



# Country report

# Greece

2016 update to the European inventory  
on validation of non-formal and informal learning

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# 1 Introduction and Evaluation

## 1.1 Abstract

The recent (December 2015) completion of the referencing of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework (HQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a significant first step towards the development of a framework for validation of non-formal and informal learning in Greece.

A national framework and strategy for validation is currently in development through the development of a National System for the Certification of Outputs. This is a very important step, considering the focus that the national education system has so far had on inputs. The Presidential Decrees (PDs) that are required to be in place for the system to be implemented are currently drafted and it is anticipated that they will be legislated during 2016. The finalisation of the PDs and the Ministerial Decisions that will follow to implement the PDs, will mark a significant development in that they will outline the strategy for validation of outputs, the necessary criteria for the certified qualifications to correspond to the relevant certified occupational profiles, and will also re-organise the non-formal and informal learning sectors by setting out the processes for the licensing and monitoring of non-formal and informal learning institutions.

Although these are significant steps for the country, validation of non-formal and informal learning is not yet developed in Greece as in other EU countries. This stems from cultural factors. Even though informal and non-formal learning represents the majority of pathways in Greece, such learning is not adequately valued and recognised in society. Alongside the planned legislative changes, a cultural shift is also required in favour of learning outcomes, and in order to support steps towards the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

## 1.2 Main changes since the 2014 update

A number of positive developments have occurred in Greece towards the further development of validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Firstly, steady progress has been noted in the development of a National System for the Certification of Outputs, which has been one of the strategic objectives of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP). The certification is implemented according to criteria and processes that will ensure that the certified qualifications correspond to the requirements of the relevant certified occupational profiles (*Epaggelmatiko Perigramma*). Also, the National System will allow all interested individuals to certify their qualifications, regardless of the learning pathway they have chosen.

In order for the above framework to be implemented, the Greek legislative framework requires that a Presidential Decree (PD) be issued outlining the conditions for the certification of outputs. A draft text for a PD has already been developed for the certification of outputs, while draft legislative texts have been put forward by EOPPEP in relation to the institutions to be licensed to carry out the certification. The PDs have not yet been approved but their implementation is foreseen in the coming months.

When completed, the National System will include:

- The processes and legal framework for the certification of qualifications. The system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning as well as the framework for evaluating and licensing institutions for the certification of qualifications;
- All institutions that will be licenced to carry out certification will be inspected and evaluated by EOPPEP;
- Certification to take place by EOPPEP.

Secondly, EOPPEP has established the Greek Qualifications Register online: <http://proson.eoppep.gr> upon its responsibility for the creation and development of the HQF and its referencing to the EQF and under the supervision and coordination of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. It comprises the qualifications classified in the HQF and referenced to the EQF, together with information based on a unified description standard suggested by the European Commission, in order to allow for uniformity in the structure of information concerning qualifications among European countries. The Qualifications Register will be linked to the European Portal 'Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe' (<http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus>) in the section of 'Qualifications'. Evidently it is an application which requires constant updating and content enrichment. **To this date, 674 qualifications are already included in the Register** sent by the respective educational institutions. Currently, EOPPEP is in the process of constantly updating the Register. In the future, it is planned for the awarding bodies to gain access to the Qualifications Register upon EOPPEP's authorization, with a view to directly updating the qualifications they award and adding new qualifications.

Thirdly, there have been key developments in quality assurance over the past couple of years, including the procedure of updating and legally establishing a National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning, 'π3'. The Ministry of Education sees this as a priority, has reactivated the legislative process and is committed to producing the draft of a PD to this effect. More generally, Greece has begun significant work to reorganise general education and upgrade the vocational education and training (VET) sector. The country has also undertaken to reform the governance and organisation of its higher education system. The Greek education and training system requires further modernisation in terms of its performance and its ways of working, in particular with regard to providing basic skills, and its capacity to ensure the successful transition of young people to the labour market. The new Memorandum of Understanding concluded in August 2015 sees education as part of a new national growth strategy (Education and Training Monitor 2015, Greece). The authorities will ensure further modernisation of the education sector in line with the best EU and OECD practices, and this will feed into the planned wider Growth Strategy.

## 2 National perspective

### 2.1 Overarching approach to validation

In order to better understand the developments and state of play in the validation of non-formal and informal learning in Greece, it is important to highlight the definitions used in the country, regarding initial vocational education and training (IVET), non-formal learning and validation.

#### Definitions of key terms in the Greek context

**Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET):** Under the latest law on Restructuring of Secondary Education (Law 4186/2013 of September 2013), IVET in Greece includes Vocational Training Schools (SEKs) (ISCED 3) and Institutes of Vocational Training (IEKs) (ISCED 4). IEKs were recognised as non-formal learning institutions from the 2010 Lifelong Learning law. SEKs were introduced by the 2013 law and were also recognised as non-formal learning institutions. SEKs provide initial vocational training to graduates of formal compulsory education; SEK programmes are of three years' duration. The last year of the three-year SEK programme is apprenticeship. However, according to the recent law 4386/2016, the SEKs will be abolished on 31 August 2019

### Non-formal learning:

Compared to the definition provided by the 2012 Council Recommendation for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, it is underlined that non-formal learning does not have the same definition in Greece. The 2013 Referencing Report of Greece also highlights this difference<sup>1</sup>.

Non formal education in accordance with Greek legislation (Law 3879/2010, art. 2, paragraph 4 and Law 4386/2016, art. 66, paragraph 2) includes:

1. Initial Vocational Training
2. Continuing Vocational Training
3. General Adult Education
4. The fourth year after graduating from the Vocational Upper Secondary School (EPAL), named 'Apprenticeship Class' is defined in the area of the non-formal education.

**Validation:** The word 'certification' (*pistopoihsh*) is mainly used across processes and national policy documents; it may regard documentation that attests that learning took place; but may also imply 'validation'. It is also interesting to note that the word "certification" (*pistopoihsh*) is sometimes used when no actual assessment takes place. Experts suggest that for 'validation' another term should be used in Greek (*Epikirosi* or *Egyropoiisi tis mathisis*), to imply assessment and equivalence in learning outcomes.

These definitions shape the way non-formal learning and its validation is handled in the country. The above definitions are also used in this report, when discussing national policy documents and processes.

Since 2010, steps have been taken in Greece towards the validation of non-formal and informal learning, especially developments in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF): The first draft of the Referencing Report was completed by the end of 2013 and presented to the Advisory Group on 17 December 2013. The Referencing Report was accepted by the EQF Advisory Group (EQF AG) in December 2015.

Key developments since 2014 include:

#### **Creation of an online Greek Qualifications Register**

EOPPEP has established the Greek Qualifications Register online: <http://proson.eoppep.gr> upon its responsibility for the creation and development of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework and its referencing to the EQF and under the supervision and coordination of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. It comprises the qualifications classified in the HQF and referenced to the EQF, coupled with information based on a unified description standard suggested by the European Commission, in order to allow for uniformity in the structure of information concerning qualifications among European countries.

The Qualifications Register will be linked to the European Portal 'Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe' (<http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus>) in the section of 'Qualifications'. Evidently it is an application with the dynamics of constant updating and content enrichment. **To this date, 674 qualifications are already included in the Register** sent by the respective educational institutions. Currently, EOPPEP is in the process of constantly updating the Register. In the future, it is planned for the awarding bodies to gain

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<sup>1</sup> "The term 'non-formal education' is a direct translation from the terminology in Greek legislation, and does not have the same meaning as the term 'non-formal learning' as defined in the 2012 Recommendation on the Validation on Non-formal and Informal Learning", and as updated in 2015.

access to the Qualifications Register upon EOPPEP's authorisation with a view to directly updating the qualifications they award and add new qualifications.

### **Methodology for the design and development of Learning Outcomes**

EOPPEP has issued in both Greek and English the 'Methodology for the design and development of Learning Outcomes' by Prof. Dr. Mile Dželalija (Dželalija). Learning outcomes are the central concept in the qualifications system in the HQF. Prof. Dr Mile Dželalija underlines in the preface: "In Greece, as in many countries in the EU, to achieve all benefits by implementation of the HQF, it is important to guide all stakeholders in the qualifications system with intention to facilitate the development and implementation of the HQF, including development and implementation of learning outcomes, which is the focus of this Methodology".

According to EOPPEP, a national, comprehensive framework for validation is currently under development. Validation practices are in place but are fragmented. Where relevant processes are in place, the four stages of validation (identification, documentation, assessment, and certification) are not distinctively implemented.

National authorities recognise the importance of validating learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning. This has been promoted by the 2010 law on Lifelong Learning (LLL law). The law introduced a National Committee on Lifelong Learning on which all key stakeholders sit, which was a first for Greece at the time. According to experts, validation is not yet high on the agenda of this Committee. The LLL law also introduced Prefectural Committees for Vocational Training (*Perifereiaki Epitropi Epaggelmatikis Ekpedefsis kai Katartisis - PEEK*), which represent a more decentralised approach in the governance of lifelong learning. In this way, local stakeholders were empowered to promote the specific needs of their labour market, accordingly design and/or suggest the supply of vocational education and training and thus, support the employability of citizens. In over five years since the introduction of the law, it seems that PEEKs are not in place or fully operational in all Prefectures but it is expected that they will be re-activated in view of the ongoing reform of apprenticeships. The establishment of Lifelong Learning Directorates (*Dieuthinsi Dia Viou Mathisis*) that were foreseen, by law 4186/2013, to be created in each prefectural unit, have now been abolished.

Non-formal learning in Greek (for foreigners) and other languages can also be validated through examinations offered by the Greek Language Centre of the Ministry of Education. The General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning also offers non-formal learning courses on the Greek language that lead to the Greek Language Competence Certificate. The Ministry of Education also offers the National Language Certificate that any individual can take through examinations, regardless of how the language skills have been obtained. This Certificate is recognised in the public and the private sector and is also mandatory for when applying for public sector positions. There is thus increased interest from applicants to receive the A2 grade certification which is increasingly being demanded as a pre-requisite for public sector jobs such as municipal cleaners, taxi drivers and nurses, professions which are in demand from foreigners.

As far as trainers for the Greek language are concerned, even though it is felt that it is important for trainers to have formal qualifications, there is the possibility for trainers with at least one year of relevant experience to participate in the train the trainer programmes offered for those interested to support applicants through the process for the recognition of Greek language competence.

More recent developments in relation to the recognition of Greek language competence include that the electronic submission of applications was piloted in 2014 and was rolled out for all exam centres in 2015. Since then, all applications are done electronically to facilitate applicants who no longer need to visit the exam centres in order to register. A new website

with enhanced user friendliness is also in preparation and will be launched in the coming months.

The developments in the governance structure since 2010 underline that there is a clear focus towards complying with EU frameworks and Directives, while upgrading the existing systems. However, there appears to be a societal preference for formal qualifications and traditional assessment methods, such as written tests. The lack of validation practices in formal education also underlines this. Authorities underline that, given the financial constraints due to the crisis, developments towards validation have to prioritise among the multiple sources of learning. Support for employment is likely to be the key goal of the next steps towards a more comprehensive approach regarding validation.

## 2.2 Validation in education and training

A significant step was taken in 2003 with the establishment of the National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ESSEEKA). ESSEEKA was based on learning outcomes, a novelty for the Greek education system, which has traditionally been based on inputs. ESSEEKA intended to create links between various systems: the System of Initial Vocational Training, the System of Technical Vocational Training, the System of Continuous Vocational Training, the Systems for Certification of Vocational Training and Qualifications, and the System of Counselling, Vocational Guidance. All these systems are linked to the labour market (Law 3191/2003). The objective of ESSEEKA was to facilitate the certification of competences and vocational skills, no matter how and where developed. According to authorities, ESSEEKA was merged into the national Lifelong Learning framework in 2010 that was established by the 3879 law.

The development of occupational profiles and especially the development of the National Certification System for Qualifications by EOPPEP (see below) also underline the growing importance of learning outcomes regardless of the learning path. This can be identified in the legislation reforms and new governance structures introduced since 2010.

In 2010, the Lifelong Learning law (Law 3879/2010) recognised non-formal and informal learning as part of lifelong learning and the providers of such learning as parts of the National Framework for Lifelong Learning. The law also introduced new organisations and empowered decentralised authorities. However, the new organisational structure that the 2010 law provided has since changed given the restructuring of organisations and authorities under the overall reforms in the public sector.

In November 2011, EOPPEP was created in lieu of three relevant organisations: the National Organisation for Qualification Certification (EOPP) created from the 3879/2010 Law, the National Centre for Vocational Guidance (EKEP) and the National Centre for the Certification of Lifelong Learning Providers (EKEPIS). The merger has resulted in a single organisation that deals with inputs (infrastructures, trainers etc.), guidance, and outputs/certification. EOPPEP is the competent organisation for the certification of non-formal and informal learning under initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuing vocational education and training (CVET). Regarding IVET, EOPPEP is the responsible organisation for certifying, among others, the qualifications of the Initial Vocational Education Institutes (IEK) (ISCED 4) graduates, which are included in non-formal education in Greece, as explained earlier.

The law on Restructuring of Secondary Education (Law 4186/2013) identifies entities/institutions offering non-formal learning that can lead to recognised certifications on a national level. According to the law, non-formal learning institutions (public or private) are:

- **Vocational Training Schools** (*Sxoli Epaggelmatikhhs Katartishs - SEK*) that offer initial vocational training to graduates of compulsory education – these institutions will however be abolished on 31 August 2019;

- **Institutes of Vocational Training** (*Institouto Epaggelmatikhs Katartishs- IEK*), offering initial vocational training to graduates of formal, non-compulsory secondary education (general or technical lyceums) and of SEK;
- **Lifelong Learning Centres**, offering continuous vocational training, general adult education, vocational guidance and lifelong counselling; and
- **Colleges** (*Kollegia*), which offer non-formal learning to graduates of non-compulsory secondary education.

These institutions can be public or private. Private providers have to meet specific criteria to receive licencing.

The Ministry of Education and EOPPEP are responsible for inputs in non-formal learning, whereas EOPPEP is the responsible organisation for the outputs. Additionally, graduates from the above mentioned non-formal learning institutions, except from Colleges (*Kollegia*), receive a certification of vocational training and can participate in examinations held by EOPPEP. Success in these examinations leads to: a) a 'Vocational Specialisation Diploma' (*Ptychio Epaggelmatikis Eidikohtas*) (ISCED level 3) for graduates of Vocational Training Schools (SEK) and b) 'Vocational Specialisation Diploma' (*Ptychio Epaggelmatikis Eidikohtas*) (ISCED level 4), awarded to graduates of Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK) that is linked to professional rights and licence to practice. The specialisation diploma will also be linked to the HQF when the latter is fully implemented.

A Common Ministerial Decree of the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs and the Minister of Finance, following initiation of the Board of EOPPEP, a Central Examination Committee for the Certification of Vocational Training (KEEPEK) has been established. The Committee will administer all the issues regarding the certification of exams of IVET/non-formal learning from IEKs and SEKs for Vocational Training Certification. This committee comprises of representatives from EOPPEP, ministries, experts from the public and private sector, professional chambers and organisations, social partners and scientific associations (Law 4186/2013). The examinations for each specialisation are designed by EOPPEP, assisted by scientific and research organisations, social partners and professional bodies.

Regarding IEKs, the validation process, rules and regulations regarding the examinations and studies follow those of formal education (EOPPEP, a). For each IEK specialisation, EOPPEP has developed Certification Regulations Guides, where individuals can find information on the type of examinations and the relevant process, a description of the job profile, the task analysis that describes the knowledge-skills and competences that the individual should demonstrate under job relevant thematic areas, and duration of the process etc. The guides also include a pool of questions (approximately 300 questions) relevant to the content of examinations<sup>2</sup>. Examinations comprise of a theoretical and a practical part. The theoretical part involves written examinations. The examinations are held all over the country in specific Examination Centres, but are assessed centrally by EOPPEP. The written essays, included in the theoretical part of the exam, are assessed by two examiners. The practical part aims at assessing the individual's professional skills and competences as described in the pre-agreed job profiles. This part of the examination takes place in the IEK laboratories or in laboratories or work places where the applicants conducted their practical training/work placement during their studies; or at laboratories of other education institutions that the relevant Prefectural Committee for Vocational Training (*Perifereiaki Epitropi Epaggelmatikis Ekpedefsis kai Katartisis-PEEK*) has approved. The examiners are present during the practical exam and evaluate in situ the individual's performance. An oral examination follows to allow individuals to explain their work. Three examiners selected by EOPPEP, after suggestion of the PEEK, evaluate each applicant. The examiners represent EOPPEP and regional social partners. In order to be successful, the individual must be

<sup>2</sup> A list of available examination guides for each specialisation can be found at <http://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/el/certification-exams/2012-05-29-10-16-57> (in EL)

positively assessed by at least two of the three examiners. The practical examinations may take place in more than one examination centre, depending on the specialisation.

The same process is followed by graduates of the Lifelong Learning Schools operated by and within higher education institutions and vocational trainings offered by Lifelong learning centres of social partners. The Lifelong learning law allowed those institutions to run Lifelong Learning Schools that are recognised to offer non-formal learning. After the completion of each training programme, participants receive a certificate of participation and a training certificate. Research shows that participants are assessed either through weekly tests or only through final examinations. Each Lifelong Learning School determines the way participants are assessed. Training programmes are very often taught exclusively through e-learning, such as examples of courses provided by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the University of Piraeus.

The 3879/2010 Act also identified institutes/research bodies of the most significant social partners<sup>3</sup> as institutes providing lifelong learning services, thus including them in the National Lifelong Learning System. These stakeholders provide CVET opportunities to their members/employees of their members. The relevant training programmes are relative to professions and sectors. After the completion of the programme, participants are provided with a certification of attendance (KEK GSEVEE a). The successful completion of some of these training programmes is linked to the advancement of professional rights (for example, Energy Inspector is eligible to be included in the relevant national registry) (KEK GSEVEE b). As these institutes are recognised to offer non-formal learning, their graduates can opt to sit the examinations held by EOPPEP for their specialisation.

It should also be noted that the 2013 law recognises distance learning as equal to traditional learning, as any private or public institution that offers non-formal learning can choose this type of learning. If a distance learning training programme regards an entire specialisation, then the graduates receive a Certification of Vocational Training and can sit in the EOPPEP Certification examinations.

The action “Development of a National System for the Certification of the Output of non-formal and informal learning”, under the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”<sup>4</sup>, is currently under development. It is considered a significant step towards the development of a validation strategy<sup>5</sup>.

### **The National System for Certification of Outputs**

The development of a National System for Certification of Outputs is one of the strategic objectives of EOPPEP (EOPPEP, b). This is a very important step, considering the focus of the national education system on inputs. The development of the National System underlines the commitment of EOPPEP as a national authority towards lifelong learning and the encouragement and recognition of all types and pathways of learning. When complete, the National System will include:

- The development of processes and a legal framework for the certification of qualifications. The development of a system for the validation of non-formal and informal

<sup>3</sup> The Institute of Labour (I.N.E.); The Centre for Education Policy Development (K.A.N.E.P.) at the Confederation of Greek Workers in Greece (G.S.E.E.); The Small Business Institute (I.M.E.) at the General Confederation of Professional Craftsmen and Tradesmen in Greece (G.S.E.V.E.E.); The Social Multi-Centre and Trans-Balkan Institute for Public Administration Senior Management Associations of Civil Servants (A.D.E.D.Y.)

<sup>4</sup> According to EOPPEP

<sup>5</sup> In the context of developing a comprehensive Policy Framework Paper on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning, in April 2014 a public consultation with social partners took place on the issue of guidelines on compatibility cross examination between EU and international certification and qualifications systems and mapping their interconnection with international standards and EU practices; design of the certification and accreditation system for qualifications and the design of the accreditation system for awarding bodies.

learning falls under this goal, as well as the framework for evaluating and licensing institutions for the certification of qualifications;

- All institutions that will be licenced to carry out certification will be inspected and evaluated by EOPPEP;
- Certification to take place by EOPPEP.

The National System aims at certifying qualifications that the Greek state is interested in and that are expected to boost employment. The certification is implemented according to criteria and processes that will ensure that the certified qualifications correspond to the requirements of the relevant certified occupational profile (*Epaggelmatiko Perigramma*). Also, the National System will allow all individuals interested to certify their qualifications, regardless of the learning pathway they have chosen.

In order for the above framework to be implemented, the Greek legislative framework requires that a Presidential Decree (PD) be issued outlining the conditions for the certification of outputs. A draft text for a PD has already been developed for the certification of outputs, based on expert opinions, as per Article 19 of Law 4115/2013. Regarding the institutions to be licensed to carry out the certification, drafts of legislative texts have been put forward by EOPPEP, but the PDs have not yet been passed into law, hence the implementation of these systems has not yet been realised.

Under this framework, professionals that do not hold a formally recognised qualification/title, regardless of the way they have developed their professional knowledge-skills-competences, can apply to EOPPEP for certification.

#### **Certification of the teaching competence of Adult Trainers in non-formal learning**

After September 2014, adult trainers in non-formal learning (as this is defined in Greece) need to have certified educational competence/proficiency to participate in non-formal learning programmes funded by public resources (Law 4115/2013). This includes the Institutes of Vocational Training (IEKs- ISCED 4). The full implementation of the new certification system of adult trainers is believed to be necessary to meet the recent and future economic, social and educational needs.

Adult trainers were formerly certified and registered in a National Register by the National Accreditation Centre for Lifelong learning Providers (EKEPIS), which was in place from 2001 to 2011, when EOPPEP was established. The new certification system of adult trainers of non-formal learning was designed by EOPPEP, before it went under public consultation. The system was finalised in 2012 (Ministerial Decision no. ΓΠ/20082/ΦΕΚ Β' 2844/23-10-2012), with the contribution of the General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning. At the same time it was decided to further elaborate the already existing Register of adult trainers of non-formal learning that will include those trainers that have certified educational proficiency. EOPPEP will manage the Register, which includes the sub-registers of adult trainers and of the trainers of trainers. Each certified trainer, who is included in the Register formulates and maintains his/her own electronic qualifications portfolio (e-Portfolio), which includes trainers' education and training and professional experience etc.

It should be underlined that the certification process is accessible by all individuals who meet specific criteria: in order to enroll in the certification examinations, one has to meet certain criteria regarding educational attainment or proven professional experience. More specifically, the individual must initially submit an electronic application. According to his/her educational and/or professional status, the system categorises the candidate in one of the following three certification paths: a) Actual Certification, in case the candidate meets certain criteria (e.g. tertiary education professors in the field of lifelong learning or adult education or continuing education and training); b) Eligible to participate in certification exams: most participants fall under this category, as the criteria are very broad, varying from specific

educational titles to a minimum 150 hours relevant teaching experience of adults<sup>6</sup>; c) Eligible to participate in certification exams, only after successful completion of train the trainer programme. The last category regards applicants with no relevant professional/teaching experience and who hold no applicable educational title in the field of adult learning.

Certification examinations comprise of a theoretical and practical part and are aimed at ensuring the candidate meets the relevant knowledge, skills and competences, described in the respective certified Occupational Profile. All details of this assessment stage are explicitly described and analysed on EOPPEP's website (EOPPEP, c). Additionally, a relevant ministerial decision defines the requirements for training programmes for train the trainers.

During 2014 and 2015, EOPPEP has implemented national level certification examinations for Adult Trainers in non-formal education. At present there are approximately 11 500 certified Trainers for Adults by EOPPEP enrolled in EOPPEP's Register for Certified Adult Trainers and eligible to teach in non-formal learning programs.

**Currently, EOPPEP are also preparing the legislative framework for:**

- a) the certification of those who will graduate from the fourth year of Vocational Upper Secondary School (Class Apprenticeship).
- b) the certification of persons attending programmes of Continuing Vocational Training in the Centres for Lifelong Learning. Those that complete such programmes successfully will be certified, while the Continuing Vocational Training programmes should be compatible with the Certified Occupational Profiles.

**Focus on specific sectors**

Currently, sectoral focus is operationally implemented for:

- Certification of private security personnel
- and for the licensing of specific technical occupations (plumbers, technical works machinery operators, liquid and gas fuel installation and welding, certification of technicians, who work with fluoride greenhouse gases, and the register of recognised Examiners of driver trains).

**Certification of private security personnel**

'Private security services' is a recognised specialisation in many EU countries and has been included in the HQF. These individuals usually have developed their professional skills only through work experience. Regardless of whether they have prior training, these professionals can apply to the Centre for Security Studies (KEMEA), an entity of the Ministry of Civil Protection and Public Order. KEMEA, in cooperation with EOPPEP, holds responsibility for the organisation and implementation of examinations and goes through the process of certification. When applying, individuals have to provide proof of professional experience.

Examinations include written tests and practical application. The written tests are evaluated by the Central Evaluation Committee (KEA), formed for this purpose. KEA has five members: two representatives of EOPPEP with experience in certification examinations, a representative of the employers, a representative of employee unions, and a representative of KEMEA (Ministerial decision in Government Gazette 25 of 10 January 2013).

Successful applicants receive a Certificate of Proficiency (*Vevaiosi Eparkeias*) which is equivalent to Vocational Training Certificate Level 1, according to the former relevant legislation (Law 2009/1992). The Vocational Training Certificate Level 1, however, following the provisions of the law 4186/2013, is no longer in use. Therefore the abovementioned

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<sup>6</sup> According to EOPPEP

Certificate of Proficiency has to be matched to one of the levels of non-formal learning, established via the law 4186/2103.

During the years 2012-2015, EOPPEP in cooperation with KEMEA, has implemented national level certification examinations for Private Security Professionals. This concerns professionals who participate in the certification exam provided that they have professional experience. The total number of participants for the theoretical and practical part of the examination was 25 890. Out of these, 22 569 have successfully passed the exams. The 2016 national-level certification examinations for Private Security Professionals that EOPPEP has implemented, have involved 5 500 candidates who participated in the certification examinations, during the first quarter of 2016.

### **Training Certification System for employees of the wider public sector**

Another attempt at certifying learning outcomes from non-formal learning regards the development of a Training Certification System for employees of the wider public sector. The relevant law (Government Gazette no. 1592/30-9-2010) introduces the System and aims at certifying the knowledge acquired by public servants through seminars/trainings delivered by the National Centre of Public Administration, other public sector schools, public universities, technical and vocational institutes (TEI) that belong to tertiary education, the European Institute of Public Administration, the Social Polycentre and the Inter-Balkan Institute of Public Administration. All training and training structures should be certified by a Central Certification Committee (KEP). Regarding the certification of participants' knowledge and competences, the law defines that it is based on the learning objectives included in the plan of training. The assessment-certification is managed by the training institutions mentioned earlier. It could include multiple-question tests or open questions, case studies, or assignments that participants have to complete. If successful, participants receive a Certificate of Accreditation linked to training points. It should be noted that promotions in the public sector take into consideration these points. Unsuccessful participants receive a certification of participation.

### **Validation of knowledge of the Greek language**

Non-formal learning in Greek (for foreigners) and other languages can also be validated through different paths. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, through the Greek Language Centre (Greek Language Centre, a) offers non-native speakers to take examinations and test their knowledge and competence in Greek. There is no prerequisite for sitting the examinations, so self-learning, informal learning or any type of learning is acceptable. The Greek Language Competence Certificate has six levels, following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe (CoE, cited 31.03.16). The General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning offers non-formal learning courses on the Greek language that lead to the Greek Language Competence Certificate (GSAE, cited 20.06.16). Also, the Ministry of Education has set up a process, based on examinations, that leads to the National Language Certificate. This certificate is not linked to formal education and there are no restrictions regarding participation in examinations. The Certificate is recognised in the public and the private sector. In applications for positions in the public sector, the National Language Certificate is a prerequisite (usually for English).

Although these are significant steps for the country, validation of non-formal and informal learning is not yet recognised as an individual's right. As described, EOPPEP is the centralised authority for such validation, but only takes into account learning coming from specific providers.

Regarding CVET, the common practice is to provide participants with certifications of participation and no actual assessment of the knowledge acquired takes place. This seems to be the common practice for training offered to public servants. While participants are awarded with points after such training (promotions in the public sector are based on a point

system), participants are not assessed in any way after the training. This is the process predicted for training/seminars run by public authorities (e.g. Ministries) and for some seminars offered by private providers, and other organisations. Exceptions can be identified, as in the case of the Hellenic Management Association (EEDE), which offers training in various fields, from general management to specialised technical fields. EEDE offers Programmes of Vocational Certification, such as a Diploma in Environmental Management. After the completion of the programme, participants undertake examinations at the end of the programme and only those successful receive the diploma.

### **Informal learning**

The validation of informal learning is currently in the early stages of development in Greece. There is no evidence of an official framework, neither in the public nor in the private sector. However, some steps have been taken in this direction. In the vocational training schools, created by the 2013 law, students that complete the third year of studies and can prove a minimum number of wages/ employment hours are not obliged to attend the fourth study year, the apprenticeship year. These people can directly take the certification exams of EOPPEP. In that way, the professional experience of a student is recognised as equivalent to part of the curriculum.

The same holds for students in IEKs (IVET): if minimum wage/hours thresholds are met, students can opt to skip the semester of traineeship. This cannot be regarded as a validation process, but underlines the recognition of informal learning in official education processes.

## **2.3 Validation and the labour market**

### **2.3.1 Skills audits**

The Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) is the Greek public employment service (PES). OAED provides services to unemployed individuals regarding their promotion to the labour market. In this context, unemployed individuals can visit OAED to develop their individual action plan, assisted by employment counsellors. The latter record the individual's profile (studies, previous work experience etc.) and taking into consideration the individual's career aspirations, then design the individual action plan towards employment. Steps in the plan may include further training, and existing job positions are suggested. Next steps are jointly agreed, but it is the individual's responsibility to carry them out.

The individual action plan does not certify or validate the unemployed individual's knowledge, skills, and competences or link them to a qualification level. The employment counsellor, based on his/her personal assessment, provides feedback to the individual about necessary next steps. Due to high unemployment rates and lack of resources, OAED does not formally monitor unemployed individuals or follow-up on the suggested steps. It is up to the individual to reconnect with OAED and seek additional guidance, if he/she does not manage to find employment. The employment counsellors are OAED employees that have been trained accordingly

## **2.4 Validation and the third sector**

In the third sector, there is no specific framework for validation. However, it seems that organisations develop their own validation systems: for example, the Greek Red Cross offers Train the Trainers opportunities for all specialisations of interest (such as lifeguards). The offered training and its certification are linked to specific international criteria. The diploma earned at the end has a validity of five years and examinations are required for its renewal.

### 3 Links to national qualification systems

#### Qualifications and qualifications frameworks<sup>7</sup>

The Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs supervises the implementation of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework (HQF) and coordinates the parties which are involved in this Framework, in accordance with the provisions of Law 3879/2010 'Development of Lifelong Learning and other provisions' and of Law 4115/2013 'Organisation and operation of Institution for Youth and Lifelong Learning and the National Organisation for Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance and other provisions'. EOPPEP, as the National Coordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework, is the body responsible for organising the referencing process of the HQF to the EQF.

In August 2013, the Board of EOPPEP approved the proposal for the Referencing Process of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework, which includes the composition of the **Referencing Committee** (Steering Committee for the EQF Referencing Report of Greece) of the HQF to the EQF and the contribution of two international experts as members of that Committee.

The first draft of the referencing report was completed and presented to the EQF AG in November 2013. A major consultation meeting took place in January 2014, attended by representatives of national level social partners, higher education institutes and Ministries.

The Referencing Report was accepted by the EQF Advisory Group in December 2015, following discussions in AG meetings during the course of 2014 and 2015. Since the acceptance of this Referencing Report by the EQF Advisory Group, the phase of classification of qualifications awarded by the Greek non-formal education system will begin.

The HQF comprises of eight levels, as the EQF, defined in learning outcomes for knowledge, skills, and competences. Key definitions in Greek have been developed to facilitate the adoption of the Framework, and a broad range of qualification types have been identified and integrated within the Framework. This is expected to allow for the differentiation of qualifications that have been grouped under the same HQF level. The Framework has been designed to incorporate all formal qualifications.

#### Further development of the HQF expected in the coming months

As part of the reform of general and vocational education and training undertaken at this time in Greece in the spirit of the European initiatives 'Rethinking Education' and 'European Alliance for Apprenticeship', the Hellenic Qualifications Framework is a powerful tool which takes into account the individual effects of these reforms.

In the near future, EOPPEP will be developing a methodology for the classification of qualifications (skills) acquired through non-formal education in the EQF.

The Hellenic Qualifications Framework is expected to be legislated in 2017.

The implementation of the HQF is expected to be assessed during 2017, this will contribute to developing an updated version of the HQF. An upgraded version of HQF is expected to be presented in 2018.

#### Credit systems

Significant steps have also been taken in regard to credit systems.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is used in higher education. The latest law on higher education (Law 4009/2011) introduced changes whereby curricula are to be defined in learning outcomes in accordance with the EQF, and the use of ECTS is introduced for doctoral programmes (National Report regarding the Bologna

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<sup>7</sup> Information provided by EOPPEP

Process implementation 2009-2012). The law allows curricula of first cycle qualifications to include courses from domestic or international higher education institutions, based on the transfer of credits. However, validation of non-formal and informal learning is not yet established in higher education. Nonetheless, the law modified the Lifelong Learning law, calling for the development of a National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, in accordance to the EQF and the European Qualification Framework of Higher Education Area.

The 3879/2010 law foresaw implementation of the European Credit System in Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), but the system has not been implemented. EOPPEP was identified as the National Contact Point. Nonetheless, the latest law on the reform of technical and vocational education explicitly recognises that vocational education curricula will be shaped according to ECVET credits and where available, to the occupational profiles developed by EOPPEP. The latest legislative developments have triggered awareness raising events on ECVET.

## 4 Standards

For the two occupations where certification is possible, as well as for certification of IEK graduates, the standards used are the occupational profiles (*Epaggelmatika perigrammata* in Greek). Occupational profiles have been developed by EKEPIS, one of the organisations that formed EOPPEP. Currently there are 202 certified occupational profiles in place covering a wide spectrum of occupations. It should be underlined that the social partners have been highly involved in the development and certification of all such profiles. This, in effect, validates the certification process that EOPPEP operates. More specifically, according to the institutional framework for the certification of Occupational Profiles, representatives from the competent authorities and from organisations of social partners participate in the opinion-issuing Committees.

Occupational profiles include descriptions of the tasks, job functions, necessary knowledge, skills, and competence for each occupation or specialty and indicative ways to assess them. Possible pathways towards the attainment of the profile are also included.

These occupational profiles are certified by EOPPEP. According to the organisation, these profiles (EOPPEP d):

- Are for occupations with high demand in the labour market;
- Are included in the national database of accredited professional profiles;
- Lead to the development of vocational education and training programmes that respond to labour market needs;
- Promote upgrade of knowledge, skills and competence;
- Contribute to the recognition of vocational skills in the labour market;
- Contribute to the promotion of lifelong learning;
- Support the credibility of vocational education and training.

The shift towards modularised curricula in IEKs, including attribution of credits, is going to be based on these certified occupational profiles. According to authorities, this will facilitate the certification of a larger number of professionals and learners.

## 5 Organisations and institutions involved in validation arrangements and its coordination

### Institutional Framework

In Greece, there is currently no comprehensive national framework on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. However, EOPPEP is the competent institution for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Overall, the Ministry of Education is the competent authority in education in Greece, especially in formal education. The 2010 Lifelong Learning law introduced more participatory decision-making bodies and procedures, introducing the Lifelong Learning Committee. This committee, responsible for IVET and CVET (and therefore, non-formal learning), involves representatives of ministries, authorities relevant to qualifications, occupational profiles and guidance<sup>8</sup>, prefectures and local authorities, as well as representatives of the main social partners.

Regarding Initial Vocational Training, EOPPEP is responsible for the certification exam of students having completed training at Initial Vocational Training Institutions (SEK-Level 3 and IEK-Level 5). Regarding Continuing Vocational Training, EOPPEP is responsible for the certification exam of students having completed training at Lifelong Learning Centres (KDBM). Regarding the fourth year (named Apprenticeship Class) after graduating from the three-year vocational education at the Vocational Upper Secondary School (EPAL) EOPPEP is responsible for the certification exam of students who have successfully completed the fourth year named Apprenticeship Class.

The supervision of the providers of 'non-formal education', both public and private, as well as the authority to define their educational framework falls under the responsibility of the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. In this respect, Accreditation of 'Input' (providers of Initial and Continuing Vocational Training, Occupational profiles, learning programmes for Initial and Continuing Vocational Training) falls under the responsibility of EOPPEP and of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, while Certification of 'Output' (certification of graduates of the Initial Vocational Training and Continuing Vocational Training, certification of qualifications) falls under the responsibility of EOPPEP (Law 4186/2013, art. 17, paragraph 2).

#### **Allocation of responsibilities (at national, regional, local, social partner, provider level) according to the different aspects of validation**

EOPPEP is the responsible authority for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Stakeholders are highly involved, although indirectly, in the validation processes in place (called certification - *pistopoihsh*).

The Lifelong Learning law introduced decentralised Lifelong Learning Committees on a regional (prefectures) level. The law empowered prefectures to develop their specific lifelong learning programme, distilling the national one. The Prefectural Committees for Vocational Training were also launched in order to link the local labour market with the supply of education and training. Although these decentralised approaches could promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning, until November 2013 these are not in place due to shortages in human and financial resources.

According to the 2013 law reforming secondary education, public and private providers of non-formal learning can be established across the country and with prefectural representations of the General Secretariat of Lifelong learning. Professionals of technical occupations will be able to run certification examinations, as EOPPEP does, under the authority of these prefectural, lifelong learning administrations. Professionals of technical occupations will be able to receive licence from these prefectural, lifelong learning administrations: they will have the authority to run certification examinations, as EOPPEP does. As the implementation of the new law matures, more information and insights will be available to allow for the evaluation of the process.

<sup>8</sup> These authorities have been merged into EOPPEP in 2011.

It should also be considered that there are in place new institutional frameworks, regarding certification of qualifications for certain occupations, namely: a) Certification of cargo uploaders (Common Ministerial Decision 9296/300); b) Recognition of Engine drivers examiners and candidate engine drivers (Common Ministerial Decision 49045/5005)<sup>9</sup>; c) Licensing examinations regulations for technicians of liquid and gas fuel, plumbers, technicians of engineering installations, and welders (Common Ministerial Decision 411/14). The certification regards examination in theory and practice, that are organised and quality assured by EOPPEP, as in the case of trainers of adult learners.

There is no evidence that validation of non-formal and informal learning takes place in formal education. Higher education institutions are autonomous and can create a Lifelong Learning Centre, so these Centres can be found across higher education institutions in Greece. The Centre for Continuous Education and Training of the University of Athens offers numerous opportunities for e-learning. The Centre has requested the certification of its programmes by EOPPEP (certification pending) (UOA). This highlights that the importance of validation of non-formal learning is gaining momentum in higher education, even with small steps.

### **Education and training providers**

Training providers do not take part in the validation process. Since the only official certification process is the one run by EOPPEP, training providers in IVET or CVET only provide certifications of vocational training to their participants. In order to obtain and sustain their operational licence, private providers are obliged to conform to specific regulations regarding their infrastructure and trainers.

### **Private sector actors (including social partners)**

Social partners collaborate with EOPPEP in the development and certification of occupational standards. Moreover, they participate in all competent examination committees that provide certification of qualifications (e.g. for the licensing process of technicians, which is carried out by the Prefectures, a representative of the respective federation participates in the examinations committee and can be supported by a representative of the Technical Chamber). Equally, in the case of IVET (IEKs) graduates certification, representatives of Chambers, professional bodies, social partners and scientific organisations participate in the Central Examinations Committee (KEEPEK).

Additionally, representatives of social partners participate in the Board of EOPPEP: a) one representative of the General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE) and b) one representative of the employers' organisations (EOPPEP, f).

One of the aims of EOPPEP for the coming years is to increase the dialogue and the actual involvement of the social partners in the wider sense (i.e. to include more stakeholders such as representatives of young people) in the design and implementation of a framework for validation.

### **Coordination between stakeholders**

Social partners are involved in the development and certification of occupational profiles that are linked to the validation of non-formal learning through the EOPPEP examinations. These examinations are designed by EOPPEP but other relevant bodies can be included, such as the Centre for Security Studies (KEMEA) of the Ministry of Civil Protection and Public Security.

Stakeholders also participate in the Prefectural Committees of Vocational Education and Training, where these are active.

<sup>9</sup> By 2016, there were 29 Recognised Assessors of Drivers of Trains

Next steps on validation seem to rely heavily on EU funds, as underlined by relevant projects and initiatives in place.

## 6 Information, advice and guidance

### 6.1 Awareness-raising and recruitment

Individuals can be informed on the process of certification through the website of EOPPEP.

No specific awareness-raising practices or initiatives have been found, specifically targeting the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

However, in terms of the HQF development (2009-2010), a six-month public consultation took place, regarding the working paper of the main principles underpinning the HQF. Also, 10 meetings, six information events and four seminars about EQF and HQF were organised in various cities. On the 10 July 2013, the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs announced the HQF in a widely publicised event held at the Ministry.

### 6.2 Information, advice and guidance

EOPPEP offers IAG services to young people and adults alike, free of charge. During the programming period 2014-2020, EOPPEP will promote the link between certification and lifelong learning guidance. The focus of this initiative will be unemployed individuals to facilitate their re-entry to the labour market.

### 6.3 Measures to enhance the awareness of validation initiatives and practices amongst guidance practitioners

EOPPEP, through its Directorate for Vocational Guidance and Counselling is committed to promoting relative information to professionals and practitioners, thus promoting participation in various European and National Networks. In parallel, several e-tools that facilitate the overall awareness-raising and knowledge exchange of practitioners and beneficiaries have been developed and launched, while providing vocational guidance e- services. These include the following.

- **A National Database of Learning Opportunities, 'PLOIGOS'** (<http://ploigos.eoppep.gr>), developed in 2009 by the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, provides information to Greek and European citizens (students, job seekers, parents, guidance counsellors, teachers etc.) about learning opportunities of all types (General Education, Vocational Education and Training, Special Education etc.). PLOIGOS is connected to the European Portal for Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe (<http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en>) promoting educational mobility throughout the European space and was being further developed within the 2014 - 2016 Euroguidance activities of EOPPEP (project 'Euroguidance National Databases for Learning opportunities').
- **The Interactive Guidance Portal for young people** was developed by EOPPEP at the end of 2012 and is widely used by students, young people and guidance practitioners. Tools available include values and decision making tests, e-portfolio development, 'Ask the counsellor' service etc.
- **The Lifelong Career Development Portal** (<http://e-stadiodromia.eoppep.gr/>) is a recently developed Lifelong Career Development Portal, providing career development services and mobility information targeted to adults and includes digitised career tests, E-Counselling Services, E-Lifelong Career Portfolio Development Tool, Career & Mobility

information Resources, and a Career Management Skills Section).

- **The IRIS Lifelong Career Guidance e-forum** (<http://guidanceforum.eoppep.gr>), organised and maintained by EOPPEP.

However, no specific initiative or practice has been found that directly and specifically targets the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The e-portfolio tools for both adults and young people, give guidance on how to identify and prove basic skills within an e-portfolio.

## 7 Validation practitioners

### 7.1 Profile of validation practitioners

Certification examinations for adult trainers for non-formal learning (practical part) are operated by two Assessors who can be employees of EOPPEP or other public authorities that are competent for the implementation, coordination, and assessment of lifelong learning activities, adult education and training and employment promotion; experts in lifelong learning, labour market and/or vocational education and training come from the Registry of Assessors of EOPPEP. There is also a Supervisor, appointed by EOPPEP as well.

### 7.2 Qualification requirements

Applications for the certification examinations of adult trainers in non-formal learning are initially screened by Assessors. As stated earlier, according to the relevant legislation, these Assessors can be employees of EOPPEP or other public authorities that are competent for the implementation, coordination, and assessment of lifelong learning activities, adult education and training and employment promotion; experts in lifelong learning, labour market and/or vocational education and training come from the Registry of Assessors of EOPPEP. All assessors should have tertiary education qualifications (Government Gazette no. 2844/23.10.2012).

The Assessors of the written tests of the theoretical part and of the practical part (teaching simulation) and interviewers who are already included in the Assessors Registry need to have a Master's degree or PhD in one of the following fields: Pedagogy; Adult Training; Lifelong learning; Continuous Education; Continuous VET; Continuing Education; Education Policy; Human Resources Management or Training. Additionally, they need to have five years of professional experience and/or significant teaching experience in relevant fields and attend relevant training run by EOPPEP (EOPPEP h).

Adult trainers who obtain training proficiency/competence certification, but are not included in the Registry of Assessors can also become Assessors, given that they possess the same qualifications and professional experience as the ones who are already in the Registry. These Assessors, however, are not allowed to evaluate candidates that they have trained as trainers of adult trainers.

The Centre for Security Studies (KEMEA) sets requirements for Assessors and Supervisors for the examinations of professionals of private security without prior formal qualification. KEMEA runs a Registry of Supervisors and Examiners. It should be noted that EOPPEP's Assessors grade the written tests of the theoretical part of the examinations.

Overall, the minimum requirement to be included in the KEMEA Registry is to have a tertiary level qualification in a field relevant to the topics under examination. At least five year's professional experience is also mandatory (KEMEA, b). In a call for Supervisors and Examiners, KEMEA asked for active or retired members of the Security Forces and Armed Forces or trainers in those Forces who are graduates of tertiary education have at least five years of professional experience, and strong ICT skills. The candidates should have studied law, sociology, criminology, psychology, medicine, nursing, or other relevant specialties.

### 7.3 Provision of training and support to validation practitioners

Before their involvement in the assessment/examination stage of the certification process of EOPPEP, Assessors and Supervisors attend a short, focused training course run by EOPPEP.

KEMEA also trains Supervisors and Examiners so they can participate in the certification process of professionals in security services without a recognised vocational qualification.

## 8 Quality assurance

### Quality Assurance Framework

Since November 2013, EOPPEP is one of the first public entities in Greece that is certified in Level 1 of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) (EOPPEP e). This means that the organisation and its activities are quality assured.

### Quality assurance systems / procedures in IVET

The certification examinations that EOPPEP runs, both for IVET graduates (non-formal learning) and for professionals without formal qualifications, are developed based on already certified vocational/occupational profiles. As described above, these profiles are used as qualifications standards. As they have been developed through consultation and collaboration with all major social partners, research centres/think tanks and the competent national authorities (since 2011 EOPPEP, previously EKEPIS) the process and mainly the outcomes (certification) can be considered as approved by stakeholders. Also, representatives from stakeholders are involved in the examination committees for the certification of IVET graduates, the certification of adult trainers of non-formal learning, professionals of private security services and technicians in specific technical occupations. Although EOPPEP leads all these examinations and its employees are involved also as supervisors, the process is designed to ensure that all relevant stakeholders have a voice, even indirectly. This is why these certifications have high acceptance in the private sector as well.

As far as the examination stage of the process is concerned, Supervisors are accountable for ensuring that the pre-set process takes place as foreseen. For this reason, they observe and report back to EOPPEP all the stages of an individual's examination. EOPPEP determines the steps the Supervisor should take if there are issues and problems during the process.

A key development over the past couple of years is that the procedure of updating and legally establishing a National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning, 'π3', denoting "quality, always and everywhere", has been reactivated. The above mentioned framework based on and following the guidelines of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, is as a new methodological tool, intending to support VET providers in further improving their provided educational services. In essence, the National Framework for Quality Assurance in LLL, 'π3', is the main means by which the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs will coordinate the role of all VET organisations towards the improvement of quality and the alignment with the national policy as well as the European strategy "Europe 2020".

The implementation of 'π3' will apply to all organisations involved in the non-formal education system, which are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. The National Framework for Quality Assurance in LLL, 'π3', comes to set quality objectives and is the outcome of the consultation process and consensus achieved during the developing period by all stakeholders. Additionally, the Ministry's effort to improve quality assurance in all educational sectors has also been extended to formal vocational education. At the moment in cooperation with the 'Institutions' (ECB, IMF, EC), a

major restructuring of the secondary vocational education, taking into consideration the main principles of “π3”, has been agreed. It is important to mention here that part of the restructuring aims at the transformation / redesigning of vocational education curricula, following the Learning Outcomes approach. Finally, the Ministry is introducing a more holistic approach to the quality assurance issue, by developing a new mechanism for better matching skills and competences to labour market needs.

In particular the framework has the following features:

- It sets the principles for quality improvement, focusing on the three main determinants of the learning process (inputs, procedures, outcomes).
- It provides a series of quantitative and qualitative indicators for assessing/evaluating the provision of services by all relevant stakeholders.
- A steering committee has already been established with the responsibility to monitor the implementation of this procedure. The Ministry of Education is committed to produce a Ministerial Decree in the coming months.

As far as the state certificates on foreign language competences and ICT are concerned, participants sit specific examinations. The state certificate on language competence is organised by the Department of Validation of Foreign Languages Competence from the Ministry of Education.

#### **Evaluation framework**

The certification system currently in place by EOPPEP is evaluated through the EFQM framework. Under the EFQM, the organisation is obliged to run annual satisfaction surveys to all users of its services, including individuals that participated in the certification.

The evaluation of the implementation of the HQF is scheduled to take place in 2016-2017. The evaluation results will lead to the design and presentation of an upgraded version of the HQF, in early 2018.

In the framework of this evaluation, three focus groups were carried out in November 2015, involving representatives of Higher Education and the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (ADIP); representatives from Secondary Education and VET; and representatives from social partners (employers and employees). The subject areas discussed during the focus groups covered factors in the successful implementation of the HQF, obstacles, and proposals for improvement. The results of the focus groups discussions will be used by EOPPEP for the further development and implementation of HQF.

## **9 Inputs, outputs and outcomes**

### **9.1 Funding**

Validation is not recognised as a national framework for specific funding.

EOPPEP, as the leading institution in validation is a legal entity of private law and is self-funded, so does not burden the state budget. EOPPEP is co-funded by the Operational Programme ‘Development of Human Resources’, in the case of certification of teaching competence of Adult Trainers for non-formal education. The development of a coherent System for the Certification of Outputs and the development/amendment of other national Certification Systems are also co - funded by the European Social Fund (ESF)

### **9.2 Distribution of costs**

A strategic objective of EOPPEP is to minimise the costs of the certification processes it oversees, both for the organisation itself and for the individuals participating. This is done by getting rid of paper processes, having as many of the elements of the process as possible take place online and by keeping the individual’s participation costs to a minimum.

In order to participate in the certification examinations organised by EOPPEP, an IVET graduate has to pay a participation fee of EUR 50, for the theoretical part of the exam and EUR 50 for the practical part. Respectively, for the certification examinations for professionals in private security services, the cost rises to EUR 150, of which EUR 100 goes to EOPPEP and EUR 50 to the Centre for Security Studies (KEMEA), an entity of private law on security studies of the Ministry of Public Order and Civil Protection. Individuals that failed in previous certification examinations and want to re-sit the examinations have to pay EUR 100 (EOPPEP, i).

In order for a non-native speaker to take part in the examinations towards the various levels of the Greek Language Competence Certificate one should pay EUR 65 (Greek Language Centre, a).

### 9.3 Evidence of benefits to individuals

- According to national experts, individuals who have been certified by EOPPEP as professionals in private security services have easily found employment, some of them even abroad.
- Overall, formal certifications from public bodies are highly valued in the Greek labour market and society. Therefore, it can be expected that individuals who successfully sit the EOPPEP certification process benefit significantly.
- Regarding the validation of foreigners in Greek language, their benefit is explicitly recognised in the related legislation: the Greek Language Competence certification is a prerequisite to obtain a 'long-stay' permit in Greece and it has to be submitted along with the relevant application to the Ministry of Interior. Also, the Greek Language Competence is a requirement to practise several professions in Greece - anyone who wishes to obtain a professional/vocational licence has to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the Greek language. The level of competence in Greek is determined by competent authorities for each licence and is adjusted to the demands of the profession, (According to Presidential Decree 38/2010 that transposes the EU Directive 2005/36/EK).

### 9.4 Beneficiaries and users of validation processes

#### 9.4.1 Validation trends

In relation to trends in the number of validation beneficiaries, the following can be noted:

- **Initial Vocational Training - Certification of Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) graduates**: During the years 2012-2015, EOPPEP, has conducted national level certification examinations for initial VET graduates in a wide range of over 100 VET specialisations. The total number of applicants for the theoretical part of the examinations was 26 224, of whom 15 235 successfully passed the exam. For the practical part of the examination, there were 21 849 candidates with 17 966 VET graduates successfully passing the examination.
- **Initial Vocational Training - Certification examinations for "Trainers for candidates for car and motorcycle driver's license"**: EOPPEP has conducted national level certification examinations for instructors for car and motorcycle driver's license. There has been a total of 832 applicants for the practical part of the examination, out of whom 508 successfully passed the exam.
- **Certification of teaching competence of Trainers for Adults of non-formal education**: At present there are 11 500 Certified Trainers for Adults, enrolled in

EOPPEP's Register for Certified Adult Trainers and eligible to teach in non-formal learning programmes.

- **Certification of private security personnel:** EOPPEP in cooperation with KEMEA, in the years 2012-2016, has conducted national level certification examinations for Private Security Professionals twice a year. In numbers, applicants for the theoretical and practical part of the examination were 25 890, of whom 22 569 successfully passed the exam. During the past five years (2012 up to mid-2016), 28 325 Private Security Professionals, not in possession of any recognised occupational title, have been certified by EOPPEP.
- **Certification of technicians, who work with fluorides greenhouse gases (in cooling, air conditioning, fire-fighting, etc.):** To date, this certification has been awarded to approximately 270 certified technicians.
- **Register of recognised Examiners of drivers of trains:** EOPPEP maintain the register of recognised Examiners of drivers of trains. The register currently includes 29 recognised Examiners of drivers of trains. Recognised Examiners of drivers of trains can work in all Member States of the European Union.
- **Greek language certification:** The overall number of persons interested in obtaining the certificate has remained stable, despite the crisis, but the success rate has been increasing. In 2013, 3 802 persons took the exam, with a success rate of 71.12 %. The number of persons sitting the exam in 2014 was 3 935 (with a success rate of 79.42 %), while in 2015, 3 810 persons took the exam, with a success rate of 81.15 %.

#### 9.4.2 Validation users

EOPPEP keeps analytical records and electronic data of the number of applications and examination participants for every specialisation, under each examination period and per prefecture. The organisation also keeps records of the members of the examination committees, various demographic and other specific data, as well as an integrated Register of Examiners and Assessors. This data is not published.

#### 9.4.3 Validation and migrants / refugees and other disadvantaged groups

No specific examples of initiatives involving migrants/ refugees have been identified, aside from the well-established process for the certification of Greek language competence, which has been widely used by migrants in Greece since 2006, and which facilitates access of migrants to – generally low-skilled- jobs in the public sector.

## 10 Validation methods

Based on the description above, all four stages of validation take place except for identification. Overall, the focus lies on assessment methods. Regarding the certification of adult trainers of non-formal learning by EOPPEP, e-portfolios are developed and used as a documentation method. E-portfolios may include teaching programme planning, development of teaching material, video-taped teaching of the applicant and electronic files from e-learning teaching experience. When applying for the certification process for adult trainers, individuals need to provide documentation that proves, among others, their minimum teaching experience.

Assessment in Greece traditionally involves written tests. This seems to be the main methodology in most relevant (although not comprehensive) processes of validation that one can currently find in the country. Nevertheless, for IVET graduates, professionals of private security without formal qualifications and adult trainers of non-formal learning, assessment also entails a practical part, which involves oral tests, case studies analysis, demonstration of skills and competences and teaching simulation.

In the assessment stage for adult trainers, the practical part also involves a presentation of a teaching plan (simulation of teaching, through a 20-minute implementation of a teaching plan by the examinee at a group of nine co-candidates, who undertake the role of 'trainees'. The presentation is assessed in situ by two competent assessors. A DVD is recorded in the event the candidate should be reassessed. After the presentation, the examinee is interviewed by two Assessors and the Supervisor.

Examinations for other forms of non-formal and informal learning, such as the Language Certificates, take place exclusively through written tests.

	Identification	Documentation	Assessment
Debate			
Declarative methods			
Interview			x
Observation			x
Portfolio method		X	
Presentation			x
Simulation and evidence extracted from work			x
Tests and examinations			x
Other (e.g. e-learning methods) – please specify			

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## Country report Greece

2016 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning

The 2012 Council recommendation on validation encourages Member States to put in place national arrangements for validation by 2018. These arrangements will enable individuals to increase the visibility and value of their knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education and training: at work, at home or in voluntary activities.

This country report is one of 36 that, together with a synthesis report and thematic reports, constitute the European Inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning. The inventory is a regularly updated overview of validation practices and arrangements in all Member States, EFTA countries and Turkey. It is a reference point for information on validation in Europe. It is organised around the principles defined in the 2012 Council Recommendation that were further elaborated in the European guidelines for validation. This is its sixth update (2004, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2014 and 2016).



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