



Please cite this publication as:

Georgiadis,N (2018). Guidance and outreach for inactive and unemployed – Greece. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.

http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2018/guidance_outreach_Greece_Cedefop_ReferNet.pdf

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The thematic perspectives series complements the general information on vocational education and training (VET) systems provided in ‘[VET in Europe reports](#)’. The themes presented in the series feature high on the European agenda.

Thematic perspectives provide national overviews of specific themes in a common format and offer comparative dimension across the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. They are available at:

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This thematic perspective was prepared based on data/information from 2017.

The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of Cedefop.

Thematic perspectives are co-financed by the European Union and ReferNet national partners.

ReferNet is a network of institutions across Europe representing the 28 Member States, plus Iceland and Norway. The network provides Cedefop with information and analysis on national vocational education and training (VET). ReferNet also disseminates information on European VET and Cedefop’s work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

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Guidance and outreach for inactive and unemployed

Many countries across the European Union (EU) have high levels of unemployment and of inactive adults. These phenomena are frequently associated with low levels of qualification and insufficient basic skills. They may also reflect lack of adjustment between skills demanded in the labour market and skills developed in formal education and training. In both cases up-skilling and re-skilling solutions could be explored to increase the employability of adults.

The national reports developed by ReferNet partners reflect efforts done by Member States to reach vulnerable groups affected by unemployment and inactivity and help them reengage in learning and employment. The reports refer, in particular, to measures which may include young adults not in employment, education or training (NEET) and adults undergoing long term unemployment (LTU), given their persistence in many countries and the high challenges these groups face.

The policy strategies and initiatives in focus shed light over ways to support the most vulnerable to find learning and qualifying solutions. Career guidance and counselling support to people with decaying skills, low levels of motivation and insufficient basic skills are addressed. Its instrumental role in providing information, identifying skills needs, clarifying career options and developing positive attitudes towards learning is made clear.

Whenever possible, outreach measures were described, addressing the ones who fall out of the scope of standard policies to support registered unemployed or recent education drop-outs. Many reports entertain an important discussion on the entitlement to social protection and its effectiveness in addressing the challenges of all demographic groups.

Lastly, Cedefop trusts that these reports will provide an important characterisation of current opportunities and challenges across the EU in establishing appropriate upskilling pathways for adults. Current European policy initiatives urge MS to integrate skills assessment measures with flexible learning and validation solution, where guidance services and outreach will necessarily play a key role.

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CHAPTER 1.

NEETs and long term unemployed: general remarks

Most of strategies for lifelong learning, employment, social inclusion and lifelong guidance are focused to developing specific support measures and counseling for young people who are in a weaker position in the labor market compared to other age groups and as a result of the recession, they are the first to lose their jobs. In particular, young people with little or no working experience, are more vulnerable when they enter the labor market and due to the limited job vacancies are at risk to remain excluded from the labor market for years

So NEETs, Young people aged 15-29 (not in education, training, employment), which are not in employment, education or training, are at higher risk to be socially and politically alienated. There is a debate at European level about the conditions and elements that differentiate young people NEET and youth unemployment in the traditional term. The concept of NEETs, and youth unemployment are related concepts, but there are significant differences between these two.

Instead, the definition of NEET records all the young people who are not in employment, education or training. According to the study by Eurofound (2012), as NEET considered those young people who are in economic and educational inactivity for a period of not less than six months, with the majority, however, the cases indicate that it is in this state for long enough more than six months.

Young people most at risk included in the NEET group - and therefore find themselves in employment, education or training; as noted in the same research:

- (a) those with low education level (these young people are three times more likely than others
- (b) those who come from families of second and third generation immigrants - Children of emigrants (at a rate of 70%)
- (c) those who are sick or have some kind of disability are 40% more likely to become NEET
- (d) those living in remote areas without easy access to goods and services
- (e) the young families with economic problems and unemployment problems and also those with family problems.

NEET's in Greece, due to the protective role of family seem to be hidden. They consist a new and in some terms unknown category of social vulnerability groups. In addition, the fact that obligatory education stops at the age of 15 even

today, does not encourage the formal educational system and the local authorities to develop a consistent plan to deal with this problem.

Based on Eurofound research ⁽¹⁾ Greece is one of the countries with highest percentages of NEET's. In 2012 the share of NEETs in the 15-24 years age cohort was 17,4% rising to 23,2%, when considering young adult up to 29 years old. In terms of their psychological profile very few international surveys exist but there's a growing worry that they are susceptible to emotional disturbances, drug abuse and behavioral problems in comparison to individuals of the same age who work or are in education/training. The first national survey dedicated to NEET's ⁽²⁾ observed large shares of individuals declaring high levels of anxiety (54,6%) and desperation(31,7%). The main results of the survey can be summarized as follows:

- (a) There are very similar numbers men and women, indicating that gender doesn't significantly influence or defines the probability that an individual becomes a NEET;
- (b) The vast majority of NETT in Greece belong to the age group of 20-24 years old;
- (c) The majority holds an upper secondary degree or a University title. A very small percentage are early school leavers or have only finished compulsory education. This suggests that early school leaving is not the only decisive factor for a person to become a NEET, but one has to take into account that usually people belonging to minority groups (e.g Roma) are more likely to leave school early;
- (d) Most NEET haven't attended any training program and those who have claim that it hasn't improved their status;
- (e) Most of them feel pessimistic and disappointed by the opportunities offered by the Greek educational system and don't think highly of it;
- (f) Their basic desire is to find a job as they are unemployed. The economic crisis combined with the fact that they don't have any type of insurance, increases their insecurity underlining the weaknesses of the Greek welfare system.

Greece belongs to the category of MS with the highest percentages of NEET's like Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland etc. Though Greek NEET's are also inactive, the structural characteristics from the countries

⁽¹⁾ Eurofound(2012) "NEETs.Young people not in employment,education or training: characteristics, costs and policy response in Europe".

⁽²⁾ Papadakis.,N. (ed) (2013) Barometer of Absentees, Editions Sideris, Athens

mentioned above are different, thus they tend to have a university degree (at least the majority of them) of them have a university degree and very high disappointment working rates. As a result it could be further concluded that there are persisting systemic problems having to do with school to work transitions and this systemic failure leads to their voluntary disengagement and their voluntary classification to the NEETs category.

The unemployment rate and the long term unemployment rates in Greece remain at very high levels, the highest in the EU-28. Long term unemployed is defined as a person actively seeking employment for more than 12 months and not receiving any unemployment benefits. They have to remain registered to OAED's "unemployed register" in order to still be considered as unemployed.

Long-term unemployment (as youth unemployment) is persistently high, by historical standards. Long-term unemployed account for over 70% of total unemployed (70.3% in 1st quarter 2016)

72.8% of total unemployed people are long-term unemployed reflecting the structural nature of unemployment and the socio-economic impact of the crisis and the adjustment programme.

The economically active population (labour force), which reflects the size of available resources of the Greek economy as a factor of production, registered a marginal decline 0.3% in the first nine months of 2015 against the corresponding period of 2014. The observed 4% decline in the labour force in the 2008-2015 period (although much less in magnitude than the employment drop in the respective period) can be attributed to factors like migration, the phenomenon of discouragement in job search and demographic developments. The activity rate (15-64) registered a marginal increase in the first nine months of 2015 as compared to the first nine months of 2014 (67.7% vs. 67.5%) due to an increase in the activity rate of women.

CHAPTER 2.

Strategies to address NEET and LTU

2.1. Promotion of human resources development (HRD) policies to accommodate labour market needs

Greece established in 2016 a mechanism for the identification and forecasting of skills needs in the labour market. The new legislation defines the governance of the system and establishes a network of bodies with distinctive roles and responsibilities, which are involved in the inputs and outputs of the system. It also provides for the establishment of a Coordination Committee composed by members of the central government, social partners and other stakeholders for the monitoring and coordination of the process. The committee is scientifically supported by the National Institute for Labour and Human Resources (EIEAD) which analyses primary and secondary data with a view to determine labour market needs in skills and occupations at sectoral, national and local level and for the issue of the annual report. The annual report, given by the Minister of Labour on the National Employment Committee, is taken into account when designing the human resources development policies.

2.2. Upgrade and expansion of vocational education and training (VET) and apprenticeship

The National Strategic Framework on VET and Apprenticeship, which was submitted to the European Commission in February 2016, is being further specialized regarding the design and the implementation of the reforms in Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) and Apprenticeship.

The CVET reform includes establishing an institutional framework on Lifelong learning Centres level 1 and 2 (licensing, accreditation, trainers), as well as shaping the educational context (define of learning content).

The reform in the Apprenticeship system includes upgrading and expansion of the institution, pursuant to the provisions of Law 4336/2015. These are being achieved through the following axes: quality assurance, ensuring a sufficient number of apprenticeship places, ensuring active involvement of social partners and all VET/Apprenticeship actors, incentives for enterprises and communication activities.

Pilot partnerships between regional authorities and employers are planned to be developed in 2016 under the pilot implementation of the “Apprenticeship class” in selected regions of the country and specialties addressed to vocational high schools graduates of past years.

2.3. Reengineering of the Public Employment Services (OAED)

In order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of OAED three streams of actions have been streamlined for 2016:

- (a) the re-organisation of business model and new management tools,
- (b) the implementation of the new service model and,
- (c) the staff retraining, performance and capacity upgrade.

The new service and policy delivery model, will include more and better services to jobseekers and employers, support to new groups of beneficiaries, customer prioritization and service segmentation, effective and cost-efficient ALMP, digitalization and diversification of service-delivery channels.

OAED will also play a crucial role in anti-poverty and social integration policies by assisting the labour market reintegration of the jobless adult members of the households entitled to the GMI (guaranteed minimum income).

2.4. Employment programmes

The Ministry of Labour develops measures to actively support as many unemployed people as possible to achieve reintegration in the labour market.

Employment programs in 2015 contributed to:

- (a) Address dynamic sectors of the Greek economy, helping enterprises to provide guaranteed employment,
- (b) Provide targeted training and counselling to unemployed or entrepreneurs, as needed and when needed,
- (c) the certification of knowledge acquired and skills upgrading,
- (d) interventions in specific areas of regions with high unemployment.

In 2015 three Public Calls were issued under the Act “Promoting employment through public aid ⁽³⁾ programmes” for more than 50,000 full-time

⁽³⁾ We use the term public aid as an equivalent of community labour (shouldn't be connected in anyway to community service).

jobs. In the last two Public Calls, disabled and parents of dependent children with disabilities were prioritized in the selection procedures. In the last Public Call disabled persons were included in the beneficiaries.

The recent Law 4368/2016 (article 1) provides for improvements on the implementation of public work schemes, with regard to the labour rights of the participants and the connection with the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) recipients.

In 2016 the public aid programmes entered a new phase, focusing on the unemployed. The new public aid programs /reintegration into the labour market programmes combine jobs placement with skills upgrading of the unemployed to enable their sustainable integration in the labour market. Unemployed persons who will participate in the programme offer their services to specific, discrete and measurable projects and do not replace jobs which meet permanent needs of the municipalities.

The new public aid programmes will be first piloted in 17 municipalities of the country “high and long-term unemployment pockets (6,000 beneficiaries). On a second stage it will be enlarged to other 32 municipalities (12,000 beneficiaries), aiming at being gradually extended to all Greek municipalities. The duration of the new public aid programmes is 8 months. In addition, 5,000 unemployed integrated in of public aid programmes will be employed in jobs related to first reception services, asylum and management of refugee flows services.

Furthermore, the following programmes are being implemented:

Pre-retirement subsidy scheme financed through the Account for Employment and Vocational training (LAEK) is implemented. The scheme is addressed to 15,000 particularly disadvantaged long-term unemployed, aged over 50.

A training voucher programme for unemployed aged 29-64 in 8 cutting-edge sectors of the economy and in 44 specialties with 26,000 beneficiaries.

10,000 new jobs programme in the private sector for unemployed and special groups of unemployed.

CHAPTER 3.

Examples of practice

3.1. Career guidance and counselling for NEET promoted by EOPPEP

EOPPEP (National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance) within its role as national Euroguidance centre is developing actions, relating to exchange of quality information between EU countries on issues relating to Counseling and Guidance, to promote the European dimension in counseling and vocational guidance and introduction to the national Counselling and Career Guidance systems issues relating to international mobility and international developments and prospects in vocational guidance. ".In the current severe economic crisis radically changed European labor markets with strongly rising unemployment, especially of young people, immigrants with low skills, less stability and safety for workers and out of control budget deficit, there is a need for concerted action to tackle "the risk of a lost generation."

EOPPEP - in cooperation with KANEP - GSEE Education Policy Development Centre developed targeted methodology and scientific support materials Consultative career and then held two seminars at national level in Athens (10,11,12 October 2016) and Thessaloniki (24,25,26 November 2016), with over 400 participants, aiming to strengthen career guidance staff to be able to implement effective guidance interventions, according to the needs of "NEETs", with aiming to tackle social exclusion, dropouts etc.

The action made use of the analytical data for NEETs in Europe and Greece, according to the findings of a recent nationwide survey (the first nationwide survey in Europe) on "Barometer absentee" implemented by the KANEP GSEE, the Human Rights Center Department of Political Science, University of Crete, the GPO and the ICS. Specific data concerning the psychological profile of these individuals are particularly important for the design and implementation of any counseling intervention, which is the subject of the seminar. This project had two parts:

- (a) Scientific and educational material for career / guidance counselors to raise their awareness for the issue of NEETs with literature review and mapping of best practices and intervention methods used in EU countries.
- (b) A 35 hours training program for career counselors / guidance entitled "Career Guidance for NEETs " based on the above supporting scientific -

educational material and the proposed theoretical counselling methodology. The supporting scientific - educational material has incorporated the most important elements of the literature aimed at conceptual clarification of the term NEET, and good international practices and a single intervention proposed advisory panel.

The purpose of this program is to develop the knowledge and the skills of Career Guidance professionals in the field of NEETs so they could:

- (a) know the basic conceptual framework of the phenomenon of NEETs under European and international literature
- (b) be aware of best practices and intervention methods used in different countries,
- (c) recognize the different needs of NEETs in making matters educational and occupational decisions and development of life and career management skills.
- (d) have at their disposal a proposed theoretical framework counselling intervention
- (e) exploit good practices and tools Career Guidance appropriate for NEETs.

The training program developed addresses the following issues:

- (a) Basic concepts and clarify definitions - Current trends and developments - European priorities
- (b) Special characteristics and needs of NEETs
- (c) Presentation of best practices and intervention methods used in different countries
- (d) Theories professional development - proposed theoretical framework counselling intervention for NEETs
- (e) A Career Guidance Model for individual and group counselling
- (f) Role of Career Guidance to address the needs of NEETs
- (g) Tools and NEETs activation methods for the development of career management skills - Experiential activities, case studies.

In the theoretical training manual is presented the basic theoretical framework for the Counselling of NEETs, including conceptual depiction of the phenomenon under European and international literature, illustrating the best practices and innovative counselling intervention methods used in various countries and proposed theoretical framework counselling intervention. The study of material will help the counsellors to get an overview of the subject and to identify the specific characteristics and needs of the target group and the advisory intervention methodology.

Additionally, the Manual of the Experiential exercises, includes activities and exercises that Guidance Counsellors can use to raise awareness and activation of NEETs in the advisory process, either at individual or group level

The 35 hours training program total duration of program is structured as follows:

- (a) In person training lasting 25 teaching hours, during this weekend, an
- (b) Distance remote training lasting 10 teaching hours

In the context of distance education:

- (a) Additional scientific material is proposed for study in electronic form (links) for the participants to deepen more in some areas
- (b) Some case studies on which the students are invited to design the appropriate consultative approach to support activation and professional development of those NEET person

The training seminars were evaluated from the participants as follows:

- (a) Most participants (78%) said they were satisfied or very satisfied from the content of the seminar
- (b) They believe that it will contribute to their personal and professional development (78%)
- (c) The supporting material that was given to them was evaluated as very useful for the 70% of participants
- (d) Almost all participants (about 94%) evaluated positively, very good or excellent logistics
- (e) Approximately 99% of the trained said they would participate in future similar seminars

There are underway discussions for the continuation of the fruitful collaboration between KANEP and EOPPEP. EOPPEP is also engaged in discussions with the Ministries of Employment and Education in order to specify actions that would enhance the ability of Counselling and Guidance activities to deal with NEETs as part of individual sessions. It's worth noting however that continuity issues usually arise as changes in the political leadership of Ministries often coincide with the abandonment of previous plans. Another danger is the need for consistent and constant consultation and data exchange between Organisations (either Public or belonging to the Broader Public Sector- including regional authorities) where responsibilities and roles are clearly defined and the funding is also viable. Local authorities could play a major role in tracking NEET's and other competent institutions (like IEP) should also provide drop-out rates (so that the ages from 15-18 are covered).

3.2. Career Development Portal e-Stadiodromia

The Lifelong Career Development Portal <http://e-stadiodromia.eoppep.gr/> has been developed within the activities of EOPPEP as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece, providing innovating career development services targeted to youngsters and adults of all ages but also to guidance practitioners. The portal has been constantly updated since the end of 2013, providing digitized career tests, Career & Mobility information Resources. A special part of the portal, which was completed recently, deals with Career Management Skills. The portal has already over 80,000 registered adults users. The added value is that it is preventive rather than therapeutic intervention, based on a nurturing culture of lifelong learning and lifelong skills development.

The portal is connected to the Greek PES services (OAED) and is universally accessible. In order improve its usage by unemployed, it is also used in guidance and counselling processes within the ESF training programs offered to the unemployed aged 29-64 organized by the Ministry of Labour, as well as to the portals hosted by the Ministry of Defense targeted to those serving in the military forces.

An E-portfolio is offered to end users, both young and adults in order to register and document their acquired skills. Reference studies and frameworks were used as the basis for the creation of the e-portfolio, including: the European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning; OECD's "Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC); the International Labour Office's study " Enhancing youth employability: What? Why? and How? Guide to core work skills "(2013); CEDEFOP's survey "Piloting a European employer survey on skill needs" (2013).

The E-portfolio provides the opportunity to the end-users to present and document the skills that are related to participation in the labor market, employability (employability skills) and the management of personal and social life (life skills), such as:

- (a) Good Knowledge and use of the Greek Language,
- (b) Knowledge of foreign languages,
- (c) Numerical Ability,
- (d) Digital competence,
- (e) Ability for lifelong learning,
- (f) Flexibility / Adaptability,
- (g) Interpersonal and communication skills,
- (h) Problem solving,
- (i) Creativeness,
- (j) Working in groups,

- (k) Initiative and entrepreneurship
- (l) Professional skills (vocational skills), related to a particular profession

The digital tool allows completing the e-portfolio also in English language ⁽⁴⁾. (For younger students and adolescents, a more simple E-portfolio development tool, based on the European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (Recommendation of the Council of the EU in 2006), is also offered.

In addition, the E-Stadiodromia offers a special section for Career Management Skills (CMS), including interactive CMS activities and CMS learning material. The exercises aim to be a valuable tool for practitioners and end users in understanding and accessing several aspects of career development.

The interactive exercises are an adaptation of exercises contained in the CMS training material for guidance practitioners and the end users, developed by EOPPEP in 2013, following the important outcomes of the ELGPN work. EOPPEP's CMS training material was based on the ELGPN definition, but also included a wider perspective derived from recent career theories. Skills of this kind help us in every age to collect, analyse, synthesise and organise information for oneself, education and occupations, and help us to take decisions to implement transitions and show flexibility and adaptability. These skills are considered important "qualifications" for the effective management of citizens' career. In brief, the skills analyzed in the EOPPEP CMS material and in the CMS exercises are the following:

- (a) Readiness to happenstance: identifying, creating and capitalizing on fortuitous situations, either positive or negative ones.
- (b) Creating alternative career perspectives: to invent practical ideas about how we can promote ourself and how we can discover new career opportunities.
- (c) Career adaptability: it helps to cope and "negotiate" successfully with changes and transitions in the world of work (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012; Savickas, 2013).
- (d) Social awareness: helps to develop empathic understanding and act more effectively as a part of the society as a whole
- (e) Career resilience: our inner ability to cope with adversities and changes which take place in career exactly at the moment they occur.

⁽⁴⁾ Go to <http://www.eoppep.gr/teens/e-portfolio> to view a real example of a completed e-portfolio.

- (f) Self-efficacy in career planning: our self-efficacy beliefs in performing the appropriate actions and activities needed to cope effectively with career issues (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, Mylonas, & Argyropoulou, 2012)
- (g) Positive orientation to the future: to know oneself better through various phases of our life and have positive images, thoughts and emotions about it in the future.

The specific exercises are self-directed answered exercises and give the opportunity to focus on oneself, to think and evaluate ones' strengths and weaknesses and how one can react to possible different situations. There is no right or wrong answers, the results are given written in simple and understandable language and help the end-users to understand how a given skill can be applied in everyday life. The results of the exercises are only indicative of the responses of users and do not mirror their personality. They can be used for further discussions with a Career Guidance Practitioner or for further introspection, reflection and help in making future decisions.

According to the procurement call for Voucher ages 29-64 where training-counselling- and certification of potential beneficiaries are the co-funded activities (aiming primarily to the long term unemployed though not explicitly to them), each training provider is obliged to conform to the criteria set by EOPPEP for the provision of counselling and guidance services. Not only reference to E-management tools is encouraged but in order for a provider to be able to participate in the program (and therefore receive funding) the recruitment of practitioners which comply with EOPPEP's requirements for the particular group of practitioners (including practitioners specialized for people with disabilities) is a prerequisite. Each provider has to get permission by the relevant EOPPEP Department (and in worst case scenario in order to begin the training phase) at least a "receipt" that a dully filled form seeking EOPPEP's approval for the counselling and guidance practitioners has been submitted must be provided to OAED's evaluation committee.

Although the provisions of this particular call may be positive in terms of the quality of relevant staff, the expansion to other programs is not certain though there is a clear tendency to enhance the quality of services of such kind(see calls of Procurement of the Operational Programme "EPANEK" which all set out the need for quality counselling and guidance practitioners) ⁽⁵⁾. Also the fact that EOPPEP has no "Authority" to perform quality controls (at least to a sample of

⁽⁵⁾ <http://www.antonistikitita.gr/epanek/proskliseis.asp>. The calls are newly published so it's new data (not existing at the time that the article was submitted to Cedefop)

providers) prohibits the actual quality evaluation of the counselling and guidance services that will actually be provided. Finally it's worth noting that there was no previous consultation about the prospective benefits of the number of individual sessions which are obligatory under the provisions set out in the call.

Annexes

Table A 1. NEET's distribution per region (%) (⁶)

Regions	Neet's percentages
East Macedonia and Thrace	17.1%
Central Macedonia	19.1%
West Macedonia	13.6%
Thessaly	13.7%
Ipiros	13.4%
Ionio	20.9%
West Greece	18.3%
Mainland	22.2%
Peloponnese	19.1%
North Aegean	15.8%
South Aegean	27.4%
Crete	17.1%
Attica	13%
Thessaloniki	14.6%

Table A 2. unemployed by duration of unemployment (⁷)

DURATION	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
TOTAL(thousands)	1.130,9	1.195,1	1.330.3	1274,4	1.197,0
Long-term Unemployed	813,9	706,2	892,7	936,8	875,2
% of long term Unemployed	72,0	59,1	73,6	73,1	72,0

(⁶) EOPPEP (2016), "Counselling and Guidance for Supporting NEETs", p. 22 (not available in English)

(⁷) ELSTAT: "Greece in Figures 1Q 2017"

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