



COUNTRY REPORT ON THE ACTION PLAN ON ADULT LEARNING: GREECE

(March 2011)

This report - as well as the reports from 30 other countries that were represented in the working group on the Adult Learning Action Plan - has been carried out, on behalf of the European Commission, by GHK in cooperation with Research voor Beleid.

This product has been more specifically drawn up on the basis of country-experts' analysis of existing national literature and the Confintea IV-report. In finalising the report, comments and feedback from the National Authority have been taken into account as much as possible; however, the report does not necessarily reflect an official position of the Member State.

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1 CONTEXT

1.1 Socio-economic context

Demographic trends

The population of Greece is 10,934,097 permanent residents, and of these 5,413,426 are men and 5,520,671 are women (census 2001). The demographic trend exhibits a negative dynamic and according to forecasts, the country's demographic make-up will be quite different in coming decades due to adverse demographic pressures. These include a decreasing number of births, influx of migrants, and an expanding ageing population. More specifically, in 2020 the 0-14 age group is estimated to face a decrease of 14.9 per cent while the age group of over 65s will constitute 21 per cent of the total population. This will significantly affect the policies developed for lifelong learning as the trend will gradually shift from an in-school and employment active population to migrants and seniors over the age of 65.

Education and literacy trends

Greece approaches the European benchmark for 2010 for early school leaving rates. In Attica for instance where one third of the secondary school population is located, the school dropout rate is close to the European mean. According to the National Statistical Service (ESYE), it is estimated that 13.3 per cent of people between 18-24 years of age leave school early. The male drop-out rate is at 17.5 per cent and that of women is at 9.2 per cent. The latest data from EUROSTAT shows a need to raise literacy levels among senior adults (65+). Low levels of literacy and numeracy among older people may become a problem given recent policy decisions on the extension of working age. There are no national targets at the moment to improve literacy for this group.

Employment trends

The increase in employment rate in Greece for 2007 was 1.2 per cent, which was a major development. The decrease in unemployment by 3 per cent from 2000 to 2007 was mainly the result of the decrease in the number of unemployed young people (15-29), the long-term unemployed and people who register as unemployed for the first time. Nevertheless, in 2007 the rate of unemployment among people under 25 was still much higher (at 22.9 per cent) than the total unemployment rate (8.3 per cent). There was also a difference between men and women, with the unemployment rate among women being higher (12.8 per cent) than among men (5.2 per cent). According to OECD (2010) young people are among the most disadvantaged groups in the Greek labour market, despite recent improvements.

The youth (aged 15-24 years) unemployment rate stood at 25.3 per cent in the third quarter of 2009, far exceeding the OECD average, and is expected to rise further in 2010. A gap *vis-à-vis* the OECD counterparts also exists in terms of access to employment, length of the unemployment spell and the duration of transition from school to work and pay. The poor labour market outcomes of

young people in Greece may be partly explained by the combination of relatively high minimum wages, taxes on labour and dismissal costs that discourage employers from hiring inexperienced young people. Moreover, the unemployment benefit system does not work on the basis of mutual obligation, and job-search support is limited.

According to the *OECD Employment Outlook*, total poverty in Greece is 13 per cent, or 2 percentage points higher than the OECD average and the second highest in the EU. Unemployment is a key driver of poverty and 25 per cent of jobless households in Greece are poor. Although this is a high number, it is well below the OECD average and in-work poverty appears to be an even more important challenge for Greece. Nine per cent of individuals living in households with at least one worker are poor, which is 2 percentage points higher than the OECD average. Groups with the highest risk of poverty include workers with temporary contracts and in part-time jobs. Importantly, households with children fare worse than those without children and with a comparable employment status. The aim of training is to modify or complete job seekers' skills so that they are able to better respond to labour market needs, and therefore, to contribute to finding a job or to the increase in the income of the employed.

According to Eurostat (December 2009), unemployment rates have risen to 10.2 per cent in relation to the EU average of 9.4 per cent for the same month, while employment rates in 2008 had increased to 61.9 per cent in comparison with the EU average of 65.9 per cent .

1.2 Economic context

GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) in Greece has risen from 84.5 per cent in 1997 to 94.3 per cent in 2008 (almost 10 per cent in ten years' time). In addition, the estimate of the GDP in PPS per person employed relative to EU-27 is 102.9 per cent according to Eurostat. However, compared to the EU25, Greece falls short of the percentage of GDP of public expenditure spent on education and training. In the EU25, the average rate of expenditure on education and training amounts to 5.2 per cent, while in Greece this figure stands at just 3.9 per cent. It is an immediate objective of government policies to increase the rate of expenditure so it is in line with other EU nations.

At present Greece is going through a severe fiscal crisis and it is hard if not impossible to predict where the crisis will lead in terms of adult education or lifelong learning policy developments. The public deficit that had reached 17,8 per cent of GDP in 2009(Q01) has recently dropped to 9,4 per cent in 2010(Q03) according to Eurostat (2011). Public debt however is the highest among the EU members according to Eurostat (2011) at 126,8 per cent of the GDP. The fiscal position is further challenged by two longer-term trends – the programmed reduction of European Union structural funds from 2013 and cost pressures from a rapidly ageing population. Productivity is hampered by slow structural reforms, and wage and price inflation has remained constantly above the Euro Area average.

1.3 Historical and ideological context

Although adult education in Greece has some history especially in terms of developing adult literacy programmes, it was with Greece's accession to the EEC in 1981 that interest in adult education really began. Until 1993 there were a series of important developments and changes in the field. Financing from Structural Funds –principally the European Social Fund (ESF) – resulted in the expansion of related activities. The socialist government of that time created

favourable conditions for the development of adult education public bodies. ESF financing was largely channelled to what is called Popular Education (Λαϊκή Επιμόρφωση). The Popular Education public network consisted of more than 300 centres operating throughout Greece. There is no exact data for programme allocation in this crucial period (1981-1993), and many researchers note: the proliferation of vocational training activities without adequate planning about the type and volume of activities provided; the allocation of a number of programmes to organisations that did not possess the necessary infrastructure and know-how to deliver them; and the absence of a co-ordinating body to plan and supervise related activities, which led to inefficient working and a waste of resources.

The situation has improved slightly over recent years especially from 2000 onwards, with the introduction of some landmark policies and initiatives that should support further development of the field. However it is as yet difficult to draw any conclusions about the effectiveness of these policies, as many of them were adopted under the pressure of losing financing from the European Union.

2 POLITICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Political Framework

The political framework for adult learning in Greece is under-developed. The reasons for this are various and relate both to lack of substantial funding and the existence of two different Ministries (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Employment) that overlap in their responsibilities and actions, which has caused a great delay in the implementation of the Action Plan. Furthermore, the Action Plan has been used more as an inspiration rather than a tool for endorsing certain policies. Although there has not been in the past a firm commitment to lifelong learning, developments are underway. In February 2010, the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, opened a public consultation process with the aim of seeking the public's views on the new national lifelong learning strategy. The strategy assesses Greece's progress towards achieving the EU benchmark in relation to the lifelong learning indicator on adult participation in education and training and notes the gravity of the situation with Greece's participation rate at 2.9 per cent in comparison to an EU average of 9.5 per cent. The new government noted that since 2004 no progress has been made towards the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) linked to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The causes of this situation identified are the following:

- Lack of links between initial and continuing education and training;
- Fragmented and non-systematic framework regarding education and training services;
- Poor links between vocational education and training and real national and European labour market needs;
- Lack of systematic quality assurance processes;
- Inadequate collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour;
- Lack of systematic consultation with social partners, local authorities and the civil society.

What is characteristic about the way this policy document defined the “problem” and its causes is that lifelong learning is understood as being primarily about vocational education and training for adults. Both the main legislative framework on lifelong learning in Greece, and key policies narrow the conceptualisation of lifelong learning to an endeavour solely related to adult lives. The new lifelong learning policy is viewed as part of a wider social reform to improve the knowledge, capacities and skills of the Greek population and is expected to lead to the implementation of integrated and free lifelong learning provision. The new policy:

- Is centred on learner needs rather than on those of education and training providers;
- Conceptualises lifelong learning as active and continuous and not forced;
- Is holistic, offering opportunities for the recognition and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning;
- Supports the development efforts of the country, by ensuring the upgrading of skill is linked to market needs and priorities towards environment and innovation;
- Supports the social inclusion of vulnerable groups;
- Targets the development of the individual as an active and informed citizen and the cultivation of social and cultural behaviour that is in line with the new socio-economic conditions.

The key objectives of the new lifelong learning strategy are the following:

- Five per cent of the adult participation in education by 2013 (based on the EU’s Adult Education Survey indicator approach);
- 100 per cent increase in the national contribution to the “general education” of adults provided by Second Chance Schools, Adult Education Centres, etc.) (no timeframe is specified for this objective);
- Increase by 50 per cent of adult participation in continuing vocational training (CVT). AES 2007 data shows that currently participation in CVT is only 14 per cent as compared to the EU average of 33 per cent. (No year is defined to specify when this objective has to be achieved).

Apart from these quantitative objectives, the strategy also sets out the following qualitative objectives:

- Quality control of every aspect of the lifelong system (adult trainers, the training of adult trainers, learning content and the curriculum, accreditation processes, infrastructure etc);
- Adoption of new pedagogic methods (experiential learning, distance learning, e-learning etc);
- Development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by 2010 (not active yet);
- Reform of the role and responsibilities of public bodies and agencies related to lifelong learning to improve their effectiveness;
- Rational distribution of funds made available in the context of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 (NSRF);
- Focus on education and training programmes that are sustainable and on distance learning and learning content.

Greece has not so far integrated into its national legislation the Directive of the European Parliament and the Commission 2005/36/EC, adopted on 7 September 2005, on the recognition of professional qualifications. In the document submitted for public consultation the government outlined the following dimensions of its new lifelong learning policy:

- Creation of a new legal framework which is planned to bring changes to the national lifelong learning system, in order to reform “non-flexible, bureaucratic and ineffective practices”;
- Reforms to the National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ESSEEKA);
- Reform of the GSLL and upgrading of the role of social partners in the National Committee of Lifelong Learning;
- Measures to encourage citizens to participate in lifelong learning activities. Organisation of the Europass and of a lifelong learning registry for individual learners in order to monitor and recognise new learning;
- The role of the National Accreditation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training (EKEPIS) is upgraded to become the strategic accreditation agency of the country for all post-secondary education and training providers;
- Development of a National Register of Adult Trainers for all types of education and training providers;
- Reform of the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK) in order to overcome its conflicting dual role as both a provider of public initial vocational training and in parallel its role as an agency which organises the national exams leading to vocational qualifications (diplomas and certificates).
- Development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by 2010 and links to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) by 2012.
- An enhanced role for general adult education providers such as Second Chance Schools, Adult Education Centres (KEEs), programmes such as Greek language learning for immigrants;
- An greater role for the Hellenic Open University;
- New flexible training programmes;
- Upgrading of the role of the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance - Euroguidance Centre of Greece (EKEP- NRCVG);
- Establishment of a Research and Innovation Unit by the Ministry of Education.

The approach to implementing the new policy is based on:

- Well-justified measurable goals within a four year planning period;
- An integrated system of monitoring of progress which will take place on a bi-annual basis at regional and national level;
- Strategic coordination by the Ministry of Education in order to ensure the coherence and the comprehensiveness of lifelong learning initiatives;
- The active involvement of local and regional authorities. These authorities are called to formulate their own measurable goals;
- The active involvement of social partners.

It is envisaged that the national policy on lifelong learning will support the establishment of a National Network of Lifelong Learning. The network is intended to include active contributions from social partners and citizens, at all stages from design to evaluation, to ensure continuing vocational education and training is effective and linked to local labour market needs. The overall aims of the National Network of Lifelong Learning are to: reduce the barriers faced by vulnerable groups to participation in lifelong learning and improves access; tackle the problems of education and training by linking formal, non-formal and informal education and training; increase the flexibility of education and training pathways making the links between types of education and training clearer; and to focus on learning outcomes within an integrated national framework of evaluation and certification of skills and training.

Specific objectives include:

- Systematic identification of labour market needs and the professional and training needs of citizens at national and regional levels;
- Continuous training of adult trainers.

2.2 Legal Framework

Until recently all lifelong learning activities were legitimated through the seminal Law 3369/2005 on 'Systematisation of Lifelong Learning and Other Regulations'. This Law was intended to establish an integrated legal framework for more efficient co-ordination and systemisation of lifelong learning actions and bodies. All recent developments however will refer from now on to the legal framework for lifelong learning that is included in the new Law 3879/2010. Other basic legislation regulating education affairs that has affected or is affecting adult education is as follows:

- Law 2983/92, Article 27 'Hellenic Open University – HOU'.
- Law 2327/1995 stipulates the establishment of the Institute for Continuing and Adult Education (ΙΑΕΚΕ/ΙΔΕΚΕ).
- Law 2525/1997 establishes Second Chance Schools attended by adults who have not completed compulsory education and who are granted a qualification equivalent to the one obtained after successful completion of Lower secondary (or primary) education.
- Ministerial Decision N^o 115911/9-10-2000, Official Journal 1263/B/18-10-2000 (Trainers Registry – ΕΚΕΠΙΣ/ΕΚΕΠΙΣ).
- Law 3191/2003 stipulates the establishment of the National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ΕΣΣΕΕΚΑ/ΕΣΣΕΕΚΑ).
- The Law 3577/2007 defines the decision-making bodies with regards to technical and developmental works implemented by the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning.

3 STRUCTURAL AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Structural Framework

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs (ΥΠΑΜΘ/ΥΡΕΠΤΗ) and the GSLL, a Legal Entity of Private Law was set up in 1995 with the title “Institute for Continuing and Adult Education” (ΙΔΕΚΕ/ΙΔΕΚΕ). The purpose of this Institute is to conduct research, provide information and develop activities on matters concerning adult learning. The GSLL through the Institute for Continuing and Adult Education supervises the following structures:

Second Chance Schools (ΣΔΕ/SCS)

The Ministry of Education has assigned ΙΔΕΚΕ to establish 58 Second Chance Schools around the country in order to offer marginalised young and older adults opportunities to enter the labour market. Second Chance Schools work with people above 18 years old, who have not completed the nine-year compulsory education, and are therefore at risk of social exclusion. The curriculum is flexible so it responds to young people’s individual needs. Emphasis is given to the acquisition of basic qualifications and the development of personal skills.

Adult Education Centres (ΚΕΕ/AEC)

ΚΕΕ is a project that has been developed by the state and aims to offer basic skills provision at a local level by creating a network of centres in all prefectures around the country. ΚΕΕ operates under the auspices of and is monitored by ΙΔΕΚΕ. It is targeted at those with basic skills and ICT needs and also offers social activities. ΚΕΕ is supported by public law and the local authorities and is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the Greek State. Its aims are to promote lifelong learning for all through the provision of programmes that are emancipator and accessible to all regardless of age, gender, race, religious and sexual orientation. ΚΕΕ learners are encouraged to draw on and communicate knowledge from their own experiences and lives, which is considered to be an important and positive aspect of their education.

Parents’ Schools

These schools offer targeted educational services for socially vulnerable groups in the fields of parental counselling, school-family relations and health education.

Prefectural Committees of Popular Education (ΝΕΛΕ/ΝΕΛΕ)

ΝΕΛΕ constitute a traditional form of educational delivery on regional level. During the last 4 years (2006-2010), a reform agenda was put in place supporting this institution. ΝΕΛΕ offer to citizens 55 localized training programs including thematic units such as culture & arts, social economy & business development, education of citizens, programs for Physically Handicapped Persons. Programme duration is up to 75 hours. ΝΕΛΕ promote the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning programmes and constitute self-governed

public services under the auspices of the Prefectural Government. 54 NELE operate all over Greece.

Centre of Distant Adult Education & Training (KEENAP)

This centre offers lifelong education services with a dual mode of delivery (face to face teaching & distance learning) using up to date information and communication technologies (ICT).

HERON – “Adult Training in the Acquisition of Basic ICT Skills”

This programme was initiated during 2005/2006 and constitutes the first large-scale effort to equip citizens with basic ICT skills.

ISIODOS – “Education of Farmers for Undertaking Action in the Secondary and Tertiary Sector of the Economy”

This programme aims to improve the knowledge and skills of farmers and to encourage them to undertake enterprising activities.

3.2 Financial Framework

With regard to funding structures, the programmes carried out by the GSLL and its executive agency, IDEKE, are funded by EU structural funds – which are considered to be key levers for promoting innovations in Greek education and training – and the Greek State. The Greek State has increased investment in education and training to the level of 5 per cent of GDP. This is driven by a widespread view that sufficient financing of education constitutes the best investment for the future of the country and its citizens. This significant increase in budget has also brought with it detailed planning and accountability procedures. The additional funds are intended to be used in a targeted way to support the provision of high quality adult education services and to focus on supporting the participation of vulnerable groups in learning. They will also be used to fund research within Greek universities.

The increase in expenditure on education and training will need to be accompanied by reforms to ways in which funding is allocated and distributed to ensure greater responsiveness.

During the period 2004-2007 for which data is available a total amount of €7,221,634 was spent by the Greek State and €10,967,867 by the European Union for regional building infrastructures. The period 2004-2007 the Greek State invested €1.190.009 in Equipment of Regional Structures supplemented with €3.570.026 which were allocated by the European Union. In the period 2004-2007 an overall €22.551.901 were spent in building infrastructures and equipment.

4 PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION IN ADULT LEARNING

4.1 Opportunities for Participation

Participation in all GSLL educational programmes is free of charge and educational materials are also provided. At the end of each programme, certification ceremonies take place during social events. Also, all adult learners in Second Chance Schools receive a cultural card, which gives them free entry to museums, as well as a concession card for the public transportation system. Offenders who participate in Second Chance Schools that operate in prisons can double the period of the time spent on a programme, and use it to count towards their sentence. Also adult learners who participate in information technology programmes (e.g. KEE, HERON) as well as Second Chance Schools are eligible for subsidised examination fees.

4.2 Barriers to participation

Despite its efforts Greece has one of the lowest participation rates in all EU-27 countries. According to the CONFINTEA report, 417,056 citizens participated in adult learning between 2004 and 2008, compared to 157,504 citizens educated during the period 2000-2004.

According to the EUROSTAT survey in 2008, participation in lifelong learning in Greece as a percentage of the population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey conducted, was among the lowest, at 2.9 per cent compared to the EU average of 9.5 per cent. There are serious concerns that in spite of a policy drive and the establishment of supporting legal and structural frameworks, participation remains low. One possible explanation for this is the development of programmes that do not identify the needs of adult learners.

In addition, the current economic crisis and lack of supporting infrastructure may be a contributing factor. Although there is no research available about the impact of the economic crisis on adult education, social partners have expressed serious concerns that adult education and vocational education and training programmes are being affected.

The CEDEFOP report "*Citizens' views on lifelong learning*" (2003) is the only available source in the literature (as no other relevant research was conducted since then) that compares Greek attitudes to lifelong learning to those of other European counterparts and highlights an interesting paradox:

- Although a fifth of Greeks are likely to consider that lifelong learning is not important, around 90% are likely to see lifelong learning as serving a wide range of objectives and 60% to consider it an important compensatory measure for those that have not done well at school;
- Greek people rate all kinds of knowledge and skills as very useful. This is especially so for management skills, getting on with people from different cultures and countries, using scientific and technological tools and equipment (around 15 percentage points above average) and using foreign languages (22 percentage points above average);

- Greek people see themselves as much less proficient in using computers, the Internet and scientific and technological tools. Over three-fifths of Greek respondents say they do not have ICT skills;
- Fewer Greek respondents report that they think they have learned in the past year than other Europeans, but they are similar in that they learn best in informal settings. They are more likely than average to say they learn in social or political work settings – whereas local resource centres and libraries are less often mentioned;
- Four out of five Greek survey respondents had not been involved in education or training in the past year and half reported that they were not particularly interested either. They are more likely to take up structured learning on their own initiative (54 per cent);
- One in five Greek citizens do not want to take up education and training in the future. For 29 per cent of respondents, family commitments are the main obstacle to participating in education and training – the highest percentage of all countries surveyed. Certificates and social recognition of learning outcomes are particularly effective incentives for Greeks;
- Around half of respondents would be willing to contribute financially to learning if it helped them to improve their lives, set up a business, obtain new knowledge in their field of work, obtain a certificate or learn a new language.

5 CLUSTERS OF MEASURES

There are a variety of mobilisation strategies in Greece to raise participation, but not all of them are equally emphasised by relevant policies or evenly supported by adult education structures. The key clusters of measures are described below:

Certification

Certification of adult learning ranges from certificates for higher education degrees that are largely offered by the Hellenic Open University (by distance) to certificates of lifelong learning. Certification offered by KEEs is the most common although it is not ranked on UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education. Adult learners who have undertaken programmes of 75 hours or more are awarded a certificate of training and learners who participate in programmes of 250 hours receive a certificate of lifelong education.

Distance education

The Hellenic Open University is the main provider of distance education in Greece. Holders of a general upper secondary school diploma or equivalent certificate of secondary education are eligible for admission without examinations. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, the selection is done by lottery draw and priority is given to candidates of at least 23 years of age. If there are still more applicants aged 23 years and above than places, another lottery draw takes place. Applicants with degrees from higher education institutions of a relevant discipline can be admitted to the postgraduate programmes of study.

Information, counselling and guidance services

Career advisers operate in all Second Chance Schools but also in Vocational and Training Centres. Information, advice and guidance is offered in groups and also on an individual basis, with the aim of identifying the needs of trainees and the skills that are required to move into a new job or retain an existing role. The guidance services monitor trends in the labour market, including supply and demand, and provide information about opportunities for continuing education and training.

Quality Assurance Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Acknowledgement of prior (experiential) learning

As reported in the new strategic plan for lifelong learning, improving the quality of the adult education system is a fundamental objective of the Ministry of Education. As such, the National System of Quality Assurance and Evaluation of Adult Education is being implemented. The system provides a national framework for evaluating and monitoring adult education, through both self evaluation and independent external evaluation. The system was piloted between 2006 and 2008 and was subsequently adopted as a mainstream process.

Outreach work for specific target groups

Overall, in Greece 51,554 individuals were trained between 2004 and 2008 compared to 2,033 individuals between 2000 and 2004, representing a percentage increase of 2436 per cent. In addition, up to 2004 several initiatives for specific social groups, such as repatriates, gypsy, Roma and traveller people, immigrants and offenders, were implemented. These initiatives included programmes for learning Greek, social skills, vocational training and retraining, the publication of educational materials, research studies and the establishment of the Unit for the Promotion of Employment.

Economic instruments

An important economic instrument is that all GSSL programmes are free of charge for participants. In addition, since the economic crisis in Greece, there has been an increased investment in programmes to support unemployed adults and also employees of small and medium size enterprises, with a total budget of €273,400,000. In particular, the following actions were implemented in early 2009:

- Training for unemployed people within the construction sector was particularly affected by the crisis. It was compulsory for 30 per cent of the beneficiaries to be provided with work placements. The budget amounts to €89,600,000 and 7,000 unemployed people benefited.
- Training for the unemployed in 'green professions' involving compulsory-guaranteed employment in relevant workplaces. This programme aimed to provide training in the fields of: sustainable development; renewable energy sources energy; waste management; and, landscape restoration in order to create 'green' workplaces, in line with European guidelines for green development. It is considered to be an innovative action adapted to contemporary needs and requirements. There was a requirement for 30 per cent of beneficiaries to be provided with work placements. The budget amounts to €94,000,000 and 7,000 unemployed people benefited.
- Training for unemployed people involving compulsory –guaranteed employment within the tourism sector which was particularly affected by the economic crisis. It was compulsory for 30 per cent of beneficiaries to be

provided with work placements. The budget amounted to €45,400,000 and 3,500 unemployed people benefited. The Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (Xenodocheiako Epimelitirio tis Ellados, XEE) in cooperation with the Institute of Tourist Research and Forecasts (Institouto Touristikon Erevnon kai Provlepseon, ITEP) have stressed the importance of training in safeguarding employment and consider it as one of the three pillars on which short-term measures are based.

- Training for unemployed people in basic ICT skills. These programmes lead to certification of knowledge. The budget amounts to €30,000,000 and 30,000 unemployed people, mainly under the age of 25 benefited from training.
- Training for unemployed people in specialised ICT skills, such as software and applications development, communication systems, networks management and informatics project management. These programmes lead to the certification of knowledge, which correspond to the requirements of the contemporary labour market. The budget amounts to €14,400,000 and 4,000 unemployed people benefited.

6 THE FIVE PRIORITIES OF THE ACTION PLAN ON ADULT LEARNING

6.1 Analyse effects of reforms in other educational sectors on adult learning

Although Greece has an average drop-out rate (around 14 per cent) the Ministry of Education provides for those over 18 who have not completed their compulsory education through Second Chance Schools. Second Chance Schools are for 18-40 years old who have not completed the 9-year compulsory education, are unemployed or unskilled, with part-time or seasonal employment and wish to develop their skills to help social integration. They take part in a two-year programme which updates their knowledge and skills, at the end of which they receive either a certificate equivalent to a primary school qualification (ISCED level 1) or equivalent to a high school qualification (ISCED level 2). Core objectives of the programme are the development of a positive learning attitude, the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills, vocational orientation, access to the job market and reconnection with the formal education system. Classes can be held either in Second Chance Schools or other local venues, depending on demand.

6.2 Improve the quality of provision and staffing

The National Accreditation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training (EKEPIS), was established in 2001 and has developed and applied a System of Certification of Adult Instructors and in 2007 had certified more than 6, 000 people. The Centre is developing specifications and key knowledge criteria for 65 professions. These job descriptions will include the title, the definition, and the required knowledge, skills and competencies. Adult Trainer is one of the professions for which a profile is being developed. The situation will change under the new Law 3879/2010 and there is a drive towards the creation of a single registry for adult educators under the supervision of the GSLL.

6.3 Increase the possibilities to achieve a qualification at least one level higher

Although the Action Plan does not include a specific priority relating to increasing the possibility to achieve a qualification at least one level higher, many adults with low qualifications have the opportunity to enrol with the Hellenic Open University (HOU/ΕΑΠ) to achieve a higher education qualification.

6.4 Speed up the process of assessing and recognising non-formal and informal learning for disadvantaged groups

The General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (GSLL) develops educational programmes for socially excluded groups. Between 2004 and 2008, 2,159 repatriates, 4,259 Roma people, 7,103 Muslims, 12,539 offenders, 23,621 immigrants and 1,876 people with special educational needs were trained. The GSLL's Adult Education Centres offer a range of courses including: three courses in Greek language for adults who have not completed basic education (75 hours); courses for parents who belong to socially vulnerable groups and combine Greek language learning, parenting skills and health education (150 hours); courses in basic skills in IT (50 hours); and a course at four levels in Greek as a second language for working immigrants, the fourth level of which allows a learner to sit a test for a Certificate of Proficiency in Greek Language, which is a prerequisite for the issue of permanent residency.

6.5 Improve the monitoring of the adult learning sector

A new law entitled "Development of Lifelong Learning and other provisions" (3879/2010) has been in force since September 2010. Its key aims are to develop alternative educational paths outside of formal education settings and to link lifelong learning bodies with quality assurance bodies. It sets out a monitoring framework with clear quantitative and qualitative targets and established specific policy initiatives for achieving these targets. The National Committee for Lifelong Learning has been established in order to detect lifelong education needs and to evaluate and coordinate the institutions offering lifelong education and training services, in order to better respond to students' needs. The Committee comprises representatives of the following bodies:

- The Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs;
- The Ministry of Employment And Social Protection;
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs, Public Administration and Decentralisation;
- The Union of Civil Servants (ΑΔΕΔΥ);
- The Union of Employees (ΓΣΕΕ);
- Higher Educational Institutions (ΑΕΙ);
- The Technological Educational Institutions (ΑΤΕΙ).

Another development is the creation and accreditation of job profiles in order to establish and maintain an effective balance between initial vocational education and training and continuing education and training to respond to specific fast-changing job requirements. Each profile can extend to the whole range of knowledge, skills and competencies gained through education and training required for the specific job profile and in line with existing labour market needs.