms of the level of achievement of political understanding. It is noted that any of the above procedures (exchange of information, consultation, or negotiation) can be either informal and ad hoc or institutionalized, which is determined by the subject matter and the conditions in which the social dialogue takes place.

As far as the social dialogue in Vocational Education and Training (VET) is concerned, either in an international or European context, it seeks in principle to contribute to social and economic development through the continuous consultation of the involving parties with a variety of topics such as: infrastructure, coordination, professional outlines, quality control and Assurance, Organization of educational programmes for evaluation, certification and qualification validation etc. It is essentially the main mechanism that encourages and promotes thorough dialogue, cooperation and consensus among stakeholders.

In Greece, the social partners, based on a methodology agreed with the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources (NILHR/ ΕΙΕΑΔ) in particular, they carry out research activities (employer and employee surveys), gather data, in particular on sectoral skills needs. The relevant literature and the general findings so far show that the social dialogue on vocational education and training issues on the one hand reduces the training costs that the state would



undertake, while at the same time creating opportunities and conditions for the entry of new and qualitatively trained workers into the labour market (GSEE et al, 2015).

One of the tasks of the social partners, as mentioned, is to implement vocational training programmes both for their members and for other groups of citizens (e.g. workers, entrepreneurs, unemployed). The majority of these programmes are covered by co-financing from the European Social Fund. It is characteristic that the qualifications obtained by this type of training are not recognized by any national authority (Athanasouli, A. et al., 2016). As a result, it is particularly important to highlight the key features of the social dialogue in Greece, in relation to the role of the social partners and their participation in scope of social consultation on vocational education and training issues. But before referring to this role, it is important to highlight the context the institutional area where the social partners move through the main actors, bodies and committees in which they participate.

In particular, the participation of the social partners, according to official data on the subjects of Vocational Education and training, provided for in bodies and organizations such as:

1. NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR QUALIFICATION AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE
2. NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR WORK AND HUMAN RESOURCES (NHRF)
3. LABOUR FORCE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY (OAED)

In committees and councils such as:

- OAED - MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR THE EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING ACCOUNT (LAEK)
- OAED-APPRENTICESHIP COMMITTEE
- MINISTRY OF LABOUR - TECHNICAL PRACTICE COMMITTEE
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION-ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING (ACVT)
- ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS
- NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK MATCHING COMMITTEE
- UEAPME - COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING
- BUSINESSEUROPE-COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS
- EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION
- EUROPEAN SOCIAL COMMITTEE
- NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENSURING QUALITY IN LIFELONG LEARNING.

More specific GSEE carries out vocational training programmes aimed at employees both in the private sector and the unemployed and its own union officials. Specifically, these programmes concern professional sectors such as tourism, technical professions (manufacturing/construction), teachers and trainers, trade, environment, consumer protection, social economy, Information Technology and economics/administration.



GSEVEE implements training and retraining programmes in professions related to tourism, environmental management while offering basic technical professional and educational skills, addressed to employers, self-employed, employees in every sector of the economy, but also to the unemployed.

According to her representative, GSEVEE has made interventions for (Zarifis et al., 2017):

- apprenticeship issues,
- quality assurance in vet (EQAVET),
- Work based learning forms),
- the duration of studies and studies in vet but also on issues related to vet
- attractiveness of curricula in vet,
- the mismatch of skills
- skill mismatch),
- ECVET credit,
- practical training,
- VET funding,
- the basic competences for the Life Long Learning,
- mobility within the VET (for example through Leonardo action),
- guidance and counselling (vocational guidance),
- validation of skills acquired in a non-formal or informal learning environment,
- permeability between educational levels,
- evaluation of vet curricula,
- the European (EQF) and the National Qualifications Framework,
- education and training under the Europe 2020 strategy,
- vocational outlines and VET programmes, based on learning outcomes,
- the relationship between general and vocational training,
- the relationship between initial and continuing training (CVT),
- the role of the TEC in employment,
- VET training staff as well as for adult participation in CVT
- and Lifelong Learning

ESEE implements programmes for the personnel of commercial enterprises. In the same context, the representative of ESEE notes that similar interventions have been made by ESEE for:

- apprenticeship issues,
- the mismatch of skills- skill mismatch,
- validation of skills acquired in a non-formal or informal learning environment,
- the European (EQF) and the National Qualifications Framework,
- Professional outlines and VET programmes based on learning outcomes.



SEV implements training programmes, initiatives and lifelong learning networks aimed at improving the knowledge, skills and competence of the country's labour force. Interventions from SEV have also been recorded for:

- apprenticeship issues,
- validation of skills acquired in a non-formal or informal learning environment,
- the European (EQF) / National Qualifications Framework,
- education and training under the Europe 2020 strategy,
- professional outlines and VET programmes based on learning outcomes,
- Work Based Learning forms),
- Human Resources Development and management (HRD & HRM,
- skill mismatch),
- practical training,
- VET funding,
- the basic competences for the Life Long Learning,
- the Copenhagen process and the Bruges process.

Similar interventions have been made by its representative and by the GSEE, in particular for:

- apprenticeship issues,
- quality assurance in vet (EQAVET),
- work based learning forms),
- the attractiveness of curricula in vet,
- ECVET credit,
- practical training,
- VET funding,
- the basic competences for the Life Long Learning,
- mobility within the vet (for example through Leonardo action),
- guidance and counseling (vocational guidance),
- evaluation of vet curricula,
- the European (EQF) and National Qualifications Framework,
- education and training under the Europe 2020 strategy,
- professional outlines and VET programmes based on learning outcomes,
- duration of study / study in vet
- the social dialogue glossary for VET

One of the main features of the social dialogue on VET issues in Greece is the lack of comprehensive integration and continuity. The main reason for this finding is firstly the fragmentary way in which the consultations and talks between the stakeholders take place. It is characteristic, in fact, that on many occasions, the social partners are called upon either to “legitimize” decisions already taken, or to ratify with their presence the framework of the



participatory process which is institutionally provided for by the official Legislative Texts. At the same time there is a lack of commitment and accountability by all three parties (government, organisms, and citizens). Based on this, the general positions of the social partners on the level, content and forms of social dialogue in Greece on VET issues are highlighted below:

In former years, the social partners representing employers and employees have developed key operational initiatives, notably in the field of lifelong learning, adult education and continuing vocational training, and less so in vocational education. However, all social partners have institutional competence, organizational skills and a desire to participate more actively in the collective regulation of VET critical issues such as:

- The form and content of the new vocational high school
- The organization of the dual-type apprenticeship system
- The development of forms of internship in enterprises for graduates of EPAL and IEK
- Vocational guidance.

The role of the social partners and chambers of Commerce is still not defined clearly: Their influence has weakened given that apprenticeships involve the joint responsibility of education and the labour market, as well as ensuring the direct participation of enterprises. The governance framework of the new apprenticeship system is not integrated: the social partners and chambers are not involved in neither the National nor the Technical committee on VET / apprenticeship, which are two of the new agencies set up at national level under the recent reforms (Cedefop, 2018).

There is no central body of sustained social dialogue for VET. The social dialogue, when it takes place, is implemented through individual thematic committees of short duration and most of the time without sufficient transparency and significant institutional competence. As a result the actions taken by the state to date do not appear to have made social dialogue in the field vocational education and training effective in desired grade. Consultation initiatives take place either at the latest moment, either in a way that is canceled in the essential contribution of the social partners in the consultation process (GSEE et al., 2015).

The individual forms of apprenticeship or learning with work in Greece are characterized by institutional fragmentation and functional fragmentary. Apart from the dual apprenticeship system of OAED schools, traineeships and work experience schemes are usually autonomous "programmes" of employment, or "additions" of training programmes without a structured basis of institutional arrangement. Actions or initiatives or learning programmes in the workplace, in which the quality of the end result is disputed and Social Security is not guaranteed, may degenerate into systems of providing cheap work, with no opportunity to acquire skills (Zarifis et al., 2017).



For these reasons, it is necessary to take steps to systematically monitor record and evaluate the results of the Trialogue, emphasizing the differences between the results of the social dialogue and the policies implemented.

Participation of the social partners: brief description of how the institution of apprenticeship should be introduced and revised according to the new vocational education law (N.4763/2020):

1. Preparation
 - Identification of specific needs by various stakeholders
 - First opinion of the relevant ministries and the social partners
2. Preparation of the educational framework and curriculum; preparation of an educational framework plan
 - Negotiation in the institution responsible for apprenticeship (ESOM) and submission of the plan to the relevant ministries
 - Development of curricula by the relevant institutions (e.g. IEP)
 - Consultation of the social partners and other interested stakeholders on these projects
3. Publication of the two frameworks
 - The educational framework is issued by the competent Ministry
 - The curriculum is issued by the Ministry of Education
4. Monitoring measures; preparation of training manuals for training providers
 - Training of trainers, teachers and examiners
 - Continuous evaluation.

Summarizing, according to Cedefop (2020: 16) “social partners contribute to the Technical Committee for VET. Their input is deemed of high importance due to their significant role in various VET subsystems (including skills forecasting and facilitation for apprenticeship positions), not to mention that social partners also raise members’ awareness of the added value of apprenticeships for economic development and of the issue of training quality. Social partners also take part in ESOM. ESOM’s purpose is to provide the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour with suggestions on improving the institutional framework for apprenticeship and designing, implementing and evaluating apprenticeship programmes”.

“The social partners, together with representatives of relevant ministries, the central Association of Chambers, and the National Institute for Labour and Human Capital, also participate in ESEKAAD, the National Council for Education and Human Resources Development. The council’s scope is to provide advice and scientific guidance on major issues related to the design of educational policy in the context of the promotion of knowledge, sustainable development, the use of human resources capacities, the promotion of inclusive employment and, in general, the link between education and the labour market and employment” (Cedefop: 2020: 16).

“On a regional level, the apprenticeship support teams include representatives of chambers and employer and employee organisations. The Institute for Educational Policy has launched an open invitation to all scientific and labour market bodies, calling for their proposals and views on the new VET and apprenticeship curricula. A more focused invitation will be addressed to social partners, involving them for the first time in EPAL curricula development” (Cedefop: 2020: 16).

In Table 1 below the social partner’s role in main institutional arrangements of dual VET in Greece is presented:

Table 3: Social partners’ roles in main institutional arrangements of dual VET in Greece²⁰

	Involvement. Yes/no	Type of involvement
Development and renovation of curricula for VET	No	No formal, institutionalized, procedure foresees social partners’ involvement. In an informal way, some state organizations (e.g. OAED) offering apprenticeship programmes, have requested social partners’ involvement
Evaluation and monitoring of the system	Yes (partially)	Social partners’ involvement is institutionalized only in some advisory boards, related to apprenticeship (e.g. in ESOM but not in Technical Committee for VET). However, those institutions are almost inactive with no considerable influence or involvement in the operation of the Apprenticeship system. Under the new draft law, are also proposed specific advisory boards with the participation of social partners.
Delivering of education	No	
Evaluation of students’ training outcomes	No	
Regulation of working conditions of “apprenticeships” or “internships”	Yes	Apprenticeship follows the framework described in the “National General Collective Agreement”, signed by the representatives of the National Social Partners. In addition, social partners, had an active participation in the formation of Institutional Framework for Apprenticeships (2017), which

²⁰ The new law for VET in Greece (including apprenticeship) was passed on 21st December 2020.

		regulates a considerable number of issues in relation to working conditions
Enforcement of working and training conditions of “apprenticeships” or “internships	Yes, partially	Social partners’ representatives, participate in the Administrative Board, of OAED, which is responsible for the operation of EPAS, which constitute the most traditional form of Apprenticeship system in Greece. However, no specific participation is foreseen within a national level, where different systems of Apprenticeship, operates. In terms of compliance of companies with apprenticeship requirements no formal role is foreseen for trade unions. Contrary to that, the auditing role is mainly undertaken by apprenticeship schools, where through teachers visit companies for assuring compliance with rules. In case of a reference on behalf of a student, school is responsible to manipulate the issue (e.g. company substitution)

Table 2 presents the main actors in VET governance in Greece. As evident, state, either through central government or state-controlled organizations, is the prevalent factor in VET governance in Greece. Within, a political-strategic level, the two responsible ministries involved in the manipulation of Apprenticeships, those of Education and Labour, are the solely actors. And if this condition can to an extent be justified, what is of considerable interest is the almost complete absence of an institutionalized role for society’s institutions and organizations (such as social partners), within a technical strategic level. Moreover, the only case where social partners participate is that of ESOM, where so far is characterized by a limited level of intervention. Contrary to that, several state organizations possess responsibilities of considerable importance. A similar trend is also evident when referring to technical operational level, where the only field of intervention for social partners is that of OYM, an institution with no major influence in apprenticeships so far.

Subsequently, in the Table 4 below the main actors in VET governance in Greece are presented:

Table 4: Main actors in VET governance: Greece

	National level	Social partners	Regional level (Autonomous communities)
Political-strategic	Ministry of Education		
	Ministry of Employment		
Technical strategic	1) Ministry of Education: 2) National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) which is responsible for certification issues (Under the supervision of the Ministry of Education)	Participation in National Apprenticeship Coordination Body (ESOM)	
	1) Ministry of Employment: 2) OAED which is responsible for EPAS, but also for specific functions (e.g. platform for finding positions) of Apprenticeship systems in total (Under the supervision of the Ministry)		
Technical operational	OAED EOPPEP	Sectoral or local representatives of social partners, participate in OYM	Apprenticeship Supportive Groups (OYM).

5. Performance

Table 5: VET indicators in Greece and EU

Indicator label	2015		Last available year			Recent change		
	EL	EU	Yr	EL	EU	Range	EL	EU
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	29.9	47.3	'17	28.8	47.8	'15-'17	-1.1	0.5
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET		28.3	'17		27.9	'15-'17		-0.5
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET	87.1	68.1	'15	90	68.6	'15-'17	2.9	0.4
Workers participating in CVT courses (%)	18.5	40.8	'15	18.5	40.8			
Workers participating in on-the-job training (%)	15	34	'15		34			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	3.3	10.7	'18	4.5	11.1	'15-'18	1.2	0.4
Enterprises providing training (%)	21.7	72.6	'15	21.7	72.6			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)	16.5	33	'18	17.9	33	'15-'18	1.4	
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	0.4	4.3	'18	0.8	4.3	'15-'18	0.4	
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)			'16	81.5	79.4			
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year olds)	58.2	77.2	'18	63.1	80.5	'15-'18	4.9	3.3
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)	87.4	83.7	'15	87.4	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	56.4	57	'15	56.4				
Early leavers from education and training (%)	7.9	11	'18	4.7	10.6	'15-'18	-3.2	-0.4
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	40.4	38.7	'18	44.3	40.7	'15-'18	3.9	2
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	34.8	12.9	'18	26.8	9.4	'15-'18	-7.9	-3.5
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	29.6	23.5	'18	26.4	21.9	'15-'18	-3.2	-1.6

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified.

(D) Forecast made in 2018.

(ce) Cedefop estimate based on available country data

(b) Eurostat: 'break in time series'.

Source: Cedefop, 2020.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

(d) Eurostat: 'definition differs'.

According to Cedefop (2020) in 2017, 28.8% of all upper secondary students in Greece were enrolled in IVET. This percentage is 19 points below the EU average. It appears that the percentage of upper secondary students in IVET is lower by 1.1 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

In 2018, 4.5% of adults participated in lifelong learning activities, which is higher (1.2 points more) than in 2015. The EU average is 11.1%.

In 2018, the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) was 63.1%. It appears that the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) is higher by 4.9 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015. The EU average is 80.5%.



Among the main issues of reference in an apprenticeship system, is apprentices' absorption to labour market. Given that EPAL and IEK apprenticeship systems operates for a limited time period, there is no available data. Regarding EPAS the last available data of OAED (2018?) indicates that 56,6% of alumni find job in their professional object within 12 months. In detail, 36% finds a job right after completing their studies, while 14% needs 2 to 6 months and finally 6% needs about 7 to 12 months. Finally, 65%-70% of those finding a job in their profession, retains their professional career for several years.



6. Conclusions

Since 2015, Greece has taken measures to develop and implement apprenticeship, strengthen the governance and quality assurance of VET, and set up a skills forecasting system to guide the development of VET provision. Steps have been taken to improve access for all to VET and qualifications, particularly through permeability measures. The VET system has been upgraded and higher level VET has been reinforced. Progress has also been made in further developing the Hellenic qualifications framework and the validation system. Initiatives have been undertaken to support the initial and continuing training of VET school teachers and in-company trainers.

The main changes in 2017 have concerned VET governance and key competences (through the initiative A new beginning for EPAL). VET governance has been further reinforced through the introduction of two new bodies: the National Apprenticeship Coordination Body (ESOM) and the National Council for Education and Human Resources Development (ESEKAAD). In MTD 4 (Riga conclusions Middle-Term Deliverable), elements of modernisation have been introduced at EPALs.

Compared to 2015-17, the main changes in 2018-19 have taken place in MTDs 3 and 5. In MTD 3, centres of vocational education (KEE), offering two-year university programmes for formal upper secondary VET (EPAL) graduates, are being created. In MTD 5, an initiative to train in-company trainers is being launched in 2019 (Section 5.4).

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the country's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed. However, there is no mention of actions targeted at the country's third policy objective in MTD 3 ('ensure the identification of educational level and qualifications of recently arrived refugees aiming to define educational needs, care and support'). Also, Cedefop (2020) suggests issues which could benefit from further consideration:

- (a) guidance;
- (b) further implementing ECVET;
- (c) further providing groups in need – particularly the unemployed – with training opportunities;
- (d) further supporting the development of key competences in CVET.



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