



Analytical Highlights

Skills anticipation in Greece

04/2017

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Summary

In Greece skills anticipation activities such as skills assessments, skills foresight analysis and ad hoc employer surveys are undertaken. Recent policy actions have been concerned with setting up a permanent process to provide a diagnosis of labour market needs. A new Mechanism for the Identification of Labour Market Needs was established in May 2015 under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare and the scientific guidance of the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources (NILHR) (1). The aim of the Mechanism is to provide reliable information on the supply of, and demand for, labour by occupation and skills level at national, regional and sectoral levels to the organisations involved in the development of labour market policies and other interested parties.

In addition, the social partners are engaged in a variety of skills anticipation exercises to fulfil the information needs of their organisations or their members. Understanding which skills are more in demand in the labour market also supports the social partners in adjusting the vocational education and training courses they offer accordingly.

The dissemination of information on skills anticipation outputs is insufficient as there is no clear dissemination policy. However, improvement steps are expected to be taken towards better dissemination, as the Mechanism develops. In addition, employers and trade unions are improving online access to the skills information they generate, which informs jobseekers, employers and vocational education and training providers.

The influence of skills anticipation in Greece remains to be seen through the changes that will potentially take place in the VET system and the higher education system as they reorganise themselves to become more responsive to labour market skills requirements.

Overview of the Greek approach

Skills anticipation in Greece



Key actors

Governance

Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare in collaboration with the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources

Ministry of Education, Research and Religion; Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism

Stakeholders

Ministries of Labour, Social Security, and Welfare; of Education, Research and Religion; of Economy, Development, and Tourism

National Agencies (e.g. National Organisation of Skills Certification and Vocational Guidance; and the PES)

Regional authorities

Social partners

Research centres and universities

Target groups

Policy makers (ministries and government agencies), local and regional authorities

Manpower Organisation (PES)

Education institutions

Social partners

Career and vocational guidance providers



Types of skills anticipation

Quantitative forecasting

None

Skills assessments

Mechanism for the Identification of Labour Market Needs

Sector/employers' skills assessments

Foresight

Qualitative research by social partners and regions

Other

Employer and employee surveys (ad-hoc)



Dissemination

Channels

Publication of the annual report & online live database (output of the Mechanism)

Social partners' reports, websites

Use

Not systematic or monitored. Mostly used in policy making by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education

By labour market intermediaries to provide guidance to students and young adults

Description

Greece undertakes skills anticipation through:

- Skills assessments, identifying current skills gaps through the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and trends by expert panels;
- Skills foresights analysis, identifying future occupations and the skills they will require;
- Ad hoc surveys of employers aimed at gathering information from companies about their skill needs.

In May 2015, the Mechanism for the Identification of Labour Market Needs (hereafter the Mechanism) was established under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare and the scientific guidance of the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources (NILHR) (2). The aim of the Mechanism is to provide reliable data for the design of policies related to (a) employment, (b) vocational education and training, and (c) human resource development in general. The NILHR has developed the methodology for the Mechanism, which is based on multiple sources of data to provide an assessment of skills needs. However, these sources are dissimilar which poses methodological challenges.

There are several fragmented initiatives on skills anticipation, including studies on skills demand and employment forecasts by occupation and sector, carried out by the social partners, various national agencies, educational institutions, and consultancy firms.

Overall, the activities described above are intended for various users including policymakers, career counsellors, young people, jobseekers, and employers.

Aims

The overarching aim of skills anticipation in Greece is to contribute to an improved matching of the demand for, and supply of skills (3). The system of vocational education and training has suffered from weaknesses in relation to its low attractiveness to learners and employers and its low responsiveness to labour market needs. The economic crisis has accentuated these weaknesses. In order to remedy this situation, steps have been taken to better anticipate the future demand for skills linked to improved dissemination of the results within the vocational education and training system (4). In this context, the main target of the Mechanism is to produce reliable results at regular intervals. The other skills anticipation exercises undertaken are also aimed at improving the supply of skills so that it better matches demand.

Legal framework

There is limited regulation for skills anticipation. The mandatory development of processes to identify skills needs has been provided by Law 4336/2015 (5).

Governance

Skills anticipation is the responsibility of the following ministries:

- The Ministry of Labour, Social Security, and Welfare;
- The Ministry of Education, Research, and Religion;
- The Ministry of Economy, Development, and Tourism.

The Ministry of Labour is responsible for the Mechanism, the most prominent skills anticipation activity currently in the country. The NILHR, operating under the Ministry of Labour is responsible for the methodology used in the Mechanism.

The governance of the Mechanism, falls under (a) the Scientific Committee involving five members, including CEDEFOP. The Committee was instituted in October 2016 to have overall responsibility for methodological consistency and steering of the project, (b) the Coordination Committee, involving the above ministries, the NIHLR, the National Organisation of Skills Certification and Vocational Guidance, the Association of Greek Regions, the Manpower Organisation (the public employment service), CEDEFOP and the social partners, and (c) the Operational Network of institutions and organisations ensuring the involvement of all organisations with an interest in skills anticipation (e.g. research centres and universities that could contribute to the Mechanism's operation).

The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare coordinates the function of the Mechanism and defines its inputs and outputs according to the decisions of the Coordination Committee. Since 2017, the Ministry of Labour is cooperating with CEDEFOP in order to improve the governance and overall use of skills anticipation initiatives in the country (6).

The role of stakeholders

The key stakeholders are the three government ministries (see section "Governance"), the National Statistics Agency, the Manpower Organisation (PES), local and regional authorities, research centres, and the social partners (employers' and employees' associations). Other stakeholders include career and professional guidance providers.

The NILHR is the public body most involved in coordinating skills anticipation policy. It plays a coordination role in implementing EU programmes in Greece closely related to employment. Finally, stakeholders sit in the Coordination and Scientific Committees and the Operational Network of the Mechanism. The dominant stakeholder is the NILHR and this is

seen through its extensive input to government policy on skills anticipation and its scientific role in the design and the coordination of the methodology of the Mechanism. Regarding social partners, they have participated in the development of the Mechanism. It is intended that they are further and more systematically involved in upcoming steps.

Some social partners are involved or run skills anticipation exercises, often to address sector-specific labour market needs at local and regional levels. They also use information stemming from skills anticipation exercises in the various training programmes and career guidance services they provide. For example, the General Confederation of Greek Workers, the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants and the Civil Servants' Confederation all run training and re-training programmes aimed at unemployed people and private sector employees, targeting sectors such as, tourism, teaching, informatics, etc.

Target groups

The intended target groups of skills anticipation exercises and most importantly of the Mechanism include policymakers in the various ministries and government agencies, the PES, local and regional authorities, the social partners, education and training providers, and career and vocational guidance providers.

Funding and resources

Most skills anticipation programmes are financed by the government, mainly through the three governing ministries (see section "Governance"). Funding in several cases is provided through European Structural Funds. ESF are being used to steer the education and training system closer to the needs of the labour market under Operational Programme 'Human Resources Development' and the Partnership Agreement 2014-20. The establishment of the Mechanism of Forecasting the Needs of Enterprises in Occupations and Skills was co-financed both by the ESF and the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV).

Funding is also derived from the non-government sector, . The main actors in this regard are social partners including the General Confederation of Labour, the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises, and the General Confederation of Greek Small Businesses and Trades that produce studies on skills demand.

Methods and tools

Skills assessment

Skills assessment in Greece takes various forms. The NILHR and its predecessor bodies prior to 2011 (Vocational Training SA and the Employment Observatory Research-Informatics SA) have carried out most of the skills assessments at the national and regional levels.(7) It is worth, however, mentioning that the most important skills audit to have taken place resulted from Greece's participation in PIAAC Round 2.

Currently, the NILHR has the scientific responsibility of the skills anticipation process and coordinates the methodological approach utilised in the Mechanism. The Mechanism provides data at the three-digit occupation level for the whole country. It provides an interactive database allowing the user to see the employment prospects and other job characteristics (e.g. wages, share of higher education graduates etc.) associated with each occupation. In addition, there are specific analyses available in the database relating to changes at the sectoral and regional levels, as well as the outcomes related to qualifications and skills.(8) The Mechanism uses data on skills supply and demand drawn from a number of sources. Given that the Mechanism is at its initial stage of development methodological challenges exist that can be addressed as the Mechanism evolves

The social partners are also engaged in skills assessment. The findings of the surveys or other activities they run are often published in skills outlook reports.

Skills forecasts

The forecasting and labour market intelligence infrastructure in Greece is in development and is therefore one of the countries receiving support from the ESF to improve its forecasting capabilities. Currently, the only source of skills forecasts in the country is provided by CEDEFOP's European skills forecasting model.(9)

Prior to the economic crisis, econometric models were used to produce a forecast of labour supply (e.g. population of working age, labour and non-labour force by gender, level of education, etc.) and demand (e.g. employment by gender, level of education, and sector of work). Their usage, however, declined as the crisis took hold and greater emphasis was placed on implementing EU programmes related to employment and vocational education and training.

Skills foresight

Skills foresight studies have been undertaken by various stakeholders (the government, education institutions, and the social partners) in response to the economic crisis. For instance, the National Organisation of Skills Certification and Vocational Guidance has conducted research on emerging business areas and the new skills these will give rise to, while similar studies on employment trends have been carried out by the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises, the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers, the University of Piraeus, and private consultancies such as McKinsey & Co.(10)

The Hellenic Federation of Enterprises has also been engaged in identifying future skills needs to 2020 (11). It has identified eight sectors and 87 occupations that are expected to expand up to 2020 (12). As noted above, this activity was co-financed by the ESF as part of the OP Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

Recently, in an effort to support the development of the Mechanism there have been several qualitative studies conducted by the social partners in specific professions / occupations, as well as studies in the regions.(13) Skills foresight activities tend to concentrate on those sectors where Greece has a degree of comparative advantages, such as tourism, agriculture/food, ICT, and logistics.

Other skills anticipation practices

In addition to the types of activity listed above, there have been ad hoc surveys of employer and employees, respectively, enquiring about skills needs and gaps as part of the qualitative inputs for the Mechanism. More precisely, in an effort to support the development of the Mechanism, the following were undertaken: the General Survey of Employers by the General Confederation of Greek Small Businesses and Trades (December 2015);(14) and the General Survey of Workers by the General Confederation of Labour (December 2015).(15)

Dissemination and use

The dissemination of information on skills anticipation outputs derived from the Mechanism is provided through a standard procedure. The annual report of the NILHR is submitted to the National Employment Committee, which brings together the General Secretaries of the main ministries, the representatives of local authorities, and the social partners. The annual report is uploaded on the website of the Ministry of Labour and the NILHR, and is available to companies, training providers, and the public.

Use of skills anticipation in policy

The two principal government departments which utilise skills forecasting findings in policymaking are the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education. The former provides continuing vocational training while the latter supervises initial vocational training, with both ministries having an interest in the results from the Mechanism. Since the start of the economic crisis, employment and education policymakers' engagement with the findings and recommendations from the various anticipation studies has been limited. A possible reason for this is the fact that dealing with high unemployment and the diminishing number of vacancies has taken priority over the discussion of skills gaps.

Target groups' uses of skills anticipation outputs

The utilisation of skills anticipation outputs is closely linked with the governance of the vocational education and training system. The outputs of the Mechanism concern primarily the institutions involved in the development of human resources policies. The ultimate target groups for the skills anticipation outputs include young people (choosing courses to study or entering the labour market from school), jobseekers, and employers. Labour market intermediaries, under the coordination of the National Organisation of Skills Certification and Vocational Guidance, use the outputs of skills anticipation to advise the target groups (such as young people) on skills and career matters.

Please cite this document as: Skills Panorama (2017), *Skills anticipation in Greece*. Analytical highlights series. Available at http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/analytical_highlights/skills-anticipation-greece

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(2) NILHR. 2016.

(3) Ministry of Education, Research, and Religion. 2016.

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(5) Greek Parliament. 2015. Law 4336/2015 concerning 'Pension provisions - Ratification of the Draft Agreement on the Financial Assistance by the European Stability Mechanism (E.S.M) regarding the implementation of the Financing Agreement.'. Also in the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission (acting on behalf of the European stability mechanism), the Hellenic Republic and the Bank of Greece for a three-year ESM programme for Greece, 19 August 2015.

(6) Ministry of Education, Research, and Religion. 2016.

(7) National Organisation of Skills Certification and Vocational Guidance. 2013.

(8) NILHR. 2016.

(9) EU Skills Panorama. 2014.

(10) National Organisation of Skills Certification and Vocational Guidance. 2013.

(11) Hellenic Federation of Enterprises. 2014.

(12) Hellenic Federation of Enterprises. 2014. Sectors and occupations include energy (photovoltaic technician, energy investment consultant); ICT (mobile applications developer, software engineer specialist, systems analyst/network

planner, business analyst, network engineer, ICT security manager, hardware engineer); food (quality assurance manager, marketing expert, R&D scientist, quality assurance expert, maintenance engineer); construction materials (green marketing specialist, construction waste recycling specialist, construction engineer, marketing expert); environment (water quality monitor, environmental economist); logistics (supply chain manager, transportation manager, export manager, logistics engineer, warehouse planner); metals (aluminium structures joiner, metal recycling expert, plant machinery operator), and; health (clinical pathologist, medical auditor, health informatics expert, pharmacologist, geriatric nurse).

(13) Qualitative research in specific professions and occupations by social partners and by regions are available in the website of the NILHR (<http://www.eiead.gr>)

(14) Institute of Small Enterprises of the General Confederation of Greek Small Businesses and Trades. 2015.

(15) Institute of Labour of the General Confederation of Labour. 2015.

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